

New Law Tightens City Camping Rules



Workers in haz-mat clothing work to clean up trash at encampments along Quintana Road. Photo submitted

By Neil Farrell

The City of Morro Bay is hardening its laws and attitude somewhat on people illegally camping in town, passing a new ordinance that will bring the actions of City officials fighting blight new authority under a recent court case, but also hitting homeless folks especially hard.

And evidence of this new stance arose recently, when City officials helped clear people out of private property and what had become a trash-strewn strip alongside several blocks of Quintana Road, one of the City's main commercial districts.

That's where a number of homeless men and women had set up camp, pitching tents amongst the evergreen trees on a narrow strip of land sandwiched between Quintana and Willow Camp Creek and adjacent to Hwy 1.

An Eyesore

That area on Quintana — from 399-785 Quintana — is highly visible to motorists and shoppers and has been talked about on the NextDoor Morro Bay social media platform for months.

City officials said they've had to deal with many complaints about Quintana Road and it's an issue that Police Chief Amy Watkins said could get worse.

"Failure to adopt the ordinances will predictably see a steady increase in an ongoing and continuing drain on City

resources, time and money," she said in her Dec. 21 report to council. "This is from ever increasing city staff responses [including from police department, fire department, code enforcement division and public works department] to the growing public health, safety and welfare harms generated by lack of regulations like those in the proposed ordinances."

Camping Long Regulated

Camping in town has long been regulated and is illegal unless one is parked inside a licensed RV park or campground. Those places, plus local motels and vacation rentals, collect bed taxes on an overnight stay, one of the main money sources for the City's annual budget. (However, the two State Parks Campgrounds in town, do not collect the City's bed taxes.)

Parking overnight and sleeping in one's vehicle (or pitching a tent in the dunes) — really anywhere in town other than those approved businesses — though illegal hasn't stopped people in RVs from parking overnight on the street or at Morro Rock.

Police occasionally crack down on such things, issuing expensive tickets to RVers, if they can make contact with them. Sometimes, police will knock on doors of an RV parked in a city lot, like Front Street, but if no one answers the knock, there isn't much they can do.

While it's illegal to camp overnight there, it isn't illegal

Camping Rules Continued on page 16

Feds Grant \$1 billion for Diablo Canyon to Remain Open



Photo shows Diablo Canyon's twin containment domes, brown power generation building and the ocean outfall discharging heated cooling water into Diablo Cove.

By Neil Farrell

The effort to keep the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant operating years into the future got a billion dollar boost from the Biden Administration.

Meanwhile, opponents of the plant argue it's too expensive to continue to run and the taxpayers are being made to bear the cost burden.

A Billion-plus Awarded

The Energy Department last week announced that it has finalized a \$1.1 billion "credit award" to Pacific Gas & Electric out of something called "The Civil Nuclear Credit Program."

"Funded by President Biden's 'Bipartisan Infrastructure Law'" reads the announcement, "and administered by DOE's Grid Deployment Office, the \$6 billion CNC program supports the continued operations of safe and reliable nuclear energy facilities, preserving thousands of good-paying clean energy jobs while avoiding an increase in carbon emissions."

The claim is that nuclear plants like Diablo Canyon are, "a vital resource for achieving the President's goal of 100% clean electricity by 2035 and a net-zero emissions economy by 2050."

Maria Robinson, the director of the Grid Deployment Office, said, "Preserving the nation's nuclear fleet is critical not only to reaching America's clean energy goals, but also to ensuring that homes and businesses across the country

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Moving Forward: Paul Irving, Estero Bay's Man of Many Hats



Paul Irving and friends out on the Bay for regular kayaking with his group the Baywood Rowing Club. Photo submitted

By Judy Salamacha

Monday through Friday at 7:30 a.m., Paul Irving meets up with fellow members of the Baywood Rowing Club at the Morro Bay Yacht Club for a 60-minute

row. I had heard of the Baywood Navy, but never a Baywood Rowing Club! Of course, I quickly discovered Paul had created the new group! For me it was just one more start-up this man had his imprint on and why I was compelled to write his story.

Paul Irving Continued on page 18

Discussing the Economy of the Estuary

By Neil Farrell



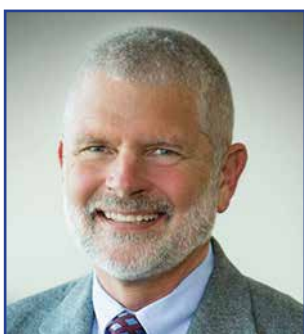
The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce held its first "Breakfast on the Bay" event for 2024, bringing together business leaders to hear about the "Economy of the Estuary," meet the new city manager and get a quick warning about new labor laws business owners will face in 2024.

Held Jan. 17 at the Community Center, the Chamber Board President, Cherise Hansen welcomed everyone and served as emcee.

Economy of the Estuary Continued on page 18

Second Recall Launched Against Bruce Gibson

By Neil Farrell



San Luis Obispo County Dist. 2 voters have filed a second Notice to Recall County Supervisor Bruce Gibson, after the County Clerk-Recorder ended their first bid when they failed to meet deadlines set for the process.

The second notice was filed Nov. 28 and Marlea Harmon signed the affidavit attesting that she'd personally served Gibson with the recall notice at the County Government Center.

In the Notice the recall proponents claim Gibson has abused his authority in several ways:

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Athletes of
The Month
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Low-Income Apartments Full – Still Taking Applications



Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo [HASLO] Construction Director, Mike Burke overlooks the interior courtyard of the Rockview at Sunset Apartments in Morro Bay during a tour back in July 2023. Photo by Neil Farrell

By Neil Farrell

All units of a brand new, low-income apartment complex in Morro Bay are filled, applicants are encouraged to get on the waitlist.

The City of Morro Bay issued a news release last week concerning the Rockview at Sunset Apartment complex on Atascadero Road, which was recently completed by the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo.

At 35 units, it's the biggest apartment complex built in Morro Bay in decades and sports a mix of one, two and 3-bedroom units, all priced according to gross family income.

Essentially, HASLO can charge no more than 30-percent of an area's median income and also, it depends on the size of the family, so the larger a family the more leeway given.

For example, according to HASLO's website, a 1-bedroom apartment is listed at between \$651 and \$1,303 a month. A 2-bedroom is \$782-\$1,654 a month, and a 3-bedroom is \$903-\$1,806 a month.

There are a total of nine 3-bedroom units, nine 2-bedroom and 17, 1-bedroom apartments in the complex. There were also five, HUD Housing Vouchers available with the units, which if one qualifies could lower monthly rents even further. Such vouchers must be applied and qualified for every year.

The website doesn't say how many of each size apartment or how many vouchers are still available.

Last July, in an article in Estero Bay News, we reported that they had begun to take applications, and they already had nearly 200. But things haven't worked out too smoothly. The opening was delayed by unforeseen circumstances.

HASLO Director, Scott Collins, the former Morro Bay City Manager, said they were met with delays. "The switchgear [for the electrical system] for the property was delayed [as it has been on projects across the state and nation — supply chain challenges] and we needed to have PG&E power the facility."

He added that the utility company recently finished that work and they are "targeting occupancy beginning at the end of January into February."

The new apartment complex is the first in Morro Bay for HASLO, which has over 500 units spread over several existing complexes throughout the county and numerous others in varying stages of construction.

But few if any of those other complexes has what Rockview at Sunset has to offer.

"Located at 405 Atascadero Rd., at the intersection of Atascadero Road and Sunset Avenue in Morro Bay," reads the website description. "It is conveniently located minutes from shopping, schools, parks, the Embarcadero, Highway 101 and Highway 41, and the beach."

It is in fact about five blocks from Morro Strand State

Beach, a straight walk down Atascadero Road. But you'll have to go to SLO if you want an apartment.

According to HASLO's website, "The leasing office is NOT located onsite at this point in time, but is being managed out of the HASLO corporate offices."

Technically the property is still an active construction site and the public is not allowed on the property.

If readers have questions, call the designated leasing agent, Regina Barbo at (805) 431-1942. More information on Rockview apartments is available on HASLO's website, see: www.rockviewmorrobay.com.

Poly Awarded \$2M to Transform Computer Engineering Department

A revolutionary project to reimagine Cal Poly's Computer Engineering Department has secured close to \$2 million from the National Science Foundation as educators seek to transform engineering education on campus and across the country.

Through workshops, dialogue and critical mentoring, CPE students and faculty will examine their perceptions and beliefs to uncover implicit bias within the department, then reimagine a department that is designed for all its members, from curriculum to physical spaces.

"We want to make the department a better place for students, faculty and staff of different races, genders, sexual orientations and abilities, among other social identities," said Computer Engineering Department Chair Lynne Slivovsky.

She believes that addressing equity and justice within the department will lead to increased diversity and inclusivity, bringing about shifts in the demographics of the computer engineering population.

"College engineering departments are not doing the kind of work we are doing on this scale," she said. "It's revolutionary."

Founding Director of The Noyce School of Applied Computing Chris Lupo expressed his enthusiasm for the grant's broader impact. The school that launched this year combines three departments — Computer Engineering, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and Software Engineering.

"This is a groundbreaking opportunity that will not only transform computer engineering within our college but also revolutionize the educational landscape in this field," Lupo said. "With this grant, we are poised to embark on a journey of innovation, collaboration and daring invention."

The project, which officially launched in June 2023, has broad goals including holding workshops and encouraging dialogue in which faculty members examine their perceptions and beliefs.

"We can identify that different models are at play instead of assuming this is how it is for everyone," said Slivovsky, giving the example of shifting from a deficit model that focuses on learners' weaknesses to an asset-based one that focuses on the strengths students bring to the classroom. "In the end, we want to determine how we can design things differently."

The grant team also is exploring ways to deepen relationships between and among students, staff and faculty.

"We can build authentic relationships that allow us to have a greater appreciation for each other and ask honest questions about perpetuating systemic structures," she said.

Those relationships will ultimately enable a more collaborative dynamic between faculty and students, fostering a tailored educational experience.

"We want to be a place that values everyone for who they are and how they show up, where they can learn computer engineering but not at the expense of their own identity," Slivovsky said.

The grant team includes members from inside and outside the department who are committed to making a difference.

Professor and co-principal investigator Jane Lehr called the grant a tremendous achievement that will "enable

faculty, students and staff at Cal Poly to take transformative action to create a new approach to doing computer engineering that will serve as a model at Cal Poly, nationally and potentially beyond."

Lehr serves as the director of the university's Office of Student Research and is a professor in ethnic studies and women's, gender and queer studies and affiliated faculty in computer science and software engineering and science and technology studies.

The interdisciplinary faculty team also includes Bridget Benson, associate dean and computer engineering professor, Andrew Danowitz and John Oliver, computer engineering professors, and Liz Thompson, director of the General Engineering program and industrial engineering professor.

External and internal advisory boards will support and aid the team. Experts outside Cal Poly will also lend their skills, including Jon Stolk, professor of materials science and engineering education at Olin College of Engineering, and Susan Lord, chair and professor of integrated engineering at University of California, San Diego.

The award is through NSF's Revolutionizing Engineering Departments (IUSE/PFE: RED) program, which supports radical changes to the training of undergraduate engineering students, will fund the five-year Breaking the Binary project.

Robocalls, a Thing of the Past?

Answering a call from an unknown number could soon come with a lot less trepidation.

A coalition of 26 attorneys, including California Attorney General Rob Bonta have filed a comment letter responding to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) notice of inquiry related to the potential impact of emerging artificial intelligence (AI) technology on efforts to protect consumers from illegal robocalls or robotexts.

"In addition to being a daily annoyance, robocalls are often used by scammers to cause real financial dam-

Correction:

In the January 18 issue, we printed the wrong date of birth for Nancy Fraim. It should have been 1929 not 1950.

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News

age,” said Bonta in a news release. “AI technology presents opportunities for new levels of deception by bad actors. The FCC should take this opportunity to underscore that existing laws, like the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, can be used to protect consumers against this threat. Classifying AI-generated human voices as a type of artificial voice is a step in the right direction in preventing consumers from receiving unwanted and potentially dangerous robocalls.”



Are endless robocalls coming to an end?

The multistate coalition argues that AI-generated technologies that mimic human voices are a form of “artificial voice” as that term is used in the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, and that consumers therefore cannot be sent AI-generated robocalls that mimic a live caller without the consumer’s prior express written consent.

For Californians, the impact of illegal and unwanted robocalls can range from a momentary nuisance to serious fraud involving identity theft or life-changing financial losses. Phone calls and text messages are by far the most common contact method for fraud, and in 2022 alone, fraudulent phone calls and texts led to more than \$1.13 billion in reported financial losses nationwide, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

In the comment letter, the attorneys general argue that considering AI-generated human voices an “artificial voice” is consistent with the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, and with the FCC’s treatment of prior technological developments. Robocalls are typically the number-one consumer complaint to the FTC each year. AI technology has the potential to make phone scams more sophisticated and believable, as scammers have already begun using the technology to mimic live voices, including those of celebrities and distressed family members.

In January 2022, Attorney General Bonta, as part of a bipartisan multistate coalition, urged the FCC to stop the flood of illegal foreign-based robocalls that “spoof” U.S. phone numbers. In August 2022, Bonta announced the launch of a bipartisan nationwide Anti-Robocall Litigation Task Force to investigate and take legal action against the telecommunications companies responsible for bringing a majority of foreign robocalls into the U.S. In May 2023, a bipartisan coalition of 49 attorneys general, announced a lawsuit against Avid Telecom for allegedly initiating and facilitating billions of unlawful robocalls that included Social Security Administration scams, Medicare scams, and employment scams.

In filing the comment letter, Bonta joins the attorneys general of Pennsylvania, Alabama, Arizona, Colorado, Con-

necticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington, and the District of Columbia.

A Checklist for Storm Readiness



With Old Man Winter upon us, and El Niño brewing in the Pacific, the City of Morro Bay has issued a checklist for residents and property owners to help them prepare for potential big storms and all the misery it can bring.

The City said the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or NOAA predicts a 95% chance of an El Niño this winter and 66% chance of a strong El Niño.

El Niño is the name of a warm water current that comes up the West Coast bringing strong, very-wet storms here, as happened last winter.

El Niño winters have in the past brought well over 30-inches of rain to Morro Bay, about double the normal rainfall of about 16-inches a year.

(On the other hand, a “La Niña,” or colder water current, tends to bring dry winters our way.)

“Past strong El Niños,” the City warned, “have been characterized by extended periods of high intensity rainfall, triggering heavy runoff, floods, mudslides, debris flow, and landslides both inland and along the coast.”

The Checklist Includes:

- **Inspect slopes:** Visually inspect all sloped areas for signs of erosion gullying, surface cracks, and slumping. Inspect buildings, patios, retaining walls, and garden walls for signs of cracking or rotation, which may indicate slope movement has occurred. If signs of slope movement are observed, consider contacting a California-licensed geologist or geotechnical engineer for a site inspection.

- **Inspect bare ground:** Large bare areas may be sources for mudflows during rain. Consider covering or vegetating bare areas before storm season. Consider covering and securing mounds of loose soil or fill material.

- **Inspect drains and gutters:** Visually inspect and remove debris from retaining wall drains, surface drains, culverts, and gutters before storm season. Storm water

runoff should be directed into appropriate drainage control areas to avoid excessive soil saturation.

- **Inspect structures:** Visually inspect all structures for signs of distress, loss of material, obstructed drainage, or exposed reinforcing steel before storm season and after every rainstorm. If significant problems are observed, consider contacting a California-licensed engineer for maintenance suggestions.

- **Inspect Roofs:** Visually inspect roofs, or hire a roofing contractor, to check for loose tiles, holes or other signs of distress.

The City has also dropped a large pile of sand at the City/County Library parking lot on Shasta Avenue for residents to fill sandbags, but you’ll have to bring a shovel and your own bags, which are usually available at hardware stores.

And remember, the time to fill sandbags is before the big storms hits.

The City also has a message for everyone to heed:

“The public is also encouraged to prepare for severe weather and other natural disasters by ensuring they have taken steps for personal emergency preparedness.

“The recommendation is to have sufficient supplies in your residence to sustain each occupant for at least 72 hours.

“This includes food, water, medications, clothing, batteries, flashlights, sanitation supplies, blankets or bedding for warmth, and sources for backup power such as battery packs, generators, etc. to charge cell phones and radios.”

Just as with wildfires, you should pre-pack a “go bag” with the essentials listed here and be ready to go at a moment’s notice should emergency personnel call for an evacuation.



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Confessed Child Rapist Gets Life

A San Luis Obispo man has been sentenced to life in prison after pleading guilty to sexual assault and rape of two juvenile girls, the District Attorney's Office announced.

D.A. Dan Dow's office said Juan Adriel Cambray-Miranda, 33 of SLO was sentenced to 80-years to life in prison on four counts of "sexual assault involving two separate children, including Aggravated Rape of a Child Under the Age of 14, Sexual Penetration of a Child Under the Age of 14, and two counts of Committing Lewd and Lascivious Acts on a Child Under the Age of 14."

Cambray-Miranda's crimes occurred between April 2016 and May 2018, in Atascadero the news release said. He also received four years in a separate residential burglary case that he also pled guilty in, the D.A. said. That burglary happened on May 31, 2021 in San Luis Obispo. The prosecutor said Cambray-Miranda was a "predator."

"For years," Deputy D.A. Kimberly Dittrich the prosecutor in the case said, "this predator leveraged a position of trust to manipulate and sexually assault these young survivors. I am in awe of the strength and courage shown by the two young victims in reporting these crimes, which was necessary to hold this defendant accountable."

The rape cases were investigated by the Atascadero Police and SLOPD and the Sheriff's Department worked the burglary case. Dittrich of the Sexual Assault Prosecution Team prosecuted both matters.

Murder-Suicide in Creston

The Sheriff's Department has determined that a December double homicide in Creston was actually a murder-suicide involving family members.

According to Sheriff's spokesman, Tony Cipolla, deputies received a 9-1-1 call at 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 20 from a home in the 2700 block of California Canyon Highway in Creston reporting a domestic dispute.

While all such calls are potentially dramatic, this one was serious right away. "Sheriff's Dispatch," Cipolla said, "heard what was suspected to be gun shots in the background during the 9-1-1 call."

Responding deputies discovered a tragic scene. "Deputies located a deceased female and deceased male inside the residence," Cipolla said. An immediate investigation quickly uncovered the sad truth.



Convicted child rapist, Juan Adriel Cambray-Miranda, was given 80-years to life in State Prison

"It was determined," Cipolla said, "the disturbance was between a stepdaughter, Maria Quesada (40-years old) and her stepfather, Arturo Quesada (60) who were both residing at that location."

He added that their theory of the crime is that the stepfather, Quesada, murdered his stepdaughter, and then

killed himself.

Cipolla said there were no others involved in the case, and there was no threat to the general public arising from the incident.

He added that the investigation was ongoing, but did not indicate what their argument was about.

Estero Bay News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

100 Percent Pass Rate for Cuesta College RN Students

Cuesta College's Registered Nursing graduating class of 2023 ranks number one for students passing the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), which allows nursing graduates to be licensed as a registered nurse in the United States.

"With the help of our dedicated nursing faculty and healthcare community partner support, our students are successfully passing the RN licensure examination, allowing them to obtain healthcare jobs in our community," said Cuesta College Superintendent / President Dr. Jill Stearns.

Outperforming the average pass rate for the state of California (83.07 percent), this achievement not only makes Cuesta College the top-ranked program within California but also places it first among 2,219 Registered Nursing programs (BSN, associate degree, or diploma) across the United States and its territories.

Nursing students are provided resources to assist in their goal to pass the licensure examination. The Student Success Specialist is pivotal in aiding students with practice questions from their first semester forward. In their last semester, courses are facilitated by nursing faculty with NCLEX-style test questions. Student progress is tracked and those who practice the most are awarded with gas cards and other incentives.

Cuesta College's accredited Nursing & Allied Health Program, established in 1967, offers degree and certificate programs in Registered Nursing, Licensed Vocational Nursing, Certified Nurse Assistant, Medical Assisting, Phlebotomy, Psychiatric Technician, Emergency Medical Services, and Paramedic. The recent launch of an accelerated track for the Registered Nursing Program further exemplifies Cuesta College's commitment to providing a faster path to nursing education and entry into the workforce.

For more information on the Nursing & Allied Health Department, call (805) 546-3119 or visit the website here.

Free Rapid COVID Tests



Free at-home COVID-19 tests are available at several locations in the county. Tests will only be available outdoors at these locations (such as in the parking lot) alongside Food Bank distributions during the scheduled times while supply lasts.

Pop-up COVID-19 Test Distribution Events:
 • Thursday, February 1 from 3 – 4 p.m. at Santa Rosa

- Church, 1174 Main Street, Cambria
- Wednesday, February 7 from 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. at Los Osos South Bay Community Center, 2180 Palisades Ave.
- Thursday, February 8 from 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. at CL Smith Elementary, 1375 Balboa St. SLO
- Tuesday, February 13 from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. at Nipomo Elementary, 190 E Price St.
- Friday, February 16 from 11:00 – 12:30 p.m. at California Valley Community Center, 13080 Soda Lake Road
- Wednesday, February 21 from 9:30 – 11:30 a.m. at Zion Lutheran Church, 1010 Foothill Blvd. SLO
- Thursday, February 22 from 2:30 – 3:30 p.m. at Del Mar Elementary, 501 Sequoia St. Morro Bay
- Tuesday, February 27 from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. at Sherwood Park, Santa Ynez Ave. & Creston Rd. Paso Robles
- Wednesday, February 28 from 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. at Arroyo Grande Soto Park, 1275 Ash St.

Addis Pens Mushroom Act



Mushrooms, those delectable fungi that add an earthy flavor to almost any dish, are in-line for proposed protection for the farmers who grow them.

Assemblymember Dawn Addis (D-Morro Bay) introduced Assembly Bill 1833, the California-Grown Mushroom Act.

"California is the second largest mushroom producer in the world," said Addis in a news release. "It's vital that mushroom consumers are provided transparency and that California's farmers are recognized. AB 1833 will create marketplace transparency and recognition via a labeling system that lets consumers know if their mushrooms are produced right here in the Golden State. I'm proud to author this important bill that will create the first-ever grown in California label for California's mushroom industry."

AB 1833 tackles misleading marketing practices for mushroom products by creating a "California Grown" designation. Its sponsors include the California Certified Organic Farmers and Far West Fungi.

"California farmers face some of the highest production costs in the world," said Erin Raser, Operations Manager at Far West Fungi. "This bill would increase transparency for California consumers that want to support local farms and give farmers a marketing tool to distinguish their product."

AB 1833 now awaits referral to policy committee.

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Community

Morro Grill — Sports Bar With a Twist



Co-owners of the new Morro Sports Bar & Grill are Kristen Ryder (left) and Sharruss Humlicek, posing here behind the beautiful wooden bar at their new restaurant. Photo by Neil Farrell

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay's newest waterfront eatery, located in its newest development, offers traditional fare from a sports bar and grill — with a twist.

Sharruss Humlicek, one of the owners of Morro Grill Sports Bar, located upstairs at Morro Bay Landing, 1215 Embarcadero, has been working in restaurants most of her life. "Since I was 15," she says while sitting in the sunny dining room a few minutes before opening for the day. The other owners are Kristen Ryder and the folks who own Beach Burger in the 500 block of Embarcadero. And those folks also own Laguna Grill in San Luis Obispo, so the team behind Morro Grill have a wealth of restaurant knowledge.

Setting up shop in the Morro Bay Landing site was unusual. That's because the place was fully furnished with tables, chairs, bars, counters and a magnificent solid redwood bar that was hewn by a logging outfit in Cambria for the first person that tried to open in the spot. And, the second restaurant to open there was the short-lived Rock Taco, which unfortunately didn't catch on.

As anyone who's ever opened a restaurant could tell you, the trickiest most expensive thing is the kitchen. Fortunately for Ryder and Humlicek, there was already a full kitchen there, though she says they did have to do some reconfiguring and bring in some special equipment needed for their diverse menu offerings.

They specialize in the typical foods one might expect at a sports bar — burgers, chicken, sandwiches, soups, salads, and various rice bowls — but they expanded that



basic fare.

"It's sports bar and grill food with a twist," she explains, "and some healthier options."

They will soon have finalized their beer and wine license too, and she says they plan to offer several local beers on tap and local wines too. "We will also be doing wine cocktails and mock-tails," she says, laughing when this reporter looks puzzled. Mock-tails?

"Those are non-alcoholic mixed drinks," she says with a chuckle.

They have a staff of about 10, she says. The two main owners don't just supervise the operation, they run the place, too, taking orders and working the floor. The dining room sports five, big screen TVs, tuned in of course to sports coverage. Watching NFL, NBA, NHL or MLB will be PDC (pretty darn cool) sitting at that fabulous wooden bar and following the action on the big screens.

"We plan to have some TVs out on the patio too," she says. When they started forming the idea and business model for Morro Grill, they searched for something new.

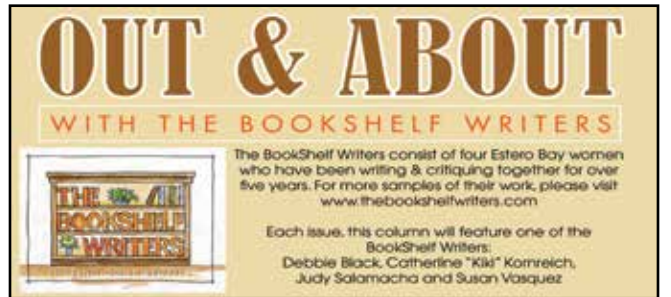
"We did a lot of research," Humlicek says, studying the more than 23 restaurants along the Embarcadero and coming up with a place that doesn't steal anything from existing establishments. "We did a lot of research on what was needed here," she says, adding that their goal isn't to compete directly with any of their neighboring restaurants. They put together a combination that she says, "Is a little different. It sets us apart."

They are still a work in progress. "We have a lot of plans for this place," Humlicek says. Among the changes will probably be additions to the sizable rear patio, which has one of the best views of the yachts docked below, and of Morro Rock.

Since their quiet opening Jan. 1 the responses just form basically word of mouth has been really good. "So far," Humlicek says, "the response has been better than we expected."

She says they've gotten so much support from locals, they already are starting to build up some "regulars," which is a key for success with a sports bar.

But being busy from the get-go, "It's a great problem to have," she says.



RV Camping in Your Own Backyard

San Elijo State Beach

By Debbie Black



The oceanside sites at San Elijo State Beach Campground are great for viewing the surf and sunsets Photo by Debbie Black

Got a surfer in your family like I do? Surfers know about San Elijo — right on the beach in Cardiff near San Diego. This is one of the best campgrounds in California if you surf and even if you don't. Well worth the drive! Water temps are a good 5 to 15 degrees warmer than Estero Bay. The place can accommodate hundreds of surfers spread out along a mile of gorgeous reef breaks with typical surfer-names like Swami's, Pipes, Traps, Turtles, etc.—similar to Estero Bay's beach breaks: The Rock, The Pit, Chaney's, Montecito's, Pinkies, The Pier...only warmer!

There's plenty for non-surfers too — warm, sunny, beachside camping; generous campsites; proximity to the exciting little towns of Encinitas and Del Mar on either side. I'll bet you a bundle of firewood that San Elijo will be one of your favorites, like it is ours.

There are 165 sites, including 26 with hookups and a lively group campsite #128. There's beach access via five stairways with rinse-off showers. The camp restrooms/showers are immaculate (buy shower tokens at a machine by the park office). Purchase firewood from vending machines with QR code. Campsites have a fire pit/grill, picnic table, and a few screen shrubs. Some have asphalt pads but most are hard sand—some leveling needed. Coveted sites are along the ocean—especially with hookups! Ocean sites in the north section are the most spacious (#145-171, no hookups). Train/road noise is an issue in sites along the Coast Highway. Some of the ocean sites have shrubbery

Out & About Continued on page 6



Sorina Ratchford DDS



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Community

Out & About From page 5

blocking the view to the beach—probably the steep bluff makes pruning too onerous, or maybe the Coastal Commission won't allow it! If you want the ocean view, check individual campsite photos on the reservation website or go to www.campsitephotos.com.

There's a dump station (\$) and water fill-up (free). Great cell service. The camp store and laundry are closed. But for groceries, there's upscale Seaside Market across from the campground—a delightful mash-up of Trader Joes and California Fresh.

Coast Walk: A must do! Level, scenic, paved, accessible easy walk—around 2 miles, total loop. Leave camp at the North Gate (near campsite #141). Walk north. Your view opens up to the entire beach all the way to the point. Stop to watch the hundred-plus surfers, then continue along the bluff to Swami's (iconic spiritual retreat since the 1940s). Cross the Coast Highway at the signal and pick up the much-loved Coastal Rail Trail that will bring you back to Chesterfield Drive along a pretty, landscaped pathway with views all the way to La Jolla. Cross back to camp at the Chesterfield signal, and meet The Cardiff Kook, a statue of a young surfer—often dressed up by locals with hilarious costumes. Walk behind The Kook and re-enter camp at the South Gate. Be aware: North/South Gates close at sunset!

Good Eats: Across from the campground are seafood, pizza and beer, Italian, Mexican, and fast food. Local favorites are the Seaside Market and PIPES. Both have indoor seating as well as dog-friendly outdoor dining. Seaside Market makes sandwiches, soups, breakfast burritos, etc. It's famous for its Original Crack Tritip—the best tritip I've ever tasted (sorry Santa Maria). Pipes is a delightful surf-themed little place for breakfast or lunch, named after the surf break next to your campground. South of camp is Tower13, a surfer/sports bar where we watch Niner games!

Dogs: Leashed dogs are okay in campsites, on camp roads and coast walk. No dogs on the beach by the campground! However, it appears that you can have a leashed, well-mannered dog on the beach to the south of the big, main lifeguard building (along the lagoon outlet). Please be respectful and don't mess that up for others. Leashed dogs allowed on the beach SOUTH of the lagoon.

Kids on Bikes: Lots of them! It's a relatively safe, flat place for kids to ride around. But this campground is always busy with big RVs cruising down the one-way roads, so your kids should be streetwise or with an adult.

Noise: The ocean mostly drowns out helicopters from Camp Pendleton, commuter trains, and the regular urban racket like sirens and traffic.

Reservations: An extremely popular campground! There are usually dry campsites available at the North End but I advise you plan ahead and book as soon as the six month booking window opens at www.reservecalifornia.com.

com. Check campsite details to make sure your rig will fit. Rates: \$50-\$95.

Pair this trip with a week at Anza-Borrego in the high desert (my next review in the Estero Bay News 3-28-24). See you in camp!

For extended articles, visit www.debbienobleblack.com/rv-camping-in-your-own-backyard.

Takin' Care of BUSINESS

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Kiwanis and Golden State Water Company Donate



San Luis Obispo Food Bank Chief Executive Officer Molly Kern (L) receives a \$500 donation from Kiwanis Club of Bay Osos President Deanna Sweeney and the Golden State Water Company. Photo by Annie Wahler

The Kiwanis Club of Bay-Osos in Los Osos participated in the 33rd annual Operation Gobble, in partnership with Golden State Water Company and the California Water Association. This annual philanthropic event gives back to families with limited resources across California.

San Luis Obispo Food Bank Chief Executive Officer Molly Kern recently accepted a \$500 donation made possible by a partnership between the Kiwanis Club and the Golden State Water Company

For more than three decades, the Golden State Water Company has partnered with community leaders to distribute thousands of turkeys and donations to charitable organizations that assist individuals and families with limited resources.

"The cash donation assures the most efficient use of the funds by utilizing the buying power and distribution system of the SLO Food Bank, allowing us more bang for the bucks," said Kiwanis Program Chair Al Strunk.

The Kiwanis Club of Bay-Osos meets for lunch and informative programs at the Sea Pines Golf Resort in Los Osos on Wednesdays at noon. Visitors are welcome to attend and find out more about Kiwanis.

New Barber in Town



Joel Elliot of Mike's Barber Shop has a new, home-grown barber on staff, and fellas needing a trim, a shave or cut can book appointments now.

Elliot introduced Joel Liedenger to the City Council at the last meeting, which is broadcast on Charter Cable Channel 20 and streamed on slo-span.org. Liedenger is a Morro Bay local who recently graduated from the San Luis Obispo Barber School and became a licensed barber, Elliot said.

Liedenger will be manning the company's Northside Mike's Barber Shop, located at 2300 N. Main St. Clients can book appointments by calling or texting to: 805-772-9316; or online at: mikesbarbershop.com.

Northside Mike's is open Tuesdays-Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Elliot said his new barber had worked in maintenance for hotels and casinos before barber school, so he should have some pretty good stories to tell.

In the photo, Liedenger stands ready for business at Northside Mike's Barber Shop. Submitted photo

Morro Bay

ANNUAL

YARD SALE

The 24th Annual City Wide Yard Sale
March 15th, 16th, & 17th, 2024
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Community

SLOCOG Transit Survey

Take an online survey about transportation published by the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments.

This analysis report, called the Unmet Transit Needs Assessment, is reviewed by the Social Services Transportation Advisory Council, which provides a recommendation for unmet transit needs findings to the SLOCOG Board of Directors.

The Cambria Chamber of Commerce is encouraging locals to take part in the survey to help workers in the area with transportation.

"Many of our employees here in Cambria come from longer distances for the jobs due to the cost of housing," wrote Oz Barron said in a Chamber newsletter.

The study, according to SLOCOG, entails a comprehensive needs assessment and a public outreach program and public hearing to obtain testimony on any transit deficiencies that exist. Once the testimony is obtained, it is analyzed to determine if there are any transit needs that meet the adopted criteria for "unmet transit needs" and "reasonable to meet".

The deadline for the on-line survey is February 14. A public hearing takes place at the Board of Supervisors meeting on Feb. 7 starting at 9 p.m. in the BOS Chambers at 1055 Monterey St. in SLO. Take the survey at slocog.org/programs/public-transportation/transit/unmet-transit-needs

PG&E Dollar Energy Fund

Folks having a difficult time paying their energy bills might find help from the very business they own money to.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (contributed \$55 million to support the Dollar Energy Fund, marking an ex-

pansion of the Relief for Energy Assistance through Community Help (REACH) program. The REACH program helps income-eligible families pay their energy bill during a crisis, by providing a bill credit for qualifying customers with unpaid balances to prevent service disconnections.

The infusion of \$55 million will be implemented in two phases, the first of which started January 2024. In the first phase, approximately half of the funding will double the maximum amount of financial relief available to California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) enrolled or eligible households from up to \$500 to up to \$1,000. The temporary shift from traditional REACH assistance guidelines is part of PG&E's commitment to providing tangible relief for more qualifying customers across its service area.

Information on the program including how to apply is online at dollarenergy.org. The remaining funds will be made available to a larger group of income-eligible customers later in the year, with details released in the coming months.

"This time of year, our customers rely more heavily on energy to heat their homes, which can significantly impact household finances. This historic assistance marks PG&E's largest contribution to the REACH program, reinforcing our support for customers when they need it most," said Vincent Davis, Senior Vice President, Customer Experience.

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.

esterobaynews.com
Your Community • Your News

Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Central Coast Women for Fisheries (womenforfish.org) are making and selling albacore enchiladas at the Morro Bay Community Center on Kennedy Way, Saturday, February 10, the day before Super Bowl Sunday. Each tray is \$15 and filled with prime albacore from a local fisherman, along with other ingredients to make a tasty enchilada. There's a choice of corn tortillas with green sauce, or flour tortillas with red sauce.

This is the organization's biggest annual fundraiser for community projects. Past projects include the statue at Morro Rock and the recently installed signs on the waterfront about local fisheries. It's best to pre-order because it's possible to sell out before the event. To order call, text or email Sharon Rowley: srowley303@gmail.com or 805-674-4854. They need your name, phone number and how many of either green/corn or red/flour. You can pay on Feb. 10 when you pick up between 1 to 5 p.m.

•••



On Sunday, February 18 from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Cayucos Yoga and Estero Bay Kindness Coalition present a clothing and food drive along with three donation-based yoga classes at 9 a.m., 11 a.m. and 1 p.m., with a suggested donation of \$25. The event takes place at Cayucos Yoga, 625 S. Ocean Ave. All proceeds go to EBKC and their efforts helping under-resourced kids and families of the Estero Bay community know that they are cared for and never have to go to bed hungry. Sign up for the yoga sessions now at CayucosYoga.com, space is limited to 20 per session, and a waiting list is available. All food and clothing donations can be dropped off at the ocean view deck which is located in the south back area of the studio property.

•••

Transitions-Mental Health Association announced their 40th annual Strike Out Stigma Bowl-a-Thon taking place in March at Pismo Bowl, Cal Poly's Mustang Lanes, and Rancho Bowl in Santa Maria. The Bowl-a-Thon raises critical funds for SLO Hotline and other crucial services TMHA provides — all while bringing friends and families together for a great cause. We invite you to join in on the fun!

Assemble a team of 5 bowlers • Visit <https://support.t-mha.org/campaign/tmha-bowl-a-thon-2024/c547975> to reserve your preferred shift or contact Eileen Calandro at ecalandro@t-mha.org or 805-540-6510 or Clara Cobb at ccobb@t-mha.org 805-540-6564.

Share your fundraising page with your friends, family, and colleagues. Your team is asked to raise at least \$500 by March 14th, 2024, or skip fundraising and pay a flat fee of \$500 for your team. You and your team will receive shoe rentals, pizza, snacks, and event t-shirts. Bowl 2 games with your team. Win prizes for raising money and have fun.

•••

The San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre (SLO REP) presents its winter gala production, "Beehive: The 60's Musical," which promises to transport audiences on a vibrant journey back to the iconic era of the 1960s.



Beehive is a captivating and high-energy musical tribute that pays homage to the women who made the 60s an unforgettable period in history. Featuring a playlist of timeless hits, this production is set to dazzle San Luis Obispo audiences with its powerful performances, memorable melodies, and a kaleidoscope of fashion and culture.

"Beehive: The 60's Musical" runs from Feb. 9-March 10, with performances on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 7p.m. and Sunday at 2 p.m.


Directed and choreographed by Keenon D. Hooks, Beehive features a talented ensemble cast who will bring

EventsContinued on page 9

BAY


BAY THEATRE PRESENTS

COMING ATTRACTIONS * FEBRUARY 2024




THE BOYS IN THE BOAT (PG-13) 2 hr. 3 min. | February 2 - 8

Celebrate the true story of underdogs from Washington State University's 1936 rowing team, as they are thrust into the spotlight and face elite rivals on an unlikely path to the Olympic Games. George Clooney directs this heartfelt drama based on the #1 New York Times bestselling non-fiction novel written by Daniel James Brown.



FERRARI (R) 2hr 11min | February 9 - 15


Michael Mann's stylishly directed biopic stars Adam Driver as world renowned race car designer Enzo Ferrari. Mann explores Ferrari's personal trials and close-kept secrets. While he faces grieving loss and company bankruptcy, Ferrari doubles down on the engineering of a perfect racing machine to launch into the treacherous Mille Miglia 1,000 mile race across Italy. Also stars Penelope Cruz, Shailene Woodley, and Patrick Dempsey.




BOB MARLEY: ONE LOVE (PG-13) 1 hr. 47 min. | February 16 - 29

See Bob Marley's incredible life and music immortalized on the big screen for the first time. Produced in partnership with the Marley family, Reinaldo Marcus Green's biopic honors the difficult journey behind Bob's revolutionary music. Marley's son (and ONE LOVE producer), Ziggy Marley says "This message of unity and love is as urgent as ever. People will deepen their connection to Bob and honor Bob in the right way".


MONDAY SPECIALS



MOLLI & MAX IN THE FUTURE
(NR) (2024)
1 hr. 33 min.
February 12 & 19



WHEN HARRY MET SALLY
(R) (1989)
1 hr. 36 min.
February 26



THE WIZARD OF OZ
(G) (1939)
1 hr. 52 min.
March 4

QUESTIONS? VISIT US ONLINE AT: MORROBAYMOVIE.COM

Police Blotter



- **Jan. 14:** Police responded to a disturbance at 11:20 a.m. in the 2000 block of Ironwood. Logs indicated some fruit loop dingus violated a stay-the-hell-away court order.
- **Jan. 14:** Police were called to a disturbance at 11:15 a.m. in the 2700 block of Alder. Logs indicated an upset citizen was taken in for a 72-hour timeout.
- **Jan. 14:** At 11 a.m. police responded to the 200 block of Atascadero Rd., for a report of some apparent scaramouche brandishing a weapon.
- **Jan. 14:** A citizen came down to the police station and said his or her identity had been stolen, against which about the only defense is a crappy credit score.
- **Jan. 13:** Police spotted a suspicious fellow at 5:05 p.m. in the area of Beach and Main. Logs indicated the 33-year-old roasted rascal was nicked for suspicion of flapping-out where the tourists can see him.
- **Jan. 13:** Police responded at 8:38 a.m. to a business in the 900 block of Main where a beloved employee had died of an apparent heart attack.
- **Jan. 12:** Police spotted a suspicious fellow at 10:30 p.m. in the 700 block of Quintana, the new heart of the danger zone. The 66-year-old apparent squit was arrested for suspicion of being rat-arsed in public.
- **Jan. 12:** Police responded at 10 p.m. to the 2400 block of Ironwood for an apparent domestic disturbance. Logs indicated one party had violated a domestic violence restraining order he or she had taken out against a second party, which tends to K.O. the R.O.
- **Jan. 12:** At 9:38 p.m. police responded to a disturbance

at Tidelands Park. Logs indicated another domestic violence stay-away order had been violated.

- **Jan. 12:** Police responded at 5:31 p.m. to the 1100 block of Napa for a report of illegal campers. Logs indicated they gave a 72-hour notice to get lost or else to a man and a woman they found apparently setting up camp at the old elementary school.
- **Jan. 12:** Police responded at 3:41 p.m. to Main and Pacific where two cars went badda-boom badda-bing.
- **Jan. 12:** At 1:25 p.m. police got a report of suspected child abuse from the 500 block of Sequoia.
- **Jan. 11:** Police responded at 5 p.m. to the 800 block of Embarcadero for a boisterous fellow causing a ruckus. Logs indicated the 37-year-old rabble rouser was arrested for suspicion of being stoned on drugs, indecent exposure and a probation violation, as it was apparently not the illuminas-ty's first rodeo.
- **Jan. 11:** At 3:15 p.m. police towed off a bothersome vehicle parked too long at Front and Harbor with an expired registration to boot.
- **Jan. 11:** Police contacted a regular customer at 2:18 a.m. in the 400 block of Quintana. Logs indicated the 33-year-old fellow was booked into the Parkinson Plaza for suspicion of possessing illegal drugs and three bench warrants.
- **Jan. 10:** Police responded to a disturbance at 7:53 a.m. in the 300 block of Rennell. Logs indicated a 60-year-old Idjit was arrested for suspicion of domestic battery of a spouse or co-habitant and the disagreeable cur was jailed.
- **Jan. 10:** Police responded at 7:39 a.m. to a store in the 900 block of Morro Bay Blvd., and began an investigation into whether the store sold alcohol to an intoxicated person.
- **Jan. 8:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow traipsing along the 900 block of MBB at 11:37 p.m. Logs indicated the 66-year-old boozer was allegedly drunk and got arrested.
- **Jan. 9:** At 2:42 p.m. a citizen came to the police station and said someone stole his identity and used it to set up a Direct TV account through AT&T.
- **Jan. 9:** Police responded at 11:10 a.m. to the 300 block of LaJolla where a local citizen had died of apparent natural causes.
- **Jan. 8:** Police spotted a regular customer at 10:50 p.m. in the O'Reilly's Auto Parts Store parking lot on Quintana Rd. Logs indicated the apparent swagman, 39, was cited and released on four bench warrants, plus a fresh charge of alleged possession of drug paraphernalia.
- **Jan. 8:** Police contacted a man and woman at 4:12 p.m. in the 700 block of Quintana. The 35-year-old man had a pair of bench warrants and police hauled him to the gaol. The woman, 45, was cited and released for suspicion of trespassing, as the crackdown on the Creekbed Estates kicked in.
- **Jan. 8:** At 3:15 p.m. police spotted another squatter camping on private property in the 500 block of Quintana. Officers issued a 72-hour move-it notice because he was within 200 feet of a school and a community building, not to mention right across the street from the County Social Services Office.
- **Jan. 7:** Police responded to the 1100 block of Monterey at 7:30 p.m. where some larcenous, apparent ruffian burglar was accused of spousal battery, and stealing enough stuff to call "grand theft," but logs didn't say what or whose booty the scoundrel pinched.
- **Jan. 7:** Police responded at 4:30 p.m. to a traffic crash in the 400 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Sorry, no heinous injuries to report.
- **Jan. 7:** Some maniacal Jack-wagon slashed the tires on an innocent vehicle in the 800 block of Pacific.
- **Jan. 6:** Police received a report of multiple subjects fighting at 10:30 p.m. in the 400 block of Monterey. Logs indicated when officers arrived to referee the bout, they ended up arresting a 34-year-old knuckle-dragger for suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon and child abuse. A 31-year-old bent woman was nicked as well for suspicion of child abuse and drunk & disorderly conduct.
- **Jan. 6:** Police received a report at 9:34 p.m. from a guy in the 200 block of Atascadero Rd. who said he'd gotten a death threat.
- **Jan. 6:** At 8:18 p.m. police were called to the 400 block of Morro Bay Blvd., where a business owner said "an individual" had run into their business after he or she was reportedly "assaulted by their significant other."

- **Jan. 6:** Police towed off two offending vehicles in the 700 block of Butte and on Hwy 1 at South Bay Boulevard for the capital offense of expired registration.
- **Jan. 5:** Police responded to a disturbance at 10:08 p.m. at Harbor and Monterey. The apparent Snallygaster, 48, was arrested for suspicion of being trashed in public.
- **Jan. 5:** At 4 p.m. police towed away a camper trailer parked on Quintana at Kings for parking too long in one place, or vehicular vagrancy.
- **Jan. 5:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 12:24 p.m. in the 500 block of Quintana. The 30-year-old scofflaw had a felony warrant and was hauled off to the hoosegow.
- **Jan. 4:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 8:08 p.m. in the 800 block of Murray. Logs indicated the 25-year-old driver was shackled and charged with three felony counts of alleged resisting arrest, felony vandalism, and drunk driving, which explains a lot.
- **Jan. 4:** Police responded at 6:33 p.m. to the 200 block of Atascadero Rd. and arrested some apparent arch criminal mastermind on a slew of charges. The 56-year-old apparent she-devil was charged with suspicion of felony vandalism, receiving stolen property, and grand theft.
- **Jan. 4:** At 2 p.m. in the 800 block of MBB police contacted a regular but delinquent customer who had five bench warrants for which he owes a debt.
- **Jan. 4:** A citizen in the 2600 block of Santa Maria Way turned in a shotgun for police to destroy, no doubt the only form of gun control proven to work.
- **Jan. 3:** Police espied some swizzle stick traipsing down the 300 block of the Boulevard at 8:49 p.m. Logs indicated the 42-year-old annoying flesh monkey was nicked for suspicion of being on the razzle.
- **Jan. 3:** Police responded at 3:45 p.m. to Miner's Ace Hardware after some sticky-fingered thief stole batteries.
- **Jan. 2:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 8:30 p.m. in the 300 block of Atascadero Rd. Logs indicated the 41-year-old scrap had a bench warrant, was re-ticketed and allowed to roam again. Another bail jumper, 65, was stopped in the 800 block of the Boulevard at 10:52 a.m. He too was mercifully cited and released to catch another day.
- **Jan. 2:** At 7:55 a.m. in the Creekbed Estates in 700 block of Quintana, police picked up a suspicious fellow, 42, who was booked into the dungeon for violating a court order.
- **Jan. 2:** Police responded at 2:30 p.m. to a car crash at San Joaquin and Alder. No injuries reported.
- **Jan. 1:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at the highly suspect time of 3:30 a.m. at Hwy 1 and San Jacinto. Logs indicated an 18-year-old reveler was jailed for suspicion of driving deep in his cups.

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Nawww man, I'll meet you at the club.

Friday Night Lies

Photo by CatNoirCC.com

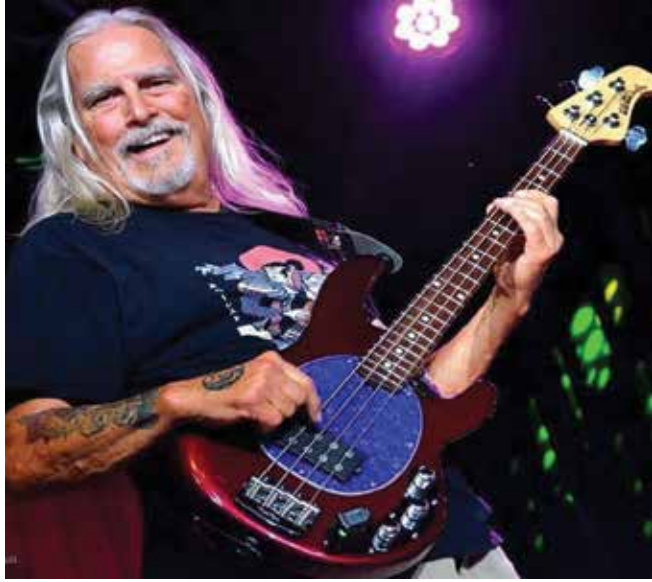
Follow Cat Noir CC on Facebook for daily photos and read the blog at CatNoirCC.com. Every Color Deserves a Forever Home

Community

Events From page 7

to life the iconic female singers of the 1960s. From Aretha Franklin to Janis Joplin, the show offers a musical celebration of the cultural, social, and artistic changes that defined this remarkable decade. Audiences can expect a fantastic voyage through the music and fashion of the era, celebrating the empowering spirit of women in a time of significant change. The show captures the essence of the 60s, from the early girl-group harmonies to the psychedelic anthems.

For tickets, call (805) 786-2440.



Bruce Willard, the bassist for several local bands including Dr. Danger, Robi's Narrow Bridge, Anam Cara, The Mojo Combo, The Three Muskrat Ears, and Hey Mikey! The Melvin Brucifer Show, suffered a major cardiac event on December 1, 2023. His recovery has been nothing short of miraculous, but he will need to be on supplemental oxygen. Friends and band members Deborah Tullos, Mike Melchione, and Richard Manuputy are throwing a benefit

on Saturday, February 10, 2024, from 1-10 p.m. at Niffy's Merrimaker in Baywood Park. The purpose of the benefit is to raise money to gift Bruce a backpack oxygen concentrator so he can be more mobile and continue to work as a musician. Any money raised in excess will be given to Bruce to use for other expenses.

The benefit features twelve local bands in the following order: Blues Asylum (the host band) with Robi Duganne, "Burning" James Scoolis and Billy Baxmeyer, Dr. Danger with Wil Anderson on bass, Vintage Renegades, Back Pages Band, Cocktail Shorty, Mojo Combo, Rosewood & Honey, Ted Waterhouse & The Jumptones, Back Bay Betty, Bay Love, and Electric Lavender Train. Bands are scheduled to trade off every 40 minutes. If time permits, there will be a jam hosted by Blues Asylum at the end.

There is a \$5 cover at the door, which includes the same value in raffle tickets. Besides a prize raffle, there is a silent auction with more 50 items, and a 50/50 raffle. Monetary donations will be accepted as well. Many of the items in the prize raffle and silent auction are of special interest to musicians, including musical instruments and accessories.

For further information, to volunteer, donate goods or services as prizes, or donate, contact Deborah Tullos at 1(559)904-1060.

Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main Street, present two shows: Chasing Light and Aquarius 2024, presented by the Central Coast Watercolor Society.

The impetus behind Chasing Light is how the light in artwork can portray depth, perception, and intensity, as well as more subtle characteristics such as mood and emotion. How light is used – through choice of color, sunlight, and reflection – can bring the champagne softness of an autumnal East Coast landscape or the hardness of a southern California



beach day. Or, maybe you "chase" neon light in a modern piece of sculpture or experiment with an LED light box to bring storytelling to your art in an unusual way. How we use light, (and also shadow and the absence of light: darkness), in our work is premeditated and often nuanced. And, more difficult to create than it may seem.

In this exhibit, artists submitted entries on any platform that reflects their meditation on "chasing" the light in their creations.

In addition, the Central Coast Watercolor Society will host Aquarius 2024 in our Russell Gallery. A juried show, Aquarius 2024 presents the best in water-media painting, representing a wide range of subjects, materials, and techniques, from traditional to experimental. Awards will be presented during the opening reception, February 25 from 2-4pm. Joe Cibere is the juror of selection and awards.

Chasing Light & Aquarius 2024 are on display from February 22 to April 1, 2024. The opening reception is Sunday, February 25, 2024 from 2 – 4 pm. There is a call to artist for Chasing Light.

For more information, call (805) 772-2504 or go to www.artcentermorroby.org. Photo by David Stroppe

Art After Dark returns in 2024 with more venues than ever before. The SLO County Arts Council welcomes back dozens of annually participating venues and tons of new monthly locations. The spotlight for February is Texture Salon's "Black History Month Lounge: Celebrating Arts and History." The lounge will include drum circles led by Tracy Morgan at 5:30 p.m. and 7 p.m., a digital gallery of works by local Black artists, a history of hip hop between drum circles, and Black history visuals and conversation starters.

This event is a collaboration between R.A.C.E. Matters and SLO County Arts Council. In March, Art After Dark will highlight Arts Education Month with a neighborhood block party in the Mo-Jo neighborhood, featuring an "instrument petting zoo" from SLO Youth Symphony, alongside Raku (ceramics) firing demonstrations outside Anam Cre Pottery Studio. More spotlights will continue throughout the year.

Art After Dark runs from 5 to 8 p.m. on the first Friday of each month, countywide. For the list of participating venues, visit slocountyarts.org/art-after-dark.

The following are free events brought to you by the Los Osos Library 2075 Palisades, Ave, 805-528-1862. The featured artists this month are: wall artist is Guillermo Willie and display case is Nemadji Pottery by Fayla Chapman

• Paws to Read - Wednesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m.

Come and read your favorite book to Berkeley! She's at the Los Osos Library on Wednesday afternoons. School

Events Continued on page 10



NATURAL HEALING CENTER

SENIOR CANNABIS EDUCATIONAL FAIR!

TUESDAY FEB 20, 2024
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

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Community

Events From page 9

Age.

- E-Device Class - Wednesdays, 9:15-10 a.m.
Bring your device in and Diana will do her best to answer any questions you have.
- Storytime - Thursdays, 10:30-11 a.m.
Stories, dance, and music for toddlers and preschoolers.
- Nintendo Switch - Friday, February 2, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
Master your gaming skills and make new friends with our Nintendo Switch! We will provide one Switch for up to 4 players at a time - feel free to bring your own too. Games include Mario Kart and Just Dance. School Age
- Lunar New Year - Friday, February 9, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
Learn all about the Lunar New Year while making fun holiday crafts! Wear your finest red outfit for good luck! Welcome to the year of the dragon. School Age, Teen
- Brain Education Series for Adults: Week 1 - Tuesday, February 13, 5:30-7 p.m.

Promoting Your Brain Health: Growing evidence suggests that you can keep your brain healthy by adopting key lifestyle habits. Learn how you can take care of your brain through diet, exercise, social engagement and cognitive activities. Registration preferred. Walk-ins welcome. RSVP: Los Osos Library: 805-528-1862 or Alzheimer's Association: 800-272-3900



Volumes of Pleasure bookshop in Los Osos is thrilled to host — for the ninetieth time — a Chinese New Year celebration, Saturday, February 10 at 3 p.m.

The marvelous Cal Poly Lion Dance Team and Band will be in front of Volumes of Pleasure bookshop to enthusiastically perform the centuries-old Lion Dance ritual which will delight attendees and bless our community.

This year is the Year of the Wood Dragon which combines qualities of the dragon — such as courage, charisma, and leadership — with the qualities of the wood element, which includes flexibility, generosity, and cooperation.

Wood Dragon years are known to foster harmony, balance, and peace. So we can anticipate 2024 to be a year of renewed positive energy stimulating creativity, innovation, and compassion.

The Year of the Wood Dragon invites us to be authentic, adventurous, and optimistic in our expression and to celebrate our individuality and enhance our community with a shared vision of generosity and cooperation.

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. We do not guarantee publication but try to include as many as we can.



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Obituaries

Dolores Ann Butterfield 1935- 2023



Dolores Ann Butterfield, long-time resident of Morro Bay, passed away on December 18, 2023, at the age of 88.

Her family is grateful for the compassionate care provided by the Wilshire Hospice team and the many neighbors, friends, family members, and others that helped her retain her independence and endure the effects of severe COPD with dignity and grace.

Dolores was born in Fillmore, California, to Ella and Albert Bafford. The eldest of five children, Dolores began secretarial work immediately after graduating from Ventura Senior High School to help support her two younger brothers. Following positions with a local bank and Shell Oil Company, Dolores joined the Marine Corps serving from 1960-1963. Dolores took great pride in her military service, which no doubt provided the basis for her profound sense of responsibility, determination and devotion to family.

These values remained with Dolores throughout her life, enabling her to obtain an Associate of Arts degree at Cuesta Community College (while raising three children); take care of her ailing parents/other family member; and to manage a full-time career with the San Luis Obispo County Department of Social Services from which she retired in 1997.

A fervent gardener and avid reader, Dolores could usually be found in her (or a neighbor's yard) tending to an ailing plant or with a book and cup of coffee. Otherwise, Dolores probably had a dog in tow — her own or that of another's. From a St. Bernard to a Rat Terrier — she loved dogs of all shapes/sizes and spent countless hours at the beach with her various four-legged companions.

Dolores is survived by her daughter, Kathleen LaRoque, of Santa Fe, NM; her son, William Butterfield, of The Hills, TX; her sister, Linda Beardsley, of Morro Bay, CA; numerous nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her daughter, JoElla Daugette, and her siblings Charles Bafford, John Bafford, and Sharon Borden.

A ceremony to honor Dolores will be held February 17th at 2 p.m. at Morro Strand State Beach Day Use Area (Cayucos) with a reception to follow at the Ocean View Manor Community Center, 456 Elena Street in Morro Bay.

For those who wish to make a memorial contribution in Dolores' honor, please consider donating to Wilshire Health and Community Services of San Luis Obispo.

Elaine S. Hiatt 1932 - 2024



Elaine S. Hiatt passed away in her sleep on the morning of January 9, 2024, at her residence in Bullhead City, AZ.

Elaine was born in Bakersfield and graduated Bakersfield High School in 1950. Elaine moved to Morro Bay with her late former husband, Cliff Hiatt, to raise their family before returning to Bakersfield after retiring from First American Title Insurance.

Even though Elaine was retired and living in Bakersfield, she maintained the friendships she'd developed during her years in Morro Bay through frequent trips back to the coast. Due to ill health, Elaine eventually wound up in an assisted living facility in Arizona, so her family could make sure she received the care needed.

Elaine had two children, Blake and Paige. Unfortunately, Elaine lost her daughter a few years ago. Elaine is survived by her son, Blake, six grandchildren and five great grandchildren. Elaine was a long-time member of the Methodist Church, an association she treasured greatly.

Jami Dee Todd 1964 - 2024



Jami Dee Todd was born Oct. 11, 1964, and left our presence Jan. 13, 2024

Jami worshiped the ocean, cold and foggy weather, and little ugly dogs.

She surrounded herself with mermaids, animals, ocean creatures and boat memorabilia. She loved anything colored deep, cobalt blue, and only wore yellow-gold jewelry.

She refused to take showers... only bubble baths. She smoked like a train, and cursed like a sailor, but was as fragile as a flower. She always had your back; and could not pass

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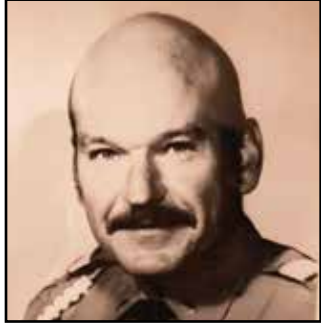
Obituaries

a homeless person without giving them spare change. She always looked and smelled good, and loved to drive fast. She loved loud rock 'n' roll — Led Zeppelin, Van Halen (Roth not Sammy). She worked as a veterinary tech in Yuma, Ariz., and Morro Bay and was a docent for Friends of the Elephant Seals.

Jami is survived by her husband of 28 years Bill Todd, daughter Chasi, son Michael and all her little animals. She will be sincerely missed by everyone who graced her presence.

A celebration of life is scheduled for noon on Saturday, April 13 at the Eagles Club in Morro Bay. In lieu of flowers, please make a donation in her name to the Friends of the Elephant seals.

Anthony Regis Toomey 1938 - 2024



Anthony Regis Toomey, born on January 27, 1938, peacefully passed away at home on January 9, 2024, surrounded by the love of his life, his wife Irene "Rene" Toomey. Anthony, known affectionately as Tony, leaves behind a legacy of love, dedication, and a life well-lived.

Born and raised in Pittsburgh, PA, to Clara and Patrick Toomey, Tony grew up with his older siblings, Robert and Joan. Tony moved to California in his early 20s but remained deeply connected to his East Coast family.

In his 86 years of life, Tony forged a beautiful journey.

He was a devoted husband, celebrating 50 years of marriage with his beloved Rene. Their union was blessed with a son, Matthew Toomey, who, along with his daughter-in-law Rebecca, brought joy and fulfillment to Tony's life. The Toomey family expanded further with the addition of grandchildren Owen, Raquel, and Camilla, whom Tony adored.

Tony dedicated a significant portion of his professional life to serving his community. He worked tirelessly for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for 25 years, where he eventually retired as a homicide detective. His commitment to justice and the well-being of others was unwavering.

After his distinguished career in law enforcement, Tony embarked on a second chapter as a college professor upon moving to the Central Coast in 1989. Sharing his knowledge and experiences, he inspired countless students, leaving an indelible mark on their lives.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Tony was a true family man and a loyal friend. He found joy in simple pleasures, particularly spending time with friends and cheering on his favorite sports teams, the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Los Angeles Dodgers. He also took up golf in his 30s and was an avid golfer for nearly 40 years.

As a father, Tony was unparalleled. Whether playing catch in the backyard, assisting with homework, or offering fatherly advice, he was a constant pillar of support and love. His presence enriched the lives of his family, and his guidance will be sorely missed.

Known for his generosity and willingness to help others, Tony's legacy extends far beyond his professional and personal achievements. His warm heart and genuine kindness touched the lives of many.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations be made to Wilshire Hospice of San Luis Obispo, a cause close to the Toomey family. As we say our good-byes, let us remember Anthony Regis Toomey for the love he shared, the lives he touched, and the lasting impact he leaves behind. He will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

Letters

To The Editor



Viewpoint

'Progress' — a Danger to All?

By Gail Johnson, Morro Bay

In his 12/14/23 opinion (Estero Bay News Vol. 5, Issue 25), "Is Morro Bay in danger of being 'industrialized'?", John Lindt waxes nostalgic about a time when industry, energy production and military use co-existed with tourism and commercial fishing in Morro Bay. He implies that because this was historically true, we should welcome it in the future. While Mr. Lindt romanticizes an era marked by dubious "progress," he acknowledges that advancements often have serious impacts.

The World War II effort required universal resolve to fight our enemies, and coastal towns were needed to protect our nation. In our collective determination to save our country from foreign threats, mistakes were made that affected us locally, such as the internment of our Japanese American neighbors and seizure of private property. Our iconic Morro Rock, considered an Indigenous sacred place, was partially blasted apart and used to renovate our harbor. Today we are making symbolic gestures to restore it.

Post war exuberance brought a baby boom, a building boom and the need for energy to power our bright ambitious world. PG&E's power plant provided the electricity, and because it required abundant cooling water for its operation, it was located adjacent to our harbor. The power plant was not universally accepted when it was built and led to even more dissent when the effects of the toxic smoke, discharged wastewater and sea life mortality became evident. Today, we continue to experience the impacts of unsightly asbestos-filled stacks and polluted ground, and question how and when these offenses will ever be resolved.

The legacy of commercial fishing has defined our town, but drag-net fishing, chosen by the fishermen themselves as a survival strategy, proved unsustainable. Now, the fishing industry and government agencies are coordinating to promote sustainable fishing practices. Newly proposed industrialization of the ocean off our coast could hamper their efforts and seriously reduce the fishing stock. Fishing families are in a battle for their legacy and their livelihoods. How much more adaptation and hard work must our fishermen endure?

Climate change IS the defining threat of our times. Mr. Lindt recognizes that "Morro Bay does have a clear and present danger from rising seas, stronger storms and ocean acidification." The need to develop renewable sources of energy is undeniable, but it must be safe, smart, properly engineered, appropriately located and cost-efficient. We must follow the science and be honest about the costs. To that end, several projects are being proposed that would drastically transform our world-renowned tourist destination and historical fishing village.

The docks, infrastructure and harbor created by the military in the 40's are laughably inadequate for the kind of Long Beach-style port necessary to build and service the proposed wind projects and potential commercial sea-borne deliveries.

A major port overhaul is envisioned. Our bay would be unrecognizable and would be so transformed as to be useless for fishing, recreational boating and beach-loving families. The north end of our famously safe harbor would be annihilated. Our most protected shore, Coleman Beach, locally known as "Mothers' Beach", where children learn to swim, surf and safely enjoy the sea, would be gone. Our

Letters Continued on page 12

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Community

Letters From page 11

otters will disappear. The harbor would be dredged to over twice its depth. The view of our harbor would include massive piers, huge ocean-going ships, cranes and platforms that would dominate the skyline. Heavily laden trucks would damage our roadways, pollute our air and drown out the sounds and smells of the ocean with their diesel-hungry engines. Is this what a tourist, much less us, want to experience?

Located directly across the Embarcadero from Mothers' Beach would be a 22 acre lithium-ion battery storage facility, the largest project of its kind in the world, proposed by an out-of-state corporation: Vistra. The battery facility would loom nearly 70 feet above the beach, within a stone's throw from the old power plant. Shorelines and waterways are not required to cool battery energy storage systems (BESS). Placing lithium-ion batteries near salt water (flooding, rising seas and tsunami potential notwithstanding) increases the risk of failure resulting in lethal fires and deadly toxic gas plumes. Existing substations and transmission lines are antiquated and would need to be rebuilt.

Is an unsightly, dangerous and deadly BESS, electrical sub-station and transmission lines surrounded by razor-wire-topped cyclone fencing truly the best use of a precious piece of our coastal land? There are vast expanses inland, away from population centers, to develop these new industrial facilities. How can anyone imagine the coexistence of these threats and blight with a thriving tourist industry? There is absolutely no reasonable argument that these should be located in the heart of our town, on our Embarcadero, and near our precious beaches.

Mr. Lindt argues that Morro Bay citizens should coexist with industrialization. We, the residents, boaters, fishermen and surfers, the birders, hikers, beach and nature-lovers, are not willing to surrender our community's character, harm our natural resources or threaten our economic tourist base, and certainly not our lifestyle, for whatever questionable "benefits" there may be from reckless development. There are exceedingly safer, more appropriately located and financially rational sites to locate industrialized development.

"Progress" that outpaces caution, shuns testing and eschews experience is a danger to us all.

In the past, Morro Bay may have welcomed and coexisted with the impacts of industrialization, for "good" causes. We can choose a different path for our future. We have the power of our vote.

The current General Plan of Morro Bay, known officially as "Plan Morro Bay", was approved by our elected City officials and certified by the California Coastal Commission in 2022. It does not allow industrial uses on our Embarcadero, our harbor and adjacent beaches. In November, by voting YES on Ballot Measure A-24, Morro Bay citizens will preserve the uses currently allowed in these sen-

sitive areas. Industrial projects would have to be approved by Morro Bay voters before they could proceed, now and in the future. We can discuss, debate and decide for ourselves whether the benefits and impacts of a proposal is good for us, or not. Ballot Measure A-24 takes decision-making out of the hands of the corporations, profit-motivated entities and politicians, and gives us, the Morro Bay citizens, the right to make choices for ourselves concerning the future of our beautiful harbor and valuable natural resources.

Plan to vote in November and show your support for Ballot Measure A-24. And — VOTE YES!

Check Out Real Estate Licenses

As a retired educator I am all about student and consumer empowerment in SLO County. Headlines about consumer fraud in the news have concerned me over the years. So I believe information is power to help consumers make the right decisions especially for renters and property owners when selecting a professional realtor and property manager locally. Make sure you initially and occasionally look up the real estate license status and any pending disciplinary action or audit results (scroll to the bottom of the page for any PDF's) on the CA Department of Real Estate website at www.dre.ca.gov/. Information is power in making smart consumer decisions especially in today's tough real estate market.

John Paul Drayer
Cayucos

Thank You From People Helping People

People Helping People of Los Osos would like to thank all the wonderful, generous donors who made this year's Needs 'N Wishes event a great success. Also, a big thank you to the exciting entertainers, The Ichimi Daiko Drummers, the singing duet with Rick on guitar and Melissa on the ukulele and The Coastline Arts Chamber Ensemble directed by Coleen Wall. Last but not least, thanks to Santa for visiting us and bringing good cheer to all.

The generosity of the people who donated toys, treasures, baked goods, handmade items, gift cards, money and time spent is much appreciated.

The recipients of the proceeds were 40 Prado homeless Services Center and SLO Noor Clinic.

Be sure to mark your calendars for next year's event, December 8th, for The 19th Annual Needs 'N Wishes Holiday Fundraiser.

Marlene McQueen
Los Osos

M.B. Chamber Want All to Know



I hope this letter finds you in good spirits and thriving in your respective endeavors. I am writing to address a matter of importance and to share some updates regarding our beloved Chamber.

Clarification Regarding Recent Information:

Firstly, I want to extend my sincere gratitude for your membership and commitment to the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce. Recently, it has come to our attention that there are circulating rumors, specifically a recent blog post, suggesting a merger between the Morro Bay Chamber and the San Luis Obispo Chamber. I wish to clarify unequivocally that this information is not accurate. It is no secret that in recent years we have had conversations with neighboring chambers about possible consolidation of efforts. However, no such merger is taking place at this time. We continue to operate as an independent entity dedicated to serving our community.

In the future, if there were earnest consideration of a merger both chambers would make their membership aware and seek their input.

Your thoughts, questions, and concerns are invaluable to us. Please feel free to reach out via email or call me directly. As the 2024 chairperson, my door is always open to you, and I am here to listen and address any matters you may bring forth.

The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce was established in 1956. We are proud to have served the business community for almost 70 years. We have a dedicated staff and strong partnerships throughout the Central Coast. Our Chamber has one of the highest membership retention rates in the industry. We look forward to continuing to serve the needs of the businesses in Morro Bay.

The 2024 Chamber Board comprises 12 dedicated volunteers, each hailing from diverse segments of the Morro Bay business community. We are focused on enhancing our operations in line with the valuable insights gained from our member surveys. This ensures the continuation of the high-quality service our members have grown to ex-

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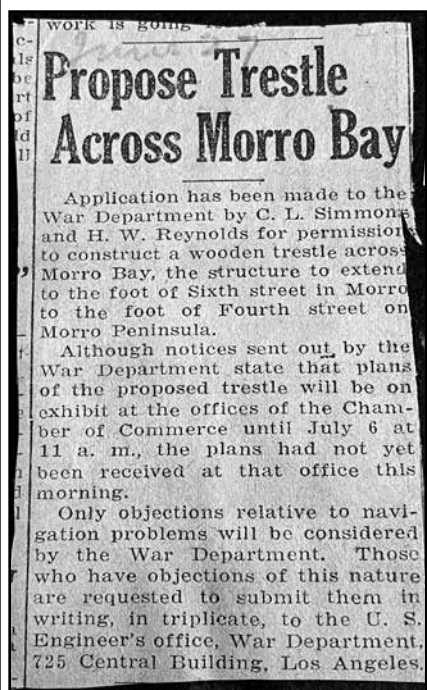
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LOOKING BACK

A look at our local history, from way back when to now!



The newspaper clipping at left tells of plans to construct a wooden trestle "across" Morro Bay. The photo is the project once it was completed.

Although date of the clipping and publication are unknown, it is part of the Richard Otto collection. Photo courtesy of the Sullivan Studios collection.

pect and value. I assure you, any improvements we consider will be deeply rooted in member participation and feedback.

In closing, I want to reiterate my appreciation for your commitment to the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce. Together, we will continue to foster a vibrant and prosperous business community and I look forward to seeing you soon at an upcoming chamber event.

*Cherise Hansson
2024 Chairperson
Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce*

Letter To The Editor Policy

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

Los Osos/Baywood Park 2024 Chamber Board

The Los Osos/Baywood Park Chamber of Commerce kicked off 2024 with the installation of the newly elected board of directors and the election of their officers.

New Team

Colleen Vecchetti, Movement for Life Physical Therapy, president; Curtis Armstrong, Baywood Inn, past president; Alyssa Petersen, individual member, vice president; Annie Wahler, Kiwanis, secretary; and Matt Hathaway, Hathaway Accounting, treasurer.

Other board members are Gary Dove, Rotary; Travis Britton, individual member; and Jim Stanfill, individual member.

In addition to membership support, the Los Osos/Baywood Park Chamber of Commerce plans many community events including the Community Awards Dinner, Festival of Flavors, Oktoberfest, and holiday events such as the annual holiday parade, Christmas tree lighting and Light Up Los Osos).

The next mixer takes place at The Baywood Inn. Date and time is to be determined.



NATURAL HISTORY NUGGETS

The Compost Lizard

By Dean Thompson

My son always hated taking out the compost bucket. I must admit by the time the bucket full of banana peels, peach pits, melon rinds, moldy pieces of bread and other food waste was ready to be dumped into the compost pile it could be rather odoriferous. Once dumped, the mass of sometimes smelly, slimy, and moldy food waste had to be broken up, spread around, then covered with dry leaves and watered. This was just a little too much for him.

As a biologist though, I found it to be fascinating. Sure, the rotting mass of food was not pleasant to smell or look at, but here I was creating a miniature habitat where a whole host of organisms were turning this dead plant matter into something that would foster life. Early on biologists learn that we can't have life without death. The mere fact of our existence is because thousands of living things have died so that we can be here. I hate to be trite, but it is indeed the circle of life, of which my compost pile is just a microcosm.

Beetles, springtails, red wiggler worms, ants and other invertebrates combine with bacteria and fungus to break it all down to compost/soil for my garden. But in addition to those critters, I occasionally find other larger critters attracted to the fecund pile of decomposing vegetation. My dog is especially keyed into the compost pile when I turn it,

hoping to grab the occasional mouse that was enjoying the banquet of leftovers. Myself, I am always on the lookout for one of my favorite reptiles, the California legless lizard.



Yes, legless lizard. The presence or absence of legs is not the determining factor as to what group the animal belongs to. Snakes and lizards are both vertebrates with scales covering their entire body. Both are ectothermic (using outside sources to regulate their body temperature). Among other differences lizards have eyelids and ear holes, and some can shed parts of their tails to escape predators. Snakes cannot "shut" their eyes nor wink or even blink and have no ears, preferring to sense sound through their jawbones. And ... lizards don't always have legs.

So legless they may be but lizards they are, and the California legless lizard is a beauty to behold. I've only ever seen them while digging in and around my compost pile or in the sand under leaf litter; their quicksilver bodies slithering away under the leaves or sand. If you're able to gently grab them,

Compost Lizard Continued on page 18

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Sports

January 2024 Athletes of the Month

It's a New Year and new prep sports season, and the Morro Bay High School Booster's Club has named its Athletes of the Month for January 2024.

The student/athletes being honored are: Danny Martinez, Emily Giordano, Jacob Falat and Mia Bennett.

Basketball Stars Shine

Boys' Basketball Team Head Coach Emily Dunn said senior Martinez is a stellar athlete and perhaps more importantly, a stellar young man.

"In his senior season," Coach Dunn said, "Danny Martinez is one of the captains of the Morro Bay High School Boys' Basketball Team. Danny is the epitome of a stellar teammate on and off the basketball court.

"His leadership shines through his actions, emphasizing the importance of teamwork. Recognizing the value of every detail, Danny's commitment to doing the little things sets the tone for team success. His influential voice resonates with all teammates, becoming a reliable pillar for players and coaches."

She called Falat a powerhouse on the court.

"Jacob Falat," Coach Dunn said, "is a powerhouse of the MBHS Boys' Basketball Team and is one of the players who dominates the boards with rebounding prowess. Not only does Jacob secure possessions but also contributes a solid, 15-points per game."

He's a savvy court general. "A true competitor," Coach Dunn said, "Jacob's high basketball IQ is a game-changer, guiding the team to success. His teammates and coaches alike deeply appreciate his strategic brilliance and relentless dedication on the court."



Senior hoopster, Danny Martinez, is one of Morro Bay High's Athletes of the Month for January 2024.



Hoopster, Jacob Falat, is a monster on the boards, big scorer and team leader for the Pirates and an Athlete of the

Girls' Soccer

Varsity Girls Soccer Coaches, Kim Wishon and Stuart Fryer agree on Giordano's value to the team. "Emily is an amazing, dedicated part of our team," they said in a joint statement. "As a sophomore last year she suffered a debilitating knee injury that kept her on the sidelines the entire season. She came back this year, stronger and ready to play."

She takes the "C" on her jersey seriously. "As a captain," the coaches said, "she leads the team with her grit, commitment and hustle. She plays forward and attacking midfield, and is always making a difference on the field."

Giordano makes the team go. "She is one of those players that makes things happen and she is a leader in assists," the coaches said. "She wins the ball in the midfield, makes runs to move the ball forward and always follows shots. We look forward to Emily continuing to lead the team next year."

Bennett, "is a force to be reckoned with!" the coaches said. "She plays striker and attacking midfield and is a top goal scorer. She is a dynamic player that always gives 100% in whatever position she plays."

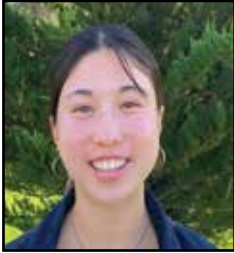
She is seemingly everywhere on the pitch. "She enjoys being involved," the coaches said, "has incredible stamina, and embodies the saying — 'Covers every blade of grass on the field.' This, combined with her close control skills, makes her an essential player on our team."

She makes everyone better. "The team plays better with Mia on the field and we look forward to watching her continue to develop and be a leader next year."

Estero Bay News congratulates these honored student/athletes and wishes them good luck and great success the rest of the season.



MBHS soccer star, Emily Giordano, is an Athlete of the Month for January 2024.



MBHS soccer star, Emily Giordano, is an Athlete of the Month for January 2024.

South Bakersfield Wins 68th Annual CIT in M.B.

By Neil Farrell

Grapplers from some 91 high schools converged on Morro Bay High School Jan. 18-19 for the 68th Annual Sam Boyd California Invitational Wrestling Tournament, with over 1,600 young men plying to stand atop the podium at the end of what was a grueling, 2-days of competition.

South High Wins CIT

In team scoring, it was South High of Bakersfield coming away with the First Place Trophy, scoring a total of 168.5 points. Second Place went to Bakersfield High School with 156.0 points and in third was Kingsburg High with 156.0. Calvary Chapel came in fourth with 152.5 points.

Among SLO County schools, Paso Robles was the top scoring team with 71.5 points, taking 27th place. Atascadero High School was 30th with 67 points and San Luis Obispo High was 40th with 48.5.

The host team Morro Bay Pirates finished 57th with 29 points. Another local school, Santa Maria High was 76th with 12 points.

Wrestling is divided by weight classes, and each athlete must "weigh in" before the tournament begins and is placed in the appropriate brackets for their weight on that day. Weight classes in general go up every 7 pounds. Here are the top finishers by weight class:

106 Pounds. In the smallest weight class, 106 pounds, it was Nathaniel Granados of Merced HS winning the CIT Championship, beating Isaiah Lara of South High, taking the match due to injury in 2-minutes 32-seconds. It improved the senior's record on the year to 32-6.

Third Place went to Xavier Escamilla of Exeter; fourth to Aiden Salas of Matilda Torres HS; fifth to Isaiah Cruz of Mayfair; sixth to Diego Barajas of St. Francis; seventh went to Makai Van Natta of Hanford; and, Logan Hansen of Royal HS took the Eighth Place medal. Top 8 wrestlers in each weight class were awarded medals.

113 lbs. Anthony Castillo of Central East High took the top spot in the 113s, defeating second place finisher, Elijah Valencia of Merced 6-0 in the finals. The official stats posted online didn't list Castillo's season record but Valencia dropped to 30-8 on the season.

Third Place went to Carlos Melgoza of Kingsburg; in Fourth Place was Ian Morales of Exeter; fifth went to Sergio Escobar of Bakersfield; sixth to Quinton Hull of Clovis West; seventh to Caine Martin of Camarillo; and the final medalist was Santana Ugues of Arvin.

120 lbs. Caleb Rivas of Golden West won the 120-pound class, defeating Yousef Jubrail of Chaminade; pinning him in 50-seconds and improving the junior's season record to 20-4. Jubrail, also a junior, dropped to 24-6 on the year.

Third Place went to Andrew Wallace of Cabrillo; fourth was Kobe Negrete of Redwood; fifth was Brandon Gamino of Sanger; sixth was Jonel Hutton of Oxnard; seventh was Alex Ramos of Clovis West; and in eighth was Solomon Reyes of Madera.

126 lbs. Santino Alvaro of Santa Ynez defeated Paso Robles' Dominic Marquez in a 2-1 decision in the finals of the 126s. Alvaro, a junior, improved to 20-6 on the year, and the senior Marquez dropped to 32-5.

Third Place went to David Gonzales of Sanger; fourth to Daniel Baeza of San Dimas; fifth to Alexander Marquez of Golden Valley; sixth to Manuel Gutierrez of Selma; seventh to Gavin Mitchell of Madison; and eighth went to Isaac Ghaffari of Camarillo.

132 lbs. in the 132-pound class, Monache high's junior sensation, Jacob Perez defeated another junior, Leo Macias of Kingsburg in a 6-2 decision. Perez improved to 30-1 on the year and Macias is now 24-7.

The other medalists were Bryce Luna of St. Francis in third; fourth was Leo Maestas of Clovis West; in fifth was Isaak Mendoza of Redwood; sixth was Gavin Contreras of Ceasar Chavez; seventh place went to Edgar Mora of Mayfair; and in

eighth place was Morro Bay's top finisher, Shea Dawson, who was injured in his last match and so couldn't continue on and challenge for seventh.

Nevertheless, eighth place at the CIT is an accomplishment to be proud of.

138 lbs. Alek VanBebber of Kingsburg was the CIT Champion at 138 lbs., defeating Jeremiah Bertalotto of Turlock 12-7 in the finals to improve to 18-2 on the year. Bertalotto dropped to 12-2.

Third Place went to Roman Gutierrez of Bullard; Sonny Lora of South High was fourth; fifth was David Arroyo of Reedley; sixth was Matthew Luna of St. Francis; seventh went to Noel Garcia of Madera South; and eighth went to Brendon Ko of Garces Memorial.

144 lbs. In the 148s, it was Slava Shahbazyan of Chaminade defeating Anthony Vargas of Central East in an 8-2 decision in the finals. Shahbazyan is now 26-1 on the year and Vargas is 5-1.

Third Place went to Niko Valenzuela of Calvary Chapel; fourth was Jesus Loreto of Kingsburg; fifth was Bradley Espinoza of Brea Olinda; in sixth was Elijah Robled of Mayfair; seventh went to Andrew Gonzalez of Camarillo; and Angelo Adame of Matilda Torres was eighth.

150 lbs. In the 150s, it was Nicholas Hernandez of Highland defeating Eli Reyes of Selma, 5-1 to win in the finals. Hernandez is now 26-4 and Reyes is 19-4.

Third Place went to Cross Rodriguez of Calvary Chapel; fourth was Lewis Saldivar of Bullard; fifth was Christopher Alvarez of Camarillo; in sixth place was Demetrius Vargas of Reedley; seventh went to Brody Preisendorf of Redwood; and in Eighth Place was Israel Gutierrez of South High.

157 lbs. Christopher Creason of El Diamante defeated Isreal Sanchez of Hanford, pinning him in 2:28 of the first round to win the tournament. Just a sophomore, Creason's season record now stands at 24-3, while Sanchez, a junior, fell to 25-10.

Third Place went to Benjamin Kirk of Royal; Fourth Place went to Fabius Carrillo of Golden Valley; in fifth was Ray Juarez of Bakersfield; sixth went to Nathan Aceves of Brea Olinda seventh to Brandon Velasquez of Dos Pueblos; with Chuk Ohiaeri of El Camino Real Charter taking eighth.

165 lbs. In the 165s, it was Junior Bojorquez of South High defeating Dylan Trevino of Calvary Chapel, 3-1 in the finals. Bojorquez, despite his first name is a senior this year and now sports a 21-4 record. Also a senior, Trevino fell to 25-9.

In Third Place was Owen Hammel of Righetti; fourth was Ayden Cortez of Clovis West; fifth was Forfeit Forfeit of Unattached (sic); sixth was Hayden Tadeo of Garces Memorial; in sixth was Christian Carchi of Simi Valley; seventh went to Samuel Ramos of Dos Pueblos; and, eighth was Robert Maria of Hueneme.

175 lbs. In the 175-pound weight class it was Max McWilliams of Calvary Chapel pinning Primo Catalano of Chaminade in the finals at the 2:23 mark in the second round, improving to 28-4 on the season, while Catalano dropped to a still very respectable 25-5.

Third Place went to Nicholas Perez of Hughson; fourth to Ramon Arredondo of Bullard; fifth was Evan James Keppler of Edison; sixth was John O'Brien of Bishop Alemany; and Seventh Place went to Noel Ceballos of Monache; and eighth was Steven Sengprechanh of Exeter.

190 lbs. In the first of the heavy weight classes, senior Chance Evans of San Luis Obispo High blanked senior Kai Vasquez of Bakersfield, 7-0 to win the tourney. Evans improved to 7-0 on the year and Vasquez fell to 10-5.

Simon Arredondo of Bullard took third; Fourth Place went to Enrique Segura of Redwood; Fifth Place was Jack Beard of Mayfair; sixth was Michael Baeza of San Dimas seventh was Anthony Aldana of Salinas; with Merced's Eric Almanza eighth.

285 lbs. And in the final weight class,

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Morro Bay Police Department is proud to present our Citizens Police Academy. Beginning Thursday March 7, 2024, from 6 pm to 9 pm and continuing every Thursday night until April 25, 2024 (excluding March 28th) at Morro Bay Police Department.

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If you are interested in attending the Citizens Academy and live or work in Morro Bay, please contact Sergeant Nicole Taylor at ntaylor@morrobayca.gov or Bonnie Johnson at bjohnson@morrobayca.gov

Applications can be picked up at
Morro Bay Police Department
850 Morro Bay Blvd.
(805) 772-6225

News

Second Recall From page 1

- He got rid of “effective County Administrator Wade Horton, and replaced him with a crony and political contributor” who subsequently left office amid allegations of improper conduct towards women;
- Turned his back on the Dist. 2 voters “by spearheading repeal of the 2021 redistricting maps to return to 2011 boundaries that do not comply with the 2019 Fair Maps Act “but ensure his safe re-election.”
- Gibson “exhibited contempt for property owners who live on fixed incomes and rely on the protections of Proposition 13;
- He favored the interests of Sacramento over San Luis Obispo County voters;
- He violated the Brown Act on multiple occasions obfuscating transparency and suppressing public comment;
- He has been silent about the bribery and extortion and corruption of deceased Supervisor and political ally, Adam Hill, as well as: the County’s mushrooming County Employee Pension debt, totaling nearly \$12 billion; and,
- Gibson worked hard to hand special interests control over water rights harming the County’s small farmers.

Those claims are nearly identical to the first set of claims filed last October adding just the part about the Interim County CAO being run out of office “amid allegations of improper conduct towards women.”

That issue references the sudden firing of Interim CAO, John Nilon last November after he was accused of acting inappropriately with women in his office. “After an investigation of improper conduct toward women in violation of the County’s policy against discrimination and harassment,” reads a Nov. 17, 2023 new release from the County Counsel’s Office.

Supervisors discussed the allegations against Nilon in Closed Session on Nov. 14 and he turned in his resignation the next day, and under his contract he actually gave a 30-day notice.

But after a Nov. 17 Closed Session discussion, he was immediately terminated.

Board Chairman at the time, 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.”

Peschong is no longer board chairman and Gibson is currently serving in that capacity.

In Gibson’s immediate response to this second Notice to Recall he again claimed the recall effort was illegitimate. “This is an illegitimate use of a lawful public process but I’m not surprised these highly-partisan, election-denying activists would try this again, given their track record,” he said.

He lists four arguments against the recall:

- They Gerrymandered the district and lost anyway;
- After I won, they demanded a recount and failed;
- They then refused to fully pay the County Elections Office for that failure, and still haven’t paid;
- They failed again at their first ill-considered recall attempt; and,
- They continue to peddle debunked election fraud conspiracy theories.

He goes on to claim that the recall is being led by two of the candidates he defeated in 2022. “Two of the candidates I defeated in 2022 are fronting this effort,” Gibson’s response reads. “Their spokesman in that election promised a dirty campaign against me, and these allegations are more of the same. This petition notice is full of distortions and lies, exactly like the losing campaign they ran against me in 2022.”

He called the recall petitioners “a small group of MAGA fanatics” that were peddling falsehoods, “and are abusing the Constitutional process. It’s just what they do.”

With the renewed effort at recalling the now fifth-term Supervisor, County Clerk-Recorder, Elaina Cano issued a new timeline for the recall to follow. Cano halted the first recall effort when the petitioners failed to meet deadlines for filing paperwork.

The process is well along already as several early deadlines have already passed and presumably been met this time.

Indeed, the process is already entered the 120-day signature gathering period, which Cano has set a May 2



This is a screen shot of the home page of a website dedicated to the recall of Dist. 2 County Supervisor Bruce Gibson.

deadline to turn in sufficient signatures of registered voters to qualify for the next available ballot, which would be November’s General Election. That’s the same election Cano had designated for the first recall if it had succeeded in qualifying.

And if Dist. 2 voters are concerned for their Supervisor’s future, there’s good reason to be because the recall petition, as well as any recall vote that makes the ballot, won’t be decided by the current Dist. 2 voters.

In 2022, Gibson ran for his fifth term in office under a new Supervisorial District Map, which had been approved in 2021 by the Board of Supervisors.

That 2021 map dramatically changed the district boundaries, and Gibson’s safe district on the North Coast was carved up to remove Los Osos and Morro Bay from the district and include Atascadero, part of Templeton and San Miguel in the new boundary.

Morro Bay was moved into a new Dist. 3 along with about half of SLO and Los Osos was moved into a new, rather oddly shaped Dist. 5 that included Nipomo, and the southern and eastern edges of the County.

That map meant the traditional Dist. 2 towns of Morro Bay, Los Osos, Cayucos, Cambria and the west side of SLO were no longer together. It also took away the right to vote for Supervisor in 2022 from Los Osos, Morro Bay and a large portion of SLO.

Nevertheless, Gibson won the Primary in a crowded field and took the runoff in November 2022, winning by just 13 votes. A call for a recount was started but soon ended when the County wanted to charge the proponents over \$30,000 to do the recount.

Nevertheless, Cano tried to charge them anyway and the matter is likely headed to court.

Also, in Dist. 3, appointed incumbent Dawn Ortiz-Legg, who was appointed to the seat by the Governor following the 2020 suicide of Supervisor Adam Hill, faced voters in the old Dist. 3 that included Pismo Beach, Avila Beach, Grover Beach and part of SLO. Hill had won re-election in March 2020 so Ortiz-Legg had to run using the old District boundaries.

So the voters of the new Dist. 3 under the 2021 map didn’t get to vote for Ortiz-Legg or one of her opponents but were scheduled to vote in Dist. 3 this year, when the seat naturally comes up for election.

But the second map change in 2023 took that vote away too and now, Ortiz-Legg, who is back running in the old district boundaries, is unopposed and will get a walk-

Second Recall Continued on page 19



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Community

Camping Rules From page 1

to park and leave one's vehicle overnight, so when no one answers a knock at 3 a.m., they might get a 72-hour notice to move the vehicle, but that's a fix-it ticket not a citation.

Council Funds New Law

The City Council was asked to allocate \$50,000 to help pay for the costs of enforcing the new law.

"Adoption of the ordinances," Chief Watkins said, "will result in upfront additional City enforcement costs, including the costs of retaining personal property held under the ordinance and cleanup of encampments, which may involve the collection and disposal of trash and potential hazardous material response. The Police Department and Code Enforcement Division will be primarily responsible for enforcement and handling of personal property, while the Public Works Department will provide support for coordinating the pickup and disposal of trash and hazmat response through its contractors."

The money, she said, was to "support the implementation of these ordinances, begin the cleanup and securing storage containers for the retention of personal property during cleanups."

"Future costs are unknown and are dependent on changes in the resident homeless population and the amount of enforcement associated with the proposed ordinance."

Back in December, the City Council got a report on the overall issue of homeless encampments, which led to adoption of an emergency ordinance, No. 664, and the eventual adoption of Chapter 666 into the Municipal Codes.

Homeless Working Group

Last November City Manager Yvonne Kimball convened a "City Homeless Working Group" with City department heads, staff and homeless outreach service groups, according to the working groups report to the City Council. The purpose was to address the growing homeless population in town and the growing calls by the public for the City to do something about it.

The report said, "concerns are often raised at public meetings, through calls for service to Police and Code Enforcement, to City administrators, to Council Members, and in public forums such as Facebook or NextDoor. During the pandemic, encampments expanded while more residents used the trails, pathways, and public infrastructure where persons experiencing homelessness often reside. Pandemic-related impacts, historically low vacancy rates, rising rents, and conversion of rental housing into ownership housing have all contributed to increasing homelessness."

"Staff estimates there are approximately 100 people experiencing homelessness in Morro Bay at any given time." Morro Bay's official population as of 2021 is 10,779,

according to the Census Bureau.

Defining the Issue

The issue, according to the report, is when campsites grow out of control. When this happens in public areas "especially [but not limited to] when an encampment site develops and spreads out over large areas," the report said, "generates considerable garbage or waste, or when unlawful camping, coupled with other illegal activity, impacts a sensitive land use such as schools, degrades and destroys environmental areas, and creates dangerous water shed into waterways and the ocean."

"Camping on public property creates public health and safety hazards for city residents and for people living in encampment sites, including impacts related to the disposal of hazardous materials and unsanitary conditions that can lead to an infestation of vermin and the spread of communicable diseases. Camping on public property has also been a problem for Public Works staff."

The report adds these camps impede people and emergency responses, and any evacuations that businesses and homes might experience, "as well as exacerbates the likelihood of conflict, intimidations and threats to the public safety for both the un-housed, as well as all members of the public, and furthermore the collection of biohazard materials, human waste, trash and rubbish near businesses and residential areas contributes to a general decline in public health, safety and welfare."

The report also names people living in vehicles that park on private property as being problems too. "The use of vehicles for human habitation overnight on private property used for business or non-profit organization operations also impacts public health and safety. These impacts are mostly trash, food wastes, human waste and contaminated medical waste and the unauthorized discharge of grey water and hazardous water."

Discarded hypodermic needles, have been a growing problem in town, as several years ago, a young girl playing near the creek at Lila Keiser Park was stuck by a needle found laying on the ground. That incident triggered the first major cleanup of the creek area by the City and police department. The cleanup cleared a few tons of trash, and evicted everyone from the woods there, including one local



Photo shows some of the homeless encampments along Quintana Road before people were evicted from what is private property. Photo by Neil Farrell

man who had been living there over 20 years.

Sweeping New Ordinance

The new camping ordinance, officially "Chapter 8.26 to Title 8 of the Morro Bay Municipal Code," regulates the time, place and manner for all camping outside RV parks and campgrounds:

- Time: Any camping or camp, where allowed, "may only occur for 24-hours at a time in any one location. After 24 hours in one location, the Camp and all associated Camp Materials must be moved at least one street block or 600 feet, whichever is greater, to another allowed location."

- So the homeless would be required to break camp and move to a new spot at least two football fields away every morning and anyone staying in a vehicle has to park somewhere new every night.

- Place: Camping is not allowed within 200-feet of "a residentially zoned property boundary or within any area zoned residential, according to the City's Zoning Map" (found in the muni code).

Camping is also not allowed in any mixed-use or commercial visitor serving zones; on public sidewalks and other right-of-ways or blocking driveways; in vehicle and bicycle lanes, the roundabout or bus stops; or within 1,000 feet of any shelter set up for emergency evacuations. Any street closures for construction by the City are off limits too.

It also bans camping within or within 300-feet of any school, playground or "critical infrastructure."

The ordinance also cites specific locations owned by the City where camping is regulated — "Morro Bay City Hall, Morro Bay Community Center, Morro Bay Veterans Hall, Morro Bay Public Library, Morro Bay Centennial Parkway and Stairway, and such further designations made in writing by the City Manager, or her or his designee,

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Community

upon the written recommendation of the Morro Bay Police Chief and the Morro Bay Fire Chief.”

The ordinance effectively kicks people out of the woods, too. Camping is banned “Within, or within 200 feet of, either a very high Fire Severity Zone or a high Fire Severity Zone.”

• **Manner:** The City also regulates the “manner” of camping, or how one sets up a camp. Camping materials like tents, or any personal property and even the people themselves, “may not obstruct, block, prevent access to, or impede: sidewalk accessibility or passage; clear vision of moving vehicles or bicycles; usage of fire hydrants; usage or function of Public Utilities, Critical Infrastructure, or other City infrastructure; or, otherwise obstruct, block, prevent access to, or impede the use of the Rights-of-Way for vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, or other passage.”

The law limits a campsite to no more than 12-feet by 12-feet or 144-square feet — a little bigger than an average garden shed. “The intent of this section is to allow a person to sleep protected from the elements and maintain the essentials for living, while still allowing others to use public spaces as designed and intended.” And the law now says no camp can be within a 150-foot radius of another camp, in order to prevent a buildup of encampments in a single spot.

The law outlaws open fires but does allow one to try and keep warm. “Types of flameless cooking stoves and other flameless devices for keeping warm, as consistent with this subsection, are permitted,” the law reads.

They can’t build makeshift shelters or things like plywood lean-tos attached to trees or utility poles, however, “Items such as tents, and similar items used for shelter that are readily portable, are not structures for purposes of this section.”

The law prohibits an accumulation of stuff — “vehicle tires, bicycles, or associated components (except as needed for an individual’s personal use), gasoline, generators, lumber, household furniture, propane tanks, combustible material or gases, or other items or materials, — is prohibited, other than what is related to camping, sleeping or keeping warm and dry.”

As for homeless pets, “All animals, in the custody, ownership or companionship of an individual, must be leashed or crated at all times.”

The new law also limits camps to no more than two people and two animals (dogs).

Compliance

The law will seek voluntary compliance as a first resort, giving violators “a reasonable opportunity to cure or remedy the alleged violation.”

But when someone won’t or doesn’t comply, the law gives the City authority to force them out after first giving advanced notice.

Quintana Cleanup

Morro Bay residents got a look at what enforcement might look like last week, when the campers along Quintana were cleared out by the police. But that was a little different, according to the police chief.

Police Chief Watkins told Estero Bay News, “The area that was addressed last week was a result of the private property owners requesting their property be cleared from all trespassers.

“The trespassers were served notice on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, with a final chance to leave the property without penalty by Friday evening.”

Though the City coordinated a trash hauler to pick up the Quintana area, Chief Watkins said it wasn’t a full cleanup. “This was not a cleanup,” she said, “although the City Public Works department did clear some debris from the easement. City and other service providers made frequent visits over the weeks leading up to the advisement.”

“The private property,” she added, “was not cleaned or cleared outside of the subjects removing their property. This is private property and will need to be cleaned up by the property owners.”

With reference to the community’s discussions on NextDoor and one question many had, “Where are they supposed to go?” Chief Watkins said, “This is private property. The shelter that serves Morro Bay is 40 Prado [in SLO]. I hope many of these subjects seek services that can assist them with short term housing such as drug and alcohol programs. We continue to work with all service organizations to support these individuals in finding shelter and potential housing.”

She said no one got arrested with the eviction done last week. “This is private property,” she restated. “They are not allowed to return. No trespass orders were served. This is just an advisement; no citations were given last week. Two citations have been this week for individuals who were served last week and failed to leave the property.”

Problem Areas

Is Quintana the main encampment location, as the homeless used to live in the woods along Morro Creek, too? “We have un-housed individuals residing throughout Morro Bay,” Chief Watkins said. “This is a large encampment location that was created when Vistra Energy reclaimed their private property next to Lila Keiser. Same un-housed residents.”

The Quintana Road folks have been causing problems. “This area has become an area with an increased number of calls for service as a result of the large encampments and the activity that accompanies encampments,” Chief Watkins said. “We have received dozens of complaints related to blocked access, aggressive panhandling, dog bites, trespassing, drug usage, and theft. Just to name a few.”

Diablo From page 1



Here’s a peek inside the control room at the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant.

have reliable energy.”

“Today’s announcement,” she continued, “demonstrates the Administration’s commitment to domestic nuclear energy by preserving existing generation, while we continue to support a stronger nuclear power industry.”

The Energy Department announced in November 2022 that it had conditionally approved the deal and it’s taken this long to finalize the agreement.

Award Over Four Years

The agreement pays out over four years, from 2023 to 2026; “with the amount of the annual payment to be adjusted based on a number of factors, including actual costs incurred to extend the operation of the Diablo Canyon Power Plant,” the announcement said.

So by that standard, the first installment due PG&E won’t come until 2025 and cover the plant operations from 2023-2024, according to the release.

But just what is the “Civil Nuclear Credit Program?” According to the DOE’s webpage on the program, “owners or operators of commercial U.S. reactors can apply for certification to bid on credits to support their continued operations.

“An application must demonstrate the reactor is projected to close for economic reasons and that closure will lead to a rise in air pollutants.

“Credits will be allocated to selected certified reactors over a four-year period beginning on the date of the selection and credits can be awarded through September 30, 2031, if funds remain available.”

Opponents Cry Foul

While the news might be music to the ears of the plant’s supporters, its detractors are calling it a giveaway for a lost cause.

In a statement released following the Fed’s announce-

Diablo Continued on page 18

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Economy of the Estuary From page 1

Kim Banks, a human relations consultant with BBSI, gave a quick rundown of new laws businesses should take note of. Those include a hike in the minimum wage rate to \$16 an hour and \$20 an hour for fast food workers; and an increase in mandatory sick leave.

Banks said paid sick leave increased from 2-days (16 hours) to a full week (40 hours) a year starting Jan. 1. She added that “Sick time is protected” and business owners should figure out a way to make sure their employees get the extra pay.

There are new “protected categories” of workers in terms of harassment and discrimination actions they should become aware of too.

She said owners needed to be aware of “wage compression” as something being addressed in new labor laws.

Essentially, it’s when a new-hire employee comes in making as much or nearly as much as a long-time employee doing the same job, due to the market rate for salaries increasing faster than a company’s wage increases. It is seen as discounting all the experience and value that a long-time employee brings.

And with regards to marijuana, you can no longer use the fact that an applicant uses cannabis when making the decision whether to hire them or not.

City Manager Yvonne Kimball seemed to be the main attraction for the event, as several of her city staffers came for breakfast, which was sponsored by Carla’s Country Kitchen (with coffee from SLO Roast).

“My power team is here with me,” said Kimball, who was born and raised in China and was hired in Morro Bay back in August from the Sierra Foothills town of Jackson, Calif. Also at the event was former City Manager Scott Collins, now the executive director of the Housing Authority of San

Luis Obispo.

Kimball explained that she came to the United States from China in 2003 as a 20-year-old college graduate. Her journey up the ladder in municipal government has taken her from Florida to Arizona to California and now Morro Bay.

“The ocean is one of the reasons I am here,” she said. A city manager in a small town has to be a Jack or a Jane of all trades. “Everything falls on the shoulders of my team.”

She also had kind words for city council members, all of whom were also in attendance. “I’ve never seen a council work so hard.”

The main program discussing the economy of the estuary featured three speakers — Don Chartand, the executive director of Creek Lands Conservation; retired commercial fisherman Jeremiah O’Brien; and Executive Director of the National Estuary Program, Melodie Grubbs.

O’Brien spoke of the early history of commercial fishermen in Morro Bay, explaining that the Commercial Fishermen’s Organization was founded in 1972. He said, “A few of the men who founded it are still with us,” though they’d recently lost Dickie Sylvester, who died.

He said Morro Bay and Moss Landing were the pioneers of the famed California abalone fishery of the early 20th Century and at one time there were as many as 30 abalone dive boats plying the local waters.

He recalled Sandy Monroe a CFO founding member, who was also one of the founders of the United Reserve Fund, which insures boat captains and made liability insurance affordable so they could keep fishing.

“They saved me \$200,000 in insurance costs,” O’Brien said. “It still exists today.”

Economy of the Estuary Continued on page 19

Community

Diablo From page 17

ment, Jane Swanson, spokeswoman for the anti-nuclear power group, San Luis Obispo Mothers for Peace, said, "The \$1.1 billion federal aid package to support an additional five years of operation of the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant takes advantage of the nation's taxpayers. Even those not served by PG&E or Diablo Canyon [with few exceptions], will be subsidizing an unprofitable, privately-owned utility that produces the most expensive energy in the State of California."

She said Diablo Canyon will need a lot more money than this to stay open and there's a steep price to pay.

"Ratepayers in California," she said, "who are not customers of PG&E will likewise be exploited. In addition to paying their own utility companies — such as Southern California Edison or San Diego Edison — they will be charged to support the additional [at a minimum] \$6 billion required to keep Diablo Canyon running until 2030. This amounts to over \$500 for every family of four in the state."

She added that because PG&E has applied to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for new operating licenses for both Unit 1 and Unit 2 reactors, this could go one for much longer than five years.

"Since PG&E is applying for a 20-year license renewal from the ever-accommodating Nuclear Regulatory Commission," Swanson said, "it is entirely possible that this exploitation of taxpayers and rate payers could continue until the year 2045."

Back-and-Forth

The issue has been hit back-and-forth like a game of pickle ball. PG&E for many years sought a license renewal for the two reactors, which were scheduled to cease operations in 2024 and 2025.

But a deal was made with environmental groups and government regulators to abandon the re-licensing process and shut it down permanently at the end of the licenses.

But subsequent hot summers and energy shortages including so-called rolling brown outs, has led to a sea change in thinking in both Sacramento and Washington D.C.

Since that announced closure, the State Legislature has called for PG&E to keep it open longer to strengthen reliability of the energy grid while more wind and solar generating plants, and storage facilities including battery plants, can be built.

Diablo Canyon's 2,200 megawatts of emissions-free energy, accounting for about 9% of the total generating capacity in California, was deemed too important to close the plant down right now.

The State has already awarded a \$1 billion forgivable loan to PG&E, and now the Federal Government has added another billion.

More Good News for Diablo

And in other Diablo Canyon news, in December, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) decided that PG&E's new license application for the two reactor units was "sufficient for its review."

That simply means the NRC has what it needs to judge whether Diablo's licensing applications to extend operations can move forward.

Meanwhile, the decision also allows the plant to

continue to generate electricity past 2024 and 2025, while NRC processes the applications for new 20-year licenses.

According to the NRC, it was the State that directed PG&E to apply for the new licenses, after the NRC refused to allow the company to pick up where it left off with its former licensing applications, which were halted in mid-review when PG&E agreed to shut down the plant.

The NRC announcement came a week after the California Public Utilities Commission approved "the ratemaking design and new retirement dates for Diablo Canyon's Units 1 and 2, now 2029 and 2030 respectively."

The renewed push for nuclear power as an option to combat climate change, seems to contradict the old argument against nukes — that they are too dangerous in general, and with nearby earthquake faults, Diablo Canyon in particular.

Water Use Ignored

Keeping the plant open will also require an abandonment of the State's push to end so-called "once through cooling," which in Diablo Canyon's case, uses billions of gallons of seawater to cool steam.

That ruling by the State Water Resources Control Board was a major factor in Duke Energy's abandonment of a project to replace the Morro Bay Power Plant, as well.

Diablo Canyon was facing the same ruling and has already missed the 2020 deadline to stop once through cooling at nuclear plants, but any enforcement action that might have been imposed for missing the deadline has apparently also been suspended. Keeping the plant open another 20 years, if a new license is granted, would require that ruling to continue to be ignored.

Power Not Needed

The Mothers for Peace and other opponents have argued that the power isn't even needed and hinders progress towards more emissions-free, cleaner, renewable sources.

"Keeping Diablo Canyon online beyond its current licenses that expire in 2024 and 2025," reads the Mothers' statement, "will crowd out and slow the development of alternatives [wind, solar, energy storage and demand response]. It will depress the State's growing renewables market, thus causing collateral economic effects and undermining the State's goal of converting to an entirely renewable and zero carbon electric energy grid by 2045."

Swanson concluded, "Diablo Canyon is too expensive to keep running. It is dangerous, being surrounded by major, active earthquake faults. It is not needed because of new, renewable energy sources and much added energy storage capacity. It is blocking the addition of even more renewables by hogging access to the grid. Shut Diablo down at the end of current licenses — November of 2024 and August of 2025 for the two units."

Lawsuit Filed

The next word on this could play out in a courtroom. SLO Mothers for Peace "is pursuing legal actions in both Federal and State agencies to stop continued operations of the Diablo Canyon plant."

Other groups, including some who signed the original closure agreement, are also seeking to sue over the about-face.

If readers want to learn more about the position of Mothers for Peace, see: mothersforpeace.org/blog for more information.

Compost Lizard From page 13

you will see small eyes (don't need big ones when you spend most of your life underground) a delicate mouth and thin dark stripes on their finely scaled silvery back; but I find the lemon yellow undersides the pleasant surprise of having one in hand.

California legless lizards can be found from Northern Baja to the Bay Area and sometimes in the foothills of the Southern Sierra. We are lucky here in Los Osos, the sandy soil is perfect for this reptile who prefers to remain subterranean searching for beetles, worms, or other little critters to devour. So, pay attention and be a little careful when digging in our ancient sand dune soil, you too may have the fortune to see this beautiful snake-like lizard that we're lucky to share this habitat with.

Dean Thompson is a lizard lover, naturalist and storyteller who has worked as an educator, and field biologist for the last 42 years, mostly in the Estero Bay area.

Paul Irving From page 1



Paul Irving of Los Osos being honored with the baton to conduct a song during a Pops by the Sea performance by the SLO Symphony. Photo by Dean Sullivan

He admitted he was going stir crazy during COVID-19. "Bayside Life (his insurance business that pays the home-front bills) and Big Big SLO (one of his many side-hustles) had been filling my time." But when music literally stopped at concerts, fundraisers, wineries etc. etc., he had to find something else to do.

"I took up kayaking on the bay," Paul explained. "When it got harder to go faster when it should have gotten easier, I realized I was trying to push the kayak faster than it could go." Paul is not one to hesitate. He moves right to a solution. "So, I got a new boat and signed up for SLO Rowing Club lessons. I learned what a great workout rowing was. You use 85% of your muscles."

Since 2020 he believes he has rowed 1,000 miles per year.

And while on his morning row, wildlife activity or interesting views would be worthy of pause for a photo. "I spent so much time on the bay." He estimated 12,000 miles to date. "I noticed no two times were ever the same. The bay has moods that are always different. I found that interesting."

He would post his favorites on Facebook and followers began to suggest he do something with the photos. "That's how the annual calendar came about," he said. Since his public had suggested it, he created a voting system to choose the favorite twelve, which were then published in an annual Estero Bay calendar he pre-sold to the same followers who selected the photos. "2024 was my third edition."

Paul was not born with a marketing/sales brain, but his career path demonstrates he has the gift. He was born in New Haven, CT and became a Californian at age 10. He grew up in Diamond Bar and by age 18 was working claims in Los Angeles for the auto insurance industry. Was making the best of a bad situation his training to recognize a next opportunity?

He explained, "I did that for several years and one day looked around and asked myself if I wanted to live in LA and do that the rest of my life? I had been visiting a friend who was going to Cal Poly."

Paul was 21 when he chose the SLO lifestyle, but he had to find ways to make his choice work. At first, he lived on a boat in Morro Bay and leased space at Horizon's dock offering kayak lessons. In 1999 he expanded to Port San Luis with a sailing school and water taxi business. Stability, financial security, and a desire for home ownership was the goal. When he was offered the chance to build his own insurance brokerage, Bayside Life, (paul@baysidelife.com) living comfortably on the Central Coast became sustainable.

Most folks, however, who know the name Paul Irving associate him with music. "Music is my happy place," Paul admitted. "Or one of them!"

Thirty-five years ago, he added music to his already active life. The first group was the Rock Steady Posse, which morphed into Mozaic in the 90s and ultimately the sought-after Zongo All-Stars. Paul plays the trumpet for



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Community

both Zongo All Stars and Upside Ska, a Jamaican ska band.

Always promotion oriented, Paul befriended event planners and venue owners. Talk would invariably come up about methods to get the word out earlier about what, where and when the music was happening. Paul had the idea. Today's www.bigbigslo.com entertainment guide online and in New Times, began as little monthly booklets Paul would produce and personally hand out at the venue that sponsored the booklets. When he realized concert attendees and promoters were hungry for contact information, he also created an annual SLO County Musical Guidebook. Who paid for it? They all did! Paul would create the content and the venue/events promoters/musicians would pay for the printing cost based on the number of books they intended to help Paul hand out.

Music became a preferred attraction throughout SLO County expanding a variety of musical opportunities for concert attendees as well as gigs for musicians. Music festivals, music at weekly downtown street fairs, music at wineries during weekend wine tastings and several restaurants offered musical entertainment. The Paso Robles Fair was renamed the Paso Robles Event Center and Vina Robles Winery added an outdoor music venue to attract celebrity talent all year long.

And Paul was the go-to person, including when New Times, which produced the largest weekly entertainment guide, decided it was time to create a ticketing platform. Paul was called in to develop it. "Today 805Tix has 50,000 subscribers," he said. "It sends out an online newsletter weekly for readers to see what's going on as well as purchase their tickets in advance." Paul continues to do the sales and often the ticket management training for those buying into the service.

Indeed, a savvy businessman – but one with a heart for helping his community. For the past three years, Zongo All-Stars promoted benefits for the Kindness Coalition, feeding Estero Bay's food insecure; Celebrate Los Osos, funding a high-profile entry landscape project and tables and chairs for the Red Barn; and the Los Osos Vista Drive homeowners displaced during the mud slides January 2023.

And yet he continues to stumble on needed projects he's compelled to make happen. Another "happy place" is on the water. Paul has been a longtime member of Morro Bay Yacht Club. Membership mandates annual volunteer workday duty. Recently, his assignment was rearranging the bulletin board information for members and visitors to access local marine services. "It was a jumbled mess. I'm a boat guy. I offered to organize the information in a guidebook! That's what I knew how to do!" With buy-in from MBYC and support from the Friends of the Morro Bay Harbor Department, Paul produced the current marine services guide free to those who will use it.

While Paul was working on this project, he learned the annual tide book producer was no longer producing it. What would boaters, surfers, sailors, kayakers, bay tourism directors, etc. etc. do without an annual tide book? Paul added another project in 2022 and today his tide book productions are in Crescent City, Humboldt, Monterey/Santa Cruz, Santa Barbara, LA area, Orange County and our Central Coastal regions.

To be sure, family time is always important to Paul. He's proud of his wife Jessica, owner/therapist of Coast Therapy Associates in Los Osos. Their two children are currently at the University of Santa Cruz. Edie is studying social justice and Cooper is interested in Marine Science and Music.

Is there another great idea for Paul Irving? I have no doubts 2024 will be another big year. He can't help himself! Thanks, Paul Irving! And, belated congratulations! No wonder you were the 2023 Los Osos Citizen of the Year!

Economy of the Estuary From page 17

He added, "Our insurance costs are incredibly steep." He said the MBCFO was a trailblazer.

"Believe it or not," he said, "we were one of the strongest commercial fishing organization on the West Coast. We've been recognized nationally and continue to work very hard today in the fisheries."

He explained that Morro Bay is one of the top ports

in California for landings and is number one or two on the California Coast for landing swordfish."

Chartrand of the Creek Lands Conservation, a non-profit organization, said they do conservation work in the watersheds the feed into the Morro Bay Estuary – Morro Creek and Chorro Creek.

Currently, they are trying to restart the abalone farm north of Cayucos that was founded in the 1980s but closed down in 2020. The coastal ranch site is on the market for \$20 million. Their organization bought the abalone farm and are trying to restart it. He said the hope is to bring new jobs and new ways to the fishery. "Finfish and shellfish have been over-harvested," he said. "We want to work together to find a future that works for the economy and the environment."

National Estuary Program Director, Grubbs said they were gearing up for 2025 and the 30th Anniversary of the MBNEP's founding.

They are currently revamping their "Nature Center" display, located on the second floor of Marina Square (NEP has offices there too). They do several things for the estuary, which is one of just 28 National Estuaries in the U.S. Their goal is to prevent development on "really big parcels around Morro Bay," she said. They do Bay cleanup events and publish a "State of the Bay" report every three years. "Last year's report is online."

They have a water quality monitoring program using numerous community volunteers and NEP staff scientists in what they call the "Dawn Patrol."

"We rely a lot on our volunteers," she said.

The NEP also runs educational programs and is overseen by an executive committee. They have a staff of 17 now. But the COVID pandemic delivered "a big hit on our educational programs," she said. Those center around giving teachers lessons on the estuary that they then teach their students.

Visit Morro Bay Executive Director Michael Wambolt closed out the morning giving a quick update on their efforts to promote Morro Bay's lodging and tourism industry.

Visit Morro Bay is an assessment district amongst motels, hotels, B&Bs and vocation rentals charging 3% of a room night and pooling the money. Wambolt called the assessments a "bucket" that "allows us to do advertising and promotions that the members couldn't do on their own."

He noted that revenues are "running a little flat" right now in part because of last winter, which saw record snowfall and had skiers plying the slopes in Mammoth and the Sierras into the summer.

He said his board appropriated an extra \$350,000 this year to step up promotions through a "retargeting campaign to people who came here during COVID."

They also have a new slogan, he said goes to the essence of Morro Bay – "Come get Salty."

The campaign will feature interviews with the folks from Grassy Bar Oyster Co., O'Brien and others and take "a deeper dive into who we are," he said.

They've also purchased a 1960 VW Westfallia van that will be a sort of mascot for Morro Bay. Look for it around town.

Second Recall From page 15

over win to a full 4-year term. So too will Dist. 1 Supervisor John Peschong, but there are two people vying for the Dist. 5 seat, after incumbent Debbie Arnold decided not to run again.

After the 2022 Elections, the Supervisors, with a new liberal majority, immediately moved to overturn the 2021 redistricting map, even though it had already been used for an election cycle, which they won, and return to the old district boundaries.

That political shell game meant that the towns in the 2021 Dist. 3 and 5 – Morro Bay, Los Osos and SLO – had their right to vote for County Supervisor taken away a second time, this time in order to overturn what the Board majority admitted was "Gerrymandering," a confession that Gibson has repeated with his response to the recall notice.

However, under State Election Laws, the voters in that 2022 Dist. 2 election – including Atascadero, Templeton and San Miguel – who elected Gibson, are the only people who can sign the recall petition, giving them the potential to shape the Board and possibly flip the majority.

And if this petition drive is successful, they will also be the ones who decide Gibson's fate. This even though he no longer represents the majority of those voters.

Voters in Cayucos and Cambria can also sign the petitions and will vote in a recall, as they were part of the 2021 Dist. 2 map.

Recall proponents have a website with information posted on it, see: www.recallbrucegibson.com for information.

CIT From page 14

at 285 pounds, it was Adam Stanley of Bakersfield with a decisive 7-1 win over Second Place Joey Chacon of Clovis West in the finals. Stanley improved to 23-3 on the year and Chacon is 16-4.

Third Place went to Xavier Franco of Central East; fourth was Isaiah Beas of Madera; fifth was Peter Fulgentes of Royal; Sixth Place was Angel Mercado of Crespi; seventh was Berkan Ranjbari Saisan of El Camino Real Charter and in Eighth Place was Ruben Fabela of Selma.

Outstanding Awards

The CIT also has Individual Awards, given for the most pins, the fastest pin, Outstanding Wrestler, and more.

Jacob Perez of Monache High School was named the Outstanding Wrestler of the Tournament, after he won the 132-pound Championship.

Most Pins – Fastest Time Award went to Central East's Xavier Franco with seven pins in 16:07, for an average pin time of 2:30. Each round lasts 3 minutes, so Franco impressively pinned each of his seven victims in the first round of the match. Franco also took the honors for the "Most Pins/Tech Falls – Least Time."

Most Technical Falls – Least Time. Niko Valenzuela of Calvary Chapel had the Most Technical Falls in the Least time, recording four in a total of 14:42.

Fastest Fall went to Atascadero's Cole Loney whose recorded time for the quick pin was listed at "0:00" (clearly a typo). The second fastest pin was recorded by Frank Riley of St. Francis in 11-seconds, so Loney's pin was in 10-seconds or less.

Fastest Technical Fall. Max McWilliams of Calvary Chapel had the fastest technical fall in 1:20.

Most Team Points Scored. Golden West's Caleb Rivas scored the most points for his team of any wrestler, with 38.0. SLOHS' Chance Evans was tied for third most points with Adam Stanley of Bakersfield at 36.

Most Single Match Points. Paso Robles' Dominic Marquez scored 22 points in one of his matches to win the Most Single Match Points Award.

Most Total Match Points. Alex VanBender of Kingsburg scored the most total points in his matches with 88.

And the "Largest Seed-Place Difference" or the wrestler who started out lowest in the rankings and finished highest in the tournament was a tie between Anthony Aldana of Salinas, and Andrew Gonzalez of Camarillo. Both were seeded 64th in their respective weight class brackets and finished seventh, improving by some 57 spots.



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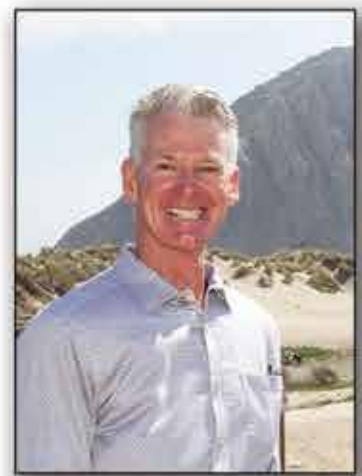


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