

Second Mountain Lion Sighting in Los Osos Neighborhood

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

An adult mountain lion was captured on a trail camera in the front yard of a home in Los Osos. This is the second reported sighting of a lion in the area since March of this year.

Again, the feline, which can be 60 to 180 pounds and up to 8-feet long, was spotted in the 1100 block of 8th St., about a block from the El Moro Elfin Forest Nature Preserve.

"I notified County Parks and Fish and Wildlife," Gene "Skip" Rotstein, a retired high school biology teacher and board member of the Friends of El Moro Elfin Forest, told Estero Bay News. His cameras captured the first pawed and clawed animal eight months ago.

"County Parks will probably put a lion [warning] poster at each Elfin Forest entrance. My guess is it is the same lion as in March. Fish and Wildlife or State Parks probably knows which lion it is because this is probably the only one in a pretty big area."

State Parks and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife could not be reached prior to deadline.

The second, or perhaps the same, lion making an appearance is verification to Skip that our space is part of their territory.

"The foggy night video in March was pretty much a 'proof of existence' video," "The night of November 22, 2023, was crystal clear. The lion's walking pace enabled the three cameras, spaced twenty to fifty feet apart to capture every detail — coming, going and sideways."

Caution and respect should always be foremost in the wilderness with any animal, but mountain lions are more common than the weekend hiker might be aware. That is not a reason to panic, it has likely always been the case.

Freddy Otte, a biologist for the City of San Luis Obispo, issued a news release earlier this year following a report of a mountain lion grabbing a leashed dog in the Prefumo



Footage from a trail camera shows a mountain lion about a block from the El Moro Elfin Forest Nature Preserve. Photo by Gene 'Skip' Rotstein

Creek area and taking off with it, dragging the owner in the process. The dog died in the incident, and the lion was successfully trapped, fitted with a GPS tracker and relocated outside of the city.

"It's important to remember that we live in a region that is home to a variety of wildlife, including mountain lions," Otte said. "These majestic creatures have been roaming these hills and valleys for centuries, and while they are a natural part of our environment, it's understandable that the recent sightings and attack on a pet may be causing some concern. Mountain lion attacks on humans are extremely rare, and it's even rarer for them to occur in urban areas."

California Department of Fish and Wildlife defines a mountain lion attack as an incident resulting in direct physical contact between a human and a mountain lion resulting in physical injury or death to the person. An attack is verified only when a physician, law enforcement officer or CDFW personnel determine the injuries were caused by a mountain lion. The list of attacks, located at [wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Mountain-Lion/Attacks](https://www.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Mountain-Lion/Attacks), show people from 5 to 70 years old. Since 1986, there have been 21 verified attacks in CA — four were fatal.

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More Alcohol Sales Approved



Two new liquor licenses were recently approved by the Morro Bay City Council.

By Neil Farrell

The Morro Bay City Council is 2-for-2 when asked to approve new liquor licenses in town.

The Council recently approved support for a license to sell beer and wine at the recently completed Hampton Inn, located at 295 Atascadero Rd., next to Morro Bay High School.

The Type 20 license from the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC), allows the hotel to sell alcohol for off site consumption, just like a grocery store or a mini-mart.

According to the ABC website, Type 20 licenses are "Issued to retail stores. Authorizes the sale of beer and wine for consumption off the premises where sold. Minors are allowed on the premises."

Minors, those under 21, are of course entirely prohibited from purchasing, possessing or consuming alcoholic beverages.

So why would minors be allowed in the store? Being a hotel, children might be expected to accompany an adult or maybe a parent down to the store in the Inn's lobby, just as they might go into a mini-mart with their mom or dad.

The license means the Inn's employees will have to check IDs just like a liquor store clerk must do and could be subject to underage sting operations by ABC, the County Sheriff or local police.

The approval is the Council's second since ordering such licenses to come to them instead of being approved or denied "over-the-counter" at the planning department.

Alcohol Sales Continued on page 15

Residents Balk at City Plans for Canet Road Walk-Bridge

By Neil Farrell

A rural Morro Bay neighborhood is in a quandary as the City plans to remove a footbridge over Chorro Creek that they say they need during the winter when high creek flows make a road bridge impassable to be able to get home.

And with this coming winter anticipated to be another wet one, due to a predicted El Niño weather pattern, this winter could be a real challenge.

Residents living on the end stretch of Canet Road off Hwy 1 east of town as it begins climbing the lower flank of Hollister Peak, are prepared to wage a pitched battle with the City over what they call the "walk-bridge" that's been there so long, its origin story is a little murky

The Setting

The roadway on Canet dips steeply down at the creek crossing, turning into a 1-lane, narrow roadway after it crosses the normally calm and tranquil water.

Homes are on short driveways off the main thoroughfare, which passes by a tiny historic cemetery where many of the former residents are buried.

The walk-bridge runs adjacent to the roadway, but crosses the creek about 15-feet higher than dip in the road bridge.



Canet Road dips low as it crosses Chorro Creek.

That means when rising water crests over the top of the road bridge, the walk-bridge is the only safe way across Chorro Creek. They've used it for longer than anyone can recall.

"Many years ago," reads a post on a special website the residents put up entitled "Save the Walk Bridge" (see: <https://savethewalkbridge.com>), "we are still trying

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Wind Knocks The Rock off the Air

By Neil Farrell



She's a mighty radio station but apparently no match for Mother Nature. The Estero Bay's community radio station is hoping its supporters will come through and keep commercial-free public radio live and on the air.

On Wednesday, Nov. 15, strong overnight winds blew down a radio tower installed at the City of Morro Bay's Corporation Yard on Atascadero Road.

That old radio tower used to hold the City's wireless communications antennae for dispatching maintenance crews — for roads, water and sewer issues.

But the tower is no longer in use and the City doesn't

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Moving Forward: Worldwide Travel Correspondent Picks Morro Bay Best of...

By Judy Salamacha



When Morro Bay's Tom Wilmer entered La Katrina's Authentic Mexican Cocina he was dressed head to toe in military fatigues. A longtime friend and colleague, it had been several years and seven national awards for him since I'd updated his amazing career producing "Issues & Ideas" for public radio's San Luis Obispo affiliate KCBX and "Journeys of Discovery with Tom Wilmer" on www.npr.com.

Fatigues? What else had changed? Would Tom announce he'd been deployed to battle-torn Ukraine or the Gaza Strip? I had reviewed his recent work and had

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Deadline Missed;
Gibson Recall Halted

By Neil Farrell

The North County-driven effort to recall Dist. 2 County Supervisor Bruce Gibson has been terminated by the County Clerk-Recorder, after the recall proponents committed a procedural SNAFU and the Clerk-Recorder ended the effort and possibly returned a sense of sanity to what was shaping up to be a seriously odd election.

County Clerk-Recorder Elaina Cano on Nov. 15, terminated the effort to recall Gibson. “The termination of the recall process was the result of the petitioner missing a deadline per California Elections Code,” reads a news release from Cano’s Office.

The “Committee to Support the Recall of Supervisor Bruce Gibson,” as the proponents called themselves, served Gibson a “Notice to Recall” at his Cayucos home on Oct. 27, and Gibson filed an official response with the County Clerk-Recorder’s Office on Halloween, wherein he sharply criticized the recall effort.

“On Oct. 31,” Cano’s news release said, “Supervisor Gibson issued an answer to the recall proponents’ filing of an intention to circulate a recall petition. Section 11042 requires the proponents of a recall effort to submit two blank copies of the petition to be circulated, along with proof of publication of intent ‘at least once in a newspaper of general circulation,’ within 10-days of that answer.”

That meant the clock was ticking as of the 31st and time ran out on the recall. “The deadline,” the release said, “for the Clerk-Recorder to receive the blank copies and proof of publication was Monday, Nov. 13, 2023. The petitioner did not attempt to file them until today [Nov. 15].”

But it might not be over yet. “By law,” Cano’s release said, “the recall proponents are entitled to initiate a new recall effort should they choose, but they must begin the process again from the start.”

Estero Bay News queried the recall committee as to their future plans but did not get an answer before deadline.

If the issue is indeed dead, it brings to an end a potential election mess in 2024, as the people who would be able to sign a recall petition and then vote on it, would come from the Dist. 2 electorate used in the 2022 elections, and not the current Dist. 2, which came into existence earlier this year.

In 2021, the redistricting map approved by Supervisors took Morro Bay and Los Osos, plus a sizable chunk of SLO out of Dist. 2 and split them into a new Dist. 3 (Morro Bay and SLO) and 5 (Los Osos). All five Supervisor Districts were dramatically changed and Gibson picked up Atascadero, San Miguel and part of Templeton for the Dist. 2 2022 elections. He won that election by 13 votes.

So the recall, which was launched by people from those North County areas, would have been in the hands of people that Gibson no longer directly represents.

Adding to the boggle, those same people would then be able to vote for Dist. 1 or 5, and would have been able to decide Gibson’s fate. Cano’s termination of the recall, if it holds, would end all this and set the Supervisor elections right again.



City Hires Interim
Assistant City Manager

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay has hired a temporary assistant city manager taking over for the former ACM who left for the greener pastures and the same job in Sunnyvale.

City Manager Yvonne Kimball pegged retired Los Gatos finance director, Steve Conway, as the Interim Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director, filling in for former ACM/ASD, Sarah Johnson-Rios, who left in early October after a couple of years on the job. She came here from Paso Robles and started in Sunnyvale as their assistant city manager on Oct. 23, making nearly three times as much money as she did in Morro Bay.

Under the current City Salary Schedule, the assistant city manager/administrative services director job pays from \$144,000 (at Step 1) to \$175,000 (Step 5), plus benefits and retirement. Conway was hired making “\$87.56 per hour,” Kimball’s report to Council said, “which is within the hourly compensation range for the Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director position. By law his hours are limited to no more than 960 per fiscal year.” That’s because Conway is officially retired and under the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) he is limited in the number of hours he can work in a government interim position like this and still collect his pension.

“Under CalPERS rules,” Kimball said, “the compensation paid to retirees cannot be less than the minimum nor exceed the maximum monthly base salary paid to other employees performing comparable duties, divided by 173.333 to equal the hourly rate” [\$182,118 a year divided by 12 months, divided by 173.333 hours a month = \$87.56/Hr.]. He will not be getting the insurance benefits of regular City employees, which will save the taxpayers a little bit of money.

“Retired annuitants,” Kimball said, “cannot receive any other benefit, incentive, compensation in lieu of benefit or other form of compensation in addition to this hourly pay rate. Therefore, compensation will be no more than the hourly rate of the Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director position, and those amounts have been programmed in the current year FY 2023/24 approved budget.”

Kimball went looking for an interim ACM right after Johnson-Rios gave notice. “Following notice of Ms. Johnson-Rios’ resignation,” Kimball said, “Staff explored options for pursuing an Interim while we recruit for a permanent Assistant City Manager/Administrative Services Director. As of Oct. 5, 2023, the City is actively recruiting for this position.” Johnson-Rios helped find Conway to take over for her before she left.

Though readers might think an assistant city manager’s job is like the vice president with not much to do, this is a big job with a lot of responsibilities.

According to the City’s website, the assistant city manager is “Under general administrative direction of the City Manager, plans, organizes, and directs the activities of the Administrative Services Department by developing and implementing efficient and effective financial policies, plans and reporting systems to ensure the City’s long-term fiscal health; oversees Information Systems and may oversee Human Resources; coordinating assigned activities with City departments and outside agencies; organizing and coordinating other programs and projects as assigned by the City Manager; and representing the City Manager as assigned.” They also assume the manager’s duties and responsibilities when that person is out of town.



City of Morro Bay
Interim Assistant City
Manager Steve Conway.

But the biggest job will be getting information together for the next City Budget, which is due to go to the City Council for approval by next June.

Meanwhile the City is advertising the position now and according to the notice on the City website, the salary ranges from \$149,829 to \$182,118 annually. The job flyer doesn’t give a deadline date for applications.

Supervisors Fire
Interim County Admin
Officer

By Neil Farrell

The County is again under the direction of a temporary administrative officer, after the Board of Supervisors fired an interim CAO they just hired a few months ago, and pegged the No. 2 woman at the County to take over while the worldwide search for a permanent replacement continues.

Supervisors on Nov. 17 announced the immediate termination of Interim CAO, John Nilon, “After an investigation of improper conduct toward women in violation of the County’s policy against discrimination and harassment,” reads a new release from the County Counsel’s Office.

The announcement came a couple of days after a closed session meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 14 amongst Supervisors when he was told of the complaint and investigation. They put him on paid leave at that time.

Nilon resigned the next day (Nov. 15) and under his contract the resignation wouldn’t be effective for 30 days, but the ongoing investigation, which apparently came to a head at another closed session meeting on Friday, Nov. 17, proved decisive enough for Supervisors to act immediately.



County Supervisors fired interim County Administrative Officer, John Nilon, on Nov. 17, after allegations of discrimination and harassment were field against him by an unnamed County employee



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“The Board made the decision to terminate Mr. Nilon’s employment effective immediately in closed session,” the news release said.

Board Chairman, Dist. 1 Supervisor John Peschong, said, “Our policy is clear and adherence to it is mandatory by all employees. The County has a zero-tolerance policy for any violations.”

“The County,” he continued, “is committed to providing a work environment where everyone is treated with respect and professionalism. We expect all employees to adhere to the policy and expect our CAO to exhibit the best judgment when dealing with employees in the workplace.”

No further details were given and none would be expected given that this is a sensitive personnel matter.

However, the County did say that Nilon’s firing has nothing to do with another County employee’s alleged shenanigans. “Mr. Nilon’s departure is unrelated to the investigation of an employee within the Information Technology Department

Neal told The Tribune that Nilon was fired for alleged “improper conduct toward women;” specifically for violating the County policy on discrimination and harassment.

Citing an anonymous County source, the Tribune reported that “Nilon was questioned about the harassment allegations on Wednesday, and submitted his resignation later that day.”

But according to an online news site, Cal Coast News, Nilon is calling it all a bunch of hokum.

“First,” Nilon reportedly told CCN after his ouster, “it is ridiculous to terminate someone who has already resigned. Second, and most important, this is purely a political stunt, trying to curry favor with those unhappy with the speed at which I have led change.”

He pointed out that he’s never gotten anything in writing. “I have never been presented with any written allegations of misconduct by anyone in the county,” Nilon was quoted by CCN, “and as such, any comments by the board or their representatives are entirely fabricated and have no basis in truth.”

The hints there’s something wrong at the County. “Two CAO’s and one homeless division director,” he told CCN, “have resigned within the last six months, perhaps



Former Assistant County CAO, Rebecca Campbell, was named the interim CAO replacing John Nilon who was fired amidst harassment allegations.

the focus should not be on those who resigned but instead on the board who caused those resignations. I have done what I set out to accomplish and look forward to going back to where I came from, retirement.”

Assistant County Administrative Officer, Rebecca Campbell, was named Acting CAO until a permanent replacement is chosen.

Nilon was hired May 1 to take over the CAO’s duties after former CAO Wade Horton resigned suddenly last March and also without explanation.

Much speculation has been made over Horton’s departure, as it came closely after Supervisors voted 3-2 to throw out the redistricting map that had been approved in 2021, a normal procedure after the results of the U.S. Census (in 2020).

That new map radically changed all five districts and placed Los Osos and Morro Bay, as well as a large portion of SLO, into different districts. The new map took away the right to vote for County Supervisor away from voters in Morro Bay, Los Osos, SLO and the residents in between. Dist. 2 Supervisor Bruce Gibson, whose new Second District, now included Atascadero, Parts of Templeton and San Miguel. Despite losing much of his traditional voter base, Gibson still eked out a 13-vote win over challenger Bruce Jones of Atascadero.

After Dist. 4’s Jimmy Paulding, who won his seat in the June Primary, and Dist. 3’s Dawn Ortiz-Legg, who also won the seat she had been appointed to by the Governor, to replace the late Dist. 3 Supervisor Adam Hill.

Despite winning the election, the Board’s liberal majority (Supervisor positions are non-partisan), settled a citizen’s group’s lawsuit seeking to overturn the 2021 map, and settled out of court for \$300,000.

The majority then voted to cancel the 2021 map and approved a new map that closely matched the former district map that was instituted after the 2010 Census.

Nilon also played prominently in a recent announcement of a recall effort against Gibson. The proponents of that recall effort listed Horton’s departure and claimed Gibson had hired one of his donors (Nilon) for the lucrative interim CAO position, which paid some \$144 per hour.

The official “Notice to Recall” document filed against Gibson, it stated the he “abused his power as County Supervisor by (a) getting rid of effective County Administrative Officer, Wade Horton, and replacing him with a crony and political contributor.”

That recall effort was recently terminated by the County Clerk-Recorder after the proponents missed a paperwork deadline that she had set.

Though the recall petitioners can still move forward, they must start all over again with a Notice to Recall.

Addis Appointed to Policy and Research

Assemblymember Dawn Addis (D-Morro Bay) is the new Assistant Majority Leader of Policy and Research. Speaker Robert Rivas appointed Addis who will lead the Assembly Office of Research and Policy and will oversee a staff of experienced policy experts who analyze and research the pressing issues California is facing, including climate change, economic inequality and housing.



Dawn Addis

“I’m grateful to have Assemblymember Addis on our team, working with our top policy experts, leading on analysis and taking action on the critical issues facing all Californians,” Speaker Rivas said in a news release. “Our caucus requires a deep understanding of the issues, and I look forward to working with Dawn as we unlock solutions that serve our 40 million residents.”

For the past year, Addis was assigned seats on the Natural Resources, Higher Education, Veterans Affairs, Public Employment and Retirement, and Rules Committees.

“I’m thankful to Speaker Rivas for entrusting me with such an important leadership position,” Addis said. “The Central Coast district that I represent shares the challenges facing the rest of the state and I’m looking forward to working on innovative policy solutions that benefit Central Coast residents and all Californians in the years ahead.”

Addis had six bills signed by Governor Gavin Newsom, including legislation to remove barriers that prevent minors who have experienced sexual abuse from seeking justice against their abusers, enhance housing options for seniors and community college students and legislation to further opportunity for multilingual students.

In addition, Addis Chairs the Central Coast Legislative Caucus, is the Assembly appointee to the California Ocean Protection Council and chairs two Assembly select committees: The Select Committee on Offshore Wind Energy in California and the Select Committee on Serving Students with Disabilities.

The Assembly Office of Policy and Research goals are to translate research into good public policy for the Assembly Democratic Caucus. The staff of the office researches and analyses complex policy issues for Assemblymembers and their staff, leadership offices and Assembly committees.

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News

By Neil Farrell

The City of Morro Bay is looking for someone to conduct a rate study for its water and sewer systems, and residents can probably expect the costs for both to increase.

In a “request for proposals” notice, the City said, “The objective of the RFP is to receive proposals for a Water and Sewer Rate Fee Study that includes reviewing and updating all fees and charges for services, recommending additional fees, provide a comparison of current water and sewer system costs [operations, capital improvements, bonded debt] against appropriate industry benchmarks.”

The City is wrapping up its massive “Water Reclamation Facility” or WRF Project now, with construction completed and the remaining testing and certifying and review normal with such huge projects underway now before a final determination is made and the contractors paid off.

Though there has been a SNAFU — a problem with unanticipated heavy in-flow into the collection system that showed its ugly face during last winter's fierce storms.

In-flow into the system from cracks in the collection pipes that lie in the ground surrounded by groundwater, exceeded the disposal system pipe built as part of the WRF.

It's a long-time problem the City has had with its aging collection system — wet winters, means high groundwater, which leads to high in-flow into the old sewer pipes resulting in high flow rates to the treatment plant.

A new rate study, if it looks at future maintenance needs and costs, will surely have to consider this expense. There should not, however, be any rate hikes needed to finish the WRF.

There will also be costs the City incurs in the demolition of the old sewer plant on Atascadero Road in the WRF financing. That final bit of business with the Cayucos Sanitary District has been under negotiations and the City Council held a discussion at a recent closed session meeting. The two agencies are co-owners of the Atascadero Road treatment plant property and the undersea discharge pipeline connected now to the City's new WRF.

The CSD built its own treatment plant on Toro Creek Road and discharges its unused effluent via an undersea pipeline left over from Chevron's old Estero Bay Marine (oil) Terminal that ceased operations in 1999.

The City is also in discussions with the Rancho Colina RV/MHP located east of the City Limits on Hwy 41, to potentially have it hook up to the City water and sewer systems.

Also, the water-recycling portion of the WRF Project is just now beginning to be designed and permitted, with the Council recently awarding contract extensions to cover some aspects of that work.

Construction costs of what amounts to a “purple pipe” recycling system have yet to be determined, but it’s safe to assume it will run several million dollars. Wastewater recycling was a requirement for the low-interest financing

the City took out for the WRF Project from both the State and Federal Governments.

Bids on the rate study are due Nov. 30 with a contract slated to be awarded in January. Costs would come out of the water and sewer fund budgets.

Nominations Open Now for March Primary



If you're ready to take the plunge into local politics and dive into the deep end of the pool, the nomination period for next March's Primary Election is open now.

“Monday, Nov. 13,” reads a notice from the Clerk-Recorder’s Office, “signals the beginning of the nomination period for the March 5, 2024, Presidential Primary Election.”

If anyone wants to run for office in that election, the deadline to get nomination papers in is 5 p.m. Friday, Dec. 8. But if an incumbent in that office decides not to run, then the deadline gets pushed back to Wednesday, Dec. 13 for that race only. Already, we know that Dist. 5 County Supervisor Debbie Arnold does not plan to run again, however, “This extension period does not apply for party central committee or county council contests or when the incumbent is not running due to term limits.”

The 2024 Elections will be crowded ballots. Contests on the ballot include:

- Federal (elected nationally): U.S. President/Vice President;

- Federal (elected statewide): U.S. Senator (partial/unexpired term) and U.S. Senator (full term);

- Federal (elected by district): U.S. Representative in Congressional Dist. 19 and 24;

• State (elected by district): State Senator Districts 17 and 21; members of the State Assembly Districts 30 and 37;

- Judicial (elected countywide): Superior Court Offices (judges) 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 13;

- County (elected by district): County Supervisorial Dist. 1, 3, and 5;

- County (elected countywide): partisan offices of the County Central Committee/County Council Contests (The Democratic County Central Committee elects members by district) for all qualified parties except the Ameri-

can Independent Party.

Anyone interested in running for office is encouraged to call the elections office at 805-781-5228 to make an appointment so that their nomination papers can be prepared in advance.

And if you despise politics and would never run for office, but like to keep tabs on the players, the Clerk-Recorder's Office will post the status of candidates daily, see: slovote.com.

A person could also apply to be a volunteer poll worker on Election Day at this website.

Community Needs Hearing, Dec. 12

By Neil Farrell

County Supervisors will hold a hearing to get the public's input on how it should spend federal housing and community development grant monies next year.

The hearing is set for 9 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 12 at the Supervisors Chambers in the County Government Center, at 1055 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

“The purpose of the hearing,” reads a news release from County Social Services Department, “is to give the public an opportunity to express their views on both the needs of the community and the use of federal funds. The results of the Community Needs Assessment Survey will be presented during the hearing.” That online survey was done back in October and had just 166 respondents in a County with over 230,000 residents.

The so-called “Urban County of San Luis Obispo,” which includes all seven of the incorporated cities (including Morro Bay), and SLO County towns — receives federal grant monies under several programs, including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG); the Home Investment Partnership Program (HOME); Home Investment Partnership Program American Rescue Plan (HOME-ARP); Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG); Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA); Title 29 Funds; plus County General Funds.

Such grant funds are meant to address housing and community development needs and are doled out annually on a per capita basis.

“CDBG funds,” the release said, “can be used for housing, public facilities, and economic development activities that benefit low-income persons. HOME funds are used to support affordable housing projects for low-income families. ESG funds support homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, homelessness prevention, and rapid re-housing programs.”

According to the County Social Services' website (see: www.slocounty.gov/communitydevelopment), Social Services works "in partnership with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the County of San Luis Obispo uses federal funds to support and develop public services, affordable housing, and economic opportunities on the central coast.

“These community development efforts are currently



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News

guided by the priorities set in the 2020-2024 Consolidated Plan. The Consolidated Plan, its concurrent Action Plans, and the related block grants are administered by the Homeless Services Division.”

In the current Action Plan, there are five basic areas the public said needed these grant monies — affordable housing; homelessness service; public services; economic development; and public facilities.

According to the Plan’s summary: “The overall goal of the Urban County’s community development programs is to encourage viable and sustainable communities by providing affordable housing, a suitable living environment, and expanded economic opportunities. The Consolidated Plan enables the Urban County of San Luis Obispo to examine the housing and community development needs of this community, and to develop programs that effectively utilize the resources available to address these needs and improve the quality of life for low- and moderate-income residents.”

In practical terms, the Consolidated Plan is a blueprint for how and where the County should spend these grant monies.

Another County Employee in Trouble

By Neil Farrell

It’s head honcho quit, then his temporary replacement tried to quit but was then fired, and now another SLO County employee is in hot water after being suspected of using taxpayer money on himself or herself.

According to a news release from Jim Hamilton, SLO County Auditor-Controller-Treasurer-Tax Collector, on Nov. 13 the District Attorney’s Office served a search warrant on the employee’s home and office at the County Government Center after an internal investigation gave them probable cause for a warrant.

“This came,” the news release said, “following an internal County-initiated investigation focused on the potential

misuse of County funds for personal purchases. Evidence discovered during the internal investigation was provided to law enforcement leading to the search warrant served.”

That same day the employee was placed on paid administrative leave, Hamilton’s release said.

They have not released the employee’s name nor any other distinguishing information.

“The County,” Hamilton’s release said, “is not naming the employee due to the confidentiality restraints of on-going internal and external criminal investigations. Those investigations will assess the extent of any criminal wrongdoing and appropriate personnel actions.”

If the person is charged the D.A.’s Office will likely have to release the person’s identity, as it would be included in the court filings.

Meanwhile, the Tribune, citing an unnamed County spokesperson, reported that the person worked in the IT Department (Information Technologies).

The County reportedly started its investigation several weeks ago and the employee “works in a mid-level position in the department, according to the spokesperson,” the Tribune reported.

D.A. investigators will continue their investigation and the internal investigation will go on as well, as the County seeks to uncover the extent of the potential crimes.

The announcement came just a few days before the County’s employment relationship with an interim administrative officer fell apart and he resigned amidst an investigation into claims of “improper conduct toward women in violation of the County’s policy against discrimination and harassment,” according to a news release from the County Counsel’s Office.

Interim CAO, John Nilon, was officially “fired” a day later in closed session after County Supervisors got the results of the internal investigation.

Though he resigned first, he was let go rather than paid to work for another 30 days after tendering his resignation, as per Nilon’s contract.

The IT employee reportedly works in a mid-level position in the IT Department, according to The Tribune. The nature of the alleged theft — how much and how was it done? — have not been disclosed.

Shooting in Los Osos Sends Man to Hospital

The Sheriff’s Department arrested a 20-year-old Los Osos resident following an alleged shooting.

On Nov. 26, deputies responded to a report of a victim with a gunshot wound in the 1900 block of 10th Street in Los Osos a little after 1 a.m.

Sheriff’s Detectives were immediately called out to investigate the incident.

“Detectives determined a shooting had occurred at that location,” said Tony Cipolla in a news release. “A search was immediately conducted for the suspect. He was identified as 20-year-old Christian CambrayMartinez of Los Osos. Deputies were able to locate the suspect nearby and he was taken into custody.”

The victim, 29, was transported to a local hospital and is said to be in stable condition with non-life-threatening wounds, according to Cipolla.

CambrayMartinez was booked into County Jail on numerous charges including assault with a deadly weapon and violating his probation.

The investigation is ongoing. As of press deadline, no further information was available.



Christian Cambray-Martinez.

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Estero Bay News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

County Grant to Educate Young Drivers

The County of San Luis Obispo Behavioral Health Department received a \$113,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) to increase education among young adults around responsible and safe driving. The Department’s Prevention & Outreach Division will use the funds to raise awareness about the risks of impaired, distracted, and unsafe driving.

The Youth Traffic Safety Initiative grant will allow funding through September 2024 to support:

- Ongoing training and presentations to middle, high school, and college students focusing on alcohol and drug impaired, distracted, and unsafe driving.
- Educational campaigns focused on impaired and distracted driving, especially during major national traffic safety events such as Winter Mobilization Month, Superbowl, National Distracted Driving Awareness, Summer Mobilization National Teen Safe Driving Week.
- Outreach at local high-traffic events including high school rallies, Cal Poly Rodeo, community farmers markets, California Mid-State Fair, and local health fairs to increase awareness around safe driving practices.
- Needs and Wishes Fundraiser Dec. 9
- On Saturday, December 9, the 18th Annual Needs ‘n Wishes Holiday Fundraiser takes place from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. At the South Bay Community Center, 2180 Palisades Avenue, Los Osos.
- Watch the Chamber of Commerce’s Los Osos Christmas Parade, then visit with Santa, enjoy free cookies, refreshments, and entertainment. Shop at Santa’s Toy Store, Mrs. Claus Bake Shop, and bid on our huge silent auction. Be sure to get a bite to eat at Rudolph’s Kitchen and save up your spare change to fill the 2-gallon water jug.
- The event is sponsored by the South Bay Seniors - People Helping People
- to benefit 40 Prado Homeless Shelter Services Center - SLO Noor Clinic, a free health clinic for the uninsured and underinsured.
- Readers who would like to make a monetary donation, cans make out a check to People Helping People and designate Needs, N Wishes in the memo section. Mail to P.O. Box 6721, Los Osos Ca, 93442. The first \$8,000 in donations will be matched dollar for dollar. Every penny goes to Prado and SLO Noor Clinic.
- For more information, call 805 528-5800.

Low Income Housing in SLO Could Spread

The City of San Luis Obispo and its partners were recently awarded a \$400,000 award to create a community-led concierge service called SLO Green and Healthy Homes — a program that officials say, “will expand over time and the lessons learned can then be used by other communities in California and throughout the nation.”

SLO Green and Healthy Homes will help low-income building owners who want to improve their homes by investing in energy-efficient upgrades, solar panels, and high-efficiency electric appliances.

“Federal and state funds to promote energy improvements are heavily focused on low-income homeowners and, in our community, that primarily means mobile and manufactured homeowners. These improvements have the potential to provide cleaner indoor air, provide access to air conditioning, and stabilize energy bills,” said Chris Read, sustainability manager.

The program will initially focus on serving the over 1,400 mobile and manufactured homes in the community and will eventually expand to serve the entire community in the hopes of helping the City reach its climate action goal of communitywide carbon neutrality by 2035. The success of the program could see other communities implementing the process.

“There are historic levels of federal, state, and regional funding available to support building energy retrofits,” a news release said. “However, accessing these funding sources is often complicated and time consuming for many community members. The Department of Energy funding will support the City and its partners CAPSLO (Community Action Partnership of SLO County) and the Diversity Coalition of SLO County as they seek to create a program that will simplify access to the multiple funding resources.”

For more information, visit www.slocity.org/Climate-Action.



\$200,000, but well below the price tag of the 13-acre property, which was put up for sale for one million dollars. Funds were gathered over the last year and a half from more than 200 donors throughout the region.

The inlet to the Morro Bay National Estuary has been enjoyed for decades by area hikers, kayakers, birders, and others who appreciate a quiet space to take in the central coast’s beauty. It was created in the 1950s when the owners at that time dredged the marshland in an attempt to develop it for residences or vacation homes with bay access.

The proposed development never came to fruition and the land has remained vacant.

“Save Cuesta Inlet has been working with the property’s multiple owners, along with grantors, government agencies and conservancies that have expressed strong interest in the purchase and transfer of the land for public use,” said SCI representatives. “Towards that end, Save Cuesta Inlet had the property appraised and is seeking to have it purchased for the appraised amount consistent with IRS guidelines that limit government agencies and non-profit organizations to paying no more than the appraised value.”

The current appraisal value of \$700,000, is less than the \$1,000,000 asking price and all five of the private parties who own the land must agree to the sale price, negotiations are continuing. It is the fervent hope of Save Cuesta Inlet, its donors and thousands of Los Osos and area residents that a deal can be reached.

To learn more about the effort to Save Cuesta Inlet, including historic photos, maps, and an FAQ, go to savecuestainlet.org.

Cuesta Inlet, Challenges Remain

Save Cuesta Inlet Inc, the non-profit organization seeking the transfer of the privately owned Cuesta Inlet to the public domain, has reason to cheer, but work still needs to be done.

The groups fundraising efforts have now approached

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Community
Taylor Wins CIF; Girls Qualify for State



Morro Bay High's Girls' Varsity Cross Country Team pose for photos on the winner's stage to accept their 2nd Place plaque after the CIF Central Section Finals held Nov. 16 in Clovis' Woodward Park.

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay High School's Girls' Varsity Cross Country Team won a chance to compete for a State Championship after the girls took second at the CIF Central Section Div. 4 Finals and the top Lady Pirate runner won a CIF Championship; so too the Pirates' best boys' team runner.

Shelby Wins

Morro Bay's Shelby Taylor raced to an over-10-second win in the Div. 4 race leading the Lady Pirates to a second place finish behind Kerman. Taylor's winning time in the 3-mile race was 19 minutes 09.02 seconds, far ahead of second place finisher, Anna Villavicencio of Woodlake in 19:13.65 and Alyana Chaves of Roosevelt was third (19:34.32). Fourth went to Jaslyn Rodriguez of Liberty of Madera in 19:47.61 and fifth was Irene Martinez of Matilda Torres in 19:57.44. The next highest MBHS runner was ninth place, Mia Bennett in 20:49.83 and third best was Lilith Buller (16th, 21:18.01). Noleena Fahy was 87th (24:05.26) and Jane Hotaling was 105th in 24:45.83;

followed by Astrid Barnett-Davis (138th, 25:57.2). Bennett and Taylor both received individual CIF medals and there were 204 runners in the Div. 4 girls' race.

In the team scoring, Kerman won CIF with 95 points, and Morro Bay was second with 112. Third was Arvin with 145 points; Matilda Torres H.S. was fourth with 169 points; and fifth went to Roosevelt with 174.

Morro Bay's CIF win followed up on the Girls' Ocean League Championship just a week prior. Should they triumph at the State Meet they would be the first MBHS cross country team to ever win a State Championship, though there have been individual champions, including twice by Isaiah Festa and current Pirates' head coach Jennifer Frere (when she was Jennifer Lacovara).

Kelly Takes Second

Morro Bay's top runner, Otis Kelly, ran the race of his life so far taking second in the Div. 4 race, and leading the Pirates to a sixth place finish, but out of the money for the whole team to qualify for State. Kelly clocked 16:07.71 in the 3-mile race behind winner Evan Torres of Parlier in 15:53.23. Israel Gutierrez of Del Oro was third in 16:28.25; and fourth was Kade Ketterman of Taft Union (16:45.25). Jose

Delgadillo of McFarland was fifth in 16:51.51. Morro Bay's other top runners were: Lucas McAlpine (51st, 18:24.07); Eli Waldman (55th, 18:30.12); Nathan Fuller (75th, 19:01.49); Dominic Holst (88th, 19:23.20); and Joaquin Cuellar (110th, 19:50.68). There were 217 runners in this race and only Kelly medaled for Morro Bay.

Del Oro took the team title with 60 points; Justin Garza was second with 88; and McFarland was third with 108. Fourth went to Nipomo with 160; Taft Union was fifth (213); and Morro Bay sixth with 248 points.

Kelly will now compete in the State Meet as an individual.

Both Are Young Teams

It should be noted that the girls' Taylor, Wilson, and Buller are all freshman and have potentially three more seasons to



Morro Bay High's Otis Kelly runs all alone in the Boys' Div. 4 finals, coming in second place and qualifying for the State Meet. Photo by Roger Warnes



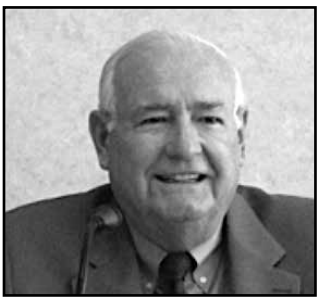
From left: Shelby Taylor, Mia Bennett and Otis Kelly bite down on the CIF medals they took home; with Taylor and Bennett holding the team's second place plaque.

compete. Bennett is a junior. The girls will lose seniors, Fahy and Hotaling to graduation after this season. On the boy's side, Kelly is the Pirates' only senior, and Walker and Waldman are both juniors. Fuller, Cuellar and Holst are sophomores, and McAlpine is a freshman.

Morro Bay Author to Sign New Book

A retired Morro Bay computer expert and teacher is now dabbling in science fiction, after a lifetime teaching the world about the computing future. Dr. Robert Bliss, PhD, will sign his new science fiction novel, "A.N.G.E.L.S., Inc.," which is an acronym for "American Genetically-Engineered Lifeforms," from 1-3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2 outside Coalesce Bookstore, 845 Main St., during the weekly Saturday Farmer's Market. According to a press release, "The story is about the first genetically-engineered humans. One is a young man who becomes the Heavyweight Boxing Champion, and two others are stunning women and dead-ringers for movie stars Charlize Theron and Penelope Cruz." As the story unfolds, all three are hap-

pily married to normal humans, successful and with seemingly normal, idyllic lives but something is just off. Set in California and Las Vegas in "the near future," ANGELS, Inc., is "a hard-hitting action-adventure, as the boxer slugs his way to the title. It also entwines three touching love stories, as the



Dr. Robert Bliss, PhD, will sign his new science fiction novel, 'A.N.G.E.L.S., Inc.' Saturday, Dec. 2 outside Coalesce Bookstore.

Morro Bay Author Continued on page 13

Advertisement for FitnessWorks Morro Bay, featuring holiday specials, membership offers, and contact information.

Advertisement for the Morro Bay Rotary Club's 2023 Lighted Boat Parade, including pre-parade festivities, parade details, and entry applications.

Police Blotter



• **Nov. 19:** Police responded at 9:25 p.m. to some Zhlub disturbing the peace of decent society in the 400 block of Morro Bay Blvd. A 43-year-old bounder was nicked for suspicion of being drunk & disorderly.

• **Nov. 19:** Police contacted a suspicious man at 7:30 p.m. in the area of Harbor and Main. Logs indicated the 23-year-old apparent Fresnoid had a felony warrant from Fresno County and was checked into the Parkinson Plaza.

• **Nov. 19:** Police contacted a suspicious woman, 21, in the area of Harbor and Main apparently acting like a fooligan. She was arrested for suspicion of being overly inebriated and tossed into the gaol.

• **Nov. 19:** Police contacted a suspicious woman hanging around the Community Center at 2 a.m. The 55-year-old apparent nillionaire had a bench warrant out of Kings County and was cited and released, as sometimes the juice isn't worth the squeeze.

• **Nov. 18:** Police responded at 10:56 p.m. to the 700 block of Quintana for a suspicious subject in the Albertson's parking lot. Logs indicated they contacted a 24-year-old allegedly soused probationer and returned him to the loving arms of the Sheriff.

• **Nov. 18:** Police contacted a regular customer, 49, at 11:35 p.m. in the 900 block of Piney Way. She had a bench warrant and was issued another useless summons and released.

• **Nov. 18:** Police were called to a disturbance at 1:49 p.m. in the 1200 block of Embarcadero. Logs indicated the 66-year-old citizen of the year was allegedly drunk & disorderly and slept it off on a block of concrete in County Jail.

• **Nov. 17:** Some scalawag vandalized a boat in the 300 block of Embarcadero. In another cruel act, some hooligan vandalized the former teen center in the 200 block of Atascadero Rd.

• **Nov. 17:** Police responded at 12:16 p.m. to the 500 block of Kings for a reported possible kidnapping of a child.

• **Nov. 16:** Police responded at 10:23 p.m. to the 1300 block of Main where they contacted an old friend with a bench warrant. The 62-year-old scofflaw was cited and unleashed again.

• **Nov. 15:** Police responded at 11:32 p.m. to a report of a suspicious subject in the area of Casitas and Nutmeg. A 39-year-old regular customer was contacted. She also allegedly possessed paraphernalia and was arrested, her stash no doubt already shot.

• **Nov. 15:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 11:37 p.m. in the 600 block of Atascadero Rd. The woman driver, 30, was nicked for suspicion of driving poo-pooed.

• **Nov. 15:** Police responded to a disturbance at 6:30 p.m. in the 400 block of Monterey. Logs indicated a man was hauled to County Mental Health for 72-hours of no doubt much needed rest and relaxation.

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• **Nov. 15:** Police responded at 10:45 a.m. to the 500 block of Pacific where someone had passed away.

• **Nov. 14:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 10:13 a.m. in the 800 block of Embarcadero. The 65-year old had a bench warrant and was issued another citation to ignore and released.

• **Nov. 14:** Police responded at 8:27 a.m. to a traffic collision at South Bay and Quintana. Sorry, no gruesome details to report.

• **Nov. 13:** Police took a report of suspected child abuse in the 500 block of Dawson.

• **Nov. 13:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 9:41 p.m. at Scott and Morro. A 19-year-old rookie was arrested for suspicion of driving stultified and not having an actual driver's license, which over the next couple of years will come to seem normal.

• **Nov. 12:** A 45-year-old man paid two visits to the hoosegow over one no doubt very long day. It started at 2:17 a.m. in the 200 block of Atascadero Rd., with a report of a piflicated fellow raising Cain. He was arrested for allegedly being too drunk to pass go, a case of the nail that sticks out getting hammered. Then at 11:35 p.m. the same day police returned to the scene for another disturbance and the same man was arrested for suspicion of threatening his wife and stepson. The hot head made an encore appearance at the County cooler.

• **Nov. 12:** Police responded at 9:18 a.m. to the 700 block of Embarcadero where some disturbing woman apparently got up on the wrong side of the tent. The hellcat, 39, was arrested for suspicion of disorderly conduct due to being bent on illegal drugs and possession of a glass crack pipe.

• **Nov. 11:** Police responded at 9:51 p.m. to a disturbance in the 700 block of Morro. Logs indicated a 45-year-old reveler was nicked for suspicion of going woolly-booger.

• **Nov. 11:** Someone found a set of car keys at in the 500 block of Piney Way and left it to police to unlock the mystery.

• **Nov. 11:** At 11:15 a.m. police contacted a suspicious fellow at Beach and West. The 66-year-old swizzle stick was hauled to the hoosegow for suspicion of being twisted in public.

• **Nov. 10:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 9:31 p.m. in the 2100 block of Laurel. Logs indicated a 67-year-old woman was arrested on suspicion of driving toasted and was taken to the hospital for a bloodletting before going to County Jail for some tear shedding.

• **Nov. 10:** Police responded at 5:39 p.m. to the 400 block of Quintana where two people had gone shopping but

Canet Road From page 1

to find out how many years, a walk-bridge was constructed over Chorro Creek.”

Chorro Creek starts far back in Chorro Valley on Camp San Luis lands and meanders mostly through the southern side of Chorro Valley fed by a series of smaller creeks flowing mostly from the mountains on the opposite side of the valley — San Bernardo Creek, as well as San Luisito and Dairy Creek, among others.

A Long History

The website, put up by Dr. Guy and LaRonda Chirman, goes on to explain that the creek’s history goes back to the days when California was owned by Mexico and Chorro Valley was carved up into huge ranchos. It’s colorful.

“Chorro,” they wrote, “is a word that Mexican people used as a synonym for ‘diarrhea.’ Whether the locals know it or not, they are living on a tributary that, at one time, sent raw sewage to the Pacific Ocean. A hundred years ago, that’s the way it was done.”

Raw sewage no longer flows down the creek but it is fed by treated wastewater from a sewage treatment plant upstream behind Cuesta College and owned by the California Men’s Colony State Prison. That discharge is what keeps Chorro Creek flowing year-round.

“We’ve come a long way,” the post continued, “since Jose Canet settled the area more than a century ago. A sewage treatment plant was erected up stream and the stream began to come back to life. Residents say there were lots of steelhead fish and many turtles amongst other wildlife.”

Chorro Creek is one of two main sources of freshwater to the Morro Bay National Estuary.

apparently paying slipped their minds and they skedaddled with several no doubt precious and valuable items.

• **Nov. 10:** Someone found a phone down by the beach and police have it now.

• **Nov. 10:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 5:55 a.m. on Quintana at Buena Vista. The 24-year-old driving was nicked for suspicion of being half cut behind the wheel, as he was apparently out late and not up early. It was the scofflaw’s second encounter with Johnny Law in a couple of days, as back on Nov. 7, at 1:24 a.m. he was stopped at Monterey and Beach and cited for a suspended license, a case of will dinguses never learn.

• **Nov. 9:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 9 p.m. in the 1700 block of Main. Logs indicated the 38-year-old driver had two bench warrants and a suspended license but was just cited and released, no doubt part of the new reimagining policing craze.

• **Nov. 9:** Police responded at 12:31 a.m. to a disturbance in the 1500 block of Quintana. Logs indicated someone was taken to County Mental Health for a 72-hour timeout.

• **Nov. 8:** Someone turned in an electric scooter they found in the 2500 block of Greenwood. Someone else turned in a bag of dope for police to destroy that they reportedly found in the 2400 block of Main.

• **Nov. 8:** Police responded to the 500 block of Dawson for a report of a runaway juvenile.

• **Nov. 7:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 11:35 p.m. at Main and Atascadero Road. Logs indicated the 34-year-old driver might have gotten away but for a miserable failure of the sobriety test.

• **Nov. 7:** Police responded at 7:40 p.m. to a reported trespasser in the 1000 block of Main. Logs indicated a 21-year-old raucous boor was arrested for suspicion of open container, carrying a concealed deadly weapon (a knife), and being plastered in public, which might explain a lot.

• **Nov. 7:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 12:48 a.m. in the 700 block of Quintana. The 27-year-old had a bench warrant and got a second disappearance ticket and was released back into the wild.

• **Nov. 6:** Police were called to a disturbance at 9:26 p.m. in the 900 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated they encountered a 49-year-old woman and arrested her for suspicion of being stoned on drugs.

• **Nov. 6:** Police responded to a disturbance report at 8:22 p.m. in the 400 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated a 21-year-old hombre was pipped at the post for suspicion of possessing drugs, and being schwasted on drugs.

Walk-Bridge a Solution

“So that’s the setting,” the post continued, “the cars used to travel over the creek bed. When traveling over the creek bed became impassable, everyone would use the walk-bridge. As best we can tell, the walk-bridge has been there since the 1970s.”

“Driving through polluted water was one thing,” they continued, “but walking through it was another. So a walk-bridge was erected over a water pipe supplying the City of Morro Bay. This was primarily done to allow City officials access to their wells even when the creek made driving over impossible to do.”

Old Infrastructure

The City of Morro Bay has long had water wells scattered along Canet Road, as well as Chorro Creek Road, just a short distance west of Canet.

For decades the Chorro Valley wells supplied the majority of Morro Bay’s drinking water, until an issue arose over the City’s prescriptive water rights to the wells.

In essence, the City was prohibited from pumping the wells within a certain distance of the creek, whenever Chorro Creek’s flow drops below 1.4-cubic feet per second.

With the arrival of State Water in the mid-1990s, the City stopped pumping nearly all of those Chorro Valley wells. Now, over 25-years later, the wells out there are no longer in use and aren’t likely to be put back into use, now that the City is working on recycling its wastewater from its new treatment plant.

Canet Road Continued on page 19

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Photo by Danna Dykstra-Coy

Holiday Events for Everyone



Annual Christmas Tree Lighting



Harris Stage Lines



Edna Valley Carriage Rides

Join the fun for the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting in Cayucos at 5 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 3 at the Corner of Ocean Avenue & D St. Festivities include a warm welcome and the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus accompanied by a fire engine. Enjoy Christmas carols and refreshments. Santa's quaint Victoria home will be open for visitors until 6:30 p.m.

Ring in the holidays by finding something special for everyone on your shopping list at the 13th Annual Cayucos Christmas Open House from 5 – 8 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9. This event, full of family fun, community celebration, and Christmas cheer, is a great time to visit Cayucos businesses and see what they have to offer.

Families can also enjoy a free horse-drawn wagon ride, a tractor-pulled wagon ride, craft stations, entertainment, and refreshments. Harris Stage Lines and Edna Valley

Carriage Rides provide the wagon rides and Woody's Adventures has rides throughout town as well.

Santa and Mrs. Claus look forward to little visitors home, but watch out for the Grinch — rumor has it that stealing Christmas is planned by little heart of his.

The Cayucos Christmas is hosted by the Cayucos Chamber of Commerce, Cayucos Rotary and Cayucos merchants. Join the spirit and fun along Ocean Avenue and Cayucos Drive in downtown.



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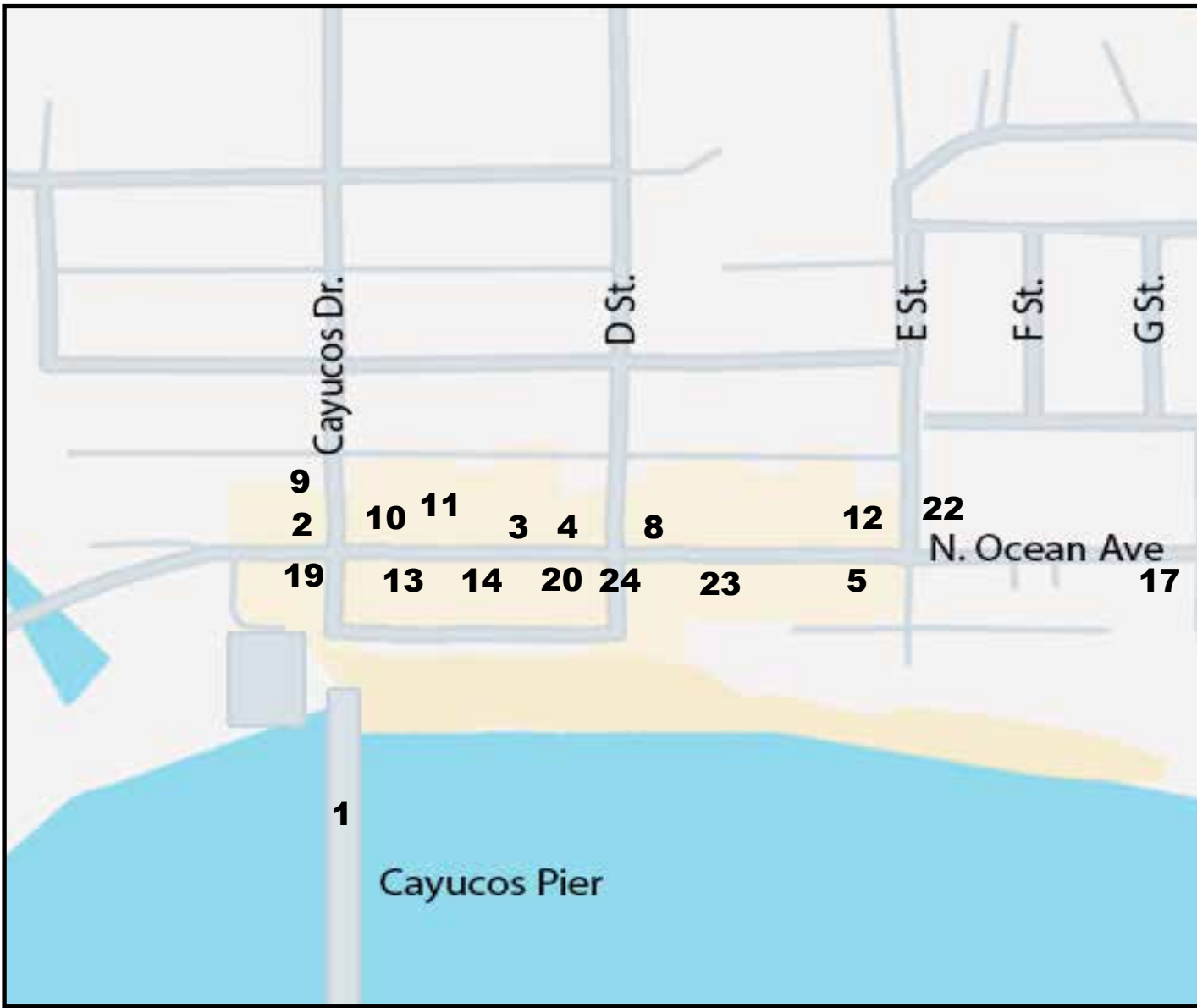


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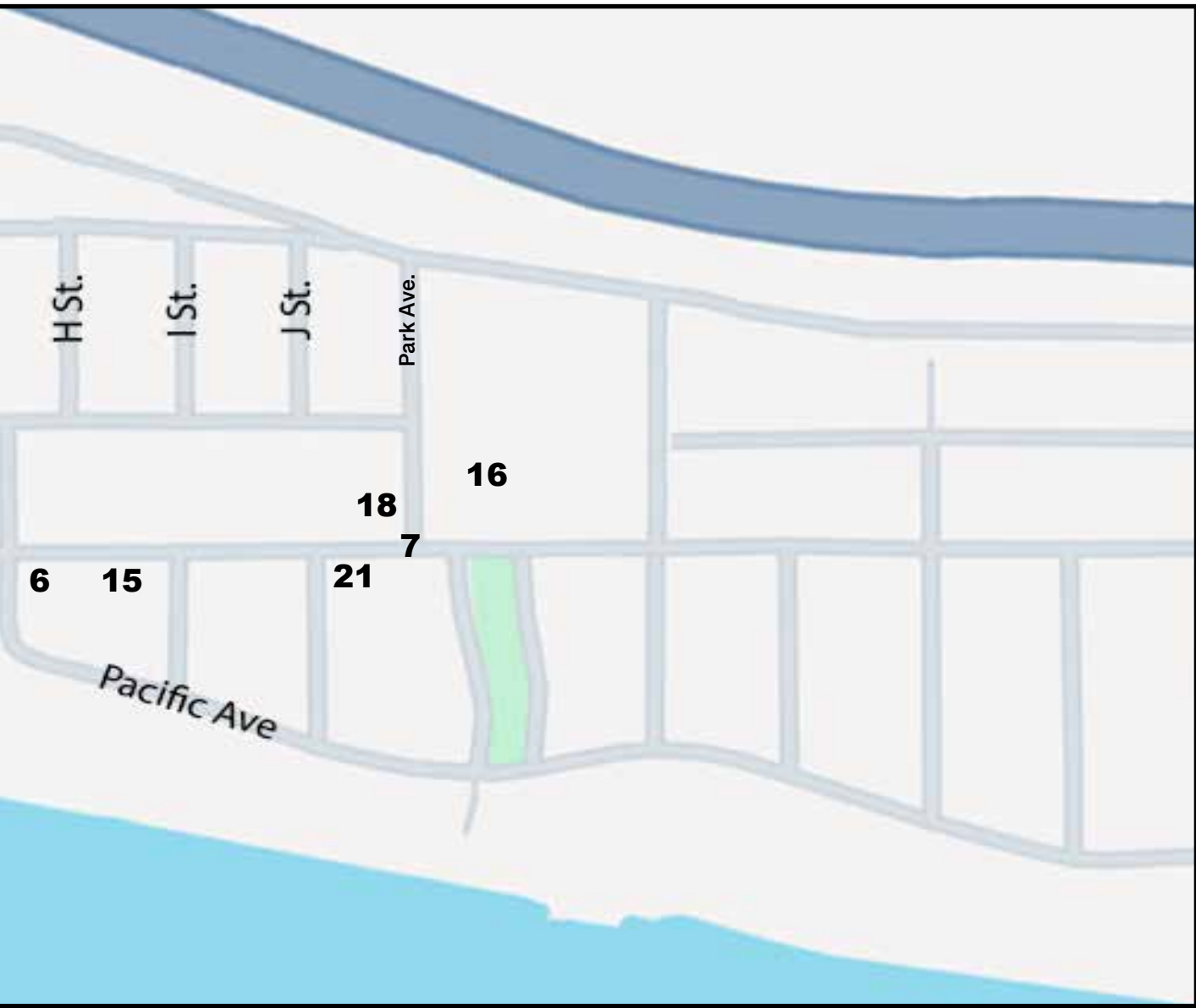
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events happening in Cayucos



- 13. **Make You Own Smares**
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- 16. **Refreshments**
- 17. **Cocoa & Drawing for
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- 18. **Pet Potraits**
- 19. **Wine and Gift Basket Drawing**
- 20. **Gift Drawing**
- 21. **Face Painting**
- 22. **Ortiment Crafts for all ages
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- 23. **Pick a gift from under the
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- 24. **Wine and a drawing for an
Adventure**
- 25. **Rides also provide by Woody's
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Christmas Pet Portraits

Cayucos’ Unleashed Grooming Salon and Spa is holding holiday photo shoots of the furry members of your family.
Event photographer Linda Hamilton is recognized as a premier photographer across California and Nevada.
Hamilton has won awards for her photographic style and excellence.
Her specialty ranges from portraits, weddings, commercial events and the last 5 years

she’s been concentrating on animal photography.
Living in Las Vegas with her husband, two sons and a 5-year-old mini Goldendoodle, she travels to California, Arizona, Utah and Tennessee to accommodate her clients.
Unleashed Grooming Salon and Spa is located at 287 S. Ocean Ave. in Cayucos. Give them a call at 805-602-7557 to make an appointment.

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It's Going To Be a Kitty Christmas



It is the “Bring a Kitten Home for the Holidays! event” and the Feline Network has so many adorable cats and kittens available for adoption. All are spayed or neutered, tested, microchipped and vaccinated. The Holiday Special adoption fee is \$100 for one kitten. If you adopt two kittens, the second one is only \$50 “There is no better way to celebrate the holidays than to adopt a cute, cuddly, adorable kitten,” said Feline Network volunteer, Kristin Perl. “And if you want double the fun, we give a discount for a pair of kittens.”

See all of the kittens at PetsMart, 1530 Froom Ranch Way in SLO, on Saturday December 2, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



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Los Osos Holiday Festivities

Get your holly jolly on and spread cheer throughout the community. The Los Osos/Baywood Park Chamber of Commerce invites the community to its upcoming holiday festivities.

“Let’s embrace the holiday spirit together,” said Chamber officials. Kick off the celebrations on December 8, at 5 p.m. with the Christmas Tree Lighting, located at 2180 Palisades Ave. A sing-a-long and refreshments will follow, so warm up your pipes. Continuing on with the holiday spirit,

December 9, the highly anticipated Holiday Parade -- Holiday in Paradise -- starts at 10 a.m. at LOVR and Fairchild. Start the day right by joining the Chamber for a scrumptious Bay-Osos Kiwanis Pancake breakfast at 8 a.m. Don’t Grinch out just yet, everyone is encouraged to participate in the Light Up Los Osos competition. Ongoing registration runs until December 18 with judging from December 18 to 22. For more information or to sign up for the parade, visit lobpchamber.org.

Letter to the Editor

How a Functioning Democracy Works



Do you have expertise in a certain area? Maybe you have experience in a field and have studied and prepared to use your knowledge in a gainful way. Elected officials can claim a certain expertise apart from and above many of their constituents. They turned the levers of power to get themselves elected. They know how to collaborate with other elected officials, staff, and the public. Their knowledge of ordinances and regulations is greater than those of us in the general public. If they’re good, they know how things work and how to get things done, i.e., how to govern. We as citizens have areas of interest as well. We have responsibilities to obey laws, pay taxes, and to know enough to be an informed voter, at least. Sometimes we need to let our elected officials know our opinions, when we have a point of view on an issue where our opinions matter. What good citizens do is, we know when to provide input to City Council, and when to let them make a decision based on the facts, the financial needs of the City, and on the wants and needs of the entire electorate. What has happened is that our meetings and forums and workshops and town

halls are driven by public opinion as defined by those who have the freedom to attend. There is a brief introductory description of a problem with little or no further dissemination of information. The backstory of an issue, what brings it to the level of public attention, what recent developments or current conditions that exist is barely covered. Then public comment begins. An informal study uncovers the fact that much of the letter-writing, public comments, and airtime is taken up by a few names. Often, the opinions stated are repetitious and predictable. New and needed information takes place during the business session, which is shortened by time constraints. People who frequent City Council meetings must be brief and business-like in their comments. Public officials must realize that the vast majority of citizens expect that those officials are doing their due diligence on topics of vital public interest and that they are making decisions based on facts. That’s how a functioning representative democracy works.

Carol Swain
Morro Bay

Happy Holidays

Deck the halls and jingle those bells! The Los Osos/ Baywood Park Chamber of Commerce cordially invites you to our merry and bright Holiday Events. Join us for festive fun, scrumptious treats, and more, because 'tis the season to be jolly!

- Christmas Tree Lighting 12/08/23 starting at 5pm
2180 Palisades Ave, Los Osos, CA 93402
- Holiday Parade 12/09/23 starting at 10am
LOVR & Fairchild where the parade starts
Bay-Osos Kiwanis Pancake breakfast at 8am
- Light Up Los Osos: Registration Starts now and will end 12/18/23. Judging will take place from 12/18/23 through 12/22/23

Morro Bay Author From page 7
Angels fall in love.” Bliss explained, “Scientists today disagree on which technological development was the most significant in the 20th Century — the automobile, the airplane, nuclear weapons, the computer, organ transplants, etc.? But, there’s no disagreement on what will be the most significant in the 21st Century — genetic engineering.” Bliss was a college professor for 30 years, and was the founder and chairman of the Computer Systems Department at Saddleback College in Mission Viejo, Calif. Prior to that, he was a technical writer and systems analyst in the computer and aerospace industries. While there, he went to night school and earned an associate degree in physical science from Cerritos College and then earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in management from Cal State Fullerton. With an MBA in hand, Bliss worked part time at two colleges for a couple of years before landing a full-time job at Saddleback College, where he went on to earn a doctorate degree in administration of higher education from Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Bliss made three television series for computer education. “In 1988,” the release said, “his ‘Computer Talk’ show allowed

viewers to phone in questions, which he answered on the air. In 1989, Saddleback videotaped 28 of his Computer Systems lectures and broadcast them as a telecourse for several years. In 1990, he made the ‘Computer Literacy with Dr. Bliss’ series at KOCE-TV, the PBS station in Orange County. John Wiley & Sons distributed that series nationally.” Bliss’ imagination has always been in sci-fi stories, a fascination that started at 7. At his high school Science Fair, the news release said, he lectured on space flight 4-years before the Russians launched Sputnik and started the Space Race. In 1968, his vision saw the future when he won an employee suggestion box award “for recommending a machine we now call the Fax.” These days, Bliss said he’s most interested in “intelligent robots, and genetic engineering.” “While teaching at Saddleback College,” the release said, “he took sabbaticals at the Artificial Intelligence Lab at M.I.T.; the Robotics Institute at Carnegie-Mellon; and the Knowledge Engineering Lab at Stanford. He also studied with professors at Harvard and Dartmouth “who used A.I. Expert Systems for business decision-making.”

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Takin' Care of BUSINESS

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Cambria Hospitality Night

The Cambria Chamber of Commerce Hospitality Night takes place Monday, December 4 from 3 to 7 p.m. Chamber officials are spreading the word. "We would love to hear from you if you are planning anything for that day." Main events in the Village from 3 to 7 p.m. Your business may celebrate all day if you want.

- The festivities include:
- A decorating that started November 24
 - There is a scavenger hunt again this year. By December 1, the Chamber will bring participants a poster, a wine glass to hide, and the QR code for people to register when they find your wine glass. Let the Chamber know you want to participate; we will come to all the businesses in person.
 - Santa will meet with children in the East & West Villages.
 - Music and food and fun throughout town.
 - Real Estate Company of Cambria will have food and beverages at their offices.
 - The Place will have 20% off store wide all day!
 - University Women will be at the Historical Society. They are again pairing with the library to offer free books to children (babies through high school).
 - Lights and demonstrations by the Lawn Bowlers Club at the Joslyn Center. AND free lessons in lawn bowling from 2:30 until dark.
 - Hotdogs by the Sons of the American Legion outside the Chamber!
 - Chips and lemonade provided by the American Legion Auxiliary outside the Chamber to go with your hotdog.
 - Coffee and hot chocolate at the Cambria Coffee Company next to the Chamber!
 - Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch & Preserve will be open for visitors next to

Sandy's Deli.

- Cutruzzola Vineyards will offer 2-for-1 tastings and 15% off for all in store purchases on Hospitality Night. We encourage all locals to stop in for a tasting, a glass of wine, or stock up on wine and merchandise.
- Popcorn! and H.A.R.T. at Mimosa's.
- Tree Lighting at the Cambria Historical Society!

For more information, go to cambria-chamber.org/hospitality-night-2023/.

12 Free Parking Days in Downtown SLO

Everyone will have 12 more reasons to support local businesses in downtown San Luis Obispo this holiday season – 12 Days of Free Parking.

"Community members can enjoy the festivities and shopping in our vibrant downtown San Luis Obispo and park for free on certain days this holiday season," said Jennifer Rice, deputy director of Mobility Services for the City's Public Works Department. "We invite the community to explore the heart of San Luis Obispo and support local businesses in person and park for free in the downtown public parking structures for one hour every day plus all day on the 12 Days of Free Parking. To spread even more holiday cheer, we are also offering free parking downtown during the annual holiday parade."

The remaining 12 Days of Free Parking are only on the following days in all three public parking structures (842 Palm Street, 919 Palm Street, and 871 Marsh Street):

Sundays Dec. 3, 10 and 17, Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, Christmas Day, Dec. 25, the day after Christmas, Dec. 26, New Year's Eve, Dec. 31 and New Year's Day, Jan. 1.

SLO Transit Route 2A is Changing Soon

Two SLO Transit bus stops will be

removed from Route 2A, but will continue to be serviced by other routes, to improve reliability and on-time service.

Community members who ride the bus in San Luis Obispo can soon expect improved reliability and on-time service on Route 2A. SLO Transit is realigning Route 2A and removing two stops effective December 1, 2023.

"We are continually improving our services to better meet the needs of the community. This minor realignment is a great example of flexible and responsive transit operations," says Alex Fuchs, the City's mobility services business manager.

Route 2A will no longer serve the bus stops Dalidio at Froom and Dalidio at Madonna, but these stops will continue to be available on SLO Transit Routes 2B, 3A, and 3B. SLO Transit Route 2A will instead now serve a nearby bus stop (Madonna at Oceanaire) 48 minutes after the hour.

SLO Transit bus riders are encouraged to contact Transit Dispatch at (805) 541-2877 along with visiting www.slotransit.org, or the SLO Transit app, for current service status prior to planning their trip.

For more information on routes and schedules, contact SLO Transit Dispatch by phone at (805) 541-2877, by email at slotransit@slocity.org, or online at www.slotransit.org.

Tap the Power of Core Values

Spokes hosts Tapping the Hidden Power of Core Values on Dec. 12 at 4 p.m. This class is designed for nonprofit leaders—CEOs, executive directors, board members and others in leadership positions. This class is a live, in-person event held at People's Self-Help Housing, 1060 Kendall Rd, San Luis Obispo, near SLO County. The cost is \$70 for non-members, \$45 for Spokes members and \$20 each additional person from the same member organization.



Zette Harbour, a leadership and development coach, will facilitate a workshop for non-profits.

"Our nonprofit organizations have values. Each of us has values. They may be implicit," Spokes said in a press release. "They may be explicit. They may be listed in our strategic plans, our brochures, and on our walls.

"But do we truly know what our core values are? Are we clearly aware of those most deeply held values that frame how we make decisions, build relationships and solve problems?"

Core values are the often-unseen drivers that propel you and your staff as you work to deliver your mission. Allowing them to remain unconscious sets your organization up for unpleasant and sometimes negative consequences.

The problem could be as simple as interoffice friction or as complicated as losing a major supporter. Understanding how to identify and effectively employ organizational and individual Core Values enables you to create success for you, your team, and those whom you serve.

In this workshop, participants will experience increased clarity about the measurable benefits of Core Values Mastery, a strategy you can use in your organization to help:

- Eliminate mission creep
- Improve and streamline team communication
- Strengthen client relationships
- Increase organizational productivity
- Attract highly qualified staff, board, and patrons
- Enhance community awareness

To register or find more information about the event, visit <https://bit.ly/spokes-valuesworkshop>.

AARP Tax-Aide Announces New Volunteer Recruitment

Due to continuing demand for AARP Tax-Aide's free tax preparation and e-filing services for seniors and low to moderate income taxpayers, the SLO County Tax-Aide program is seeking volunteers for the 2024 tax season. Volunteers are needed for both tax return preparer positions, as well as client facilitators, and call-center positions. All volunteers will receive training and IRS certification.

- Qualified volunteers should:
- Be reasonably skilled using a computer
 - Have previously used tax preparation or other software
 - Like working in a collaborative team environment
 - And want to "Pay It Forward"
- Then you may find AARP Tax-Aide a rewarding volunteer experience. Go to www.ccfreetax.org, for information. The program has nine locations in the county spanning Paso Robles to Nipomo.
- AARP Tax-Aide has been providing tax preparation service to Central Coast residents for more than 30 years. The approximately 75 local AARP tax counselors and other volunteers are trained annually, are IRS certified, and provide services across the county at nine preparation sites.

SLO Wayfarer



Matt Marquis (CEO of Pacifica Hotels), Senator John Laird, Golda Mae Escalante (general manager, Wayfarer San Luis Obispo), Adam Marquis (president of Pacifica Hotels) and Rey Rodriguez (former task force director of sales). Photo submitted

Ribbon Cutting

A ribbon cutting ceremony and grand opening party was held recently at the newly rebranded Wayfarer San Luis Obispo. The ceremony included the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce, California State Senator John Laird, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo administration and faculty, and a special performance from the Cal Poly San Luis Obispo marching band. Senator Laird presented the hotel with a certificate of welcoming in honor of the property's opening.

Following the ribbon cutting ceremony, guests enjoyed food and drinks from the hotel's restaurant, Schoolyard Burgers & Brew, and browsed booths from local SLOCAL makers. Participating vendors included Infinity Metals SLO, The Mayan Collective, Peachy Pairs, Taddo's Tallow, Central Coast Stitchworks and Forever Stoked Art. In addition, guests tried sips from local companies including Tablas Creek Winery, Tooth & Nail Winery, Antigua Brewing, Firestone Walker Brewing Company, SLO Cider and Sabe Ready to Drink Cocktails.

The Wayfarer SLO offers 100 boutique rooms and suites that mix collegiate flair with modern amenities, with design details like collage-style photographs on the walls, world globes and old-school typewriters throughout.

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.

The Carols of Christmas
December 3, 2023
6 pm

Join us for an evening celebrating the coming of Christ through Scripture and Carols, accompanied by organ, piano, and strings. Bring along a Christmas snack or dessert to share!

Community Baptist Church of San Luis Obispo
51 Foothill Blvd. * San Luis Obispo, CA 93405 * 805-543-6546
cbcslo1938@gmail.com * facebook.com/cbcslo/ * cbcslo.org

Community

Alcohol Sales From page 1

The other license that was approved is for another convenience store under construction now on The Embarcadero. That store too will be connected to a small motel at the Harborwalk Plaza development.

The Inn’s license request goes back a few months. “In July 2023, Escape Hospitality LLC [Hampton Inn], the property owner of the property,” reads the staff report from Community Development Director Scot Graham, “requested a letter of support from the City of Morro Bay for approval from California Alcohol and Beverage Control to allow alcohol sales” at the Hampton Inn. “The intent of the Hampton Inn,” Graham continued, “is to make available the sale of beer and wine to hotel guests within the gift store in the hotel.”

Such matters are routine, so long as ABC has not determined that there are too many such licenses in one area, which apparently ABC has done. That means a city (or county) needs to send in a letter of recommendation.

“ABC,” Graham said, “has identified this area of the City as having an over concentration of alcohol sales licenses triggering a requirement for the applicant to obtain a letter of support from the City in favor of a ‘Determination of Public Convenience and Necessity’ for issuance of the ABC license in this location.”

In the immediate area of Hampton Inn are several mini-mart style stores — a USA Gas Station (formerly a Chevron Station), Circle Z, Cork & Bottle Liquor — that all sell beer and wine to go.

Indeed, the town has an abundance of places that either sell, serve or make alcoholic beverages, with nearly 50 bars and restaurants and all but the fast food places have at least beer and wine.

On the Embarcadero there are six full liquor bars/restaurants; plus there are two grocery stores and a chain drug store in town that sell hooch by the gallon. There are five gas station/mini-marts; four straight up liquor stores; five wine tasting

rooms; and two brewpubs.

All told, that’s a lot of alcohol outlets for a town of just over 10,000 souls. The police department had no objections to adding another.

“The hotel use serves visitors to Morro Bay,” Graham said, “and the request to allow the sale of beer and wine at the hotel is a reasonable ancillary use to the hotel.

“Both the Police and Community Development Departments have reviewed the request and found no reason to deny the sale of alcohol at this location.”

Graham had already notified the Inn’s owners, Hemant and Jalpa Patel Hampton

Inn (dba Escape Hospitality, LLC) that he saw no reason to deny them a letter but it had to have the council’s blessings.

“I reviewed the documents,” Graham’s letter reads, “and I support the application of alcohol sales and license type for the above location. The Community Development Department has no concerns or issues to express.”

He added that the city council authorized the letter of recommendation be sent.

The Patel Family built the 83-room Hampton Inn and also owns several other motels in town.

Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

By the Sea Productions presents the California premiere of “A Rainbow Holiday” by Lori Sigrist and Joe Simonelli.

Thanksgiving dinner at the home of Maggie Anderson and Jerry Collins was supposed to be simple this year. Maggie is expecting her son and his pie-loving boyfriend for the holiday. What she’s not expecting is a surprise visit from her Fundamental Christian daughter and her new husband, both vegan. Added to the mix are Jerry’s daughter and her husband who are going through a crisis of their own. Maggie attempts to walk a hilarious tightrope to keep the holiday peaceful, setting the table for laughter and tears.

Samvel Gottlieb directs the cast featuring Rosemarie Lagunas, Russell Snow, Jeremy Engel, Molly Pendley, Elizabeth Renee Bolyard, Tim Linzey, Ryanne Howard, and Randal Sumabat. Show dates are Friday and Saturday at 7 pm and Sunday at 3 pm, through Dec. 3 at 545 Shasta Ave. Morro Bay. Reserve tickets at bytheseaproductions.org or call 805-776-3287.

The Kiwanis Club of Bay-Osos is again selling See’s Candy for the holidays. All proceeds go to support children’s activities in Morro Bay and Los Osos. Help

kids and enjoy a traditional treat by visiting the booth next to the Post Office in Los Osos. Get a few boxes for your friends and clients, too! For more information, call (805) 801-8793.



The Cal Poly Choirs, which include Cantabile, Chamber Choir, PolyPhonics and University Singers, present the seventh annual “Holiday Kaleidoscope” at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 1, in the Performing Arts Center. As a special treat, the concert includes performances by the Cal Poly Wind Ensemble, and the Cuesta College Chamber Singers, directed by John Knutson.

In what has become an annual tradition, the Cabrillo Madrigal Singers from Lompoc will make a guest appearance, directed by Cal Poly graduate Jennifer Peterson (Music, ’95), as well as Cal Poly a cappella groups Take it SLO and That’s the

Events Continued on page 18

Mountain Lion From page 1

The big cat is known by over 40 different common names including but not limited to puma, cougar, panther, red tiger, catamount, and screamer.

“Mountain lions inhabit diverse habitat types across California including temperate redwood forest, coniferous / deciduous forest, coastal chaparral, foothills and mountains,” The CDFW website states. “They can be found wherever native or introduced ungulates such as mule deer, elk, bighorn sheep, or feral hogs are present.”

In the past, Skip and his camera have captured mice, woodrats, rabbits, opossums, raccoons, coyotes, a barn owl (on the ground), a great horned owl (on the ground), deer, quail, a mallard duck, crows, innumerable small birds, a pair of grey foxes, a red fox, and a long-tailed weasel. That night the other visitors were a little scarce in the presence of the lion.

“In the 24 hours after the lion’s visit, only an injured doe walked down the game trail,” Skip said. “Coyotes, raccoons, two big bucks and even skunks were noticeable

by their absence.”

Signs that a mountain lion might be in the area, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service website, include large tracks (3-5 inches wide) without claw marks; food caches, where a kill has been partially eaten and then covered with brush and dirt; scrapes in soft dirt or leaf litter, and claw marked trees and logs.

Mountain lions are classified as a ‘specially protected’ species in California following the passage of the California Wildlife Protection Act of 1990.

“Increased sightings and reports of mountain lions are likely due to the increased presence of home security cameras (e.g., ring doorbells), social media, and personal trail cameras often used for hunting, wildlife photography and leisure purposes,” the CDRW website states.” Statewide mountain lion population estimates are considered stable based on the best scientific knowledge, research, and methods available.”

Friends of the MORRO BAY HARBOR DEPARTMENT

We are on a mission to raise \$40,000 for a state-of-the-art **Polaris UTV**, specially equipped for rapid beach rescues and designed to aid our harbor department and beach lifeguards. This isn't just a vehicle; it's a commitment to the well-being of every soul that sets foot on our sands, ensuring that our cherished beach remains a haven of joy, relaxation, and security.

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- Cost-Effectiveness:** Investing in a Polaris UTV is financially savvy. It's significantly more affordable than a standard-sized emergency vehicle, without compromising on functionality or safety features.
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- Enhanced Communication:** Equipped with a PA system, our Polaris UTV can preemptively communicate with beachgoers, ensuring clear paths for emergency access and informing the public of potential hazards or necessary precautions.

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Community

Off The Air From page 1



KBEF 97.3 FM The Rock’s radio tower lies mangled, hanging from the roof of the City maintenance shop on Atascadero Road after high winds on Nov. 15 toppled the tower, and knocked the radio station off the air.



A City crew removes the mangled radio tower at the City Maintenance Yard after it blew down Nov. 15 in high winds.

plan on resurrecting it.

That’s left KBEF 97.3 FM The Rock scrambling to find a location to re-install their antenna.

“The tower collapsed,” said Hal Abrams the founder of The Rock and creator of community radio here. Abrams is also host of Animal Radio, a syndicated talk show all about animals, pets and the people who take care of them.

Abrams said the radio tower blew down while they were live on the air, too, and while they kept broadcasting via the Internet, the local signal was lost. Eventually they had to shut down the station and it remains off until they can get another antenna up.

“We eventually turned it off,” Abrams told Estero Bay News. “The next day a City crew took the tower down.”

He noted that the station’s antenna wasn’t damaged and they tried to install it on the station’s building, which is also home of the Morro Bay Resources Center, the TBID and Chamber of Commerce (at 695 Harbor St.). But that didn’t work, as the building just isn’t tall enough to be able to broadcast throughout the area.

“The tower is gone,” he added, “and the City has said it is no longer needed and they won’t put it back up.”

He said they are now on a double mis-

sion — to raise money for a new tower and to find someplace to erect it.

He said they’ve gotten a lot of notice to their plight on social media, especially the Next Door gossip site (and now a story in the local newspaper).

The response has been good, which he finds very encouraging and reaffirming of a vision the radio veteran had over 10-years ago when he started the station.

“We run on a skeleton budget,” Abrams said in a news release, “with over 40 volunteers, all great neighbors and community members. This is a very unexpected and unfortunate turn of events. Finding a new tower in the Morro Bay City Limits is not an easy task.”

Today the City’s communications — both emergency and non-emergency, are run through a radio repeater station set up on Black Hill, where the City has water storage tanks. Abrams is hoping they will be able to set up their antenna along with the police department’s and is hoping to meet with City officials on that idea.

He said the public has been great, with several people who live at higher elevations in town offering to let them install the antenna on their homes and Abrams said they are keeping that idea as a back-up plan if nowhere more appropriate for a radio station antenna can be found.

While they are looking, he wishes the station had the same levels of support it had 10-years ago when former Councilmen Noah Smukler and the late-Bill Peirce were helping get them started.

“Bill is dearly missed,” Abrams said. “He had the technical know-how on where to put this stuff. Ideally we’d like to be on Black Hill.”

He noted that from the City’s radio repeater station on Black Hill, one has sweeping views in all directions.

Another ideal spot would be on the ridge above Nutmeg Avenue in North Morro Bay, which is private property, where the City has a water storage tank and hopes some day to build a second one.

He said they don’t have to hardwire the station to the antenna, as their broadcast can be sent via microwaves, Wi-Fi or UHF signal to the antenna for broadcast.

The Rock is at 97.3 FM on your radio dial in Los Osos, Morro Bay and Cayucos (on clear days one can get it almost in San Luis Obispo); in Paso Robles at 107.9 FM; and over the Internet. Right now they can still broadcast in Paso Robles and can stream online but its namesake cities — the Estero Bay Area — has gone silent.

“Right now,” he said, “we’ve got no solutions and have already spent over \$1,700. We need money and we hope

the press coverage we get will stir some thoughts amongst land owners and help us find a location.”

He said public radio station, KCBX, reached out to them and they are grateful to have them as comrades. “We’ve gotten some traction on ‘Next Door’ too,” he said.

Abrams isn’t sure about the offers from folks who live high up in town to use their homes for the antenna, as he’s hoping to find a long-term solution and worries what would happen if someone has to move, or, God forbid, dies and their heirs sell the house?

He worries about something else too — this is the type of setback that can kill a small, non-profit radio station. So, could this actually kill The Rock?

“We hope it doesn’t kill the radio station,” Abrams said. “I think there are residents here that can fix this. Ideally, we’d really like to be up on Black Hill. That’s our best view for line-of-sight. From there we can cover from Los Osos to Harmony.”

If readers would like to know more about The Rock and its programming or make a donation to help save the only commercial-free local radio station, see: www.esterobayradio.org. The item talking about the antenna emergency is front and center on the home page.

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Community

Moving Forward From page 1



Tom Wilmar, a member of the California State Guard/Military Museum Command, poses to 'fire-up' the 1898 French 75mm cannon he recently restored. Photo submitted.

wondered if his latest assignments at the United States Air Force Academy and Space ISAC National Cybersecurity Center in Colorado Springs were training for a military mission overseas.

"I'm on active duty," he said as he joined me at the table. Breathe, Judy! It rarely is what you think it is in your head! "I'm on a member of the California State Guard/Military Museum Command now," Tom explained. He had volunteered under the command of Lt. Col. Erik Brun at Camp San Luis Obispo for two years before deciding to swear-in. "My title is Museum Curator at Camp San Luis' Military Museum office. Remember I served in the Air Force in the late 60s?"

Tom pulled out his phone to show me a recent picture with him posing to fire-up the 1898 French 75mm cannon he had recently restored. Fellow guardsman Jason Lopez of Cambria produced an historical training film circa 1930 that replicates the exact positioning on base used for cannon practice. "They call me the wheelwright."

He seemed as proud of the "wheelwright" moniker as he is of his gold 2023, 2020, 2019, 2017, 2016, 2015 & 2013 Lowell Thomas Awards (www.tomwilmer.com).

"This year's Indiana Mennonite/Amish show was bestowed by (his peers) the Society of American Travel Writers," he announced. "It is my second Lowell Thomas award in the past three years to beat Rick Steves and he has radio and television travel shows."

But then he mentioned a second-place award that seemed just as meaningful. "I loathe doing all this social media writers and broadcasters are expected to do to promote our work. I've been guest lecturing for Cal Poly's journalism department for years so I thought if I could mentor interns interested in travel writing, they might also benefit learnings ocial media marketing and at the same time help me promote 'Journeys of Discovery.'" He mentioned a talented intern from Canada who also produced her own story that he believed would do well in competition. "I encouraged her to enter it. She beat me! And I was like a proud father when she won the gold!"

For close to 40 years Tom has traveled the world producing stories about interesting people and places. His talent as a craftsman introduced him to his KCBX opportunity. In 1989 he was hired to do finish work on the radio station's newly acquired San Luis Obispo studios. "I got to know the folks and thought it would be cool to work with these people," he said in a 2014 interview celebrating his 25th anniversary in the industry. He had professional writing experience, but not broadcasting experience when he pitched a travel series that eventually gained on-air popularity. Some years later NPR suggested their affiliate stations recommend two broadcasters who had developed a following. KCBX recommended Tom and Guy Rathbun.

Exposure on NPR's worldwide stage expanded the number of invitations Tom receives annually. I found over 600 when I googled "Journeys of Discovery."

"I sometimes decide to do Central Coast stories (without an invitation)," he said. For example, this past September he interviewed Scott Mather with the Morro Bay Maritime Museum about the dedication ceremony the museum coordinated with Camp San Luis' involvement to recognize the centennial anniversary of the U.S. Navy's largest naval disaster at Honda Point. (www.npr.org) "But most of my assignments are in America and overseas gener-



Tom Wilmar of Morro Bay produced 'Issues & Ideas' for public radio's San Luis Obispo affiliate KCBX and 'Journeys of Discovery with Tom Wilmer' on NPR.

ated by contacts from travel media PR firms. They vet and invite qualified journalists. In the past three months I have been on such assignments to Indiana, Missouri, Virginia, and Colorado Springs." At the end of the month, he will be on an island off the Florida panhandle. In October Tom traveled to San Francisco's Half Moon Bay and in the last three years he has produced stories in Tahiti, Costa Rica, and Belize.

But there came a time when visiting posh resorts in pretty places created a disconnect for Tom. It triggered a career decision. His mission changed. He would accept the invitations, but the discovery became the focus of his stories. Tom had never been opposed to promoting deserving visitor-serving benefits and activities. After all, he was their guest and appreciated their expectations that his commentary would be positive. At the same time, as an independent correspondent he was never shy about pointing out both the positives along with what he felt might need improvement.

"I realized there was so much invested in these beautiful places and yet when I would go out (into rural communities of Europe or America or wilderness in Africa or the bush in Australia) the happiest people seemed to be the one's living on barely a \$1 a day. They were the people singing and dancing. I promised my work would also have purpose — a message to benefit the greater good."

Reactivating his service to focus on military history aligned with his new promise. For example, his series at the Air Force Academy covers how the Air Force teaches cadets ethics. In Colorado Springs his interview with Mayor Yemi Mobolade, an immigrant-American from Nigeria, discusses the mayor's dedication to resurrecting a retro-style of politics that intends to serve all his constituents regardless of affiliation or agenda by being inclusive when problem solving. And yet, even if not always popular, focused on economic vitality and what is best for his city.

Tom spends approximately 150 days a year on assignment. "I average 40 to 50 flights per year, mostly out of SLO with United." On average Tom produces "...two shows per month titled "Issues & Ideas" (www.kcbx.org) where I primarily cover the Central Coast including San Francisco and down to Los Angeles."

Indeed, a glamorous lifestyle and Tom would never complain about another journey somewhere, but he admitted, "The only way I receive funding is based on the number of subscribers to the 'Journeys of Discovery with Tom Wilmer podcast.' So check out several of his podcasts, and if you like what he is doing, he'd appreciate your subscribing at either Apple Podcasts, iHeart Radio, Spotify, or NPR.ORG's Podcast Directory.

So, I had to ask Tom's favorite place in the world? He instantly said Morro Bay. "The blessing of travel is finding out how nice it is to come home," he said. "Everything beautiful is here — the Estuary, the wildlife, looking at the Rock and boats in the bay — it never gets old."

Tom has research to back up Morro Bay's unique and inviting qualities promoted in his book "California Coastal Getaways."

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Community

Events From page 15

Key. PolyPhonics, University Singers and a Cal Poly brass ensemble will perform the first movement of English choral composer John Rutter's celebrated "Gloria."

The evening will include other fun features, such as College of Liberal Arts Dean Philip J. Williams' narration of the classic holiday poem "Twas the Night Before Christmas."

Tickets to the event are \$15 and \$20 for the public, and \$10 for students. Event parking is sponsored by the PAC. Tickets are available at the Cal Poly Ticket Office between noon and 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. To order by phone, call 805-SLO-4TIX (805-756-4849).

For more information, visit the Music Department's website, email music@calpoly.edu or call 805-756-2406.

Free upcoming December programs at the Morro Bay Library - 625 Harbor St, (805) 772-6394.

- Cartoon Club - Wednesday, December 6, 3-5 p.m. Learn how to create characters, draw backgrounds, build a story and more during a fun comics-filled afternoon! Paper, pens and pencils provided - you bring the inspiration. For ages 8-18.
- Teen Crafts & Snacks: Felt Bear - Saturday, December 9, 2- 4 p.m. Come on down for snacks & creativity! This Saturday we'll be stitching and embroidering the ursa minor constellation on a cute felt bear. Will you turn it into an ornament? A fragrant sachet? A cat toy? You decide! For ages 11-18.
- Create an Axolotl - Wednesday, December 13, 3:30-5:30 p.m. Learn all about this unusual amphibian who only lives in one lake in Mexico then make your own drawing or sculpture of an axolotl to take home. Presenter Luna will guide us through the steps. For ages 3+. This program will be presented in English y en Español.

Estero Bay Handy Man

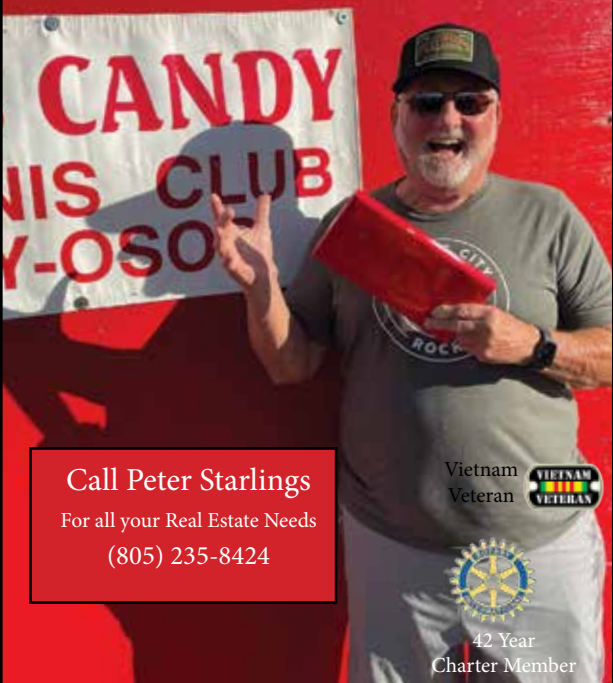


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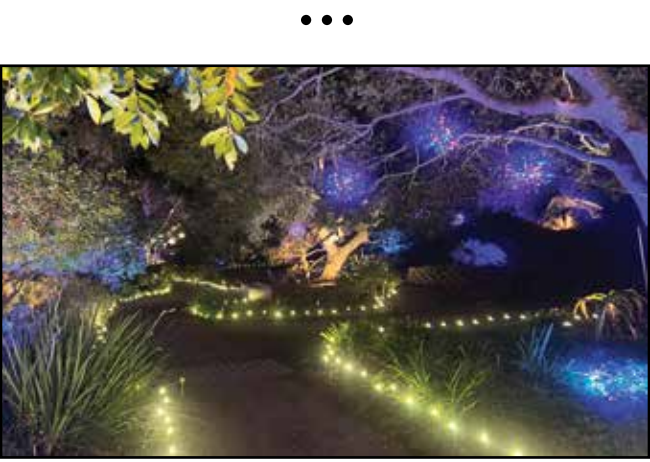
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San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden Presents an Immersive Experience with Nature Nights. Friday and Saturday Evenings through December 30 from 5 to 8 p.m.

The cost is: adults: \$27 + fees , youth (6-17): \$17 + fees, children (5 & under): free

Visit the gardens to enjoy this second annual event featuring enthralling lighting exhibitions and art throughout eight-acres of the Garden. Guests can enjoy live music each night. Local culinary treats, regional wine, and beer will also be available. Last year over 9,000 people visited Nature Nights.

Nature Nights is open to the public from November 17, 2023, through December 31, 2023, at the SLO Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405. For more information, go to www.slobg.org or call (805) 541-1400. Tickets are available at: My805Tix.com.



Call for Artists for the Visions of Cambria: Shoreline, Sunsets, Shops, and More taking place January 5, 2024 -February 25, 2024. This show will focus on iconic Cambria settings including our well-loved shops and restaurants, familiar street scenes, near-by back roads, the forest and of course, the beautiful Cambria coastline. All mediums included and all artists invited to submit.

There will be non-cash awards for best in categories, multiple local jurors.

- Friday, December 29- Tuesday January 2: Upload paintings to website
- Tuesday, January 2 – 10 a.m. to Noon: Exchange Day (bring in new art, pick up unsold art.)

- Saturday, January 6 – 4:30-6 p.m.: Artists' reception featuring wine, live music, refreshments

Submission/registration must be done using our online form. If you are unable to use this registration method, you can bring your art in on Exchange Day and our team will help.

For more information about fees and entrees check out www.cambriacenterforthearts.org or go to galler@cambriaarts.org.

The Harmony Magnet Academy Symphony Orchestra (HMASO) will join the Cal Poly Symphony for its Fall Concert at 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3, in the Performing Arts Center.

Harmony Magnet Academy, located in Strathmore, California, offers students a rigorous curriculum with a program of study in either the Academy of Engineering or the Academy of Performing Arts. It was recently named one of the top 5% of high schools in the nation by U.S. News and World Report, and the top high school in Tulare County.

The concert begins with selections played by the HMASO, including Aaron Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man," arranged by Robert Longfield; and Ludwig van Beethoven's Symphony No. 6, fifth movement, "Shepherd's Hymn," arranged by Vernon Leidig.

A side-by-side performance will follow, for which the strings of both ensembles will fill the stage to perform John Corigliano's "Voyage for String Orchestra."

The Cal Poly Symphony will perform Valerie Coleman's "Umoja." The concert will conclude with the Cal Poly Symphony's performance of Antonín Dvořák's lyrical Symphony No. 8.

Tickets are \$15 and \$20 for the public, and \$10 for students. Event parking is sponsored by the PAC. Tickets are available at the Cal Poly Ticket Office between noon and 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. To order by phone, call 805-SLO-4TIX (805-756-4849).

Community Baptist Church of SLO is holding a hymn sing featuring The Carols of Christmas at 6 p.m. on Dec. 3. They will trace the Christmas story through scripture and song while singing carols accompanied by strings, piano, and organ. You will not want to miss this wonderful start to the season as we remind ourselves of what Christmas is all about. There is no charge but feel free to bring along a Christmas snack or dessert to share. Community Baptist Church, 51 Foothill Blvd., San Luis Obispo. 805-543-6506. For more information, send an email to cbcslo1938@gmail.com or check out cbcslo.org.




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Experience Cal Poly Caroling at St. Andrew Greek Orthodox Church on December 9 at 6:30 p.m. at 232 E. Foothill Blvd, SLO. The performance is free and open to the public. Come hear these heavenly voices and share the joy of the season; and join in singing! Then stay and enjoy some Christmas refreshments! For more information call 805-546-8337.

The San Luis Obispo County Friday Night Live (FNL) Partnership program welcomes all community members to this year's Reindeer Run 5K on Dec. 9 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Mitchell Park in San Luis Obispo.

Proceeds for the Reindeer Run go straight to senior scholarship funding where FNL provide scholarship opportunities for high school seniors each year. Friday Night Live currently has local chapters at twelve middle schools, 9 high schools, and one at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

All registrations include a Reindeer Run T-shirt, running bib, and breakfast. Online registration is available until noon on December 8th at Reindeer Run | SLOFNL.



For more information and to register online, please find us on Eventbrite, or visit Reindeer Run | SLOFNL or contact Megan Frauenheim, mfrauenheim@co.slo.ca.us.

Artists wanted. It is time to focus your artistic talents on the 2024 Annual MBAA "For the Birds" exhibit at Art Center Morro Bay. This, 8th annual show, held in conjunction with the Morro Bay Annual Bird Festival, a yearly event promoting an understanding and appreciation of birds and other wildlife, and an awareness of environmental and conservation issues of the Central Coast.

Birders from all over the United States come together to experience our wonderful and diversified ecosystem on the West Coast of California. Artists have the unique opportunity to share their artistic talents with the many visitors attending the festival and are encouraged to create art that will celebrate the varieties of birds and other wildlife, and their habitats, in our area.

Located on the Pacific Flyway, Morro Bay is a globally Important Bird Area and a designated State and National Estuary. Morro Coast Audubon Society ranks in the top five for the yearly Audubon Christmas Bird Count. In most years, over 200 different bird species are spotted during the annual count. The visiting public and festival attendees are encouraged to visit the MBAA Gallery and the opening reception on January 7, 2024.

Artists may submit up to three 2D wall-hung artwork, 10 notes, 5 matted prints, and three 3D pieces for this exhibit that runs January 4, 2024 to February 20, 2024. Art take-in is January 2, 2024 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main Street, Morro Bay.

For more information, call (805) 772-2504 or go to www.artcentermorrobay.org.

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.

Canet From page 8

What About the Cars?

Next came a proper vehicle crossing. "At some point," the post said, "the County realized that having cars driving through Chorro Creek was not a good idea."

They guess that the Coastal Commission may have intervened as that State agency has jurisdiction over any waterway that empties into the ocean. "Who knows what the impetus was."

The County did try and fix the situation. "In 2001, a new concrete vehicular bridge was completed that ran parallel to the walk-bridge," the post said. "Now cars could drive over the creek rather than through it, but when the weather turned nasty, the vehicular bridge became impassable forcing people to park their cars and use the walk-bridge."

"So, for nearly 50 years, the residents [and City officials] used the walk-bridge when the vehicular bridge became impassable. This was standard operating procedure until recently."

They admit the high water usually drops fairly quickly, in 5-10 hours or so, once the rains stop. However, they said there have been storms when the road bridge is impassible for several days. "This is why the walk-bridge became so vitally important."

Bridge Design Faulty

The residents of Canet Road feel the County blew it with the road bridge, starting with its design.

"The engineers who designed the vehicular bridge did so with faulty weather data," the residents' post claims, "which is why the vehicular bridge is so much lower than the walk bridge."

"They designed the vehicular bridge to traverse Chorro Creek at a much lower elevation because they mistakenly believed the bridge would only become impassable once every 70 years. Boy were they wrong!"

The reality is that the creek overflows the road bridge three or four times a year forcing residents to use the walk-bridge if they want to get home. But even that they said is dangerous.

"The vehicular bridge is far too low," the post said, "which creates a chronic flooding problem every year and danger for anyone attempting to drive their car across the bridge."

What Should Have Been Done

They get to the root of their boggle. "If constructed properly," they said, "the vehicle bridge would have been at the same height as the current walk-bridge, which is 10-15-feet higher, and sporting two lanes with a pedestrian walkway."

This 1-lane bridge is obviously substandard, but this is a quiet country lane, not an in-town collector street, heavy with traffic. Nevertheless, they wish it had been built correctly.

"Instead," the post said, "the vehicular bridge only has one lane and no space for pedestrians to safely traverse the bridge, even during good weather. Presently, there is a high level of danger for anyone who walks over the vehicular bridge regardless of the weather, especially at night."

"We dare City officials to take a walk with us at night over the vehicular bridge to see for themselves the extraordinary danger it poses."

Walk-Bridge a Mess

An Estero Bay News reporter drove out to the site on Canet Road to take photos and see for himself this rather odd situation. That walk-bridge, which the City boarded up and posted warning signs, is in rough shape. The residents blame the City.

"When people began falling through the bridge because the planks were rotted so badly," the post said, "Morro Bay City officials decided to just board up the bridge until they could figure out a game plan."

Indeed, while the deck boards on the far side of the walk-bridge don't look like they are in too bad of shape, the other side is badly rotted with missing boards that the residents said, the City removed.

The welded steel water pipe that runs under the walk-

Canet Continued on page 20

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The City of Morro Bay blocked the entrances to the Canet Road walk-bridge.

bridge, spanning from one concrete abutment to the other, is seen with the missing deck boards.

There's also a large steel framework on each side that support the walk-bridge's cable spans, which hold up the deck. It's a classic bridge design and one that has been used on such iconic structures as the Golden Gate Bridge.

Large wooden beams that hold the deck planks, and are connected to the suspension cables are rotted too, as termites have apparently eaten their fill. But having the steel water pipe underneath, no doubt aids greatly in supporting the walk-bridge.

Given its condition, it's pure luck that no one's fallen through. That might be very bad.

"We are darn lucky that someone did not fall through the center of the bridge," the post said, "because the fall would have seriously injured or even killed the unfortunate victim."



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City Wants to Demolish

Having no use for the walk-bridge, the City wants to tear it down. One of the residents sent a let to the City asking for a meeting and they said the Public Works Director informed them the City was tearing it down, and soon.

"With nearly 50-years of use by the residents and the general public," they said, "the City of Morro Bay unilaterally decided to destroy the walk-bridge without a hearing or public feedback of any kind."

City Plans

The Estero Bay News asked Public Works Director Greg Kwolek about this situation and he appears to be resolved to tear it down.

"The City has already restricted access due to the condition of the decking," he said. They have no plans to remove the wells, which were drilled on private property through an easement, nor the piping.

Normally whenever one does work in or around a creek, it triggers a slew of permitting requirements on both the State and Federal levels, but Kwolek said that isn't necessary.

"That would not be needed," he said. "We are not altering the creek."

As for the road bridge, Kwolek said it wasn't their issue to fix. "It's not the City's road/vehicular bridge," he said. "We don't maintain them."

Removing the walk-bridge would mean the City too would be prevented from accessing its wells when the creek runs too high, but the wells aren't being used and haven't been used much at all for at least the past 7 years.

County Responds

EBN queried the County about the road bridge on Canet Road and Public Works spokeswoman Shelly Cone tracked down the answers.

"The Canet [vehicle] Bridge," she said, "is within the County maintained right of way and the County is responsible for in-kind maintenance."

The County has been amassing lists of bridges and roads that need repair and in some cases replacement, but apparently Canet Road isn't one of them.

"The short answer is 'No,'" Cone said. "Though it's county-maintained, Canet Bridge is subject to FHWA/Caltrans inspection and condition assessments."

"It was replaced in 2000 and in February of this year, it was inspected by the State and rated in 'Good' [on a good, fair, poor scale] condition."

The road bridge, despite its shortcomings, apparently isn't a County priority. "It received a sufficiency rating of 91.5 out of 100," Cone said. "The Board of Supervisors has adopted a 'zero deficient bridges' policy for prioritizing bridge replacements and with that rating, this bridge is not considered deficient or in need of replacement. Properly maintained, the bridge may not need replacing for 2-plus generations."

EBN asked if the County has any interest in the walk-bridge, which Dr. Guy Chirman said may date back at least 90 years (the City rebuilt it in the 1970s) and has been used by people out there for decades? The County claims poverty.

"In general," Cone said, "Public Works receives limited



The entrances to the two bridges are shown as they start to cross Chorro Creek.

funding to maintain its existing facilities [roads/bridges], and meet regulatory mandates. This equates to about \$4 for every \$5 needed to maintain facilities to current conditions.

"Expansion of existing facilities or implementation of new ones are almost entirely funded through private development or regional transportation funds and are only possible when it's for the benefit of the general traveling public."

What's Next?

Reached by phone, Dr. Chirman, explained that as a physician, he needs to be able to get out to go to work and there are several elderly residents that live back in the half dozen or so homes that lie on the other side of the creek.

"There's always been a walk-bridge there," he said. "Tradition is that you park on the other side of the creek and use the walk-bridge" when the creek flow is too dangerous to cross.

He added that the City rebuilt the bridge when it put the wells in but, "The City of Morro Bay has never done any maintenance on that bridge," he said. "So obviously, it's deteriorated."

His old friend, the late John Linhares, who worked his entire career for the City, told him that he built that walk-bridge when he was with the City. And it was a neighbor, "who got the ball rolling" with the City when he asked them to maintain it.

"Two years ago," Dr. Chirman said, "the City pulled the wood off [the missing deck boards]. That's why it looks so terrible."

He feels the City can't just remove something that that's been there for nearly a century. They may have no use for it, but the people who live there and depend on it, sure do.

"I told them you can't just take it down," he said. "It's well-established. Elderly people live back here."

He added that they will hire an attorney if needed and are planning to research the history of the bridge, which should have been documented when the water well easement was agreed to and filed with the County.

Meanwhile, they will try and make the City Council aware of the situation. "We've all [the affected residents] sent letters to the City, telling them that we need that bridge."

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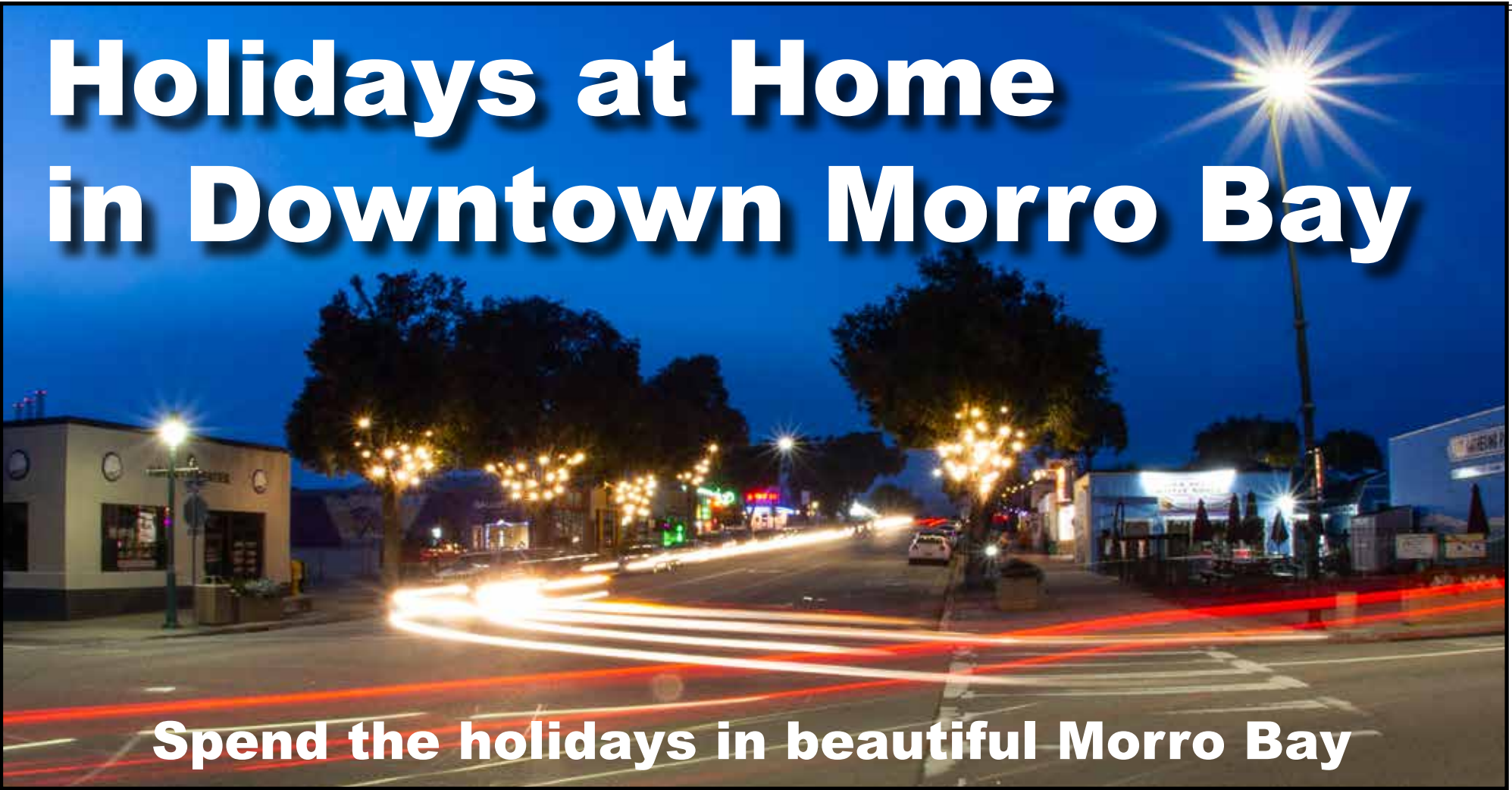


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Photos With The Grinch



Grinch Photo Op - He's a mean one, Mr. Grinch, but you know you want to meet him and soak in his grumpy cheer. The Morro Bay Peace Officers Association

present a meet the Grinch photo event at the Morro Bay Veteran's Hall on Surf St. from 4 to 8 p.m. on Dec. 15 and 16.

There will be free hot chocolate and cookies, and a snow machine for children. Bring your camera to get a memorable shot.

A \$20 donation per family is requested. Proceeds collected go towards future events hosted by the Morro Bay Peace Officers Association.

Holiday Tree Lighting Celebration



Watch the Christmas tree light up the park and share joys of the holiday with your friends and family. Head to City Park located at 734 Harbor Street on December 1, 2023 from 3:30-5 p.m to enjoy the lighting of the Morro Bay City Park tree for the holidays! Activities begin at 3:30. Lighting of the Tree is at 5 p.m. For more information, contact Morro Bay Recreation Services at (805) 772-6278.

Lighted Boat Parade



Presented by Rotary Club of Morro Bay – on December 2 from 6-8:30 p.m. the official Lighted Boat parade will

Morro Bay Events Continued on page 21

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SLO Cal Open at Morro Bay



On December 4-10 the World Surf League event is happening at The Rock in Morro Bay! For more info or to sign up, go to worldsurfleague.com.

Santa’s House in Morro Bay



The Rotary Club of Morro Bay is bringing Santa’s to the Embarcadero! Visit Jolly ol’ Saint Nick and get a photo to remember the occasion. Admission is free! Santa will be welcoming families on Fridays and Saturdays from 4 to 8 p.m. and Sundays from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. the first three

weekends of December.
On Friday December 1, Santa will be at the Tree Lighting at City Park and will come to his house at 6 p.m. Santa’s house is at the corner of Embarcadero and Front Street.

Caroling Cops



On Dec. 5 - 7, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m., listen for the sirens and music and be on the lookout for police employees and members of the community as they join Santa on the



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22

November 30 - December 13, 2023 • The Estero Bay News • Your Community, Your News

Community

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Dec 5 Downtown & Embarcadero; Dec 6 South Morro Bay.
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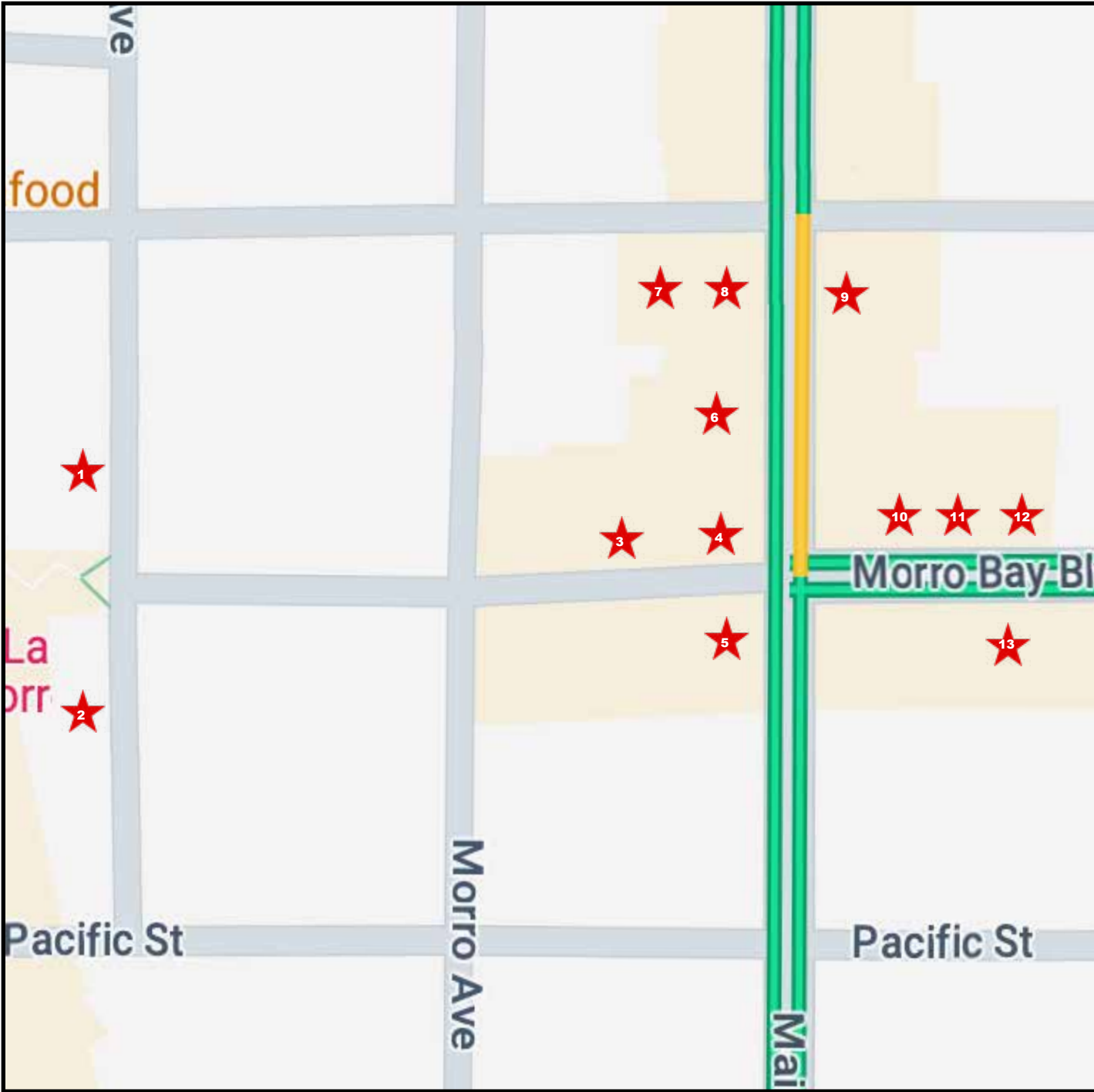
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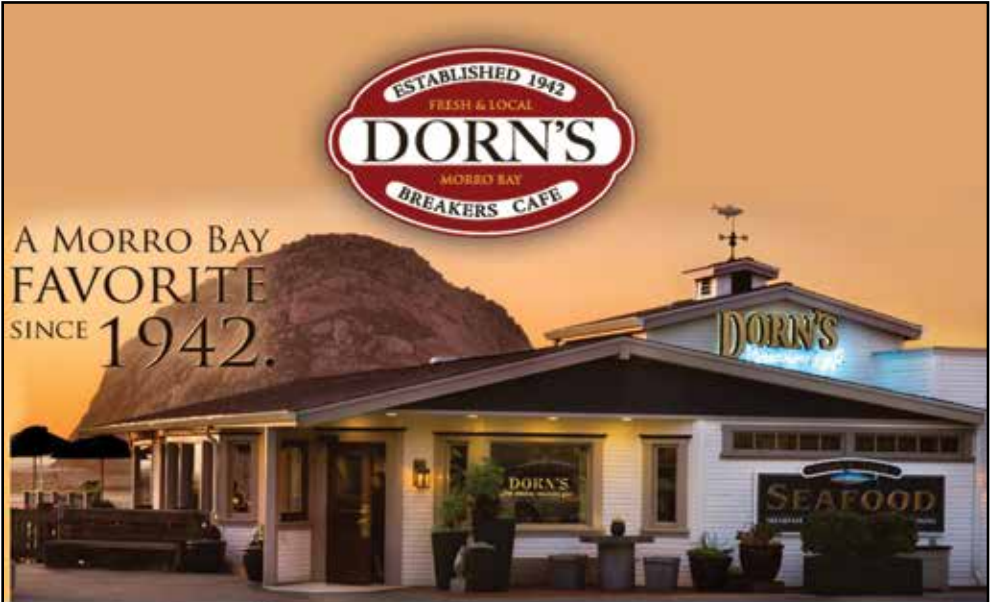
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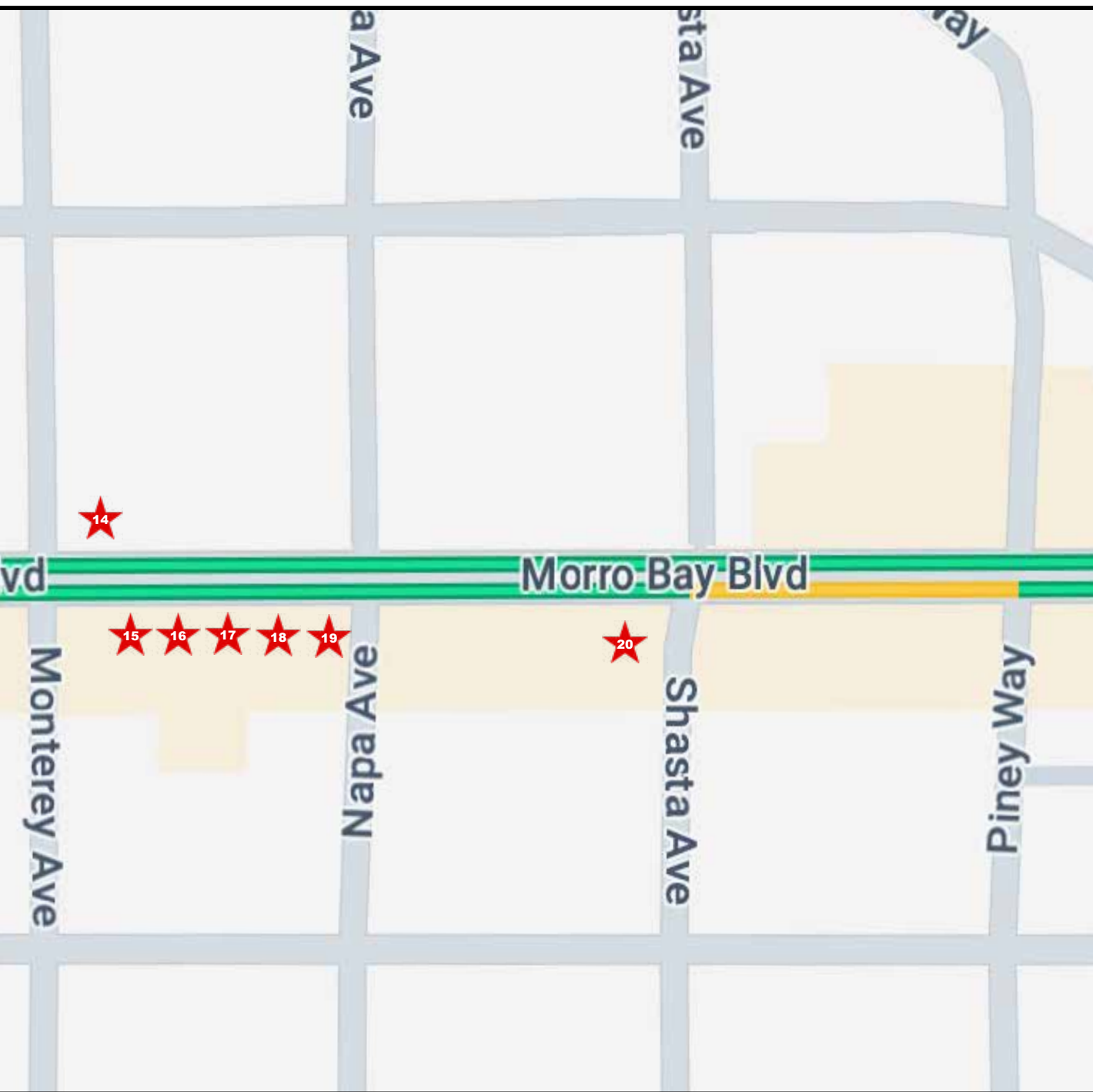
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Community

A Dose of Good Dogma

It's the most 'time of the year!'



By Lisa Ellman

Yes, that space in the headline was intentionally left blank because, depending on how you and your dog feel, it can be quite wonderful or extremely stressful. It's a difficult and chaotic time; traveling, people coming and going, abundant food and drink, and changes in routine. It's these factors that may cause your dog troubles. Let's address them.

First, traveling. Is your dog going with you or staying in a kennel? Either option can be stressful for your pet. Unless your dog is an experienced traveler, plane rides and long

car rides can cause upset stomachs and increased anxiety. Talk to your vet about any medications that can ease these issues. I personally do not recommend having your dog travel by plane; whether on board or in a cargo hold. Travel by car is better option, giving your dog the opportunity to get out, run around (take a long line with you), and potty. Also, should you run into any health issue, there are vet clinics in just about every town and you can use your phone to locate the closest one.

Kenneling can often be quite stressful if your dog has not had that experience previously. It's a good idea to get to know the kennels and staff and introduce your dog to them

now. Perhaps a couple days of doggie day care before you leave them there for an extended period of time. Always go and tour the kennels without your dog before you decide which one is best for your needs. Look for cleanliness, kennel space and play yard activities.

Next, guests. If you expect to have guests coming and going from your home, does your dog have a tendency to bolt out the door? Or jump on people as they arrive? Now would be a great time to reinforce those basic commands such as wait, stay, off and sit. Be sure that your dog is well socialized with people and provide a safe place for your dog to get away. Just like with humans, your dog may need some down time. Put their crate, or bed, in a quiet room, with a toy or two, perhaps a stuffed Kong. You can leave some soft music on to drown out the activities in the other parts of the house. Be sure that whoever is coming to your home knows that you have a dog and, if they have not met, introduce the dog to them in a calm, quiet manner.

Let the people know what your dog does or doesn't like. For example, where to pet them, how to approach, if your dog is comfortable, or not, with children. And be sure, if new kids come into your home, to always have an adult present and monitoring that interaction.

With all the activity, routines will change and this can be really stressful for your dog. Dogs love routine and structure. They depend on a certain time everyday to eat, go potty and get a walk or go to the dog park. It's important to try and maintain this schedule. If you're traveling it may be near to impossible. Just keep in mind, whether you're home or not, that this may cause some unexpected changes in the animal's behavior.

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Community

Finally, food. Remind your guests not to feed your dog table scraps, especially sugary or fatty foods. Try to keep your dog on its regular diet and feeding routine. If you're serving appetizers, and using toothpicks, be sure to pick them up as soon as you see them. Toothpicks on the

ground, that smell like food, might be chewed up by your dog and may cause splinters or puncture wounds to the mouth and or GI tract.
Keep everyone safe and have a "wonderful" time of the year!

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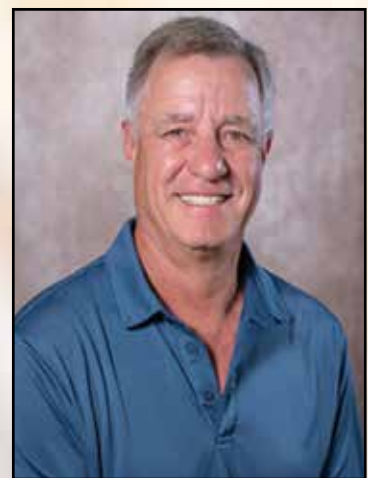
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