

Coalesce Bookstore Celebrates 50 Years in Business

By Neil Farrell

For over a half century, Coalesce Bookstore and its owner Linna Thomas have been a beloved part of Morro Bay's business community and one of the anchors in the Downtown business district.

Thomas and long-time employees Sherri Hereford and Joanne Hand sat down with Estero Bay News to talk about the store's beginnings, its past, present and future.

She started the business in 1973, Thomas says, opening around her birthday that July. The first store was in a little old house at 230 Harbor St., across from the Pleasant Inn.

"That old house," Thomas recalls, "it's amazing how many people who come in today remember that place. It was very funky."

It was funky in that each room of the house had different genres of books, for example cookbooks were kept in the kitchen.

Coalesce's origin story is as eclectic as the store's extensive book collection. Thomas and husband Lance, a retired Caltrans engineer, once took down an old water tower made of beautiful redwood and used it for the store. They painted the outside of the old house to look like shingles, Thomas recalls, and used that water tower wood for shelving and decor.

One of the house's back rooms was empty and over the next few years several people stayed in that space, including Thomas.

Hereford says that every room was filled with books and people would come in and open the fridge, "to see if there was anything to eat."

Hereford recalls the old house's roof "leaked like a sieve."

In 1982, they moved the store to 845 Main St., into a



Coalesce Book Store in Morro Bay is celebrating 50 years in business. Photo by Neil Farrell

little brick building where it remains today.

As for the old house, Thomas said the owners gave it to the city fire department for training, but when they tried to burn it, the old house had the last laugh.

Over the years, so much hot-mop tar had been splattered onto the roof to try and stop leaks that when the fire reached the roof, a thick black cloud of smoke engulfed the whole area. One woman, a neighbor of the house, was screaming out the window, "You're ruining my curtains!" Thomas laughs. "I stood there watching and cried."

Hereford adds, "People came out in their underwear [from the motels] because they thought it was a big fire."

The current location was already a bookstore as well as a chapel. "It was a metaphysical bookstore," Thomas says. The little chapel in back was the owner's "church," where they held services, astrological classes, and weddings.

Today no one really gives the idea of "metaphysical" teachings a second thought, but back in the 1970s, it was a pretty radical idea.

The owners had put the property up for sale and

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Moving Forward: The Future HarborWalk Inn



Cherise Hansson, owner of the HarborWalk Inn, on the balcony in one of the suites overlooking bay and rock. Photo by Judy Salamacha

By Judy Salamacha

For generations several members of Morro Bay's Leage family have owned and operated Embarcadero retail and restaurant related operations. It is noteworthy that Travis Leage and Cherise Hansson and their three sons, Trason, 18, Lance 14, and Coen, 12 have embarked on an exciting new waterfront project.

They are third generation Embarcadero lease holders. He was born into the lifestyle. She chose to marry into it after she and Travis became a couple while attending Humboldt State University. He developed Travis Leage Construction while she opened and operated Under the Sea Gallery at 725 Embarcadero as well as Mermaid Boutique at 833 Embarcadero. Currently 833 is under construction as HarborWalk Inn at HarborWalk Plaza.

Cherise said, "We knew we needed to plan ahead for our three sons' futures if they might decide to carry on the family businesses in Morro Bay." At the same time Hansson said there was a secondary purpose for sinking their savings into the project. "As Embarcadero lease holders we also believe it is our responsibility to invest in the health of our bay and harbor. We need to keep up with the times – offer what our visitors expect – even more than they expected – so they will return. Travis and I decided we wanted to do our part to maintain a future economic vitality for our waterfront business district."

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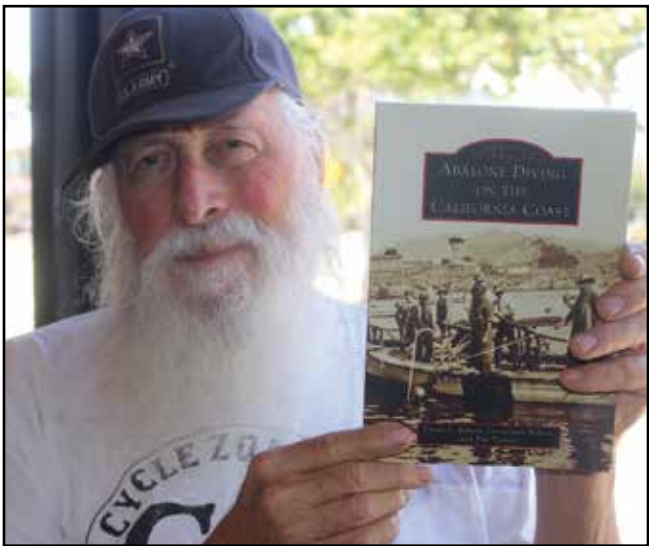
New Book Dives into History of Abalone Fishery

By Neil Farrell

A new book by a local man explores the rich history and fascination man has had with the sea, in particular the sea snail, abalone, and its influence on the Central Coast from ancient times to more recent history and through various stages of innovation in the exploration of the ocean.

Steve Rebuck, who lives in San Luis Obispo and spent pretty much his whole life working in and around the abalone fishery and has been an advocate and expert, just released a book through Arcadia Publishing entitled, "Abalone Diving on the Central Coast," a history of the industry told mainly through historic photos.

Rebuck put the book together with help from his oldest son, Christopher, and Tim Thomas, a writer who wrote chronicled the abalone industry focused on Monterey and Pop Ernest, a restrauntuer and diver who first cut abalone into steaks



Steve Rebuck just released a book through Arcadia Publishing entitled, 'Abalone Diving on the Central Coast,' a history of the industry told mainly through historic photos.

for a restaurant he owned.

Thomas, Rebuck says, contributed a whole section of his book telling the fishery's story in Monterey. Christopher, and Morro Bay resident Janice House, did technical work for the book. "We repackaged the photos into modern materials," he explains.

By that he means taking delicate old

Fishery Continued on page 18

Cannabis Taxes Cut

By Neil Farrell

County Supervisors have done something unimaginable to many folks — they cut taxes.

Supervisors in June reset the annual Cannabis Business Tax (CBT) rate for grow operations in the unincorporated areas of SLO County, rejecting the staff's recommendation to leave the new rate at 8% of gross sales even though it was slated to rise to 10% as outlined in the original Cannabis Ordinance that was passed about 5-years ago.

On June 6, Supervisors asked for an agenda item to come back discussing the cannabis tax rate, which started at 4% of gross receipts in 2018.

Under the law it was scheduled to increase every

Tax Cuts Continued on page 17

Ironman to Return but will Run on Sunday

By Neil Farrell

The Ironman Triathlon will return to Morro Bay next year, but a significant change was made in the scheduling to try and make the mega-event more palatable for local businesses.

The City Council voted to move the day of the triathlon, which drew over 2,000 participants and thousands of spectators to town on May 20, when it returns in 2024 but will be held on Sunday, May 19 instead of Saturday, May

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Turns 92
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City Council to Vote on ABC Licenses

By Neil Farrell

A new development now under construction on Morro Bay’s Embarcadero will be the first time the City Council will vote on whether it can sell and serve alcohol, under a recently enacted policy change.

The leaseholders at 833 Embarcadero, requested City support on two Alcohol and Beverage Control (ABC) liquor sales license applications.

The development, HarborWalk Plaza [see story, page 1], is well along on a complete teardown-rebuild into a small motel, restaurant, and retail spaces. Cherise Hanson, who has Under the Sea Gallery, is listed on the support request letter. The master leaseholder is TLC Family, which are Hanson and Travis Leage in partnership on the development.

The City was asked to support liquor licenses for Umi Grill Corp., dba Umi Seafood Grill, to be able to serve beer and wine (Type 47 license) at a future restaurant; and for Under the Sea Gallery, dba Harborwalk Convenience, an off sale beer and wine license. Off sale is the type of license (Type 20) a market or convenience store would have, meaning no on-site consumption of alcohol permitted.

The request was sent in April to Police Chief Amy Watkins for her approval and she reportedly found no reason to deny it.

Included in the council packet of information, was a completed site plan that shows two retail spaces fronting Embarcadero, each over 700 square feet, and a sizable restaurant with outdoor patio overlooking the bay, along with other amenities like a children’s play area and restrooms. The kitchen space is in between the store spaces and the restaurant.

It also includes the extension of the Harborwalk and the motel takes up the second story.

Of note, the master lease on the site also supports alcohol sales there, which is one of the main sources of revenue for the Harbor Department’s lease payments. Each restaurant with a City lease or sublease is required to pay a percentage of its gross alcohol and sales in the monthly rent.

The police chief sent the requested letter to ABC, which sent it back to the City to ask that language be added. Chief Watkins said ABC wanted an addition that reads: “According to California Business Section Code 23824 the City of Morro Bay is requesting that this property should be given the ability to sell alcohol because it benefits the public and the area. This is a visitor serving area that will attract more guests and meet the needs of the public.”

Also, since all this started, the City Council changed its policy with regards to awarding liquor licenses in town, instructing that all such issues come to them for a vote.

This case marks the first time the staff, which used to have the discretion over issuance of ABC licenses, has had to bring it into the open.

In July, after the Council’s vote to change up the process, Estero Bay News asked Community Development Director Scot Graham what the change meant.

“It will create a bit of a delay in someone getting an ABC license,” Graham said, “as we will have to place it on an agenda and write a staff report. Item would be on consent agenda.”

EBN asked if there’ve been any problems with the old process? Graham said, “We don’t currently have issues with ABC licenses in town, its just that we have added a couple of restaurants down on the Embarcadero that have added beer and wine licenses, increasing the density to a level ABC identifies as an over concentration.

“When this happens, they require the City to issue a letter of convenience or necessity to support issuance of an ABC license.”

Morro Bay, a town if about 10,700 residents, has around 50 bars and restaurants and all but a handful serve at least beer and wine. On the 8-blocks long waterfront (Embarcadero), there are about 25 restaurants/eateries,

and only the bakeries don’t serve alcohol. Seven have full liquor licenses and bar areas.

The space where the future Umi Seafood is slated to occupy used to be The Outrigger (before that it was Bob’s Seafood), a restaurant with a full bar.

“In general,” Graham said, “this process is designed to address an over concentration of liquor stores and/or bars in a given location, as that type of thing can have a negative impact on the neighborhood. Beer and wine license issuance in a town with lots of restaurants and visitors is far less of an issue.”

The item should be routine as the City has been supportive of this redevelopment for various reasons; not the least of which is that the old lease agreement for the site was not under the so-called “modern lease format” that’s now used by the Harbor Department in drafting leases.

The new leases take percentage of gross sales into account, as well as settling on a minimum rent amount for when times are slow.

Replacing these old lease agreements has been the Harbor Department’s goal for a long time. It’s mainly been achieved through a redevelopment project.

South Bay Blvd. to Close Overnight

The City of Morro Bay will close South Bay Boulevard next week to make way for extensive road repairs stemming from last winter’s spate of rainstorms.

The City announced on Aug. 4 that it was going to completely close South Bay overnight from Sunday-Wednesday, Aug. 13-16 and reopen the road to alternating traffic with flagmen on Thursday-Friday, Aug. 17-18, also overnight.

The City said it was time to make repairs to the shoulder along a stretch of South Bay past the Chorro Creek Bridge that was undermined in the March storms.

It will also be patching several areas of the roadway that couldn’t be done along with the rest of the annual street repairs due to the rain.

The work area is from Quintana Road to the City Limits, which is located in the road’s “S” turns about a half mile past State Park Road. No work will be done during the day.

“With the night road closures,” the City said in a news release, “the public should be prepared to plan extra travel time between Morro Bay and Los Osos as the other travel route is through San Luis Obispo.”

The City is asking everyone to follow all posted signs and the directions of flagmen.

Tenant Found for Market Avenue Property

By Neil Farrell

The City of Morro Bay has apparently found a tenant for its property on Market Avenue, and the new tenants plan to open a health and wellness studio.

The City Council was being asked at its Aug. 8 meeting to approve a 2-year lease for its two vacant spaces at 781 Market Ave. The applicants, Let’s Get Tuned, has been operating in Morro Bay for some seven years without a so-called brick and mortar location, according to a report from Community Development Director, Scot Graham.

The rent is over \$5,200 a month, or more than \$65,500 for the first year alone. The second year will be adjusted for inflation but the lease would bring in a total of over \$125,000 over the 2-year term.

Meanwhile, the City continues to try and sell that building and two adjacent parking lots as part of a larger package and hoped-for redevelopment. But while numerous people have talked about buying it, no takers have been found.

The building is the one-time home of the original Breakers Café, the Hungry Tiger, Rubens, Brannigan’s Reef, Distasio’s, and others.

The City purchased it in the early 2000s as part of a package deal that included the parking lot below at 714

Embarcadero. The upper lot was purchased prior for some \$500,000 out of the City’s parking in-lieu fund. It’s been trying to get someone to redevelop it ever since.

At one point, the late-George Salwassarr bought the building from the City and it underwent a complete model of the top floor into two separate spaces. Distasio’s By the Bay Italian restaurant opened in the larger space and Salwassarr briefly had a wine tasting room in the smaller one.

The City took the property back through bankruptcy proceedings, as the full purchase price had not been paid. Ken McMillan who owns Distasio’s tried to get the property but the City prevailed. A new lease between Distasio’s and the City included some \$9,000 a month in rent. Distasio’s soon moved to its current location on Morro Bay Boulevard after buying and remodeling that one-time bank building.

Ciano Realty next rented the larger space for a real estate office and for a short time, the Morro Bay Skateboard Museum moved into the old wine tasting space.

After the museum closed, Rock Harbor Marketing, co-owned by Councilwoman Jen Ford and husband Travis, moved into that space but have since given it up. Ciano Realty moved to a building on Main Street and the City’s building has been vacant for some time.

The building has two floors and the downstairs former bar was deemed not to be handicap accessible and hasn’t been used since 1995.

The City has been trying to unload the properties using its “Market Plaza” concept of building a multi-story motel on the bluff top connected to a large parking garage on the Embarcadero and also rebuild the Centennial Parkway pocket park, with its Giant Chessboard.

Why rent the place out if they hope it someday gets torn down? Graham said, “Having tenants occupy the 781 Market building while the City pursues sale/lease and redevelopment of the property will serve to generate income for the City and while also ensuring the property is maintained and not left to deteriorate while the City pursues redevelopment opportunities.”

If they sold the property tomorrow, Graham said it would be two -three years to go through a sale/lease and permitting process.

Let’s Get Tuned, owned by Natalie Teichmann and Jon Nowaczyk, plans to occupy both of the spaces on the second floor.

“They intend to use the lease space as a yoga and sound studio with unique class offerings, educational workshops and teacher training with the intent to attract people from



Estero Bay News Staff

Dean Sullivan

Owner - Publisher

dean@esterobaynews.com

Theresa-Marie Wilson

Editor

editor@esterobaynews.com

Neil Farrell

Reporter

neil@esterobaynews.com

Shari Sullivan

Marketing Director




shari@esterobaynews.com

Joan Sullivan

Judy Salamacha

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News

all over country,” Graham’s report said.

In a flyer that accompanied the report, Let’s Get Tuned said, “Morro Bay does not currently have a wellness center that offers a large variety of classes, educational courses and a place to gather to connect with others.

“Let’s Get Tuned Sound & Yoga Studio would offer a unique studio experience that will fill provide (sic) just that — a full schedule of offerings, a place to lounge and enjoy the view and company of others as well as a place to further one’s knowledge in the areas of sound, mindfulness, movement and relaxation.

“Our studio’s mission is to bring wellness to people of all ages and backgrounds, with each class accessible to all. Our specialty will be providing professional sound baths and trainings to empower others. We also sell high end sound healing instruments drawing in clientele from around the state and nation.”

They do something called “Sound Baths.” “Sound baths are an ancient tradition that are making a modern comeback,”

Welcome Mat to Roll Out for New City Manager

The City of Morro Bay is rolling out the welcome mat for its new city manager and the public is invited.

The City announced Aug. 4 that it will hold a welcoming and swearing-in ceremony for new City Manager Yvonne Kimball at 10 a.m. Monday, Aug. 14 in front of the Community Center, 1001 Kennedy Way.

“Attendees will have the opportunity to meet and mingle with Ms. Kimball, as well as other city officials and community leaders,” reads the City’s announcement.

Kimball was hired to replace Scott Collins, who left the City last March to become executive director of the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo, and was replaced temporarily by Interim C.M. Greg Carpenter.

Kimball was formerly the city manager for Jackson, Calif., a small town in the northern foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Kimball has led Jackson, a town of some 5,000 residents, since 2017 and has some 15-years of city management experi-

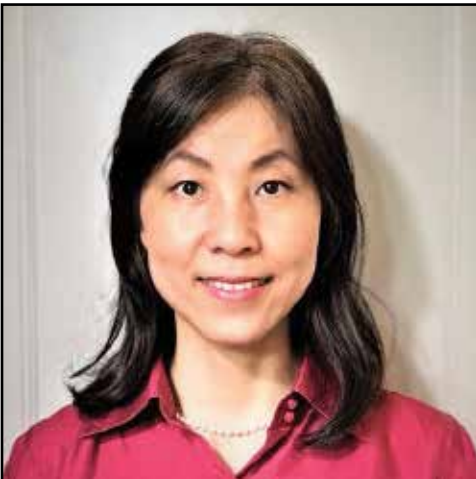
they told the City. “Just as the breath & movement are used to reduce stress and shift energy, sound baths interact with the nervous system to bring deep rest & restoration.”

Teichmann is “a school teacher and curriculum writer. She has taught in schools around the world since 2008. She has over 1,000 hours of yoga teacher trainings and has written her own 200-hour YTT training.”

Nowaczyk is a street performer and entrepreneur who readers may have seen perform a unicycle-and-juggling act as part of “Something Ridiculous.”

“He has brought joy and laughter to millions of people around the globe,” reads the company’s flyer, “and looks forward to bringing the same light-hearted loving energy to Morro Bay.”

Whether a yoga studio is ultimately successful in that location, one thing is certain — it’ll have sweeping views of the waterfront, bay, ocean and iconic Morro Rock.



Morro Bay City Manager Yvonne Kimball will be sworn in Aug. 14 in front of the Community Center. Photo submitted

ence overall.

Before Jackson, Kimball was the town manager at the Town of Dewey-Humboldt, Ariz., from 2012-17, and was the City

Manager at the City of Bowling Green, Fla., from 2008-11.

Kimball earned a Master of Public Administration Degree with a focus on urban and regional planning from the University of Central Florida. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in business English

from the Tianjin Institute of Technology in China.

Kimball will become just the second woman city manager in town history after Andrea Lueker and comes to a town that has for the first time ever, an all-female city council.

Inspection Contract Awarded for New Dispatch Center

By Neil Farrell

Bills are starting to pile up on the County’s new emergency dispatch center project, with a sizable contract recently let for inspection services.

County Supervisors approved a contract with 4Leaf, Inc., for “inspector of record services” for the dispatch center project, slated to be built in a vacant lot on a Hwy 101 frontage road in Templeton.

4Leaf’s 2-year contract was for

\$557,000 with another \$83,000 budgeted for contingencies. The approval also left it to the director of Public Works to decide on contract amendments without Supervisors’ approval until the overall budget is spent.

The new communications center would put dispatchers for the Sheriff’s Department and Cal Fire/County Fire, plus several other local law enforcement and fire agencies who contract for dispatching, under one roof for the first time.

The two sides — law enforcement and Dispatch Center Continued on page 4

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News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Know Your Evacuation Zone



During an emergency the right information can save your life.

Residents of San Luis Obispo County are encouraged to "know your evacuation zone" as part of the launch of a countywide evacuation planning project. The new pre-determined evacuation zones will assist first responders in rapidly determining evacuation areas during an emergency and allow the public to easily identify if they are in an area under an Evacuation Warning, Evacuation Order or other protective actions. The zones are intended for emergencies that require large-scale evacuations.

To save time during an emergency, it is important for residents to know your zone in advance. Go to ReadySLO.org/evaczone and enter your address in the evacuation zone tool. The tool will tell you your zone name. It is important to write down the zone name and post it in a location easily accessible in an emergency.

"Taking a minute to write down your evacuation zone could save your life," said Emergency Services Manager Scott Jalbert, "knowing your zone in advance will save you valuable time during an emergency if you are told to evacuate."

If an Evacuation Warning or Evacuation Order is issued, emergency officials will utilize alert and notification methods such as Wireless Emergency Alerts and Reverse 911 to notify residents which zones are affected. By knowing your evacuation zone in advance, you will be ready to respond as soon as your zone is identified.

This new initiative was made possible through a grant from the FireSafe Council and partnership between

the County of San Luis Obispo and the San Luis Obispo County Fire Chiefs Association.

Readers with questions should call the County Office of Emergency Services at (805) 781-5678 or visit ReadySLO.org.

SLO Transit Announces New Electric Busses

Getting around the City of San Luis Obispo is going to get a little more green.

SLO Transit has added two state-of-the-art battery electric buses that will serve the San Luis Obispo community and transit riders. This decision not only aligns with the California Air Resource Board's Innovative Clean Transit regulation, but it also aligns with City's the Climate Action Plan goal of becoming a carbon neutral community by 2035, officials said.

"Transportation is the biggest cause of climate pollution in our community and riding the bus is a fun way to reduce your household emissions," said Lucia Pohlman, the City's Sustainability and Natural Resources Analyst. "Now that we're transitioning to electric, bus riders will have an even bigger impact."

The SLO City Council recently approved funding for an additional six battery electric buses, which will increase the percentage of zero-emission buses in SLO Transit's fleet to an impressive 45%, which are anticipated to be delivered by 2026. The installation of charging infrastructure for the electric buses is underway and is anticipated to be completed by the end of the month, ensuring a seamless transition to electric buses for the benefit of residents, commuters, and the environment.

The new electric buses promise numerous advantages, including reduced greenhouse gas emissions, quieter operation, improved air quality, and increased passenger comfort, officials said.

SLO Transit provides daily fixed-route transit service within the city limits of San Luis Obispo and Cal Poly. For more information on SLO Transit's electric bus program, visit www.slotransit.org.

Addis Bill Signed by Governor

Governor Newsom recently signed Assembly Bill 358, the California Community College Housing Act, introduced by Assemblymember Dawn Addis (D-Morro Bay).

The bill aims to address student homelessness and

housing challenges and is the first of Assemblymember Addis' bills to become law. It allows community colleges to provide student housing without mandatory approval of architectural plans by the Department of General Services' Division of State Architect (DSA), bringing parity with faculty campus housing.

The bill becomes law on January 1, 2024, a significant step in supporting students affected by housing insecurity in the community college system.

Community Band Seek Players



Did you hang up your instrument years ago but miss the thrill of playing for a crowd?

The Morro Bay White Caps Community Band continues to thrive and expand under the baton of conductor Brenda Hascall. Although the band has more than doubled in size since Hascall began conducting, new members are wanted.

"The members are enjoying a challenging but fun repertoire which keeps them highly motivated," Hascall said. "There has been wonderful engagement with our audience both in person and online as well. I like to keep our rehearsals fun and moving forward. I do my best to encourage a collaborative environment where we can all grow as musicians."

Anyone interested in joining the band, should see information on the band's website: www.morrobay-whitecaps.com.

The Morro Bay White Caps Community Band has two more summer performances scheduled on the South T-Pier; Saturday August 5 and Saturday September 9 from 11a.m. to 1p.m. Photo by Brenda Hascall.

Send your news, community and business briefs to Editor@EsteroBayNews.com. Be sure to include the who, what, why, where and when information along with a contact person.

Dispatch Center From page 3

fire — have always had separate facilities, with Sheriff's dispatch located in the Darth Vader Building (Office of Emergency Services) on Kansas Avenue and County Fire at the Cal Fire HQ on Hwy 1 in San Luis Obispo, which also dispatches ambulances.

A lot has happened since the idea was first hatched in 2016, including moving the location from Kansas Avenue to over the Grade to Templeton, though a County official previously told Estero Bay News that the Templeton location was actually better in terms of radio signaling.

Supervisors chose the delivery method for the project (design-build); signed agreements with Cal Fire; sent out requests for qualifications and then chose three companies qualified to do the work to seek bids from.

Then in August 2022, they awarded a contract to both design and build the facility to Diani Building Corp.

The facility's nature as a public safety building requires specialty construction, using specially approved materials, and to certain standards for security and technology, so the County decided it needed to hire a specialist,

"to ensure the new building is constructed to essential services standards of construction. The County received two proposals from qualified firms."

A selection committee of County staffers went through the bids and evaluated the inspection companies and 4Leaf got the nod, "due to 4Leaf's extensive experience with similar essential services building projects," the report said, "and 4Leaf's experience working with other public agencies, the Selection Committee unanimously recommended the award of the IOR consultant contract to 4Leaf for a negotiated not-to-exceed fee of \$557,848, which will be paid on actual and necessary expenditures made by 4Leaf."

The new dispatch center has a total budget of over \$39.92 million and according to the report there is \$1.5 million "still available and unencumbered to use towards soft costs, such as professional inspection services."

The report said this inspection contract was covered within the budget and they didn't need Supervisors to approve any more funding for now.

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News

Syphilis Surging in SLO

By Neil Farrell

An ancient disease is rearing its ugly head again, as reported cases of the venereal disease, syphilis, are spiking in San Luis Obispo County and all over California.

The SLO County Public Health Department, said, “Rates of syphilis have been increasing nationally, across California, and here in SLO County. Now, patients and health care providers are facing a national shortage of the medication most commonly used to treat this infection — making prevention more important than ever.”

In 2022, the County said in a news release, “99 cases of syphilis were diagnosed in SLO County, up from 22 cases in 2013 and 66 cases in 2019.”

The scourge has been rising all over. “This increase is similar to trends statewide and across the U.S.,” the County said, “for reasons that researchers are working to understand. No matter what the reason, local public health officials want residents to understand: the risk is real, and resources are available to help.”

County Health Officer, Dr. Penny Borenstein, said, “Syphilis can be prevented and, even amid this medication shortage, it can be cured if it is found in the early stages. However, syphilis can cause very serious health problems if it is left untreated and can be especially devastating when it is transmitted to a baby during pregnancy and birth. Our Public Health team is here to help you protect yourself, get tested, and get treatment if needed.”

Simply put, syphilis is transmitted through sexual contact and can also be passed from mother to fetus in the womb causing serious health problems for newborns.

According to the Mayo Clinic’s website (see: www.mayoclinic.org), “The incubation period for primary syphilis is 14 to 21 days. Symptoms of primary syphilis are: small, painless open sore or ulcer [called a chancre] on the genitals, mouth, skin, or rectum that heals by itself in 3 to 6 weeks, [with] enlarged lymph nodes in the area of the sore.”

Though transmitted through sex, like Hepatitis, HIV and other STDs, it’s not a virus. “Syphilis is a bacterial infection,” the Mayo Clinic said. “Syphilis spreads from person to person via skin or mucous membrane contact with these [chancre] sores.”

The disease has three stages each with its own symptoms, sometimes overlapping. People can live with syphilis for many years and not know they have it. But it is dangerous.

“After the initial infection,” the Mayo Clinic said, “the syphilis bacteria can remain inactive in the body for decades before becoming active again. Early syphilis can be cured, sometimes with a single shot [injection] of penicillin.

“Without treatment, syphilis can severely damage the

heart, brain or other organs, and can be life-threatening.”

Syphilis, which is believed to have begun around 3000 B.C., can be identified with blood tests and can be cured with antibiotics. When syphilis is not treated, it can eventually spread to the brain and nervous system or to the eye, causing problems like hearing loss, stroke, and blindness.

Babies born with syphilis may have very serious health problems or even die from the infection as a newborn.

Perhaps the most infamous victim of the disease was the gangster, Al Capone, who died of a stroke and heart attack in 1947 in Miami Beach, Fla., after serving time in Alcatraz Prison. Capone was already showing signs of syphilis when he was sent to The Rock in 1931 on convictions for tax evasion. When he died at 48, he was deep into dementia caused by the syphilis.

The most common form of medicine to fight syphilis is Bicillin L-A, which is long-acting penicillin, if you can find it. “It is currently in low supply nationally due to surging demand,” the County said. “Other medications are also effective when taken as directed but require a longer course of treatment.”

Dr. Borenstein said, “If you have symptoms or think you may have been exposed to syphilis, please don’t let this shortage deter you from getting tested — there are still good options available and it’s important to treat syphilis as soon as possible so it doesn’t cause further damage to your body.”

The Public Health Department has confidential, low-cost testing, treatment and education programs for all sexually transmitted infections, including syphilis. Public health nurses also offer guidance on protecting yourself (free condoms) and can help connect partners with treatment if needed.

To learn more or make an appointment, see: www.slo-county.ca.gov/STD-Test or call 805-781-5500. For more information about syphilis, see: www.cdc.gov/std/syphilis/STDFact-Syphilis.htm.

Grant to Reduce Homeless Encampments on Popular Trail

Grant money will help both the unhoused and preserve a popular walking and biking trail utilized by locals and visitors alike.

Last month the County of San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors unanimously accepted \$13.4 million in Encampment Resolution Funds from the State of California Interagency Council on Homelessness. The County will use the grant funding to reduce encampments in a flood and fire danger zone near and around the segment of

the Bob Jones Bike Trail parallel to South Higuera Street in San Luis Obispo.

The Bob Jones Bike Trail Encampment Resolution Project has 3 main phases:

- Clean-up of the San Luis Creek and associated open spaces near the Bob Jones Bike Trail
- Expansion of ongoing field outreach efforts to those living in the area
- Development of a non-congregate housing facility with on-site wraparound services, dubbed the “Welcome Home Village.”

The County of San Luis Obispo Homeless Services Division will work with four key partners to launch the multi-phase project: the City of San Luis Obispo will lead the expansion of outreach services to the Bob Jones Bike Trail area, DignityMoves will build a supportive housing community, LifeArk will build the modular homes, and Good Samaritan Shelter will manage the supportive housing program.

“The acceptance of the Encampment Resolution Funds marks a step-change in the way the County is going about homelessness,” according to Homeless Services Division Manager Joe Dzvonik. “Alongside our community partners, the County is ready to implement methods that are proving successful in cities like Santa Barbara and Austin, Texas. This will be a life-changing project for many of our county’s residents.”

San Luis Obispo County currently has the third largest percentage of unsheltered individuals nationwide compared to other communities of its size. Last August, the Supervisors approved the San Luis Obispo Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness and its goal to create more than 2,000 housing units to meet the unique needs of those that are persistently unsheltered. In March 2023, the San Luis Obispo City Council also adopted the City’s first-ever Homelessness Response Strategic Plan, which aligns with the County’s plan.

The Welcome Home Village, which will be located next door to the County’s Department of Social Services headquarters, will supply 80 of those much-needed beds, through the creation of 34 interim and 46 permanent supportive housing units. The County is partnering with DignityMoves to develop the property while Good Samaritan Shelter will manage the supportive housing program with mandatory case management and individualized service plans for residents.

“This grant will allow us to reduce the number of homeless encampments along the Bob Jones Bike Trail by

Grant Continued on page 6

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Three men are being charged in connection with the 2022 shooting death of an Arroyo Grande man while up at Lopez Lake after a fake road rage cover story fell apart under scrutiny, the Sheriffs Department announced on July 27.

According to Sheriff's spokesman, Tony Cipolla, Sheriff's deputies responded to Arroyo Grande Hospital at about 8 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 4, 2022 for a report of a man with a gunshot wound who was transported to the hospital via private vehicle.

"The victim, 28-year-old Arroyo Grande resident Alexander Montero Pille," Cipolla said, "died at the hospital.

"The involved parties who were present during the incident and transported Pille to the hospital initially reported the shooting was related to a road rage incident on Los Berros Road."

Los Berros Road runs from rural Arroyo Grande to Nipomo. The apparent cover story soon fell apart,

"During the investigation," Cipolla said, "Sheriff's detectives learned the victim and the three others were in



Daniel Jacobo

the same vehicle near the Lopez Lake area of rural Arroyo Grande when the incident occurred.

"Based on the investigation, Sheriff's detectives believe the shooting was unrelated to a road rage incident."

Lake Lopez is far from Los Berros Road, in fact it's on the opposite side of Hwy 101. Cipolla said they forwarded their report to the District Attorney's Office and they have filed charges against three men.

Daniel Jacobo, 22 of Oceano is being charged with suspicion of involuntary manslaughter, using a firearm in commission of a felony, and making a false crime report. Cipolla said Jacobo was already in custody on a drive-by shooting case and now faces these additional charges.

Two other men are accused of accessories to the crime and also filing a false crime report. They are 21-year-old Alexis Tapiapille of Oceano and Marc Anthony Ramos Perez, 21, listed as from Mexico.

Tapiapille "is out of custody on an unrelated case," Cipolla said, "and is awaiting arraignment on this new case. Perez is not in custody and is still outstanding."

City-Poly Ink New Dock Deal

Ongoing experiments in vessel hull fouling and marine paints will continue after the Morro Bay City Council approved a new lease with Cal Poly for use of a small area at the North T-pier.

For many years a Cal Poly research project has been done using a small floating dock moored on the inside area of the North T-pier. The float mainly tests the durability of paints used to maintain the bottom of boats. It sits in an area that isn't in high demand by fishermen, for whom the City reserves use of the T-piers and its slips.

Harbor Director Ted Schiafone asked the council to approve a 2-year agreement with Cal Poly to continue the testing and will have the authority to extend it for 2-more years, twice (total of 6 years). And he's even managed to wrangle a little more money out of the deal too.

"The expiring License Agreement with Cal Poly," Schiafone said, "is \$4,637.04/year [\$386.42/month], while the proposed new agreement is for \$6,570.00/year [\$547.50/month (adjusted for inflation)]. As is the existing rate, the new rate is based on the current T-Pier daily rate."

The Harbor Department's main source of revenue is from lease payments — both water and land leases — and dockage (slip fees and T-pier fees), plus a few other relatively minor sources.

Schiafone said the City-Cal Poly agreement on this facility dates back to 2006 and the last official agreement was signed in 2019, and must be renewed every 2 years.

Also of note, the new agreement gives Cal Poly the authority to stop any vessels from tying up to their float, in essence giving the college exclusive use of that small area. Boats that are tied to the T-piers sometimes get side-tied to by other boats especially when the harbor is crowded with visiting fishing boats.



Four area athletes will compete at the 16th World Dragon Boat Racing Championships: Belin Tanner, Rose Marie Battaglia, Becky Adams, Dave DeGroot. Photo submitted

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Boats will glide across the water, paddlers working in unison to the rhythm of a drum pounding out one beat, one boat at the 16th World Dragon Boat Racing Championships August 7-13, 2023, in Pattaya, Thailand. Some of the rowers decked out in red, white and blue are from San Luis Obispo County.

Four local dragon boat paddlers were selected to compete on Team USA at the World Championships, the highest level of competition in the sport. National teams are made up of top individual paddlers from across each participating nation. Rose Marie Battaglia (Morro Bay) and Becky Adams (Cayucos) were selected for the Senior C Women's team; Dave DeGroot (Grover Beach) will compete with the Senior C Open team; and Belin Tanner (San Luis Obispo) was selected for both the Senior B Women's and Senior B Mixed teams.

"This is my first time on Team USA," said Battaglia. "The training, the trying out, the melding with new teammates and coaches has been challenging but ever so rewarding. I look forward to the event and to bringing home the results of our effort—hopefully in gold! We really appreciate all the support from our home team."

Team USA paddlers will compete with 17 other national teams in races of 200 meters, 500 meters and 2,000 meters in length. All four Team USA athletes paddle in

Grant From page 5

providing our most vulnerable neighbors with a place to call home and will also allow the City to clean up the area so that all community members can use it as originally intended. said City Manager Derek Johnson. We are so grateful to the County and the San Luis Obispo community for their ongoing support."

Similar to the 5Cities Homeless Coalition's Grover Beach project, "Cabins for Change," the interim supportive housing units of the Welcome Home Village provide each resident with a private space for rest and recovery along with electricity, air conditioning, heating, and a desk. Guests of the interim housing units will share communal bathroom, laundry, and kitchen facilities. In contrast, each permanent housing unit will have a private restroom and kitchen area. In alignment with the intention to create a community, the Welcome Home Village will also feature a small park with a playground and dog run.

The County of San Luis Obispo's Homeless Services Division applied for the grant earlier this year in coordination with the City of San Luis Obispo and was awarded the grant on June 14, 2023.

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Central Coast SurviveOars team, gold-medal winners in 2000-meter race at Club Crew National Championships in Sarasota, Florida. Photo submitted

Morro Bay with the Central Coast SurviveOars Dragon Boat Team. The International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF) is the governing body for the sport and sponsors of the World Dragon Boat Racing Championships, which happen in odd numbered years — 2021 was canceled due to the pandemic.

“It is an honor to represent the United States and our local community,” Belin said. “The journey to get here has been filled with hours of dedication to meet personal goals and the coaches’ expectations. My success lies on the back of hard work and the never-ending support of my family and friends. I just arrived in Thailand and the excitement continues to build!”

The sport combines athleticism, art and tradition dating back 2500 years ago in China. The 40-foot long, canoe-like vessels with brightly painted, ornately carved dragon’s heads and tails weigh about 500 pound and are powered by a team of up to 20 paddlers working in synchronicity along with one steer person and one drummer.

“The selection process for Team USA is rigorous, involving multiple training camps with several days of intense paddling and fitness testing,” said Sandy Mitchell, Central Coast Dragon Boat Association (CCDBA) president. “Candidates train year-round on dragon boats and outrigger canoes, in addition to twice-a-week ‘off water’ workouts with specific requirements. Only 24 dragon boat paddlers from across the nation are selected for each team.”

There will be a link to a livestream of the competition on the IDBF website at www.Dragonboat.sport. Remember Thailand is 14 hours ahead of Pacific Standard Time.

“There is nothing like competing on this level that has made me feel so alive,” Adams said. “I think what does it is pushing myself way outside my comfort zones. I highly recommend it!”

The non-profit CCDBA officially formed in 2014. And currently has 135 registered paddlers. The founding team, the Central Coast SurviveOars, began as a group of cancer survivors and supporters in 2007.

“The four local Team USA paddlers are all cancer survivors; now they are competing at the highest level on the world stage,” Mitchell said. “It’s a tremendous accom-

plishment.”

CCDBA welcomes everyone to participate. To paddle as a guest, go to CCDBA.org, click Paddle With Us. Practice times are listed on the website. Pick a practice time, sign two forms online, and contact registration@ccdba.org to sign up for a practice. The first ‘guest’ practice is free.

Anyone can take part in according to his or her own individual level, goals, and physical fitness. The paddling technique involves the entire body in the stroke, emphasizing the larger muscle groups, so it is a great full-body workout.

It is also an inclusive sport, with all age categories; the Senior C division is ‘over 60’ paddlers, there is an ‘under 16’ category, and all ages in-between. Many competitions include cancer survivor categories, and a paradragon team was recently formed.

To join a team, register as a team paddler the cost is \$175/year or \$125 for cancer survivors. Starting August 1, it’s half price to join for 2023. If you have 10 people who want to form a dragon boat team, contact president@ccdba.org

“CCDBA is committed to building a community of dragon boat teams on the Central Coast,” Mitchell said. “We are hoping to start a team of high school students, a college-age team, and a mixed adult ‘all ages’ team. All it takes to start a team is 10 people willing to learn paddling together; the organization can help with training a coach and steersperson for new teams.”

The Central Coast SurviveOars team most recently competed in July at the National Club Crew Championships in Sarasota, Florida in the All Cancer Survivor Small Boat category. A small dragon boat is 10 paddlers, a drummer and a steersperson. The team of 13 cancer survivors, both men and women, won a gold medal in the 2000-meter race, and silver medals in the 200-meter and 500-meter races. The team qualified for a berth at the 2024 World Club Crew Championships in Ravenna, Italy. They thank the Morro Bay Rotary Club for a community grant that supported participation in this competition.

Doing Good and Having Fun



The South Bay Community Center, BIG BIG SLO and partners of local non-profits have teamed up together to raise much needed funds, awareness and to create a community-building event series called “Unity in the Community.” These events will include bands, dancing, BBQ, wine, beer and non-alcoholic refreshments, plus raffles for unique items. The first event is Sunday, September 3 from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. and is a benefit for Celebrate Los Osos and the Community Center. Funds raised will go to repair the median damaged recently by an uninsured, alleged drunk driver.

A small group of generous friends, “Friends of Los Osos,” have underwritten the costs of the first concert, so the money raised will go toward the repairs at the median.

“We want our event’s raffle and auction items to be truly unique,” said Celebrate Los Osos’ President, Pandora Nash-Karner, “and we’re focusing on unique items, for instance:

A former Sunset Magazine pastry chef will teach four people how to make sweet and savory pie crusts in her waterfront home on the bay. They will bake pies and then take them home. Another item is an i-Phone photography lesson by well-known local photographer, Paul Irving—who rows on Morro Bay daily and is noted for taking fabulous bay photos. This item includes being rowed to the dunes, a gourmet picnic lunch and a lengthy photo technique session.”

Upcoming “Unity in the Community” events are October 3 for the Estero Bay Kindness Coalition and the South Bay Community Center with the “Zongo All-Stars”; and on November 3 for the Bay-Osos Kiwanis Club and the Los Osos Rotary Club as well as the South Bay Community Center with “Sound Investment.”

Tickets for all three events are free. Get yours via <https://www.my805tix.com/>. Raffle tickets can also be purchased there as well as in person at the event.



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Police Blotter



• **July 29:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 10:22 p.m. at Morro Bay Boulevard and Shasta. Logs indicated the driver consented to a field breath test, which the 28-year-old fellow apparently failed miserably, blowing a .14.

• **July 29:** Police contacted an apparent swagman lurking about on Kennedy Way at 8 p.m. Logs indicated the model citizen had a warrant from out of the county and was issued another citation and released, no doubt part of the ol' job security program.

• **July 29:** At 4:36 p.m. police at Lila Keiser Park contacted a suspicious subject who they discovered had a felony warrant. And so the scofflaw was whisked off to the County re-education center.

• **July 29:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 10 a.m. in the 900 block of Allesandro. The driver, 38, was arrested for a suspended license and sentenced to the DMV.

• **July 29:** Police contacted a suspicious woman, 35, at 2:49 a.m. traipsing about in the 700 block of Quintana. She was nicked for suspicion of possessing paraphernalia and illegal drugs, in this week's example of why they call it dope.

• **July 29:** Police contacted another twisted sister, 39, at 12:12 a.m. in the 1000 block of Main. Logs indicated she was busted for alleged possession of drugs and being higher than the stacks in public. She was booked into a somewhat murky future.

• **July 28:** Police took a report in the 400 block of Quintana of a stolen motorcycle license plate, proving once again that people will steal anything.

• **July 28:** At 2:12 p.m. in the 800 block of MBB police arrested a suspicious squit, 52, for suspicion of being butt-toasted on drugs.

• **July 28:** Police rolled to a reported car crash at 11:44 a.m. in the 2000 block of Main, which a roundabout won't likely prevent.

• **July 28:** Police responded to Cloisters Park at 1:30 p.m. where some apparent idjit vandalized something and then stole something else, as the crime wave begins.

• **July 27:** Police contacted an old friend at 10:22 a.m. in the 2800 block of Main who had four bench warrants, which while a lot only warranted a future fifth no-show.

• **July 27:** Police responded at 8 a.m. to the 2200 block of Emerald Cr., in the Cloisters where some dingus broke a "glass protector," which apparently needed protecting itself.

• **July 26:** Police contacted a 33-year-old desperado at the Community Center on Kennedy Way who had a failure to appear warrant. He was issued a citation and assigned a new court date to miss.

• **July 26:** Police contacted yet another citizen of the year, 30, in the 700 block of Harbor at 4:32 p.m. who had six bench warrants. He was of course issued a seventh disappearance ticket and released.

• **July 24:** At 1:21 p.m. in the 500 block of Norwich, police took possession of a firearm and ammunition that someone

said he or she found.

• **July 22:** Police contacted some suspicious subjects at 4:35 p.m. in the 1000 block of Kennedy Way. Logs indicated a 38-year-old rapsCALLION had a bench warrant. He was cited again and released to go on his merry way. Another 44-year-old heathen also had a bench warrant, was cited and released. And a 39-year-old bad girl had five bench warrants and while one might speculate that five will get you 30-days, she too was cited and unleashed back into the wild.

• **July 22:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 4 p.m. in the 800 block of Morro Bay Blvd. for some undisclosed code violation. Logs indicated the 28-year-old driver had a suspended license and a bench warrant, and was given another ticket to ignore and released, presumably on foot.

• **July 22:** Police contacted an apparently offensive fellow at 3:42 p.m. in the infamous 700 block of Quintana Rd. Logs indicated the 54-year-old scofflaw had a bench warrant and he too was subjected to the tortuous sentence of cite-release.

• **July 22:** Police visited the wilds of Quintana once again at 3:16 p.m. where they encountered a female hellcat, 53, who had an out-of-county bench warrant. She was given an in-county chit and released.

• **July 22:** Police towed away an oafish vehicle parked too long in the 700 block of Harbor.

• **July 21:** Police stopped a couple of suspicious vehicles at 11:34 p.m. in the area of Butte and Balboa. Logs indicated they dinged a 28-year-old and 33-year-old borrachos for suspicion of driving twisted.

• **July 21:** Some lady turned in a wallet she said she found near Kern Avenue and Morro Bay Boulevard; might it be yours?

• **July 20:** Police responded at 3:51 p.m. to a car crash in the 500 block of Bernardo. No gruesome details were forthcoming.

• **July 20:** Police responded at 4:40 p.m. to a deceased subject in the 2800 block of Fir.

• **July 20:** Police responded at 10 a.m. to the Shell Station in the 900 block of MBB where they nicked a 25-year-old sticky fingered unruly woman for suspicion of taking "help-yourself" from the pump into the store and disturbing the peace when she got caught.

• **July 19:** Police took a report from a citizen in the 1000 block of Las Tunas who was scammed out of \$6,700, which is a felony even in Califreakornia.

• **July 19:** Police responded at 9:30 a.m. to the 200 block of Morro Bay Blvd. where a guy reported that some no good thief stole his 2007 Ford F-150 truck from where he'd parked it on July 18. Logs indicated the clueless Schmoe found his wheels a day later parked a block over on Harbor Street.

• **July 18:** Police espied a guy driving recklessly through town in the 1500 block of Quintana at 7:45 p.m. Logs indicated the well-known suspect, 38, ditched the car outside the City Limits and ran off. He was last seen about 400 feet from his car and no doubt beatin' feet to get away, which he did. However, police laughed last when they towed his car away.

• **July 18:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 6:12 p.m. in the 400 block of South Bay Blvd. Logs indicated the 65-year-old driver was nicked on suspicion of driving thick as a tick.

• **July 18:** Police took a report from a required reporter of some someone inflicting corporal injury on a child in the 700 block of Butte.

• **July 18:** A citizen in the 700 block of Quintana said someone lifted his or her wallet and then used the credit cards at Walmart in Arroyo Grande, so the thieves are apparently sneaky and cheap.

• **July 18:** Someone found a jar of suspected drugs in the 500 block of Quintana and turned it over to police. Logs indicated police suspect it was methamphetamine and weed.

• **July 17:** Police responded to a disturbance at 4:54 p.m. in the 1000 block of Market. Logs indicated an apparently mul-ish fellow, 54, was arrested for resisting arrest and obstructing emergency personnel, for as Confucius never said, "Nails that stick out get hammered."

• **July 17:** Police arrested a 38-year-old apparent sinner they contacted at 3:53 p.m. for suspicion of possessing meth in the 1000 block of Kennedy Way at St. Timothy's Catholic Church, where he would surely be forgiven, but the judge is another matter.

• **July 17:** Police responded at 2:45 p.m. to a report of vandalism in the 500 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated they suspected a certain 53-year-old graffidiot to be the culprit and indeed he was later arrested for the apparent defacement.

Matching Funds Month at Woods

Pets in need of homes could hit the jackpot this month. Woods Humane Society announced a \$10,000 match fundraising challenge that will double each donation made to the organization in August to help two times as many homeless pets.

"This year, we have really seen the lasting impacts of the pandemic, the veterinary shortage, and economic inflation on the animal welfare industry," says Woods CEO Emily L'Heureux. "We've had a record-breaking baby season, the cost of pet care and operations in our shelter have gone up, and the number of surrender and transport requests have grown exponentially. As we face all of these mounting challenges, we are so grateful to The Marianne and Stacy Cocks Fund, a Fund of the Community Foundation San Luis Obispo County, for this incredible opportunity to double every gift this month so that it will go twice as far for the growing number of local pets in need."

L'Heureux says that with the help of this matching challenge, Woods Humane Society aims to increase the number of homeless pets it helps this year, in spite of the financial challenges in the way. Woods found homes for more than 2,700 pets last year and hopes to increase that number to 3,000 this calendar year.

"We are fortunate to live in a community that embraces pet adoption and that so generously welcomes these animals into their homes and families," she says. "Fundraising is our biggest barrier to increasing the number of animals we can take in and care for."The current average direct cost of caring for an animal at Woods, which includes a spay or neuter surgery, vaccinations, microchips, licenses, and treatment for fleas and other parasites, is \$800, and that cost goes up dramatically for pets in need of specialized training or medical care, or extended stays.

"During August, local animal lovers have a unique opportunity to double their impact so that instead of helping one homeless dog or cat, two will find the veterinary care, shelter, food and adoption services they need to have a second chance at happiness."

To donate to the match challenge fundraiser, visit www.WoodsHumane.org. To view animals currently available for adoption, visit www.WoodsHumane.org/Adoptions. Woods is open to the public daily from 12-5 p.m., with adoption hours from 12-4 p.m. For more information about Woods, goto www.WoodsHumane.org or call (805) 543-9316.

Estero Bay Handy Man

Ryan Hilton-Sullivan

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Last treat in the bag? I need a tissue.

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Takin' Care of BUSINESS

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Celebrate Farmers Markets



There is still time to join the county in recognizing National Farmers Market Week. Even if you miss the festivities, every week there are multiple places and reasons to celebrate the bounty of local farmers we have. On July 18, 2023, the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors heard a resolution proclaiming August 6-12 as San Luis Obispo County Farmers Market Week. The resolution acknowledges the role that farmers markets play in the economic, social, environmental, and physical health of our local community. In addition, the proclamation calls out the efforts of many of our local farmers markets to make markets accessible to people on limited incomes by accepting CalFresh/EBT as payment and pro-

viding additional nutrition incentives through the Market Match program. National Farmers Market Week is an annual celebration of farmers markets coordinated by the Farmers Market Coalition, a membership-based 503(c)3 nonprofit organization that supports farmers markets nationwide through training, technical assistance, and network-building. This year, the campaign is centered around the essential role that farmers market operators play in our local food systems and in developing resilience in communities as hubs for local economies and connection.

The following farmers' markets across SLO all accept CalFresh/EBT

- Monday:** Baywood on Santa Maria Ave from 2-4:30 p.m.
 - Tuesday:** Paso Robles 11th and Spring St 9:30 a.m. -12 p.m.
 - Wednesday:** Atascadero Sunken Gardens from 3-6 p.m.; Arroyo Grande Smart & Final 8:30-11 a.m.
 - Thursday:** Morro Bay Spencer's Market Parking Lot from 2-4:30 p.m.; SLO Downtown 6pm-9pm
 - Friday:** Cambria 1000 Main St 2:30-5:30 p.m.
 - Saturday:** Templeton 6th & Crocker from 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; Paso Robles 11th & Spring 9 a.m.-1 p.m.; SLO Embassy Suites Parking Lot 8-10:45 a.m.
- "Farmers markets are abundant sources of food, connection and resilience in our communities across the country, but they don't just happen on their own," said Ben Feldman, Farmers Market Coalition executive director. "Behind the scenes of every successful farmers market is a dedicated person or team working to make the market thrive. These farmers market operators are experts who need community and financial support to run their markets and resources specifically designed for their needs."

Save the Date for Community Foundation of Estero Bay Concert



The rumors are true! Come out and support Estero Bay kids and have a great night of fun, food and live music as the Stellar Band presents and evening with "Fleetwood Dreams," featuring hits by the iconic Rock Band Fleetwood Mac. The concert is a benefit for the Community Foundation of Estero Bay, celebrating its 13th annual "Morro Bay Sings." In addition to live music, the event features dinner, a live auction, and a silent auction. Tickets are \$70 per person, tables for eight are \$525 and tables of ten are \$600. New this year is a Sponsor Table (either 8 or 10 seats) for \$750 – this includes two bottles of wine and sponsorship recognition. Tickets include dinner, cookies and coffee, music, dancing and exciting auctions. The price of each individual ticket includes a tax-deductible donation of \$60. Tickets go on sale September 1 through the Foundation Website at www.communityfoundationesterobay.org/events. It all takes place at the Morro Bay Community Center, 1001 Kennedy Way, in Morro Bay on Saturday, November 4. The doors open at 5 p.m. For more information about the non-profit Community Foundation of Estero Bay, or to purchase tickets please visit: www.communityfoundationesterobay.org/events, email comm.found.esterobay@gmail.com or call (805) 458-4494.

French Hospital Opens Heart Lab



Technology can save lives, and the latest is at a local hospital. Dignity Health French Hospital Medical Center (FHMC) recently opened its brand new Heart Catheterization Lab with the most advanced technology and equipment, the GE Allia IGS 730 fluoroscopy system. The new cath-lab is located in the Copeland, Forbes and Rossi Cardiac Care Center in the hospital. Cardiologist, Robert Doria, MD, performed the first

Takin' Care of Business Continued on page 10

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procedure at French Hospital's new cath lab last month and said, "Our first procedure with the new technology was successful and resulted in excellent imaging of the patient's coronary arteries and valves. It couldn't have gone better. The new state-of-the-art cardiac catheterization laboratory system brings the most advanced imaging technology to the Central Coast. This is the first of two identical catheterization lab systems which will be installed at French Hospital Medical Center, making French Hospital the only facility between Los Angeles and San Francisco to have this advanced diagnostic system. Patients will benefit from more precise and improved imaging of heart and vascular structures while receiving even lower radiation doses compared with the systems which have been replaced. This advanced technology will significantly enhance cardiovascular diagnostics and therapies for the patients in our community for many years to come."

The new system and the types of procedures physicians can do with it will help serve people in our community who suffer from heart attacks and other heart and vascular conditions that need specific procedures like pacemaker implantation and coronary artery stenting. Doctors can also use it for arrhythmia ablation, minimally invasive aortic valve replacement (TAVR), Transcatheter Edge to Edge Repair (MitraClip), Watchman, radioembolization for liver cancer, uterine fibroid embolization and more.

The new system adds both clinical and operational efficiency with custom system settings to suit clinician preferences which helps reduce time-consuming procedural setup and provides more focus on the needs of the patient.

Some highlights of GE Allia IGS 730 fluoroscopy system include:

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- Features and capabilities of the system effectively future-proof the lab, allowing for added technology and to support new or breakthrough procedures. Features a fully robotic gantry system
- Applies the first AI-based, interventional image chain in the industry with training on over 6,000 procedural datasets to optimize image quality

French Hospital's Cardiovascular Services cover both diagnostic and interventional cardiology procedures, electrophysiology, structural heart, and interventional radiology services.

Are you or a neighbor Taking Care of Business. Is your business, including non-profits, supporting our community? Maybe you're launching a new business, or you're making updates to your current business model, or re-opening. Perhaps you have a job opportunity, or have been doing some volunteer work, or are collaborating with another business or a non-profit. Or maybe you know someone who is. Submit your awesome local efforts for publication to Editor@EsteroBayNews.com.



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Spanish Galleon to Visit Morro Bay

Story and Photos
by Neil Farrell

The namesake of the first Spanish Galleon to ever sail the West Coast of North America will return to Morro Bay for an extended stopover on its grand tour of the West Coast.

The San Salvador, a replica of the original tall ship that carried Spanish Conquistador, Juan Cabrillo, on an expedition of discovery in 1542-43, will be in Morro Bay from Friday, Aug. 11 to Sunday, Aug. 20.

San Salvador is owned by the Maritime Museum of San Diego, and her Morro Bay visit is hosted by the Morro Bay Maritime Museum.

She will be moored at the South T-Pier and open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily for dockside tours.

Dockside tours are \$12 for adults 18-over; \$10 for seniors 65-over; \$10 for active military; \$8 for kids 4-17; and free for kids 3-under.

Get advanced tickets online at: my805tix.com/e/san-salvador to reserve your tour spot.

The living history exhibit harkens back to the days of the European exploration of the New World. Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo was an Iberian maritime explorer who led the first naval expedition of Europeans into San Diego Bay and up the West Coast on behalf of the Spanish Empire. He was the first European to explore this coast, navigating along the Coast of California in 1542–1543 on a voyage from New Spain (Mexico).

The San Salvador arrived at the port now called San Diego on Sept. 28, 1542, then sailed north in search of new trade routes that would link Mexico to Asia and Europe. She was the first recorded European vessel to sail along Southern California, and survey its coastline.

The Maritime Museum of San Diego built this new San Salvador piecing together plans from specs used on similar ships by the Spanish and Portuguese, as no blueprints for the original San Salvador have been found. She was completed and added to the MMSD's fleet in 2015. This will be her second visit to Morro Bay.

San Salvador first came to Morro Bay in September 2016 and was greeted by a flotilla of small craft — kayaks, paddle boards and even some Salinans paddling reed



The San Salvador makes her way past the power plant intake building and the 'Welcome to Morro Bay' sign in 2016.

canoes. The Harbor Patrol gave her a water canon salute as she slowly sailed into a foggy harbor.


The belief is that this San Salvador is a highly accurate representation of the vessel that arrived at San Diego in 1542, according to the San Diego museum. To execute the vision, the Maritime Museum engaged a group of skilled professional boat builders, who are assisted by scores of regular volunteers.

Home-ported in San Diego, San Salvador sails the Coast of California on the "Pacific Heritage Tour" visiting cities and towns as a floating education platform for all who visit her.

On the tour you'll get a taste of just how harsh life at sea in a Spanish Galleon was for what have to be considered extremely brave men sailing into uncharted waters.




The San Salvador emerges from a fogbank in her 2016 arrival in Morro Bay.




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(805) 995-2110


Morro Bay



Nelson Pamplona
Financial Advisor

501 Harbor Street
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(805) 772-6188


Cambria



Jonathan Mumper
Financial Advisor

1073 Main Street
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(805) 927-1343


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Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



Downtown Cayucos will rumble with the fury of hogs when all manner of custom motorcycles line Ocean Avenue when the first ever, vintage and custom motorcycle show takes over town.

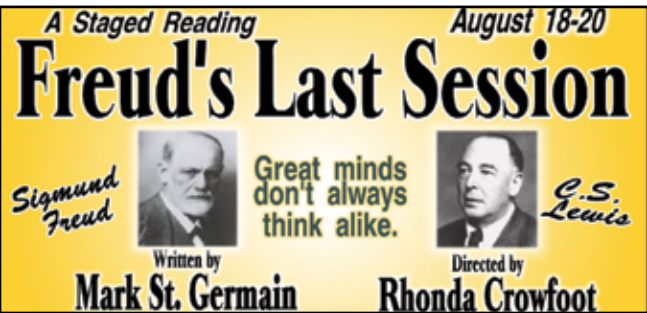
The Moving Parts motorcycle show is slated for 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 23 on Ocean Avenue.

According to organizer, Tamara Bell, “The Event aims to celebrate and merge the skate, surf and motorcycle culture of the past and present. Moving Parts will showcase a variety of vintage and custom built motorcycles accompanied by a swap meet and market.”

Admission is free and the event is open to all. See the website at: movingpartsshow.com for more.

Join the Celebration of Caring premier event benefiting patient programs and services at French Hospital Medical Center. The evening includes a cocktail reception, a gourmet dinner by Chef Ryan Fancher of Ox + Anchor, an exciting auction, as well as the presentation of the 2023 Louis Tedone, MD Humanitarian Award to Bob & Debbie Wacker. You’re invited to an elegant evening of celebration at ACI Jet on Saturday, September 23, 2023.

Seating is limited, reserve early! Tickets are \$295. Sponsorship opportunities are available. For more information or to reserve a sponsorship, contact Samantha Cardenas via email or call 805.542.6496. Individual tickets are \$295. Tables seat eight individuals. Formal attire is recommended. Register for the celebration of Caring at <https://dignityhlth.org/43PqisB>.

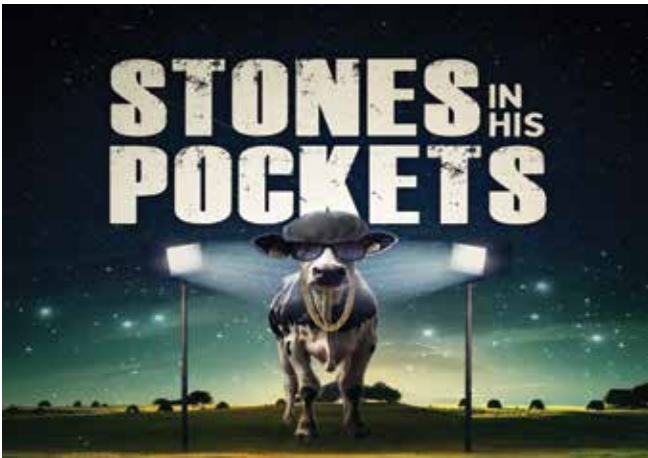


By the Sea Productions presents a staged reading of ‘Freud’s Last Session’ by Mark St. Germain. It’s 1939 and England has just declared war on Germany. Imagine the conversation between atheist psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud and Anglican author C.S. Lewis as they exchange their divergent views on God, war, politics, religion, race, joy, sex and music — a discussion as relevant and thought-provoking today as it would have been then.

The reading takes place at 545 Shasta Ave. in Morro Bay on August 18-20 with shows on Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. For more information or to get tickets, call 805-776-3287 or go to bytheseaproductions.com. Tickets are \$15.

Directed by Rhonda Crowfoot, ‘Freud’s Last Session’ features Don Gaede as Freud and Samvel Gottlieb as Lewis. Performing one weekend only, August 18-20, on Friday and Saturday evening at 7 pm and a Sunday matinee at 3 pm. Tickets are \$15 at bytheseaproductions.org or call 805-776-3287.

Friends of the Cayucos Library Used Book Sale is set for Saturday, August 19 at the Library patio at 310 B Street. Shopping begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 1 p.m. Search the tables for great books, CDs, and more! Most items are available for \$1. Discount shopping begins at 12 p.m. - fill a bag for \$3. Friends of the Library memberships are available.



San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre (SLO REP) opens their 2023-24 season with the comedy “Stones in His Pockets” by Marie Jones. With just two actors playing over a dozen parts, “Stones in His Pockets” is a comedic yet tragic take on the effects of the Hollywood dream in a small Irish town. When a Hollywood film crew takes over a rural town in County Kerry, the townspeople are excited to be part of a major film. Charlie Conlan (Billy Breed) and Jake Quinn (Jeff Salsbury), both local extras on the film, tell the story of the impact this movie set has upon the local community.

“Stones in his Pockets” opens Friday, August 11 and runs through August 27 with performances Thursday through Saturdays at 7 p.m. and Saturdays and Sundays at 2 p.m.. SLO REP is located at 888 Morro Street in downtown San Luis Obispo. Ticket prices range from \$20 - \$42 and are available at www.slore.org or by calling (805) 786-2440.

As a two-hander, “Stones in His Pockets” features actors Billy Breed and Jeff Salsbury. Breed and Salsbury play a more than a dozen characters in the story. Breed and Salsbury previously played multiple characters on the SLO REP stage in another two-hander comedy, “Greater Tuna.” Breed has also appeared numerous times on the SLO REP stage, including last year as Inspector Fix in “Around the World in 80 Days.” Salsbury was in SLO REP’s spring comedy “Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike” as Spike. “Stones in His Pockets” is directed by Lawrence Leshner. Hailing from Queens, New York, Leshner has acted or directed in all 50 states and nearly 40 countries. His directing credits at SLO REP include “Around the World in 80 Days” and “Rounding Third.”



Join Studios on the Park Los Osos for mixed media and glass artist Larry Le Brane’s presentation “The Spark to Creativity,” Friday, August 11, 2023, 5-7 p.m., when he’ll share the creative journey and inspiration behind his eclectic art. Larry will share stories, photos, and humor to describe how he originally began making art with fused glass, offbeat materials and found objects.

Events Continued on page 12

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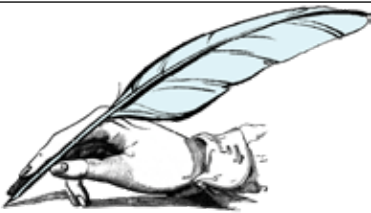
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Letters
To
The Editor

Obituary



Thanks for Voting in
Favor of the
New Roundabout

Congratulations to the Morro Bay City Council for voting to create a new roundabout at the intersection of Hwy 1 and Hwy 41. This location has been a topic of concern for decades. Caltrans has been warning the city for years of the dangers this intersection poses and has told the city not to wait until someone dies before we actually do something to prevent a tragedy.

So, contrary to some of the other letters we have seen in this paper stating reasons not to build it, by creating a new roundabout, we are protecting our children’s safety, and by doing nothing, we are complicit in the dangers. The data shows that in the past five years since the Morro Bay Blvd. roundabout was installed, there have only been a total of nine minor collisions there. Whereas the proposed new site has had 23 recorded crashes in the same time period and is considered by Caltrans to be a “hot spot”.

In one recent letter, the author issued threats of reprisal against the council majority who voted for this necessary project. That’s not the civil way we should conduct our Morro Bay politics. We see too much of that in national politics. Divisive personal attacks are not helpful. The Council did a good job voting for this roundabout.

Sincerely,
Colby (Concho) Crotzer, former City
Council Member for eight years Shoosh Crotzer

Thank You
Estero Bay News

Thank you very much for the article “No Story Should End Too Soon” in the last issue of Estero Bay News [Vol. 5 Issue 15]. Since then, Shiloh’s Animal Rescue has received inquiries, donations, and just more general awareness.

Shiloh’s Animal Rescue is very grateful for your support. It has been a very positive response, and we hope to

Letters Continued on page 14



Steve Murphy
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Unique Home on beautiful 1/2 acre with absolutely stunning views. This 4 bedroom (all big bedrooms) home has over 2800 sq. feet of living space, 4 fireplaces, 2 Master Suites- One with balcony and the other office with mountain views. 3 bathrooms (downstairs new). New flooring, nice deck, with ample room on the outside to create your dream. 2 car garage and bonus deluxe workshop. Solar is owned, new leech line being installed or could offer credit. Exterior is fenced and nice retaining walls. Nicely maintained, Corner location, top of the hill with Calle Cordoniz Rd. cross street.



Opportunities like this don't come along too often. So much to consider with this wonderful home.
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of Morro Rock and nice Ocean views as well. Move in ready. All furnishings are included. Very quiet complex that is extremely well maintained.
\$998,500

William F. “Bill” Kraft
1952 - 2023

William F. “Bill” Kraft, 71, died peacefully at his home in Los Osos on June 27, 2023. Sue, his wife of 45 years, and Molly, his Golden Retriever, were at his side.

Born April 14, 1952, in Rockford, Illinois, to Dr. Alexander and Margaret (Ravlin) Kraft, Bill was second youngest among his five brothers and sisters.

In his youth, Bill was a member of Boy Scout Troop 41 of the Blackhawk Area Council. For him, his years in scouting were more than a coming-of-age checkbox. The scout-sponsored float plane trips to the wilderness reaches of Quetico National Park, Canada, to canoe, camp, and fish were opportunities to bond with his dad and brother Jim. The experiences also had the profound effect to cultivate in him what would be his lifelong sense of adventure, and instill in him a self-confidence that forever made him a giant to anyone he met.

He attended the University of Missouri, and later graduated with a degree in education from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale. Shortly after graduating, he moved to Northern California to be closer to his brothers, and it was there he began his career in teaching.

Standing over 6’ 8” tall, Bill easily commanded the attention of his elementary school students, and perhaps not so inadvertently, the attention of a colleague, Sue Childers. She would quickly and forever become the love of his life. They took advantage of their convenient, coinciding vacations, and were soon on a summer-long backpacking excursion to Europe, cementing their shared excitement for adventure. In 1984, they postponed work for six months to travel the world. Europe, North Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Back at work, they spent 10 consecutive summer vacations traveling to the UK, and their favorite places in Ireland and Scotland. The Caribbean was also a favorite destination. Their shared passion for travel and learning and meeting new people from all over the world never waned.

Intensely proud of his Polish heritage, Bill was eager

to recount his father’s and cherished aunts’ immigration to the US from Nowy Sacz, Poland, at the end of World War I. He embraced their determination and carried it with him always. He also embraced the cherished foodways of Poland. He was never far from his mother’s homemade pierogies or Polish borscht.

Bill continued to teach and soon earned a Masters in Education degree from Cal Poly. Teaching led Bill to sales, and eventually to a position as corporate trainer for a prominent micro chip manufacturer. He once again was traveling the world, this time to deliver technical training programs to the company’s global workforce. Adventure, self-confidence, and charisma made him an outstanding public presenter. He also had a keen sense of humor and flawless comedic timing that would rival any Jerry Lewis skit. He was admired for his teaching and learning prowess; and his legendary ability to bring a smile to your face whether you were in the front office or the doctor’s office.

For those who knew him, it wasn’t just his height or stature that made him unforgettable, but it was his capacity for empathy that set him apart from the rest of us. Though he struggled with health issues over the years, he was always there when you needed him, needed something, needed anything. His capacity for caring was boundless.

His love of road biking and mountain hiking were equally boundless. He was an accomplished cyclist on the narrow roads of the Central Coast, the roads of Mount Tamalpais, and the roads encompassing the urban hills of the Castro District in San Francisco. Among his hiking accomplishments was summiting Mt. Whitney in 1995, scarcely a year after his bone marrow transplant. He shared the journey with Sue. It was another adventure for them, and another demonstration of his tenacity and perseverance.

He was a wonderful son, brother, and husband, and the greatest uncle and friend. He was courageous and loving. There are some people who simply and fully enrich your life. Bill was one of them. In the words of Johnny Mercer, when the angels ask us to recall the thrill of it all, we will tell them we remember you.

Bill is survived by his wife Sue, sisters and brothers Maxine (George) Gaffney, Hillsdale, MI; Alexander Kraft Jr., San Jose, CA; James Kraft, Santa Rosa, CA; and Peggy Kraft (Bill Filler), Palo Alto, CA. He is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews, and grand nieces and nephews and by his dearest friend, Rosie.

He was preceded in death by his parents Margaret and Dr. Alexander Kraft; and sister-in-law Jane (Robertson) Kraft, Santa Rosa, CA.

In lieu of flowers the family asks you to consider placing a gift in Bill’s honor in one of the following charities:

- Woods Humane Society in San Luis Obispo, (<https://woodshumanesociety.org/>)
- Canzona Women’s Ensemble, (<https://www.canzona-women.org/support-us.html>)
- San Luis Obispo Master Chorale, (<https://slomaster-chorale.org/support-us/>)

A memorial service is planned for a later date.

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August 10 - August 23, 2023 • The Estero Bay News • Your Community, Your News

Community

Events From page 11

Learn firsthand how Larry originally included musical instruments in his sculpture at two previous Studios on the Park exhibitions. These music-inspired creations led to his current “Largemouth Bassoon off the Hook” sculpture that is illuminated in their front window as part of the “Our Central Coast” exhibition.

This event is open to the public, but seats are limited. Bring your questions and curiosity, and get ready to be inspired! More details at <https://studiosonthepark.org/events/artist-talk-the-spark-to-creativity-by-larry-le-brane/>.



Upcoming free programs at the Morro Bay Library - 625 Harbor St, (805) 772-6394.

- Nintendo Switch - Wednesday, August 16, 3:00-5:00 Master your gaming and fine motor skills with our Nintendo Switch! We will provide one Switch for up to 4 players at a time - feel free to bring your own too. Games include Mario Kart and Just Dance.
- Rock Paintings – Wednesday, August 23, 3:30-5:30 p.m.

Learn about pictographs, petroglyphs and more before creating your very own piece of rock art to take home! Presenter Luna will guide us through the history and process of rock art. This program will be presented in Spanish and English. All ages welcome.

It’s time for TMHA’s 2nd Annual Sunshine Celebration at Sea Pines Golf Resort in Los Osos, 1945 Solano St. Join us for an afternoon of fun in the sun with a free concert from the Josh Rosenblum Band on Saturday, August 26 from 2 to 6 p.m. They will be rocking out on the green starting at 2 p.m.. Grab a friend and join the cornhole tournament or enter the golf ball drop for a chance to win up to \$500! All proceeds go to supporting the programs of Transitions-Mental Health Association. To purchase pre-sale Golf Ball Drop entries, contact Clara Cobb at ccobb@t-mha.org or 805-540-6564.

The following are free events brought to you by the Los Osos Library 2075 Palisades, Ave, 805-528-1862. All library programs follow current California and County of San Luis Obispo health guidelines.

- Book Discussion - Thursday, August 17, 2023 5:30-6:45 p.m.

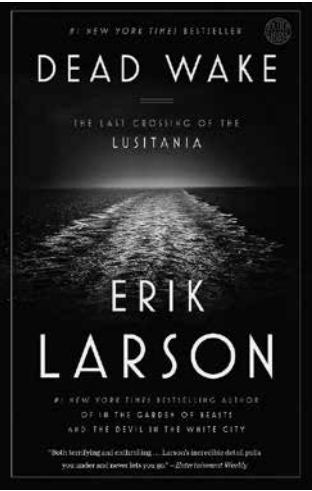
We will be discussing “Dead Wake: The Last Crossing of the Lusitania” by Erik Larson. No need to sign up ahead of time. Just show up! Call the library for details.

- Button Making - Friday, August 18, 2:30-4:30 p.m. Create your very own fantastic pieces of flair using our button maker! For ages 8-18.
- Nintendo Switch - Friday, August 25, 2023 2:30-4:30 Master your gaming and fine motor skills with our Nintendo Switch! We will provide one Switch for up to 4 players at a time - feel free to bring your own, too. Games include Mario Kart and Mario Party.
- Teen Crafternoon - Saturday, August 26, 2:00-4:00 Come on down for snacks and art! This Saturday’s craft will be origami kusudama flowers and balls. For ages 11-18.

The Cambria Center for the Arts invites community artists to participate in the Fall Juried Art Exhibit featuring juror Frank Eber. Submissions take place online September 1-5. For details, go to details. <http://www.cambriaarts.org>.

The show, September 8 through November 5, will feature two- and three-dimensional art at the gallery. Art will be displayed in the CCA Virtual Gallery Online and in the physical gallery. There will be an opening reception and talk by Eber about his selection process and why he chose the awarded entries on Sept 9, from 4:30-6 p.m. All are invited to attend, enjoy refreshments, and mingle with the artists.

Frank Eber grew up in Europe and worked as a professional illustrator and portrait artist. He was later mentored by Italian master painter Renato Castro, and his direct, loose style of painting was influenced by the old-world master. He describes his paintings as a personal response to the subject, to interpret what gives it life and to capture the



energy within. Eber is an award-winning artist and Signature member of the American Impressionist Society (AIS), the American Watercolor Society (AWS) in New York, the National Watercolor Society (NWS) and an artist member of the California Art Club.

Check out the second annual Cayucos Home Tour on August 27 from 1 to 4 p.m. The event benefits the Lioness Project Fund, which supports a variety of Cayucos needs, such as scholarships for college/trade school, junior lifeguard program, swim lessons, Harvest Bag, and Cayucos Elementary Arts programs.

Tickets are \$80 per person and include a limo bus ride to each of the homes, an event wine glass and wine and treats at each home. For tickets, email home.tour@cayucos-lioness.org.



SLOMA presents Vanessa Wallace-Gonzales Exhibition through October 2.

Vanessa Wallace-Gonzales is a Black-Latinx and Santa Barbara, California native artist who uses elements of mythology to explore her identity and personal experiences. She began this exploration during her attendance at the Maryland Institute College of Art and carried it on in exhibitions in Oxnard, Ventura and Los Angeles, California, New York City, Baltimore, Maryland, and Florence, Italy.

Vanessa Wallace-Gonzales is attracted to mythology because it rides the line of reality and fantasy to tell the story of a people. Her passion has brought her to think of her own creation.

San Luis Obispo Museum of Art is located at 1010 Broad Street. They can be reached at 805-543-8562.

Send your event listing at least three weeks in advance to Editor@EsteroBayNews.com. Make sure to include the who, what, why, where and when of the event and contact information. Please, type out in paragraph form rather than attaching flyers.

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OUT & ABOUT

WITH THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS

The Bookshelf Writers consist of four Estero Bay women who have been writing & critiquing together for over five years. For more samples of their work, please visit www.thebookshelfwriters.com

Each issue, this column will feature one of the Bookshelf Writers:
Debbie Black, Catherine "Kiki" Kornreich, Judy Salamacha and Susan Vasquez

Why Not?

Catherine Kornreich



I'll be 65 in a month. Sixty-five. We all have milestone years...some of you are way ahead of me and think 65 is young. Some younger folk think it's ancient.

I remember as a kid I thought my parents were old people. And they were 25-30. My grandparents, at the ripe old age of 50, were fossils.

I just read a book, and the protagonist kept referring to the old lady next door. Further along in the novel, it turned out the old lady was 57. The nerve.

I sure don't feel like a fossil. Well, my body and cognitive functions are greedily taking on the role.

Here's the catch. I refuse to act old. To the consternation of many people, my goofiness is irritating...even my dearest friends sometimes find me bothersome...but it's who I am.

I'm the one who will take on pretty much any adventure, challenge, calculated risk. Ok, well, my multiple concussions, broken bones and arthritis now prohibit some

of the riskier things, but I incurred every one of those scars from my crazy antics.

Two of the reasons I live life like I do, are my great-aunts, Lena and Louise. They were identical twins who lived together their entire lives, deciding they made a better team than any of their prospective suitors could have.

I once asked the twins, when they were 95, what they would do different if they could do it all over. Not skipping a beat, Lena answered for both of them, "Oh, we would have appreciated our 80's more."

Those girls added so much joy, love and optimism to my life, and filled me with an even greater sense of adventure. They were up for anything (within reason) and their response to virtually any invitation was, "why not?" I asked if I could take them to Pismo to drive on the beach. "Why not!" Looking in my rearview mirror I saw two little cotton-tops, barely peeking over the rolled-down windows, noses pointing skyward and inhaling the salty air.

Louise lived to 96, and Lena flourished til her 100th birthday, a tremendous feat as she'd never been without her beloved Louise. Fairly soon after finding herself alone, she chose to embrace life again. At one point she got an eye infection, and the doctors eventually had to remove the eye. Her immediate reaction? "Well, at least I've got another

one."

I try to pull off a 'why not?' at least once a day. Sure, there are days when my body is a definite "but why?" We all have those. But even on those days, I change out of my jammies (usually) and drive to the beach. There are many places to park, roll down the windows and breathe in the sights, sounds and smells. It rarely fails to put me back into a 'why not' state of mind.

George Burns gets credit for some of my favorite quotes: "They say 'Life begins at forty.' That's silly. Life begins every morning you wake up." "I'd rather be over the hill than under it." "You can't help getting older, but you don't have to get old."

There are so many things to do when we're older. Beyond the county, the list is endless.

We can travel, eat at that fancy restaurant, skydive, ride in a helicopter, bungee jump, race cars, and so on. But even here in our glorious Estero Bay, there is so much to explore. We've got stunning beaches, extinct volcanos, scenic drives. We can hike, taste wine, fish, kayak, golf, bike, fly kites, bird watch, take art classes...and on and on. Be as ambitious or gentle as you like.

But at the very least, go look at the water.

Why not?

Letters From page 12

make more people aware and more involved with our cause.

Special thanks to Theresa-Marie Wilson for taking the time to meet with me and taking pictures of the dogs as well as writing an amazing article.

Kaya Gwinn
Los Osos

Letter Policy

Please include your full name and town you live in on all letters sent. Although we do welcome longer opinion pieces, publishing is as space permits. Estero Bay News reserves the right to edit for length and clarity. Email letters to: editor@esterobaynews.com

COLLEGETOWN

By Michael Walker

PROFESSOR, I NEVER GOT MY PAPER BACK-

UH, LET'S SEE... IT MIGHT STILL BE IN MY BRIEFCASE.

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Community

Ironman From page 1

18; and in 2025, the event is scheduled for Sunday, May 18 instead of Saturday the 17th.

“The event was successful, safe, organized, and enjoyed overall community support,” reads a report from Police Chief Amy Watkins, who was the City’s point person on the event. “The event welcomed two thousand athletes and an additional five thousand spectators to our community during the weekend. Athletes and their families arrived the week prior to settle in, register, and practice the course.”

Chief Watkins said they met with business owners about what the event would entail — road closures and the potential impacts. “This year being the inaugural event,” she said, “City staff, tourism, and businesses prepared for the event to have a large impact on businesses on the Embarcadero and along the racecourse.

“As the event started, we saw a large impact on the Embarcadero with about 50% of the businesses seeing an increase in overall business because of the event. The other 50% of the businesses saw fewer customers and less business because of the road closures and the shortened run course creating an opportunity for spectators to see their athletes more often than initially anticipated. The event closed Embarcadero Road from the Rock Parking lot to Pacific Street from 4 a.m. to 4 p.m.”

That extended closure on the main tourism area and the takeover by the event of the City’s parking lot at 714 Embarcadero, meant parking was at a premium and business that day was not so good for many.

The IRONMAN Group coming to Morro Bay was largely due to the efforts of the Visit Morro Bay tourism board and holding it on Saturday was believed to be better for sport fishermen that might be in town that day.

That’s because the original turnaround location was at the launch ramp parking lot. Mid-May is prime salmon fishing season for sport anglers and the launch ramp is usually very busy starting with the April 1 season opener and throughout salmon season, weather permitting, and the fish are biting.

But before the race, IRONMAN Group moved the transition spot to Morro Rock. That necessitated a change to the swim course of the event, and swimmers came out of the water at Target Rock instead of the launch ramp. The running course too was shortened.

So far as the moteliers are concerned, it was a success.

“According to Mr. [Michael] Wambolt [executive director of Visit Morro Bay],” Chief Watkins said, “the lodging segment during this year’s race did show an overall positive impact as it brought compression, which supported rate growth and overall revenue. Race week [May 14- May 20] was the third highest RevPAR [revenue per available room] when compared to the same weeks going back to 2018.

“However, some properties were left with rooms to sell on Saturday due to some athletes departing Morro Bay after the race concluded. As a result of this, the travel window was inverted: Friday was the busiest day and Saturday was a little soft.”

By moving the remaining two races in the City’s contract to Sundays, it’s believed that will help businesses on those Saturdays.

Watkins said Wambolt believes “moving the race to Sunday could help support non-lodging businesses on the peak weekend day of Saturday. There would not be road closures until the evening of Saturday and early Sunday morning, which would provide for an open travel path for cross visitation and day travelers to Morro Bay on Saturday and therefore help support retail and restaurants during what should be their busiest day of the week.”

The IRONMAN Group has agreed to the scheduling change and Chief Watkins said they’re planning to add an “Ironkids” race, “where kids from around the area and athletes’ kids will be invited to compete in a small race that promotes health, fun, and community.”

The comments sent to the council before the meeting were mixed as well. Former City Councilwoman Betty Winholtz wrote that she was concerned with

the swimmers messing with the town’s furry mascots, sea otters.

“I hope you will either now or at another time address the concern regarding the swim competition near the sea otters. Please include whether you or Ironman have consulted with CA Fish and Wildlife and their response.”

Beads by the Bay owner, Susan Stewart said, “I have a business in the Downtown area, and had decent sales days on the preceding weekdays and Saturday of the Ironman event. I also talked to customers mid-week who had arrived early with the purpose of shopping! But, I have always thought that Sunday would be a much better day to have special events, as Saturday is already a tourist saturated day.”

Since Ironman was controversial and even angered some businesspeople who saw their sales fall off a cliff due mainly to the road closure and loss of parking, the Chamber of Commerce polled local businesses on how they felt about the event.

The respondents, the majority of which were Embarcadero businesses, were asked to compare sales on that race day Saturday verses the same Saturday last year (2022), and 40-percent said sales were higher or about the same, and 47% said they were lower.

When comparing sales from 2023 to 2019 (pre-pandemic) again 40% said sales were higher or the same and 38% said they were lower.

On a weekly basis, 49% said sales were higher or the same in the week leading up to the weekend race; and 31% said they were lower.

It should be noted that 51% of the respondents were on the Embarcadero, 40%



A competitor in the 2023 Ironman 70.3 in Morro Bay emerges from the swim stage of the event. IRONMAN Group, which owns the Ironman brand, will return in 20-24 and 2025, but the races will be held on Sundays instead of Saturday.

were Downtown, and 10% in North Morro Bay, which saw no road closures at all.

Also, 36% of the respondents were retail stores, 36% food and beverage, and 14.5% were motels and lodging businesses.

Also of note, even though the COVID-19 pandemic saw State Government shut down much of the tourism economy, including prohibiting restaurants from using their dining rooms, Morro Bay had an extremely busy summer in 2020, though sales were inevitably down with restaurants scrambling to put together outdoor dining areas to try and stay afloat and retail stores mainly being forced to close.

The pandemic was a hard time to be in business overall.

Like the Amgen Tour of California professional cycling race that made appearances a couple of times in Morro Bay before dying and going out of business, the Ironman 70.3 was a chance for Morro Bay to host an event with a worldwide following, as the Florida-based company stages triathlons all over the U.S. and Europe, including a world championship.





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Community

Coalesce From page 1



From left, Sherri Hereford, Linna Thomas and Joanne Hand are shown behind the bookstore's front counter, always smiling. Submitted photo

Thomas says she convinced them to let her lease it. "They agreed that if it didn't sell in six months," Thomas says, "they would rent it to me. Several others [bookstores] wanted it."

Hereford says that she moved to Morro Bay in 1973 and started at the bookstore in 1976 and has been working there ever since. Used books were a novelty back then.

Once Hereford had left a note saying that people are resisting selling them their beautiful, art books "for a dime." She says used books made sense, even though they were not very popular.

"We were the only new-used book store they'd ever heard of. It's quite common now."

Thomas says they did book signings and readings, story time for kids from the beginning of the store and carried that to new levels when they moved, a process that got all their friends in town to chip in with, carrying the inventory the two blocks from the old house on Harbor Street to the new store on Main.

Friends helped them remodel the interior and build the shelving that's still in use today. It was kind of like an old fashioned barn-raising, with all their friends coming out to pitch in. The goal was never to be a "big" bookstore, Thomas says. "You want to be a good book store, not just big."

Hand adds that the store, "Has a nice eclectic collection" of books.

Hereford says that the odyssey of e-books seems to be waning. "The last five or six years," Hereford says, "we're getting Millennials in who go crazy when they walk in."

Hand says, "You're not hearing about Kindles [E-book readers] anymore."

Hereford says the young adults they see "Love to talk about the books. They will stay for hours."

"They love the smell of the books," Hand adds.

"Whatever blows through society," Thomas says, "blows through the book store."

She's continued the Chapel and has hosted everything from book signings, to concerts, community meetings, yoga classes, and of course weddings. (Note: this reporter and



Coalesce Book Store owner, Linna Thomas is pictured laughing outside her store on Main Street. Submitted photo

wife Lorraine were married in the Coalesce Chapel over 10-years ago.)

Thomas is licensed to conduct weddings herself and has done many over the years. The chapel is a key part of the business.

"Coalesce would be very different if we didn't have the chapel," Thomas says. The chapel is located out the back door of the store and you walk through a beautiful garden to get there.

"The chapel is a special space," Thomas says, "and we can do anything there."

"The acoustics there," Hereford says, "are to live for."

Hand also has a long history at the bookstore. "I used to visit the first store when we moved here in 1981." She started working at Coalesce in 1988. That kind of longevity for the core employees means there haven't been a whole lot of employees that have come and gone over the years.

Hereford says a lot of people come in to drop off resumes but are discouraged. "We want consistency," she says.

"People that come in like the consistency" with the employees, Hand says. There's been consistency in the clientele too.

Thomas says, "The little kids that used to come to our story times are grandparents now. We're bouncing their grandkids on our knees."

The COVID-19 pandemic nearly did them in. "We were closed for three-and-a-half months," Thomas says. "We'd never closed a day before that."

But their loyal customers stepped up and bought gift certificates to help keep them going.

"I was so sad," Hand says of having to close for the pandemic. "I cried when I locked the door."

When they reopened in July 2020, Hereford says they had to limit the number of people that could be in the store at one time. She was working just 3-days a week. "It was really hard."

But they adapted and managed to get through it. "Overnight," Thomas says, "we morphed into an online book store." They also made free deliveries to local people that used to come into the store.

"We always did home deliveries," Thomas says, "but more so in the pandemic."

Thomas bought the building in 1986. "That was a great move," Hand says. And while she and Hereford are not officially partners "on paper," Thomas says she feels like they are partners, and Hand, "is our in-house artist."

Turning 50 isn't going to slow them down. "I like to think we celebrated the 'first' 50 years," Thomas says. "I don't see any changes in the future."

Hereford, who is nursing an injured foot, says the store is as busy as ever. "It's busy right now," she says. "I say, 'Why couldn't it have been this busy when we were young!'"

Coalesce could be called a survivor. Barnes & Noble was supposed to kill the independent bookstores, but it hasn't done that to Coalesce.

Thomas says she is more concerned about online book selling giant, Amazon. "The most serious foe, I've thought, was Amazon," Thomas says. For a time there, people would come into the store looking for a book, get told the price and offered to order it, but then turned around and said they'd get it from Amazon; but not so much anymore.

"I haven't heard 'Amazon' for quite a while," Hand says.

"People vote with their pocketbooks," Hereford says. "They'll support the businesses they want to survive. If we don't support local businesses, they won't be there."

Hand says she enjoys the "hunt" for books that are out of print, or rare.

What's the best thing about being in business over 50 years? For Thomas it's "Most definitely the people and the interactions. We're so grateful to everyone who has supported us."

Hand says, "I agree with Linna on that."

Hereford too loves the people she meets daily. "I am eternally grateful to be in touch with these kind, beautiful, spiritual people. I'm incredibly grateful. We've been blessed."

Hand loves being "surrounded by all these literary figures. It's always interesting to walk through the store when no one is there."

As for the worst thing about it, Thomas says, "Having to leave it some day, to pass it on."

Hand echoed that. "Yeah. Yeah," she says. "We're ever blessed by all the people that have come through the door."

Hereford says, "Ditto. I can't imagine life without it."

As for the future, the immediate plans are to resume the concerts in the chapel, including bringing back the regular shows with SLO Folks, the San Luis Obispo Folk Music Society, with which they've partnered for decades.

So if you're Downtown, maybe grabbing a bite to eat at one of the new eateries or just out for a stroll, stop in at the little independent book store, nestled in a quaint little brick building on Morro Bay's Main Street; and say "Hello," to a trio of survivors thriving in a little store in the middle of a quaint, little fishing village and keeping alive the magical world of books.

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Community

Tax Cuts From page 13

year by 2%, maxing out at 10% by July 1, 2023. It was 8% during the past year, a number that was reached after the annual rate hike was suspended in FY 2021-22 at 6%.

The next year (2022-23), it rose 2% as scheduled and was supposed to go to 10% on July 1. But though rate hikes were written into the law, they apparently aren’t etched in stone.

“The County Board of Supervisors,” reads the County report on the matter, “may act to maintain or reduce the tax rate increase prior to the July First date.”

Though it seems a tiny issue, the money raised differs dramatically with the percentages.

In the current County budget, revenues from this special tax were estimated at \$645,000 based on 10% of \$6.45 million in annual sales.

Supervisors were told that if the rate stayed at 8%, the revenues based on the same annual sales, would drop to \$516,000 or \$129,000 less to the County General Fund.

At 6% the money drops to about \$387,000 on the same sales volume.

Testing labs that ensure the quality of retail marijuana products are exempt from the County’s cannabis taxes.

The County’s rate drop is part of a recent trend by state and local officials after industry leaders decried the amount of taxes that have been foisted on the relatively new industry as too high and preventing the industry from thriving.

Supervisors tried to help a cannabis industry that’s fallen on tough times, due in part to high taxes, local opposition to projects, and the increasing presence of black market marijuana.

It was thought that if marijuana was legalized, regulated and taxed, it would eliminate some of the problems that stem from having such a valuable cash crop be totally illegal.

Efforts to legalize marijuana started in the 1970s when simple possession of under an ounce was reduced to essentially a traffic ticket that carried a fine but no jail time.

It’s now been over 25 years since the “Compassionate Use Act” (Prop. 215) was passed by voters in 1996 approv-

ing the possession and use of medical marijuana.

The recreational use of marijuana became legal in 2016 with the passage of the “Adult Use of Marijuana Act” (Prop. 64).

Marijuana, cannabis, pot, weed, no matter what name one calls it (the evil weed?), marijuana has been an integral part of California’s agricultural industry since the mid-1970s and with more than \$11 billion in estimated crop value, it is the most valuable crop grown in California.

With legalization, it was anticipated the legal crops in the state would reduce the illegal marijuana markets, but it hasn’t. Among the reasons for this is the extensive regulations the State put on the industry including having to review any proposed grow operations under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for impacts to the environment.

With this onerous regulation, the State and local agencies had allowed “provisional” (temporary) permits to be issued while the paperwork was being completed for a permanent license to grow.

As of July 2019, there were just 205 growing operations statewide that had full licenses and over 1,600 still using provisional permits. SLO County has yet to approve any permanent grow permits.

And while the County has only allowed grow operations and has not yet licensed any retail pot stores in the unincorporated communities, cannabis retailers have found the going tough all over SLO County.

Recently, 805Beach Break in Grover Beach, the first cannabis retail store to open in SLO County, closed its doors.

In San Luis Obispo, the largest city in SLO County, the City is just now taking applications for a third cannabis store to open.

Though one of the smallest cities in SLO County, Morro Bay continues to have two retail pot stores, though the second one to open — the Natural Healing Center or nhc — has changed owners twice now and is currently owned by Glass House Brands. The other store is owned by Perfect Union.

That follows a trend that has seen small, entrepreneurs

who opened the first retail stores being bought out by larger companies with stores scattered all over California and in other states as well.

And marijuana continues to be banned by federal law, so the billions in cannabis being grown in California and exported to other cannabis-friendly states for retail sales, is totally illegal to do under federal law.

Also, Mexican drug cartels have set up illegal growing operations in remote areas of the state like rural Riverside County, seeking to blend in with the legal grows but escape scrutiny and taxation by the government.

County Cannabis Explained

By Neil Farrell

County Supervisors cut the tax rate for cannabis businesses under its jurisdiction, overriding a provision in its own law that would have hiked the taxes from 8% to 10%. Instead they dropped the tax rate to 6% for what’s called a “cannabis business tax” or CBT.

With all the machinations over the taxes, Estero Bay News asked the County’s point man on cannabis taxation, Deputy Director of the County Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector’s Office, Justin Cooley, about the status of the County’s marijuana regulations.

“On June 20,” Cooley said, “our Board of Supervisors made two decisions concerning the CBT: 1. They halted the automatic escalation of the CBT rate to 10%; 2. They lowered the existing rate from 8% to 6%.

“The requirement for separate votes is because of requirements in the CBT ordinance,” he continued. “There was some debate about a more significant rate reduction, but 6% was the final consensus.”

Who pays this tax?

“The CBT covers all cannabis businesses in the unincorporated areas of our County,” Cooley said. “This regulation extends to various operations such as delivery services, manufacturing, distribution, alongside cultivation businesses.

“I should clarify that the County’s jurisdiction is exclusive to the unincorporated areas. Therefore, cannabis operations within city limits must adhere to the respective cities’ tax policies and regulations.

“At present, the County does not permit brick-and-mortar retail outlets; delivery is the only currently allowed retail.”

How many cannabis businesses does this cover?

“Currently,” Cooley said, “there are 33 active cannabis licenses for businesses in the unincorporated areas. One point to note is that a single business engaged in multiple types of operations [e.g., cultivation and delivery service] must hold separate licenses for each. Therefore, while the licenses are 33, they represent approximately 20 distinct businesses.”

Why are testing labs exempt?

“As you noted, the sole exemption from the CBT pertains to testing facilities, based on the Board’s objective to incentivize safety in the industry.”

Who collects this tax and how does the County keep people honest?

“The CBT, set at 6% for the Fiscal Year 2023-24, is computed based on gross receipts,” Cooley explained. “This means that a business is liable for the tax only upon generating revenue. Therefore, no CBT is due until a business starts making money.”

It works sort of like sales taxes. “Cannabis businesses are obligated to submit their self-assessed tax returns monthly, under penalty of perjury. Additionally, businesses must report transaction data to the California Cannabis Authority [CCA] for analysis.

“As a founding member of the CCA, the County leverages their data platform for real-time monitoring, allowing us to identify and address any discrepancies promptly. We also conduct audits for further verification of data accuracy.”

Just what sort of tax is the CBT?


“The CBT is a ‘gross receipts’ tax,” Cooley said, “but some may also considerate it to be an ‘excise tax.’

“Over 76% of County voters approved the CBT in June 2018. Importantly, the CBT is distinct from fees charged by County departments. The fees aim to recoup the costs the County incurs in administering the cannabis licensing and compliance programs.”

Celia’s Garden Cafe welcomes new owners

Well, the day has come. My cafe Celia’s Garden Cafe is moving on to new owners. I want to thank the entire community for 17 fun years of serving you all. Your continued support has kept the cafe a place where we could all gather and enjoy a meal, a laugh or hug. Please welcome the new owners Todd & Korie Newman and Mattie & Alli Laurino. They are excited to continue a “ locals favorite” atmosphere with only Positive changes. You can count on same menu and staff. They are all looking forward to meeting and seeing you once again.

Your Friend, Celia



“

NEWSPAPERS ARE TUTORS AS WELL AS INFORMERS.

”

— NEIL KINNOCK



Construction of the HarborWalk Inn at HarborWalk Plaza shows a beautiful view of Morro Rock. Photo submitted

Flashback 25 years when Aunt Violet Leage was the leaseholder of record. Cherise knew during her first visit to Morro Bay she wanted to open her own shop on the Embarcadero that would feature unique ocean themed products. Aunt Vi helped her fulfill her dream. Cherise’s longtime success was built on her goal to make her customer’s smile. Even as a college student she understood smiles meant a satisfied customer that would come back to see her again. Her whimsical and artistic product selections also offered function, so while the children are entertained, their parents browse and find treasures to decorate their home – family memories from their visit to Morro Bay.

Her first shop was a tiny 400 square-foot space she sublet from Aunt Vi. “At first, I was the creator of products. Now I show other’s creations,” Cherise said.” She strives to keep up with the trends. “I have three boys, so I love buying trinkets for girls.” Years ago, she introduced Fairies Fantasy gifts “I created a Pink Room. The children love to go in and stay awhile. Their parents prefer to browse the jellyfish gallery with confidence they know where their children are.”

When their Aunt Vi experienced some health issues, Cherise and Travis were there to help her manage the leases. Eventually Cherise would expand to two larger retail shops. However, on the Embarcadero waterfront leases expire and need to be renegotiated. “The concept of a multi-purposed property we called HarborFront Inn began to percolate about seven years ago.” Then in 2018 after contending with two other bidders for the best use and design of the property at 833 Embarcadero, their waterfront proposal was selected.

Recently Cherise took me on a “dusty shoes” tour of HarborWalk Inn. My words cannot describe how beautiful this property is already. She has been posting pictures on Google HarborWalk Plaza. November or December is their target for bookings. Travis Leage Construction is the general contractor and Cameron Nelson is the project

manager. Cherise and Travis have worked closely on each detail, including selecting their tenant partners for their ocean-themed property. Her enthusiasm and love for the project is contagious.

Umi Sushi Morro Bay will expand across the street to open UMI Seafood Grill & Bar in the downstairs premier bayside area. Additional clearance space on the Harbor Walk was designed for visitors to stroll by or pause and come in. Floor to ceiling doors will front the restaurant offering an indoor/outdoor feel and experience. Another tenant, Lexi Jacobs Limited Boat Rentals, will offer smaller rental boats than currently are available on the bay. HarborWalk Inn Convenience Store will offer those necessities a guest may have forgotten at home.

“I’m asked every day if the children’s coin-operated toys are coming back,” Cherise said. “They don’t make them anymore, but I found Peter Hazel at Burning Man. He rehabilitates these antique coin-operated kids’ toys. We will have two of them.” The children’s play area will definitely return to the property.

HarborWalk Inn encompasses the entire second floor. Oversized custom-made doors funnel people right in off the street “as if entering a mermaid’s grotto,” Cherise said. There are eight rooms. From wall colors to flooring – bedding and cabinetry – bathroom fixtures and technology features, Cherise has hand-picked what she believes will inspire a positive visitor experience. Every room has a generous private deck with Polywood deck chairs and magical viewing of Morro Rock.

One room overlooks the Embarcadero. It has two decks – one positioned for viewing the 4th of July bicycle parade or daily activities happening in the Embarcadero. Another side deck has a view of Morro Rock. Two additional rooms are adjacent yet separated by a foyer entry. They are designed for individual bookings or to accommodate group bookings for families, reunion groups or wedding parties.

The art in each room features the ocean theme with names like the Jellyfish or Sea Otter Suites. Cherise has selected originally created light fixtures by Morro Bay artist Rowen Chase and furniture décor from San Luis Obispo’s Luna Rustica. She envisioned a shell shape for all the bathroom sinks and had them created by designer Justine Perkins. The showers are quartz with shower heads sporting four rotation sprays. A high-end coffee bar will stock fresh cream and interactive video screens will allow digital shopping and entertainment. Dancing colors in the fireplaces will set a mood. “Puffy mattresses are better than mine at home,” Cherise said. “Travis and I came up with our colors separately. I was surprised when he preferred my color combinations.” Each room features warm variations of gold and blue tones.

Close attention was dedicated to fully outfit the ADA room in the middle corridor, including the heights of the bedside end tables. “The deck had this small extended area that viewed Morro Rock. We wondered if it should be closed off until we realized it was the perfect size to fit a wheelchair.”

The two suites that front the bay are oversized with mammoth decks. Their beds are positioned for guests to wake up and prop up for a lazy morning facing a stunning view. As they stretch, they might reach towards the bay and feel they can touch Morro Rock. Guests will hear the otters talking and fishing boats motoring out to sea.

“These are suites that guests might invite all their Morro Bay friends to visit for cocktails or watch the Lighted Boat Parade,” Cherise joked.

Ever dream of being an innkeeper? Cherise is currently looking for a manager. “I always admired the customer service quality experiences [local hoteliers] Joan and John Solu and Molly and Roger Anderson offered their guests. I know I can offer the best of amenities, but that personal experience at the front desk and how guests are treated during their stay is what will bring them back.” She has her model for success and is determined she won’t settle for less.

Apply or be among the first to book your future stay at <https://harborwalkinn.com/>.



Photos included in Steve Rebusk’s new book, ‘Abalone Diving on the Central Coast’ show the men and equipment that were used during the heyday of the abalone fishery off the Central Coast. The photos were mainly taken by Glen Bickford of Morro Bay. Photos courtesy Steve Rebusk

photographs and scanning them into digital files and prepping them for publication and to preserve the images for posterity. Arcadia wanted at least 200 photos for the book, he says.

That’s something Rebusk, who has been dealing with health issues for a couple of years now, says is important because it helps tell the remarkable story of these diving pioneers, who over the years invented and developed the equipment — from dive boats, to dive suits and other equipment that’s allowed mankind to reach into the sea and harvest its bounty.

Like others of Arcadia’s thousands of books, this one focuses on localized history using many photos taken by one of the early pioneers of the genre.

“Glen Bickford,” Rebusk says, “a lot of the images came from Glen.”

Bickford, he explains, worked as a hardhat diver and pioneered underwater photography and filmed documentary style footage of the men he worked for and with. He and Rebusk were friends.

“I visited him regularly at his house on Monterey Street [in Morro Bay], that was across the street from the Paladini Building.”

The Paladini Building was a tiny wooden shack really that at one time was a busy processing facility in town, turning the abalone harvested in local waters into what for decades was a delicacy and regular menu item in California restaurants and beyond. It was one of numerous such processors in Morro Bay, as Rebusk recounts some of the others that used to be on the Embarcadero but are long gone now.

Abalone processing was being done at what is now Tognazzini’s Dockside, where Don and Chuck Sites did abalone, and then Mrs. Krill got into it, he says.

The Ocean House was where the old Coffee Pot Restaurant and now Giovanni’s, was located. A dirt lot (now paved) fronting the street was where abalone divers worked on their boats.

Neil McCutcheon had a plant, and then there was one at what is now the Boatyard Center, Rebusk continues, and then there was a guy named Wilson. “Bob Wilbur of Bob’s Seafood, he was a diver, too.”


Up on Beach Street was Betty Jameson’s processing plant. “Along the waterfront there were six to eight processing facilities,” he says. This was from the 1920s to the early 1960s, when the whole thing started to slow and ultimately crash in the mid-1970s.

“Abalone built Morro Bay,” Rebusk says. “Abalone fishing was consistent for decades.”


When the late Joe Giannini arrived, he brought shark fishing to town, Rebusk says. The fishing industry has concentrated on different fisheries since that time, with each



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News

one having a heyday before being restricted mainly through government regulations.

That Paladini Building too has since been torn down and housing built. The front façade was saved and is stored at the Maritime Museum.

“After Glen died,” Rebuck says, “his niece, Genie Kitzman, gave me some photo albums.” Bickford was already living in Morro Bay and started shooting photos of the abalone divers in the 1940s and early ‘50s. He built watertight camera casings to be able to shoot first photos and then do films underwater. He also worked on a groundbreaking study of abalone from Catalina to Northern California.

Rebuck’s roots sink deep into the industry. He mentions Al Hansen and his wife. “My dad worked for him when I was born,” Rebuck says. “He ran the boats.” During World War II, Rebuck’s dad built Liberty Ships and was planning to buy a boat and start diving for abalone, which was a pretty lucrative fishery at the time. He moved up to Morro Bay in the mid-1950s.

“The day I was born,” Rebuck says, “my dad went abalone diving, and then bow hunting [where he shot a wild goat] and then he came to the hospital to see me and my mom.”

He laughs that the first scents he ever smelled were his mother, his father, abalone and goat. “I was born into it,” he says. He even includes a photo of his dad’s boat flying some unusual white flags. “There’s a photo of my dad’s boat with my diapers flying over it.”

In the early days, before they moved offshore, abalone divers used to gear up and wade out from the beach. “Can you imagine,” Rebuck says, “they walked through the surf with 150-pounds of equipment on? Then they carried out 50-60-pound sacks of abalone.”

He talks about someone named, Barney Clancy, who ran a fleet of war surplus boats, dubbed the Black Fleet. That’s because back then military boats were painted black with red trim.

He had five boats operating, Rebuck says of the Black Fleet. “Each had a quote of 200 dozen abalone a week.”

He says someone once asked Clancy why he put that quota on his captains. “He said it was because that’s all he could process. That was how healthy the resource was at the time.”

He says the record haul was 168 dozen abalones in a single day, which was accomplished by Walter “Duke” Pierce, whose locally-famous family started abalone diving in Morro Bay in the late 1920s.

“All the abalones were 8-inches,” Rebuck says. “That was the legal size.” He says that over the years he dug through the many shell piles that used to be all around Morro Bay and never once found an undersized abalone, or “shorts,” as they are called.

“They were so plentiful,” he says, “they didn’t have to cheat.” Duke Pierce had a belt that declared himself “The World Champion Abalone Diver,” Rebuck laughs.

He cites statistics compiled by the California Department of Fish & Game (now Fish & Wildlife), published in an agency bulletin from the abalone heyday. “In 1962,” Rebuck says, “Morro Bay had landed 2 million pounds of abalones.”

That was from 1916 to the early 60s. But by 1976, it had all collapsed and Rebuck knows why.

“What changed was the arrival of the sea otters. That put my dad out of business.”

Over the years, Rebuck has been an outspoken critic of the government’s handling of the southern sea otters. That’s including the Channel Islands, San Nicholas Island in particular, where in 1979 the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service relocated otters, with only a handful surviving the move. The sea otters were relocated only to see the lobster, sea urchin and abalone stocks plummet at San Nicholas. “Some of us here knew what was going to happen,” Rebuck says.

But he stresses that all that political history with sea otters and the government’s relocation schemes that he says failed, is only briefly mentioned in the book.

“I only briefly touch on that,” he explains. “I didn’t want to dwell on it. I left most of that stuff out. I wanted the

book to be about the people.”

The book is split into three main sections. The first section talks about Native Americans in the area, who first harvested abalone thousands of years ago and made “mon-ey” out of abalone shells.

The Spanish, who were the first Europeans to conquer California weren’t fond of the mollusk. “The Spanish thought they were poisonous,” Rebuck says. “That’s from paralytic shellfish poisoning. So the Spanish didn’t fish abalone.”

In 1850, Chinese laborers started coming here to work in the gold mines and on the railroads, Rebuck says. In China abalone were a delicacy eaten mainly by royalty and not common people. “A lot of them ended up in Monterey,” he says of the Chinese immigrants. Seeing the abundant shellfish a fishery naturally sprang up, with the abalone being sent to Asia. “The Chinese took over.”

The government started putting restrictions on in the early 20th Century, including banning the harvesting of abalone in less than 20-feet of water, which targeted the Chinese free divers.

The Japanese arrived around 1896, Rebuck says, and started using heavy diving equipment and diving deeper. The Japanese were primarily working north of Pt. Lobos. “It was better fishing up there,” Rebuck says.

The second section of the book discusses abalone’s role in Monterey’s rich fishing history. The third section, by Rebuck, talks about Morro Bay and the Pierce Family that started the fishery here in 1928.

He also talks about the rich history of technological innovations in diving that arose out of the abalone fishery, including the use of mixed gas to allow humans to dive deeper and combat the bends.

“In 1962,” he explains, “a fellow by the name of Bob Kirby, who started building dive helmets in Morro Bay, was the first to dive to 400 feet in Santa Barbara, using mixed gas. He replaced nitrogen with helium. The bends comes from nitrogen in the blood.”

Another innovator was Phil Newton, who developed a new dive suit that was pretty expensive. “The Newt Suit was about the price of a high-end Porsche,” Rebuck says. Now, divers can reach depths of 1,000 feet.

“These technologies were developed by abalone divers over the years,” he says. “Abalone diving is no longer a fishery, but that technology lives on.”

And it hasn’t changed all that much with time. Rebuck says if you look at what the abalone divers were using and what’s in use today, “It’s essentially the same equipment.”

Rebuck’s book, which took eight months to compile and years to research, just came out at the end of July. It is currently available in San Luis Obispo at the Photo Shop store on Marsh Street and at Miner’s Hardware in Morro Bay, which has a rack with other Arcadia Publishing history books.

He hopes to get it into Coalesce Bookstore soon, as well.

Or readers can go online to Arcadia’s website and order the book (see: www.arcadiapublishing.com/products/9781467160285), which costs \$23.99.

Betty “Doc” O’Connor Celebrated 92 - Years - Young



Betty O’Connor, known to most as “Doc,” celebrated her 92nd birthday on August 2. Doc was at the helm of O’Connor Pet Hospital in San Luis Obispo for many decades and was known at the veterinarian who would go the extra mile for local pets. She was one of the first women to graduate with a DVM from the University of California, Davis and was a pioneer in many other arenas, not the least of which included an African safari to assess and support elephant heard health. Betty’s family came to San Luis Obispo county in the 1940s when her father ran a car dealership in downtown San Luis Obispo. She went away for college but has been a committed Central Coast resident ever since.

Publisher’s note: Betty is my wife’s aunt and I’ve had the honor to know her personally.






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