

New Restaurant Opens in a Popular Baywood Location

By Theresa Marie Wilson

Before opening their doors for business, the newest restaurant in Baywood Park had a list of locals wanting to book reservations.

Mirazur Restaurant, 1365 2nd Street, held a soft opening last weekend serving up what owner Alejandro Flores says is “American-European food with a French twist in an upscale casual setting. I don’t want to scare anybody by saying fine dining.”

The building is the former home of the Blue Heron and a few other eateries but has been empty for some time.

“We’ve heard from a lot of the locals,” said the Texas born and raised Flores. “They started noticing that we were in here working in January, and they just popped in to see what was going on. We didn’t know that this spot meant so much to all the locals. We’re just so excited to open the doors and say, ‘Welcome.’”

Flores, who handles the front of house, is one of three owner/operators behind the team that also includes Marco Lucatero, a partner at Lunada Garden Bistrro in Cayucos, and Chef Ismael Giles.

The Kitchen

The menu promises a farm-to-table dining experience featuring seafood, meat, and pasta dishes made in the open style kitchen.

To start, appetizers include grilled octopus, oysters Rockefeller, oysters on the half shell, roasted artichokes, and Brussels sprouts.

On the main menu are filet mignon, French duck, mushroom risotto, Colorado rack of lamb, grilled pork chops, chicken picatta, pesto penne, surf and turf, and more. Soup and salad are also available with clam chowder available every day.

No meal is complete without dessert. Mirazur partnered with Michelin-Star pastry chef Florencia Breda, who’s delectable chocolates and desserts created a following at Mistura Restaurant in SLO. Look for tiramisu, pot de crème and pistachio cream brulee among others.

The weekday lunch menu offers burgers, sandwiches, soup, salad and “fried goodies” such as fish and chips.

Bruch is available on Saturday and Sunday from 11



Chef Ismael Giles prepares the first meal in the new kitchen on the day of their soft opening. Photos by Dean Sullivan

a.m. to 2 p.m. Yes, mimosas are part of the menu as well as omelets, eggs benedict and selections from the lunch menu.

The eatery has a wine and beer bar. Beers are on tap or by the bottle and wine is available by the glass or a bottle for the table. Wine cocktails, such as the pineapple-basil margarita and other wine-spirits add to the selection.

“Everybody asks,” Flores said, “Are you going to have full liquor bar?” Some of the feedback that we’ve gotten so far is that the cocktails don’t need it [hard liquor],” Alejandro said adding that they also have non-alcoholic beer and can leave the alcohol out for a fun mocktail.

Ambiance

The restaurant has an open airy feel promoting a relaxed and comfortable experience. Copper and bamboo touches give the space a modern touch.

Mirazur, Spanish for “look at the blue,” lives up to its name in the eleven-table outdoor seating area with heat lamps for those cooler evenings.

“The way the sun sets over there,” Flores said, “it’s just perfect. It’s such a great spot. We just got lucky.”

Patrons can also take a beverage outside as long as they remain in the spacious lawn area designated as the restaurant’s space. There is an additional outside spot with three fire elements and succulent landscaping.

Alejandro says whether it is lunch, brunch or dinner he wants, “I want everybody to have a memorable experience with great service. I want them to walk away and, be able to say, ‘I can’t wait to be back to celebrate whatever

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Water Companies Closer to Emergency MOU



By Neil Farrell

Progress continues to be made by a private Los Osos water company to secure some backup help in case of emergency from its bigger brother the Community Services District.

LOCSO Directors approved in concept entering into a contract with the S&T Mutual Water Company, which serves the Sunset Terrace neighborhood on the western edge of Los Osos.

Back in 2022, S&T contacted the CSD about building an “intertie” pipeline connecting its water distribution system with the CSD’s to make drinking water available to its members should its system go down.

S&T Mutual lies entirely within the CSD’s jurisdiction and receives other CSD services like fire protection, so extending the water system wasn’t much of a problem, but how to pay for it is the issue.

“In June 2023,” reads a LOCSO report, “the [LOCSO] Board conceptually approved S&T’s financial participation in the District’s Program C Well Project to compliment the intertie project.”

That Program C Well is getting close to completion. LOCSO General Manager Ron Munds told Estero Bay News that they’ve drilled the well and completed the pipeline and are now awaiting the final phase.

“The final phase,” Munds explained, “is constructing a building to secure the electrical and piping components to pump the water from the well into the conveyance system.

“That’s proving to be a little more challenging since supply chain issues are still plaguing the electrical industry.”

Everything is ready to go. “We’ve awarded the contract, and some work will proceed,” Munds said, “but it will be a waiting game on some of the electrical components needed to complete the project.”

Water Companies Continued on page 16

Coastal Commission to Hear City’s LCP Implementation Plan

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay’s updated Local Coastal Program (LCP) is slated to go for a possible final action to the Coastal Commission at its March meetings, set for a hearing sometime on Friday, March 15. The LCP action is to approve the new Implementation Plan and “make minor amendments to the Land Use Map,” reads a notice of the hearing, which is being held in Sacramento.



Sunset at Morro Rock. Photo by Dean Sullivan

This might not be the final action by the Commission, as it’s possible they could extend it. “If the Commission does not take a final action, possible action to extend the deadline for final Commission action on the amendment by up to a year.

According to the Commission report, the LCP’s so-called “Implementation Plan” or IP, “is the second part of a complete LCP update following the Commission’s certification of the updated LUP in August 2021. The existing IP was certified along with the prior LUP in 1984 with several amendments since then.”

The LCP and General Plan underwent a lengthy updating that took the better part of 10 years for the City to complete. Such plans are supposed to be updated every 5 years. Morro Bay’s tardy update work is not unusual as most California cities have been behind schedule on plan updates. However, whenever a project comes forward that doesn’t fit the plan it can be amended as part of its Coastal Development Permit process. And such

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Film Premiere Raises \$5,000 for MBHS Drama Dept.

Photos and Story by Neil Farrell



The new owners of the Bay Theater have made a splash in the community already, donating proceeds from a special screening of a movie filmed local, to help out Morro Bay High’s drama students.

Cameron Wilson and wife, Rachel Louie bought the iconic downtown theatre last October and vowed to continue the theater’s tradition of giving back to the community.

MBHS Drama Dept. Continued on page 18

Los Osos Woman Needs Help After Storm Destroys Carport

By Theresa Marie Wilson



A longtime Los Osos resident needs help following storm-related damages to her home.

Rosemarie Krantz, 88, was safe and dry in her home at Morro Shores Mobile Home Park in early February when an atmospheric river hit the area bringing rainfall and heavy winds that ripped her carport awning off, destroying it.

“We heard a loud noise during the night,” Krantz said. “The wind was so bad, I was afraid.”

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Bales of Cotton Washing Up on Local Beaches



A container full of cotton bales removed off beaches by CA State Parks. Photo by Danna Joy Dykstra-Coy

By Neil Farrell

Those who live by the ocean would not be surprised to see oddities washed up with the high tide, and recent discoveries along North Coast beaches are evidence of this peculiarity of the Pacific.

Starting around March 1, residents have reported finding large, bales wrapped in blue plastic washed up on North Coast beaches.

“We’ve been getting calls yesterday and today,” Sheriff’s spokesman Tony Cipolla told Estero Bay News, which contacted the Sheriff’s Department because whenever something odd happens it seems they are usually the first ones who get called out. But this isn’t their concern.

“My understanding,” Cipolla said, “is that State Parks is handling it since it’s in their jurisdiction.”

Chief Ranger for the State Parks’ SLO Coast District, Eric Hjelstrom, confirmed that they had been called out for these odd bales when they’ve been discovered on State Parks’ beaches. “Where we can pick them up we do,” he said, adding that as of Feb. 5 “there are a lot that we haven’t picked up yet.”

He said he was aware of around 10 bales of what’s turned out to be just cotton, that he was aware of district wide — from Montaña de Oro to Ragged Point.

He said he didn’t know how many total have been found, as they are apparently turning up in areas outside State Parks’ jurisdiction, too. “I don’t know how many” total there have been, he said. State Parks called in the Highway Patrol to help with the matter and investigate where they are coming from, as Hjelstrom said it’s not their jurisdiction to investigate where they came from.

He said they hope the owners of the bales will come get them, but otherwise, their plan was to try and put together a cleanup crew to retrieve the bales, and if that fails, they will have to go down and get them themselves. And so far, he said, they’ve found “no evidence of contraband” inside the bales.

Stuffing items such as these with caches of illegal drugs — cocaine, heroin, Fentanyl — is a common trick of drug cartels seeking to smuggle their poison into the U.S. But it may be that these bales were exports, not imports.

Sheriff’s spokesman, Cipolla, had one clue as to where they are coming from. “Apparently,” Cipolla told EBN, “Coast Guard confirmed sometime in February that a large shipment of cotton fell off a ship and those are now washing up on our shores, in particular Northern San Luis Obispo County beaches.”

Cargo falling off ships in raging storms like those in early February is also not uncommon.

Also washing up have been empty wooden barrels that one discoverer said smelled like whiskey.

EBN contacted Coast Guard Dist. 11 in Long Beach about the matter and a spokesman issued a news release. “U.S. Coast Guard Sector Los Angeles-Long Beach,” said PA3 Richard Uranga, “received a report from Cal Fire regarding an unidentified bale that washed ashore at around 5:06 p.m. Saturday [March 2].

“The bale washed ashore approximately 100-feet north from the Cayucos Pier in Cayucos. Cal Fire initially

called California Highway Patrol about the bale and CHP responded to the area.”

He added that Coast Guardsmen from Morro Bay also responded. “U.S. Coast Guard sent law enforcement personnel from Coast Guard Station Morro Bay to support CHP in securing the area from the public. CHP discovered that the bale contained cotton inside.”

Since then, sightings have been posted online to the gossip site, Next Door, regarding the bales being found on the Sandspit, in Cayucos and in Piedras Blancas, where one washed up at the Elephant Seal Rookery.

At least one had had “Cotton USA” printed on it, according to a report in The Tribune. According to the website for Barnhardt Purified Cotton, a standard cotton bale in the U.S. measures 54-inches long, 20-inches wide and a tie width of about 33 inches, yielding some 17-cubic feet of cotton fiber. And, the standard U.S. cotton bale weighs some 480 pounds, but likely more when saturated with water.

What are these bales worth? According to Barnhardt, cotton fiber (with seeds removed) was in 2019 trading at roughly 75¢ a pound, so a 480-lb bale is worth roughly \$360.

Chief Ranger Hjelstrom said the elephant seal rookery bale will be tricky to retrieve, as the rookery is now packed with the behemoths for pupping season.

In the past, many unusual things have washed ashore — from sea creatures like by-the-wind-sailors, dead marine mammals, and moon jellyfish, to contraband like bales of weed — which were lost or ditched by smugglers plying the Coast in Panga boats.

If readers walking the beaches should find one of these bales, they should contact local police (non emergency) to report the find.

Fisher Fined for Fudging Fish Counts

The owner/operator of a sport fishing boat has settled a civil dispute with the State, agreeing to pay thousands for twice incorrectly counting fish catches.

According to the District Attorney’s Office, “Brad Leage, the operator of ‘The Endeavor,’ a commercial fishing party boat that takes customers out on sport fishing trips from Morro Bay Harbor, agrees to pay \$12,000 in civil penalties and abide by fishing restrictions during the 2024 fishing season.”

The D.A.’s “Special Prosecution Unit” reportedly reached settlement in the “civil enforcement action,” which originated with an undercover operation by Fish & Wildlife game wardens, who went on two fishing trips aboard the Endeavor, which books trips out of Morro Bay Landing.

“In 2019 and 2021,” the news release said, “undercover CDFW officers participated in two sport fishing trips with Mr. Leage on the Endeavor. On both fishing trips, Mr. Leage admitted that he inaccurately reported the number of crew fishing on the trip and exceeded legal catch limits. Mr. Leage also admitted that some customers exceeded legal fish limits and caused the waste of fish.”

The case comes out of a heavily regulated industry. “Commercial fishing,” the D.A.’s Office said, “is a highly regulated business in California with a purpose to protect the long-term sustainability of California’s coastal ecosystems. Officers of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW] are entrusted with protecting the state’s precious marine resources by patrolling and enforcing fishing laws along California’s 840-mile-long coastline.”

Under the settlement, Leage will have to pay the fine, and is required to, “accurately report the number of fish caught on board during sport fishing trips. Finally, the judgment prohibits the crew of the Endeavor from fishing on paid customer trips during the 2024 fishing season.”

The D.A.’s No. 2 in command said Fish & Wildlife needs the commercial fishers to self regulate the myriad of fishing rules and regulations.

“The California Department of Fish and Wildlife,” Assistant D.A. Eric Dobroth said, “rely upon commercial fishermen to accurately report fishing activities for the successful management of fisheries off our Central Coast. The opportunity to take fish and wildlife resources in California

requires a high degree of mutual trust between the public and law enforcement. Commercial fishing regulations exist to ensure the health of our coastal ecosystems for the public’s continued enjoyment and for a sustainable commercial fishing industry.”

The case was also prosecuted criminally, Dobroth said, which brought in another requirement for The Endeavor’s skipper. “In the criminal case, Mr. Leage agreed to follow applicable commercial fishing laws for the next 12 months and comply with the terms of the stipulated civil judgment.”

In the complaint filed in court, the State claimed that, “Over the past five years, the Department has fished undercover with the Defendant on the Endeavor twice, including June 23, 2019, and Dec. 19, 2021.” The two wardens had gone out fishing without telling the captain or crew they were law enforcement officers.

Party boat captains must count the fish caught by the passengers, reporting the grand total catch as the “boat limit” of fish.

Individually, each angler is allowed 10 rockfish per trip, but using the total fish caught allows someone who limits out quickly to keep fishing. Once ashore, the individual fisherman’s limit kicks in and no one can take home more than the legal limit of fish.

Also, crew members are allowed to fish on these trips and their limits are counted in with the passengers’ limits, but their catch must be kept separate from the passengers’ fish.

The crew is not allowed to give away fish. “Operators and crew members are also prohibited from giving all or part of their individual limit to any passenger during or after a trip,” reads the civil complaint.

The allegation was that the captain knew he was over the boat’s limit of fish. “On both occasions, Defendant was cited for taking and possession of more than the limit of rockfish, the waste of fish, and failing to keep accurate

Correction

Last issue in the article headlined: “Engineering Contracts Amended, Awarded” we stated that the Coastal Commission had already approved the Morro Bay-Cayucos Connector Project along Hwy 1. Elizabeth Kavanaugh of County Parks asked us to correct this statement. She said, “This project has not yet been approved by Coastal Commission. We anticipate a Coastal Commission hearing in the upcoming months.”

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records of fishing activity.”

Also, “On both occasions, Defendant reported in the records he submitted to the Department that crew had fished during the trips when on both accounts undercover officers confirmed crew did not catch any fish.”

The actual numbers of fish involved is pretty small. On the December 2021 trip, “A total of 17 rockfish were over limit and 29 rockfish were incorrectly reported to the Department as having been caught by the crew. Thirteen fish were thrown overboard dead.”

It is illegal to land fish that are over the catch limit, therefore extra fish — normally the littles ones — are thrown overboard.

As for the June 2023 trip, “A total of 45 rockfish were over the limit. Twenty-eight rockfish were incorrectly reported to the Department as having been caught by the crew. There was a waste of five fish, each thrown overboard from the Endeavor.”

State Department of Fish & Wildlife investigated the civil case and Dep. D.A. Attorney Kenneth Jorgensen of the D.A.’s Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit, prosecuted. Dep. D.A.’s Amy Fitzpatrick and Sean Baird prosecuted the criminal side of the matter.

Connector Project Not quite Ready



The Morro Bay-Cayucos Connector Bike Way will run from the south end of Studio Drive to North Point in Morro Bay, roughly following the curve of the highway on the ocean side of the fence. File photo

By Neil Farrell

Not so fast — the Morro Bay-Cayucos Connector Bike Path Project isn’t quite as ready to go as we thought.

Estero Bay News was contacted by Elizabeth Kavanaugh of County Parks who wanted to correct something we reported, that the connector project had all the permits it needs.

She said, “This project has not yet been approved by Coastal Commission. We anticipate a Coastal Commission



The Morro Bay-Cayucos Connector Bike Way will have to span the 150-180 feet of Toro Creek with a standalone bridge hefty enough to carry the weight of a maintenance truck. File photo

hearing in the upcoming months.”

She told EBN that the project actually needs several permits before it can move towards construction, including the biggie — a Coastal Development Permit or CDP — from the Coastal Commission.

After they get that one, which she explained is the one most likely to cause changes to the project, they will also need permits from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and State Fish & Wildlife, which has jurisdiction over any project that intrudes on a wetland like Toro Creek, which empties onto the beach at the connector site.

Spanning the creek, which Kavanaugh said is from 150-180 feet wide, is where the biggest chunk of the cost is as well. She said Caltrans, which recently finished replacing the Northbound Toro Creek traffic bridge, is now intending to replace the southbound bridge too, widening it for bike lanes.

The Connector Project will also need a bridge, though not as hefty of one as the Hwy 1 traffic spans.

“Right now,” she said, “it’s a stand alone bridge over Toro Creek.” She said it could be similar to the steel bridge the City of Morro Bay put in over Morro Creek, reserved for pedestrians and bicycles.

Asked if it would be stylish, possibly made to look like a famous bridge, she said the preference of the community is to make it as unassuming as possible, to preserve as much of the view as they can. It will likely be steel, and Kavanaugh said the Toro Creek Bridge would be the biggest expense with the project.

There is also another portion of the Connector’s route that will need a small bridge, as there’s a major highway drain pipe emptying out there.

One other potential snag has arisen, as the homeowners of the row of bluff top homes on Morro Bay’s Toro Lane have filed a lawsuit seeking to make the Connector route move away from their dead end street.

Kavanaugh said the lawsuit isn’t stopping their prog-

ress on the project, as the County Counsel’s Office has told them to keep marching along with the project.

Nevertheless, she asked EBN to fix the misstatement in our previous story because she didn’t want the folks on Toro Lane to think the County was somehow circumventing the process.

County Supervisors recently amended the design contract with Cannon Corporation on the Connector Project and the California Transportation Commission approved \$7.4 million from the Active Transportation Grant Program to fund construction of the Connector Project.

Supervisors awarded an additional \$650,000 “to complete the Plans, Specification, and Estimate [PS&E] package from the current 60% completion milestones to the final 100% completion milestone,” reads a County report on the project.

Once the design is done, and presuming the permits are awarded and the lawsuit settled, the County would then be ready to move towards construction phase. But how does one land \$7.5 million in funding for a project that has no permits yet? Kavanaugh said their main milestone with the grant monies was to secure all the needed right-of-ways, which the project has done, the biggest of which was the purchase of the former Chevron Dog Beach, which was purchased from Chevron by the Cayucos Sanitary District as part of its new treatment plant project. That beach is now under the jurisdiction of the City of Morro Bay.

Congress Members Urge Sanctuary-Wind Farm Co-Existence

By Neil Farrell

Government officials continue working on establishing a marine sanctuary off the Central Coast, but a fight is brewing over the new boundaries currently under consideration, and a couple of Congress people have now gotten involved.

Dist. 24 Congressman Salud Carbajal (D — Santa Barbara), and Dist. 26 Congresswoman Julia Brownley (D — Ventura) have teamed up to lobby the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to return the boundaries of the proposed Chumash Heritage NMS to the original proposal, and bring Morro Bay, Cayucos and the Harmony Coast back into its protection.

Both Democrat Congress members have long supported both the Sanctuary and offshore floating wind, and both matters seemed to be sailing along, until NOAA threw in this hot potato curveball of a boundary change, cutting Morro Bay out and frankly, angering many supporters here.

Last year, when NOAA released it preferred boundary, **Co-Existence** Continued on page 5

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ies for the sanctuary, it dropped the northern edge down from off Cambria to below Morro Bay (at Hazard's Reef in Montaña de Oro State Park) and added in a small section of the Gaviota Coast to the south. So what had been intended to be a continuous row of sanctuaries from San Francisco to the Channel Islands suddenly had a huge hole cut in it.

Cutting out about 30 miles of coastline was NOAA's way of solving the perplexing issue of the offshore wind farms being proposed for a patch of ocean off the coast of San Simeon and hugging the boundaries of the Monterey Bay NMS, which stretches from San Francisco past Monterey Bay and ends off Cambria.

Though the wind farm area is outside the Monterey Bay NMS, the three wind farms would likely need to run transmission cables and install floating substations in what would be sanctuary waters in their run down to Morro Bay, where the electricity is expected to come ashore.

That conflicts with the goals of the marine sanctuary program, namely to prevent the industrialization of the ocean — mainly from oil and gas exploration but apparently also electrical transmission wires.

Carbajal and Brownley also wrote to Department of Commerce Secretary, Gina Raimondo, urging that the boundary be restored and provisions written into the new sanctuary's management planning to allow for the wires to cross through.

They urged "a larger footprint than the most recent federally proposed alternative, and that the final designation includes parameters that recognize the need for co-existence with future offshore wind development and ensure that the sanctuary can serve as a model for co-stewardship with local indigenous communities."

The lawmakers are pushing for the original boundaries and "advocating for the Commerce Department to clarify the future coexistence of the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary with offshore wind projects off the Coast of Morro Bay."

"We recommend," their letter reads, "selection of the Initial Boundary Alternative with the understanding that future offshore wind developments will likely require allowing transmission lines through Sanctuary waters and that care should be taken to avoid, reduce, or mitigate environmental impacts to ocean resources associated with this development," the letter said.

They also urged NOAA to "clarify that transmission cables needed for future offshore wind development may be permitted within the sanctuary and to continue to be inclusive in engaging all stakeholders."

While NOAA is in charge of the Marine Sanctuary Program, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management or BOEM is overseeing the offshore wind farm projects, both here and off the Coast of Humboldt County (as well off the East Coast and Gulf Coast). (The State of California is also beginning to explore putting in offshore wind farms up and down the Coast of California, but in state waters, that is out to no more than 3 miles offshore.)

If it is ultimately approved and built, the so-called Morro Bay Call Area would see an initial 3 gigawatts of wind turbines installed on a nearly 400-square mile patch of ocean 20-30 miles off San Simeon and some 57 miles northwest of Morro Bay.

So far it seems the main people in support of the proposal are academics and the wind and renewable energy industry, along with elected officials at all levels of government — local, county, State and Federal.

Meanwhile, a grassroots group, the REACT Alliance, has formed locally in opposition to the proposal and is seeking to stop what it characterizes as the industrialization of the ocean.

Energy Project in Kern County Hits Milestone; Local Project Officially Dropped



Rendering is of Hydrostor's proposed Willow Rock Energy Storage Center in Rosamond, Kern County, which recently hit a major milestone; meanwhile, the Canadian Company has officially dropped its plans for a similar project here in Chorro Valley. Photo courtesy Hydrostor

By Neil Farrell

A Canadian energy storage company that sought to build one of its underground projects in Chorro Valley is celebrating a milestone with another of its projects in Kern County.

Hydrostor, a multi-national corporation based in Toronto, Can., recently filed a "Supplemental Application for Certification" for its Willow Rock Energy Storage Center project, located in Rosamond, Kern County, the company said. That 500 megawatt and \$500 million facility would utilize the company's "Advanced Compression Air Energy Storage" or A-CAES technology, which involves underground tanks that are pressurized with a compressed air and water mix. The idea is to pressurize the tanks in daytime when other renewable energy sources like solar and wind are plentiful, converting the active electrical energy

into stored potential energy.

Then at night, when solar supplies fall off, the pressure is released, turning a turbine/generator to convert it back into active electricity that is then fed back into the power grid.

It's new technology that Hydrostor is seeking to install in other places.

The "Willow Rock Facility will be Hydrostor's third, grid-scale A-CAES energy storage project and is part of a growing pipeline of significant Hydrostor projects around the world."

Hydrostor has one project contracted to the Independent Electricity System Operator in Goderich, Ontario, Can.; and one in New South Wales, Australia. And, "Hydrostor has an extensive early-stage pipeline of projects in North America, Australia and Europe," the company said.

But it appears the company's plans for the 400 MW Pecho A-CAES project in Chorro Valley isn't going to happen.

Last fall the company asked the California Energy Commission to drop its project slated for the end of Canet Road off Hwy 1 at the base of Hollister Peak. That so-called Pecho Energy Storage Project was met with almost united opposition from local stakeholders, from the neighbors of the site, to the County, State and local agencies. And while Hydrostor said back then it had withdrawn its application, it left the door open a smidge to potentially refile the application, but not anymore apparently.

"Hydrostor filed a 'Notice of Withdrawal' with the California Energy Commission (CEC) in September 2023," Emily Smith, Hydrostor's Director of Media Relations told EBN, "to request the termination of the Application for Certification (AFC) proceeding for the Pecho Energy Storage Center. Consistent with Hydrostor's request, the CEC subsequently issued an Order to terminate the Pecho AFC proceeding in October 2023."

But that may still not be the last word, as Smith added, "Hydrostor continues to assess alternative options to develop an energy storage resource to serve the Central Coast community."

So it appears that the 18,500 folks in Rosamond could see this new technology coming to their community and be the first in the nation to experience A-CAES.

That storage project could pair with a solar energy project, the Rosamond Solar Array Project, a 150-MW facility planned for a site in the middle of a number of existing and proposed solar and wind energy projects in and around Rosamond, Tehachapi and Antelope Valley in nearby L.A. County.

That solar project is proposed by First Solar, Inc., which built a huge solar energy farm in California Valley.

Hydrostor has also signed an agreement with Southern California Edison to purchase the energy stored by its Rosamond plant.



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Estero Bay News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Aubrey Wins Education Award

Aubrey Kuan Roderick, dean of instruction for Creative Arts, Humanities, & Communication at Cuesta College is the recipient of the prestigious Fulbright International Education Administrators Award.

“Dean Kuan Roderick’s Fulbright U.S. Scholar Award exemplifies Cuesta College’s dedication to promoting international understanding and collaboration on a global scale,” said Cuesta College Superintendent / President Dr. Jill Stearns.



Aubrey Kuan Roderick, of Cuesta College, received the Fulbright International Education Administrators Award

The Fulbright International Education Administrators Seminars offer fully funded opportunities for U.S. higher education administrators to immerse themselves in diverse educational landscapes abroad, cultivate cross-cultural perspectives, and establish collaborative partnerships worldwide.

“I envision this experience as a catalyst for Cuesta College to engage in global educational initiatives actively, fostering knowledge exchange and nurturing meaningful connections,” Kuan Roderick said.

Traveling to Taiwan from March 11-24, Kuan Roderick will meet with the country’s Ministry of Education, go on campus visits to 15 higher education institutions, and participate in immersive tours of Taiwan’s rich historical and cultural heritage.

“I am deeply honored to represent Cuesta College and return with valuable insights into Taiwan’s higher education system, cultural nuances, and culinary delights,” said Kuan Roderick. “I am also eager to showcase our institution’s exceptional work and explore collaborative opportunities that will enrich the learning and teaching experiences of our students and faculty.”

Kuan Roderick’s selection as one of only two administrators from a community college in the United States underscores her commitment to promoting community colleges’ unique role and value in higher education.

“My mission is to provide a clear understanding of what community colleges are all about and their integral role within our higher education system,” said Kuan Roderick. “I aim to spotlight the outstanding work of our Cuesta College faculty and establish connections with institutions interested in sending their faculty and students to experience the excellence of California’s community colleges.”

Since its establishment in 1946, the Fulbright Program has empowered more than 400,000 individuals – selected for their academic merit and leadership potential – to foster enduring connections, bridge cultural divides, and advance shared aspirations for global progress.

Nominate District 30 Women of the Year

In honor of March being National Women’s History Month, Dist. 30 State Assemblywoman Dawn Addis (D – Morro Bay), recently sent out a notice asking for nominations for Women of the Year honors, which includes Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz counties.

“If you know a woman leader (including yourself),” Addis said in a release, “who is making positive change and building a better future for all of us, please nominate her.”

Deadline for nominations is March 31 at <https://bit.ly/3wRsncl>. The only requirement noted on the website is, “Nominees must either live or conduct work within our 30th Assembly District.”

“I would appreciate your help in nominating women and those who identify as women who have made significant and meaningful contributions to their community this past year,” Addis said.

If readers have questions, they are asked to call Addis’ San Luis Obispo District Office at (805) 549-3001.

Open Studios Tour 2024 Announced



The SLO County Arts Council announced the Open Studios Art Tour for 2024. The event is on October 13-14 and 19-20 throughout San Luis Obispo County during National Arts and Humanities Month. Fine artists and crafters open their studios to showcase their art and share their processes so viewers can visit art at its source.

Visitors create self-guided tours using a printed catalog. There will be 5,000 of them in circulation available for pickup in early September.

Applications close on June 21, 2024, and there will be an Application Assistance Workshop on April 24 from 12 to 1:30 p.m. for anyone interested in participating. Applications are available slocountyarts.org/osat.

Cambria Film Festival Winners

Cambria Film Festival announced the winning films of 2024. The program capped five days involving nearly 60 competition films, filmmaker talks, special programming and gala events.

The Nancy Green Founder’s Award for the film that best exemplified the festival’s goal of exploring romance and the complexities of love went to “Night Morning” (USA). This feature length film, directed by Meredith Stedman and Jeremy Sender, explores two friends in a world of their own.

The judging panel made its official selections from nearly 400 feature and short films submitted from around the world. They awarded Best Feature Film to “Peak Season” (USA), directed by Steven Kanter and Henry Loevner. They awarded Best Short Film to “Fiona” (Spain), directed by Rafa Cortés.

The Best Animated Film went to “Roped” (Spain), directed by Córdoba González. The award for Best Long-Form Short (an award for short films 15 or more minutes in length) went to “Fate vs. Elena” (USA), directed by Laura Sedlak.

Two additional awards were based on audience balloting. The Audience Award for Favorite Feature was given to “Peak Season” (USA), directed by Steven Kanter and Henry Loevner. The Audience Award for Favorite Short was awarded to “The Pileup” directed by Oscar Toribio Carbayo.

Additionally, the Director’s Award for Artistic Achievement, chosen by the organizing directors, of the Festival was presented to “Always” directed by Parker Harris. The Cambria Heart Award, given to acknowledge a unique or special exploration of the festival theme of love, was given to director John Gray for “The Overlook.”

The Cambria Film Festival is an official activity of the Cambria Center for the Arts, a nonprofit dedicated to local arts.

The Festival returns in 2025 the weekend of February 6-9. For more information about the Festival, visit www.CambriaFilmFestival.com.

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



Easter

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News

Cayucos Pier Damaged by Waves



One of the Cayucos Pier piles lies at the mouth of Cayucos Creek, ripped out of the ground by massive waves.

Photos by Neil Farrell

Recent big waves and stormy weather hit the Cayucos Pier especially hard, knocking loose some five piles off the rebuilt Cayucos Pier and depositing them on the beach, some at the mouth of Cayucos Creek.

The piles were knocked loose by massive waves despite the relatively recent total rebuilding of the iconic pier, which dates back to the 1870s and the shipping landing operations of Capt. James Cass.

The damage led the County to close the pier to the public, and have an engineer inspect the damage and make an assessment.

The verdict was apparently favorable and all but the end of the pier was reopened a few days later.

Of course a couple of temporary barricades didn't deter two surfers from walking down the pier and jumping off to catch the waves beyond the breakers, no doubt saving them a tiring paddle through the surf.



A look at the still wrapped and treated wooden pile that seemed to be entirely intact, lying amongst a mountain of driftwood below the Vet's Hall parking lot.

incident," Cipolla said, and booked into County Jail.

Sheriff's Detectives believe Spear may have been involved in similar crimes in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties.

BESS EIR Draft Released

By Neil Farrell

The long-awaited Draft Environmental Impact Report for a proposed Battery Energy Storage System in Morro Bay has been released to the public and the City of Morro Bay is taking public comments over the next several weeks.

The DEIR for Vistra Energy's BESS Project proposal, a 600-megawatt lithium-ion battery plant sited on some 21-acres of the power plant property, is available for perusal at the Planning Department, 955 Shasta Ave., or online at: www.morrobayca.gov/bess. The deadline for comments is 5 p.m. Tuesday, May 28.

City Planning Manager, Cindy Jacinth, said the project has three parts. "The project includes three components (1) construction and operation of a 600-MW Battery Energy Storage System facility (BESS Facility); (2) demolition and removal of the existing Morro Bay Power Plant building and stacks; and (3) adoption of a Master Plan."

That Master Plan is being worked on now and would cover the portions of the 107-acre power plant site outside where the BESS is being proposed.

There are a few environmental impacts identified in the report, including: historical resources [i.e. demolition of buildings and structures that contribute to the Morro Bay Power Plant's eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources]. This impact was deemed "unavoidable."

Also, "The Draft EIR," Jacinth said, "found the following environmental impacts to be less than significant with mitigation incorporated: construction and demolition air quality emissions, special status plant and wildlife species, riparian habitats and sensitive natural communities, wetlands, wildlife movement and migration, conflict with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, buried

Anyone with additional information on this or other incidents is asked to contact Sheriff's Detective Gower Slane at 805-781-4913.

archaeological resources, tribal cultural resources, seismically induced geologic hazards, expansive soils, paleontological resources, and soil contaminants including metals and petroleum. All other environmental topics were found to result in less than significant impacts without the need for mitigation."

The BESS, at 600 MW would be the largest in the world and would be housed inside three, 2-story buildings totaling some 91,000 square feet.

There'll also be a considerable amount of equipment to add to the power plant. "Infrastructure to support the BESS Facility," Jacinth said, "would include power conversion systems, substations, and tie-ins to the existing Pacific Gas and Electric substation adjacent to the project site."

Of note, the project must include changing the power plant property's zoning from Visitor-Commercial (V-CS) to General (Light) Industrial, which is the subject of a citizen's initiative heading for the November General Election Ballot.

Measure A-24, would lock in the existing zoning of V-CS, for the waterfront from Beach Street out to Morro Rock, including the power plant property (1290 Embarcadero). It would also require the BESS Project to seek voter approval in order to change the zoning, a requirement that could send the project off to Sacramento, where the Energy Commission could initiate a process under AB 205.

That State Law allows an applicant who is denied at the local or county level to appeal to the CEC, a "life-after-death" scenario that could see the State Agency take over permitting and possibly override the will of the local residents and voters.

To submit comments on the DEIR, mail (or drop off) hard copies to: City of Morro Bay, Attn: Cindy Jacinth, Planning Manager, 955 Shasta Ave., Morro Bay, CA 93442; or email to: BESScomments@morrobayca.gov.

Avila Burglary; Paso Robles Arrest

A hot burglary in Avila Beach led to an arrest of the suspect, found hiding in a fast food joint in Paso Robles.

According to the Sheriff's Department, at about 3:30 p.m. March 5, they received a 9-1-1 call from a citizen in the 6700 block of Avila Valley Dr., in Avila Beach, reporting a burglar inside their home.

"A resident had just returned home," spokesman Tony Cipolla said, "when they found a man inside the residence. The suspect made off with some cash and then fled the home."

Louis Elvenway Spear, 44 was arrested

following an alert was put out. A few hours later, deputies reportedly found Spear's vehicle in Paso Robles and tried to make a traffic stop. Instead he fled and a short chase ensued with the suspect initially giving officer the slip.

"The vehicle was later located," Cipolla said, "abandoned behind the Target store in the 2300 block of Theatre Dr., in Paso Robles." Now a manhunt on foot was begun with the Highway Patrol and Paso PD joining Sheriff's Deputies in the search.

"The suspect was located in a nearby fast-food restaurant and arrested without

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Police Blotter



- **March 3:** Police responded to the 2500 block of Greenwood for a reported burglary. Logs indicated officers investigated but decided the call was “unfounded,” the alleged pinched booty apparently having been re-discovered.
- **March 2:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 8:21 p.m. at Morro Bay Boulevard and Napa. Logs indicated the 28-year-old borracho driving was arrested for suspicion of driving deep in his cups.
- **March 2:** Police contacted a suspicious chap at 11:47 a.m. in the 800 block of MBB. The bond jumper had multiple warrants and got another slip of paper to ignore and was released.
- **March 1:** A local woman turned in a firearm that was her recently deceased stepfather’s.
- **March 1:** Someone reported to police a case of alleged domestic violence that happened outside the City, so they turned the information over to the County Sheriff, and they’re in trouble now.
- **Feb. 29:** Police were called to the 600 block of Bella Vista for a disturbance at 6:45 p.m. Logs indicated they contacted a rowdy fellow, 37, in the State Park on Black Hill, and arrested the bloke for suspicion of disorderly conduct, trespassing and drunk in public. The rapsallion was tossed into the clink to sleep it off.
- **Feb. 29:** Police responded to the 300 block of MBB and started an investigation into suspected check fraud.
- **Feb. 29:** At 10:48 a.m. police contacted a suspicious fellow in the 1800 block of Quintana. The 57-year-old apparent moonchild was cited for suspicion of possession of suspected drug paraphernalia, though his stash was apparently better well hidden.
- **Feb. 29:** Police contacted an outdoorsman, 65, at 9 a.m. who was allegedly illegally camping in the dunes near Coleman Drive and Embarcadero. The millionaire had three felony warrants and is now camping at the iron bar hotel. At roughly the same time, they came across a man and woman apparently also living the outdoors life in the dunes at Coleman and Embarcadero. He, 52, and she, 45, didn’t have any warrants and so were only told of the City’s anti-camping ordinance and no doubt advised to skeddadle.
- **Feb. 28:** At 11:40 p.m. in the 700 block of Quintana, police contacted a suspicious woman, 55, who logs allege was in possession of illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia. She got swept off to County Jail. A half hour earlier and in the same vicinity of the Creekbed Estates, a 55-year-old gent was found to have a warrant. He too went to the hoosegow.
- **Feb. 28:** Police contacted another suspicious fellow, 59, at 8:24 p.m. in the 800 block of The Boulevard. Logs indicated he reportedly had “an outstanding \$850,000 misdemeanor warrant out of Kings County,” which, given that he was only cited and released, frankly makes little sense.
- **Feb. 28:** Someone turned in a wallet they found at a shopping center in the 700 block of Quintana.
- **Feb. 27:** Police responded at 6:15 p.m. to a disturbance in the 1100 block of Napa. A 31-year-old Philistine was arrested for suspicion of trespassing, felony vandalism, and disorderly conduct while drunk and stoned on drugs. He crashed in the lockup.
- **Feb. 27:** Someone damaged an electrical outlet in the 900 block of Piney Way, in this week’s example of why we need SWAT.
- **Feb. 27:** Police contacted a 37-year-old suspicious fellow in the 800 block of Embarcadero. Logs indicated he was arrested for suspicion of vandalism under \$400, for which a slap on the hinny is likely to be worse punishment.
- **Feb. 26:** Police responded at 10:35 p.m. to the area of Beachcomber and Whidbey St., for a disturbance. Logs indicated a 66-year-old man was arrested for suspicion of simple assault after he “slapped the victim with the back of his hand with an open palm.” Police slapped the cuffs on him.
- **Feb. 26:** Police responded at 5:33 p.m. to the area of Kern and MBB for a man causing a ruckus. Logs indicated they arrested a 36-year-old boisterous fellow for suspicion of disorderly conduct and being lit in public.
- **Feb. 26:** Police contacted a regular customer at 5:39 p.m. in the 900 block of MBB. Logs indicated the 37-year-old bail jumper had two felony warrants and was taken to see the judge.
- **Feb. 26:** Police contacted a suspicious woman at 1:14 p.m. in the 600 block of Quintana Rd. She turned out to be wanted out of

- Kings County and was taken to the gaol to await a ride home.
- **Feb. 26:** Police came across another suspicious subject at 9:39 a.m. in the 300 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated the 40-year-old woman had six bench warrants and was finally taken to jail to get them cleared up.
- **Feb. 26:** Police responded to an apparent roadside fire at 7 a.m. on Hwy 1 at the northbound Morro Bay Boulevard off ramp. Logs indicated a 49-year-old apparent firebug was arrested for suspicion of “causing a fire that resulted in great bodily injury.”
- **Feb. 25:** Police responded at 6 p.m. to the Rock parking lot where some idjit was spinning donuts in the dirt. The 22-year-old Evil Ken-knucklehead was cited for reckless driving and spun loose.
- **Feb. 25:** At 11:12 a.m. police contacted a suspicious fellow in the 1400 block of Quintana. Logs indicated he was booked for suspicion of possessing stolen treasures and being stoned on drugs, which explains a lot but is no excuse.
- **Feb. 25:** Police were called at 5 a.m. by Sierra Vista Hospital and told of a suspected spousal abuse victim they were treating. The alleged assault occurred in the 300 block of Sequoia. Police documented the incident.
- **Feb. 24:** Police responded to the 500 block of Atascadero Rd., after somebody charged off with an electric scooter.
- **Feb. 24:** Police responded to a report of a mentally disturbed person apparently causing a disturbance at 8:19 p.m. in the 600 block of San Jacinto.
- **Feb. 24:** A citizen in the 300 block of Island said some thief stole things of his or her vehicle. No word on the treasures taken, but the loss of trust is no doubt priceless.
- **Feb. 24:** Police responded at 12:37 p.m. to the 600 block of San Jacinto where a woman had apparently worn out her welcome. Logs indicated the 34-year old got hooked up for suspicion of being drunk and disorderly and trespassing. She was booked into County Jail, where everyone is equally welcome.
- **Feb. 24:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at the suspect time of 12:09 a.m. at Main and Radcliff. Logs indicated the 34-year-old driver was nicked for driving thick as a tick.
- **Feb. 24:** A citizen in the 2900 block of Cedar had their vehicle burgled and the thief made off with something of value, as police deemed it grand theft.
- **Feb. 23:** A citizen came to the police station to report someone had stolen his or her identity and used the bogus info to obtain money, which this poor Magoo will no doubt get stuck repaying.
- **Feb. 23:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 10:13 a.m. in the 1000 block of Morro. Logs indicated he was picked up for suspicion of possessing drug paraphernalia, his stash apparently already shot.
- **Feb. 22:** Police responded at 7:05 p.m. to McDonald’s in the 700 block of Quintana to check out an apparently suspicious fellow. Logs indicated the Ham-bungler, 39, was arrested for

- suspicion of being stoned on drugs, at McDonalds, which used to be a rite of passage.
- **Feb. 22:** Police responded to Quintana and Morro Bay Boulevard at 1:47 p.m. for a reported hit-n-split crash.
- **Feb. 22:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 10:43 a.m. at Main and Harbor. Logs indicated the woman driver, 36, was cited for a suspended license and no insurance, hanging offenses in these parts.
- **Feb. 21:** Police stopped yet another suspicious vehicle at 8:50 p.m. in the 700 block of Quintana. The woman driver, 55, hit the Daily Special — speeding, expired registration, suspended license and no insurance. She was cited but no word on whether her car was arrested.
- **Feb. 21:** Police were called at 4:11 p.m. to the 1600 block of Main for a disturbance. Logs indicated they contacted a 24-year-old squit who they allegedly found in possession of crank and a crack pipe, which coincidentally violated his probation, too, “Say Good Night Gracie...”
- **Feb. 21:** Police towed away a car from the 500 block of Bernardo for failure to feed the DMV beast its fill of blood money.
- **Feb. 21:** Police responded at 1:10 a.m. to the 700 block of Harbor where some model citizen was apparently raising Hell. The 27-year-old reveler was hauled off to jail for suspicion of being stoned on drugs, vandalism, and of course a bench warrant, as this was apparently not this cowboy’s first rodeo.
- **Feb. 20:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 9:21 p.m. in the 200 block of Harbor. The driver, 36, was cited for suspicion of possessing illegal drugs and paraphernalia. No word on whether he was going to or leaving the party at the time.
- **Feb. 20:** Police espied some dingus run a stop sign in the 200 block of Harbor (a stop everybody runs). Logs indicated he also had a suspended license, but he apparently had insurance.
- **Feb. 20:** Police are investigating a suspected case of elder abuse in the 500 block of Atascadero Rd.
- **Feb. 20:** Police are investigating a case of simple assault, which seems an oxymoron when talking about domestic violence, committed by some apparent moron in the 700 block of Harbor.
- **Feb. 20:** Police responded to City Park at 9:34 a.m. where a stylishly named fellow, 59, “was consensually contacted” which sounds positively naughty. He turned out to have quite a pair of bench warrants. He was issued a third disappearance ticket and released.
- **Feb. 20:** Someone reportedly took a vehicle from the 800 block of Marina without the consent of the owner. No word on if that was mom or dad’s car.
- **Feb. 19:** Police contacted a familiar fellow at 10:30 a.m. in City Park on Harbor Street. The 46-year-old scofflaw had six bench warrants and was arrested. He was first taken to the hospital to be checked out medically, and after apparently passing mustard, was checked into the no-star Parkinson Plaza.

MBPD Picks Up Wanted Fugitive

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay Police arrested a man suspected in Oregon of the attempted murder of an apparent shipmate, at a home in Morro Bay with the assistance of SWAT.

According to a news release from MBPD, at about 5:20 p.m. Monday, March 10 local police were contacted by a police detective from Astoria, Ore., regarding a man wanted for questioning in connection with a March 7 violent incident in that city.

Astoria Police Department had information the suspect “had possibly returned to Morro Bay,” reads the release.

MBPD officers responded to the home, located in the 300 block of Hill St., where they confirmed the man was inside. That’s when things got a little serious.

“The San Luis Obispo Regional Swat Team was activated,” police said, “and with their assistance the suspect, [identified as Dylan Xavier Campana, 29] “was taken into custody without incident.”

He is being held in SLO County Jail awaiting extradition to Oregon, where Astoria Police plan to question him.

According to the Daily Astorian Newspaper, on the night of Thursday, March 7, “the Astoria Fire Department was dispatched to Pier 3 of the Port of Astoria boatyard for a report of a male subject injured in a fall. On arrival, they discovered the victim’s injuries were not caused by a fall.”

The victim in that case, identified by the newspaper as “a 23-year-old man who had been working on a boat with

the suspect,” was reported as being in stable condition. It did not give details on his injuries.

MBPD Chief Amy Watkins confirmed that Campana worked on a fishing boat.

“A fishing boat is right,” she told Estero Bay News. “Sounds like Campana goes up north on occasion to work on the boat and make some money for a few months, then returns to Los Osos where his family is.”

She did not know the name of the fishing boat, but believed it was home ported “up north somewhere. From what I understand the boat had an issue and was being serviced in Astoria.”

She also did not know anything more about the reported victim in the case, but did not believe he was from here. “I do not believe he has any ties to the Central Coast,” Chief Watkins said of the victim. “At least, I haven’t heard of any. All I know is he also worked on the boat.”

According to the Daily Astorian, Campana was someone to be wary of — for police.

“He is considered armed and dangerous due to his history of threats toward law enforcement and history of violent offenses,” the newspaper reported. The local police chief threw out the dragnet.

Astoria Police Chief Stacy Kelly said, “We’re pretty confident that he left the area, because the boat that they were on, it just had to stop here for emergency repairs. And he has ties to other parts of the state. So we’re assuming he went back there, but we don’t know for sure.”

Turns out that his next port of call was SLO County Jail.



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Community

Wellness Centers Open At Local High School

Photos and Story by Neil Farrell

High school can be tough on a kid; often filled with “teen angst,” anxiety and stress over things like lost loves, tough schoolwork assignments, and problems involving peers, friends, family and more.

Students at Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo high schools, now have a place where they can seek help dealing with the pressures of adolescent life or maybe just to chill for a while.

The San Luis Coastal Unified School District last week celebrated the grand opening of Student Wellness Centers on each campus, spaces designed to be relaxing and staffed by a trained therapist and counselor.

“In response to the growing need for youth mental health support,” said a news release from the District announcing the grand openings, “both Morro Bay High School and San Luis Obispo High School have designed a safe and accessible space on each campus to promote social-emotional wellness and provide students with access to mental health resources.”

Morro Bay High’s Wellness Center was designed by a student, junior Lucy Fortini, who put together a warm and inviting space that’s divided by a partial interior wall, each side with a giant screen TV and sound system. Also, there are comfortable couches in a space that’s clearly been designed by someone who has a gift for it.



Lucy Fortini, center, and another MBHS student, AJ Rabadon did the honors last week and cut the ribbon to the new Wellness Center.

“I love to get involved with these sorts of things,” she told Estero Bay News after the ribbon cutting and official opening of the MBHS Wellness Center. This, she added, had been one of the most fun projects she’s done, which includes decorating for school dances, like Homecoming.

Fortini also leads a “Wellness Club” that meets at lunchtime on Mondays, where they offer each other emotional support. She said her Spanish teacher asked if she’d like to help with this project. She contacted Heather Willis, who will staff the center.

Willis explained that her role will be as a counselor to help the kids who come in voluntarily with their social, emotional health and troubles they might have with learning.

“I will help the kids with the mental side of things,”



Morro Bay High’s new Wellness Center is a warm comfortable looking setting where kids experiencing anxiety can go to take a break.

she said. School, she added, “is a stressful place for teenagers. Here they can take a breather and then head back to class.”

If a student feels sad, stressed out or anxious — or possibly all three — they can ask a teacher for a pass out of class to go to the Wellness Center, or Willis said, anyone can drop in during break and at lunch. It’s a new way of doing things.

“Before,” Willis said, “if a kid was having a panic attack, they’d send them home. Now they can come here and talk with a counselor.” When they feel better again, they go back to class. The Center will be available before school too.

Willis, who is also a therapist, said there would not be any outside therapists involved but if warranted, they can refer someone for outside treatment. The plan is to continue the program during summer school, too.

The money for the Wellness Centers is coming from a State program, the “Student Behavioral Health Incentive Program,” and the District’s administrator for the program, Janet Gould, the former principal at Del Mar Elementary and now executive director of Student Support Services at the District, said the grant paid the start up costs. They are looking into how to keep the program going after the grant money runs out.

One way is use the law that set up the program. Gould said the law gives the District the ability to bill a student’s parents’ insurance companies for reimbursement of the services they provide.

The fee schedule, she said, is being rolled out and it will entail some tracking of services rendered. Everything would be voluntary, she explained, and set up through an insurance provider and with the permission of parents.

Services could include screening through County Mental Health, risk assessments, and counseling sessions, Gould said.

Asked about the funding, District Superintendent Dr. Eric Prater acknowledged that with a grant, funding is temporary but right now they are hoping to partner with the County Office of Education to tap monies it receives for student mental health services, so the District can continue the program after the grant runs its course.

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Sports

Girls Team Closes Out Record Season



Morro Bay High School's Girls' Varsity Basketball Team poses for a team photo after the CIF Central Section Finals game hoisting the Second Place Plaque that will adorn the school's trophy case. Pictured back row from left are: Coach Alex Engel, Coach Ashley Magday, Zoe Fitzwater, Team Manager Stiffany Plenario, Violet Pace, Tailer Morrison, Fiona Durham, Georgie Wheeler, Taylen Robson, Coach Katy Conlin, and Coach John Teixeira. Front row from left: Parker Brigham, Emily Cordes, Maiya Massie, Naiah Zales, Rosie Martinez, and Shelby Taylor. Photo submitted

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay High School's Girls' Basketball Team closed out a record-breaking season with a second place finish in CIF and an appearance in the state tournament, cracking the upper echelon of California's prep sports hoopsters for the first time in a quarter century.

Head Coach Alex Engel recounted the whirlwind season. "We ended up 24-8 overall, won the Sunset League Championship, made it to the CIF Central Section Championship, and then to the Second Round of State. It's the most successful season we've had at MB in about 25 years."

A League Title

The Lady Pirates ran away with the inaugural season of the Sunset League, posting an 8-2 record and qualifying for the Central Section CIF Tournament as a No. 2 seed. Naturally, the team took home several League Honors.

"We had six girls make the Sunset

League 'All League' team," Coach Engel said. "Senior Fiona Durham was named MVP of the league; seniors Tailer Morrison and Georgie Wheeler, and sophomore Violet Pace were named First Team All-League. Sophomore Zoe Fitzwater was named Second Team All-League, and freshman Taylen Robson was named Honorable Mention."

A Deep CIF Run

The Lady Pirates continued their domination on the court into the playoffs, hosting three games for the local fans.

In CIF they defeated West High School, Reedley, then Roosevelt of Fresno, to make it to the Section Finals against top ranked, Bakersfield Christian, in a game played at Fresno's cavernous Selland Arena.

Bakersfield Christian won that contest, but Morro Bay's great showing led them to a berth in the State Tournament and a chance at immortality.

A Statement at State

At the Div. III State Tournament,

played in Sacramento, Morro Bay faced Rancho Cucamonga in the first round, scoring a decisive 49-28 win on the strong inside play of its trio of seniors.

Morrison scored 19 points and pulled down 20 rebounds against Rancho Cucamonga. Wheeler had 14 points, and Durham had a monster game with 8 points, 11 rebounds, 5 assists, and 3 blocks. Defensive strategy played a big part in a big win.

"We knew that Rancho wasn't a great shooting team," Coach Engel said, "so we played a zone and packed it in. The girls executed the game plan perfectly on defense and made them take a bunch of 3-pointers. They went 0 for 23 from the 3-point line."

2nd Round Barnburner

The Lady Pirates' second round game was one for the ages, as the team took an early lead, then fell behind, only to battle their way all the way back to a tie with time running out.

"The game was a back-and-forth affair," Engel said. "We were up by seven at halftime and Granada Hills came back and went up by eight in the 4th quarter. We clawed back and tied the game with 30-seconds left."

As the clock ran down, Morro Bay's defense got caught out of position. "On the final defensive play," Engel said, "we got mixed up on a back screen, and Granada Hills got a look for 3 but missed; unfortunately on the mix up both of our bigs were on the perimeter, which allowed their 6-foot 3-inch post to grab the rebound and score, while being fouled to make a 3-point play."

Facing elimination, Morro Bay was forced to look for a 3-point shot, and Granada Hills was ready. "We got the ball back with 15 seconds left," Coach Engel said, "but Granada Hills knew we needed a three and stayed out on the perimeter. We got a shot off, but it wasn't a great look."

The game ended in a 48-45 defeat. Individually, the seniors again led the way. Wheeler went five-of-10 from the 3-point line and had 17 points. Morrison added 16 points and 9 rebounds, and Durham had 10 points, 7 rebounds, and 4 assists.

A Record Season

The girls ended the year 24-8. They

won the Sunset League Championship; took second place in CIF Sections; and played into the Second Round at State. It was one of the best seasons in school history and the players left their marks on the school record books.

Sharpshooter, Wheeler, shattered the single season Morro Bay school record from the 3-point line with 111 buckets made on 36% shooting from beyond the arc. The previous record was 66. "She was ranked No. 1 in the Central Section for 3-pointers made," Coach Engel said, "and according to Maxpreps Sports [a high school sports website] would be tied for eighth in the State of California this year."

Morrison tied the school record for most blocked shots in a game with nine, a feat she did twice this year; and was also second all time for blocks in a season with 75. She was also dominant on the boards. Morrison broke the school record for rebounds in a season with 377 and is ranked fifth all time for career rebounds at Morro Bay. "She broke the record for most rebounds in a game with 29 against Hanford earlier this year," Coach Engel said.

Durham too crashed the boards at a record clip. Durham, became sixth all time for career rebounds at Morro Bay, he said.

And sophomore point guard, Fitzwater, racked up 132 assists, an average of over four a game, the second highest total in school history. She also dished out 10 assists in one game, also the second best ever at MBHS.

They also set a number of team school records — most points in a season; most 3-pointers made in a season; most rebounds in a season; most blocked shots in a season; most assists in a season; and most blocks in a game.

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Community

Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Morro Bay's By the Sea Productions presents a staged reading of "Talk Radio," the Pulitzer Prize winning dark comedy by Eric Bogosian, directed by Chrys Barnes.

Nighttime Cleveland radio shock jock Barry Champlain has become wildly popular by insulting his callers in the name of "Keeping It Real." When he learns the network wants to "go National" with his show, he doubles down on the outrage, despite growing evidence that some listeners are unhinged enough to turn their anger into real world violence.

This show contains adult themes and language and is not appropriate for children.

Showtimes are March 22-24, Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. at 545 Shasta Ave., Morro Bay. Tickets are available online at bytheseaproductions.org, or call 805-776-3287.



Calling all dog-lovers! The Lioness Club of Cayucos will host their annual Easter Dog Parade from 12 - 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 30, starting at the Cayucos pier. This fun-filled event benefits the Cayucos Lioness Club who supply the Mutt Mitt bags, dispensers, and trash receptacles for Cayucos beaches, beach accesses, and downtown Cayucos. The event will offer T-shirts for sale as well as a free photo booth to capture the essence of your special furry friend. Doggie costumes are encouraged. Free bunny ears will be given to two-legged participants while supplies last. Come join the fun and support the Mutt Mitt Program that helps keep our community welcoming and beautiful!

Local sculptor, Chloe A. White, has created a new set of Stations for St. Benedict's Episcopal Church that draws from a slightly different set of events than usual.

The Stations of the Cross date back to the sixteenth century. They were created by Franciscan monks to help people go to Jerusalem in their imaginations and follow the path (the Via Dolorosa) that Jesus is thought to have taken on the final day of his earthly life. The images are drawn both from the Biblical accounts and from traditional stories.

St. Benedict's is located at 2220 Snowy Egret Lane, Los Osos. Viewing times are Thursdays March 14, 21 and 28 from 2-4 p.m. and Saturdays March 16 and 23 from 2-4 p.m. They can be reached at 805-528-0654.

Free events brought to you by the Los Osos Library 2075 Palisades, Ave, 805-528-1862.

- **Mini Weaving** - Friday, March 15, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. Learn how to weave with Librarian Emily! We'll make miniature tapestry weavings together and learn more about how cloth was made in the past and how it's made today.
- **Book Discussion** - Thursday, March 21, 5:30 - 6:45 p.m. Book of the Year: "Creep" by Myriam Gurba. No need to sign up ahead of time. Just show up! Call the library for details.
- **Fairytale Engineering** - Friday, March 22, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. Magical STEM fun at the library! Read the fairytales, plan, create and test your structural design using 3 different kits. For ages 3+
- **Teen Writing Workshop with Sherry Shahan** - Saturday, March 23, 2:00-3:30 p.m. Want to write a story but not sure how to begin? Started writing but got stuck? Learn how to turn your ideas into stories with Battle of the Books author Sherry Shahan ("Frozen Stiff," "Death Mountain," "Ice Island," and more). Bring what you're working on - even if it's only a paragraph. That's how stories are born. For tweens and teens, ages 11-18.
- **Legos!** - Friday, March 29, 1 - 4 p.m. Come to the Los Osos Library and build amazing creations with Legos! We will display your finished pieces during the month of April.
- **Nintendo Switch** - Friday, March 29, 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.



Orchestra Novo continues its tradition of performing live to silent movies with the 1925 film, "The Freshman," starring comedic genius Harold Lloyd of "Safety Last" fame. Hoping to emulate the local college star football hero, Lloyd embarks on a hysterical journey to gain personal fame and find true love.

Carl Davis's musical score captures the essence of American life in the 1920's and Michael Nowak's 40-year history of working in the Hollywood studios offers the perfect partnership for a magical afternoon at the movies.

The fun takes place Sunday, March 24 at 4 p.m. at the Harold J. Miossi CPAC at Cuesta College. For more information and to purchase tickets go to orchestranovo.com.

Morro Bay Main Street Farmers Market takes place Saturdays, 2:30-5:30 p.m. Continues through May 31. Get fresh and veggies, fruit, baked goods, sweets, and handmade artisan crafts. Come have some fun with your local farmers and artisans and enjoy delicious eats while enjoying the fresh breeze of Morro Bay.



Now that spring has arrived, learn about best practices for keeping healthy while gardening. Join the Los Osos Valley Garden club on Sunday, March 17, from 2-4 p.m., as they welcome guest speaker, Audrey Elliott, MPT from Sunnyside Physical Therapy. Elliott will talk about preventing injuries while gardening and provide tips on warm up exercises, proper body mechanics, adaptive equipment,

Events Continued on page 12

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Community

Events From page 11

and the importance of planning and taking breaks.

Elliott attended Cal Poly SLO for her undergraduate degree and graduated from the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences with a degree in Physical Therapy. She and her husband returned to the central coast in 2000. Elliott has been working at Sunnyside in Los Osos for twenty years and feels fortunate to work in a clinic where she has adequate one-on-one time with every patient.

Elliott's presentation will follow a member talk on Garden Safety presented by Debbie Weitzman and Wendy McKeown.

The Los Osos Valley Garden Club is a 501c3 nonprofit. The meeting will be held at First Baptist Church of Los Osos, 1900 Los Osos Valley Road, in Los Osos (cross street Lariat Drive). There is no fee to attend, and reservations are not required. If you have any questions, email club President, Wendy McKeown at info@lovgardenclub.org.



The Cal Poly Choirs' "Traditions" Concert takes place at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 17, in the Performing Arts Center, will feature 100 alumni of Cal Poly's choral program.

Cal Poly graduates from the last 40 years make up the alumni chorus. The group will be co-directed for several choral gems by Cal Poly Professor Emeritus Thomas Davies, and Director of Choral Activities and Vocal Studies Scott Glysson.

University Singers will open the concert with traditional favorites including "How Lovely Are the Messengers" by Felix Mendelssohn, as well as modern selections like Byron J. Smith's gospel work "Make a Way." John Knutson, Cuesta College's director of choral and vocal jazz program, is guest conductor of the group this quarter.

The Chamber Choir will present a preview of its "Sacred Sounds" concert in Mission San Luis Obispo on May 25, which will include the mass setting "Missa O quam gloriosum" by Spanish Renaissance Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611) and contemporary works by Stephen Paulus, an American Grammy Award winner who died in 2014, and Zanaida Robles, an award-winning Black American female composer, vocalist and teacher.

PolyPhonics will perform works from its upcoming tour of the San Francisco Bay Area: Alberto Ginastera's riveting "The Lamentations of Jeremiah the Prophet" from 1946, Pawel Lukaszewski's beautiful setting of "Crucem tuam adoramus," "Breaking Dawn," a modern work by Scottish composer Cecilia McDowall, and "Yon Monn

Nuovo," a vibrant and exciting work in Haitian Creole by Sydney Guillaume.

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

• • •



The next Morro Coast Audubon Society Virtual Community Zoom Program takes place Monday, March 18 at 7 p.m. The program is 15 Years of Birding for Conservation in Colombia Presented by Christopher Calonje

Christopher Calonje will talk about his 15-year involvement in promoting bird tourism in his native Colombia. The end of a 50-year civil war brought peace and prosperity to a country marred by violence, opening it up to tourism and to birders from around the globe. Colombia boasts the world's longest list of birds, now over 1,960 species, which is roughly 20% of the world's species in a country that occupies less than 1% of Earth's landmass. Chris will discuss how bird tourism has supported conservation and local communities in rural areas of Colombia, and his involvement in the process since the country finally became accessible to birders at the beginning of the 21st century.

A Humboldt State University graduate, Chris has led hundreds of tours in all regions of Colombia since he

founded Colombia Birdwatch in 2009. Chris devotes his time to various non-profit conservation groups and local communities in Colombia and also runs the amazing Araucana Lodge in southwestern Colombia, near the city of Cali. Owned by his family on a 30-acre property purchased in 1957 by his grandfather Julio H., the lodge has been touted as one of the best birding lodges in the country.

Zoom Meeting ID: 985 7649 5990 Passcode: 640771

All MCAS Zoom Community Programs are free and open to the public. All ages are welcome.

No signup/registration required to attend.

• • •

Morro Bay residents can show their city some love through brief, fun service projects on Saturday, April 27. The goal is to complete six gardening projects and one art project in two hours, using a method perfected by Morro Bay in Bloom volunteers. The event is called I MB and, for volunteers who have registered at morrobayinbloom.org/i-love-mb, it begins at 8:30 a.m. at City Park, located where Morro Bay Boulevard meets Harbor Street. The gardening project choices include tree planting, planting a native plant garden, preparing downtown for the following weekend's Cruisin' Morro Bay Car Show, and a special planting project at one of the local schools. Event participants choose their preferred project during online registration.

Art project participants will paint galvanized metal buckets with their own unique, freeform designs. The buckets will be used as planters for special downtown displays. People of all ages and abilities are encouraged to registration at morrobayinbloom.org/i-love-mb.

• • •

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

• **Fairytale Engineering** - Wednesday, March 20, 3-5 p.m.

Magical STEM fun at the library! Read the fairytales, plan, create and test your structural design using 3 different kits. For ages 3+



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The Embarcadero Master Leaseholders (the EML) are waterfront business people who lease the waterfront Tidelands Trust land they occupy from the City. They partner with the City of Morro Bay through the rent they pay to the City for their ground leases, plus paying the City a percentage of their sales and revenue. Those revenues fund more than 90% of the City's Harbor Enterprise Fund, which in turn funds the City's Harbor Department, including Harbor public safety and City waterfront facilities.

The EML's purpose is to advocate for and partner with the City of Morro Bay in developing and increasing revenue from the City's Tidelands Trust lands - for the benefit of all citizens of Morro Bay.

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LOOKING BACK

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

Then



Baywood Park in the early years. What is now known as Merrimakers was once called Boots and Spurs. Owned by Louise and Warren Holmes, it was purchased by the couple in 1953. There were three buildings on the corners built by Neil Wright in 1943. When deciding which one to build first, they all agreed that they

would build the bar first. This way, while building the other two, the workers had a place to go at five o'clock after a hard day's work.

Photo from the Sullivan Studios collection



Now

• **Nintendo Switch** - Wednesday, March 27, 3 – 5 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.

• **Teen Advisory Board** - Saturday, March 30, 3 – 4 p.m.

Looking for volunteer or community service hours? Help Librarian Emily plan teen events, create contest ideas, recommend books, movies and more. There will be snacks! For ages 13-18.

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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Community



By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Nominations Open for Morro Bay Chamber Awards

The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce is accepting nominations for its Annual Awards event. Recognizing outstanding contributions, the event honors those who have made a significant impact on the community's welfare and prosperity. Nomination deadline is April 4.

"We are thrilled to launch the nominations for our Annual Awards," said Cherise Hansson, board chair of the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce. "These awards highlight the incredible efforts and dedication of those who make Morro Bay a truly special place to live, work, and visit."

The Awards Categories include:

Business of the Year: Recognizing a business that has demonstrated excellence in its field, contributed to the local economy, and actively engaged in community initiatives.

Nonprofit of the Year: Celebrating a nonprofit organization that has made a significant difference in Morro Bay through its services, programs, and community involvement.

Citizen of the Year: Honoring a Morro Bay resident who has selflessly volunteered their time and efforts to enhance the quality of life for fellow community members.

Living Treasure: Acknowledging an individual whose

lifetime of service and dedication has left an indelible mark on Morro Bay and its residents.

To be eligible for nomination, candidates must meet specific criteria outlined by the Chamber of Commerce. Detailed requirements for each category can be found on the nomination forms. A downloadable nomination form can also be found on the Community Awards page of the Chamber's website.

Nominations can be submitted online at www.morrochamber.org/community-awards or by mail to Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, 695 Harbor Street, Morro Bay, CA 93442.

The Chamber Board will carefully review all nominations and select the deserving recipients, who will be honored at the Annual Awards Gala on May 31

For more information on the nomination process or the Annual Awards Gala, visit www.morrochamber.org.

Top Litigator Joins Carmel & Naccasha, LLP

Emilie de la Motte has joined Carmel & Naccasha, LLP as a Partner with San Luis Obispo's largest law firm.

de la Motte's diverse expertise includes product liability, construction defect, insurance defense, business litigation, employment law, premise liability, municipal law, and toxic tort. She has extensive experience representing clients in both the public and private sectors and has a strong track record of successfully bringing cases to favorable conclusions through summary judgments and pre-trial motions.

Prior to joining Carmel & Naccasha, de la Motte served as an independent contractor at law firms such as Hawkins, Parnell & Young in San Francisco, Andre Morris & Buttery in San Luis Obispo, as in-house counsel for The Wonderful Company in Los Angeles and Dunn & Pangotacos in San Francisco. She also worked for many years as a senior associate-civil litigator at Selman Breitman in San Francisco and Meyers Nave in Oakland.

de la Motte enjoys preparing complex motions, including motions to quash, protective orders, preliminary injunctions, motions to strike, and summary judgment motions. In addition, she has years of experience aggressively working up cases for trial, including taking multi-day depositions, managing electronic discovery, negotiating in mediation, handling expert discovery, and participating in



oral argument and trial.

de la Motte also maintains a passion for legal writing which extends to teaching at the San Luis Obispo College of Law, where she instructs first year law students the art of effective legal writing.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, Davis with a double major in history and Spanish and her law degree from the King Hall School of Law at UC Davis. de la Mote is a board member of the Women's Lawyer Association of San Luis Obispo, currently serving as its secretary; a member of the San Luis Obispo Bar Association and a member of the IESA-Chilean ex-pat volunteer organization in La Serena, Chile.

Fluent in Spanish and conversational in French, in her spare time Emilie enjoys playing tennis, skiing, spending time outdoors, learning Italian and is a book club enthusiast.

Tickets for SLO Sip and Saunter on Sale



Explore downtown San Luis Obispo's retailers while tasting some of the finest beverages and food the Central Coast offers. Local wineries, beverage providers, restaurants, and caterers from around SLO County will serve tastings and small bites at downtown retail locations.

It all takes place on Sunday, May 5 from 1-4 p.m. in downtown San Luis Obispo

Tickets are on sale now: DowntownSLO.com/Sip. Early Bird pricing lasts through April 1.

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.

Nominations Open For Women of the Year

March is Women's History Month and a local Congressman is looking for nominations of exceptional women for the 24th District's 2024 Women of the Year Honors.

Congressman Salud Carbajal (D — Santa Barbara) is seeking nominations "for women going above and beyond to make our district the special place to live that it is," reads a notice on Carbajal's website, which includes a nomination form to fill out.

"Nominations," the site said, "should include not just an account of the primary achievements that are worthy of recognition, but a larger story about who the nominee is as a person.

"What is their background, and how did it contribute to the work that has made them a noted community member?"

"What special obstacles or challenges have they faced?"

"How has their work — paid or voluntary — made a difference in the lives of the residents of the 24th District?"

The nomination includes the question, "In what capacity does the nominee most impact our community?" Possible categories are: Professional; Volunteer; Advocate; or, Student.

It also asks for a brief narrative on how the nominee has "positively impacted our community?" with a 500-word limit.

The women the Congressman honored in 2023 were mainly from Santa Barbara County, which is where the majority of his constituents live.

Last year's Women of the Year for the 24th District were: E.J. Borah from Santa Barbara; Dr. Van Do-Reynoso of Goleta; Casie Killgore of Santa Barbara; Kathleen Minck of Arroyo Grande; Janna Nichols of San Luis Obispo; and Laura Selken of Santa Maria.

Carbajal said the form should take about 20 minutes to fill out.

Dog Park Reopens; Tennis Courts Still Closed

After being closed for nearly a month, Morro Bay's population of pooches can run free once again, as the City reopened the Del Mar Park Dog Park, closed by a big wind storm.

The City announced Feb. 28 that it was reopening the Giannini Family Dog Park, as it is officially named, after clearing downed trees and repairing fencing damaged in the big wind storm that hit Feb. 4.

The dog park is the only place within Morro Bay where dogs are legally allowed to be off leash, though there is also Dog Beach (Morro Strand Beach from North Point to Cayucos) where your furry friends are also allowed to be untethered. The dog park is divided into two sections — one each for large and small dogs.

The City's other storm casualty was to the Monte Young Park tennis courts, which were also damaged in the Feb. 4 winds that saw gusts of 70 mph blow through the area.

The tennis courts are slated to be reopened around



The City of Morro Bay posted the tennis courts at Monte Young Park Feb. 5, after high winds damaged the fencing. It is slated to reopen around April 20. Photo by Neil Farrell

April 20, as there may also be other work needing to be done, beyond what the wind wrought, before the courts reopen to public use.

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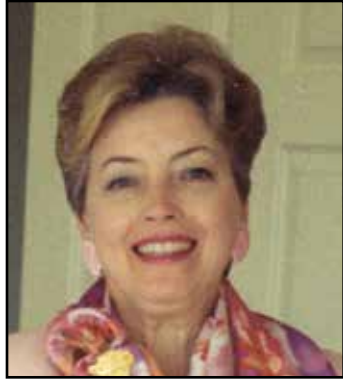
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Obituaries

Lynn Janeway 1946 - 2024



It is with sadness that we report that Lynn Sue (Mersits) Janeway passed away peacefully on February 24, 2024, after a long hard-fought illness. Lynn was born on September 24, 1946, in Long Beach, California. Her formative years were spent in Whittier, California, where she attended elementary school and Whittier High School.

While attending Whittier High School, Lynn was actively involved in music (playing the flute in the band and orchestra), sewing, and developing her leadership skills as a band officer. And she found her future husband in the trumpet section. Yes ... Lynn and George were high school sweethearts!

While attending UCLA, she continued to play in the UCLA Concert Band while working on her degree in English and obtaining her Elementary Teaching credential.

Upon graduation from UCLA Lynn and George married in June, 1968. After George's graduation from UCLA Dental School in 1970, they moved to Connecticut for two years where Lynn taught elementary school and George satisfied his military obligation with the United States Public Health Service at the Federal Correctional Institution in Danbury.

In 1972 Lynn and George moved to San Luis Obispo with their first son, Michael Scott Janeway, on the way. Lynn was introduced to the American Association of University Women (AAUW) by George's cousin, Miriam Palmer. She immediately joined that group (at age 26) and has been an active member for 51 years. Lynn held most offices in that organization including multiple years as President. She met many amazing women who mentored her, even as she mentored others.

In 1976 their second son, Christopher Mathew Janeway, was born. Soon after they moved to Los Osos. When the boys entered Sunnyside Elementary School, Lynn volunteered her time and served as the Community Resources Coordinator. She was instrumental in developing the first

school wide Science Fair. After 5 years, George convinced her to leave the school and become the full-time office manager for his dental practice. They retired in 2010.

From the time of their marriage, George and Lynn enjoyed camping and traveling in various RV's (from pup tent to 5th wheel trailer) throughout the United States. Lynn and George also played in the San Luis Obispo County Band.

In 2023 Lynn was honored by AAUW with the Cal Poly AAUW SLO Branch Lynn S. Janeway Memorial Scholarship to be given each year to a woman who is returning to college.

Lynn was preceded in death by her father, James John Mersits; her mother, Irene Lois Mersits; and her brother Thomas Mersits.

She is survived by her husband George, sons Michael Janeway and Christopher Janeway (Kristin), granddaughters Danielle Janeway and Audrey Janeway, grandsons Ayrton Janeway and Levin Janeway, and sisters Gail Wakefield and Sherry Catchpole.

We are grateful for the caring treatment at UCLA Health in San Luis Obispo and the support of Wilshire Hospice.

A Celebration of Life will be announced.

In lieu of flowers, please feel free to donate to the Cal Poly AAUW SLO Branch Lynn S. Janeway Memorial Scholarship fund. Lynn's passion was protecting the rights and advancing the education of women and girls. To donate, go to <https://bit.ly/436sgGu>.

Michael Richard Cross 1944 - 2024



Michael Richard Cross (79), a fifth generation Visalitan, passed away peacefully in his home on January 22, 2024. A graduate of Redwood High School (Class of 1963), Mike attended UC Berkeley before enlisting in the Army and serving in Korea during the Vietnam War. Mike returned from serving his country and graduated from UC Santa Barbara with a degree in sociology in 1971.

Mike found two true callings in life: One was his loving commitment to family and the other was his unwavering pursuit of social justice. He married Betsy Gaudette-Cross on July 19, 1986, his wife of 37 years, and was the proud father of four children: Grant Gaudette, Megan Lo (Gaudette), Katherine Cross, and Kevin Cross. Known affectionately as "PopPop" to his five granddaughters, Ellie (12), Coral (11), Abby (9), Kaia (5), and Finley (5). Mike relished in the joy of sharing each new milestone with his children and grandchildren.

Mike loved sports, playing golf, being outdoors with his family, and traveling the world with his wife, Betsy. Still, his dream day was any day spent with his family, sitting on the deck of his Morro Bay home reading a good book, or going on a drive to Sequoia National Park, followed by some ice cream in Three Rivers.

In the legal community, Mike was best known for his professional calling as a criminal defense attorney in Tulare County. His life's work was nothing short of heroic. He quite literally advocated for life over death for his clients. Mike fought for their dignity, fought for grace and humanity to be granted to the too often dehumanized, despised, or forgotten in our society. With such quiet grace and dignity, he faced headlong the injustices of his own community with an iron stomach, a brilliant mind, an upright spine, and unflinching eyes on reason and compassion. Mike truly believed that the death penalty should be abolished, and he made it his professional pursuit to make that happen.

It is extraordinary and admirable beyond compare how Mike Cross managed to align his moral and professional compass so completely. His family and his community have lost a quiet giant.

Michael Richard Cross is survived by his wife, Betsy Gaudette-Cross, his four children, his five grandchildren, and his brother, John Cross. A memorial service will be held in Visalia at a date to be determined. If you would like to share stories, photos, and stay connected, please go to <https://www.caringbridge.org/visit/michaelcross>. In lieu of flowers, Mike's family requests donations be made in Mike's memory to the Innocence Project (<https://innocenceproject.org/donate/>) and/or to Youth on Course (<https://youthoncourse.org/donate/>).

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Community

New Restaurant From page 1



Owners Alejandro Flores, Ishmael Giles, Marco Lucatero

occasion or just have lunch.”

Los Osos residents Jeff Wedell and Marianne McKee-Wedell were on their nightly walk when they stopped to peek in the window of the new restaurant. Flores invited the couple in where they enjoyed a glass of wine at the bar, and were the very first people to be seated.

“We are so excited to see a new restaurant, not only in Baywood but also in Los Osos. What a great experience we had and wonderful food,” said Wedell. “We will definitely be back with our friends.”

Mirazur’s official grand opening is expected later this month. Reservations are encouraged, especially for dinner, but are not required. They are open for lunch Tuesday



One of their appetizers, Oysters rockefeller with bacon, sambuca, spinach and parmigiana

through Friday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dinner hours are 4:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday. They are closed on Mondays. They can be reached at 805-489-0058 or info@mirazurrestaurant.com. A website is in the works and will be live soon. Follow them on Instagram under Mirazur Restaurant, for updates.

Water Companies From page 1

The details of a future agreement are being worked out, according to the CSD report, including what types of emergencies might the CSD help with, how they can do so and even the type of arrangement they might enter.

“The actual form of any agreement is yet to be determined,” the CSD report said, “but could be a Memorandum of Understanding or actual contract for service. S&T fully understands that the cost for services would be consistent with full cost recovery plus administrative overhead.”

An MOU is what S&T asked for. In a submittal to the CSD Board, S&T said it was “now requesting that a Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] be considered by the Board to allow for LOCSD Operations to respond to emergencies in the event that S&T has too few personnel or are not available to do so.”

S&T also asked to utilize the CSD’s maintenance staff and equipment to help maintain the 26 main valves in its water distribution system, a regular job that normally takes about 2 days to complete depending on what needs to be done.

“This work,” S&T’s letter said, “would also aid the LOCSD in becoming familiar with S&T’s system components in the event that an emergency shutdown using these valves is very needed.”

LOCSD staff recommended using the normal rate card it charges anyone for doing any work outside of its responsibility. “Staff would propose using the District’s cost recovery charges for work outside of normal operating procedures, which includes salary and benefits for staff, overtime rates, equipment use rates, materials cost and administrative overhead.”

It should be noted that the two agencies have long had a handshake sort of relationship with regards to emergencies. “There has been an informal mutual aid understanding between the two parties in the event there was emergency circumstance that the District could aid in. To date, there has not been any request for assistance.”

The CSD is expected to now firm up the agreement between the two, which will have to be approved by S&T and then the CSD Board. After that, would come the actual intertie pipeline project.

Coastal Commission From page 1

amendments are limited to only a couple of times a year.

“The IP is well overdue for a refresh,” the Commission’s report said, “both to ensure consistency with the 2021 certified LUP and to reflect more modern standards associated with contemporary coastal land use planning issues. Commission staff and City staff have been working cooperatively throughout the LCP update process, which was partially funded via three grants from the Coastal Commission’s LCP Local Government Assistance Grant Program and has been the subject of an extensive and inclusive community planning process, which commenced in earnest in 2015.”

The City may have “commenced in earnest” to update the plans in 2015, but it started talking about doing the work back in the late 1990s, when former City Manager Dave Howell first brought up the prospect of updating the City’s main planning documents.

Back then, Howell had tossed about the figure of \$1 million, as the likely cost to do the update, and in the end his predictions were pretty accurate.

The LCP is the guiding document for any development within the Coastal Zone, which in Morro Bay includes the majority of the town.

“Almost the entire roughly 6-square-mile City is located within the Coastal Zone, with only about 14 acres in the northern hill portion of the City outside of the Coastal Zone,” the report said.

Perhaps the term “update” isn’t strong enough, as the Commission report said, “the proposed IP is a complete

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TUES - SAT: 4 PM & 7 PM
SUN: 1 PM & 4 PM

MARCH 22 - APRIL 4

GHOSTBUSTERS: FROZEN EMPIRE
(PG-13) 1HR 54MIN
TUES - SAT: 4:15 PM & 7 PM
SUN: 1:30 PM & 4:15 PM

UPCOMING MONDAY SPECIALS

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(1943)
(PG) 1HR 42MIN
MARCH 18
5:30 PM

13 GHOSTS
(1960)
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MARCH 25
5:30 PM

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News

overhaul of the existing IP to carry out the provisions of the updated LUP.” (The Land Use Plan or LUP is part of the General Plan, and applies to the entire town, and the LCP deals specifically with the Coastal Zone and includes requirements and policies of the Coastal Act. The LUP includes the Zoning Ordinance and accompanying maps of the various zoning areas in town. In the end all these documents should mesh with each other.)

Conservation is the key word with Morro Bay’s LUP. “The LUP’s overarching intent is to form a greenbelt surrounding the urban core by protecting the City’s undeveloped hillsides and mostly unarmored beaches and bluffs, while also correspondingly providing for mixed use infill development and multi-modal transportation options within the already urbanized City core, including in downtown and along the Embarcadero.”

The new LUP tries to address some of the sticky issues local residents have faced over the years — namely people trying to develop in areas the community wants to protect.

“The LUP includes a quite specific and directive set of policies aimed at protecting sensitive coastal resources, including in terms of public coastal access, coastal hazards, sensitive habitats, and public views.”

And, “These policies,” the report added, “provide the ultimate performance standard [e.g., ensure new development does not include any form of armoring, prohibit residential development within wetlands and ESHA (environmentally sensitive habitat areas), protect public blue water coastal views, etc.], and the proposed IP carries these provisions out through required studies, technical reports, and other implementation techniques.”

As an example of the LCP/IP in action, the Commission report notes that the plan protects wetlands and other sensitive habitats, “by limiting the types of development in such areas and through requisite buffers. The IP maintains these overarching requirements and carries them out by specifying the procedural protocols to do so, including through the preparation of biological reports from qualified professionals that, among other things, identify specific siting and design techniques, specific buffer widths, and any restoration/mitigation components.”

Indeed, the list of studies required for

development in Morro Bay’s LCP territory include things like archaeological studies and surveys (potentially including Native American monitoring); having sea otter watchers during marine construction projects; eel grass surveys; soil samplings; and environmental reviews — from simple checklists to full blown EIR reports.

Among the plans’ issues that have been most costly are coastal hazards, the avoidance of which moved Morro Bay’s new sewer treatment plant from the Atascadero Road site to the eventual location above South Bay Boulevard at a cost of an additional \$120 million.

“With respect to coastal hazards,” the Commission report said, “the LUP requires development to be safe from coastal hazards risk, only allows for armoring to protect existing structures in danger from erosion, requires a series of coastal resource mitigation requirements for permissible armoring, and requires armoring to be removed should a structure be redeveloped.”

By “armoring,” the Commission is referring to seawalls, rock revetments and similar techniques, used to hold back the sea and prevent erosion.

“The proposed IP maintains and carries forward all such LUP provisions and provides the necessary details to implement the LUP policies by requiring certain technical studies that evaluate alternatives and mitigation measures, including identifying the potential impacts of erosion, flooding, tidal scour, and the sea level rise over the life of the development.”

The implementation plan is the key to unlocking the mysteries of Morro Bay’s planning documents and is a road map through the red tape inherent in any Coastal Zone town.

“In sum, the proposed IP contains a plethora of standards to guide development while ensuring the highest protection of coastal resources.”

If readers want to follow the Coastal Commission’s discussions on Morro Bay’s LCP/IP they can tune in the Commission’s meeting via its website, see: www.coastal.ca.gov/meetings/agenda/#/2024/3. The City’s Implementation Plan runs for 223 pages and the Commission staff’s recommendation is to approve it.

EVERYDAY WELLNESS

How to Breathe Your Way to a Healthier Life

By Natalie Teichmann and Jon Nowaczyk

We don’t need a doctor to tell us that breathing is good for us. It’s an essential part of life that our body automatically does. But what if we became more aware of each breath and started focusing on the quality and the intention behind each one?

Let’s look at two parts of the nervous system — the sympathetic nervous system and the parasympathetic nervous system. Each has its purpose. The sympathetic nervous system governs our fight or flight mode. It’s what keeps us safe from predators. We can be in fight or flight all day with no real predators besides the predators of our minds, which alone could be enough to keep the body in high alert. The parasympathetic nervous system is in charge of the body’s rest and digest response. It’s the part of the nervous system that activates when we feel safe and relaxed. Without any outside stressors to battle, the parasympathetic nervous system signals the body to rest, digest and relax.

When we breathe deeply, we can



Become more aware of each breath you take and relax for your health. switch on the power of the parasympathetic nervous system. Try this- inhale for a count of two and then exhale for a count of four. Repeat that a few times.

Now inhale for a count of three and exhale for a count of six. Repeat.

Lastly, inhale for a count of four and exhale for a count of eight. Repeat a few times. Pause and notice. How do you feel?

Does your body feel more relaxed? If so, you just helped activate the power of your body’s rest and digest response with the simple awareness of the breath. Way to go!

Jon and Natalie are the owners of Let’s Get Tuned Sound and Yoga studio in Morro Bay, a safe space dedicated to personal growth and health in a loving community environment.

Letter To The Editor Of Leviathans and Monsters

(Written in San Ignacio Lagoon on February 18th, 2024.)

We headed further out into the lagoon. The Pacific gently breaking across the shallows, showing them the entrance to their place of maternal refuge and ecstatic Cetacean joy...another generation promised in long, loving foreplay and momentary satisfaction. A safe haven for newborn calves to grow strong before the arduous and dangerous journey North. This is San Ignacio Lagoon, a magical place like no other and a birthing and mating place for Eastern Grey Whales since time immemorial.

The day was perfect. Countless single whales were putting on an unforgettable show complete with almost constant spy-hopping wherever we turned, showy mating rituals, curious side rolls, pectoral fin and tail displays, and finally the sighting of a new calf and its vigilant mother. To spend time with these beautiful, sentient creatures is an experience that will literally change your life forever and make you re-examine man’s mistaken sense of self-importance and the devastating consequences of anthropocentrism giving rise to humans’ lack of respect for the non-human capacity for intelligence and compassion and their ability to live in harmony with nature.

Here in Baja California the locals have embraced the Grey Whales. They honor these Cetaceans’ intrinsic and ecological value and do everything in their power to protect them on their migratory journey. Unfortunately, once the whales leave the sanctuary and head north with their calves in late March and early April their journey becomes perilous, especially now, as the pairs enter the rich near shore waters off the Central Coast of California. These gentle leviathans will encounter a danger never before experienced and one that is even more perilous than the pods of Orcas and the hungry foraging White Sharks lying in wait... a true monster and its mechanical minions; the High Resolution Geophysical (HRG) near shore survey boats and the accompanying sea bottom eating dredges. The behemoth energy company, Equinor, one of the three offshore wind lease holders on the Central Coast, plans on deploying

high decibel ocean bottom survey vessels and dredges this March just at the same time that the Grey Whale pairs will be migrating through our region. This determination to begin survey work by Equinor during peak whale migration season is monstrous, deliberate and with full knowledge of the consequences to Grey Whales and other Cetacean species. These pre-construction activities specific to offshore wind will cause damage and displacement and an increased infant mortality due to predation, and potential death from prolonged exposure to high decibel sound emissions. (over 228 decibels in shallow, near shore waters).

Why, with all of our environmental protections in California and the protection of the Coastal Act can we not protect these gentle giants? Why can we not emulate the residents of Baja California’s respect and recognition of the whale’s importance to the healthy functioning of an ocean environment? Are we to decimate the gentle leviathan that has lived for millennia in harmony with their environment in favor of an industrialized, dead ocean and an empty promise of a “green, renewable and sustainable” energy source for a gluttonous humanity? The answer to all of these questions is rather simple, a lack of government in favor of monetary gain for a few foreign contractors and the furthering of lofty political aspirations of those foisting this ill-conceived technology on us.

We must ask ourselves, are we willing to kill the oceans to satisfy the blatant lie by our government and the wind industries of this technology’s positive impact on climate change as BOEM has stated. Are we so caught up in collective guilt that we are willing to grasp at any straw, any “energy solution” that will assuage our raw consciences? Finally, are we willing to let a greedy, monstrous industry dictate what will happen on our beloved Central Coast and in the rich and diverse marine ecosystem that many of us call home?

I THINK NOT!

Mandy Davis
President, REACT Alliance - Los Osos,



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Letters Continued on page 19

Community

MBHS Drama Dept. From page 1

Thankfully, circumstances aligned to help them, via a somewhat unlikely route.

Mayor Carla Wixom said the producers and crew of the film, "Camera," including producer Jay Silverman had been coming into her family restaurant, Carla's Country Kitchen, before shooting began. The producer was lamenting difficulties getting permits from the City to Wixom's daughter, and she suggested her mom might be able to help. He said what's your mom got to do with anything, and the response was, "she's the mayor."

From there Wixom said, she was in touch with Silverman and his production crew. After the movie wrapped, they asked Wixom where they might hold a local premiere and possibly arrange a donation to the community? She hooked them up with the new Bay Theater owners.

The premier for "Camera," which stars Beau Bridges, Jessica Kennedy Parker, Bruce Davison, Scotty Tovar, Ross Partridge, Ayinde Howell, Jorge-Luis Pallo and newcomer, Miguel Gabriel, was held in January.

Wilson said after he was contacted about the premier, he contacted Wixom about where they should donate the proceeds? She suggested the Morro Bay High Drama Program and one thing led to another.

First, Wilson said he was unsure how the community would respond to an unknown film, but when tickets sold out fast for the initial screening, he added a second, which also sold out. All told, they raised \$5,000 for the MBHS Drama Department.

Principal Scott Schalde welcomed everyone at an official donation, check-passing photo op last Wednesday and dozens of drama students packed the school's theater to say "Thank you."

Wilson said the movie was "impressive" and the response of the community coming out in support was amazing. He said he was thinking they'd be able to donate \$500 but the \$5,000 donation was huge.

Principal Scott Schalde said it shows how little events in a small town like Morro Bay can lead to something "amazing for our little high school."

Kate Kosticka, the school's drama director, said they "have a lot of needs," including replenishing their costume



Bay Theater owner, Cameron Wilson, holding check on the right, poses with Morro Bay High School Drama students, last week. The donation was from the proceeds of the Bay's screening last December of the film, 'Camera' which was filmed in Morro Bay.



Bay Theater owner, Cameron Wilson, fills out a giant symbolic check for \$5,000 that he and wife Rachel Louie donated to the Morro Bay High Drama Department, proceeds from the December premier of the film, 'Camera.'

inventory after an unfortunate accident saw all of their extensive costume wardrobe thrown out by a workman.

They are also starting to save up the estimated \$30,000 they need to purchase a "Short Throw Projector," a stage device that allows them to project a background onto a screen at the rear of the stage, saving time and money on building scenes for their live productions.

Schalde said they plan to rent one for their upcoming production of "Beauty and the Beast," set for Fridays-Saturdays, April 19-20 and 26-27. Show times are at 7 p.m. both days, plus a 2 p.m. matinee performance on Saturdays. (Tickets were not yet available on the school website, but should be soon.)

The production will be entirely run by the students — from the actors to the stagehands, lighting and sound crew and backstage people too — with about 30 involved in the musical production.

This was the second fundraiser for the new owners of the historic theater. They also screened the film, "Botso, The Teacher from Tbilisi," which documents the life of the extraordinary artist, the late Botso Korisheli. That screening raised money for the SLO Youth Symphony



The Drama Club students all signed this giant Thank You card for Bay Theater owners, Cameron Wilson and Rachel Louie.

Ken's happy place.

For example, have you ever wondered who and why non-native Eucalyptus trees were planted at Montana de Oro in Los Osos and Franklin Riley Park in Morro Bay? In the prologue of "In Search of Alexander Hazard: The Man Who Planted the Eucalypts at Montana de Oro," Ken explains he took up walking decades ago thinking he might consider "writing a story about walking with Thoreau." Instead, the inspiration he found while walking regularly in Montana

de Oro sparked his curiosity to take a deep dive into the backgrounds of the Hazard family, one of the residents who settled in Los Osos and Cayucos areas.

Whether you wish to read an interesting story about a local historical figures or study Ken's pathway to fully research an undocumented question, you won't be disappointed. His quest was to discover the site of the Hazard homestead. And if you appreciated learning about the Hazard clan, his next book is "A Tale of Old Cape Buchon," scheduled for publication later this month followed by fictional stories incorporating references to the area.

Growing up in New Hampshire until he was nine and then in San Dimas, CA, Ken was an avid reader. "I was free to pick from my father's library. When I was younger, he recommended 'Call of the Wild' and Bradbury's 'The Martian Chronicles. Later it was Swift, and I remember him handing me Saul Bellow's 'The Adventures of Augie March.' There was also Baldwin's 'Go Tell It on the Mountain' and D.H. Lawrence's 'Sons and Lovers.'"

His mother also took him to the library for summer-time reading programs "encouraging us to read the books we liked." Among other books, Ken said he was inspired by Southwestern writer Paul Horgan and American Western writer Mary Austin. "I even visited her historic house in Independence, CA."

Meanwhile, always with the intent to publish someday, life seemed to get in Ken's way. "In the mid-60s I came up to Santa Maria to live and work for a friend at the Park-Aire Drive-in Theater. Then in 1970 after being in the army, I worked and lived in San Luis Obispo for a short time."

He was in a musical group and wrote lyrics. "I came to love the area, including Montano de Oro, but I returned to Southern California to live and attend Chaffey College, where I met my wife, Nita." In 1973 they attended Cal Poly (SLO) and settled in Los Osos in 1982.

Ken would refine his research skills working at the SLO County Library for the next ten years, then the Tribune for ten years before he returned for another ten years to the SLO Library in 2009 before he retired.

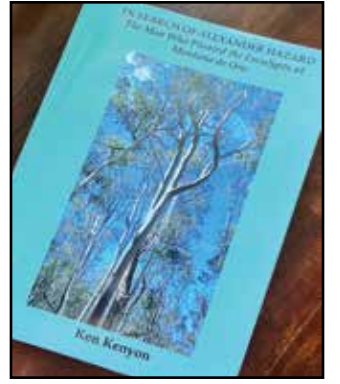
At one point when he was 40, he said he was looking at one of his sons and realized, "I'm not published and won't be until (age) 50 if I don't try."

At the time he thought readers were hungry for science fiction. Although not his favorite genre he submitted several manuscripts, but never got an acceptance letter from a publisher. What he learned was he needed to write about subjects he knew and loved.

Much of his career was spent researching local history questions that were asked by library patrons. "While at the Tribune I wrote obituaries." He was also tasked to interview some notable local personalities. His curiosity grew to discover more about the county he calls home and the people who contributed to its past.

Ken's other published books include his 1870s novel 'Passage to Cerro Alto: A Tale of the Central California Coast'; 'Art Bolt, the Eclectic, Electric Singing Gardener,' a Los Osos ghost story about a songwriter captured by myth and dreams; and a collection of his writings, 'Alternating Leaps and Other Stories.'

Both Coalesce Book Store in Morro Bay and Volumes of Pleasure in Los Osos sell his books



Local author Ken Kenyon's book 'In Search of Alexander Hazard: The Man Who Planted the Eucalypts at Montana de Oro.'

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OUT & ABOUT

WITH THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS

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

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

Ken Kenyon Records Central Coast History

By Judy Salamacha

Ken Kenyon was destined to become a published author, but it wasn't until retirement that he truly found his writing niche. Researching, writing, and sharing stories about Central Coast people and historical places is truly

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Woman Needs Help From page 1

To make matters worse, later that week, Krantz found out that her insurance had been canceled in December without her knowledge. The mobile home park requires that all residents have a carport. The estimated \$18,000 repair and replacements costs were now hers to bear.

"She is just devastated," said neighbor Sharon Bufo. "She cries. It's the saddest thing in the world. She wouldn't come out of her house. She's so embarrassed. She feels she failed, not noticing that the insurance company had stopped taking automatic payments. She is really taking it hard on herself."

Neighbors, friends and Krantz's daughter, Nadine Molina who also lives at the residence, worked on tearing down the remaining portion



Rosemarie Krantz, of Los Osos, stands by what used to be her carport awning. It was destroyed during a storm.



A neighbor removed the remaining structure for safety as storms continued to wreak havoc. Photo submitted

of the carport, removed the undamaged car, and stacked debris to prevent danger to anyone.

Krantz, a 40-year resident of the area who some might remember working with People Helping People, said she is overwhelmed by the support she has so far received from her neighbors.

"Morro Shores is family," she said with emotion in her voice. But more help is needed.

A GoFundMe.com account is set up under Rosemarie Krantz's name. Her granddaughter, Valerie Leos, Bufo and Molina set up the account to help close the \$8 to \$10,000 gap needed for replacement costs.

As of press time, close to \$400 had been raised.



The carport after the storm hit. Photo submitted

Letters From page 17

Revamp or Replace: A Response to the County's Closure of the Safe Parking Site

For two years I worked in SLO, providing life-saving assistance to the homeless population and intravenous drug users. I would dispose of their used syringes and provide them with safe injection supplies. Working with this population, I learned of the tribulations they experience and which services they find helpful. While many homeless service programs are in place here, they are unsustainable, particularly for those experiencing vehicular homelessness.

As of Point-in-Time data captured in 2022, 1,448 individuals in SLO County are experiencing homelessness. Of these, more than 25% are living in a vehicle. Beginning in 2004, California created programs to protect the safety of those experiencing vehicular homelessness in the form of safe parking sites; areas of open land where people can legally park overnight, with the goal of offering stability and protected parking to this population.

SLO established its own safe parking program, the Oklahoma Ave. Safe Parking Site, in 2021. This site has been effective, with nearly 60% of its residents successfully moving forward into housing.

When the site was established, the county claimed it was intended to be a temporary resource, but never gave a timeline on the site's expected existence. Shortly after the site's origin, the county began enforcing ordinances that prohibited residents from living in their vehicles. These residents were referred to Oklahoma Avenue.

According to SLO's municipal code, overnight camping is prohibited along city streets and in city-owned parking. This code has one exception: those parking in safe parking programs or similar vehicle shelters. This exception is made, "in support of the homeless community of San Luis Obispo".

In early 2023, the county announced its plan to phase out the site, leaving out a specific date of closure. This abrupt announcement led to unrest in the community, leading the Homeless Union to protest and file a federal lawsuit against the county.

The county claims the closure is due to safety concerns over the site's durability. A grand jury report stated issues with security, fire danger, and resident drug use are "plaguing" the site. Reports mention the site was opened with little planning or thought put into operations. Fire safety is another concern, with combustible materials being stored in close proximity to the site with no fire plan set in case of an emergency.

The poor reasoning for the site's closure combined with a lack of allocated funding on the issue creates an urgent need to be addressed. To uphold SLO's commitment to supporting those experiencing vehicular homelessness, the county needs to allocate proper funding towards the site's reliability. On February 13th, 2024, SLO County announced the availability of \$5.5 million in grant funds to improve homeless services. A portion of these funds should be allocated to the proper renewal and maintenance of a safe parking site for the hundreds of residents that have reported a need for this service. The funding and intention to protect the homeless is present, but this specific population is being overlooked and their resources are not properly maintained.

Mia Halladay

University of Southern California - Los Angeles

Glitzy Hotel Would Destroy Cayucos' Funky Character

This is to alert the good people of Cayucos that a dreadful plan to build an imposing, multi-story hotel on a fragile beach bluff in the heart of our town is making a comeback. In 2021 this woefully ill-advised project was sidelined by the Coastal Commission, but the developer has revived it in a second bid to gain approval.

In a blistering report, the Coastal Commission staff three years ago detailed the many ways the bulky, 20,114-square-foot hotel would harm Cayucos.

The site, just west of the pier, is a highly unstable ocean bluff subject to relentless erosion. But rising sea levels are not the only problem. The parcel is also bounded by Cayucos Creek, which eats away at the bluff face. Just this winter the bluff appears to have lost several feet due to king tides and the rushing torrent of Cayucos Creek during heavy rainstorms. The site is composed of erosion-prone terrace deposits and fill dirt dumped on top of all kinds of debris. With all of the erosion, a huge truck tire now protrudes from the bluff.

The Coastal Commission report stresses that, due to the sensitive composition of the bluff, it "would erode easily and quickly if subjected to more regular wave attack and higher sea levels." Because both the county's Local Coastal Plan and the Coastal Commission prohibit the developer from protecting the site with riprap, rapid erosion is inevitable. The developer appears to recognize this by proposing to build a deeply embedded retaining wall around the hotel. Unsurprisingly, the retaining wall is a thinly veiled attempt to get around the prohibition against riprap on new development and is a violation of the Local Coastal Plan.

A hotel of this large scale would ordinarily require 77 parking spaces, but the county green-lighted it with only 21 parking spaces, in violation of the Local Coastal Plan. The Coastal Commission staff report notes that "hotel guests and employees will be forced into public parking spaces nearby, thus reducing and adversely affecting public beach parking opportunities." Cayucos simply cannot afford to lose more street parking.

What's more, the hotel's monolithic, boxy design would obliterate public view corridors and would be glaringly incompatible with the unique, low-intensity character of our beloved beach town—and yet another violation of the Local Coastal Plan. It "would block nearly all existing public shoreline views from adjacent North Ocean Avenue, where these views are significant," according to the staff report.

We and our neighbors are passionate about protecting the funky historic character of Cayucos. This so-called boutique hotel would destroy much of our town's precious charm. As the Coastal Commission stated: "This site is located adjacent to the most significant natural resources in the entire community, namely the beach, the Pacific Ocean, and Cayucos Creek. These are community defining features and must be accounted for as well, including here where the project would loom over, as opposed to blend into, the important natural Cayucos Creek viewshed...." The "rather bland" nature of the development would undermine "the existing characteristics of the community, including the community's architectural aesthetic and natural features that add to the community's attractiveness."

The Coastal Commission long ago adopted an official policy of "planned retreat" all along the Pacific shoreline. Plopping down a massive new hotel right on the hazardous ocean's edge would be folly, the very antithesis of planned retreat.

Robert A. Kittle
Cayucos



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