

Offshore Wind Farm Testing Begins

By Neil Farrell

The first of three companies trying to build offshore floating wind farms off the Central Coast is beginning extensive surveying and study of the wind farm site and the path transmission cables will take to bring the energy to shore.

According to an email notice sent to commercial fishermen and shared with Estero Bay News, Atlas Wind, a division of leaseholder Equinor, planned to start "conducting geophysical and geotechnical surveys" on April 1 and were expected to continue through the end of the year.

"Offshore surveys will take place on a 24-hour-per-day basis," the company reported, "and near-shore surveys will take place on a 12-hour-per-day (day light only) basis."

The plan is to conduct surveys of the seafloor in the "Morro Bay Call Area" as the nearly 400 square mile lease area is referred, and along the roughly 60-mile corridor where the transmission cables will run to Morro Bay. The power is expected to come ashore at the Morro Bay Power Plant and connect to the State's power grid. The transmission corridor for testing will be some 2,000-meters (6,562 feet or about 1.3 miles) wide.

They plan to use underwater vehicles to do the testing using powerful sound waves.

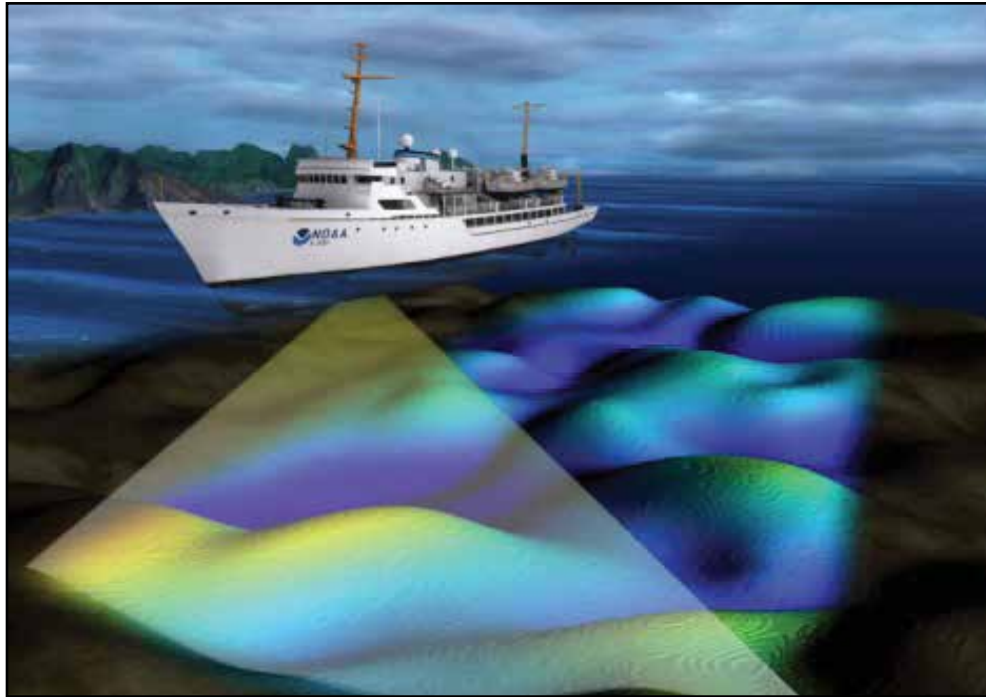
"High resolution geophysical surveys [HRG]," the email said, "will be completed using autonomous underwater vehicles [AUVs] and with equipment towed behind a surface vessel."

According to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management or BOEM, which is the Federal agency overseeing the project, "HRG surveys are focused on the seafloor or shallow subsurface and use a high frequency acoustic source. The energy source is typically electromechanical, but a small air gun (20-90 cubic inches) may be used on occasion."

There are three types of sound mapping or "sonar" commonly used — so-called Boomer, Chirp and Sparker — each employing different undersea vehicles towed behind ships. The technology employed has changed over time.

"Today," BOEM's paper reads, "HRG surveys often combine tools, such as multi-beam echo sounder, side-scan sonar and sub bottom profiler into one subsurface package; an Autonomous Underwater Vehicle or AUV. The AUV is operated approximately 150-feet above the seafloor."

In the call area, that device will be sent down over half a mile, as the water depth in the call area, 20-30 miles off the Coast of San Simeon, is from 800-1,300 meters deep (2,600 to 4,225-



Rendering illustrates how underwater sound testing is done from a ship with different types of testing equipment. Photo courtesy BOEM

feet deep).

They will also sample the sea bottom and the living things it contains. "Geotechnical and benthic sampling surveys," Equinor's email said, "will occur within the Lease Area and along the submarine export cable siting corridors in federal and state waters."

Here too they will employ different devices to include "cone penetration testing equipment (CPT), vibrocorer, piston corer, Young-modified Van Veen Grab, and Sediment Profile and Plan View Imager." Each of these employs a different way to do the same basic thing — uncovering the makeup of the seafloor sediments.

With different types of equipment and depths involved, Atlas Wind plans to use different devices and ships, none of which will be small enough to enter Morro Bay Harbor.

"For survey operations at depths greater than approximately 328 feet [100 meters]," Equinor said, "Motor Vessel [M/V] Island Pride, a 338 ft. [103m] long multi-purpose subsea vessel, will be used."

And, "For survey operations in shallower near-shore areas, the Research Vessel [R/V] Taku, a 30 ft. [9.1m] long near-shore survey vessel, or similar small research vessel will be used."

The M/V Island Pride, "will not use the port facilities at Morro Bay Harbor or Port San Luis."

The message to commercial fishing boats was clear. "Approaching vessels are requested to pass at a safe speed and distance."

These sound tests have been a major concern for a local citizens' group that has formed with the goal of educating the public about the projects and stands opposed to the wind farms because of the environmental impacts. Those may begin to be defined, as

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Moving Forward: How Business Thrives in a Tourism Marketplace

By Judy Salamacha

Once my family relocated to Morro Bay and I began writing stories for area newspapers, I asked my associate, Neil Farrell, why so many businesses seemed to close after barely a year open. He reminded me it was a tourism economy, so the businesses must depend on the locals to help get them through the winter months. Over the years I have also grown to appreciate that business ownership success means going beyond the necessary steps recommended to guarantee they stay in business - offering a quality product at affordable pricing, friendly customer service, an attractive ambiance and longtime management experience.

Speaking for myself, as our family has enjoyed frequenting our neighborhood restaurant over the past year, I felt comfortable asking the ownership of La Katrina Authentic Mexican Cuisine how they had weathered the winter since



La Katrina co-owner Rafael Hernandez shows molcajete, a new favorite menu item at the Morro Bay restaurant. Photo courtesy of Wendy Morales

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Breathing New Life into an Old Quonset Hut



John and Joan Solu, pictured, plus their two adult sons and a long-time partner Brian Harvey, plan to remodel a WWII-era Quonset Hut into a unique, 10-room hotel on Main Street in Morro Bay.

Story and photos by Neil Farrell

A local family that's been in the lodging industry forever is taking on a new challenge in Morro Bay, one with historical significance.

John and Joan Solu and their two adult sons, Orion and Ethan, along with a long-time partner of John's, Brian Harvey, have purchased an old, World War II-era Quonset Hut, located at 1141 Main St., perched near the edge of Downtown, and are planning to turn it into a rather unique motel.

It's a street-to-street lot that fronts Main Street and sits along Morro Avenue at the rear.

They've already gotten use permits and are now in the plan check process, and after that, they'll be able to start the "remodel."

The plan is to keep the basic building as it is, with modifications, including 10 individual motel rooms with outer slider doors onto individual little patios outside. They have no plans to alter the basic Quonset Hut, which is a half-pipe design made of curved steel arch beams with a cement floor and curved corrugated metal skin. Parking is already included out behind the hut.

The building's history goes back to Morro Bay's tenure during the war, when it was part of the Naval Training Base in operation for D-Day and toe War in the Pacific.

John said he's been able to trace the building's history back to 1943, when Fred Barton and William Hollister bought the building from the Navy, as it was winding down operations at the base, which was mainly down on the waterfront on the site of the power plant.

"It was always here on Main Street," John says of the over-4,000 square foot building, "but was part of the Navy Base." He said the building is solid. "It has 4-foot footings and an 8-inch slab. They don't make them like this anymore."

Asked how he knows the depth of the floors, John smiles and

New Life Continued on page 17

The Gift of Music, a Lifetime of Benefits

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



Learning to play a musical instrument provides benefits to children that go beyond the shaky notes on day one to a possible stage performance further down the road. It promotes problem solving, creativity, self-esteem, patience, coordination, social skills as well as calms stress and anxiety, improves memory, instills perseverance, and nurtures self-expression among others.

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Millions Spent on Mental Health, Homeless and Veterans

By Neil Farrell



San Luis Obispo County recently dealt with several health-related items addressing some nagging problems, and seeking or allocating millions of dollars for different programs serving a variety of clients.

County Supervisors were asked to approve applying for \$7 million in bridge housing funding from the State specifically for those with mental health problems.

They approved a \$1.3 million contract with a local hospital for acute psychiatric treatment; and another contract to assist senior care facilities.

And lastly, they approved funding for a program to provide

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Blotter
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Puppies
on Parade
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Split Supes Support 20-More Years for Diablo Canyon

By Neil Farrell

A split County Board of Supervisors approved a Resolution of Support for the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant to remain open another 20 years.

It's the latest rebound of an issue that's been kicked around more than a soccer ball at recess, as the plant had been on a path for a new license, until it suddenly wasn't and local activists celebrated its eminent demise.

But then Mother Nature played a cruel trick and exposed the State's lack of replacement power for the reliable 2,200-megawatts the plant delivers. Rolling brownouts and power shortages led State officials to second-guess the closure.

Acting County Administrator, Rebecca Campbell brought the Diablo Canyon Resolution back to the Board, which had authorized the writing of the document at its Feb. 27 meeting.

Indeed, in March 2021, Pacific Gas & Electric began a multi-billion dollar decommissioning process, submitting a land use permit application.

The County deemed the application complete in October 2021 and work began on a draft Environmental Impact Report. The DEIR was released for comments in July 2023, with some 37 letters being submitted for inclusion.

Currently, the County and EIR consultant are formulating responses to each of those letters and a final decommissioning EIR is expected to be released in August for approval.

But that process won't likely go any further, since the efforts to close Diablo Canyon, the State's last operating nuclear plant, have made a 180-degree turn. Now, the government's efforts are going to keep it open, a move that has long-time opponents in an uproar.

"Given the extreme heat waves and wildfires California has experienced in recent years," reads Campbell's report, "the state's transition from fossil fuel electricity generation to clean energy sources, and energy supply projections, Senate Bill (SB) 846 was signed into law in September 2022, providing a path toward extending the operations of the DCCPP. Since this path was not guaranteed, PG&E requested that the County continue with preparing the DCCPP decommissioning EIR and permitting."

The State was looking for the plant to remain open for another five years, and PG&E agreed to do that, after the State approved a \$1.4 billion loan guarantee to help pay for keeping the plant operating. That money would be available if the Federal Government failed to grant an award to PG&E out of the Department of Energy's "Civil Nuclear Credit Program." The Energy Department did grant \$1.1 billion in January, leaving the State to presumably pick up the shortfall.

PG&E had sought to pick up with its licensing application that was abandoned when the decision as made to close, but the NRC said it had to start over with a new licensing application, and it would be for a 20-year extension, not the 5 years that had been requested.

That process is well underway with an NRC committee of staffers holding public meetings on what would be an "Environmental Impact Statement" (the federal environmental review process).

Now the NRC is expected to decide on the new license application in August 2025.

While it is working on staying open another two decades, it's also working on the eventual closure of the plant and reuse of the roughly 12,000 acres that surround the plant.

Another effort is being made along those lines with a Decommissioning Panel! PG&E set up with ordinary citizens manning the board.

Among the critics of the Resolution was local 17th District State Sen. John Laird, who drafted a letter to the Supervisors on official State Senate stationery.

In it, Sen. Laird, who helped negotiate SB 846, sought to



educate the Supervisors on its provisions.

Sen. Laird wrote, "Specifically, the major provisions of SB 846 include the following:

- Required that San Luis Obispo County communities that received \$85 million in mitigation funding and PG&E employees who benefitted by a \$350 million retention and retraining program based on the former closing date of 2025 (as authorized under SB 1090 – 2018) do not have to return those funds, in light of the limited, five-year extension;
- Required seismic and other safety review processes so that the continued safety of workers and surrounding residents would be considered in the extension of an aging facility;
- Required that the financing process around the state loan for the extension process have very limited exposure to utility ratepayers and state taxpayers;
- Required a regular California Coastal Commission approval of the extension, with the time for that process limited;
- Provided a process and funding for the protection of and public access to the Diablo Canyon Lands, which surround the plant;
- Limited the extension to 2030 to allow for the use of transmission for the energy generated by offshore wind at the Morro Bay Wind Energy Area;
- Provided for the purchase of fuel in a timely manner to meet the extended plant life; and
- Set forth provisions about maintenance of facilities; planning for economic reuse of the Parcel P section of the plant; raised the once-through-cooling fee with an eye to certain expenses; and provided one billion dollars over three years for additional renewable electricity development in California."

Of note, that offshore floating wind energy project is itself starting to face growing opposition from local residents, who oppose industrialization of the ocean with giant windmills floating offshore from San Simeon.

Also, the three companies that won lease sites here, have watched cost estimates for wind farms off the East Coast skyrocket in recent years.

It remains to be seen if the floating wind turbine projects will ever be built and making room for wind energy on the local high voltage transmission lines might be a moot point.

Sen. Laird added that these different SB 846 requirements are currently in various stages of completion. Sen. Laird cited:

- The safety analysis will not be completed until the embrittlement of Unit 1 can be tested, which will not be done until 2025, with the results available no earlier than 2026;
- While the loan has been approved at the federal level, it does not reach the level expected to cover all costs of plant extension, and the risk to the taxpayers and ratepayers must still be protected, especially at a time when PG&E rates are going through the roof across California;
- PG&E's application to the California Coastal Commission for a Consistency Certification (under the Coastal Zone Management Act) has not been completed, and the conditions of the consistency determination, and of a coastal development permit, have not been developed nor implemented;
- The federal government has issued three leases for offshore wind in the Morro Bay Wind Energy Area since SB 846 was enacted, and the process of involving different stakeholders and attempting to resolve differences has only just begun;
- The once-through-cooling fee issues have not been resolved; and,
- The process for reviewing options for the Diablo Canyon Lands is underway but is at the early stages.

In sum, Sen. Laird believes the Supervisors' Resolution comes too early.

"In short," he wrote, "many of the issues that might be

involved in an additional 15-year extension have not even been resolved yet for the five-year extension set forth in SB 846. Therefore, it is clear that any discussion of an extension beyond what was enacted with SB 846 is very premature."

He noted that if the plant stays open, the monies allocated for "transition pay for workers," would come into question.

He pointed out that the State Legislature and Gov. Newsom have so far only supported five more years of operations, not 20.

"As a state legislator from this region," Sen. Laird concluded, "I would certainly not support any legislation for a further extension until the extension we have already approved is fully permitted, and all the attending issues outlined above are fully considered and addressed."

The three-page Resolution lists several "Whereas" items, among them: "Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant (DCCPP), California's last operating nuclear power plant, is located in San Luis Obispo County and has operated safely since 1985 under the U.S. Nuclear Energy Commission, which protects public health and safety and has the authority to shut down DCCPP, if there is any concern;" and, "DCCPP is California's largest clean energy generator, operating 24 hours per day, 365 days a year, rain or shine; and is the County's largest private employer with 1300 head-of-household jobs, and also provides millions of dollars in annual property taxes for our children's schools."

And this, "San Luis Obispo County respectfully requests that the State of California give strong consideration to extending the DCCPP operational lifespan up to 20 more years. Doing so offers certainty, ensures material forecasting, assists workforce planning, drive down costs and together with renewables, DCCPP enhances grid stability and energy security for all our families and communities."

As with everything about Diablo Canyon, the Resolution brought a lot of people to the Supervisors' Chambers and the debate was as evenly split as the Supervisors' vote, 3-2, with Jimmy Paulding (Dist. 4) and Bruce Gibson (Dist. 2) voting against the Resolution.

Dist. 3 Supervisor, Dawn Ortiz-Legg who has Diablo Canyon within her district was the swing vote, as the liberal Democrat voted against the other two Dems on the Board — Gibson and Paulding.

Dist. 1's John Peschong and Dist. 5's Debbie Arnold joined Ortiz-Legg in support.

Ortiz-Legg, who used to work for PG&E, has long been in support of keeping the plant open past the licenses expirations, as many of the head-of-household jobs holders live in Dist. 3.

Correction

In the story "Moving Forward: MB Celebrates Generations" (Vol. 6, Issue 6), Sean Green grew up in San Jose not Salinas.

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a bi-weekly publication

with 10,000 copies

distributed throughout

Morro Bay, Los Osos, Cayucos and Cambria.

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News

Election Over, Moreno Wins Supervisor Seat

By Neil Farrell

The March Primary Election is now officially over and no changes occurred from earlier returns, as the County Clerk-Recorder's Office finished up counting all the votes in what was a well-attended election.

Clerk-Recorder Elaina Cano announced on March 27 the end of counting and her certification of the results of the March 4 election.

In the only election race contested on the County level, the Dist. 5 Supervisor race was called for Atascadero Mayor Heather Moreno, who won a 2-way race against Atascadero Councilwoman Susan Funk.

Moreno tallied 9,551 total votes for 56.38% to Funk's 7,390 votes and 43.62%. However, Moreno won't assume the Supervisor seat until the term of out-going Dist. 5 Supervisor Debbie Arnold's ends at the end of the year. Until then she said she plans to continue her duties as A-town's Mayor.

Moreno told the Atascadero News, "I am deeply honored by the trust and confidence the voters have placed in me. It is the unwavering support, dedication and shared vision of so many in our community that have propelled us to this remarkable achievement."

Funk told Atascadero News, "I called Mayor Moreno last week and congratulated her on her victory in this race. She and I both expressed appreciation for our mutual commitment to keeping the dynamics and issues of the campaign out of our shared work as members of the Atascadero City Council."

In the other two County Supervisor races Dist. 1's John Peschong and Dist. 3's Dawn Ortiz-Legg both ran unopposed, though there was a weak last-minute write-in candidacy that sprang up to challenge Ortiz-Legg.

Ortiz-Legg garnered 12,272 of the 13,138 votes cast in the district, good for 93.41%. Write-in candidate Michelle Marie Morrow got 866 votes.

Peschong got all 11,408 votes cast in the Dist. 1 election for 100% of the vote.

All in all it was a pretty well attended election, with turnout here considerably better than the State overall. "San Luis Obispo County's voter participation rate in this election," Cano's report said, "was officially 52.34 percent of registered voters, which was well above the statewide average of 34 percent."

We also did better than neighboring counties to the north and south. "Not only was local voter participation higher than the statewide average," Cano said, "SLO County's turnout was higher than counties of comparable size and population, including neigh-



Atascadero Mayor Heather Moreno has won the Dist. 5 County Supervisor seat over fellow Councilwoman Susan Funk.

boring Santa Barbara and Monterey, which had turnout of about 42 percent and 32 percent, respectively."

The Election also marked the continued growth in popularity of voting by mail. "Of the 92,526 ballots cast and counted," Cano said, "94.28 percent of SLO County voters opted to use their vote-by-mail (VBM) ballot and 5.72 percent cast a poll ballot on Election Day."

VBM balloting is controversial as there remains no way to truly verify who actually filled out a ballot, even as it continues to be used more and more in elections across the nation.

Cano said California's system, though time consuming, works.

California Counties actually have 30 days (until April 4) from the election to finish the count and certify the results, so taking 3 weeks, as SLO County did, actually came in under the deadline.

"State Law," Cano said, "also dictates several specific steps in the vote canvassing process, including allowing for VBM ballots postmarked on or before Election Day to arrive at the County Elections Office up to 7-days later. Additionally, the Elections Office must manually review each VBM voter's signature — in this case, more than 87,000 signatures — and contact any voter who forgot to sign their envelope or whose signature doesn't appear to match their record, so that they may 'cure' their signature and render the ballot eligible for counting. Staff must also research and confirm the eligibility of every provisional ballot cast. All of this takes time and translates into a bit of a wait for California voters."

SLO County also checks its tabulating machines both before the election and during the count, checking the machine's totals against a hand-count of 1% of the ballots randomly selected. They also allow election observers to keep an eye on the election workers.

"Those who came in to observe were able to see our work as we did it and ask questions about each step," according to Cano. She said their counting process, "is always open to community observers, provided they check in and adhere to the office's conduct guidelines."

Now that certification of the primary election is complete, the Elections Office is getting ready to start work on November's General Election, which could see an even higher turnout than the Primary, as the nation will be selecting a new President and Vice President, as well as new U.S. Senator.

Locally, Morro Bay will see three city council seats, including Mayor on the ballot. So far, EBN has confirmed that Mayor Carla Wixom plans to seek re-election, and local businessmen Jeff Eckles and Bill Luffee plan to throw their hats into the ring. Up for re-election are Councilwomen Jen Ford and Laurel Barton. Neither councilwoman responded to an EBN request asking if they planned to run again.

Currently, Morro Bay's City Council seats are held entirely by women (including Councilwomen Cyndee Edwards and Mayor Pro Tem Zara Landrum). If the Ford and Barton don't run or other women join the races, the first-ever all-woman makeup of the board could be short-lived.

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

Also on Morro Bay's November Ballot will be Measure A-24, a citizen's initiative that would lock in the existing zoning for the power plant property, an attempt to throw up a roadblock in plant

owner Vistra's plans to build a Battery Energy Storage System or BESS on the old power plant property.

A-24 would require a vote of the people to approve any zoning changes needed for the BESS Project, and also applies to the west side of Embarcadero from Beach Street to Morro Rock, including all of the City-managed State Tidelands Leases in that area.

New City Engineer Hired

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay has a new City Engineer, filling a key position in the Public Works Department.

Public Works Director, Greg Kwolek, announced the hiring of Cindy Cecil to replace former engineer Eric Riddiough, who left Morro Bay to work for Caltrans, including on the Highway 46/41 "Y" interchange project.

Cecil was chosen out of three applicants, Kwolek said in a news release. The candidates underwent a thorough interview process, including interviews with a panel of City staff. Though she started her new job on April Fool's Day (April 1), the job is no joke. She's well qualified.

"Cindy," Kwolek said, "brings a wealth of engineering and project experience to the City, and I'm excited for her to lead up our engineering team. One of our City Council's main priorities is implementation of our capital projects, and Cindy's 40-years of experience as a leader and a project manager make her well poised to help the City improve and maintain our critical infrastructure, such as our harbor, roads, and utility systems."

"Her positivity and even-keeled spirit matches the Department's way of doing business. I am thrilled for Cindy to come on board to develop a vision for City infrastructure in collaboration with the City Council, Public Works Advisory Board, and the Morro Bay community."

A licensed civil and structural engineer, Cecil holds a degree in Architectural Engineering from Cal Poly and her work experience includes some 25 years in the private sector, "working as a structural engineer with private consulting firms designing municipal, commercial, industrial, marine, utility, military, educational and residential projects," Kwolek said. "Additionally, Cindy worked for San Diego Gas and Electric Company as a civil/structural engineering team lead, for the County of San Diego in Development Services and for the County of San Luis Obispo in Public Works."

She's got one problem licked that newcomers to the city have, finding housing. That's because she already lives in Morro Bay.

"As a Morro Bay resident," Cecil said, "I'm excited to have



Cindy Cecil has been hired as Morro Bay's new City Engineer. Submitted photo

Hired Continued on page 4

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News

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the opportunity to use my engineering and management background to help maintain existing City facilities and implement current and future infrastructure projects that will benefit our city. I'm looking forward to working with the City staff on several challenging projects, including the Embarcadero seawall and revetment improvements and the Highway 1/41 intersection improvements."

Her experience with marine issues should come in handy in the not-too-distant future, as the City prepares potentially accommodate the needs of offshore floating wind farms that are in the works.

It's unclear at this point how much the Harbor Facilities will need upgrading, however, the State and Federal Governments, who are championing these projects, appear ready with an open checkbook to help accommodate them.

Already, Congress has appropriated \$1.5 million for the North T-pier, funding a project of repairs and upgrades that hasn't actually been created yet.

However, at least one State study estimated it could cost upwards of \$50 million to do all that might be needed to accommodate what will be large boats for this small harbor.

The City Engineer could be expected to play an important role in all this.

Cecil heads-up the City's Engineering Department, which is a division under Public Works, and has four other full time employees. The Engineering Department manages traffic issues, encroachment permits, development reviews, and over three dozen active capital projects, including, water and sewer projects, pavement management, sidewalk repairs, Highway 1/41 intersection improvements, EV charging stations, and others. Cecil will also be finalizing an update to the City's engineering standards as well as development of long-term capital planning, Kwolek said.

The announcement didn't reveal what Cecil's salary would be but the City's current salary schedule (adopted for FY 2022/23) lists the City Engineer as a management position that pays from \$113,000 a year at the starting level, to \$137,000 a year on the top end plus a full compliment of insurance benefits and retirement. Someone with Cecil's experience, would likely start at or near the top of the salary range.

The new hire continues the reboot of some of the City's key positions. Previously, former Senior Planner Nancy Hubbard retired last December and was replaced in February by Kim Fowler.

She was hired by former Community Development Director, Scot Graham, who also recently left Morro Bay after nearly a decade here.

Graham left to become Community Development Director in Pismo Beach, the same town he left to come to Morro Bay some 9½ years ago.

City Manager Yvonne Kimball temporarily filled Graham's job with Michael Codron, a retired former community development director and planner with the City of SLO. Codron had been Pismo's interim community development director, so he and Graham basically switched places.

Parking Lot Rehabs Begin



This photo taken with a drone, shows the layout of the Lila Keiser Park, with the parking lot in the center adjacent to the park's west softball diamond. The parking lot is being repaired and repaved plus handicap accessible improvements. Photo courtesy City of Morro Bay

By Neil Farrell

The City of Morro Bay has begun pairs on two parking lots, one at a heavily-used park and the other at the police department.

The Public Works Department sent out a notice on March 28, saying that its contractor, Ramsey Asphalt Construction Corp., of San Luis Obispo was ready to start work. Ramsey was awarded a \$236,000 contract for the two parking lots back in January.

A news release dated March 22 from Public Works, describes the jobs. "The project addresses the deteriorating asphalt concrete surfaces and accessibility deficiencies seen in Lila Keiser Park and safety issues of the Police Department's parking lot. The contractor will perform extensive asphalt removal and replacement, concrete installations, and placement of new pavement markings and striping."

Previously, back in July 2022, the parking lots are described as also needing work to make them more handicap accessible.

"In addition," former City Engineer Eric Riddiough said, "there is need to upgrade ADA-accessible parking to the lot. The park site is not City-owned, but it is the responsibility of the City to maintain the facilities, including the parking lot."

In actuality, the park and its two softball fields, barbecue picnic area, snack bar and playground, are owned by Vistra, and part of the company's power plant property. It is leased to the City for essentially nothing, a deal that was set up long ago when Pacific Gas & Electric owned the power plant.

Lila Keiser, which hosts Little League, adult softball, girls' youth softball leagues and youth soccer, is probably used by more people than any other City park. Readers don't have to worry, as the City plans to keep the park open during the 2-month job.

"Although there may be moments during construction when the parking lot accessibility is temporarily affected, measures have been put in place to ensure that field use remains uninterrupted."

Target date for completion is June 25.

Reckless Driver Arrested in Birthday Suit

Sheriff's deputies arrested an Arroyo Grande woman after she reportedly led them on two high-speed chases that covered nearly half the county and ended outside Morro Bay where she was arrested in her birthday suit.

According to Sheriff's spokesman Tony Cipolla, on Thursday, March 28 they were advised to be on the lookout for a stolen Chevy Equinox SUV that was taken from a home off Lopez Drive in rural A.G.

"One of our units spotted the vehicle," Cipolla said. "We pursued the vehicle at speeds of approximately 50-60 miles an hour."

The suspect fled deputies on Hwy 227 to Corbett Canyon Road, then through Edna Valley towards San Luis Obispo, where public safety became threatened.

"When the vehicle reached the outskirts of San Luis Obispo," Cipolla explained, "the pursuit was discontinued for public safety reasons."

According to a news report, sometime later at about 8:50 p.m. dispatch got a report of a woman creating a disturbance at a home in Templeton. One of the responding deputies came across the stolen Equinox going west on Hwy 46. The deputy turned around and another chase ensued. The stolen vehicle was pursued Hwy 1, then south to Morro Bay, and then fled east.

"The vehicle," Cipolla said, "exited onto Highway 41 and was driving erratically at speeds up to 85 mph and crossing over the median into oncoming traffic with its headlights turned off at times."

A spike strip was deployed across the roadway in the 1000 block of Atascadero Rd. (Hwy 41), which blew out the tires and ended the dangerous incident. The driver was apparently not happy, or clothed.

"The driver exited the vehicle," Cipolla said. "She was not wearing clothes and was yelling at the deputies."

Deputies arrested Jasmine Denae Lorona, 31 of Arroyo Grande, Cipolla said, on suspicion of evading a peace officer with wanton disregard for safety and possession of a controlled substance, and the stolen vehicle was recovered.

Asked why she was naked and if deputies found her clothes, Cipolla said that information was not in the report.

Triathlon Informational Meeting, April 19

Morro Bay residents can get the skinny on how the upcoming professional triathlon event will effect where they live at an upcoming meeting with City officials and race staff to answer their questions.

The 2024 Ironman 70.3 Morro Bay Triathlon is set for Sunday, May 19 with the course, which has yet to be formally announced, starting with a bay swim from Coleman Beach to Target Rock; then a bike ride up Hwy 1; with a run course up and down North Main Street and down to the Embarcadero finish.

The course will include detours road closures and detours for

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News

traffic spread across much of town that day. There will also be a race village set up with vendors and more on the Embarcadero.

This race marks the second of three the City signed on to host with Ironman. The idea of the grueling Ironman competition was the brainchild of Jusy and John Collins, back in 1975 after the California couple moved to Hawaii.

Their first Hawaii Ironman was in 1978 and covered 104.5 miles in a swim-bike-run format. It didn't take long to be picked up by television and soon after came one of the most iconic moments in any sport.

"In 1980," reads a brief history of Ironman off the website, "founders John and Judy Collins give ABC's 'Wide World of Sports' permission to film the event, bringing worldwide recognition to IRONMAN. Only 2-years later college student Julie Moss collapses just yards from the IRONMAN World Championship finish line. She is passed for the title, but does not give up; she crawls to the finish line, unknowingly creating one of the most iconic moments in IRONMAN history."

The second of the two public meetings set up by the City (the first was March 28), is from 5-6:30 p.m. Friday, April 19 at the Community Center, 1001 Kennedy Way.

Residents can also sign up to volunteer for the event, see: www.ironman.com/im703-morro-bay and scroll down to the "Volunteer" icon.

The meeting flyer said they would discuss the event, logistics, road closures and potential impacts during the race.

Last year, 2023, marked the first of the Ironman Morro Bay Triathlons and drew over 2,000 competitors from all over to compete in the Ironman Series of triathlons that culminate on Dec. 14-15 at the 2024 VinFast IRONMAN 70.3 World Championship in Taupō, New Zealand.

Smaller triathlons like Morro Bay are qualifying events for the series. Ironman events draw professional triathletes, as well as dedicated amateurs, indeed some of the best all around athletes on the planet.

County Gets Money for Crime Victims

By Neil Farrell

The County District Attorney's Office is getting an influx of money to continue funding a trio of programs that help crime and domestic violence victims.

The three items, approved by Supervisors are coming from State agencies for specific uses and will help the County continue the programs for at least the rest of 2024.

CalVCB Grant

The D.A.'s Office is getting more than \$714,000 from the California Victim Compensation Board (CalVCB), according to a report from acting D.A. Eric Dobroth. (Elected D.A. Dan Dow continues to be away from his office deployed overseas in the military reserves.)

The grant runs through June 30, 2027 and will come in installments of \$238,000 a year. The money would go to the County's Christopher G. Money Victim Witness Assistance Center and "are provided specifically to offset the cost of assisting victims of crime who have applied for state reimbursement compensation for crime-related financial losses," Dobroth's report said.

Part of what the Money Center does is help crime victims with claim applications to CalVCB. The Money Center's staff also investigates victims' claims and verify losses for CalVCB, which

can speed the process, which Dobroth said helps victims get their compensation quicker.

He reported that the Money Center staff "work with the state to process victim compensation claims for state reimbursement of crime-related financial losses within 90 days of receiving an application."

The program tracks its clients and how they fare with the State's compensation system.

"The most recent fiscal year data from CalVCB (FY 22-23) for San Luis Obispo County," Dobroth reported, "reflects a claims-verified and approved rate of 100%."

The Director at the Money Center, Jessica Yates said on the department's website, "The San Luis Obispo County Victim Witness Assistance Program is one of the special programs designed to reduce the trauma and insensitive treatment victims and witnesses may experience following a crime. Since 1977, we have been committed to helping crime victims and their families reorganize and reclaim their lives."

The County has had a funding agreement with CalVCB since 2021 and now, it'll continue to the end of the 2026/27 fiscal year. But crime victims won't be paid out of this grant.

"The funds from this agreement," Dobroth said, "will continue to cover salaries and benefits for staff, claims verification staff, and a portion of the Victim Witness Director's salary. Additionally, in accordance with the agreement, these funds will help cover computer, operating, and training expenditures."

The Christopher G. Money, is named in honor of long-time Superior Court Judge, the late-Christopher Money and is located in the County Courthouse Annex, Room 384 at Monterey and Santa Rosa Street in Downtown San Luis Obispo. Call (805) 781-5821 to contact them or see the website at: www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/District-Attorney/Victim-Witness-Assistance-Center for information.

Underserved Victims

The D.A.S.'s Office also got a \$199,000 grant from the Underserved/Underserved Victims Advocacy and Outreach Program, which is coming out of the California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) but originates with the Federal Government.

This grant will cover from Jan. 1, 2024 to Dec. 31, 2024 and it too will go to the Christopher Money Victim Witness Assistance Center. The County had to provide a \$49,000 match boosting the annual award to over \$246,000. The overall grant program runs annually through 2027.

The main goal of this program, said Dobroth, "is to improve the safety of underserved/victim advocates in California by establishing victim advocate positions dedicated to serving a specified population. In addition, the UV Program is designed to improve coordination of crisis and support services among local agencies and groups for an enhanced response to the specified victim population and improve community awareness of this program for that specified victim population."

This over \$240,000 will extend the jobs for two "limited-term victim advocates" that work at the Money Center. But it may not be enough.

"The annual salary and benefit cost to extend the 2.00 FTE Limited-Term Victim Advocate III positions," Dobroth said, "is estimated at \$277,190. The cost of these position extensions will be offset with funding from the UV Grant estimated at 50% (\$138,595) and 50% (\$138,595) from the Victim Witness Assistance Grant Award (\$138,595 + \$138,595 = \$277,190)."

This victim assistance program would "Enhance the safety of elder crime victims in San Luis Obispo County," Dobroth said, "by maintaining dedicated advocates, as well as other staff, and volunteer support."

They will also work with local law enforcement to help train them in how to deal with elderly victims.

Domestic Violence

The D.A.'s Office also awarded some money to a non-profit organization that works with domestic violence victims, using money collected through marriage license fees.

Once again working through the Money Victim Witness Center, the County awarded over \$44,000 to Lumina Alliance, an already established domestic violence shelter program. Lumina Alliance grant would "provide additional funding for shelter-based emergency and support services for victims of domestic violence and their children," Dobroth said.

Lumina Alliance is bi-lingual and works with Spanish-speakers. "During Fiscal Year 2022-23," Dobroth said, "Lumina Alliance provided the following bilingual [Spanish/English] services for domestic violence survivors: three 24-hour emergency shelters with a total of 44 beds; 24-hour crisis and information hotline; Individual, family, and group therapy; temporary restraining order support with court accompaniment; case management; information and referrals; and community education and outreach."

"There were 137 total shelter clients which provided 4,162 bed nights to 57 children and 80 adults."

The Alliance has offices and shelters in Paso Robles, Atascadero and SLO. Lumina Alliance is also part of the County's Intimate Partner Violence Coalition.

Grant to Buy New Firefighting Equipment



Photo shows an FAE model RCU55 remote controlled tool carrier with a masticator attachment.

By Neil Farrell

The County Fire Department is getting a sizable grant from its sister State agency to buy some new equipment that will help with its efforts to fight wildfires in the future.

County Fire Chief, John Owens, asked Supervisors for permission to accept a \$477,000 grant through the San Luis Unit of Cal Fire. The two agencies are partnered to provide fire services to many of the unincorporated areas of the county.

The local Cal Fire Unit is getting the money from the Cal Fire Southern Region in Sacramento to conduct "vegetation management projects."

The money would be used to purchase two, remote controlled masticators, two trailers for the masticators; and two, utility terrain vehicles or UTVs, each with a trailer.

Grant Continued on page 6



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Grant From page 5

According to the U.S. Forest Service, a masticator is an attachment that “grinds or flails woody vegetation into chips that are deposited on the forest floor. It effectively cuts down and grinds up whole standing trees in one process. The main application is for reducing fire risk.”

Essentially, a masticator attaches to an excavator, tractor or Bobcat and has two cutting heads. The top blades chop vegetation and an array of rollers grinds it into mulch. It runs on hydraulics.

The fire chief said they were very useful tools. “These tools and technology,” Chief Owens said, “will increase the capacity of resource management to conduct vegetation management projects across San Luis Obispo County.”

The UTVs allow for better mobility in what can be rugged terrain. “For example,” Chief Owens said, “the use of UTVs has been a tremendous asset, reducing wear and tear on County Fire trucks. County Fire routinely meets with representatives, agencies and landowners to discuss prescribed fires, fuel breaks, and other vegetation management projects and the UTVs are proving very useful for efficient site visits.”

Fire regulations and increasing standards handed down from the State are expected to continue to change in the future and the UTVs will help them keep up. As County Fire partnerships and demand for more projects and monitoring grows, these vehicles will allow personnel to cover more land and assist more landowners with vegetation management projects such as prescribed fires, shaded fuel breaks, or roadside treatments to enhance emergency ingress and egress. These projects protect both residential and natural communities, while reducing wildfire spread and intensity.”

The masticators will be labor savers. “The remote-controlled masticators will be a force multiplier,” Chief Owen said, “as fewer people are needed to implement projects since the machine can be operated by one to two people and conduct the work of a small crew.”

They are versatile too. “These masticators can work on steep slopes, heavy terrain, and can be utilized by trained crew members to efficiently treat and/or prep prescribed fire sites, truck trail maintenance, and shaded fuel breaks,” Chief Owen said.

The grant is expected to cover all the costs according to the Chief, with no local money required from the County. The equipment will be under warranty and the County Fire crews will do maintenance as they use the machines.

The past couple of fire seasons have been relatively quiet in San Luis Obispo County. The county has seen several giant fires break out in the past, for example the 1985 Las Pilitas Fire; the 1994 Highway 41 Fire; and the 2016 Chimney Fire. Each of those blazes burned tens of thousands of acres.

The fire chief said the new equipment would be used all over the county.

“This will help protect multiple communities from wildfire,” Chief Owens said, “such as Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo, Atascadero, Los Osos, Pismo Beach, Avila, Parkhill, and numerous other...”



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Framing a Donation to School Art Programs

By Neil Farrell

Los Osos man and his son have given local school kids something to help them shine in art class, something he personally co-invented.

Los Osos resident, Gary J. Freiberg and his son Dylan, donated some 240 magazine-sized art frames to Baywood and Monarch Grove Elementary schools and Los Osos Middle School, 80 for each school.

The art frames, which Freiberg said he invented in 1998 and had been selling online for 24 years before ending the business in 2022. The clear plastic frames were originally intended and sized to hold and protect album covers, Freiberg said. He also made them comic-book size and for magazine covers and playbills, he explained. When they decided to end the business, they sold out all of the frames except the magazine sized ones, he said.

“We had the business for 24 years,” he said. “I sold it to my son in 2021; we closed it in 2022 due to manufacturing and shipping changes.”

He added that for the past five years, he’s been having them manufactured in China. The frames, Freiberg said retailed for \$14.95 each.

In its heyday the frames were a part of music history. “The Record Album Frames were sold at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Graceland,” Freiberg said, “and were shipped around the country and internationally.”

Graceland of course is in Memphis, Tenn., and the former home of the King, Elvis Presley. It’s now a major tourist attraction and museum dedicated to Elvis’ extraordinary life. The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame is in Cleveland, Ohio. You’ll find Elvis celebrated there, too.



From left: Los Osos Middle School Principal, Karl Blum; Monarch Grove Elementary Principal, Katie Salcido; Gary J. Freiberg; and Baywood Elementary Principal, Kirstin May, are framed by some of the 240 magazine art frames donated to the schools by Freiberg and his son Dylan, who is not pictured because he was in Japan. Photo by Neil Farrell

So, what does someone do with 16 cases of art frames? He naturally passes them on.

“Dylan and I are pleased we found a good use for the remaining inventory of magazine frames,” he said, “and give the opportunity for the schools to display their students’ art in a better way than magnets on a refrigerator.”

The frames will be used by each school’s art programs, for example, Monarch Grove Principal, Katie Salcido, said they would use them for the school’s big Art Showcase Night.

LOMS Principal, Karl Blum said his school’s art program will make good use of the frames, which have a black mat on one side and white on the flip side. It’s really a convenient way to display artwork or even magazine covers, the original intended purpose. “The frames are easy to change the artwork,” Freiberg said.

Art class is big at local schools, especially the middle school, which uses the STEAM — Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math — method of teaching, so art remains an emphasis there, as well as the high school in Morro Bay.

4-H Club’s Been Busy



Members of the Morro Bay 4-H Club Leadership Group recently did a cleanup project at Morro Bay High School. The kids removed eight bags of trash just from the school’s parking lot. From left are: Kingston, Kaya, Bailey, Mollie, Koen, Aiden, and James [no last names given]. Submitted photo

BY Neil Farrell

The members of the Morro Bay 4-H Club have been busy with club activities, community projects, and getting ready for

their annual big event — the Mid State Fair in Paso Robles.

Club Reporter, Bailey Dunn reported, “This year we have kids showing sheep and pigs for the California Mid State Fair. The kids that already have their animals have been very busy working with them and making sure that their animal is calm and healthy.”

On March 24, Dunn reported, the club Leadership Group policed the Morro Bay High School campus. Just around the school parking lot, the 4-Hers collected and removed eight bags of trash. It’s something they do a lot around Morro Bay.

“The community service group,” Dunn said, “has done a couple trash pickup days around Morro Bay and has brought animals to different events around Morro Bay and Los Osos.”

They’ve also been respectful of their elders. “The Morro Bay 4-H group,” Dunn said, “also made Christmas and Valentine’s Day cards along with other decorations and delivered them to the residents at Casa De Flores.”

Casa de Flores is a senior living and assisted care facility on Teresa Drive in Morro Bay.

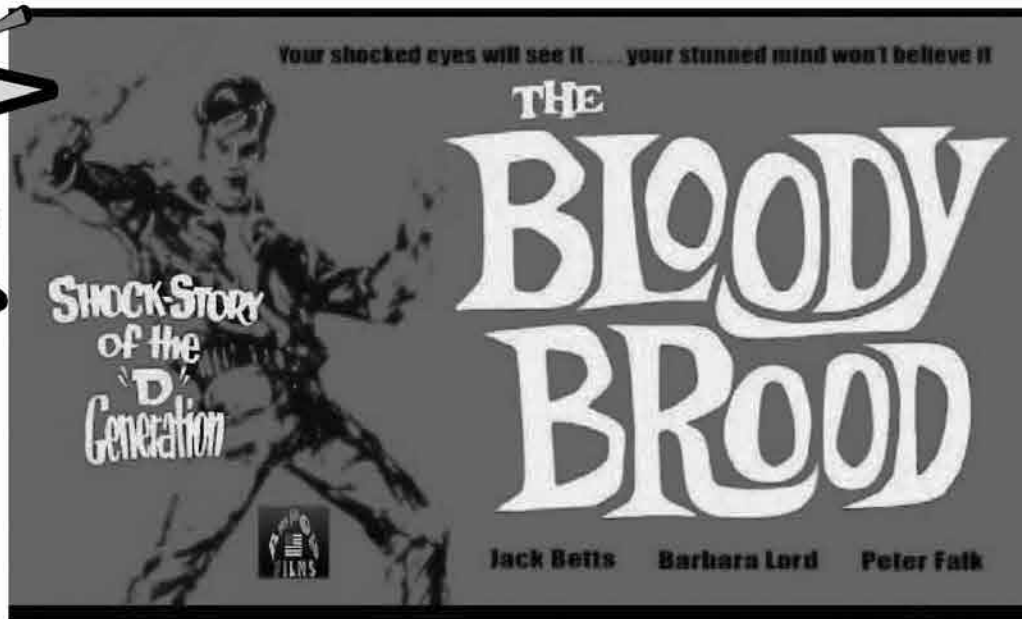
The Mid State Fair is set for July 17-28. After several months of caring for their critters, hundreds of youngsters from local high school FFA and 4-H Clubs will show a variety of small animals

4-H Continued on page 10

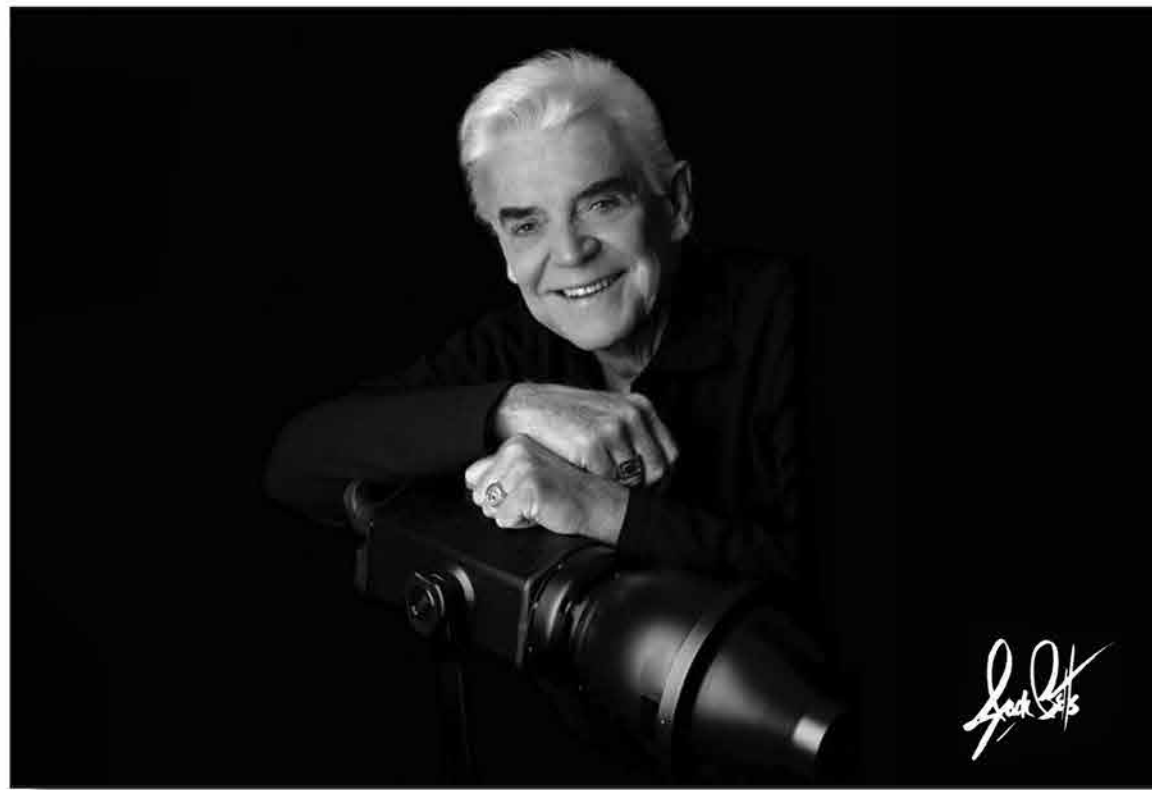
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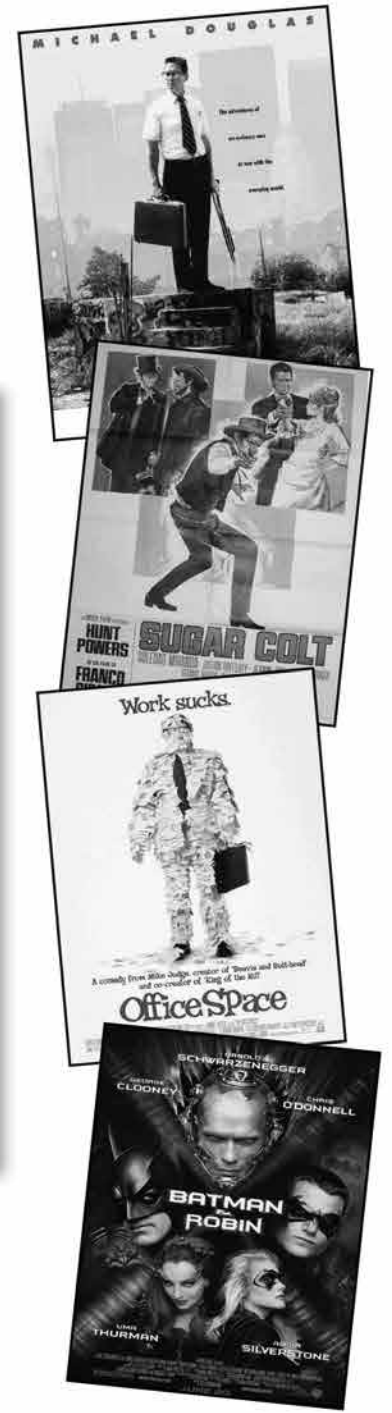
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 Recovery Road - (2016)
 The Secret of Joy - (2015)
 To Dust Return - (2015)
 About Last Night - (2014)
 Mardi Gras: Spring Break - (2011)
 Monk - (2002)
 The Mentalist - (2008)
 The Unit - (2006)
 It's a Wonderful Death - (2008)
 Being Michael Madsen - (2007)
 The Desert Rose - (2007)
 Zoey 101 - (2005)
 My Name Is Earl - (2005)
 Cold Case - (2003)
 No Conscience, No Mercy - (2004)
 I Am Stamos - (2004)
 The Commission - (2003)
 The District - (2000)
 Spider-Man - (2002)

The Young and the Restless - (1973)
 Critical Mass - (2001)
 Mockingbird Don't Sing - (2001)
 Friends - (1994)
 Cut - (2000)
 True Rights - (2000)
 The Next Best Thing - (2000)
 Power Rangers Lost Galaxy - (1999)
 Office Space - (1999)
 8MM - (1999)
 Everybody Loves Raymond - (1996)
 The Scottish Tale - (1998)
 Southern Man - (1998)
 Gods and Monsters - (1998)
 Mike Hammer, Private Eye - (1997)
 Alien Avengers II - (1997)
 Batman & Robin - (1997)
 Frasier - (1993)
 The Big Fall - (1997)
 Power 98 - (1996)
 Deadly Games - (1995)
 Mad TV - (1995)
 Batman Forever - (1995)
 Seinfeld - (1989)
 Sisters - (1991)
 Falling Down - (1993)
 White Trash - (1992)

Just My Imagination - (1992)
 Sinatra - (1992)
 In the Heat of the Night - (1988)
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 Loving - (1983)
 Generations - (1989)
 The Chair - (1988)
 Guiding Light - (1952)
 Search for Tomorrow - (1951)
 One Life to Live - (1968)
 Falcon Crest - (1981)
 Remington Steele - (1982)
 All My Children - (1970)
 Another World - (1964)
 Texas - (1980)
 The Doctors - (1963)
 The Edge of Night - (1978)
 Bye Bye Monkey - (1978)
 Kojak - (1973)
 Corte marziale - (1973)
 A.A.A. Massaggiatrice bella - (1972)
 The Assassination of Trotsky - (1972)
 Adios Compañeros - (1971)
 He Was Called the Holy Ghost - (1971)
 Rum Runners - (1971)
 Down with Your Hands... You Scum! - (1971)

Coffin Full of Dollars - (1971)
 Django and Sartana Are Coming... It's the End - (1970)
 One Damned Day at Dawn... Django Meets Sartana! - (1970)
 It Takes a Thief - (1968)
 Halleluja for Django - (1967)
 The F.B.I. - (1965)
 This Is the Life - (1952)
 The Man Who Never Was - (1966)
 Sugar Colt - (1966)
 Perry Mason - (1957)
 The Young Marrieds - (1964)
 12 O'Clock High - (1964)
 Gunsmoke - (1955)
 Burke's Law - (1963)
 Breaking Point - (1963)
 General Hospital - (1963)
 Bonanza - (1959)
 Checkmate - (1960)
 The Detectives - (1959)
 One Plus One - (1961)
 Dow Hour of Great Mysteries - (1960)
 Kraft Theatre - (1947)
 The DuPont Show of the Month - (1957)
 The Bloody Brood - (1959)

Police Blotter



- **March 31:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 11:49 a.m. in the 800 block of Embarcadero. Logs indicated a 60-year-old woman driver was nicked for allegedly driving under the weather.
- **March 30:** And from the lost-found department ... Police were notified of a missing person in the 2300 block of Peacock. Someone else found a bag in the 800 block of Embarcadero.
- **March 29:** Police responded to a disturbance at 10:35 p.m. in the 400 block of Yerba Buena. According to logs, a 17-year-old ruffian and police had a bit of a row with the kid getting the short end of the stick. Logs indicated the apparent miscreant was being charged with suspicion of two counts of disturbing the peace; two counts of assaulting police officers; an obstructing an EMT charge; violating a Juvenile Court order; and being an out-of-parental-control minor. The little squirt was hauled off to juvenile hall.
- **March 29:** Police were called to a seasoned folks home on Teresa Drive after someone reported a battery. Logs indicated they didn't find a victim.
- **March 8:** Police received two hit-n-split crash reports within a short time. The first was at 9:14 p.m. in the 700 block of Quintana. The second was at 10:55 p.m. in the 200 block of Morro Bay Blvd.
- **March 28:** At 9:30 p.m. police contacted an adult street urchin going all wooly-booger in the 300 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated the 39-year-old hipster allegedly possessed a crack pipe but apparently no stash, as it was no doubt already up in smoke. She was cited and released to catch up with another day.
- **March 28:** Police towed off yet another car parked on Bonita Street for expired tags, no doubt a death sentenced for the bucket of bolts.
- **March 28:** Police contacted a repeat customer at 11:44 a.m. in the 200 block of Atascadero Rd. The 39-year-old apparently absent-minded lass had eight bench warrants and got arrested, again.

- **March 28:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at the suspect time of 12:50 a.m. in the 400 block of Main. Logs indicated the driver, 53, was nicked for suspicion of driving gassed.
- **March 27:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 8:18 p.m. in the 3000 block of Main. Logs indicated the tool driver, 31, was arrested for suspicion of driving schnookered while on probation for a previous drunk driving conviction, as some fools never learn.
- **March 26:** Police towed off yet another offending vehicle from the 900 block of Allesandro because its owner hadn't bled for the DMV in too long a time.
- **March 26:** Yet another repeat customer was contacted at 10 p.m. in City Park in the 700 block of Harbor. The 53-year-old chap had multiple bench warrants and police also allegedly found drug paraphernalia on him.
- **March 26:** Police responded to the elementary school in the 300 block of Sequoia where they took a report involving an accused case of child abuse that reportedly occurred in 2012.
- **March 26:** Two different people turned in cell phones they found, one on the beach at Morro Rock, and the other in the 1700 block of Embarcadero. Yet another Good Samaritan citizen turned in a wallet that he or she found.
- **March 26:** Police responded at noon to a liquor store in the 900 block of Main. Logs indicated some sticky-fingered, thieving lush made off with a pair of sunglasses and a bottle of hooch.
- **March 25:** Police responded to a motel in the 1100 block of Main where a no-longer-welcomed guest was refusing to leave his room after checkout, in this week's example of why we need SWAT.
- **March 25:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 11:49 a.m. in the 700 block of Quintana. Logs indicated the 34-year-old model citizen was nicked for suspicion of disorderly conduct and being shwasted on drugs, a potential case of just 'cause it kills your liver, don't mean it ain't medicine.
- **March 25:** Police documented a reported case of suspected child abuse in the 400 block of Trinidad.
- **March 24:** Police responded to a loud dustup at 9:34 p.m. in the 3300 block of Panorama. Logs indicated a 42-year-old apparently mulish boor was arrested for alleged abuse of his spouse, false imprisonment and violating a stay-away order. He was Shanghaied off to the County lockup.
- **March 24:** Police were called to a disturbance at 6:15 p.m. in the 800 block of Main, where they contacted a 27-year-old fellow with a Heavenly name. The devilish anti-Christ was nicked on a warrant and suspicion of giving in to libation temptation. He was nailed to the cross of justice at the County Jail but was no doubt resurrected and released by now.
- **March 23:** Police towed away an offensive vehicle with expired

- tags at 1:12 p.m. The POS was parked at Greenwood and Elena.
- **March 22:** Police responded to the Tobacco Plus Store in 300 block of Morro Bay Blvd., at 3:30 p.m. and started a crime report for "simple assault," a misnomer for so personal an offense.
- **March 22:** Someone turned in a cell phone they found somewhere on the Embarcadero. Call the number if you lost yours.
- **March 22:** Police responded somewhere in the 800 block of Quintana sometime around 7:45 a.m. where some dingus was actin' a fooligan. The swizzle stick, 49, was nicked for suspicion of being too drunk to be left amongst the straights.
- **March 21:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 11:16 p.m. somewhere on Main Street. The lady driver was hauled to the hoosegow for suspicion of being wet behind the wheel.
- **March 21:** A woman reported at 9:06 p.m. that she was assaulted in the 800 block of Main. Police filed a report.
- **March 20:** Police contacted a wanted man at 11:30 p.m. in the 800 block of Quintana. The 49-year-old fellow had a bench warrant and so was apparently frisked by officers who allegedly found illegal drugs and paraphernalia, no doubt stashed somewhere you don't want to know. He was of course cited and released to catch another day.
- **March 20:** Police were called at 9:41 p.m. to the Masterpiece Inn in the 1200 block of Main. Logs indicated some scoundrel stole two bicycles.
- **March 20:** Police opened up an elder financial abuse case in the 2000 block of Clark Rd. No word on who did it.
- **March 19:** Police were notified of an abandoned car in the 500 block of Kings. The registration was expired and the vehicle will be sacrificed to the great God DMV.
- **March 19:** Police noted the arrest of an inebriated woman, 66, at 10:15 a.m. at Harbor and Napa. She was apparently having a bag lady moment in public and got arrested for a D&D. First they took her to the hospital for a medical evaluation, and clearing that, she was jailed, which no doubt made her just sick.
- **March 19:** Police contacted a suspicious woman, 22, at 8:33 a.m. at Monterey and Beach. The scofflaw had three bench warrants and was issued another gag gift and released, in a case of see you in about a month...
- **March 18:** Police responded at 5:50 p.m. to a disturbance in the 1000 block of Main. They wound up arresting a 23-year-old hombre for suspicion of getting stupid in public.
- **March 18:** Police responded at 2:37 p.m. to a disturbance in the 400 block of Atascadero Rd. Logs indicated a 35-year-old bat-leaxe allegedly violated a domestic violence, stay-the-Hell-away from your spouse court order but she was apparently not arrested, this time.

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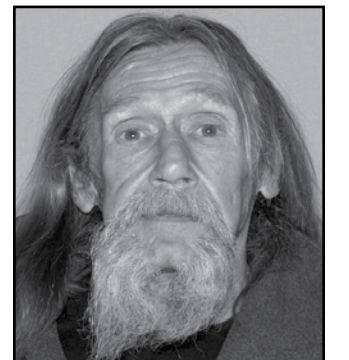
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Suspect Arrested in Stabbing Incident

The Morro Bay Police Department arrested a man in his seventies for a reported attempted homicide. Police responded to calls of a stabbing in the 2400 block of Reno Ct. on April 5, at approximately 6:36 p.m. "Officers responded to the area and immediately located an adult female victim suffering from injuries to her neck and multiple stab wounds to her chest and hand," said Chief Amy Watkins in a news release. "The victim was promptly transported to a local hospital by medical personnel." Upon speaking to the victim, officers learned the suspect had fled the scene and was a known friend who lived in the 400 block of Bonita. The suspect, Jerry Eugene Adams, 71, of Morro Bay, was later arrested in the 400 block of Bonita. Adams was taken into

custody without incident and booked into the San Luis Obispo County Jail on charges of attempted homicide, false imprisonment, intimidating a witness, and sexual assault against the victims will through force. Morro Bay police continue to investigate the incident, but say there is no threat to the community.



Jerry Adams

GoFundMe Setup For Local Man's Memorial

A GoFundMe page is set up to help a family after their 43-year-old husband and father was killed in a car accident. "Late on Friday, March 29, we received the devastating news that Chad Wood was killed in a car accident in Morro Bay," reads the page set up by Kristin W. "He is survived by his partner, Leah, and their three children, Marley, Eli, and Zeva. "If you live in Morro Bay, you may have met Chad in a game of pickup basketball, through mutual friends, or while he was slinging smoothies at Shine Cafe. Towering over everyone else, he stood 6'6" and was always ready with a smile and a goofy joke. He was a gentle, loving man and we already miss him deeply." To help, go to gofundme.com and search under Chad Wood. Funds raised will go toward expenses for Chad's memorial and any additional funds will go to Leah, Marley, Eli, and Zeva. Please consider donating if you are so inclined.



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Estero Bay News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Battery Project EIR Discussed

The Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for a battery energy storage plant proposed for the old Morro Bay Power Plant site, is on tap at two upcoming public meetings.

A citizens' group calling itself "Concerned Citizens of Morro Bay & the Central Coast," will be at the Morro Bay Library Meeting Room from 10 a.m. to noon, Saturday, April 20 for a public workshop on the DEIR. The goal is to help citizens understand the DEIR, which is several hundred pages, so they can make comments to the City. Often such comments can help make a project better.

The workshops will have a short orientation presentation, study the materials and additional resources, and give "helpful tips for making your letter effective," reads a flyer for the event.

A second workshop is set for 2-4 p.m. Saturday, May 11 at the Library, 695 Harbor St. The meetings are free but space is limited. Pre-register by texting Jeanne Marie Colby at: (650) 773-1381.

The workshops on the DEIR could also be informative in advance of the November General Election when Morro Bay voters will decide Measure A-24.

That initiative concerns the zoning at the power plant and would force Vistra Energy to seek voter approval to change the property's zoning if needed for the project to win approval. If A-24 passes, it could put up a significant speed bump to the project.

The State Legislature however, passed a law last summer that gives Vistra a potential work-around on Measure A-24, and could remand the project to the California Energy Commission for approval.

Distracted Driving Awareness Month

April is Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Law enforcement agencies are actively looking for drivers who are in violation of the state's hands-free cell phone law.

According to the 2023 California Statewide Public Opinion Survey, more than 74% of drivers surveyed said that distracted driving because of texting was their biggest safety concern. In 2021, there were at least 140 people killed in distracted driving traffic crashes in California. The numbers are likely underreported because law enforcement officers may not always be able to tell that distraction was a factor in a crash.

Under current law, drivers are not allowed to hold a phone or electronic communications device while operating a vehicle, even when stopped at a red light. This includes talking, texting or using an app. Using a handheld cell phone while driving is punishable by a fine, and violating the hands-free law for a second time within 36 months of a prior conviction for the same offense will result in a point being added to a driver's record.

If you have an important phone call, text or email, or are in a situation with other distractions, such as looking up directions, pull over to a safe parking spot to complete the task without putting yourself and others at risk. Other distractions can be eating, grooming, reaching for something that fell on the floor, putting on or taking off clothing, talking with passengers, or children in the back seat.

Funding for distracted driving enforcement is provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Utility Rate Transparency Bill Moves Forward

A new bill by Assemblymember Dawn Addis (D-Morro Bay) to address soaring utility rates by increasing transparency to consumers successfully passed its first committee.

Assembly Bill 2847 passed out of the Assembly Utilities and Energy Committee with bipartisan support.

"It's no secret that energy rates are skyrocketing - impacting real people across California," said Addis. "In just three years, residential electricity rates have increased 63% for PG&E customers and 52% for SoCal Edison customers. Californians deserve to know what to expect when they open their monthly energy bills and that all of the costs included in their bills are fair and reasonable. Having this critical information will ultimately help lower costs for ratepayers."

Specifically, AB 2847 will establish new disclosure mandates for electric and gas utilities as they seek approval for long-term capital expenditures.

In July 2023, Assemblymember Addis advocated for the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to reject overly high fixed utility rates proposed by investor-owned utilities. Last month, she urged the PUC to reject Pacific Gas and Electric Company's request for interim rate relief, in order to prevent additional rate increases for Californians.

The bill now moves to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

SCOTUS to Rule on Regulation of Homeless Encampments

The Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) will hold oral arguments on April 22 at 7 a.m. on the enforceability of state, county and local laws that prohibit camping on public property and whether those laws violate the Eighth Amendment's ban on "cruel and unusual punishment." The SCOTUS decision in *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson* will have an impact on how cities and counties can manage homeless encampments.

Several cities throughout SLO County have recently passed ordinances which regulate how and where people experiencing homelessness can stay overnight on public property, according to the League of Women Voters SLO County.

"These ordinances, which were adopted to comply with the guidance in *Grants Pass v. Johnson*, have been controversial and the subject of much public discussion," said the LWV in a news release. "The court's ruling in this case could affect how other cities address their own epidemics of homelessness, including those throughout San Luis Obispo County."

Watch the SCOTUS oral argument at 7 a.m. PDT on April 22 at supremecourt.gov/oral-arguments/live.aspx.

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

Did You Know . . .

. . . that Morro Bay's Tidelands Leases contributed \$2,000,000 last year to the City's Harbor Enterprise Fund (90% of the Harbor Department's operating budget)?

. . . that the economic activity on the waterfront generated almost \$9 million in taxes and fiscal revenue of one form or another out of the City's current General Fund of \$15.6 million?

. . . that visitors to Morro Bay staying in our hotels and motels paid the City \$4,500,000 in Transient Occupancy taxes last year in 2023 alone?

. . . that Embarcadero waterfront businesses are not "getting rich" off the backs of the City and the community?

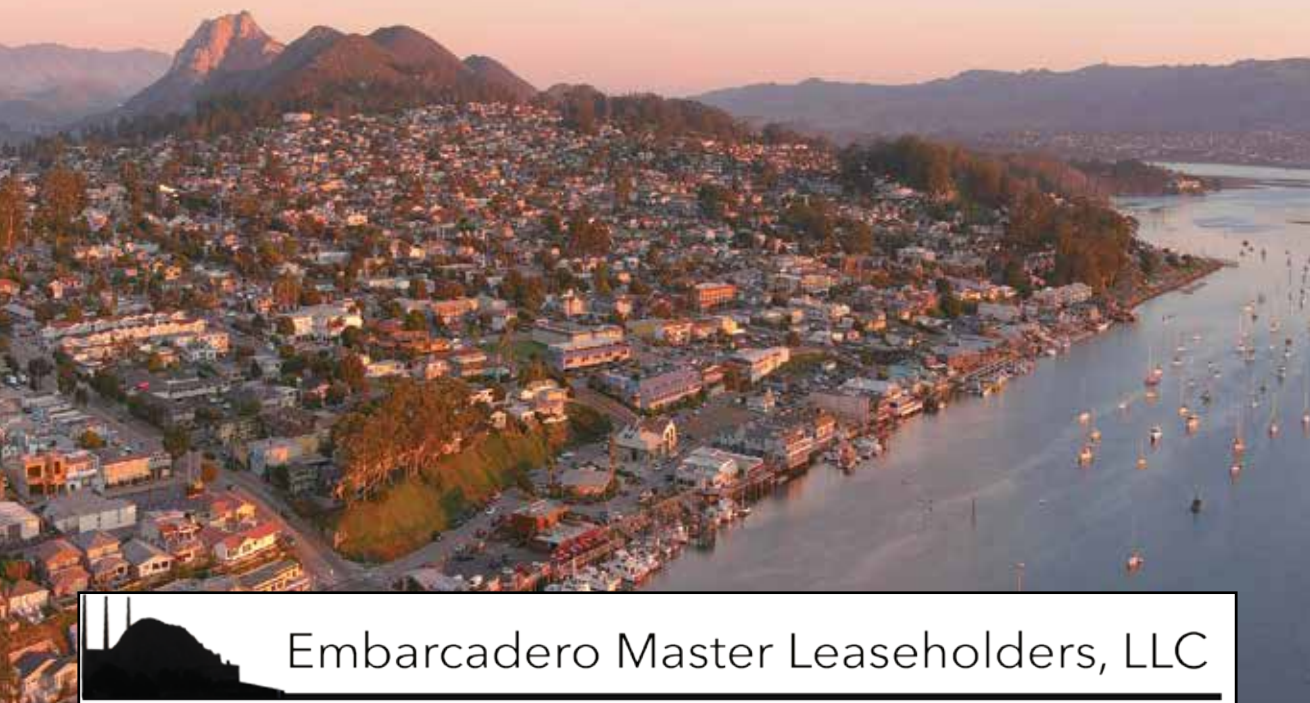
. . . Did You Know that Embarcadero waterfront businesses are a leading contributor to the tourism that supports the City of Morro Bay economically, including the services the City provides to the community?

. . . that the typical term for Embarcadero waterfront leases negotiated with the City are 30-40 years long.

. . . that most Embarcadero waterfront lease holders have, at their own expense, built on to the Embarcadero "Harbor Walk", which is enjoyed by thousands every year?

. . . Did you know that Embarcadero waterfront lease holders, at their own expense, provide public restrooms in their buildings?

. . . Did you know that waterfront businesses contribute much-needed contributions to local schools, nonprofits, and charities?



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Community

4-H From page 6

and livestock, auctioning them off to the highest bidders, earning hundreds of dollars for their efforts.

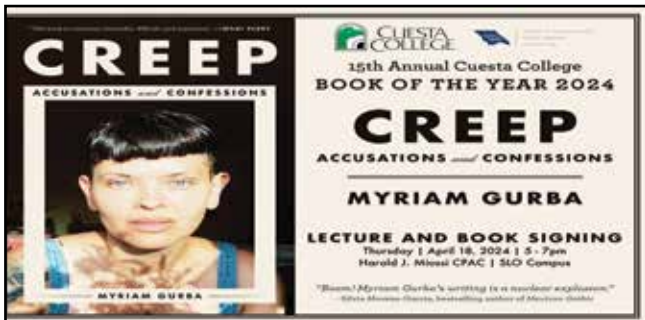
The club is also rebounding from devastating floods last winter at their club farm on Chorro Creek Road. As we reported at the time, San Bernardo Creek, one of several tributaries to Chorro Creek, overflowed a levee and washed down past Chorro Creek Road. It flooded the 4-H Farm, and some private homes along the short country road, located off Quintana Road below Cerro Cabrillo. The floods left mounds of mud and covered the farm's pasture, pens and farmyard.

EBN asked adult club leader, Tammy Haas, for an update. "We had two farm clean up days last year," Haas wrote in an email. "The swine project was able to use the farm for their fair projects last summer."

However, "We are still not completely open again," she added. "The farm has a ground water draining issue, which has slowed the clean up of the excess storm debris and silt that was washed in last Jan. 9 and again March 10, 2023. At this time we just need the ground to dry in order for the kids to use the farm for their projects."

The name 4-H, stands for Head, Heart, Hands and Health, the four values the organization strives to instill in youth. According to the organization's website, (see: www.4-h-learns.org), 4-H "is a positive youth development movement based on skill building activities and meaningful leadership roles supported by caring adult volunteers."

Cuesta's Book of the Year Lecture



Myriam Gurba is the recipient of the Cuesta College Book of the Year honor.

Cuesta College's Book of the Year lecture returns with celebrated queer Latinx author, poet, and artist Myriam Gurba. A Santa Maria native, Gurba brings a unique perspective that challenges conventional narratives of history and society through a bi-cultural lens.

Gurba will appear in person for a lecture and book signing on Thursday, Apr. 18, from 5 - 7 p.m. at the Harold J. Miossi Cultural and Performing Arts Center (CPAC) Mainstage Theater, located on the San Luis Obispo campus.

During the lecture, Gurba will share insights into her works, including her recent essay collection, "Creep: Accusations and Confessions." This provocative collection explores the creep of toxicity and negativity that permeates our lives.

"We are proud to mark our 15th year of bringing influential and dynamic writers to our campus," said Carina Love, Division Chair of the Library and Learning Resource Centers. "Myriam Gurba's bold and insightful voice promises to ignite dialogue and challenge perspectives - we look forward to her visit!"

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Now in its 15th year, the Book of the Year program at Cuesta College continues its tradition of spotlighting renowned authors, offering enlightening lectures, and providing opportunities for book signings. This enriching program is made possible through generous sponsorships by the Cuesta College Friends of the Library and the County of San Luis Obispo Public Libraries.

General admission tickets are available for \$15 and can be purchased at tickets.cuesta.edu. Students can reserve complimentary tickets by emailing cuestabook@cuesta.edu.



New Public Art Display in SLO



The City of San Luis Obispo's Public Art Program and the San Luis Obispo Museum of Art (SLOMA) present a new public sculpture, Tidewalker, by California-based artist April Banks on the lawn at Mission Plaza and SLOMA this Saturday.

"The City is excited to continue our partnership with SLOMA to bring another thought-provoking public art piece to San Luis Obispo," said San Luis Obispo Mayor Erica A. Stewart. "We

strategically set aside one percent of the Capital Improvement Plan funds for public art projects like these because they help create a sense of community, represent diversity of thought and experience, and add to the vibrancy of our home."

San Luis Obispo community members can enjoy Tidewalker for about one year. The sculpture is the most recent addition to the City of San Luis Obispo's public art inventory, which boasts more than 100 pieces, both temporary and permanent, throughout San Luis Obispo.

Tidewalker is a corten steel flora fauna creature that holds a resin soul cabana inside (spirit house) and inverts the colonial hierarchy between nature and the built environment.

Visitors can experience the sculpture as an enveloping protector of land and laborers, offering a refuge for people and species. This sculpture is a part of the artist's ongoing series "Freedom is a Place," which uses radical imagination to rethink our relationship to water, to land and to each other.

The project is supported by the City of San Luis Obispo's Public Art Program and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Poly Cleared for Success

Cal Poly launched a comprehensive fundraising campaign to support Cleared for Success (CFS), a landmark workforce development initiative that will cultivate a talent pipeline of highly skilled STEM students interested in pursuing cybersecurity careers in the public service and national defense sectors.

Cal Poly's CFS program aims to transform the national security landscape. Hosted by the California Cybersecurity Institute (CCI) at Cal Poly, the program will introduce students from the Noyce School of Applied Computing in the College of Engineering (CENG) to foundational security concepts; assist them in their professional journeys as future cybersecurity professionals; and provide them the opportunity to network with leading employers recruiting for this specialized skillset.

While gaining invaluable practical experience through internships and apprenticeships, students will learn the importance of obtaining and maintaining necessary credentials such as security clearances and cybersecurity certifications and will assist in those processes - ultimately improving career placement outcomes for hundreds of highly qualified students in well-paying fields in the public and private sectors.

Gary's Favorite Pieces Vol. 1

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For many prospective graduates, careers in cybersecurity in the public or private sector are often under-considered due to security clearance requirements and the lengthy process typically involved in being cleared. CFS addresses and lifts this potential barrier, creating access to well-paying opportunities for undergraduates who may not have considered pursuing work that requires a security clearance.

"This program will provide students with an unprecedented Learn by Doing opportunity as they collaborate with industry leaders on real-world projects in the field," said Bill Britton, Cal Poly's vice president for information technology, chief information officer, and director of the California Cybersecurity Institute. "Cybersecurity has become the frontline of national defense, and cyberthreats are rapidly evolving to incorporate emerging trends such as generative AI. Cal Poly graduates are uniquely positioned to anticipate the next frontier in cybersecurity intelligence threats to solve high-impact problems at the national level."

The new program will build students' competencies and confidence in this highly specialized arena and allow for opportunities to engage in additional cybersecurity training, research, and potentially work on classified projects under the mentorship of cleared faculty.

At the nexus of theory and applied practice, the program will create new opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and unlock unprecedented opportunities for students, faculty, and national defense in the effort to build a safer world.

"A program like CFS will be very valuable in helping students get acquainted with the enigmatic clearance process," said Dr. Chris Lupo, founding director of the Noyce School of Applied Computing. "The earlier that students receive exposure to concepts of security, the better positioned they will be to make decisions about coursework, internships, and eventually careers they want to pursue. The CFS program will be a benefit to both our students and our external partners that want to hire professionals that need clearances."

Nationally, the cybersecurity field is growing nearly twice as fast as the workforce, and demand has only continued to accelerate, with the number of cybersecurity analyst positions anticipated to increase by 33% through 2031. As companies struggle to recruit for this unique skillset to keep pace with ballooning demand, Cal Poly's visionary new program will be the first in the CSU system and in the state to address the industry's resource deficit by supplying the public sector with a diverse workforce of the nation's brightest talent.

The university has received \$1 million in foundational funding through philanthropic support to launch this initiative. Cal Poly is seeking additional funding to ensure the successful implementation of the program. To learn more or to support the Cleared for Success program with a generous gift, visit the Cal Poly Giving page.

Cayucos Trust Attorney Earns Peer Recognition

An estate planning lawyer based in San Luis Obispo with an office in Cayucos, was honored with two significant recognitions early this year.

Klaus Gottlieb was selected as a "Rising Star" by Super Lawyers for 2024, a distinction that less than 5% of practicing attorneys achieve, underscoring his notable expertise in the field.

He was also awarded a merit scholarship for a master's in law (LLM) program at Golden Gate University, with a focus on taxation and estate planning. This scholarship is aimed at further deepening his legal expertise in these critical areas.

Gottlieb said that the pursuit of a dual LLM degree in Taxation and Estate Planning will allow for a "deeper understanding and knowledge of the complex interplay between tax law and estate planning."

For clients, it ensures that they receive advice grounded in the latest and most comprehensive understanding of tax implications affecting estate planning. This can lead to more effective strategies for asset protection, wealth preservation, and the minimization of tax liabilities.

"The advanced training enables me to navigate the complexities of estate law with greater precision, offering solutions that are tailored to the unique needs and circumstances of each client," Gottlieb said.



Klaus Gottlieb

lieb said. "This level of expertise ensures that clients' estates are managed and transferred according to their wishes, with an eye toward efficiency and legal compliance."

To find out more about the wealth care services offered by Klaus Gottlieb, go to weathcarelawyer.com.

New Events Added for Wood's Fundraiser

Wine 4 Paws, the weekend of wine country fundraising for homeless pets at Woods Humane Society, has extended this year to include new events on Thursday, April 18 and Friday, April 19.

Dracaena Wines has announced a Bring Your Pup Movie Night on April 18. The Downtown Wine District will host a special Bark After Dark on April 19 and 20, during which participating wineries in Downtown Paso Robles will stay open late for Wine 4 Paws. Cinquain Cellars will also join the Friday festivities, offering Yappy Hour with wines by the bottle and Pizza 4 Paws wood-fired pizzas for donations.

On Saturday, April 20, Hayseed & Housdon will host the official kick-off party at Cal Coast Beer Company. The event celebrates the release of the 2021 Pinot Noir "Pray For Love" and 100% of profits from ticket sales will go to Wine 4 Paws. Tickets include food, wine and entertainment by the Mark Adams Band.

More special events for the weekend are being added to the list each day, and currently include more than 10 unique experiences such as a cat café, pet photo portraits, wine blending, pet portrait painting, live music, food trucks, and more. Visit www.wine4paws.com/events to read the most up-to-date list of exciting Wine 4 Paws special events.

The weekend boasts more than 80 participating wineries, cideries, olive oil companies, restaurants, hotels, tour companies, and other businesses, each of which will donate a portion of their proceeds from the weekend to support dogs and cats in need at Woods Humane Society. A list of all participants can be found at www.wine4paws.com.

Woods Humane Society CEO Emily L'Heureux notes that the Wine 4 Paws event comes at a crucial time of the year when puppies and kittens are being born and the shelter begins to be inundated with pets in need of food, medical care, foster care, and adoption services. "The donations that come in from Wine 4 Paws participants will go directly toward vital surgeries, treatments, and hands-on care that help the most vulnerable puppies, kittens, dogs and cats find health, hope and loving families."

Full Wine 4 Paws event details can be found at www.Wine4Paws.com. Woods Humane Society is located at 875 Oklahoma Ave., San Luis Obispo and at 2300 Ramona Rd., Atascadero, and is



Takin' Care of Business Continued on page 12

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'Where There's a Will' One Weekend Only



Kenny Culp as Shakespeare and Samvel Gottlieb as Gordon in the production of 'Where There's a Will' from By the Sea Productions.

Morro Bay's By the Sea Productions presents a staged reading of the romantic comedy "Where There's a Will" written by Joe Simonelli and directed by Rhonda Crowfoot. Through a quirk of Fate, William Shakespeare is transported to the Staten Island home of Gordon Coldridge, a struggling playwright with a pushy manager and an estranged girlfriend. Who better to help with love and writer's block than the Bard himself?

Featuring Samvel Gottlieb, Kenny Culp, Janice Peters and Anja Christie-Johnson, 'Where There's a Will' plays one weekend only, April 12-14 at 545 Shasta Ave. in Morro Bay. Showtimes are Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m. Tickets are available online at bytheseaproductions.org or call 805-776-3287.

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OUT & ABOUT

WITH THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS

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

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

Here I Come!



By Catherine "Kiki" Kornreich

The oft admonished "don't wait for illness, to value wellness" hits us all at some point.

About a month ago, my brain reminded me that I'd let that lil' suggestion fade, when my knee gave out. I'd injured it 25 years ago on a wildly fun ski trip. I've had ups and downs with the pain that entire time, but my knee finally threw in the towel.

I know that in the scheme of things, a knee replacement is low on the list of life-altering diagnoses, but it was sure a wake up call on how much my limbs have been taken for granted. Well, really, all of the gazillion functions that a body serves.

I was camping in Avila Beach and was just beginning to pack up and head home when the knee simply buckled. For a few minutes, I couldn't move.

Somehow, I managed to load everything, empty the tanks, and mosey on. Granted, the thirty-minute task took about three hours, but I succeeded.

As we all know, it takes a bit of a wait to schedule non-emergency surgeries, and the wait is dreadful. I had a transatlantic cruise scheduled a month after the collapse, and immediately thought I'd have to cancel. But then I realized that I'd be in pain at home, why not be in pain while having a good time?

It was a fun, if not exhausting and agonizing trip. I took a collapsible cane and rented a scooter for the ship. I wore a knee

brace night and day and started each day with the cane. When the pain became unbearable, I'd slide onto the scooter.

It was a geriatric clientele (maybe because of all the sea days?), so I fit right in with the knee braces, walking sticks, canes, walkers, scooters and wheelchairs. Many of us formed a tribe and compared our equipment and abilities.

With my cane, I raced a couple of old men (the ladies didn't seem to be into racing), and I'd often let them win.

With the scooter, however, there was a bit of a learning curve.

On my first outing, I discovered that you do not turn around in an elevator. I'd driven into an almost-empty car and tried to flip a U-ie. I crashed into one wall and broke the little attached basket. I backed up to continue with the turn and ran over a tiny Asian woman's foot. (She was very sweet and said I only got her shoe, but then she hobbled out on the next floor). Then as I backed out of the elevator on my floor, (gave up on the U-ie) a kindly older gentleman held the door open for me. He yelled, "STOP! You're gonna go over my foot!!!" He quit on me, walked away, and the elevator doors crashed into me.

But I got much better with my maneuvers and was on fire. Needless to say, the scooter ladies also refused races.

But here's the big lesson. During the past 25 years, with the off and on pain, I could usually do regular things without thinking about it. Get up and get a glass of water, say. Walk across the room. Just the simplest of things took no forethought. No effort.

Now, every step requires analysis. Do I really need it? Can I wait until I have to get up for something else?

So, I have been appreciating my worn and abused body every day. Maybe every few hours. The list of reliable functions is endless. I am grateful for all.

The full knee replacement is scheduled for next month, and I'm beyond excited.

Black Hill, here I come!

Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Mark your calendars because the American Association of University Women, Morro Bay Branch's Morro Bay Garden Tour is back! The tour is scheduled for Sunday, April 28 from 12-5 p.m. There are four gardens featured, all worthy of a visit, however; the tour is self-guided and can be enjoyed at the pleasure of your own pace.

Tickets are on sale now. They are \$15 and can be purchased at Volumes of Pleasure in Los Osos, Coalesce Bookstore in Morro Bay, Farm Supply (locations include SLO, AG and Paso Robles), My805Tix.com or from any AAUW member. This is the major fundraiser for the Morro Bay Branch of the American Association of University Women. Proceeds are used to fund community projects and scholarships.

Takin' Care of Business From page 11

open to the public daily from 12-5 p.m., with adoption hours from 12-4 p.m. For more information about Woods, visit www.WoodsHumane.org or call (805) 543-9316. Pictured is Monch, who is available for adoption.

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Community

Also, AAUW will meet on Saturday, April 13 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 about our Annual Garden Tour, April 28th. Everyone's welcome.

The Morro Bay High School Drama Club presents the play "Beauty and the Beast" as a musical comedy with Josephine Davis as Belle and Elliot Miranda as the Beast. Students will perform, sing, staff and produce the play in the brand-new theater located on campus. The public is welcome. Performances are Friday and Saturday, April 19 and 20, at 7 p.m. with a matinee on Saturday, April 20, at 2 p.m. Then again on Friday and Saturday, April 26 and 27, at 7 p.m. with a matinee on Saturday, April 27, at 2 p.m. Adult tickets are \$15, with tickets for Student/Child at \$12. Morro Bay High School Theater is located on the high school campus at 235 Atascadero Road, Morro Bay. Tickets can be purchased online at www.mbhsdrama.com. For questions contact K. Kostecka at kkostecka@slcusd.org.



Take part in the South Bay Women's Network Spring Fling High Tea Fundraiser on April 21 from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Savory palette Wine Bar, 601 Embarcadero #5 in Morro Bay. This event serves as the inaugural fundraiser for 2024, aiming to collect funds for our SBWN Cuesta College Female Reentry Student Scholarship Program. Show your support by "filling our teapot" at our Spring Fling High Tea Fundraiser. Make a donation and take a guess at the total amount in our teapot by the event's conclusion for a chance to win our High Tea Gift Basket. The goal is to raise \$10,000 this year to grant \$1,000 to 10 recipients.

Come dressed in your fancy hats and Sunday best to sip tea and sample savory delights. Be part of an afternoon filled with friends, fun, and a most stylish hat contest! The event features: high tea menu with finger sandwiches, soup, salad, and desserts; tea, wine and beer; high tea themed games; a fancy hat contest and prizes.

Support the SBWN cause by "filling our teapot." Donate and guess the total amount in the teapot at the end of the event for a chance to win a gift basket. Proceeds benefit SBWN Scholarship Program. Tickets are \$60 and can be purchased at my805tix.com/e/sbwn.

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

- 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! Learn a few different techniques to patch your clothing as well as add beauty to it. Supplies are provided, just bring your clothing item. Adult
- Book Discussion - Thursday, April 18, 5:30 - 6:45 p.m. "Horse" by Geraldine Brooks. No need to sign up ahead of time. Just show up! Call the library for details.
- Button Making - Friday, April 19, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. Create your very own fantastic pieces of flair using our button maker! For ages 8-18.
- Plant Swap - Saturday, April 20, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Calling all plant enthusiasts, newbies, and everyone in between! Help us celebrate Earth Day by bringing along any plants, cuttings, starts and pots you'd like to share; then take home a new plant for yourself. Don't have a plant to share? We'll have extras, so come anyway! Also, check out our seed library while you're here to inspire your spring garden.
- Teen Advisory Board - Saturday, April 20, 3 - 4 p.m. Calling all teens! Looking for volunteer or community service hours? Help Librarian Emily run the Teen Advisory Board! Participation can be listed on job, scholarship and college applications. Help plan teen events, create content for social media, create contest ideas, recommend books, movies and more. Tell me what rad stuff you want to see happen! There will be snacks. For ages 13-18.
- Nintendo Switch - Friday, April 26, 2:30-4:30 p.m. Master your gaming skills and make new friends with our Nintendo Switch! We will provide one Switch for up to 4 players at a time - feel free to bring your own too. Games include Mario Kart and Just Dance. School age.



Adults and youth looking for outdoor activities over summer break now have another fun, family-friendly option: group or private golf lessons taught by PGA instructors Terri Benson and Michael Sameniago.

Whether you are looking to refine your golfing skills or are new to the game, Laguna Lake Golf Course lessons can help you reach your goals. For more information, please call the Laguna Lake Golf Course at 805-781-7309.

For more recreational activities, adventures, volunteer op-

portunities and events, check out the SLO Parks and Recreation 2024 Spring/Summer Activity Guide at www.sloreactivities.org.



The Morro Coast Audubon Society's April In-Person Annual Members' Meeting and Community Program takes place April 15 at 7 p.m. at Unitarian Universalist Church of San Luis Obispo, 2201 Lawton Ave., SLO. This is the second Annual Birds of SLO and Northern Santa Barbara counties curated and presented by Al King.

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

No signup/registration is required to attend.

The presentation is an all-new program that showcasing the splendor of birds that live in the varied habitats from sandy beaches to oak woodlands, savannahs and alkali flats. The wide range of birds that live in or pass through these landscapes is truly amazing. Join us as we get a close-up look at these birds as they live their lives, in photos taken by some of the Central Coast's finest nature photographers. The program will be set to original music created and recorded by the curator and presenter of the program, Al King.

MCAS is excited to offer this program as an in-person event. If you are unable to attend in person, you will be able to view the program just a few days later, on our YouTube Channel.

Readers are asked to consider helping out with setting out cookies, coffee and tea before the program, and cleaning up afterwards. MCAS especially needs a kitchen clean-up crew to help the event go smoothly. For questions or to get involved, contact Wendy at wendy@morrocoastaudubon.org.

Join the City of San Luis Obispo's Office of Sustainability and Natural Resources and the SLO County Library for the Sustainable SLO Earth Month Event Series highlighting the champions and community organizations that are leading efforts to reduce local pollution and address the climate crisis.

Remaining events include:

- 4/13 - Fix Your Stuff, Fix the Planet Lecture and Repair Race (iFixit)
- 4/13 - Kids Garden Day (One Cool Earth)
- 4/17 - Recycle Right Workshop (Science Discovery)
- 4/20 - SLO County Earth Fest at Laguna Lake Park (Earth

Events Continued on page 14

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR IN CONCERT!

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Community

Events From page 13

Day Alliance)

- 4/22 - Good Fire and Indigenous Leadership in SLO (yak tit u tit u yak tilhini)
- 4/22 - Compost Application Tour and Discussion at Johnon Ranch (CSL-RCD)
- 4/27 - Keys for Trees Planting (ECOSLO)
- 5/4 - Speedweave Patch and Clothing Repair Workshop (SLO County Library)

For more details about events, go to www.slocity.org/SustainableSLO.

...

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

- **Button Making** - Wednesday, April 17, 3 - 5 p.m. Create your very own fantastic pieces of flair using our button maker! For ages 8-18.
- **Nintendo Switch** - Wednesday, April 24, 3 - 5 p.m. Master your gaming skills and make new friends with our Nintendo Switch! We will provide one Switch for up to 4 players at a time - feel free to bring your own too. Games include Mario Kart and Just Dance.
- **Create a Thaumatrope** - Saturday, April 27, 10 - 11:30 a.m. Join presenter Luna as we learn how to create clay totems - inspired by los Atlantes de Tula, ancient warrior statues from Toltec culture. For ages 3+. This program is presented in Spanish and English.
- **Teen Advisory Board** - Saturday, April 27, 3 - 4 p.m. Looking for volunteer or community service hours? Help Librarian Emily plan teen events, create contest ideas, recommend books, movies and more. There will be snacks! For ages 13-18.

...

More than 100 different types of tomato plants will be available at Cal Poly's annual Tomato Spectacular plant sale from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on April 20 at the Horticulture Unit near the Poly Plant Shop. This one-day event will be accompanied by live music on the lawn at the unit's entrance while customers wait.

Brandywine, Kellogg's Breakfast, Vintage Wine, and a selection of cherry tomato plants, including Nature's Bites, are some of the unique cultivars that will be available during the student-run event, one of several hands-on opportunities offered by Cal Poly's College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences. A catalogue of available varieties is at polyplantshop.com.

This year the program is directed by a team of five students who have grown more than 5,000 tomato plants from seeds to provide home gardeners with quality plants that will produce fresh tomatoes throughout the summer. Students sow the seeds and grow the plants in campus greenhouses.

The plants are \$6 each and are available on a first-come, first-served basis, with no holds or reservations made in advance. Customers are encouraged to bring boxes and/or wagons to transport plants to their vehicles.

The sale takes place at the Environmental Horticultural Sciences Building (No. 48) on Via Carta Road off Highland Drive. Parking will be provided for free in lot H14. Customer inquiries can be sent here: polyplantshop.com/contact-us.

...

The next El Moro Elfin Forrest Third Saturday Walk, Butterflies, takes place on April 20. Pat Brown will introduce several native plants and talk about the butterflies that sip their nectar and the caterpillars that eat their leaves. She will lead you to hangouts of variable checkerspot, Morro blue, swallowtail, hairstreak, and other butterflies that make the Elfin Forest their home. Bring a pair of close-focusing (5- 10 ft.) binoculars. Easy walk of 1 mile, 1.5 to 2 hours. Meet at 15th St. Reservations required at walks@elfin-forest.org with the number of guests in subject line. Photo by Pat Brown



...

With a retro nod to the 50s fascination with outer space, Art Center Morro Bay asked artists to tap into their personal "outer limits" for this unusual exhibit. We prompted artists to draw on their childhood memories of such TV shows as "The

Outer Limits" and the "Twilight Zone." Or a different angle of the same subject could come from more recent obsessions over mysterious white balloons, the colonization of other planets, or the Webb telescope providing us with mind-boggling celestial glimpses from the beginning of time. Most importantly, we ask artists to question their own personal "outer limits" as creators in this new world where, for example, artificial intelligence is currently challenging our perception of creativity.

Regardless of the inspiration, the purpose of this exhibit is to play with the edge and to push the limits and test the outer boundaries. See the exhibit through May 13 at Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St. For more information, call (805) 772-2504 or go to www.artcentermorrobay.org. Photo by Linda DeRosa

...

The 2024 Central Coast Guitar Show is on Saturday, April 20 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Building, 801 Grand Ave. in San Luis Obispo.

Admission at the door is \$15 (\$1 off if you bring in an instrument or amp to sell or trade)

Discounted advance sale admission tickets available at www.My805Tix.com.

For the price of admission, those attending the show may "walk-in" as many new, used, old or rare guitars, amplifiers, effects, parts or other musical items as you can carry to sell or trade at one time at no extra charge. In fact, get \$1 off admission for walking in your gear to the show! There will be buyers who may be interested in buying or trading for your gear. For more info, call or text (805) 431-3067, or send an email to CentralCoastGuitarShow@charter.net.

...

Send your event listing at least three weeks in advance to Editor@EsteroBayNews.com. Make sure to include the who, what, why, where and when of the event and contact information. Please, type out in paragraph form rather than attaching flyers. We do not guarantee publication but try to include as many as we can.



Cold water can help reduce inflammation and associated pain among other health benefits. Photo submitted

I'm Not Getting in That Ocean, It's Too Dang Cold!

By Natalie Teichmann and Jon Nowaczyk

Did you know that cold water therapy has amazing benefits? You don't even need to get all the way into the water, just start with a toe dip then let the water rush over the ankles. Cold water can help reduce inflammation, relieving localized pain. If your feet are swollen, you have a foot injury or other bodily aches and pains, then cold water can do you good after the initial shock wears off, which it quickly does.

Our feet are meant to touch the earth and we are blessed to live on the stunning Central Coast with the ocean right here. Don't take it for granted. Next time you go for a morning walk, take those shoes off and get those toes wet.

Everyday Wellness Continued on page 17

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www.morrobaycarshow.org

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- Rotary Club of Morro Bay
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- SLO Noor Foundation
- Central Coast Dragon Boat Association
- Community Thanksgiving Dinners
- CASA of SLO
- Morro Bay in Bloom

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Community

Celebrating Lionesses and Dogs

Photos by Neil Farrell

The Cayucos Lioness Club's Annual Easter Dog Parade saw poodles of every size and type and their best friends gather Saturday, March 30 at Cayucos Pier for a march down Front Street and around to Ocean Avenue.

Dozens of dogs entered the parade wearing all manner of fancy garb — from a tutu and bunny ears to a cute bumble bee costume — the dogs seemed as happy to be there as the people were.

The event is a fundraiser for the Club's vital Mutt Mitt Program that provides dispensers and plastic dog waste bags at public access points all along the beach. The club has 50 dispensers spread out from Toro Creek to the Estero Bluffs State Park; provides over 275,000 bags free to the public along with 10 trashcans to collect the bags (otherwise folks might leave them along the trails). They also pay a company to empty the cans 2-3 times a week. That company specializes in composting pet wastes. Without this program, the town's beautiful beaches would not be so enjoyable.

The Club relies on donations from the public to keep the Mutt Mitt Program going. They are also regular fixtures at the Independence Day Parade on July 4. For more on the Club's activities, see the website at: cayucoslioness.org.

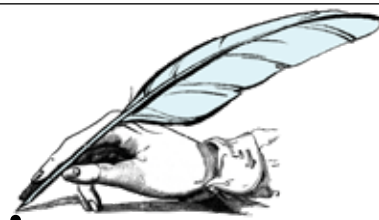


Letter

To

The Editor

Greenwashing at Work in Wind Energy



I want to thank Susan and Mark Garman for calling attention to the spread of misinformation regarding offshore wind energy projects. ("The Monster Among Us" Vol. 6, issue 6) Before addressing that matter, however, I need to speak to the fact that the Garmans' first impulse was to malign and insult hundreds of people in our Central Coast community who have valid concerns and questions regarding the impact of offshore wind energy on our environment, community and economy. Their claim that REACT Alliance was created, and is now controlled by powerful fossil-fuel loving elites "to do their bidding" is laughable, and sad. Maligning the messenger to discredit the message is a lazy, age-old tactic that only serves to squash open dialog and prevent important conversations.

Unfortunately, it seems that the authors have bought into one type of misinformation, known as "greenwashing," which paints wind energy companies in the most positive light and attempts to obscure the fact that many wind energy companies ARE in fact fossil fuel companies. For example, let's look at Norwegian-owned Equinor, one of the three lease holders in the Morro Bay Wind Energy Area. Equinor is partly owned by British Petroleum (BP), which, according to the EPA, was implicated in "the largest spill of oil in the history of marine oil drilling operations" in 2010 when their Deepwater Horizon oil drilling rig exploded and released over 400 million barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico causing one of the worst environmental disasters of our time. I urge the Garmans to research how BP responded to those harmed by this tragedy to better understand the true nature of the multinational corporation they wish to invite into our community and entrust with our most precious natural resources.

While in research mode, the authors may also want to investigate how many millions of dollars the Sierra Club, Greenpeace and the other environmental organizations have taken directly from Big Wind, as well as from foundations and philanthropic organizations who are also invested in and profit from wind energy development. Let's take Audubon for example. In 2023, REACT Alliance board members attended a Congressional hearing in Sacramento on the impacts of offshore wind and heard a presentation given by Garry George, Director of the Clean Energy Initiative for the National Audubon Society. During the presentation, Mr. George admitted to receiving \$12.5 million dollars from wind developers for a thermal imaging technology system to survey birds around wind energy installations. Not surprisingly, he concluded from those studies that the birds "will learn to go around wind farms". The Morro Bay Wind Energy Area, however, is directly in the Pacific Flyway which has been a migratory path for hundreds of species of birds for millennium. The migration patterns are ingrained in their DNA.

Coincidentally, Gary George was recently promoted to Chairman of the Board for Renewable Energy Wildlife Institute, which is funded by numerous energy corporations, many who profit from offshore wind, including the aforementioned BP as well as Orsted, the biggest name in Offshore Wind development. Orsted is also the largest energy company in Denmark. They were formally known as Danish Oil and Natural Gas.

Nicole Dorfman
REACT Alliance Board of Directors

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News

Lifetime of Benefits From page 1



A group of Infinite Music students during a performance at the Performing Arts Center in San Luis Obispo. Photo submitted

Infinite Music, a Morro Bay based non-profit, wants to ensure that K-12 students have an opportunity to experience music education and appreciation in communities and schools where kids are underserved in some way. Programs are supported by grants, donors, and school funding when applicable. Students are not charged enrollment fees.

"There is so much guiding research that demonstrates how children do better in school and life when music education is an ongoing part of their education," said Sarah Mason, founder-director of Infinite Music. "It benefits kids socially, emotionally, and academically, and the sooner they receive music education the better.

"I was fortunate to study music as a young child — piano privately, and flute in school — and it has been a lifelong passion of mine. It was also a time when music was a big part of school curriculums, all through elementary, middle, and high schools. I often refer to it as the golden age of music education. Unfortunately, that's not always the case today."

Infinite Music's goal is to provide equitable and comprehensive music programs for local students at all grade levels, and to assist countywide schools and other learning-based organizations that are challenged to provide music and arts programs for their students.

Since 2013, Infinite Music has provided more than 2,000 local youth in San Luis Obispo and northern Santa Barbara counties the opportunity to experience the transformative power of music. They offer choir, ukulele, guitar, world rhythm & movement, and drumming from schools as far south as Guadalupe and as far north as Paso Robles and west to Morro Bay and Los Osos. Currently, more than 500 students are enrolled in music lessons.

"Teaching music is more than just introducing students to beats, notes and songs," Mason said. "It provides them an opportunity to discover and experience what they are good at, and what motivates and inspires them. It opens endless possibilities to their learning potential."

Group lessons take place after school, and tuition assistance is provided for those students enrolled in the Schools Lunch Program. Currently there are 29 students on the Central Coast receiving free private instruction in either instrument or voice as part of Infinite Music's Rising Stars scholarship program. They will perform a recital for their friends and family in late April at



One of Infinite Music's teachers and elementary school students from Infinite Music's World Drumming class. Photo submitted

the Morro Bay High School Theater.

"Many kids that could most benefit from an arts education are the very ones who lack accessibility and affordability," Mason said. "Music is one of the many things they miss out on. Infinite Music strives to bring music into communities and schools where kids are underserved in some way and provide them musical opportunities."

Spring Instrument Drive

Through the month of April, Infinite music is holding their Spring Instrument Drive and welcomes the donation of any type of quality used music instruments that are in functional condition.

"We welcome donations of all types of instruments and sound equipment year-round," Mason said. "We cannot accept acoustic pianos, but we do welcome electric keyboards."

PA and sound equipment are also welcome, such as headphones, microphones, speakers, mixing boards and more.

Depending on the value and condition, Infinite Music then distributes select instruments to deserving students in their youth music programs or sometimes sells the instruments with 100% of the proceeds going toward student lessons and purchasing additional instruments.

"We are truly amazed at the generosity of our local community," said Mason. "We remind everyone that instruments deserve to be played so if through the years you've moved on to playing a newer instrument, and you're still holding on to your very first instrument, perhaps collecting dust in a closet, we can put that treasured friend in the hands of a deserving music student."

Since the nonprofit's inception, Infinite Music has received over 350 donated instruments.

Robyn's Legacy

Infinite Music was inspired by the love and enduring musical life of Robyn Brancart, Mason's brother, a gifted singer and songwriter who lost his fight with ALS, a degenerative motor neuron disease, in February 2012.

"All the life skills important to our brother are what Infinite Music was inspired by - a medium to foster joyous expression, empowerment, collaboration and common ground," Mason said. "Our brother inspired us with his musical talents, his love of education, and starting Infinite Music was a way for us to turn our grief into a positive. He would be absolutely charmed to see all the kids whose lives have been touched through Infinite Music," says Mason.



A trumpet that was donated to Infinite Music during an instrument drive. Photo submitted

With Robyn's legacy always in her heart, Mason finds her own fulfillment at the helm of the organization.

"It's rewarding to see how they [youth] use the discipline that goes along with making music and apply that to the challenges they face in life. It's really just the pure joy of watching a young person focused and, in the moment, totally immersed in what they are doing, whether it's singing in a choir, feeling the rhythm, or performing in an ensemble or solo.

"I'm hopeful Infinite Music can continually provide as many kids as possible the opportunity to experience the power and benefits of music and fill in the gaps where music education and appreciation are missing for young people in our area."

Instruments are only part of the musical journey. Infinite Music awards individual private and/or small group instrumental and vocal instruction to deserving students, 7th through 12th grades. Students are evaluated for the award based on academic achievement, musical talent, and financial need.

"All of our instrumental and vocal instructors are professionals and paid for their service," Mason said. "We are proud to support all of these excellent teachers— some of the best music teachers and educators in the area. It is especially gratifying to see the musical community that is developing through these wonderful interactions."

Over the years, Mason said there are many success stories that stand out in her mind, but one that remains at the forefront followed a performance in the one of the county's best venues, the PAC in San Luis Obispo.

A group of 4th and 5th grade students enrolled in Infinite Music ukulele lessons at a local elementary school had the opportunity to learn and perform on stage with world renowned performer and ukulele player Jake Shimabukuro.

"That was pretty remarkable, and he was so wonderful with the kids," Mason said. "After they played there, they wanted to know where their 'next gig' was going to be."

To donate an instrument, call Infinite Music at 805-225-1899, or email support@infinitemusic.org. Instruments can be dropped off at their office or their volunteer staff will provide pick up service. For more information about Infinite Music's mission and programs, visit www.infinitemusic.org

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News

Testing From page 1

the high energy sound testing gets underway. High energy sound waves are feared to be a danger to marine mammals — whales and dolphins — that use hearing for finding food, navigation and communication. High energy sound blasts like with these tests, is feared to cause hearing damage and is suspected of causing dozens of wright whales and dolphins to strand themselves off the East Coast. Thus far, the wind energy companies doing those surveys, have denied being the cause and the government has not identified the cause of the whale deaths.

The REACT Alliance (see: www.reactalliance.org/off-shore-wind) stands opposed to what it terms the industrialization of the ocean.

"Most folks have no idea of the scope of the wind farm facilities [1,000-foot tall and needing a square mile each]," REACT Alliance said on its website, "the planned industrialization of our small local ports, the potentially ruinous outcome for our current thriving local economies, the devastation of our local fisheries, and finally the extreme negative impacts to our local marine ecosystem, one of the richest and most biologically productive on earth."

The issue has two unlikely allies — environmentalists and commercial fishers — coming together in a common cause to stop the wind farms.

But that is also not the only somewhat odd couple in this saga. Commercial fishermen are also cooperating with the State and the wind companies, according to Equinor.

"Equinor is a member of the California Coastal Commission 7c Offshore Wind and Fisheries Working group," the company's email reads.

Equinor Wind, LLC is one of three companies that won the roughly 80,000-acre lease sites sold off by BOEM last July. The others were Golden State Wind, Inc., and Invenergy California Offshore, Inc.

Equinor's lease area is the most northerly of the three, with GSW and Invenergy located in the middle and to the south respectively.

Equinor paid \$130 million, GSW paid \$150 million and Invenergy \$145 million for the rights to try and build the wind farms. The initial capacity identified by BOEM was 3 gigawatts (3,000 megawatts) total, but the wind companies apparently don't plan to stop there. Atlas Wind's website alone identified its lease site as having capacity for 2 GW.

Everyday Wellness From page 15

Not only can it help relieve pain and inflammation, but cold water can also boost our mood and shift feelings of depression or frustration. So next time your spouse ticks you off, take a cold dip before things get more heated.

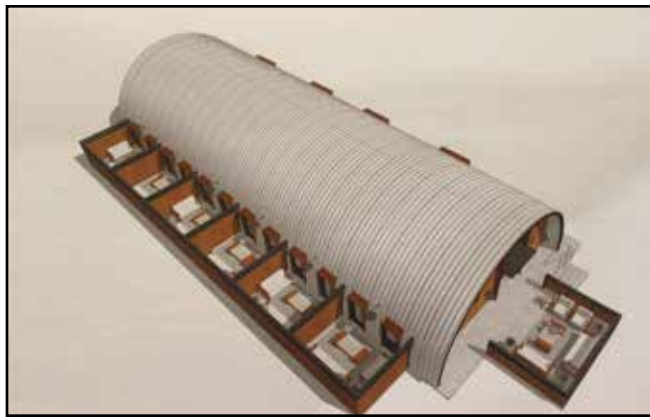
If you are feeling up to a full system reboot- take a quick dip in that ocean or even a quick cold shower at home. This will increase your circulation, redistributing freshly oxygenated blood to the body. If that's not enough to get you in the water, another benefit is enhanced immunity. The shock of cold water on the system activates leukocytes in your body, those are the blood cells that fight off infections.

The information above comes from UCLA Health. If you are unsure if cold water is right for you, check with your physician.

We'll see you at the beach!

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

New Life From page 1



Conceptual drawing shows the Quonset Inn, as it would look from the back corner along Morro Avenue, with small outdoor spaces for each room and a larger outdoor lounging space outside the hotel's rear doors.

says he had to do a coring of the slab in preparation for cutting out channels for plumbing that must be installed for the hotel.

The Solus have a long history in the lodging industry. John recalls that their first hotel was in Solvang, where they could have been snake-bit from the start. "We closed escrow on Sept. 11, 2001," he says of one of the nation's most infamous dates.

When they came to Morro Bay they owned, remodeled and sold several existing properties. The Villager, now Coastal Breeze, was the first; Days Inn, now Harbor House Inn was second; The Sandpiper, now Beach Bungalows was third; the Pleasant Inn, no name change, fourth; and most recently, The Embarcadero Inn, now 456 Embarcadero, have all gotten the Solus' touch.

After all those successes, John's life had changed. "Now," John laughs, "I'm an avocado farmer." He explains that the family bought a 40-acre ranch on Hwy 41 across from the Grange Hall and planted 1,500 avocado trees.

"In 9 months," he says, "I've lost 10 trees," which he says is great considering they expected to lose many more than that. Joan's taken a different route, working at Morro Bay High School as a school secretary, a job she says she absolutely loves.

Orion and Ethan are slated to graduate college this year — Orion from Boise State in Idaho where he's studied hospitality management; Ethan will graduate from U.C. San Diego where he studied real estate planning and development. The Quonset Inn will be a project they plan to do as a family.

John, who is a long-time Rotary Club member and past president, said his old partner, Atascadero resident Harvey, a general contractor, is also along for this ride. In the 2000s, John explains, they developed subdivisions in Sanger. Together they built over 450 homes.

Despite possessing a wealth of knowledge about the motel business and tons of experience in breathing new life into old properties, what made him think an old Quonset Hut would make a good hotel project?

He says they are basing the idea on the Butler Hotel in San Luis Obispo. That project was once an industrial building dating back to the 1960s.

"It was built for farming," John says. It was a mill and other things too before it was transformed into what still looks like an industrial, metal structure on the outside, but is a modern, even plush, 3-Star hotel inside. "That's where we got this idea," John explains.

The Quonset Hut has been many things over the decades, however, its use by the Navy is a little fuzzy. It may have been the base supply depot or a mess hall. Since it was purchased, it's been used for many things, most recently, an antiques store.



Side-by-side images show the Quonset Hut as it is today [on the left], and what it will be remodeled to look like on the right.

"Brent Knowles [a local contractor] remembers having Cub Scout meetings here," John says. "Tons of people have owned this place."

Back in the mid-1980s, John says, the late Reg Whibley built the false façade that is still attached to the front of the building. It's a similar concept to what Reg did to another Quonset Hut a few blocks farther down Main Street. But that one is an art deco design.

That unique building's façade was built in the early 1990s, to class up the front of an equipment storage yard and shop for Whibley's former business, Associated Pacific Constructors.

John says their plans are to remove the false façade and restore the original look of the Quonset Hut with their remodel. Since it was modified back in the '80s, John says, that meant the building couldn't be considered a historic structure, which normally might be a problem for a developer, but Joan says they want to honor the building's history. "We want to honor the military people who came here and then went off and did great things for our country."

Inside, the Solus' hut is cavernous, with a vaulted ceiling like one might see at a school gymnasium. The motel rooms will essentially be boxes within the overall structure, so there'll be a hallway down the middle and a huge, open-air space above the rooms' ceilings.

It also will use a modern method for booking rooms, as John says there won't always be someone on site and check-ins will mainly be done online. "All motels close at night," he says.

John notes that each room will have a single bed, smiling when a reporter gives a puzzled look at that comment. That's as in, adults only, he explains, though they will have some rooms with adjoining doors, making it possible for couples to bring their kids and put them in the room next door.

"A few hotels in town are already doing this," John says.

Joan will oversee the interior décor, along with a design consultant. The plan is "to lean towards bringing in the feeling of the original intent, the military," Joan explains. "We want to honor that but not be overly masculine and have people sleep on a cot," she laughs.

The plan is to use different colors and textures in the rooms, making them unique in many ways. They will use different woods and furniture; things that would have been in common use 100-years ago. The design is right now being worked out and they will have a lot of decisions to make, but one has already been made, the Quonset Hut will remain.

"I'm as excited about saving this building as the design," she says. "I see this as an under-utilized property in our community. This is a great opportunity for our family."

She declined to say how much they paid for the building, but a check on the Redfin website, shows it had been listed at \$567,000.

The Solus are eager to get started. "In the end we'll have something the community can be proud of," Joan says.

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News

Moving Forward From page 1

celebrating their first anniversary November 21, 2023. Had they planned for a tourism market economy to make it through what Visit Morro Bay calls the “shoulder season?” As an example of such a new business to Morro Bay, I wondered how they had prepared for the anticipated slow times. Owners Rafael Hernandez and Wendy and Hector Morales shared what they did.

Instantly, Rafael wanted me to thank the locals – their loyal customers - for returning regularly during the slow months. “It is all about our customers and the relationship we try to build with them.”

Wendy added, “We decided to call our first year in business our community builder year. It took six months of hard work to open the restaurant. We even opened for dining before our liquor license came through. Once we celebrated our grand opening, we had agreed we all needed to spend our first year being out there and getting to know our community.”

So besides taking on extra duty while serving new customers at the restaurant from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily with a brief break Sundays to close at 3 p.m., the partners personally attended, sponsored and catered breakfast for nine months at the newly created Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce themed breakfast meetings on the third Wednesday of each month. Rafael, Wendy and periodically Hector were also present at the Chamber-sponsored Shop, Sip & Stroll events downtown and on the Embarcadero. They offered street tacos at the Morro Bay Maritime Family Fun Day and participated in special events for the Morro Bay and Cayucos Rotary Clubs and an anniversary event for the Grizzly Youth Academy based in SLO County.

Wendy was particularly proud that her signature Carrot Cake sold for \$700 at the Chamber’s annual Gala event with proceeds benefiting local scholarship. Both families have students in local elementary and high schools.

The Hernandez and Morales families relocated to SLO County from larger markets – Santa Barbara and San Diego. Rafael said, “In Santa Barbara the pace was constant. It took years to get to know people, but in Morro Bay I feel I already know so many of our customers.”

The partners realized it was not only refreshing to get to know Morro Bay customers, but it has been invaluable marketing. Their new “friends” became ambassadors to let others know they enjoyed the cuisine and that they were available to offer onsite and offsite catering.

“We are always open to trying just about anything our customers suggest,” said Wendy. “We have even hosted a Celebration of Life at the restaurant.”

Cal Poly, Morro Bay fire and police departments have had recent group gatherings and during December they hosted holiday parties. The original restaurant configuration came with a private dining room where they can host at least a dozen guests for meetings and special events.

When it comes to longevity in the industry, the partners have a combined expertise of more than 72 years. Rafael spent twenty-four years at Pepe’s Mexican Restaurant in Santa Barbara/Goleta. He worked his way up from washing dishes to manager of the popular eatery. His management skills were further developed while owning a Mexican Market in Santa Barbara for six years. In 2017 he had the opportunity to move to SLO County. He purchased Nucci’s Pizza on Foothill. However, with a long history as a chef, he preferred to offer patrons his authentic recipes sourced from growing up in Zacatecas, Mexico. Rafael said he also missed, “...the camaraderie with my customers.” So, in 2020 he sold the pizzeria and opened Poncho’s Mexican Restaurant, located on Johnson in SLO.

“My entire family works with my wife, Adela Christina, and I in the business,” he said.

Authentic flavors Rafael grew up enjoying have always been important to him. When he discovered Hector and Wendy felt the same way, he suggested they become partners in a restaurant in Morro Bay while his family continued to operate Poncho’s. Their combined family recipes have been recreated at both locations.

“Hector and Rafael working together in the kitchen add the spice to our flavors,” Wendy said with a smile. “They create the magic.”

Rafael hired Hector when the Morales family moved to San Luis Obispo from San Diego. The couple had operated an Asian restaurant, Pick-up Stix, for eighteen years. Rafael hired Hector at Poncho’s while Wendy worked at the Hungry Fisherman in Morro Bay for six years.

What is the most asked question, I wondered, assuming it was which authentic menu item was their personal favorite? But patrons are more curiosity about the origins of their unique decorating ambiance.

“It is based on the traditional Mexican Catrina, a symbol of life in our culture,” said Wendy. “For us it represents happiness and remembrances of our ancestors.”

Rafael added, “Life, death and color - a catrina dresses in many colors.”

I had to ask what their most popular menu item was. I was not surprised it was one of their humongous burritos – the Shrimp Burrito – as well as the Grilled Fish Tacos and the Morro Bay Enchilada. For breakfast my daughter’s favorite is their La Katrina French Toast. She also loves the Churros. I think of my mother’s custard every time I order their flan. A new favorite I have yet to try is the unique Molcajete with shrimp, avocado, and cactus spears served in a volcanic rock bowl.

Check out their website www.lakatrinamexicancochina.com There is often something new like Monday Seniors’ Night offering a 15% discount on food ordered.

The partners requested I let everyone know how blessed they feel by the community’s welcome and support these past fourteen months. What I personally believe is that it works both ways. We are blessed that La Katrina’s owners have chosen to operate their business in Morro Bay and choose to reinvest back into our community with their time and resources. Working together we are all better served and build better communities.



Rafael Hernandez serving at a Chamber of Commerce breakfast meeting in 2023. Photo courtesy of Wendy Morales



Traditional Mexican Catrinas represent life, death, and happiness with a variety of color inside the eatery. Photo courtesy of Wendy Morales



College Readiness 101

By, Robin Haas, M.A., Ed.

Tips for College Visits

With summer around the corner now is the time to start planning for college visits, especially if your student is a rising junior or senior. Without a doubt, a college visit is the best way to determine whether a college fits your needs. That said, here are some tips to consider when planning your upcoming college visits.

First and foremost, do not attempt to visit more than two colleges in one day. Visiting colleges is a very exciting way to spend the day, but if you overdo it exhaustion may impact your impression of the colleges. And, you will surely discover that it is challenging to keep the details straight without notes and photos. Regardless of the number of visits planned for each day, be sure to research the college before you visit. Take some time to peruse materials from the college and explore their website and social media. By limiting yourself to two schools in one day, you allow yourself enough time to get a clear picture of each school.

Whether or not you intend to apply to a particular college, it can be advantageous to visit a variety of institutions in order to figure out what type of institution appeals to you. For example, do you prefer the anonymity of a large university or relish the intimacy of a smaller liberal arts college? Are you, or your student,

the type of person who needs access to a big city or nearby town? Think about how you react to inclement weather, especially coming from the temperate Central Coast climate. Be honest with yourself - how will you really feel about having to take public transportation in cold rain or snow?

Be sure to register for an official information session. Colleges keep track of who shows up for these events. This “demonstrates interest.” Once you’re there, check in with the admissions office and actively participate in the information session. Come prepared with questions in mind, but listen carefully to the presentation. Do not ask a question that was already addressed. Your questions should focus on understanding specific academic programs at the college and the type of student said college is hoping to attract. If there is an opportunity for an interview, sign up ahead of time and come prepared. Do your research, bring a resume, and dress for success.

Sign up for the student-led tour of campus ahead of time. Tours and information sessions fill up fast so don’t wait until the last minute. When you are on the tour be sure to inquire about campus life from a peer, taking into consideration that the guides are specially trained to represent the school in a positive light. If possible, check out a dorm room. Ask about different dorm room options for freshmen. If possible, set up campus meetings with department heads in the subjects you are likely to focus your studies on. Athletes should arrange meetings with coaches as well as former graduates from your high school.

Whenever possible, take advantage of sitting in on classes. Pay particular attention to the class size as well as rapport between students and faculty in the classroom. Also take note of how the classroom is set up. Is it a typical lecture hall or a large table set up for a discussion? And be sure to check out the library. Be nosy and look at the books and technology available to



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11:40 M (R)
TUES - SAT: 4:15 & 7 PM
SUN: 1:30 & 4:15

APRIL 19 - APRIL 25

GODZILLA X KONG

11:55 M (PG 13)
TUES - SAT: 4:15 & 7 PM
SUN: 1:30 & 4:15

UPCOMING MONDAY SPECIALS

THE BLOODY BROOD

(1959)
11:20 M (NR)
APRIL 15
5:30 PM

THE KID

(1921)
11:5 M (NR)
APRIL 22
5:30 PM

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News

students. Look for options for both group study spaces as well as quiet nooks for individual study.

Don't forget to investigate athletic facilities, theater, student centers, and other outdoor spaces. When you are in the dorms, check out flyers posted on the bulletin boards. Read the school newspaper to discover the latest happenings and concerns. Then imagine yourself living there. What would you do? What clubs might you join? If you have time, grab a bite in the student center. Evaluate the food choices and eavesdrop to your heart's content. Does the vibe resonate with you or your student?

Last but not least, be sure to take lots of notes and photos while on campus. Note the positive and negative characteristics of each school. You will be really glad you did down the road when you are trying to figure out where you are going to apply. You may even find a nugget to throw into an essay! Safe travels and enjoy your visits!

Robin Haas, M.A.Ed. is the founder of Haas College Connections and can be reached at Robin@HaasCollegeConnections.com. She is a member of the Independent Educational Consultants Association (IECA) and earned a Certificate in College Counseling with Distinction from UCLA.

Millions From page 1

mental health support for military veterans.

Bridge Housing

Supervisors gave the OK for the County Health Agency to apply for up to \$7 million for the "Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Program," administered through the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS).

The money is part of a \$1.5 billion allocation in the 2022 State Budget. The funding set up so-called "bridge housing," a sort of "missing link" between homeless shelters and permanent housing. Essentially it gets people off the street and into safe housing while they look for a permanent place to live. With this program, the target is people with serious mental illness or drug abuse problems.

The money will be used for "operational and supportive services funding to quickly expand bridge housing implementation and includes short-term [less than 90 days] and mid-term [90 days-2 years] shelter and housing," said a County report from the Health Agency.

This new money comes on the heels of other State efforts to address this issue, and the Behavioral Health Bridge Housing Program or BHBH is designed to complement those other efforts.

The County in August 2023 accepted a \$7.5 million non-competitive grant under this budget allocation and contracted last February with Transitions Mental Health Association (TMHA) to set up a bridge housing program here.

"The services provided through the TMHA contract," reads the County report, "includes 10 beds in a licensed housing facility with 24/7 supervision and eight beds of rental assistance, including supportive services and outreach."

This new grant application is a competitive-bidding situation with other counties and cities competing for the money. The deadline to apply is April 10. It would cover from July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2027.

The report said it can be used two ways: up to \$5 million for "shelter, interim housing, and/or auxiliary funding for assisted living, housing navigation, and outreach and engagement, including services; and up to \$2 million for the purchase and renovation of existing structures [spending] up to \$75,000 maximum per bed."

County Behavioral Health was still working out how this program will work and if the grant were awarded, they would go out for bids again to administer this money.

Acute Care Contract

Supervisors also approved a \$1.3 million agreement with Sierra Vista Hospital in San Luis Obispo to "provide acute psychiatric care for adult and youth/adolescent Behavioral Health clients."

The agreement extends an existing contract through June but it has possible extensions built in.

The County contracts with several facilities for its mental health programs and sometimes folks need extra care. "In some cases," the County report said, "the appropriate level of care for persons with serious mental illness may be acute psychiatric hospitalization. Apart from State Hospitals, acute care hospitals offer the most intensive level of care in the mental health care continuum."

Sierra Vista is specially equipped for these troubled folks. "Acute psychiatric hospitals," the report said, "are locked multi-bed, typically short-stay, facilities that are primarily engaged in providing intensive care of persons with severe mental illness."

"Services may include psychiatric assessment, clinical treatment, social work, related psychiatric services, medical attention, and medically supervised detoxification."

These services are offered 24/7 at acute hospitals, and the

County Behavioral Health in 2021 and 2022 contracted with SVH and other hospitals outside SLO County, too.

Those contracts have already been extended by the Health Agency Director, as stipulated with the previous approvals including a 25% increase in service rates. But Sierra Vista had a few rate hikes that went above what the director could approve, thus Supervisors were asked to approve them and the extension of the contract through this June.

They only get billed against the budget when the County needs more beds than it can provide or if deemed necessary by the staff.

"Behavioral Health oversees the contracted operations of a 16-bed Psychiatric Health Facility [PHF]," the report said, "however, due to the disposition of some clients, client insurance, the census on the PHF, age of the client, and/or quarantine issues related to COVID-19, clients may need to be transferred to other facilities for appropriate treatment."

Fix Up Care Facilities

The County received another State grant designed to assist senior citizen facilities that accept State and Federal funding for the poor.

The County got over \$700,000 from the State's "Community Care Expansion Preservation Program," which the County said has two parts — Operating Subsidy Payments or OSP, and money for capital improvement projects at existing facilities.

Transitions Mental Health Association (TMHA) operates two such facilities in SLO County and Supervisors awarded most of the State money, some \$631,000, to them.

"California has a shortage of adult and senior care facilities [e.g., Adult Residential Facilities and Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly] that accept individuals receiving or applying for Supplemental Security Income/State Supplemental Payment or the Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants," the report said.

The California Department of Social Services created this grant program to try and support these critical facilities trying to help them stay open and continue to accept the government funding.

Last October, the County Health Agency went out for bids from qualified facilities for this money and chose TMHA. The \$631,000 would be used for making numerous mostly minor repairs to their two facilities, among them are: weather stripping, new furniture; replacement of garbage disposal, replacement of a screen door, upgrade of bathroom vanities, toilets, sinks, and faucets, and installation of a security system/automated access system (cameras, monitors, and alarms).

There are some more hefty repairs they want to do as well, including upgrading the utility room, carpet and flooring replacement and upgrades, HVAC replacement, and seismic upgrades.

TMHA will oversee the grant and its maintenance staff or contractors would do the work. The grant monies are coming in two installments of \$338,000 and \$387,000. And the County is keeping 15% of the overall State grant (\$726,000) for its expenses, some \$94,000.

Money for Veterans

County Supervisors have also gotten some money to help veterans with mental health issues.

Morgan Boyd the County Veterans Service Officer brought the matter to Supervisors asking them to accept \$200,000 from the State Department of Veterans Affairs and the 2004 Cal Vet Mental Health Services Act. The grant covers from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2026.

In the typical military tradition, the County hopes to do a lot with what is actually not a lot of money. "It is recommended that the Board:

1) Accept a grant award from the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) in the amount of \$200,000 from Cal Vet Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funds for the period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2026, to provide enhanced support for mental health outreach and support services for California veterans living in San Luis Obispo County.

- Approve an agreement with The San Luis Obispo Vets Center to provide Behavioral Health outreach resources to veterans and their families in San Luis Obispo County;
- Approve an agreement with Cal Poly Center for Military-Connected Students to connect veterans and family members to VA resources;
- Approve an agreement with Honor Flight Central Coast to connect veterans with services and programs to help with mental health needs;
- Approve an agreement with Operation Surf to reduce stigmas and encourage those with mental health needs to seek help;
- Approve an agreement with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to enhance access to mental and physical healthcare for veterans and their families;
- Approve an agreement with CAPSLO to provide homeless

veterans with referrals to supportive housing programs;

- Approve an agreement with Ponderosa Homestead to provide veterans assistance with aging services;
- Approve an agreement with the San Luis Obispo Veterans Services Collaborative to refer veterans for assistance with mental and physical health needs, aging services, and housing assistance;
- Adopt a resolution amending the Position Allocation List (PAL) for Fund Center (FC) 186 – Veterans Services to extend the 1.00 Limited Term FTE Veterans Services Representative I/II/III through June 30, 2026."

That last item is key for this whole thing, as the grant monies will mostly be used to pay whoever lands this position and they would then do the coordinating called for in the other dozen bullet items.

The program is CalVet's attempt to address the mental health issues of the State's veterans. "CalVet's MHSA program," the report said, "aims to expand and enhance the county mental health services for veterans, including treatment and other related recovery programs, in California communities where they reside or return to after military service."



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