

## Morro Bay Gets Wired



One of Astound's bucket trucks is framed by a double rainbow on a rainy day in Morro Bay. Submitted photo

Story by Neil Farrell

Residents and businesses in Morro Bay now have access to something only one other town in San Luis Obispo County has — high-speed fiber optic Internet connections.

San Luis Obispo based-Astound Business Solutions — powered by Digital West — is near completion of a multi-year project to wire Morro Bay with fiber optic cable, stringing the wires along utility poles and underground in the parts of town where wires were long ago buried.

Los Osos resident Jeff Buckingham, a local leader in the communications field here in a 1990s partnership between Call America and Cal Poly, has led the project for Astound. Now, they have fiber optics strung to some 85 percent of homes and 70% of businesses, with just a few specific areas left.

Morro Bay is the second SLO County town to get what Buckingham said was an amazingly fast and reliable network.

"We started in Grover Beach," He told Estero Bay News, "then Morro Bay."

He noted that Astound has made this investment. "There's no government money involved," Buckingham said, "No grants or taxpayer money. All we asked for [from the City] was to be kind with the permitting."

He explained that the City had long ago arranged

for fiber optic Internet with another company in a deal that included connecting the City's various departments. But the company couldn't get financing to do the rest of the city and Buckingham said he was approached by former City Manager, Scott Collins, about continuing fiber optics throughout town.

"I liked the size [of Morro Bay] and the infrastructure," he said. Most of the town still has utility poles lining the streets. "Using telephone poles is faster, and it's more economical to build the network on poles." With undergrounded utilities, "it's a much more difficult undertaking."

Nevertheless, they used trenching and under-directional drilling to run the fiber optics Downtown and along the Embarcadero. They still have to go into Cloisters, which he said they are still working out how best to do that underground work.

What they have now is some 38-miles of fiber optic cables strung and ready for orders to make the final connection to homes and businesses. Fiber optics arrive much the way cable TV arrives, hard-wired as opposed to wireless.

The main differences are in speed. For residences, Buckingham said, the speed is 2 gigabytes "up and down," meaning it downloads as fast as it uploads, a key difference for business people.

For most services, you might get 50 megabytes on download, Buckingham explained, and uploading

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## Election Wrap-Up



By Neil Farrell

Though votes were still being counted by the County Clerk-Recorder's Office, the races in the March Primary are pretty much concluded. And November's races are starting to come into focus.

### County Clerk's Timeline

County Clerk-Recorder Elaina Cano announced a timeline for when that she expects her office to be done with the election count. Her aim is to announce the final results by the prescribed deadline of 30 days from Election Day (including weekends).

The deadline for finalizing and taking the results to County Supervisors for certification is April 4. While it may seem like forever to get final results, given all that must be done to ensure the count, it no doubt flies by.

"All ballot processing and tabulating," Cano said, "must be open to the public, however, so while some staff may work on weekends, certain steps can only be taken during business hours. Once other critical steps are taken into account, such as immediately inventorying all materials returned from the polls, the Elections Office really only has about 16 business days to complete a lengthy list of tasks."

### The Non-Local Election

This March Primary ballot was bereft of local races for voters in the Estero Bay Area — Morro Bay, Los Osos and Cayucos — but there was a key County Supervisor Election for the 5th District seat being vacated by the retiring Debbie Arnold.

In that race, Atascadero Mayor Heather Moreno leads Atascadero Councilwoman, Susan Funk 56.4% to 43.6%. Out of a total of 16,896 votes counted, Moreno has garnered 9,068 and Funk 7,010. Turnout was just 50.85% in District 5, which covers Atascadero, Cal Poly (portion), California Valley, Creston, Garden Farms, Pozo, San Luis Obispo (portion), Santa Margarita, and Templeton (portion), according to the County District Map.

### Two Get Easy Ride

The other two Supervisor Districts up for election were uncontested, as Dist. 1 incumbent Supervisor John Peschong was unopposed for re-election and Dist. 3's Dawn Ortiz-Legg was only challenged by a weak write-in campaign.

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## Moving Forward: MB Celebrates Generations

By Judy Salamacha

Does it feel like everyone is working harder yet still getting further behind? We certainly appreciate the abundant rain, but might our personal mood swings depend on more coastal sunshine? Or could it be the barrage of negative messages we are hearing about our world, our country, and our communities?

At a retreat planning session that I attended for the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce over a year ago, past president of the board, Ray Riordan, passed out a match-box sized paper with a different kind of message, "IYAD WYAD YAG WYAG." Translated it means, "If you always do, what you always do, you'll always get, what you always get."

Today's column is a shout-out to Morro Bay's Sean Green for taking a chance on doing something different for the sole purpose of celebrating and thanking the multitude of good intentions and efforts offered by Morro Bay nonprofits to produce positive outcomes for our community.

Calendar Monday, April 8 and let's all go to the movies together for the sole purpose of

Moving Forward Continued on page 21



Sean Green celebrates celebrating and thanking the multitude of good intentions and efforts offered by Morro Bay nonprofits to produce positive outcomes for the community.

## Tibetan Monks to Create Sand Mandala, Share Culture in M.B.

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



The community is invited to immerse themselves in the culture and ceremony of Buddhist monks visiting Morro Bay.

As part of the Tibetan Sacred Arts Tour, Let's Get Tuned Sound & Yoga Studio is hosting the creation of a Green Tara Sand Mandala by the monks of Drepung Gomang Monastery from April 8 through 11. Viewing is

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## Baby Gray Whale Pays a Visit

By Neil Farrell



For much of the past couple of weeks, Morro Bay residents and visitors have been enchanted by a baby gray whale that wandered into the harbor and seemingly couldn't find its way back out.

Gray whales are on the northern leg of their annual 10,000-mile round-trip migration from Alaskan waters where they spend the summers to the warm waters of Baja California and the Sea of Cortez, where they winter and give birth.

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# Rockview at Sunset Apartments Dedicated

Story and photos by Neil Farrell

March 13 was officially move-in day for Morro Bay's newest low-income housing development, the Rockview at Sunset Apartment complex.

Located at the corner of Atascadero Road and Sunset Avenue, the three, 3-story buildings comprise a 35-unit apartment complex built by the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo. It's the first project HASLO has done in Morro Bay and one of several developments the non-profit is currently working on countywide.

HASLO Executive Director Scott Collins was the emcee for the grand opening, which brought in City, County and State officials as well as executives from the lending



Representatives of Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo (HASLO) pose with City and County officials, and representatives of State Legislators to cut the ribbon and officially open the Rockview at Sunset Apartments.



Morro Bay Mayor Carla Wixom speaks at the grand opening of the Rockview at Sunset Apartments, the newest low-income housing development built in Morro Bay.

institutions that made the \$16 million project possible.

Collins opened the ceremony reading a statement, "HASLO acknowledges that Rockview at Sunset occupies the traditional land of the Salinan Tribe and the Yak Ti'u Ti'u Yak Tithini (YTT) Northern Chumash Tribe."

He also thanked the many entities that made it possible including: City of Morro Bay, SLO County, Morro



Kristal Keith, a new tenant along with her children, of the Rockview at Sunset Apartments addressed the grand opening crowd.

Bay Apartments, LLC, National Equity Fund Inc., SLO Nonprofit Housing Corporation, Abbott/Reed, Inc., Arris Studio Architects, and Banc of California.

Mayor Carla Wixom, speaking on behalf of the City Council, said, the apartment complex means "a more inclusive, sustainable community." She added, "The name



New apartment tenant, Linda Herrera holds her fidgety son as she thanks HASLO and everyone for the new home for her and her young son.

sounds like 'Morro Bay' doesn't it?"

SLO County provided a significant amount of money for the project, awarding Community Development Block Grants. The City also contributed a significant amount out of its Housing In-Lieu Fund.

Dist. 2 County Supervisor Bruce Gibson praised the project as speaking to the idea of community, and the idea that such affordable projects are a benefit to everyone. "The County simply supplied funding," Gibson said, crediting others who did more work including the crew that built it.

The complex is a mix of one, two and 3-bedroom units that one must income qualify for. Long before it was completed, HASLO had a list of applicants with over 200 names on it. Collins noted that one of the concerns local residents had with the project was that the tenants would not be from Morro Bay. He was happy to report that 22 of the 35 units were filled by Morro Bay residents.

## Clarification

Last Issue's story, "Energy Project in Kern County Hits Milestone; Local Project Officially Dropped" we got some apparently old information off Hydrostor's website. According to Hydrostor's Director for Media Relations, Emily Smith, its Willow Rock Energy Storage Center in Rosamond, Kern County, has some 200 megawatts out of 500 MW capacity, under contract with Central Coast Community Energy (3CE). "We are shortlisted for the balance of the capacity and expect to have an announcement on that later in the year," Smith said.

Also, the Willow Rock project's costs have risen considerably from the figure we got off the website. "The project's CapEx has been adjusted from \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion due to inflation-related cost increases," Smith said, "not the \$500 million that appears in the article."

# Human Jawbone Found on Beach

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay Police made some rather grisly discoveries of bones near a local park, a creek and the beach with at least one believed to be human.

The department's weekly media logs listed three incidents where someone reported finding bones.

At 4 p.m. Thursday, March 14, they received an email from an unnamed citizen. "Human bones," reads the publicly available media log, "were discovered on the beach near the 1700 block of Embarcadero Road in the incorporated city limits of Morro Bay."

On the 15th the next day, at 11 a.m. and again at 1:24 p.m. more bones were reportedly found. "Found bones in a creek bed at Lila Keiser Park," the log entries read.

Esterobay News asked the police chief about this, as finding human bones isn't something you see every day in Morro Bay.

Chief Amy Watkins explained via email. "Last Thursday we received an email from someone who had located a lower portion of a human jawbone that had apparently washed up on the beach or came down from Morro Creek. Some additional bones were located along the creek near the beach and then further up Morro Creek near Main Street."

These bones were believed mostly animal. "Other than the jawbone," Chief Watkins said, "it is unlikely that the other bones are human."

Human bones have been found before along Morro Creek and Lila Keiser Park. Bones were discovered by a work crew back in the 1990s that was clearing out vegetation from the Morro Creek bed. Those were determined to be ancient Native American.

The City found human remains when it tried to drive a steel wall into the ground between the creek bank and the west softball field to protect against erosion of the park-

## Correction

Last issue in the story, New Restaurant Opens in a Popular Baywood Location, we printed the wrong phone number for Mirazur Restaurant. The correct number is 805-439-0058.

## Esterobay News Staff



Dean Sullivan

Owner - Publisher

dean@esterobaynews.com

Theresa-Marie Wilson

Editor

editor@esterobaynews.com

Neil Farrell

Reporter

neil@esterobaynews.com

Shari Sullivan

Marketing Director

shari@esterobaynews.com

Joan Sullivan

Judy Salamacha

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# News

lands. That work also uncovered Native American bones and the local Salinans were called to come in and reinter the remains according to their customs.

The entire Estero Bay area was the site of Native American settlements — Chumash and Salinan — for thousands of years before the Europeans arrived. It's been estimated there were tens of thousands of people living in this area at its peak.

Today, Morro Creek at Lila Keiser is one of the city's areas where homeless folks have campsites in what are pretty dense woodlands. They have yet to determine if the jawbone is ancient remains or someone who died recently.

"It is common for us to find bones," Chief Watkins said, "especially after large storms and major runoff upstream. The jawbone is in possession of the Sheriff's Office, as they are the coroner. The jawbone will be sent off for investigation and we will wait for identification if available."

It could be expected that if it was a recent death, a search would be conducted for the rest of the body.

## Los Osos Middle School is One to Watch

Los Osos Middle School and Laguna Middle School were honored with the prestigious designation as National and State "Schools to Watch." The recognition, awarded by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform in partnership with the California League of Schools, celebrates middle schools' commitment to excellence in education and their outstanding support for students.

Both schools received word of their designations in late November. For Los Osos, this year's designation marks their third such award, and second "re-designation." Laguna Middle School is receiving the honor for the first time. The schools will receive their awards along with other middle schools from around California that also received the award.

"To be one of 600 'Schools to Watch' out of approx. 1,400 middle schools in California is an awesome honor," said Karl Blum, Principal at Los Osos Middle School. "And while the designation itself is great, the process is equally as meaningful because it causes us to self-reflect on our successes and grow where we need to grow."

The "Schools to Watch" designation recognizes exemplary middle schools based on a reflective self-study in four areas:

- Academic Excellence
- Developmental Responsiveness
- Social Equity
- Organizational Processes and Procedures

If the application is approved, the school hosts a validation visit. If the school meets the qualifications, the school

becomes a California School to Watch.

"We are immensely proud of Los Osos Middle School and Laguna Middle School for this designation," said Superintendent Dr. Eric Prater. "This recognition underscores their tireless efforts to continuously improve and create nurturing and innovative learning environments that empower our students to thrive academically and personally."

Schools to Watch is a national network of over 600 schools in 17 states. California is the largest state participant. For the "Schools to Watch" recognition, go to <https://www.leagueofeducators.org/stw>.

## Increase in Tuberculosis in SLO County

The number of tuberculosis (TB) cases in California and here in San Luis Obispo County is increasing, though numbers remain low. Ten cases of active TB were identified in SLO County in 2023, after more than a decade of case counts in the single digits. Cases of latent TB — in which the bacteria "hibernate" in the body without yet causing illness — have also increased in recent years.

When the bacteria that causes TB was first identified in 1882, TB killed one in every seven people living in the U.S. and Europe. Decades of research led to effective, widely available testing and treatment so that today, most people in the U.S. never encounter the disease. Those who encounter it for an extended time are at risk for becoming infected. In most cases, exposure causes people to develop latent TB, which does not cause symptoms and cannot spread to others. It stays in the body and can later develop into active TB disease if it is not treated. About 85% of TB cases in California are caused by latent TB developing into active TB disease.

"We're very fortunate that tuberculosis is not common in our area and very effective treatment is available to stop latent TB from causing you harm," said Dr. Penny Borenstein, County Health Officer. "If you've spent more than a month in a country where TB is more common, it's a good idea to mention this to your doctor so you can get tested and get treatment if you need it, even if you feel fine."

Treatment is available for both active and latent TB. Symptoms of active TB include severe cough (sometimes with blood), night sweats, fever, weight loss, and weakness or fatigue. People who have active TB in their lungs or throat can spread the infection by coughing, talking, or singing. TB spreads when people spend extended time together, such as living in the same household or sitting together on a long flight or car ride, not by spending a few minutes in the same room or having a short conversation on

the street.

The Public Health Department follows up on all cases of active TB in SLO County. When patients come to the Public Health Department with active TB, they begin a treatment regimen with support from the nursing team. Public Health nurses observe patients taking their medicine five days a week to ensure they fully complete the treatment.

For more information about TB testing and treatment with the Public Health Department, visit [slocounty.gov/TB-test](http://slocounty.gov/TB-test). For more information about tuberculosis, visit [CDC.gov/TB](http://CDC.gov/TB).

## Satanic Murderer Denied Parole

By Neil Farrell

A man convicted in one of the most shockingly senseless murders in San Luis Obispo County history, has been denied parole after the District Attorney's Office lobbied the Governor to keep him behind bars.

Royce Casey was one of three teenage boys who were convicted and sentenced to prison for the 1995 ritual murder of Arroyo Grande High School Freshman, Elyse Pahler.

Casey and his accomplices, Jacob Delashmutter and Joseph Fiorella, were all teenagers in 1995 when the 15-year-old Pahler was killed in a ritual slaying dedicated to Satan and driven by rock 'n' roll fantasies.

According to a Wikipedia Page on the murder, Pahler's body was discovered in March 1996, some 8 months after she went missing from her Arroyo Grande home. She had been raped and murdered the previous July, lured into a eucalyptus grove on the Nipomo Mesa.

She had been stabbed, strangled and stomped by the three boys, who left her in the woods. According to Wikipedia, "The perpetrators returned to her corpse and raped it on several occasions."

As twisted as that sounds, their motive for the murder is even more bizarre.

"The trio lured Elyse from her house with the stated intention of killing her as part of a Satanic ritual," the post reads. "In their defense, the defendants said they had needed to commit a 'sacrifice to the devil' to give their heavy



Elyse Pahler was 15 in 1995 when she was kidnapped and murdered by three teenage boys in Arroyo Grande. One of her killers, Royce Casey, in prison since 1997, was recently denied parole by the Governor at the behest of SLO County D.A.'s Office. File photo

Denied Parole Continued on page 4

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# News

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metal band, Hatred, the ‘craziness’ to ‘go professional.’”

Pahler’s parents, David and Lisanne Pahler, blamed the death metal band, Slayer, for their daughter’s murder, suing the band twice over their song lyrics, and losing both times.

According to Wikipedia, in a Washington Post interview, Delashmutt denied the band was to blame. “The music is destructive [but] that’s not why Elyse was murdered,” Delashmutt is quoted as saying in the Post. “She was murdered because Joe [Fiorella] was obsessed with her, and obsessed with killing her.”

Casey was the first of the three to confess and plead to first degree murder and was sentenced to life in prison for a minimum of 21 years; The other two killers got Life and a 26-year minimum sentence after they too confessed.

All three have now been up for parole more than once and denied each time, with Delashmutt scheduled for a parole hearing again next December.

This is the second time the local D.A. has opposed parole for Casey, who is now in his mid-40s. The Governor also denied Casey parole in July 2021.

Ironically, the Pahler Family did not oppose Casey’s parole back in 2021, which the Governor overturned. But Superior Court Judge Craig Van Rooyen granted a writ of habeas corpus filed by Casey and reinstated his parole, which the Governor has now blocked again.

Last December, with his boss Dan Dow deployed overseas with the National Guard, Assistant D.A. Eric Dobroth wrote to the Governor asking him to block Casey’s scheduled parole, arguing that he hasn’t learned his lesson from this heinous act.

Dobroth said Casey, “still has not developed insight into the grave character defects that allowed him to participate in such a hideous crime.”

Dobroth said insight was “a significant factor in determining whether there is a rational nexus between the inmate’s dangerous past behavior and the threat he currently poses to public safety.”

On March 11, the Governor’s Office responded and blocked Casey’s release, deciding that he posed too great a risk to the public. “Mr. Casey must better understand the internal processes that led him to commit the crime,” Gov. Gavin Newsom said, “and hone the skills he will need to manage them beyond the controlled environment of prison.”

“Mr. Casey will almost certainly encounter significant stressors while navigating his reentry into the community if he is allowed to parole, particularly given the stigma and notoriety of his case.”

Casey has some work to do, according to the Governor. “I encourage him to continue to develop his parole plans, and in particular his relapse prevention plans and the strength of his social supports, which will be critical to his success on parole.”

I have considered the evidence in the record that is relevant to whether Mr. Casey is currently dangerous. When considered as a whole, I find the evidence shows that he currently poses an unreasonable danger to society if released from prison at this time. Therefore, I reverse the decision to parole Mr. Casey.”

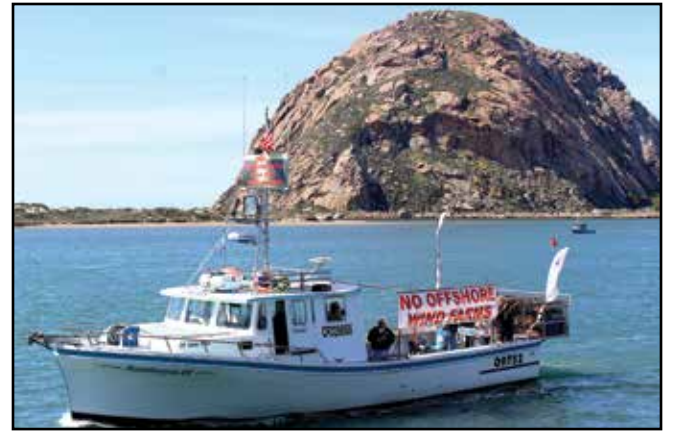
## Winds of Protest Blow Against Offshore Wind Farms

Photos by Neil Farrell

Anti-offshore wind energy activists held a protest march against proposed wind farms being planned for and area off the Central Coast, raising concerns about the environmental impacts from what they call the “industrialization of the ocean.”

The REACT Alliance (see: [www.reactalliance.org](http://www.reactalliance.org)) hosted a “Save Our Seas Stop Offshore Wind/2024” gathering March 9, kicking off what promised to be an afternoon of music, food and learning about the issue with a sign-waving protest march down to the South T-pier. There a commercial fishing boat met them cruising back and forth in the bay, and flying a banner that read, “No Offshore Wind Farms.”

Some of the signs being waved decried the harm that will be done to sea life and seabirds by the wind turbines.



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## Estero Bay News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

### Fentanyl is Forever Public Awareness Campaign

The San Luis Obispo County Health Agency launched a multimedia public awareness campaign called “Fentanyl is Forever” to raise awareness of the dangers of fentanyl and empower community members to access local resources for assistance.

Funded through Opioid Settlement Funds, the campaign features family testimonies, educational materials, as well as prevention information.

“Even a minute amount of fentanyl contamination can be fatal,” said San Luis Obispo County Health Agency Director Nick Drews. “Prevention through education is the goal of this campaign and, with the widespread availability of fentanyl in our communities, it’s vitally important for people not to use illegal drugs that can be laced with this poison.”

San Luis Obispo County Behavioral Health Department Director Dr. Star Graber said her department is dedicated and committed to working with partner agencies throughout San Luis Obispo County to raise awareness of about the dangers of fentanyl.

“Our overarching campaign theme, ‘Fentanyl is Forever,’ carries a profound message that should resonate with our community members,” said Dr. Graber. “It acknowledges the harsh reality of fentanyl, and this is a significant step in our ongoing efforts to combat the fentanyl crisis by equipping our community members with the knowledge, tools, and resources they need to protect themselves and their loved ones.”

The campaign will utilize various media channels, including digital, broadcast, and social media videos, as well as materials in English and Spanish. Posters, flyers, and banner ads will be distributed throughout San Luis Obispo County, with active engagement on social media platforms.

### Opinions Wanted, Parking Fees in SLO Meeting

Tired of spending quality shopping money or paying fees to work, let your voice be heard about parking rates in SLO.

The City of San Luis Obispo invites community

members to three upcoming opportunities for further public input on the recommendations that will be brought to City Council as part of the 2024 Parking Rate Study:

- Community Meeting – Parking Rate Study (In-Person)

April 4, from 6 – 8 p.m.

Ludwick Community Center, 864 Santa Rosa Street

- Community Meeting – Parking Rate Study (Virtual)

April 5 from 12 – 1:30 p.m.

Online via Zoom

- City Council Meeting – Study Session (In-Person)

April 16, at 5:30 p.m.

Council Chamber at City Hall, 990 Palm Street

Results from the previous community engagement efforts (including an online survey) will be presented during the meetings, and staff will ask for community input on draft recommendations for parking in downtown San Luis Obispo. Staff will incorporate community input into proposed solutions for the City Council’s consideration during a study session on April 16. Final solutions based on Council feedback and community input will be recommended to the City Council in a final 2024 Parking Rate Study report in June 2024.

### DUI Services Moving

The County of San Luis Obispo Behavioral Health Department announced a strategic transition in its Driving Under the Influence (DUI) Program Services.

With the aim of enhancing service delivery and expanding support options for individuals facing DUI-related challenges, the County will commence the transfer of its DUI program services to Kings View Behavioral Health Systems. Any community member seeking to enroll in a DUI program will do so by contacting the new provider: The Kings View DUI Program 2727 Buena Vista Drive, Ste 109 Paso Robles, CA 93446 805-475-8260.

The transition plan outlines a phased approach, with the County gradually reducing its provision of DUI services while facilitating a seamless transfer of clients to Kings View Behavioral Health Systems. By May 31, 2024, all DUI program services will be fully transitioned to Kings View Behavioral Health Systems.

“The Behavioral Health Department is committed to ensuring the welfare and continued support of all individuals enrolled in the DUI program,” said Dr. Star Graber, Behavioral Health Department Director. “By partnering with Kings View Behavioral Health Systems, clients will benefit from expanded resources and specialized care tailored to their needs.”

For further information or inquiries regarding the transition process, current clients are encouraged to contact their counselor or the County of San Luis Obispo’s DUI Program Office.

### Hospice SLO Seeks Sponsors for Walk for Healing Challenge

Hospice SLO County is seeking business and individual sponsors for its 4th Annual Walk for Healing fundraising event taking place April 29–June 9. The six-week virtual event coincides with Global Employee Health & Fitness Month, providing an excellent opportunity for businesses and individuals to invest in wellness while supporting compassionate end-of-life care in the community.

With sponsorship levels ranging from \$5,000 to \$500, the Walk for Healing challenge allows participants to log miles from walking, running, hiking, biking, swimming, or any preferred fitness activity. The goal is to collectively reach 25,000 miles and raise \$60,000 to fund Hospice SLO County’s volunteer support services.

“The Walk for Healing is a chance to prioritize your health and find healing through movement, all while ensuring those facing life-limiting illness or grief have access to our services,” said Shannon McOuat, Executive Director of Hospice SLO County. “We’re grateful for the sponsors who make this meaningful event possible each year.”

Hospice SLO County is a non-profit that provides compassionate non-medical hospice care, grief counseling, end-of-life resources, and volunteer support at no cost to clients or families. Sponsorship dollars allow the organization to recruit, train, and support volunteers who provide invaluable emotional, spiritual, and practical assistance.

All sponsors will receive promotional benefits based on their level. Registration for teams and individuals opens on April 15 at [www.hospiceslo.org/events](http://www.hospiceslo.org/events).

For more details on becoming a 2024 Walk for Healing sponsor, please contact June Mallory Aiello, Development Director, at [juneaiello@hospiceslo.org](mailto:juneaiello@hospiceslo.org) or (805) 544-2266.

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

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# News

## Wrong-Way Drunk Driver Gets Life

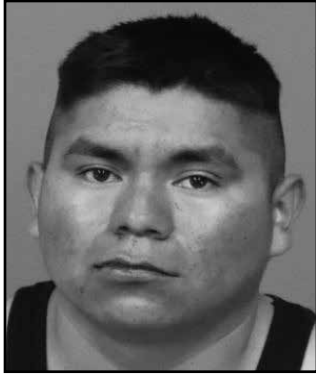
A wrong-way driver who pled "No Contest" in connection with a drunk driving accident that killed a 14-year-old boy and seriously injured two others has been given a life sentence for his crimes, the District Attorney's Office announced.

Earnesto Nava Herrera, 28, was sentenced to 6-years-8-months plus 15-years-to-life in State Prison for the series of crashes back on March 27, 2021.

He pled No Contest back in January to: second degree murder, gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated, hit and run causing death, driving under the influence of alcohol causing great bodily injury, and driving on a suspended license. He also pled to possession of child pornography that was discovered on his phone during the homicide investigation, the D.A. reported.

During a 3-week trial, jurors were told about the events of that fateful night. "Herrera," the news release said, "while driving heavily intoxicated, collided with 70-feet of metal pipe fencing and knocked over a tree. He fled in his vehicle and entered Highway 101 using the Tefft Street off-ramp [in Nipomo]."

He entered the highway using the off ramp, which put his vehicle heading into on-coming traffic. "While driving the wrong direction on the off-ramp," the release said, "Herrera nearly collided with a vehicle that was exiting the freeway. The vehicle was able to swerve to avoid a head on



Earnesto Nava Herrera

collision." The next car he came upon wasn't so lucky.

"Herrera continued to accelerate northbound on 101 against traffic when he crashed into the victim vehicle head on. The collision killed 14-year-old "J" and seriously injured two others in the victim vehicle."

But he wasn't done with this rampage. "Herrera fled on foot as his vehicle was disabled," the release said. "About an hour after the deadly crash, California Highway Patrol located Herrera, by using a helicopter with FLIR (forward facing infrared) technology. He was crawling near the freeway in an apparent attempt to avoid detection."

He was double drunk at the time of the crash. "Herrera had a blood alcohol level of .164, nearly 2 1/2 hours after the deadly crash." The legal limit to drive in California is 0.08% BAL. It was his second DUI in just a few months.

"On Dec. 31, 2020," the D.A. said, "just three months before the fatal collision, Herrera was arrested for DUI and was read the following admonition: 'Being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or both, impairs your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. Therefore, it is extremely dangerous to human life to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or both. If you continue to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or both, and as a result of that driving, someone is killed, you can be charged with murder.'"

At the sentencing hearing the 14-year old victim's mother provided a statement describing her son:

"My son... "J", was an only child, a miracle boy, and he had many dreams and aspirations. He was a very ambitious 14-year old, enjoyed soccer, and was an avid reader. He loved to travel and had been to Japan, Mexico, Costa Rica, and many states in the U.S., and he loved Disneyland.

"He was a pleasure to be around, and he was loved by many. He loved math, physics, and science. He was a 4.0 student and was en route to be valedictorian of his class. He aspired to be an engineer and hoped someday to be a Noble Prize winner.

"He loved sea otters, and he had a best friend, Oddy. He looked forward to Summer Christian Camp, and spending time with his cousins. He also enjoyed summer school and math enrichment, and spending time with his friends.

"J will be missed every day and remembered forever." Assistant D.A. Eric Dobroth empathized with her. "This is a terrible, yet completely avoidable tragedy," Dobroth said. "As this incident so heartbreakingly illustrates, driving while impaired puts every life on the roadway in peril. We will aggressively prosecute drunk or drugged drivers in our community and will charge murder when appropriate. We are hopeful that completion of the criminal case will provide family and friends the space necessary to begin healing."

The case was investigated by the Highway Patrol, with the from the D.A.'s Bureau of Investigation and was prosecuted by Dep. D.A. Melissa Chabra.

## Grant Award for New 'Jaws of Life'



The Morro Bay Fire Department received a sizable State grant breathing new life into its use of the Jaws of Life.

Fire Chief Daniel McCrain announced the award of a \$48,000 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, "to purchase new extrication equipment," reads the news release. The tool, known as the "Jaws of Life," is a heavy duty hydraulics powered tool used to take apart wrecked cars, prying open crashed car doors and collapsed roofs so rescuers can get to anyone trapped inside.

The tools have long been in use by fire departments the world over, and Morro Bay uses them often with local car crashes.

"This grant will have a significant impact on our ability to protect and serve our community," Chief McCrain said, "allowing us to respond even more effectively in times of crisis."

The money will buy equipment and help pay the training needed to use it effectively and sped up their efforts to save car crash victims.

"The goal of this program," Chief McCrain said, "is to reduce the time an accident victim is trapped in their vehicle, increasing the survivability for victims."

As a full service fire department, each crewmember is supposed to train with such tools and try to earn an engineer's certificate. All personnel are trained in emergency medical care, normally to full paramedic level. That way when they arrive, they can start working on patients immediately.

"Delays in providing care to crash victims," Chief McCrain said, "impact the 'golden hour' of survival, a care principle in the emergency medical services industry. Reducing the time it takes to get to the patient, treat what can be treated, and transport the patient to the hospital helps increase the chance for recovery."

The money came through the California Office of Traffic Safety, via the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. But the original source of all this money is fuel taxes paid by drivers at the gas pump.



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# News

## County to Buy Marine Terminal Lot

By Neil Farrell

County Supervisors will start the process to buy a large piece of the old Chevron Estero Marine Terminal, acquiring another piece of the land puzzle that separates Morro Bay and Cayucos on the map.

Supervisors approved a sale contract with the Cayucos Sanitary District to purchase a 17.36-acre parcel of the marine terminal property, which was in operations from 1929 to 1999, and piped in crude oil from oilfields in San Ardo and Kern County, uploading the product onto tanker ships (most notably the Chevron Louisiana). The marine terminal occupied over 600 acres in all, including the famed Dog Beach, the shore plant, hilltop tank farm and vast open spaces bordering North Morro Bay on the east, from Del Mar Park north.

As part of its project to construct its own sewer treatment and water recycling facility, the Sanitary District purchased several parcels from Chevron. This particular lot, described as APN 073-075-019, in the County report, was needed to run its wastewater discharge pipe through, which ultimately connected with one of the marine terminal's unused undersea oil loading lines, for an ocean outfall to dispose of unusable water from the new plant, which is located about a mile up Toro Creek Road from Hwy 1.

The San Luis Obispo County Land Conservancy has been negotiating with the Sanitary District for some time and finally agreed upon a price, \$1.22 million, all of which is coming from grants and donations.

The idea is to buy what is now largely grazing lands for cattle, "for the purpose of obtaining acreage for a park, coastal access, environmental conservation enhancement, and trail facilities connecting Morro Bay and Cayucos as identified in the County General Plan's Parks and Recreation Element," reads the report from staff. "This is a portion of a multi-year acquisition strategy to transition the bulk of the former Chevron shore plant and hill plant operational lands to San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation Department for operation as a park."

That \$1.22M might seem a low-ball valuation for 17-plus acres of almost beach-front property, but the County said they had it appraised. The price "is supported by a fair market evaluation determined by an independent real estate appraiser and confirmed by staff and contingent on a close of escrow no later than June 30, 2024," the report said.

The sale was negotiated between the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County and the Sanitary District, according to the County report with the intent to sign it over to SLO County Parks.

When the papers are signed, a clause in the terms will transfer ownership directly from the District to the County, even though more than two-thirds of the money was provided by the County Land Conservancy and the Cayucos Land Conservancy, providing \$650,000 and \$271,000 respectively. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) kicked in an additional \$300,000. The County Land Conservancy is coordinating the funding for the sale.

After the sale is final, the County parks plans to leave it in open space for the time being, with a pair of leases — one for grazing cattle and the other for housing, already on the site. "A residential lease agreement," the County report said, "will generate revenue to offset operational costs, and a grazing lease agreement will provide open space land management of the property. No General Fund support anticipated for the operation and management of the property."

With their vote, Supervisors set April 23 as the date for an official public hearing on the sale. If the proposition survives public scrutiny, and there is little reason to think it won't, then the property sale would move forward.

Previously, the dog-friendly beach below the plant was



acquired by the District and then turned over to the City of Morro Bay to manage. And a large parcel across Toro Creek Road from the Shore Plant, used to graze cattle and also containing a single home, was purchased and signed over to County Parks.

Perhaps the prize in all this acquisition of open space lands, besides putting Dog Beach into public hands, will be eventual acquisition of a valley that stretches from Morro Bay's Del Mar Park back into the wooded hills to the east.

It should be noted that acquiring this property is a long ways from developing a usable park, as any such development would have to undergo complete permitting process, including a full environmental review.



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## 35TH BAY-OSOS KIWANIS ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT

WHEN:

Saturday, March 30th 2024

WHERE:

Grassy area next to South Bay Community Center

TIMES:

10:00 am: FUN ACTIVITIES BEGIN

10:30 am: Contest Entries Due

Story Time with the Los Osos Library

11:00 am: **EGG HUNT BEGINS**



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1-4 5-7 8-10

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# Police Blotter



- **March 17:** Someone found something of some unknown value somewhere around Main and Morro Bay Boulevard. Police have it now.
- **March 17:** Police responded at 3 p.m. to a disturbance in the 400 block of MBB. Some mulish fool apparently violated a stay-the-hell away court order.
- **March 17:** Police responded at 2 p.m. to a burglary report at an office building in the 600 block of Harbor. Some sneak thief made off with radios and lanterns, in this week's example that people will steal anything.
- **March 17:** At 1 a.m. police were called to the 500 block of Mimosa for some stinky skink stinking up the place with his behavior. The 33-year-old snallygaster was nicked for a slew of evil deeds — intimidation, resisting arrest, and of course drunk & disorderly. He checked into the County B&B.
- **March 16:** Police responded to a disturbance in the 300 block of Kern. Logs said the apparent lady of the house, 65, "pushed her husband down the stairs causing injuries to CV's left forearm." A report was begun in case he misses the elevator again.
- **March 16:** Police responded to the 2600 block of Ironwood for a disturbed individual causing some sort of disturbance. Police disturbed County Mental Health about the incident.
- **March 16:** Police responded to a storage facility in the 900 block of Allesandro, where someone's buried treasures had been pirated by some scurvy dog.
- **March 16:** Someone found a duffle bag in the 1300 block of Main and gave it to police, there apparently being no one or nothing good inside.

- **March 16:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 8 a.m. in the 1700 block of Embarcadero. The 26-year-old apparent Swagman had an out-of-town warrant and was issued another to ignore and released.
- **March 15:** Police were called at 11:59 p.m. with a report of a vehicle stuck on the beach at the end of Atascadero Road. Apparently no vehicle was found, how high was the tide?
- **March 15:** Police responded at 5 p.m. to a car crash at Main and Morro Bay Boulevard. No word on the carnage.
- **March 15:** Someone parked in the 700 block of Embarcadero reported their license plate being stolen. Police called out the CSI Squad.
- **March 15:** Twice, suspicious bones were found in the Morro Creekbed at Lila Keiser Park. The first report was at 11:05 a.m. with a second report at 1:24 p.m.
- **March 15:** Police responded at noon to a traffic collision at Kern and Mesa, as the garage sale weekend traffic chaos apparently started early.
- **March 14:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 11:30 p.m. in the 700 block of Harbor. Logs indicated the night owl was arrested for suspicion of hootin' around in public while stoned on drugs, possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia. He crashed at the County detox center.
- **March 14:** Another parking lot demolition derby was reported at 8 p.m. in the 600 block of Quintana. No injuries reported.
- **March 14:** Police responded at 10 a.m. to the 1700 block of Embarcadero for a report of someone finding human remains on the beach. No crime was reported, but nobody deserves that.
- **March 14:** Police recorded a case of identity theft reported by some unknown citizen in the 800 block of MBB. No word on how much the scoundrels took from their mark.
- **March 14:** Someone found a car key in the 700 block of Harbor and left it with police to unlock the mystery.
- **March 14:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 6:46 a.m. in the 700 bloc of Harbor. Logs indicated the 39-year-old tragedy had a bench warrant, and was of course nicked after they allegedly found suspected illegal drugs and drug paraphernalia in his possession, it apparently being too early in the morning to already be stoned, too.
- **March 13:** Police towed away an offensive vehicle parked

- too long in the 700 block of Harbor.
- **March 13:** At 2:25 p.m. police contacted a suspicious woman, 47, at City Park in the 700 block of Harbor. Logs indicated the model citizen had four bench warrants. Officers issued a fifth disappearance ticket and master criminal was unloosed back onto the world.
- **March 13:** Some apparent chiseler passed a bad check in the 300 block of Morro Bay Blvd.
- **March 13:** Police hooked up another felonious fellow at 8:50 a.m. at City Park, who had a felony warrant. The 42-year-old gent was placed in the loving care of the screws at the County dungeon.
- **March 12:** Someone in the 900 block of the Boulevard said his or her vehicle got boosted.
- **March 12:** Police contacted a wanted dude at 5:19 p.m. in the 800 block of MBB. The 44-year-old scofflaw had one lousy warrant and police still took him to jail.
- **March 12:** Police espied some scruffy Philistine, 33, at 9:30 a.m. in the dunes at Coleman and Embarcadero. He also had just one warrant but was cited and released, apparently not worth the gas to haul to jail.
- **March 12:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at the suspect time 12:51 a.m. in the conspicuous area of Main and Surf. The 55-year-old woman driver was arrested for suspicion of possessing illegal drugs and paraphernalia and the unforgiveable crime of fake registration tags. She was whooshed off to the hoosegow.
- **March 11:** At 11:30 p.m. an officer walking the beat at City Park reported finding some undisclosed something.
- **March 11:** Hitting on a theme this week, police found yet another suspicious model citizen at City Park. The 56-year-old nodcock had an extraditable out-of-state felony warrant and got to visit the Parkinson Plaza before his trip back where he came from.
- **March 11:** At 1:30 p.m. police responded to the 700 block of Quintana where they ran some poor Nillionaire out of the Creekbed Estates and cited the nomad for trespassing on private property, now a hanging offense in these parts.
- **March 11:** Police contacted a suspicious woman, 39, at 9:30 a.m. in the 300 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated she was arrested for suspicion of possessing a glass crack pipe; a curious case given there's a smoke shop right there where you can legally buy a new one. This week's example of "Welcome to Califreakornia!"

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**Sheriff Increases Office Space**  
 By Neil Farrell

The County Sheriff's Department is increasing the amount of office space it's renting in south San Luis Obispo, space needed for its Support Services Department. Supervisors approved amending an existing lease with Walter Bros. Const., for office space in a complex at 3220 S. Higuera St.

The change would add some need space to a rapidly expanding division of the Sheriff's Department. "In the past 10 years," reads a report from the General Services Department, "the support services division of the Sheriff's Office has expanded significantly. With the increasing demands on civilian personnel, the need for more office space has also grown. Sheriff's support staff building has remained unchanged despite the rising number of staff members. Additionally, as the state imposed new requirements for jail facilities, grant funding has been allocated for staffing positions rather than office space."

Sheriff's spokesman Tony Cipolla was asked what Support Services does? "The Support Services Division of the Sheriff's Officer," he replied via email, "is made up of civilian employees whose function, as it's stated in the name, is to support the duties and responsibilities of our sworn personnel. This includes things like our IT department, background unit, crime prevention, crime lab, fiscal services, records & warrants, legal clerks, etc."

Last December, the Sheriff was notified of available space in the Walter Bros., building on South Higuera Street where it already had rented office space for Support Services.

The department has a specific use in mind for this

added room.

"This space," the report said, "will accommodate staff from our Background Unit, freeing up space in our current office on Kansas Avenue to accommodate Information Technology staff whose positions are grant-funded."

The amended lease will go up by over \$100,000 over the 4-year term, which goes from March 15, 2024 to March 2028.

The monthly lease payment for this part of the equation is \$1,900 and the Supervisors transferred over \$7,000 to cover the remainder of the fiscal year (until July 1), out of what must be a never-ending source of funds — the asset forfeiture monies obtained through the confiscation of ill-gotten gains.

The payments also include a 4% increase annually for inflation, so the first full year's rent would be \$24,046, rising to \$25,007, \$25,815 in 2026-27 and \$18,639 for the first 8-1/2 months of FY 2027-28. Grand total for this lease increase is \$100,584, according to the report.

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# Community

## A Surfing Send-off for Bro-Fro

Local surfers in Morro Bay gathered March 8 for a celebration of life and paddle out tribute to Richard Silverman, who died sometime before.

Silverman, or “Brother Frog” as he was known and as he called himself, died in January at age 81. Bro-Fro was a free-spirited fellow, a hermit really, who lived for many years in Morro Bay, at times in vehicles or the woods along Morro Creek, and then on a little boat out in Morro Bay Harbor.

He had a number of pet dogs who lived their entire lives alongside Bro-Fro, living free and getting along by the seat of his sagging pants, doing what it took to survive.

He was a talented artist and hand-painted surfing scenes, usually with a pretty girl on a long board, onto T-shirts that he sold down by the Rock out of an old van for a “\$20 donation.”

The Estero Bay Surf Club organized the March 8 paddle for Brother Frog, with wave riders from up and down the state drawn to town for the 31st Annual Big, Bad & Ugly Surf Contest that was held the next day at Morro Rock, a place where Brother Frog was a fixture.

The program for the Big Ugly contest had an article on Brother Frog, and we’ve gleaned tidbits from that unattributed article. Brother Frog came to town in the early 1990s at age 50 and immediately became a prominent figure on the waterfront and at Morro Rock.

“His connection with the locals, tourists, vagabonds,



Richard Silverman, better known to Morro Bay residents and visitors alike as Brother Frog, an artist, poet, story teller and free spirit who died in January at age 81. Photo courtesy EBSC



Photo shows the paddle out for Brother Frog on March 8, attended by local surfer bros of Bro-Fro, celebrating the colorful life of a free spirit with a water canon salute by the Harbor Patrol. Photo courtesy Susan Beauchemin

and castaways was unmatched; with a steady stream of poetry, artwork, games and one-liners, and wisdom to share. Bro Fro was one of a kind.”

On the club’s website, they posted a photo of the paddle out and ring of honor ceremony out in the bay by Target Rock. There were dozens of comments and blessings posted for Brother Frog, among them:

“Cemented in M.B. history! You are a legend Brother Frog! Thank you for sharing your kind soul with everyone. Aloha.”

“His T-shirts were my favorite!! Authentic art he would paint by hand, with love and sell for a \$20 donation. A legend in my eyes.”

And, “Our Brother from another mother will never be forgotten. RIP BROTHER FROG.”

This reporter met Brother Frog hanging out down by Morro Rock one day way back in the mid-1990s, when I was a waterfront beat reporter at the Sun Bulletin Newspaper.

He tried to sell me a T-shirt, and I would have bought it, but I had no money on me (common in those days).

In the early 2000s, after Duke Energy bought the power plant, they brought in the Conservation Corps kids to clear brush from the Morro Creek channel, and got a little too close to Bro-Fro’s secret camp nestled in the woods.

I was sitting outside the office having a smoke break, when he came storming up waving his arms, wild hair



The Morro Bay Harbor Patrol did a water canon salute and local surfers held a paddle out tribute for Richard Silverman, a.k.a. Brother Frog, who died in January at age 81. Photo courtesy EBSC

blowing in the wind, and started shouting, “They’re cuttin’ down the trees, man, the trees!”

I told him that I had heard the work crew discovered some bones in the woods and the coroner had determined they were ancient Indian remains, so they called in an archaeologist and...

He interrupted, “Nobody gives a damn about a bunch of old bones! They’re cuttin’ the trees, man! The treecees!”

I advised him to write a letter to the editor to complain publicly, which he did, by hand, with myself given the task of transcribing his scribbling. And we printed it in that week’s paper. He let Duke have it good.

When the copies hit the street, one of Duke Energy’s guys at the power plant emailed me and asked, “Ok, who the hell is Brother Frog?”

I explained the situation with cutting of the trees, and it wasn’t long after that, that Brother Frog moved out of the woods and onto a boat, “Native Dancer.”

He was a long-time live aboard on the bay, rowing a dinghy back and forth from shore to his boat moored off Tidelands Park, some senior dog faithful by his side.

Bro-Fro Continued on page 10

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# BAY

MAIN EVENTS AT THE BAY THEATRE

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UPCOMING MONDAY SPECIALS

<p>APRIL 1</p> <p><b>HUNDREDS OF BEAVERS</b> (2024) (NR) 1HR 48MIN 5:30 PM</p>	<p>APRIL 8</p> <p><b>IT'S A MAD MAD MAD MAD WORLD</b> (1963) (NR) 2HR 40MIN 5:30 PM</p>
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# Community

## Bargain-Hunter Heaven at Citywide Yard Sale



Story and Photos by Neil Farrell

Bargain hunters and collectors of rare — or not-so rare — items, were in seventh heaven March 16-17 for the 24th Annual Morro Bay Citywide Yard Sale.

With more than 100 garage sales spread from one end of town to the other all occurring at the same time, it was a wonderful bit of chaos with traffic, walkers, cyclists and lots of folks just out for a bit of fun on a beautiful St. Patrick's Day weekend.

And the variety of sales from tiny ones with just a few items put out, to massive, almost parking lot sized sales of some folks, who have clearly made re-selling a business. Items, especially clothing, were laid out on blankets or hung from store racks, spread across fold-up tables and sorted by type and price.

Some hunters — like this reporter and wife Lorraine — wisely make out a wish list of things they need, much as one goes to Spencer's Market with a shopping list. It helps



focus one's attention as you cruise the streets, eyeballing the sales.

This year I was primarily looking for a jigsaw and not much else. We of course came home with a car full of things, after Lorraine went through her list, plus the things, like an old rocking chair in need of repair, we just had to have.

The event is sponsored by Visit Morro Bay, the town tourism bureau, and draws thousands of bargain hunters every year.

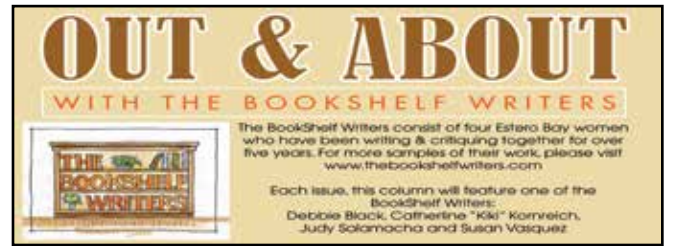
Morro Bay Beautiful originally started the Citywide Yard Sale, with help from the Chamber of Commerce and the City.

It was a hit from the beginning and has continued to grow in popularity every year. Next year will mark the 25th annual sale.

The sale corresponds with the garbage company's spring cleanup week, when Morro Bay customers can put out extra garbage bags for pickup on their regularly scheduled days. And the garbage company will also schedule to pick up big items like furniture for an additional fee.

It was started with the idea of having some fun and helping people relieve themselves of unused items, for as they say, one man's junk is another man's treasure.

In the photos are some of the sales and items on display for sale from Saturday's event (we didn't visit even half of the sales listed on the official maps).



## RV Camping in Your Own Backyard: Anza-Borrego Desert State Park



Metal sculptures at the Galleta Meadows Estate.

By Debbie Black

Camping at Anza-Borrego Desert State Park will change you. If you already love the high desert, it'll deepen your appreciation. If you're like me — a "redwoods, Rhododendrons and ferns" person — it will convert you.

There's a peacefulness, a simplicity, a quiet elegance, and orderly beauty about the desert. It's one of the most pure and natural places to witness Mother Nature's brilliant orchestration of adaptation, survival, color, and texture under a ceiling of wild lightning storms or a dazzling show of stars. I've come to love the desert, even though every plant could rip me apart!

In early February 2022, we tacked a week-long Anza-Borrego trip onto our week's stay at San Elijo State Park (Cardiff). I highly recommend this—the perfect experiences of ocean and desert back-to-back, as only California can provide. Interested in San Elijo? Read my article in Estero Bay News 2-1-24 issue.

From San Elijo, we took Hwy 78 through Julian (stopping for apple pie at Mom's Pies), then down Banner Grade into Anza-Borrego. The stark moonscape below morphed



Bro-Fro From page 9

He went through several dogs over the years, getting them from animal shelters and caring for them until they died of old age.

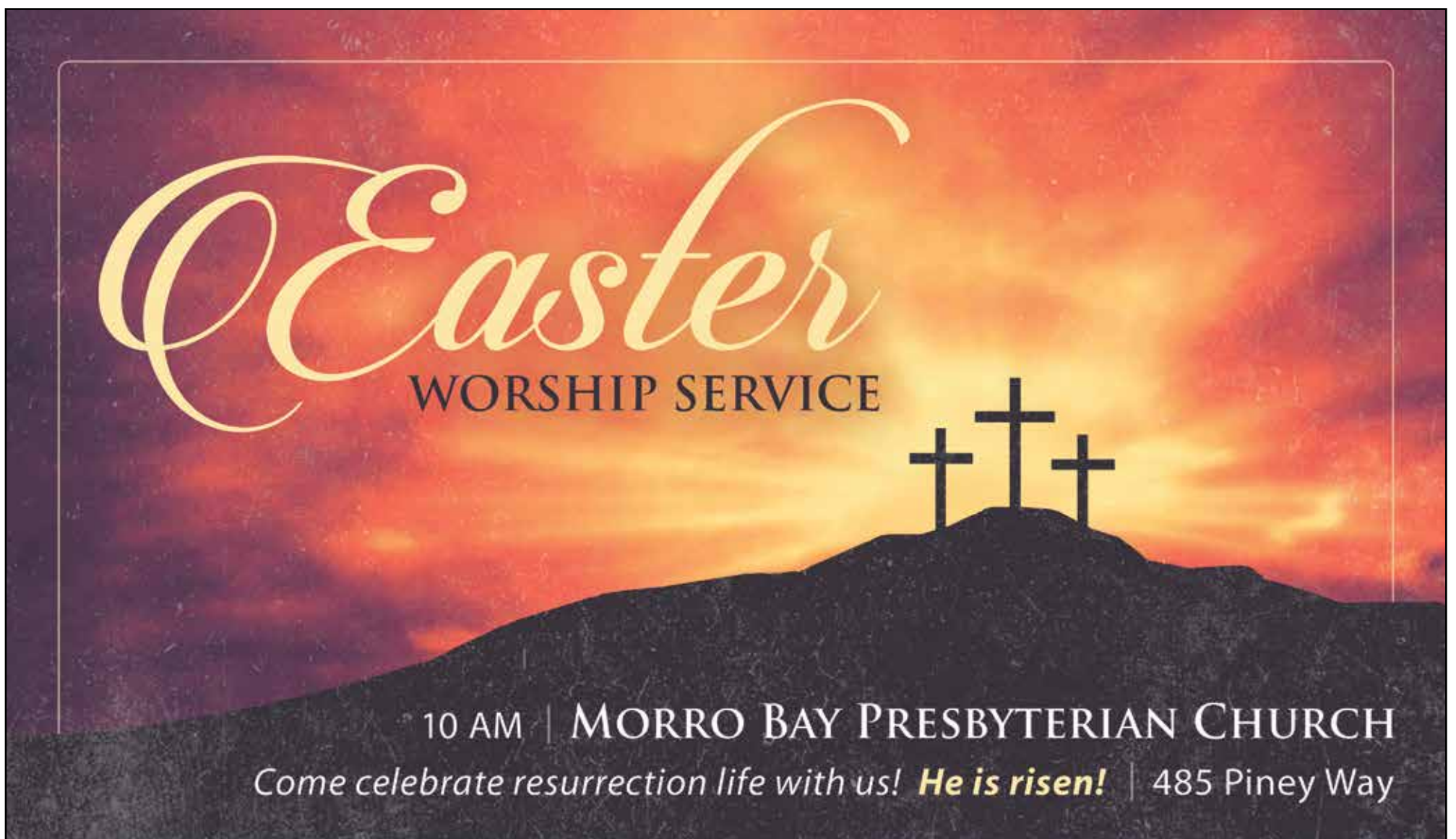
Brother Frog was born in New York on May 18, 1942, according to the surf club article, and raised on the music of the Beatniks.

Among the many chapters in his life, the article reports, was owning a health food store in Key West during the 1960s; owning a farm in Telluride, Colo., in the 1970s; and running an art supply store in San Francisco in the '80s. But he called Morro Bay home.

The article concludes with, "He was a staple in our

small coastal town and a strong part of making this town unique." And, "He lived life the way he wanted up until the very end. He lives on through his stories, quotes and most of all, his T-shirts."

Rest in peace Brother Frog — our brother from another mother. — Neil Farrell



# Community



The gently climbing Borrego Palm Canyon Trail rewards hikers with a beautiful oasis and babbling brook. Photo by Debbie Black

into beautiful desert—bright green lacy Palo Verde trees, fluffy Cholla looking like sweet white teddy bears with serious barbed spines, and flowering Ocotillo alongside fat barrel cacti. A world apart from San Elijo's marine environment—and equally beautiful. Driving to our campground was pure delight. This was going to be a good trip.

• **Camping:** There are two RV camping choices in Anza-Borrego—The Springs at Borrego RV Resort (upscale), or the state campground, Borrego Palm Canyon—where we stayed.

Borrego Palm Canyon has 52 full-hookup pull-through sites that are generous, level, and paved. Little to no shade. There are 68 dry-camping sites. Nice restrooms and showers (tokens). There's a dump station, water fill up, as well as spigots throughout. Maximum trailer/motorhome length is 35'.

Camping here is an "out in the desert" experience. It's VERY quiet. You'll see more stars than you thought imaginable, plus spectacular golden sunrises and red sunsets. Breezes pick up unexpectedly, so most people forego putting out tablecloths and are careful using their canopies.

• **Hiking:** From camp, hike the popular Borrego Palm Canyon Trail (3 mi round trip), a gentle climb to a palm oasis and babbling brook. Take water, hat, hiking poles, binos, and sunscreen. Watch for bighorn sheep. Or hike the Panoramic Overlook Trail (1 mi RT) or the paved trail to the Visitors Center (1.4-mile RT) which we walked every day with our dog, Chase. Dogs and bikes are allowed on this trail through desert flora and fauna with good informative interpretive signage.

The subterranean Visitors Center and surrounding garden of desert plants should be your first stop for info and self-guided tour maps. Pick up trail info from the knowledgeable rangers who can direct you to slot canyons, overlooks, the historic Southern Overland Trail, points of interest, etc.

• **Kids and Bikes:** Flat paved camp roads are good for kids. Instruct them about the dangers of walking "cross

country" through cholla, beavertail cactus, and ocotillo. Bring pliers just in case.

• **Dogs:** Leashed dogs are allowed on most roads in the entire park. No trails except the trail to the Visitors Center. Don't let your dog go offroad even a little! Watch where they pee. Everything in the desert has spines.

• **Metal Sculptures:** Don't miss this free adventure—drive the 22 mi round trip tour of 130 metal sculptures dotting the desert on the Galleta Meadows Estate. Plan 2-3 hours to enjoy giant serpents, T-Rex, mastodons, scorpions and more. Pick up a map at the Visitors Center.

On our last day, we drove out of Anza-Borrego via Road 22, taking our time, touring the metal sculptures and checking out other points of interest. Then we stopped at Salton Sea (227 ft below sea level) to walk along the crusty shell "beach" and peer into the yellow-green water at the amazing creatures surviving in the warm toxic waters.

That last night of our trip, we stayed at Indian Waters RV Resort to be near the Living Desert Zoo and Gardens in Palm Desert—our final adventure. If you haven't been there, please go. Plan at least 3 hours. You'll see wildlife and striking native plantings from Africa, Australia, and the Americas. Feed giraffes. Walk among wallabies. See rare rhinos and 500 other animals, birds, and reptiles. Get tickets ahead of time online.

• **Anza-Borrego Reservations:** Go to [www.reservecalifornia.com](http://www.reservecalifornia.com) to book your site for Oct-May. There's a rolling six-month window and this park fills up fast, so mark your calendar. What campsite is best? I'll share my campsite rating sheets for both San Elijo and Anza-Borrego at [www.debbienobleblack.com/rv-camping-in-your-own-backyard](http://www.debbienobleblack.com/rv-camping-in-your-own-backyard). Happy camping!

## Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

The American Association of University Women, Morro Bay Branch will meet on Saturday, April 13th at Saint Peter's Episcopal Church 545 Shasta, Morro Bay at 10 a.m. A representative from Master Gardeners will talk about their training, the basics of a successful garden and the importance of butterflies and bees to a healthy garden. Final details will be discussed on our Annual Garden Tour, April 28th. Everyone's welcome.

Join the Cayucos Library, located at 310 B St., for the following free events.

• **Pollinator Discussion:** Wednesday, April 24 at 10 a.m. Want to learn more about pollinators in SLO County? Join us at the library for an informative discussion with Master Gardeners of SLO!

• **Chair Yoga:** Every Tuesday at 11 a.m. A gentle mindful mobility practice for all skill levels.

• **Booked for Lunch:** Friday, April 12 at noon. A book discussion group where readers share any book they have enjoyed recently. New members are always welcome.

• **Read to Lily the Dog:** Wednesday, April 10 at 2 pm. Lily is a certified therapy dog who loves hearing all types of books. Children of all ages are welcome to read to her.



Get egg-cited for the Easter festivities in Cayucos! Join us on Saturday, March 30th, for the Cayucos PTA Easter Egg Hunt at Cayucos Elementary lower field! Enjoy games, prizes, and a surprise appearance by the Easter Bunny! Festivities start at 10 a.m., with the egg hunt at 11 a.m.. Kids under 5 will be able to hunt first. Remember to bring your own basket!

The Cal Poly Music Department presents an Open House Recital at 2 p.m. Saturday, April 13, in the Davidson Music Center (No. 45) on campus.

The recital is one of many scheduled events for Cal Poly's 31st annual Open House. Instrumentalists and vocalists will be featured. The student performers are from a variety of majors, and all are involved in at least one of the department's large, premier ensembles that include Cal Poly's Arab Music Ensemble, Choirs, Jazz Ensembles, Symphony, Wind Orchestra and Wind Ensemble.

The recital is free and open to the public; no tickets or advanced reservations are required. The event is sponsored by the Cal Poly's Music Department, College of Liberal Arts and Instructionally Related Activities program. For information on parking, visit Cal Poly's Open House website. For more information on the recital, call the Music Department at 805-756-2406.

Events Continued on page 12



**Discover the best of Morro Bay at our Spring Shop, Sip & Stroll events!**

Two evenings filled with tastings from local businesses, including food & beverages, along with a map and access to all locations, a wine glass and tote bag for your purchases!

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[www.morrochamber.org/3S](http://www.morrochamber.org/3S)

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April 12, 2024  
Embarcadero  
April 26, 2024



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**2023 COMMUNITY AWARDS NOMINATIONS ARE OPEN!**

Nominations are due by April 5th. The Annual Awards Gala will be on May 31st, 2024. Please read the criteria carefully before nominating. Nominate your favorite Business, Nonprofit, Citizen and Living Treasure by scanning the QR code or going to:

[www.morrochamber.org/community-awards](http://www.morrochamber.org/community-awards)




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11

# Community

Events From page 11

In celebration of PRIDE, The Bunker, SLO County Arts Council, and the Gala Pride & Diversity Center invite people of all ages to submit art inspired by their Story of Self for the Pride: "Who Am I?" art show. The exhibit will take place in June in celebration of Pride.

In 2023, The Pride Center & The Bunker produced the photographic exhibit "We Are Family" showcasing the diverse makeup of LGBTQ+ families living on the Central Coast. In 2024, they are seeking artists from the LGBTQ+ community working in two- and three-dimensional fine art media to express who they are. Focused on the artists' present Story of Self, "Who Am I?" allows room for artists to move outside of the labels that qualify them as members of queer spaces, and represent themselves fully, focusing on whichever aspects of themselves they are called to show in their artwork.

One work of art will be selected as the featured piece for the event. The selected piece will be featured on all promotional and marketing materials. The featured artist will receive a stipend and recognition at the opening reception.

Applications are due April 30. Get yours at <https://form.jotform.com/240635730227048>. Direct questions regarding this show, to Laura Albers at [slononprofit@gmail.com](mailto:slononprofit@gmail.com) or 805-457-3533.

The SLO County Citizens' Climate Education is partnering with the SLO County Library to bring an Electrify Your Life: At Home and on the Road event to Morro Bay on April 6 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Public Library, 625 Harbor Street. The Informative presentations will cover everything you need to know about California's transition to renewable energy and how you can be a part by electrifying home appliances and personal vehicles. The latest information on rebates, incentives and tax credits will also be shared, followed by ample time for questions and answers. Several electric vehicles will be showcased by their owners in the parking lot.

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

- Art Party - Wednesday, April 3, 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Unleash your creativity at our monthly art party! Use your imagination to make unique art pieces using paper, pens, pencils, scissors, glue and more. All materials provided - you bring the inspiration! Creative options available for ages 3-12.

- Ozobots - Wednesday, April 10, 3:00-5:00

Come to the library and write code to control a robot with just markers and paper!

- Sensory Playtime - Saturday, April 13, 10 - 11 a.m.

Let your little ones lead the way in this open-ended playtime! Babies and toddlers can use their five senses to explore our play stations. Parents & caregivers: we also have early literacy tips for you! For ages 0-5.

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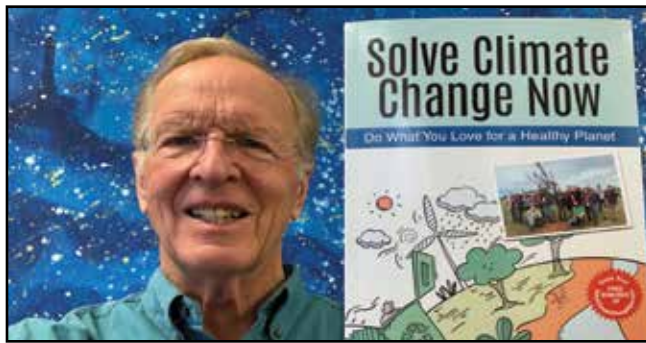
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Learn why you need to be part of the solution for climate change, and how you can enjoy doing it. See a first-hand report from author Don Maruska about the rapid changes happening in Antarctica and what's at stake for us living in the USA. Discover how Ian and Alicia Denchasy have made a comfortable, low-impact, low-cost home in Atascadero. Hear the story of how MJ Family Farms in Creston is using regenerative agriculture to draw CO2 out of the atmosphere and hold it in living soil that nurtures healthy food.

Benefit from free resources provided by Climate Fellows at Cal Poly and Cuesta to help you reduce your greenhouse gas emissions and even save some money.

The Climate Solutions Community Forum takes place April 6 from 2-4 p.m., in the meeting room at St. Benedict's Episcopal Church, Los Osos Valley Road and Clark Valley Road, Los Osos.

Sponsors include: Earthcare Team at St. Benedict's, ResilientSLO of SLO Climate Coalition, Rotary Club of Los Osos, People of Faith for Justice, Central Coast Center for Ecological Civilization, and Yes We Can Peace Builders.

SLO Skiers, a local, non-profit sports and social club for adults is having its next monthly meeting at Dairy Creek Golf Course Clubhouse in San Luis Obispo at 5:30 pm on Tuesday, April 2nd. Meetings are free and yearly membership is only \$65. Social hour from 5:30 to 6:30 pm. Meeting follows. Social and sports activities occur year around.

Take part in the exhibit: Inspired by a Master (note- inspired not copied)- Themed / Juried Show at Cambria Center for the Arts. Artists are invited to submit their paintings or three-dimensional art for inclusion. Photographic images of submitted art can be uploaded to the Cambria Center for the Arts (CCA) website at [www.cambriaarts.org/art-submittal-form](http://www.cambriaarts.org/art-submittal-form), from Tuesday, April 23 until Tuesday, April 30. For details regarding submission requirements, please see the CCA website, [www.cambriaarts.org](http://www.cambriaarts.org). Contact the gallery director for questions at [sheri.parisian@cambriaarts.org](mailto:sheri.parisian@cambriaarts.org).

The following are free events brought to you by the Los Osos Library 2075 Palisades, Ave, 805-528-1862.

- Featured Wall Artist: Ron Baers

- Display Case: Lego Creations by the Children of Los Osos - Come see the Legos created by the youth of Los Osos. As Legos are created, they will be displayed in the case. Come cheer them on!

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

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

- E-Device Class - Wednesdays, 9:15-10 a.m.

Bring your device in and Diana will do her best to answer any questions you have.

- Storytime - Thursdays, 10:30-11 a.m.

Stories, dance, and music for toddlers and preschoolers.

- Art Party - Friday, April 5, 2:30-4:30 p.m.

Unleash your creativity at our monthly art party! Use your imagination to make unique art pieces using paper, pens, pencils, scissors, glue and more. All materials provided - you bring the inspiration! Creative options available for ages 3-12!

- Messy Art Playtime - Saturday, April 6, 10:00-11:00

Encourage your child to get creative through painting and other messy art processes! Leave the clean-up to us. All materials will be provided. Wear clothes that can get messy!



## Crosswalk

Thursday, March 28, 4:00-8:00; Friday, March 29, 4:00-8:00

Saturday, March 30, 9:00-12:00

Crosswalk is composed of 14 interactive stations based on the gospel accounts of the events leading up to and including Jesus' death and resurrection.

This takes place outside and everyone can go through Crosswalk at their own pace.

## Good Friday Service: March 29 at 6pm

Join us for a very special service as we reflect upon God's love for us as demonstrated through His death on the cross.

## Easter Services: Sunday, March 31 at 9 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

Join us for a great day of worship as we celebrate Christ's resurrection. Continental breakfast goodies will be provided before and between services and an egg hunt for the children and lunch for everyone will take place immediately following the second service.



1480 Santa Ysabel Ave., Los Osos • 805-528-0391 • [elmorro.org](http://elmorro.org)

For ages 6 months and up.  
 • Dungeons & Dragons for Teens - Saturday, April 6, 2 - 4 p.m.  
 Teens and tweens: Local Dungeon Master John will take us on a voyage to The Enchanted Woods! You and your friends are attending a school for wizards, but on a field trip to the Enchanted Woods you get separated from your group! Work together with your friends, watch out for dangers, and get help from the forest's residents to get safely back to your class before night falls!  
 For ages 11-18. Space is limited so please register!  
 • Brain Education Series for Adults: Week 3 - Tuesday, April 9, 5:30-7 p.m.  
 Where are my Keys vs What are my Keys. Slowing down is normal as we age, but when do those changes become a concern? Learn the ten warning signs of dementia and techniques to approach a loved one with your concerns about their cognition.

Registration preferred. Walk-ins welcome. RSVP: Los Osos Library: 805-528-1862 or

Alzheimer's Association: 800-272-3900  
 Ozobots - Friday, April 12, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.  
 Come to the library and write code to control a robot with just markers and paper! For ages 8-18.

• Visible Mending - Saturday, April 13, 10 - 11 a.m.  
 Do you have a piece of clothing that has a small hole or stain? Come learn how to fix it and make it beautiful again! We will be learning a few different techniques to patch our clothing as well as add beauty to it. Supplies will be provided, just bring your clothing item. Adult

• Book Discussion - Thursday, April 18, 5:30-6:45  
 "Horse" by Geraldine Brooks. No need to sign up ahead of time. Just show up! Call the library for details.

• • •

Calling all swimmers! Whether you're just learning to dip your toes in the water or have enjoyed swimming for years, the SLO Swim Center has swim lessons and family recreation swim opportunities for you! Swim lessons for all ages begin in June. Learn to get comfortable with the water, increase water safety skill basics, or sign up for higher-level sessions to learn freestyle, breaststroke, backstroke, or butterfly. There are also Baby-and-me sessions and beginner swim lessons. Classes fill up quickly so be sure to register on April 8 at 9 a.m. at <https://bit.ly/4au3eDL>.

• • •

Zion Lutheran Church will sponsor a free concert by internationally known Ekaterina (Katia) Poritzko, a German organist, conductor, cembalist, pianist, carillonneur and musicologist, on Friday, April 5. She will perform works by J.S. Bach, Friedrich Mendelssohn, and her own improvisations. The focus of her work is to convey culture in public spaces, and to ensure tolerance and international understanding through international projects.

The concert will begin at 6 p.m. in the church sanctuary, located at 1010 E. Foothill Blvd., San Luis Obispo. There will be a free will offering opportunity, but no tickets are needed.

• • •



Cal Poly Student Opera Theatre presents "Spring Opera Scenes" at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, April 13, in the Spanos Theatre on campus. The program features a pastiche of opera favorites as well as lesser-known pieces sung in English, French, German and Italian, with English supertitles.

The popular, commonly performed opera selections are from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "Don Giovanni" and "The Magic Flute" and Franz Lehár's "The Merry Widow." The audience will also get to hear lesser-known works including Claudio Monteverdi's "L'incoronazione di Poppea (The Coronation of Poppea)," Carl Maria von Weber's "Der Freischütz (The Marksman)," Giacomo Puccini's "La rondine (The Swallow)," Leonard Bernstein's "Candide," Mozart's "La clemenza di Tito (The Clemency of Titus)" and Jacques Offenbach's "La Périchole (The Street Singer)."

More than 50 Cal Poly students are participating in the production, onstage and behind the scenes. In addition to the opera singers, the program will feature singing by members of the Cal Poly Chamber Choir, choreography by Theatre and Dance Department students, and some artwork produced by student artists.

Tickets are \$20 for the public and \$10 for students and 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).

• • •

Send your event listing at least three weeks in advance to [Editor@EsteroBayNews.com](mailto: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.

## Takin' Care of BUSINESS

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

### Join Central Coast State Parks Association Board

Are you looking to support San Luis Obispo's State Parks in a meaningful way?

The Central Coast State Parks Association (CCSPA) is looking for board members! CCSPA has supported San Luis Obispo County's State Parks for nearly 50 years, and are looking for like-minded individuals to continue the legacy of environmental stewardship on the Central Coast.

As a board member of CCSPA, folks are asked to make the following commitments:

- Serve a full term (2 years)
- Attend meetings as scheduled
- Support and assist staff in fundraising efforts
- Attend CCSPA sponsored events
- Assist in recruitment of new members, donors and sponsors
- Provide budget and financial oversight

Find the informational packet at [centralcoastparks.org/board-service/](http://centralcoastparks.org/board-service/). For any questions or concerns, contact Executive Director Sierra Emrick at [sierra@centralcoastparks.org](mailto:sierra@centralcoastparks.org) or (805) 548-0391.

### Poly Announces New Lynda and Stewart Resnick Center

Cal Poly today announced plans for the Lynda and Stewart Resnick Student Success Center, a new facility aimed at expanding the career and personal development opportunities available to students.

Named after philanthropists and entrepreneurs Lynda and Stewart Resnick, co-founders of The Wonderful Company, the center honors their \$20 million lead gift supporting the facility and their long-standing commitment for quality education.

The Resnicks' philanthropy includes historic gifts to

Takin' Care of Business Continued on page 14

**395 La Jolla St, Morro Bay, \$769,000**  
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**260 N Ocean Ave, Cayucos, \$1,575,000**  
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**777 N Ocean Ave, Cayucos, \$2,900,000**  
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# Community

Takin' Care of Business From page 13

local institutions, including Caltech, UC Davis, and Fresno State, among others. They've focused transformational efforts in California's Central Valley, where they support paradigm-changing work in education, community engagement, and health and wellness.

The 25,000 square-foot Lynda and Stewart Resnick Student Success Center will feature a professional development center for career services, programs that support Cal Poly's growing numbers of first-generation students, and student diversity and belonging cultural centers.

"We have worked closely with Cal Poly for over 20 years through our Wonderful Scholars program and know it to be a tremendous educational environment that we are proud to continue to support," said the Resnicks. "This program will ensure first-generation students have access to the resources, collaboration and learning tools to help empower them to build successful lives and careers and make meaningful contributions to the world."

The Student Success Center will provide space for more student advisors, along with three times the office, counselor and professional recruiting space for Career Services, and Student Diversity and Belonging cultural centers.

The Resnicks are already stalwart supporters of student success at Cal Poly through their College Success Scholar Program. Created and funded by the Resnicks, this flagship program currently provides scholarships up to \$30,000 for 82 Cal Poly students from the Central Valley and helps them prepare for, pay for, and persist through college.

The Wonderful Company is a privately held \$6 billion global company dedicated to harvesting health and happiness around the world. Its iconic brands include FIJI Water, POM Wonderful, Wonderful Pistachios, JUSTIN, Landmark and Lewis Cellars® wines. To learn more about The Wonderful Company, visit [www.wonderful.com](http://www.wonderful.com). To learn more about their Corporate Social Responsibility, visit <https://csr.wonderful.com/>.

*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](mailto:Editor@EsteroBayNews.com).*

## In Print and Online



[esterobaynews.com](http://esterobaynews.com)

## Cambria Scarecrow mixer

The Cambria Scarecrow Committee recently hosted a chamber mixer and open house.

The Scarecrow Festival takes place every year in October, and this gathering helped to show people what goes on the rest of the year. Visitors saw "Doctor Crow" where previous scarecrows are fixed up, tweaked, and have their costumes changed. Everyone also saw the space where all the scarecrows are kept safe and sound until the following year.

Lorienne Schwenk, executive director for the Chamber, greeted the crowd of about 50 people and also introduced Tricia Congdon, one of the newest Chamber members. Those in attendance included Chamber members who got to "mix," and members of the community who are interested in the Scarecrows.

During the mixer, Jim Chalifoux entertained everybody with his guitar and ukelele. The Spot restaurant generously donated food. Harmony Cellars kindly donated wines.

Interested in making a scarecrow or getting involved with the festival? Visit [cambriascarecrows.com/volunteer](http://cambriascarecrows.com/volunteer).



## COLLEGETOWN

By Michael Walker



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501 Harbor Street  
Morro Bay, CA 93442  
(805) 772-6188



**Jennifer L. Redman**  
Financial Advisor  
1085 Kennedy Way  
Morro Bay, CA 93442  
(805) 772-7938

### Cayucos



**Alex Schams**  
Financial Advisor  
241 S. Ocean Ave  
Cayucos, CA 93430  
(805) 995-2110



**Luke Munds**  
Financial Advisor  
241 S. Ocean Ave  
Cayucos, CA 93430  
(805) 995-2110



**Jonathan Mumper**  
Financial Advisor  
1073 Main Street  
Cambria, CA 93428  
(805) 927-1343



**Sandy Cha Mumper**  
Financial Advisor  
1073 Main Street  
Cambria, CA 93428  
(805) 927-1343

### Cambria

# Sports

## Six Honored as Athletes of the Month

By Neil Farrell

Each month, the Athletic Boosters of Morro Bay High School celebrates some of the amazing students/athletes that are representing Morro Bay High School.

The Morro Bay High Booster's Club is honoring six Pirate athletes with Athlete of the Month Honors for March 2024.

This month's honorees are: girls beach volleyball players Keolani Cross and Jane Taylor; track and field athletes Nami Hoag and Luca Macari; girls swimmer Tessa Standridge; and boys golf player, Jonas Smith.



Keolani Cross and Jane Taylor were named Athlete of the month for the girls' beach volleyball team.

### Girls Sand Volleyball

Beach Volleyball Coach, Kate Yarbrough, named Cross and Taylor as her team's Athletes of the Month.

Both young women demonstrate on and off the court their commitment to individual and team improvement, Coach Yarbrough said, not only in their physical skills but their mature personalities and welcoming, encouraging attitudes.

"Keolani asks all the right questions and takes in every bit of coaching and turns it rapidly into results," Coach Yarbrough said. "She is the player always asking for more — more repetitions, more workouts, more feedback, more anything to get better, and motivates her peers to work harder by setting that example.

"Though just a sophomore, Cross is showing a lot of leadership. "She takes pleasure in helping less experienced players grow their game and grow our program," the coach said, "and shows up every day with a smile and exceptional work ethic. She is one of the most elite athletes in our program and is crucial in adding wins to our record, but more importantly adds wisdom, kindness, and demonstrates in all her actions what it means to be a team player. All teams should be so fortunate to have an athlete like Keolani in their program."

Taylor shows a lot of maturity for such a young age. "Jane gives and takes advice at a maturity level far beyond her years," Coach Yarbrough said. "She is able to discuss

her game at a deeply intellectual level and has the physical capabilities to back it up in action."

Taylor's a force in the huddle. "In team huddles," the coach said, "she always notices the little details about her own performance and that of her teammates, and she has become most trusted by her peers to say something positive, encouraging, honest, and helpful. Jane is the leader in communication in our program, both during rallies, giving feedback during practices, and liaising between her fellow teammates and coaches."

Already a great athlete, Taylor shows signs of continued growth. "Her incredible athleticism is only made stronger by the fact that her improvement is continuous and completely self-driven," Coach Yarbrough said. "Jane is the kind of athlete all coaches want to have as a leader in their program."



Nami Hoag and Luca Macari were named Athletes of the Month in track and field.

### Track & Field

Coach Jennifer Frere named Hoag and Macari as her Athletes of the Month. "Nami Hoag is a senior leader and sets an example for our younger athletes," Coach Frere said. "He motivates others to do their best. He tries new events and is always looking for ways to improve. He is setting new personal records and has his sights set on success at CIF."

Macari always gives his best effort. "He is on time to practice everyday and shows up ready to work," Coach Frere said. "He is willing to try new events and is a team player. Luca is consistently improving as a result."

### Girls Swimming

Girl's Swim Team Coach Laure Carpenter, praised her Athlete of the Month, Standridge for a great comeback from injury.

"After missing out on competing due to an injury last season, Tessa is back and full of fierce energy this season," said Coach Carpenter. "As our team's leading breaststroker, she shows excellence in many areas: acting as one of our upperclassmen role models, moving as a force in the weight room, and maintaining a consistent drive to improve in the pool."

Standridge strives to get better all the time. "She is always looking for ways to refine her talents," Coach Carpenter said, "and is not one to shy away from a challenge. She is a multi-faceted, multi-sport athlete who completes our team in the best way, and she also has the ability to make anyone on the team laugh or smile. I'm proud to be her coach!"

### Boys Golf

Boys' Golf Coach Sean Allstot said Smith recently played scratch golf — shooting an impressive, even par, 72, in the opening league tournament. "This score led the tournament and anchored MBHS to the team victory!" he said.

Estero Bay News congratulates all the Student Athletes of the Month for March 2024. Go Pirates!

## A Dose of Good Dogma



### We're Just Playing!

By Lisa Ellman

Your dog thinks differently than you. It's why when you've been gone five minutes, they think it's five days, and when you've been gone five days, they think it's five days. As much as we consider them our four-legged children, they don't have brains that work like ours. I like to emphasize to my clients that they need to use dog brain when working with their dogs, not human brain. One of the ways I notice people using human brain is when their dog is playing with another dog. Unless you have a dog that hasn't been socialized with other dogs, your dog knows how to play with other dogs. They learn this at a very young age, usually with their littermates and mama dog.

Many times, I observe dog owners trying to teach their dog what is appropriate play with other dogs. This is unachievable for two reasons. The first is, again, they are using human brain, and second only another dog can teach another dog what acceptable play is, by playing!

It's like the humping thing (which I won't go into here), only the "humpee" can tell your dog to stop. If the human (repeatedly) goes and pulls the humper dog off, it just goes right back.

Why people try to prevent their dogs from playing like dogs, I don't understand. Especially young dogs who are still learning the rules and boundaries of play. The perspective I want dog owners to realize is that when dogs play, they are playing with dog brains. Sometimes their play is like how children play; they vocalize, they run and chase, but sometimes, it's not. Often, dog play looks rough and sounds too scary for us to feel comfortable with. This is almost always normal dog play. They body slam, they growl

Dogma Continued on page 16



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# Letters To The Editor



## Claims of Wanting Public Feedback Ring False

Recently KSBY reported on REACT Alliance's very successful Save Our Seas event in Morro Bay. In response to an inquiry on the story from KSBY, Equinor, one of the three offshore wind lease holders, was quoted as saying, "We look forward to meeting community members and to gathering more feedback, exchanging ideas and addressing concerns over the coming years as we build Atlas Wind with an emphasis on safety, community input, and bringing significant benefits to our host communities." There are some real issues with this statement and significant inconsistencies between their recent actions and their claims to be interested in public feedback.

First, we would like to point out a common device used by the wind companies to manipulate the public without most of us realizing we are being spun...it's called the assumptive close and it was used in this PR release very effectively. Notice they refer to the Atlas (yes, a new name) wind project as a fait de complis... a done deal as it were. Let's be incredibly clear on this point; the PROPOSED project is precisely that. It is not a "done deal" as they and many of

our local politicians including Laird, Carbajal, Addis, and Gibson would have you believe and have mistakenly stated in public. The permitting process is just beginning and would take years for this ill-conceived project to successfully pass through the regulatory and public opinion gauntlet.

Next on the list is Equinor/Atlas Wind's claim to be interested and concerned with "meeting community members and gathering more feedback". They have proven themselves to be otherwise. For the last couple of years, the public has been treated to numerous "dog and pony" shows in an effort to convince the public that offshore wind would have no negative impacts to our environment, our lifestyles and our economy. Public participation was not encouraged and on several occasions was disallowed. But here's the kicker and proof of their disingenuous claims: In a 10-day period from February 27th to March 7, the wind companies canceled three public engagement opportunities when they became aware of community action that would question their claims and put them on the spot publicly and idealistically.

There will be no long-term benefits to our communities as they claim. There will be no real interest in public feedback. Finally, the claims of concern for safety are disingenuous and are clearly displayed in communities where the wind industry has already taken hold and is negatively impacting the local marine environment and related economies.

We at REACT Alliance ask the public to think for yourselves, get the facts and recognize a big industry's attempts to manipulate the public. Let's protect our beautiful Central Coast both now and into the future.

Mandy Davis  
President, REACT Alliance  
reactalliance.org

## Bears in Los Osos

Grizzly bears are going to be reintroduced back into Los Osos. During early California, Grizzly bears were common in Los Osos. Spanish soldiers were very cruel to them and they are all gone now. The bears that are coming are actually Polar Bears. They are endangered because their habitat is melting due to global warming. They should be happy in Los Osos and we hope they will not be discriminated against just because they are white. I wish everyone a happy April 1st, my birthday.

Gary Dove  
Los Osos

## Assemblymembers Letter to Utilities Commission to Prevent Rate Hikes

We are writing to urge the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to reject the Proposed Decision on Application 23-06-008, which would grant Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (PG&E) request for interim rate relief and allow them to recover an additional \$516 million from ratepayers.

In November, the CPUC approved PG&E's 2023-2026 General Rate Case (GRC), which allowed the utility to begin charging 13% more for power at the beginning of this year. This is expected to cost the average family \$34.50 more per month, or \$414 more per year. Combined with the increasing cost of living in the state, many California ratepayers are struggling to afford this additional burden on their monthly budget.

Now, only a few months later, PG&E is seeking to recover millions more from taxpayers by raising rates once again. If the proposed decision is approved, electric bills are expected to increase an additional \$15 per month for the average customer. On top of these requests, PG&E is expected to seek to increase rates even further in the coming months, with more requests to recover costs from ratepayers pending before the commission.

This situation is untenable for many of PG&E's residential customers, who have seen rates balloon by over 80% over the last three years, making PG&E the most expensive power provider in the state. Although some of the utility's lowest-income customers may be able to access discounts, skyrocketing rates have made electric bills burdensome for customers of all income brackets, including middle class customers who will receive no rate relief.

PG&E's move to recover millions more dollars from

### Dogma From page 15

and bark, they hump and jump on each other. All expected and common play behaviors. This is certainly not to say that an Italian Greyhound, with such delicate bones, should be playing rough with a large doodle, but for dogs that are evenly matched in size and play style. These actions often make humans very nervous, because they think it's aggressive behavior, and they call their dogs off. This is where trouble can manifest. If dogs can't learn appropriate actions and responses from visual and auditory cues from another dog, it leaves them vulnerable to a fight. For example, your dog is playing too rough with another dog, the other dog is baring its teeth and barking at your dog to get away (it's scared). A human steps in and admonishes the scared dog because they think it's being aggressive. Now the frightened dog is afraid to communicate to the next dog, "Get away from me," because the owner will step in, possibly with an

angry grab. Two things have happened here. The scared dog no longer gives "go away" cues to the other dog, and the other dog hasn't learned what the "go away" cues are. Playing with and learning from other dogs provides social skills dogs can transfer when meeting new dogs; thinking about and processing the cues and signals the other dog is giving

As a trainer, when I see people calling their dogs out of play because they think that they're doing something wrong, it makes me sad. They say to their dogs, "Play nice," as if the dog knows what that means and how to do it. Again, human brain. Supervise your dog's play with other socialized dogs, but don't prevent them from learning.

Good Dogma has been training humans and their dogs since 1996. Readers are invited to submit questions to [gooddogma@hotmail.com](mailto:gooddogma@hotmail.com). Contact information for all offered services can be found on our website [www.GoodDogma.net](http://www.GoodDogma.net)

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# News

ratepayers is particularly troubling in light of the fact that the utility recently announced \$2.2 billion in profits in 2023, an increase of nearly 25% from 2022. The company also resumed issuing stockholder dividends this year.

California ratepayers are already grappling with some of the highest electricity rates in the nation. It is unconscionable for PG&E to place this additional burden on their ratepayers when they are touting billions of dollars in profits and issuing dividends that will line the pockets of their shareholders. PG&E shareholders should not be making a profit at the expense of hardworking Californians.

As California's regulator of investor-owned utilities, it is imperative that the CPUC protect the interest of the state's consumers and ensure that electricity rates are affordable for all Californians. We therefore urge the commission to reject PG&E's unreasonable request to recover millions more dollars from ratepayers.

*Dawn Addis  
Assemblymember, 30th District  
Al Muratsuchi  
Assemblymember, 66th District  
Damon Connolly  
Assemblymember, 12th District  
Gil Pellerin  
Assemblymember, 28th District  
Scott Weiner  
Senator, 11th District  
Rebecca Bauer-Kaban  
Assemblymember, 16th District*

## Viewpoint

BY Gail Johnson, Morro Bay

I would like to point out some fundamental inaccuracies in Mr. Farrell's article in the March 14 issue: "BESS EIR Draft Released".

Mr. Farrell states: "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." True, BESS would be the largest in the world. Correction: it

would be housed in three buildings at 91,000 square feet EACH, totaling 270,000 square feet. In addition, each building will be surrounded by 80 "Power Conversion Systems" the size of a 10'x30' mobile home, adding 54,000 square feet to the total. The buildings will be over 35' tall with an additional 6-10' roof-top equipment screen. To describe this as a "2-story building" is misleading, at best. A typical two-story building is anywhere from 18'-30' high, depending on the style and roof detail. These imposing structures will be similar in size and scale to a Home Depot warehouse. Various other features planned include substations, transmission lines and support structures.

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) is a 411-page document, overwhelming at first, but written so that anyone can plow through it with a little motivation. It is a searchable document that can be found on the City's website. If there is a feature of our lovely town that you especially appreciate, look for it in the DEIR and study what's been written. If it says there is little or "less than significant" impact, be suspicious. Be aware of errors by omission, also.

The DEIR is called a "Draft" because it will be rewritten to address every comment that is received before May 28. The final EIR must address every written concern. The more detailed, fact-based, and scientific comment you make the better. It is perfectly okay to write what you think, what you feel, and how living next to a giant Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) will affect you and your family. Even if you do not live in Morro Bay, you may make your concerns known. If you would like help writing your comment, post your request on NextDoor and someone will reach out to you.

I think we should all keep in mind that, although "commissioned" by the City of Morro Bay, the Draft EIR was paid for by Vistra and written to their advantage. It should be an unbiased report, but it is not. If read as a complicated murder mystery, the DEIR offers endless nuggets of revealing information. When all of the dots are connected a picture of Vistra's motivations emerge. Consider this doozy:

Whether we love or hate the old Power Plant building and the stacks, they are NOT official historical resources.

The DEIR suggests that they might be eligible "for the National Register of Historic Places and California Register of Historical Resources." Maybe so, but they are not currently protected by any "landmark" designation. Over years much discussion has ensued about removing them and remediating the ground on which they stand. Who benefits most if these are protected as (or even suggested to be) National Landmarks and not allowed to be destroyed? This would save Vistra at least \$3 million out the gate.

Don't be fooled by pretty pictures and misleading descriptions. Vistra's PR (propaganda) campaign is just beginning. They will be writing press releases with glowing descriptions of a harmless, attractive, benign facility that will give Morro Bay "bragging rights in the green energy revolution." You will be receiving mailings and see television and social media advertisements about the endless benefits of allowing them to develop their BESS here. The community will be bombarded with "mitigation" offers, money in other words. They are already touting themselves as good neighbors. (If you believe that, we have a bridge to sell you!)

Mr. Farrell also notes that Morro Bay will consider adopting a "Power Plant Master Plan" for the portions of the Vistra property that are not dominated by BESS and/or the old power plant. That Master Plan assumes that BESS will be built. A meeting scheduled for March 27 that would offer the community an opportunity to input their thoughts about how the property adjacent to BESS be best utilized was postponed. Personally, I cannot visualize any use compatible with a potentially deadly and unsightly industrial facility. The only conceivable solution is to stop BESS from being built.

The power plant property is not zoned to allow BESS or any other industrial use. The citizens of Morro Bay have an opportunity to make their opinions known by voting YES on Measure A-24 in November. Thank you, Mr. Farrell, for noting that "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."

Proponents of BESS and Vistra site SB 205 as the mechanism that corporations can use to revive locally-defeated renewable energy projects. Actually, because 1290 Embarcadero is within the Coastal Zone, the California Coastal Commission will have the final decision if Vistra chooses to take their doomed proposal that far.

Educate yourselves. Question everything that you see and hear regarding Vistra and BESS. Attend City Council and City Planning meetings. Write letters. Comment on the DEIR. Make your opinions known. Your devotion to Morro Bay will pay off in spades.

## The Monster Among Us

There is a monster loose on our Central Coast. Yes, there is a very real monster lurking in the shadows of our coastal community. It feeds on fear. It enters the brain

Letters Continued on page 19

# Spring Cleaning Specials

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# Community

## Honoring the 50th Anniversary of the End Vietnam War

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On March 29, the nation recognizes National Vietnam War Veterans Day on the 50th anniversary of the date the last combat troops left South Vietnam. We honor Vietnam Veterans and their families for their service and remember the men and women who put the lives of others ahead of their own to serve during one of America's longest foreign wars.

"This 50th anniversary, remember to thank your family members, friends, and neighbors who served in the Vietnam War," reads a news release from Central Coast Vietnam War Veterans. "In line with honoring our Vietnam veterans, we invite local Vietnam era veterans to a special

coffee meetup at the San Luis Obispo Veterans Center on March 29th. Join together for a morning of camaraderie, conversation, and reflection."

### Event Details:

Central Coast Vietnam War Veteran Coffee Meet-up Friday, March 29th 10:00 am - 12:00 pm SLO Vets Hall 801 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo \*Entrance doors at the front of the brick building facing Grand Ave

- Event Agenda:
- 10 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.: Coffee, conversation, photo portraits
  - 10:30 am - 11 a.m.: Guest presenters (Vietnam veterans)
  - 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.: Comradery and conversation \*Depending on how many attend possibly a round table roll call following the guest speakers, with each veteran stating their name and branch/years served.

This event is exclusively for Vietnam War veterans. Please RSVP by filling out a short form at <https://form.jotform.com/231577922448162> to confirm your attendance.

## Sugaray Rayford, Saturday, March 30



The San Luis Obispo Blues Society presents Sugaray Rayford on Saturday, March 30 at 7 p.m. at the SLO County Vets Hall (801 Grand Avenue, SLO). Sugaray Rayford performs with a big seven piece horn driven band. It takes a band that big to provide the power to match Sugar's voice.

Rayford's album Somebody Save Me (2019) was nominated for a Grammy Award in the Best Contemporary Blues Album category. In 2020, Rayford was presented with two Blues Music Awards for B.B King Entertainer of the Year and Soul Blues Male Artist of the Year. His latest release, In Too Deep (2022), won the Blues Music Awards Best Soul Blues Album of the Year.

Local favorites, Blues Asylum will open the show. Advance tickets are \$32 at [my805tix.com/e/sugaray-rayford](http://my805tix.com/e/sugaray-rayford). Tickets at the door on the night of the show are \$40. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., music at 7: p.m. 21 and over.

## Poly Earns STARS Gold Rating for Sustainability Achievements

Cal Poly has earned a STARS Gold rating from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) in recognition of its sustainability achievements.

STARS, the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System, measures and encourages sustainability in all aspects of higher education. Cal Poly adopted the AASHE STARS in March 2016 as a framework for implementation, measurement and improvement of sustainable practices.

With a score of 75.14% in 2023, Cal Poly is now the third highest-ranked campus in the 23-campus California State University system. The score marks a significant improvement over Cal Poly's 70.16% score in 2019. The report is completed every three years.

"Cal Poly is committed to leadership in sustainability in both the academic and operations side of campus," said Chad Worth, Energy and Sustainability manager at Cal Poly.

Since 2019, the university has made significant progress, including:

- Integrating sustainability strategies throughout the 2035 Campus Master Plan.
- Completing a comprehensive Utility Master Plan (with a strong focus on carbon reduction and electrification strategies).
- Updating the campus Climate Action Plan to accelerate the path to carbon neutrality.
- Updating greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory showing campus has reduced total GHG's from buildings and transportation by more than 14% since 1990 (despite campus more than doubling its building square footage and on-campus residency over that time).
- Completing a 430-kilowatt solar power system at the yak-it-ut-u student housing complex.

- Creating a High-Performance Buildings policy to guide design and construction of low-carbon, life-cycle optimized facilities using the LEED certification framework.

"STARS was developed by the campus sustainability community to provide high standards for recognizing campus sustainability efforts," said AASHE Executive Director Meghan Fay Zahniser. "Cal Poly has demonstrated a substantial commitment to sustainability by achieving a STARS Gold rating and is to be congratulated for their efforts."

With more than 900 participants in 40 countries, AASHE's STARS program is the most widely recognized framework in the world for transparently and publicly reporting comprehensive information related to a college or

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## Chamber Corner



### Cambria Chamber of Commerce

The Cambria Chamber of Commerce presents information to prepare and protect when it concerns fire insurance and safety.

Most of you are aware of the homeowner's insurance crisis in California, including here in Cambria. You or someone you know may have had their insurance cancelled, advised they were being cancelled, or told to make certain fixes or they would be cancelled. The Cambria Fire Safe Focus Group (FSFG) has heard many concerns and is here to help as best they can.

In collaboration with the Cambria CSD, the FSFG has assembled specific pieces of information they believe will be helpful and enable you to take positive action. The key objective has been to link you directly to the information you need given your particular situation

without having to navigate through a ton of content that may be nice to know but doesn't help you specifically. Information at <https://bit.ly/3TJksr5>.

We hope you find this easy to understand and to navigate, and most importantly, useful in taking steps to solve your specific challenges. Fire Safe Focus Group needs and welcomes your feedback to improve this information, so please attend their monthly meeting at the Fire Station on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 3 pm.

Check out <https://bit.ly/3Tu4Vdj> for information regarding preparing and protecting your business from wildfire.

Go to <https://bit.ly/497c60I> for Disaster Resiliency Tips for Small Businesses.



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## LOOKING BACK

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

# Then

# Now



Built in the 1950's by Richard Otto, locals referred this to the Baywood bus stop. The sign on the left says "The Purest and softest water in the world". Photo by the Sullivan Studios collection.

university's sustainability performance. Participants report achievements in five overall areas: academics, engagement, operations, planning and administration, and innovation and leadership.

"We are very proud to have achieved a STARS rating for our sustainability accomplishments," Cal Poly Sustainability Coordinator Kylee Singh said. "We look forward to watching our sustainability efforts grow and improve through the STARS program."

For more information about the STARS program, visit [stars.aashe.org](http://stars.aashe.org).

### Letters From page 17

through the eyes and ears. It infects unsuspecting people with its venom of mistrust and divisiveness. It spins fanciful stories and uses imagery designed to attract its victim deeper into its grasp. The monster is then able to manipulate the actions and emotions of its prey. The victim, once bitten, will not even realize they have become a puppet to their new master. Once infected the victim is mobilized to attract more brains for the monster to control.

The monster is called misinformation. It has recently been summoned forth by powerful elites in the resource extraction industries to sow lies and false claims about green energy. They have already released the monster on the east coast to do their bidding and now they have summoned it here.

These elites, notably Koch Industries, have a strategy to halt or obstruct any efforts to move away from our dependency on fossil fuels. They have created a sophisticated network of climate-denying nonprofits and conservative

"think tanks". Unfortunately, many well-meaning and concerned citizens have been infected by these lies and now they too are spreading the misinformation monster.

The fossil fuel industry does not want green energy projects, like offshore wind, to compete with them. They continue to deny the impact and severity of climate change and they continue to spread misinformation and false claims.

The only way to protect yourself from this misinformation monster is to critically assess the credibility and origin of any information regarding clean energy projects, such as offshore wind. On local social media you will see outright false and sensationalist posts opposing offshore wind projects. These posts are often presenting "evidence" that, in reality, is simply speculation.

These offshore wind opponents hope they can infect us at an emotional level with their anti-green energy propaganda. They know once a person has been triggered emotionally by a shocking headline or image it becomes very difficult for the victim to objectively consider an alternate view. The REACT Alliance Facebook page is filled with images of dead whales (emotional trigger) and assertions that the offshore wind industry is responsible. These allegations have been widely disproven, but the monster has a strong hold on its victims.

We are in a race to save our planet. We cannot continue to delay our transition to cleaner energy sources. All the major environmental groups support offshore wind: Sierra Club, Audubon Society, Greenpeace, Environmental Defense Fund, National Wildlife Federation and World Wildlife Federation. We need to inoculate ourselves from

the lies, greed and self-interest of the few for the benefit of everyone and everything.

Mark and Susan Garman  
Cambria

### Letter Policy

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



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# Community

**San Mandala** From page 1

open to the public daily from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The experience also offers insightful meditation talks, cultural events and special ceremonies.

Jon Nowaczyk, an owner of Let's Get Tuned Sound & Yoga Studio, says being in the same space as the monks brings peaceful, calm energy.

"Being with so many other people resonating that same vibration of peace and acceptance of impermanence, being in that light builds so much compassion and love for all beings on the planet," he said.

Mandala sand painting is an ancient art form of Tibetan Buddhism. They are created with fine grains of colorful sands. Each grain of sand is carefully laid down by hand. Then, using techniques unchanged for millennia, an intricate, geometric design that represent harmony and peace, is formed. The Green Tara mandala is believed to invoke the energy of compassion, healing, and the removal of suffering. It is an opportunity to explore the benefits of mindfulness and slow creation, highlighting the value of observing the creative process without pressure.

During their visit, the monks will also provide donation-based services to the community that include educational workshops and house/business blessings.

The opening ceremony for the mandala construction takes place on the morning of April 8. Tour leader Geshe Khenrap Chaeden and the monks will chant prayers for peace, prosperity, and healing in traditional overtones.

A closing ceremony is slated for around 4 p.m. on April 11. At that time the intricately designed mandala is swept away as a symbol of the impermanence of all things.

"The whole purpose of this dissolution is to bring awareness to the impermanence of everything in life, that nothing lasts forever," says Nowaczyk. "No matter how beautiful or how special or how dirty, eventually it'll be gone. It's about becoming okay with that, the joy and honoring of the time we have with whatever it may be — this person or this time in our lives. It's honoring that nothing



A Tibetan monk works on a mandala.

lasts forever.

"Here, in the West, we fear impermanence so much, but that's part of the beauty. Something that we teach at the studio is that before you have peace and organization, there's generally chaos. It's just a part of life and it's really about accepting that part of life."

Following the destruction of the mandala, members of the community are welcome to follow the procession of monks to the bay.

Overall, Nowaczyk hopes people participating in any of the daily opportunities gain a new perspective on another culture while finding their own connections to harmony and service.

"We're all in the same boat — all fingers on the same hand, planet Earth being the hand, us being the fingers," he said. The monks are trying to do good, and they are out here serving. They're not getting anything out of this personally; it all goes back to help their own communities or own people. I hope people can see the power of serving your community, friends, and loved ones, and how supportive that can be. And, how we can take that same service that these Tibetan monks are doing and start implementing that more into our own communities."

The touring monks are refugees from a Tibetan monastery in South India. They are on tour in the United States to share the compassion and wisdom of Tibetan Buddhism,



The Drepung Gomang Monastery Tour Group will create a sacred sand mandala at Let's Get Tuned Sound & Yoga Studio in Morro Bay, April 8 – 11. Photo submitted

to demonstrate the artistic accomplishments of the people of Tibet, and to generate funds to insure the survival of Tibetan culture. Daily visitors can visit the marketplace featuring handcrafted goods created by Tibetan artisans.

Donations are gladly accepted and will support the Monastery in its efforts to preserve Tibetan traditions and culture as well to provide shelter and education for individuals, including orphans and refugees, at their monastery.

"I look at it as a great opportunity to serve the community on a global scale," says Nowaczyk. "I just feel so honored to be able to bring support to people that are thousands of miles away from me. I believe in helping all of humanity. We are all humans. We all we all suffer, whether it's people down the street from me or a thousand miles from me, we're on the same boat."

Readers interested in hosting a workshop or having your house or business blessed by the Monks, are asked to reach out to [letsgettuned@gmail.com](mailto:letsgettuned@gmail.com). Let's Get Tuned Sound & Yoga Studio is located at 781 Market Ave., Morro Bay.

For more information about Drepung Gomang Monastery, go to [www.DrepungGomang.org](http://www.DrepungGomang.org).

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# Community

**Moving Forward** From page 1

finding out what's going on in Morro Bay that we might consider supporting in the next few months. After Sean introduces representatives of the participating nonprofits, we'll enjoy tons, tons, tons, and tons of laughs watching the 1963 epic comedy "It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World" directed by Stanley Kramer. Sean worked out a buy-out night with the historic Bay Theater to sell the 300 movie seats with 100% of the \$15 purchase price benefiting the participating organizations.

"Though we may be nearing theatre capacity soon," Sean advised, "additional Morro Bay 501c3 groups interested in participating may reach out to mbcelebratesgenerations@gmail.com to check the availability of group ticket bundles. Individual members of participating organizations can reach out directly to their leadership to buy a ticket for the event."

Each group was offered a limited number of tickets to sell. Sean then offered to create a new website to promote the purpose of the group and the activities the group planned for the near future. Additionally, if the group would offer attendees a silent auction item to create more revenue, the auction would happen at the event and on the interactive website [www.celebrategenerations.com](http://www.celebrategenerations.com).

Since it was a new concept, Sean first reached out to groups he was already involved with to see if it would be of interest. Instantly the answer was "We'll do it." Ticket bundles were created and to date are available from members of the following nonprofit organizations: Morro Bay Open Space Alliance, Historical Society of Morro Bay, the Morro Bay Maritime Museum, Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, Morro Bay in Bloom, Morro Bay Youth Sailing Foundation, Morro Bay Lions Club, Morro Bay Rotary Club, Morro Bay Active Adults, and Friends of the Morro Bay Harbor Department.

This columnist wondered if our world's current madness was Sean's inspiration to create the purpose-driven evening of pure enjoyment. And why this retro-movie? To my surprise Sean was remembering time spent with his father. "Whenever I go home to Salinas my dad is watching an



old movie," he said. "He's 73 now and it reminded me of all the good times we had going to movies together as a family when I was younger. When I told him what I was doing (for the Morro Bay nonprofits) he told me a story I never would have known if I hadn't been working on this project. His parents took him to see Mad Mad World in November 1964, the first ever film shown at San Jose's brand-new Century 21 dome theatre."

In 2014 the theater closed as a movie theater and the city deemed it historically valuable enough for preservation status. Leadership had high hopes to repurpose it, thus inspiring a blending of the old and the new within the surrounding neighborhood as future economic development opportunities were created.

Sean Green bridges the generations as one of our resident young adults who chose to move to Morro Bay. He had vacationed with family here, but specifically moved to teach English Studies, particularly writing courses, at Cal Poly. At first, he enjoyed the two years he lived in San Luis Obispo, however, in 2016 when timing and circumstance allowed him to purchase in Morro Bay, he made the leap and is happy he did it when he did. "I'm a Morro Bay homeowner and I live near downtown. I can walk everywhere."

He, like many of us, recognizes there is something

special happening in downtown – a new energy of business activities. And like many of us that have relocated to the Estero Bay, Sean became involved in numerous organizations to connect with his new neighbors and community. He currently serves on the Morro Bay Harbor Advisory Board and actively supports and/or supports several other organizations. "In Morro Bay it is the many nonprofits that make things happen. They are the engines that add valuable expertise and volunteer hours to do things beyond what our city budget can afford."

Sean also noticed, however, that the groups don't always know what the other is doing. This became Sean's "why." He intends to celebrate each group by bringing several of its members and supporters together to meet-up and share what they are doing. It's that simple!

Got your ticket, but want to help more? Anticipated silent auction items will be available on the website soon, but note the following that have been offered for the event by EBN's deadline: Four guests will experience a 60-minute ride on the Harbor Department's Rescue Boat; Youth Sailing Training for a future sailor; Pick the Concert at the Siren & a Table for 4 will be reserved if offered by the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce's Foundation for Scholarships; MBOSA is putting together a guided tour of Toro Creek Preserve with a picnic lunch; MBIB offers an "I Love Morro Bay" merchandise package; the Historical Society offers a uniquely framed photograph of resident Gladys Walton, a 1920s silent film star; and the Morro Bay Maritime Museum is offering a gift basket including Kelsey See Canyon wine showcasing an Abalone Diver, an Abalone shell gifted by The Shell Shop, two tickets to the May 20 re-airing of the locally produced film "Morro Bay 'Once' The Abalone Capital of the World and special guest speakers, a MBMM t-shirt and a maritime book from the museum store.

So now with a ticket-sales buzz out and about, other businesses are finding ways to collaborate. For example, since the Bay Theater doors open at 4:45 Sean suggests, "Ticket holders may wish to grab a pre-matinee dinner. D'Stacio's Italian Ristorante is opening early at 3:30 p.m. and Scout Coffee is planning an afternoon bake-off of cookies and baker's choice croissants." And, of course, there is buttered popcorn as only the Bay Theater can pop it!

## Chamber Ribbon Cutting For Baywood Hotel

The Los Osos/Baywood Park Chamber hosted its first mixer of 2024 at the Baywood Inn on March 20. The mixer was done in conjunction with a ribbon cutting for the Inn's new building. The new addition is open and running; it has eight guest rooms and two event rooms for meetings, conferences, parties and weddings.

Check out the Baywood Inn when you are down in Baywood or reach out directly at [frontdesk@baywoodinn.com](mailto:frontdesk@baywoodinn.com).

Photo by Dean Sullivan



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# Community

Wired From page 1



Astound's construction manager for the Morro Bay project, Justin Hunt, takes a selfie from atop a utility pole while stringing fiber optic cable in Morro Bay. Submitted photo

is much smaller. "You might be at 10 megabytes on upload. That's OK for most residences but artists, engineers, architects, medical professionals all need to send big files. With fiber optics, 'up and down' are super fast."

Doesn't the cable company have fiber optics too? "Cable companies have some fiber in their networks," he said. Mostly, that's between towns. "There's a big difference with the plant we've built. You'll have a strand of glass going to every single house and business."

With data being carried essentially on light waves, "You have fewer things to break," Buckingham said. You also don't need as much electricity to run fiber optics and if there's a power outage, something Morro Bay residents are pretty familiar with, you can still use it.

"If our customers have battery back-up on a device," he said, "you can continue to have Internet."

And the bandwidth available means multiple devices — phones, gaming consoles, TV streaming — can all run at the same time, and each be equally as fast. Gaming with fiber optics "now allows people to play at a much higher level than before."

He said wireless companies "are some of our best customers," because a wireless signal at some point has to be carried by a wire.

When one subscribes to Astound's service, a technician will come out and run the fiber optic wire down to the home and inside the house and "feed Internet

to devices. People can run all the appliances in a house that run Internet." That would include smart devices — from a Siri to new-fangled refrigerators.

"Everyone can use all devices at the same time," he said. It will also help the growing number of people who work from home, a practice that exploded during the coronavirus pandemic and continues to grow in the workforce.

The fiber optic lines also have room for future upgrades, which Buckingham said is happening a lot. Back when he started in the business, 9600 kilobytes "was lightening fast. Now it's 2 gigs. It's just unbelievable."

"Fiber optic technology has infinite capacity to grow in the future."

High speed Internet has become a goal of the Biden Administration, which has been calling for bringing Internet access to the rural areas of the country, much the way the Federal Government electrified the nation.

"After World War II, the government subsidized the rural electrification program," Buckingham said. "Now there are grants monies to address small pockets of people. It's part of the effort to bring fiber optics to every part of the country. For Morro Bay, we're a little ahead of the curve."

They wired up Grover Beach first, then Morro Bay, and Buckingham said they are also in Old Town Paso Robles — west of the Salinas River — and are looking at other communities on the Central Coast. "All we've done so far," he said, "has been Astound's investment, there've been no outside investments."

Residents have been seeing the company's work trucks in town for a couple of years now but somewhat ironically, if you want to find out more, you don't have to use the Internet to do it.

With the network largely complete, it's time to sign up customers. Their marketing strategy is to use the old fashioned kind of social media — word of mouth.

"We're in the rollout stage now," Buckingham said. "We're not doing a lot of media or mass marketing. We want to go door-to-door."

They have a sales specialist based in Grover, Juan Carlos Herrera, who is the contact person in Morro Bay. Call 805-393-1367 and Herrera will set up an appointment to come to you. Then you might invite family, neighbors or other friends in town over and have a group informational meeting.

"One neighbor signs up," Buckingham said about their marketing strategy, "and they tell their friends next door and across the street about it."

Wrap Up From page 1

In SLO County results, Peschong is listed as getting 100% of the vote, with 11,117 total votes. Some 5,501 voters left the race blank.

There were just 16,618 votes cast or 47.04% of the registered district voters. Dist. 1 includes Adelaide, Cholame, Lake Nacimiento, Oak Shores, Paso Robles, San Miguel, Shandon, Templeton (portion), and Whitley Gardens, according to the County's map.

## Dist. 3 a Walkover

Dist. 3 Supervisor, Ortiz-Legg, who was appointed to the board in 2020 after the suicide of former Supervisor Adam Hill, and won the seat for a partial term in 2022, was now running for a full 4-year term.

She was unopposed on the ballot; however, a write-in candidate emerged who didn't appear on the printed ballots. Michelle Marie Morrow garnered 838 write-in votes.

Dist. 3 covers Avila Beach, SLO Country Club, Edna-Los Ranchos, Edna Valley (portion), Grover Beach, Pismo Beach, Rolling Hills Estates, San Luis Obispo (portion), Shell Beach, Squire Canyon, and Sunset Palisades.



Dawn Addis



Dalila Epperson

Dist. 30 State Assembly incumbent Dawn Addis will face off with Dalila Epperson in the November elections.

## Addis Leads

In the Dist. 30 State Assembly race, Democrat incumbent Dawn Addis of Morro Bay finished ahead of Republican challenger, Dalila Epperson, garnering 41,825 votes (55.06%) to 34,140 (44.94%).

Because of California's Top-2 open primary system, both women will be in the General Election runoff in November.

Turnout here was about half. With 158,197 registered voters (from SLO County) 79,926 actually voted. Nearly 4,000 voters left the race blank on their ballots.

Dist. 30 includes all of SLO County plus the coastal areas of Monterey and up into Santa Cruz County.

District wide, according to the Secretary of State's election results, Addis leads with 63.1% (86,695) to Epperson's 36.9% (50,636).



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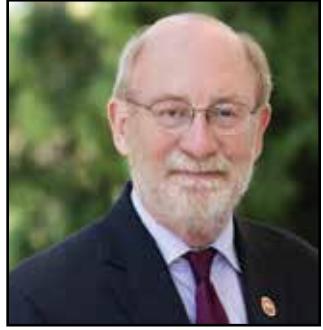
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# Community



John Laird



Tony Virrueta

State Senator John Laird and Tony Virrueta will go head-to-head for the Dist. 17 State Senate race in November.

## Laird, Virrueta to Runoff

In the Dist. 17 State Senate race, incumbent Democrat John Laird was leading in SLO County, in a 3-person race with 53.87% (36,436 votes); second place was Republican challenger and military veteran, Tony Virrueta (19,430, 28.73%); and C.S.U. Monterey Bay Professor, Eric Tao, was third (10,404, 15.38%).

State Senate Dist. 17 encompasses Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Benito, and San Luis Obispo Counties. In the State's results, Laird has 64.7% (142,400) of the votes; Virrueta has 21.8% (47,972); and Tao 11.5% (25,381).

## Congress Seat Runoff

In the race for Congressional Dist. 24, incumbent Democrat Salud Carbajal got 55.56% (30,468 votes) of the votes in SLO County. Republican challenger, Thomas Cole got 38.30% (21,003); and third went to Helena Pasquarella with 6.14% (3,306).

District wide, Carbajal was at 53.9% (101,181); Cole at 37.2% (69,901); and Pasquarella at 8.9% (16,718).

Dist. 24 includes all of SLO and Santa Barbara Counties and part of Ventura County. Carbajal and Cole will now face off in November.

## U.S. Senate

In the race for a full U.S. Senate term replacing the late-Diane Feinstein, SLO County voters leaned towards Republican and retired pro baseball player, Steve Garvey, who garnered 36.37% (31,082 votes) in a very crowded field.

Democrat Congressman Adam Schiff of Hollywood was the next best finisher at 34.78% (29,729); followed by Democratic Katie Porter at 11.55% (9,870). The race had 27 total candidates.

Schiff and Garvey lead the race statewide as well in a neck-and-neck contest. Schiff held a slight advantage garnering 31.6% of the votes (2,288,820) to Garvey's 31.5% (2,279,870). Porter is third with 15.3% (1,109,701).

## Partial Senate Term

Feinstein's death also left an unfilled term to serve out, though it'll only last for a few weeks before the full term winner is sworn in.

Garvey leads that partial-term race with 33.2% (2,430,724) to Schiff's 29.3% (2,145,802); Porter is third there too with 17.2% (1,261,685).

In the only statewide ballot measure, Measure 1, voters were nearly evenly split in support and opposition.

Measure 1 is a \$6.4 billion bond measure that would change how counties provide some services to mental health care, including drug and alcohol abuse; and allow the State to borrow up to \$6.38 billion to further the cause.

Measure 1 was approved by the narrowest of margins, with 560.2% (3,609,814) to 49.8% (3,580,585).

## November Shapes Up

And while no Morro Bay council seats were on the ballot this time, there is some news to report on the local political front. Estero Bay News has confirmed that Harbor Advisory Board Member Bill Luffee and former HAB member, Jeff Eckles, are both planning to run for City Council, as two seats will be contested in November.

According to City Clerk Dana Swanson, Luffee filed

a Form 501 (Candidate Intention Statement) declaring his intentions to run and also formed a "candidate-controlled" committee "and can receive contributions and spend funds related to his campaign," Swanson told EBN.

Eckles, she said, had not yet filed that notice of intent with her office. Incumbent Councilwomen Laurel Barton and Jen Ford are reportedly not going to run for re-election.

Eckles ran for Dist. 2 County Supervisor, losing to Incumbent Bruce Gibson in what was Gibson's fourth Supervisor Election win. (Gibson also won a fifth term in 2022.)

Incumbent Mayor Carla Wixom has also said that she too plans to run for re-election in November.

"Mayor Wixom," the City Clerk said, "has an open committee from the 2022 election but has not filed a candidate intention statement or re-designated remaining funds toward the 2024 election."

Wixom told EBN that it was still early to be thinking about re-election campaigning.

The official nomination period, according to Swanson, runs from July 15-Aug. 9, provided all of the incumbents do run. If any officially bow out, the deadline would be extended to Aug. 14.

If any readers in Morro Bay decide to run for office, they are encouraged to contact reporter Neil Farrell if they wish to make a public announcement, email: [neil@estero-baynews.com](mailto:neil@estero-baynews.com).

## Initiative on Power Plant

Morro Bay voters in November will also be deciding a voter initiative, Measure A-24 that would lock in the current zoning of the Morro Bay Power Plant property.

Though it applies specifically to the west side of the Embarcadero area from Beach Street out to Morro Rock and includes the over 100-acre power plant property, it would most affect plant owner Vistra's plans to build a 600 megawatt Battery Energy Storage System or BESS.

If A-24 passes, Vistra would have to ask voters to approve any zoning change needed for its project.

## Whale Pays a Visit From page 1

The migration is among the longest taken annually by any mammal species.

This little one was estimated at about 20-feet long by people who posted online about their up close encounters with the whale.

According to news reports the whale's presence in the bay was reported to authorities — the Marine Mammal Center, State Fish & Wildlife, Coast Guard, and of course the City Harbor Department, which has been fielding countless calls from a concerned and curious public.

They've been keeping tabs on the little one as well as watching the interactions kayakers and other boaters are having with it. The Marine Mammal Protection Act protects whales and makes it a federal crime to approach too close or to harass them.

In the photos here, people on the Sandspit at low tide were able to get within mere yards of the whale, as it swam back and forth along the Sandspit.

And while these folks seem exceedingly close, they are standing on land and not in the water with it, so they could hardly be accused of harassment.

Baby gray whales like this youngling are only a few months old when they embark to swim the roughly 5,000 miles from Baja to Alaska; and during their most vulnerable time, when new to the world and unaware of all the dangers of modern life for these ancient creatures.

Among the most common man-caused hazards are boat strikes, as gray whales swim through some of the busiest waters anywhere.

They also face being hunted by pods of orcas. And while local waters don't have resident pods of killer whales, there are pods found to the north in Monterey Bay and to the south in the Santa Barbara Channel. The Santa Barbara Channel pod is occasionally spotted in local waters, as they roam far to the north following the migrating gray whales.

Several years ago, that Santa Barbara Channel pod was spotted in Estero Bay, off Morro Rock, hunting a baby gray whale and its mother.

The orcas repeatedly attacked in formation, trying to drive the pair apart. Eventually they separated the calf and

drowned it. They then feasted on the baby whale's carcass, biting the head off and eating the giant tongue — a hundreds of pound filet mignon from the sea.

When the carcass washed up on the beach north of Morro Rock, its ravaged body had raking bite marks from the missing head to the tips of its tail, a most gruesome sight indeed. The City buried the carcass under the beach sand.

If readers are worried about food for this little whale, according to NOAA's website on gray whales, "They are primarily bottom feeders that consume a wide range of benthic [sea floor] and epibenthic [above the sea floor] invertebrates, such as amphipods [shrimp]."

"Gray whales suck sediment and food from the sea floor by rolling on their sides and swimming slowly along, filtering their food through 130 to 180 coarse, baleen plates on each side of their upper jaw. In doing so, they often leave long trails of mud behind them and 'feeding pits' on the seafloor."

So with a bay full of sand dollars and bay shrimp, especially in the muddy shallows by the Sandspit, food shouldn't be too big of a problem for the baby whale.

However, on a sad note, there's little chance of survival for this baby whale if it doesn't find its mother, or doesn't connect up with other gray whales, as they migrate past, for Alaska is quite a challenging swim even for adult gray whales.

In the past when baby whales have wandered into the harbor, they've usually found their way back out fairly quickly, and on at least one previous occasion, officials chased a baby whale out of the harbor, harassing it with boats and successfully herding it out of the bay to hopefully reunite with its mama and continue the journey to Alaska.



A baby gray whale has spent a few weeks in the Morro Bay harbor to the delight of locals and visitors. Photo By Dronesey

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**2002 Harley Davidson Soft Tail Classic**  
Many Extras - \$11,750



**West Marine Ponton Style Inflatable**  
10' with Evinrude 6hp motor - \$1,875



**3 Kawasaki Motorcycles**  
Many Extras - \$1,000 takes all



**1946 Chevy 1 1/2 Ton Truck**  
Rebuilt Motor - \$Make Offer



**1952 Dodge Truck**  
Side Tilt Bed - \$750



**1952 Dodge Truck - Chopped**  
1 engine, 2 transmissions - \$4,750



**1971 Ranchero Squire**  
Runs, Clean Title - \$5,500



**1971 Ranchero Cleaveland**  
Ran when parked, Clean Title - \$4,750



**1966 Ford Galaxie**  
7 liter (428) Motor, Runs, Clean Title - \$10,750



**Ford Econoline Van**  
Ran, Clean Title - \$750



**Honda Trail 90**  
Ran when parked - \$1,475



**Jacobson Mower**  
Make Offer



**Yamaha Wave Runner/Kawasaki Jet Ski**  
Both run, Clean Title - \$6,250



**1984 International Dump Truck**  
Ran, Clean Title - \$4,750



**Ford F-800**  
Rebuilt Cat motor - \$3,250



**2008 Chesapeake Light Craft**  
18' - \$1,575



**1974 Mercury Comet**  
All Stock, 29, K miles - \$1,475

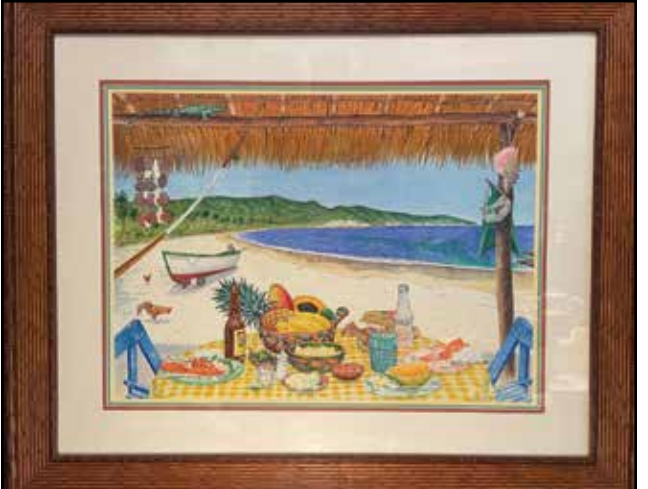


**1970 Suzuki TC-120 II Cat Scrambler**  
Ran when parked, Clean Title - \$875



**1993 Race/Motorcycle Trailer**  
New, cost \$25K - \$14,500

**"La Buena Vida"**  
By John Ramos  
On the Pacific Coast of Mainland Mexico, a tropical beach setting under a Palapa patio looking out over warm ocean cove. Cistom framed by Ramos Framing Studio, conservation mats and UV protective glass.  
Call to view.



**Call 805-528-6303**  
**Appointments Only**