

Supervisors Support Forming Redistricting Commission



John Peschong District 1 **Bruce Gibson** District 2 **Dawn Ortiz-Legg** District 3 **Jimmy Paulding** District 4 **Debbie Arnold** District 5

The current County Board of Supervisors is from left: Dist. 1's John Peschong; Dist. 2's Bruce Gibson; Dist. 3's Dawn Ortiz-Legg; Dist. 4's Jimmy Paulding; and, Dist. 5's Debbie Arnold. The board voted 3-2 with Peschong and Arnold dissenting, to ask the State Legislature to allow them to form an Independent Redistricting Commission ahead of the 2030 Census and the next time Supervisorial Districts are up for possible changes.

By Neil Farrell

A 3-2 split County Board of Supervisors have lent their support to a bill that would allow them to form a citizen's redistricting commission and avoid the kind of election shenanigans that happened the last time Supervisors were charged with redrawing their districts.

County Counsel, Rita Neal's report said our State Sen. John Laird had introduced Senate Bill 977, which if passed would allow SLO County to form an Independent Redistricting Commission.

Forming such commissions can be done two ways, according to Neal. One is to put an ordinance to the voters to decide or to seek State Legislation authorizing it. Last January, a split Board directed the staff to work with Sen. Laird on the legislative solution.

"Staff was directed to work with Senator Laird's office," Neal said, "to draft legislation with certain preferred components. Those components included creating a commission consisting of 11 members, requiring at least five public meetings prior to the drafting of a new map and requiring at least three public meetings after a map is drawn. Staff was directed to return to the Board with an update on the process."

Like anything else, the road ahead was full of baby steps. "Conversations ensued with Senator Laird's office," Neal reported, "with an eye to drafting legislation that was

similar to the legislation existing for seven other counties but was also tailored to address the preferences of the Board and the public. Staff prepared an initial draft of the legislation and submitted it to Senator Laird's office.

"Conversations also began with staff from the Legislative Counsel's office, the Committee on Senate Rules and the Senate Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments for purposes of finalizing language, getting clarity on timing to get the proposed legislation to the appropriate committees, and determining when the County would need to provide testimony in support of the bill."

What emerged was SB 977, which calls for: an 11-member districting commission, with two people from each of five Supervisorial Districts, plus one person chosen at large.

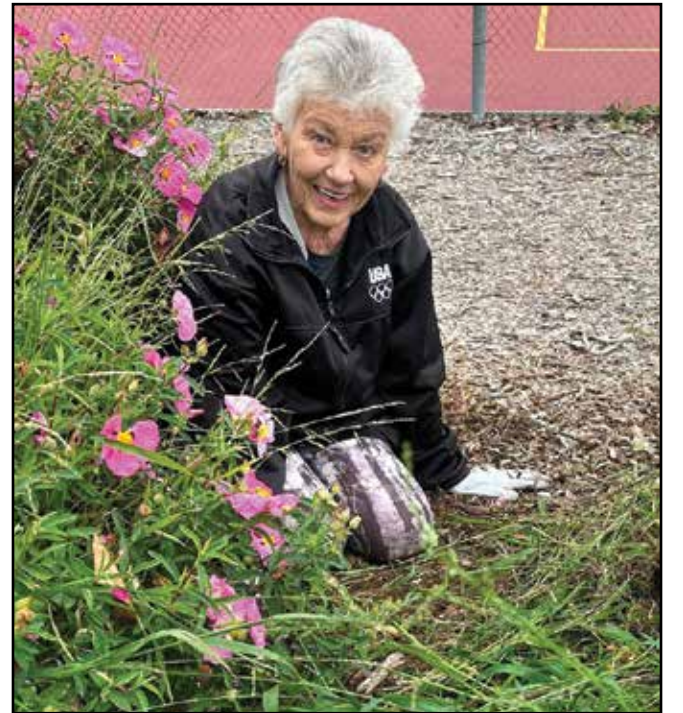
Political party preferences "shall be as proportional as possible to the total number of voters who are registered with each political party or who decline to state or do not indicate a party preference."

Members must be SLO County residents (living in their respective districts), and a registered voter; and must have voted in at least one of the past three statewide elections.

Also, members must, "Have not changed registered political party affiliation or had no political party affiliation within the past five years immediately preceding the date of their appointment to the commission."

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Earth Day Done the Celebrate Los Osos Way



Tanny Koeppel pulling weeds near the tennis courts at the Los Osos Community Park. Photo by Pandora Nash-Karner

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

At the heart of Earth Day, the message is strong — raise awareness of the need to protect Earth's natural resources for future generations. Celebrate Los Osos, a community benefit non-profit, put that goal at the forefront of their latest project.

Working with and under the guidance of the San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation Department, the nonprofit with a group of 23 volunteers spent about three hours last Saturday at the Los Osos Community Park with a concentration on maintenance and beautification by the tennis courts.

Armed with gloves, shovels, rakes and trowels, volunteers spread wood chips removed dead and woody undergrowth, and removed debris that had collected at the base of dense bushes and shrubs.

"Volunteers are so important in our parks because the County budget for parks is very restrictive," CLO President Pandora Nash-Karner told Estero Bay News. "There isn't enough money to do this kind of basic maintenance, as a result, we have lots of weeds."

Those weeds had to be removed before the mulch could be put down, which deters new growth without the

Earth Day Continued on page 21

It's a Wrap — WRF Contracts Settled

By Neil Farrell

It's the biggest public works project in Morro Bay's history and now, after nearly four years, the contracts for the Water Reclamation Facility or WRF have been settled.

According to a report by Public Works Director Greg Kwolek, all outstanding issues with the City's contractors — Filanc/Black & Veatch (FBV) — have been ironed out. Also completed is the contract with Anvil Builders, the company that installed some 3.5 miles of conveyance piping, and built two new lift stations to send the raw sewage out to the new treatment plant, located above the northern terminus of South Bay Boulevard.

Treatment Plant

The new treatment plant and recycling facility, called the Water Reclamation Center or WRC, cost a lot more than initially thought, but the City was able to keep it



A September 2021 aerial drone photo taken by Anvil showing the big dig on Atascadero Road for a new lift station.

under its latest amended budgeted amount.

"The City's current budget for the construction of the WRC is \$79,123,216," Kwolek said. "The \$79 million closeout contract value does not exceed the City's budgeted construction amount for the WRC."

The WRC has been finished since last fall but the two sides had some issues

Contracts Settled Continued on page 18

County to Push for Transportation Sales Tax Hike

By Neil Farrell



San Luis Obispo County's roads need help, and if the county is to see relief from potholes, it needs to help itself.

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments, the countywide agency that doles out transportation monies from the State and Federal Governments, is pushing a

Tax Hike Continued on page 22

Moving Forward: Musical Mike McCabe

By Judy Salamacha



"Music is the universal language of mankind," poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote. Central Coast musician Mike McCabe has experienced this truism as he spent a lifetime following his muse.

In the 19th century, Longfellow coined the phrase and yet it wasn't until 2014, that someone questioned the scientific validity of the claim. Harvard graduate student, Manvir Singh, probed the question, and for five years a team of Harvard cultural scientists took a deep dive listening and comparing 118 musical examples in 86 cultures in 30 geographic regions dating back to the Celts (1200-700bc.)

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News

Lease Extension for Paddle Sports Shop



Operators of a small paddleboard shop on the Embarcadero will have additional time on a temporary lease to get moving on a redevelopment project.

The City Council approved amending the lease for Morro Bay Paddlesports, Inc., which is located at 551 Embarcadero in the former home of Kayak Horizons.

Owned by Todd Baston and Tamara Gray-Baston, the little shop is packed with gear for kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding, and also rents them to the public.

According to a report from the Harbor Department Business Manager, Lori Stilts, the Bastons were given a green light to proceed with a redevelopment plan last September, through a Consent of Landowner (COL) agreement. That COL gave them 5 years on a temporary lease.

But that action back in September left out a key piece. "The term of the Interim Lease Agreement expires on Sept. 30, 2024," Stilts' report said, "whereas the redevelopment project will supersede the lease expiration date. Staff met with the Baston's contractor, discussed the project timeline and agreed the Interim Lease Agreement needed to be extended by at least 18 months to meet the COL deadlines."

The amended lease now has a deadline of March 20, 2026 and they continue to work on its redevelopment plans.

Redeveloping a lease site on the Embarcadero is an involved process that includes automatic review and approval by the Coastal Commission, which has "original jurisdiction" over the State Tidelands Lease sites, like this one.

That process can be lengthy as the Coastal Commission often takes a couple of years to bring projects to the Commission for approval.

As a superior agency, the Commission has the authority to change plans as they see fit, and while changes must be brought back to the City for concurrence, the City can't override the Commission.

This is one of the smaller lease sites on the Embarcadero.

Harbor to Get Rescue UTV



The Friends of the Morro Bay Harbor Department have finished fundraising to buy a new Polaris UTV, like this one, for use by beach lifeguards for emergencies on the beach. Photo submitted

By Neil Farrell

This summer, people who have an emergency on Morro Strand Beach should see help arrive a bit sooner, after the City accepted a large donation to buy an off-road vehicle.

The Friends of the Morro Bay Harbor Department recently finished a fundraising campaign to raise \$40,000 to buy a new Polaris UTV (Utility Task Vehicle), commonly called a 4-wheeler for easier access to the beach.

"This vehicle will make it much easier to navigate on the beach," Harbor Director Ted Schiafone told Estero Bay News, "as well as the ability to get around traffic on the Embarcadero if needed for an emergency."

The Polaris UTV is the latest in a string of essential equipment for the Harbor Department, and Harbor Patrol, that the Friends group has raised money for.

Friends President, Bill Luffee said, "The Friends of the Morro Bay Harbor Department is again grateful to our numerous supporters that stepped up to the plate and we purchased the Polaris UTV a couple of weeks ago and hope to get delivery and equipped to be used for the Summer Season."

Luffee, who sits on the Harbor Advisory Board, and a handful of others, formed the Friends several years ago. They've made a significant impact for the Harbor Department in general and purchased several key pieces of equipment, like a beach wheelchair for public use, and night vision equipment for nighttime rescues on the water, among others.

Raising the money for the Polaris went relatively quickly. "We started the process in November of 2023," Luffee said, "and it took approximately 5 months to raise the necessary funds. We sent out a special invitation to our supporters to contribute to this project and created a link on our website, so people had the information to learn about it. We printed flyers, posted them around town, and set up a booth at various events making people aware."

Getting a smaller vehicle for the waterfront became apparent in the face of disaster. "If you recall," Schiafone said, "after the high surf storms in late December, all roadway accesses to our beaches were blocked by debris. Our rescue trucks could not have been able to get onto the beach had there been need for a rescue. However, the UTV would have easily navigated those conditions."

The basic model Polaris Ranger Crew XP 1000 — Desert Sand vehicle is \$22,000 but the Harbor Patrol ordered several accessories that bumped the cost up to \$35,800. They still need some gear to be ready for the type of emergencies beach lifeguards see, like drowning and medical emergencies. "While this UTV is custom ordered with many important off-road features," Schiafone said, "there are some additional custom items that need to be added so that it can handle beach emergencies and rescues; such as the ability to carry some medical equipment and transport

a person on a backboard. Those items will be added after we receive the UTV."

He expects they'll get the vehicle sometime in June. They will also have to learn how to safely drive the vehicle and will train with other first responders.

Schiafone said, "Our Harbor Patrol Officers and Lifeguards will go through training with our Fire Department on all the necessary safety and protocols for emergency operations."

That the same training regiment they've used with personal watercraft or PWCs, which they use for rescuing people in the surf.

The department's pickup truck, which is normally what the lifeguards use, is old. "Large pickup trucks are not the best vehicles for beach use," Schiafone said, "they are difficult to navigate traffic backups on the Embarcadero during emergency response and have blind spots for driving around crowded beach activities."

For Luffee, the new vehicle will be good for everyone. "This isn't just a vehicle," he told EBN, "it's a commitment to the well being of every soul that sets foot on our sands, ensuring that our cherished beach remains a haven of joy relaxation, and security."

With this \$40,000 fundraising campaign drawing to a close, Luffee reported that their group has raised nearly \$300,000. "With this approximately \$40,000 earmark," Luffee said, "we are up to close to \$290,000 Raised for our Harbor Department over the years."

One of the Friend's big fundraisers is set for the end of June. The Annual Morro Bay Marine Swap Meet is set for 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, June 29 at the Maritime Museum located at the north end of Front Street and The Embarcadero.

Vendors will have a myriad of nautical items — fishing poles, rods and reels, nautical art, marine electronics, boat gear, lifejackets, surfboards, and more. It's the most unique swap meet anywhere and is done in conjunction with the Morro Bay Youth Sailing Foundation and the Maritime

Clarification

AB 205, a State law passed to take local control away from cities and counties regarding energy storage and generating projects, still calls for the Coastal Commission and other State agencies to conduct their permitting reviews. A story in last week's News Briefs (Vol. 6, Issue 7) didn't clearly state that.

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News

Museum.

If readers would like to know more about the Fiends of the Morro Bay Harbor Department, see the website at www.friendsofthembhd.org.

Strategic Plan to Improve Community Health

San Luis Obispo County residents can expect substantial growth of local mental health and substance use disorder services thanks to the Behavioral Health Department's new Strategic Plan. The plan, which details goals through 2029, is the first of its kind following the pandemic.

The strategic plan focuses on five key areas that change the current behavioral health system: Prevention and Wellness, Community Services, Intensive Outpatient Services, Crisis Services, and Intensive Residential Services. It ambitiously states over 100 objectives that address the increasing needs of the community around mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

"To emerge from a difficult era marked by the pandemic, an explosion in opioid overdose and suicides, and a growing need for crisis services for all ages, the County has turned its sights forward," said a news release from SLO Behavioral Director Star Graber, PhD., LMFT. "The strategic plan serves to strengthen our commitment to having a mission and workforce that is equitable, flexible, and creative in its response to the emergent and unfolding behavioral health environment. We are ready to get to work."

The plan not only outlines how the department plans to expand its current programming, but also includes ways to increase healthcare access to new populations including students, adults over 60 years of age, LGBTQIA+ populations, and non-English speaking community members.

County officials acknowledge that while the plan's strategic goals are ambitious and vast, they cannot do everything, everywhere, all at once. Dividing the work over five years allows the department to achieve progress at a momentous pace, while still allowing time to adjust when they are met with challenges.

"Like most California counties, San Luis Obispo has a population with behavioral health issues impacted by the economy, lack of access, workforce shortages, stigma, and gaps in services," said Graber. "We are grateful that no matter what challenges may come our work is supported by dozens of County partners including local providers, agencies, County administrators and supervisors, advocates and the community at large who also see a need for this type of work here in SLO County."

More information as well as the complete Behavioral Health Strategic Plan 2024-2029 can be viewed online at www.slocounty.ca.gov/BHStrategicPlan.

Speeding Driver who Killed Two Gets Prison Time



SLO couple, Matthew Chachere, 39 and Jennifer Besser, 36, and their dog were struck and killed by a speeding driver in November 2022.

By Neil Farrell

A speeding driver who killed two people in 2022 has been sentenced to State Prison for his crimes.

The District Attorney's Office announced that Daniel Angel Saliganpatricio, 25, received 5-years and 4-months in prison for the Nov. 21, 2022 deaths of married couple, Matthew Chachere, 39 and Jennifer Besser, 36, when he lost control of his speeding car and hit the pair while walking along Sacramento Drive in San Luis Obispo. Saliganpatricio pled guilty to the charges in February.

It was shortly after 5:30 p.m. that day when Saliganpatricio accelerated his vehicle to over 60 miles per hour on the 25 mph posted roadway of Sacramento Drive.

Assistant D.A. Eric Dobroth told Estero Bay News that Saliganpatricio had been quarreling with his wife and was distracted as he drove by several text messages she'd sent to him. He tried to take a corner going too fast, lost control and hit the couple on the sidewalk, knocking them down into a heavily wooded creek. He told a responding officer that he might have hit something and officers considered it a single car accident. They didn't know the two people and their dog were lying in the creek.

According to the D.A.'s Office, the turn was posted as 20 mph and "there was no evidence that he hit the brakes prior to the turn."

The case is a tragic case of distracted driving. "The investigation revealed that Saliganpatricio had been reading text messages immediately before the deadly collision."

Saliganpatricio was let go by the officer on scene, who was unaware of the two people lying dead or dying in the brush.

Some time later, the couple's parents in Modesto, where they were due for Thanksgiving but never arrived. SLOPD investigated and connected their disappearance with the car crash the day before, he said.

Also, someone else out walking the area reported a dead dog in the creek. Officers checked the dog's license and realized the missing couple was involved in the crash the night before, he said.

SLOPD brought out a police search dog and eventually found the pair in thick brush a short distance away from where the dog was found, he said.

Police then tracked down Saliganpatricio and arrested him on the involuntary manslaughter charges.

Dobroth noted that Saliganpatricio had never been in trouble before, wasn't drinking at the time, and called it a terrible accident.

When Saliganpatricio pled guilty to the charges in February, no deals were struck beforehand.

"Saliganpatricio pleaded guilty to all the charged counts," the D.A. said, "without any agreement on what his sentence would be. Because there was no agreement on a sentence, the judge had wide discretion in imposing a sentence, which could have ranged from a period of probation to a maximum term of 7-years and 4-months in prison."

Superior Court Judge Michael S. Frye imposed the 5-year 4-month sentence "after carefully balancing the aggravated circumstances of the collision with Saliganpatricio's lack of criminal history and acceptance of responsibility before a trial."

Some of the victims' families gave statements to the court. Besser's mother, Pati Blevins, said, "Jenn was such a bright light, not only in my life, in the lives of everyone she met, everyone she knew. She was funny, intelligent, articulate, beautiful, kind, she was a really good person."

"When she met Matt, I knew she had found her person. Together, they lived a big, amazing life. They had created a healthy, active lifestyle and were always doing things together. San Luis Obispo offered them so much."

"It was the perfect area for them so when Matt got a job in the area in Feb 2022, they were excited to begin a new chapter. It wasn't long before they had found gyms they

Prison Time Continued on page 8



Daniel Saliganpatricio, 25, was sentenced to 5-years 4-months in prison for the November 2022 accident that killed a San Luis Obispo couple.

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Estero Bay News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

County Community Health Improvement Plan

The Public Health Department along with community partners have released a Community Health Improvement Plan, a roadmap for how they will work together to build and foster a healthier SLO County.

"This plan is grounded in data and input from our community," said Dr. Penny Borenstein, County Health Officer. "To everyone who told us about your health experiences, from challenges accessing healthcare to the well-being you get from your favorite hiking trail: we heard you, and this is your plan. It is within our power as a community to create environments that make it easier for all of us to live healthier lives."

The plan addresses the needs and strengths unique to SLO County today focusing on three priorities to address over the next 5 years:

- **Healthy Neighborhoods**, including objectives that focus on access to affordable housing, enhanced food access, safe community spaces such as parks, resilience to the health impacts of climate change, and investment in bike and pedestrian safety.

- **Access to Care**, with a focus on recruiting and retaining healthcare providers on the Central Coast as well as expanding services in remote areas and for populations who have difficulty getting care.

- **Mental Health and Substance Use**, including reducing drug-related deaths and suicide deaths, and connecting more teens and parents with mental health supports.

The Community Health Improvement Plan was developed by SLO Health Counts, a collaborative of community members, nonprofits, government agencies, cities, schools, and leaders in SLO County working together toward the shared goal of a healthy, thriving community. It is based on analysis of the Community Health Assessment released in August 2023, which brings together information from primary local sources, multiple state-level data sets and the results of a countywide survey with more than 3,790 responses from residents.

To learn more and view the full Community Health Improvement Plan, visit SLOHealthCounts.org.

Laird Receives Clean Energy Leader Award

American Clean Power named senators Josh Becker (D-Menlo Park) and John Laird (D-Monterey) as inaugural Clean Energy Leaders Award recipients in "recognition of their outstanding commitment to advancing clean energy in California to meet our clean energy



goals."

"We celebrate Senator Laird and Senator Becker for their exceptional leadership in clean energy," said Alex Jackson, director of ACP-CA. "Their thoughtful policy-making will help modernize transmission, create California's first-ever offshore wind market, and establish California's position as a clean energy leader."

Senator Becker and Senator Laird have been at the forefront of supporting California's transition to a clean energy future, ACP-CA said. Their efforts have significantly contributed to advancing policies that promote the growth of clean energy across the state.

"I'm dedicated to facing climate change and forging solutions to manage its impacts, as well as advancing clean energy jobs and affordability, so it's an honor to be recognized as a clean energy leader by ACP-CA," said Senator Laird in a news release. "I look forward to advancing California's leadership in clean energy development by continuing to promote diverse clean energy technologies and the thoughtful and responsible development of California's first-ever offshore wind market."

In selecting the award recipients, ACP-CA focused on policymakers who have significantly contributed to California's clean energy advancements, addressing climate change, and deploying solutions that help achieve the state's clean energy goals.

Poly Team Creates Eco-Friendly Glue

An eco-friendly glue product created by a Cal Poly chemistry team in partnership with an East Coast research and development company has earned a national award as one of the top three innovations from the adhesive and sealant industry.

D-Glue — a debondable adhesive platform created by Cal Poly chemistry Professor Phil Costanzo in partnership with the Massachusetts-based Geisys Ventures — earned the second runner-up 2024 Innovation Award presented by



Cal Poly chemistry Professor Phil Costanzo (middle) works with students Ryan Donnelly (left) and Sophia Newcomer (right) on debondable glue research at a Cal Poly laboratory.

the Adhesives and Sealants Council (ASC) in Louisville, Kentucky.

Contest participants include raw material suppliers, manufacturers and academics focused on adhesives and/or sealants.

D-Glue was designed with Cal Poly student research and development involvement over the past few years and now is a patented, commercial product.

The product has applications for uses in industries including electronics, apparel, automotive and solar, making it far more convenient and cost-effective to repair, reuse and recycle manufactured products because of the adhesive's ability to be broken down more easily than many mainstream glue products.

"To be recognized by industry is a major accomplishment," Costanzo said. "To launch this idea from the benchtop to a position to now enter the real world is exciting and helps validate our process. We're helping to solve actual problems with practical, applicable solutions."

Kris Stokes, CEO of Geisys Ventures, collaborated with the Cal Poly researchers to design and usher D-Glue to market, creating the adhesive using a sequence of bonds that link one polymer chain to another, referred to as Diels-Alder linkages.

Extreme heat is typically required to separate recyclable materials from the commonly used glues currently in use, and often separation cost is prohibitive, discouraging reclamation that saves waste and reduces environmental pollution.

D-Glue is designed to be broken apart at lower temperatures, requiring much less energy, while maintaining the integrity of the item.

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Community

Local Holds Lead in National Bowling Tournament



Morro Bay resident Joe Barket, pictured at the South Point Bowling Plaza in Las Vegas, is leading his division United States Bowling Congress Open Championship. Photo submitted

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Morro Bay resident Joe Barket is not content to let the pins fall where they may; he prefers to knock them down.

Barket, a 63-year-old right-hander, leads the singles event in his division in the national United States Bowling Congress Open Championship that runs through July 29. He holds the top spot after rolling games of 279, 279 and 248 for an 806 series.

"It's a great feeling. There's nothing like being on top and leading," Barket, who has lived in Morro Bay since 1969, told Estero Bay News.

The event draws more than 11,000 five-player teams and 55,000 bowlers to Las Vegas. With such a large playing field the potential prize winnings Barket could walk away with are not yet defined.

"It's a little too early to determine the final payout, but last year's winner in Regular Singles earned \$10,000 for first place," said Aaron Smith, USBC communications manager.

Barket is no stranger to competition. This is his 15th

time at the USBC Open, and he has played in the PBA Tour and regional tournaments off and on for 12 years.

"I love the competition aspect," he said. "I'm very competitive."

Barket, who has bowled for 54 years, plays in a league and practices at Rancho Bowl in Santa Maria. He is not aiming for pins, he works at his brother's company Harry's Upholstery in Morro Bay.

To find out more about the United States Bowling Congress Open Championship

The USBC Open Championships is celebrating its 120th edition with a history dating back to 1901. The 2024 event started Feb. runs daily until July 29.

Takin' Care of BUSINESS

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Sip-n-Stroll, Gala Dinner April 26

The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce is having a "Shop, Sip & Stroll" event on the Embarcadero, featuring food tastings from participating restaurants and shops.

The event is set for 5-7:30 p.m. Friday, April 26. Advance tickets are \$20 and \$25 the day of the event. "You will get a chance to discover all the amazing local businesses that make this city so special," reads the event flyer (see: www.morrochamber.org/shop-sip-and-stroll). Check-in will be at the Giant Chessboard Park.

"We have an amazing assortment of food and both alcoholic and nonalcoholic beverage tastings at some of the finest shops on Morro Bay's Embarcadero."

If you buy tickets, you'll get a map showing all the participants in the event, which include gift shops, and restaurants; a wine glass and tote bag for purchases. You'll also be eligible for a designated driver service with tickets.

The Chamber is also selling tickets to its Annual Awards Gala, where Citizen of the Year, Business of the Year, Living Treasure, and Non-profit of the Year will be announced. The Gala Dinner is from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Friday, May 31 at the Community Center.

Tickets are \$115 per person or \$900 for a table for eight. Catering by Brick & Mortar Co. The Chamber also has sponsorship packages available, see: www.morrochamber.org/community-awards for more information.

Ribbon Cutting for Thrive



The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting ceremony at The Rock for Thrive, Flourish & Grow.

"It was a perfect day to celebrate the expansion that I've experienced," said Thrive Flourish & Grow owner Beth McGill. "I started out teaching the Law of Attraction and manifesting. Now, I produce a weekly show on my YouTube Channel, speak at events and provide online and in person workshops. Last year I published my #1 International Best-Selling book, Allow Life to Happen and receive everything you desire!"

"I strongly believe that every human deserves to feel empowered, confident, and live a life they absolutely love and that's exactly what I aim to achieve through my teaching."

McGill said that in her one-on-one sessions via Zoom she uses techniques like hypnosis and energy work to help people to uncover and release any "negative emotions or limiting beliefs that are holding them back from living a joyful life."

For more information about Thrive Flourish & Grow, go to www.thriveflourishgrow.com.

Pictured are Ryan Blevins, Judy Salamacha, Loren Ledinger, Dave Sozinbo, Terri Mansker, Thrive owner Beth McGill (holding scissors), and Carocha.

Takin' Care of BusinessContinued on page 6

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News

Takin' Care of Business From page 5

SLO Vocal Arts Ensemble's New Artistic Director

Melody Svennungsen is the new artistic director of the San Luis Obispo Vocal Arts Ensemble. She was the assistant director for the late Gary Lamprecht for many years and was highly regarded by him and members of the choir.



Melody is a San Luis Obispo native and has been a member of SLOVAE since 1986. During that time, she also served as soprano section leader. Music education and choral conducting are Melody's "enclave career," as her first vocation was a 22-year period spent in human services as an instructor and advocate for special-needs adults. Her "official" conducting career began shortly before she earned her music degree in vocal performance at Cal Poly in 2007, where she served as assistant conductor for Dr. Davies and studied voice with both Katherine Arthur and Jackie Kreitzer.

In the fall of 2006, Melody accepted a position with the Central Coast Children's Choir [CCCC] as choir conductor and educator. While with the CCCC, she helped concert choir become a highly developed treble chorus; she also established AVE, an ensemble performing collegiate-level repertoire of varied styles. These two choirs, comprised of auditioned singers, gained a reputation for excellence, collaborating with musical organizations, such as SLO Master Chorale, SLO Vocal Arts Ensemble, and Opera SLO, as well as participating in national and international choral festivals.

In 2017, CCCC rebranded, becoming the Central Coast Youth Chorus [CCYC]; Melody was appointed artistic director of CCYC at this time. Melody says she is grateful for the richness and meaning that music brings to life and is grateful for the opportunity to serve her students and her singing colleagues as their teacher and conductor.

Upcoming Performances

- "Music for Generations — A Tribute to Gary Lamprecht"
- Thursday, May 2, at 7 p.m. Trilogy Monarch Dunes, Nipomo
- Saturday, May 4, at 3 p.m. Harold J. Miossi CPAC,

Cuesta College
 • Sunday, May 5, at 3 p.m. First Presbyterian Church of San Luis Obispo
 Tickets are \$30 reserve seating and \$10 children ages 6-12. Order tickets online at vocalarts.org or call 805-541-6797.

Input on SLO Parking Opportunity



Many North Coast residents commute to SLO for work, shopping, and social activities. Let your voice be heard about the future of parking in downtown San Luis Obispo.

The City invites community members to two more public input opportunities for the 2024 Parking Rate Study in May.

There is a Parking Rate Study Public Meeting online via Zoom on May 2 to get community feedback on recommended parking rates and operations in the downtown area that will be brought to the City Council for consideration during a Special City Council Meeting on May 14. Input and comments can also be emailed to: slo@dixonresource-sunlimited.com.

Community Input Meeting

When: Thursday, May 2
 Time: 5 – 6:30 p.m.
 Where: Zoom

Special City Council Meeting

When: Tuesday, May 14
 Time: 5:30 p.m.
 Where: 990 City Hall Council Chambers
 Final rate and operations changes based on Council feedback and community input will be incorporated into the final 2024 Parking Rate Study report scheduled for completion in June 2024.
 At the May 14, 2024, Council meeting, staff will pres-

ent findings from the community input efforts, occupancy survey results, financial modeling scenarios, and preliminary recommendations.

For more information about the 2024 Parking Rate Study, visit www.slocity.org/parking.

Spokes Executive Director/CEO Roundtable

Serving as Executive Director or CEO is hard work. At times, it can be lonely work. Spokes Resources for Non-Profits is holding a Zoom roundtable discussion on May 02 from 12 to 1 p.m. that is free to members and \$10 for the public.

In this roundtable participants will gather with other executive directors and CEOs to share challenges, brainstorm solutions, gain facilitation skills and build connection with each other.

This event is for those who hold the top, paid staff position in their nonprofit organization and are working under the direction of an established board of directors.

"It is our aim to foster stronger connections with one another and feel 'safe' when sharing within the group," said facilitator Michael Simkins, Ed.D. "As we meet in Zoom, we request that participants display their name and organization and have their video on."

Folks who sign up will receive the Zoom link upon registration. Registration limited to the first 12 registrants; also, we need a minimum of six for a useful roundtable. Register at bit.ly/3JwVLrL.

Are you or a neighbor Taking Care of Business. Is your business, including non-profits, supporting our community? Maybe you're launching a new business, or you're making updates to your current business model, or re-opening. Perhaps you have a job opportunity, or have been doing some volunteer work, or are collaborating with another business or a non-profit. Or maybe you know someone who is. Submit your awesome local efforts for publication to Editor@EsteroBayNews.com.

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APR 26 - MAY 5

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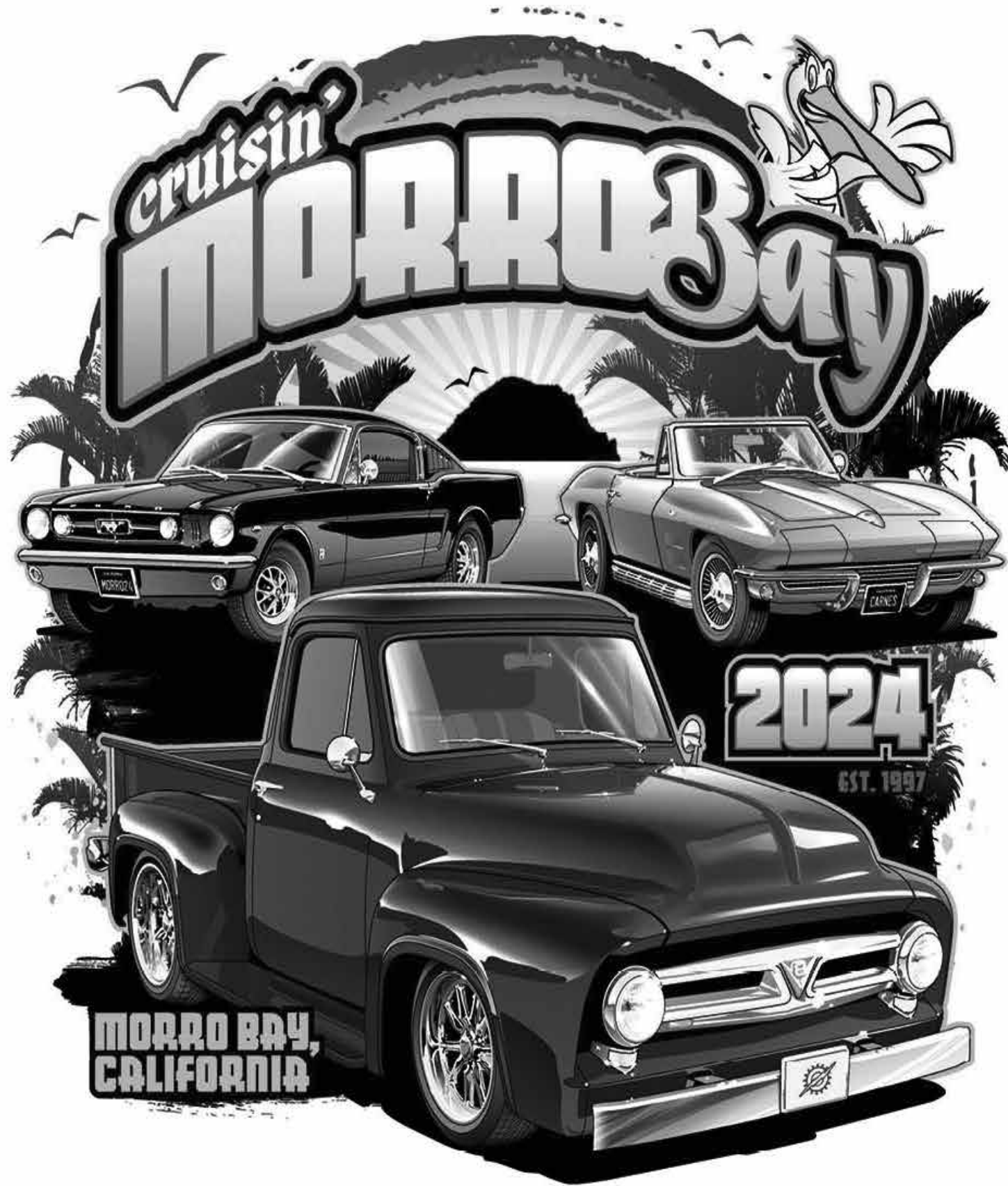
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www.morrobaycarshow.org



2023 RECIPIENTS

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

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Police Blotter



- **April 14:** Police towed away an apparently homeless vehicle found squatting in the 700 block of Quintana.
- **April 14:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 11:30 p.m. at Main and Preston Lane. Logs indicated the 56-year-old driver apparently had hooch for dinner and was cited for suspicion of DUI and released to a "responsible person."
- **April 13:** Police contacted a suspicious hombre, 33, at 6:43 p.m. in the 700 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated the scofflaw had a bench warrant and was issued another disappearance ticket to ignore, and then released.
- **April 13:** Police responded to the Inn at Morro Bay on State Park Road for an apparent Second Amendment violation. Some guest left a firearm in his or her room.
- **April 13:** Police responded at 1 p.m. to a gift shop in the 600 block of Embarcadero. Some sticky-fingered thief had shoplifted, in this week's example of why we need SWAT.
- **April 12:** Police responded at 9:55 a.m. to the 3200 block of Main where someone had passed away.
- **April 11:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 10:52 p.m. in the 600 block of Harbor. Logs indicated the 44-year-old stultified squit was arrested on a bench warrant and being schnoekered in public.
- **April 11:** Ofc. Clouseau in the 1800 block of Main recovered a vehicle that was reported stolen, and "Zee caze ez sol-ved!"
- **April 10:** Police responded at 7:49 p.m. to the 400 block of Trinidad for a reported battery charge.
- **April 10:** Police contacted a suspicious woman at 10:50 a.m. in the area of South and Morro. Logs indicated the

lady, 39, was nicked for suspicion of possessing drug paraphernalia, and drunk & disorderly conduct, which explains a lot.

- **April 8:** There were a couple of oopsies involving vehicles and boneheads that police responded to. The first was at noon in the infamous Roundabout at Quintana and Morro Bay Blvd. An RTA bus and a vehicle apparently tried to occupy the same space at the same time, with predictable results. The second was at 6:11 p.m. in the 300 block of Quintana and no doubt equally avoidable.
- **April 8:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 9:42 p.m. at Main and Radcliff. Logs indicated the mulish driver, 24, was nicked for suspicion of driving half-cut behind the wheel; on a license suspension for a previous DUI; and while on probation for that DUI no less; and, as one might anticipate, giving police a fake name.
- **April 7:** Some coward vandalized a poor defenseless building in the 2100 block of Seaview.
- **April 7:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at the highly suspect time of 12:46 a.m. at Main and Harbor, pretty much in the middle of town and no doubt the last place you want to be seen by police at that hour. The driver was nicked for suspicion of driving on a toot and tooted his horn in the County lockup.
- **April 6:** Police responded at 9:55 p.m. to a domestic disturbance in the 300 block of Oahu. Logs indicated a 67-year-old allegedly slapped her husband across the face in a case of what's deemed — simple assault & battery, though some might beg to differ on that point.
- **April 6:** Police arrested a 71-year-old local yokel at a home in the 400 block of Bonita in connection with a reported stabbing of the man's lady friend sometime earlier on Reno Court. The man was charged with suspicion of attempted murder, making terrorist threats, intimidation of a witness, and other charges.
- **April 5:** At 5:06 p.m. police came upon a regular customer in the 300 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated they arrested the 37-year-old reprobationer for violating probation.
- **April 5:** Police responded at 7:50 a.m. to St. Timothy's Catholic Church on Piney Way where some scruffy Philistine reportedly entered the church without permission, also called trespassing. But confidence is high that the sinner will be forgiven.
- **April 5:** Police responded to a business in the 300 block of Morro Bay Blvd, where someone apparently got a bum

check or credit card.

- **April 4:** Someone found some undisclosed something somewhere in the 1000 block of Monterey. In an unrelated matter, someone found a deceased citizen at or near the intersection of Main and Atascadero Road.
- **April 4:** Police responded to a disturbance at 8:26 a.m. in the 2600 block of Main. Logs indicated the apparently soused fellow, 59, was dunked into the clink for suspicion of being wet where the tourist can see him.
- **April 3:** Police towed away an offensive car from the 3000 block of Main because the DMV Snellygaster had not been fed in over six months.
- **April 2:** At 11:10 p.m. police contacted a suspicious fellow in City Park in the 700 block of Harbor, whom they apparently knew well. Logs indicated he had seven bench warrants and yet was cited and released to apparently catch again when the magic number reaches eight.
- **April 2:** A disturbance report brought police a runnin' to the 1700 block of Main at 2 p.m. where they encountered someone apparently having a bad day. He or she was detained until County Mental Health could take over.
- **April 2:** Police responded to two minor car crashes, the first at 1:50 p.m. at Hwy 1 and Main. A second fender-bender occurred at an hour later in the 800 block of Napa.
- **April 2:** Police contacted a suspicious woman, 41, at City Park in the 700 block of Harbor. Logs indicated the belle of the ball was allegedly stoned on drugs, and possessed drugs and drug paraphernalia, as "Just say No" apparently fell on deaf ears.
- **April 2:** Police contacted a fellow at Hwy 1 and Atascadero Road and issued a stern warning regarding the City's new sleeping-where-we-can't-collect-a-bed-tax camping ordinance.
- **April 1:** At 8 p.m. police responded to a disturbance in the 1300 block of Bolton. Logs indicated a 31-year-old hothead was arrested for suspicion of spousal battery.
- **April 1:** Someone turned in an abandoned bike they found in the 500 block of Main. Meanwhile a few hours later, someone found a deceased citizen in the 100 block of Panay.
- **April 1:** Police responded at 8 a.m. to a disturbance in the 200 block of Anchor. Logs said a 40-year-old ruffian louse was nicked for suspicion of spousal battery, assault with a deadly weapon, aggravated assault and making terrorist threats. He was checked into the SLO Gitmo.

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Prison Time From page 3

loved, coffee houses to enjoy, good restaurants, beautiful hiking along the cliffs, dog-friendly beaches for Buddy."

Chachere's mother, Linda Chachere, said, "Matt was a resilient man with great humility and a kind, loving heart. He was extremely capable and was an uplifting and inspiring role model and leader."

She continued, "He cared for his family, friends, team, and coworkers in genuine and significant ways. The loss of his charming smile, huge laugh, boundless sense of humor, and positive attitude will leave a deep and profound void in our hearts and lives."

The SLO Police Department investigated the case and Deputy D.A. Danielle Baker prosecuted.

**Remember
Mother's Day**

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Community

Events From page 9

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Join the fun at upcoming free youth programs in May at the Morro Bay Library - 625 Harbor St, (805) 772-6394.

• **Art Party** - Wednesday, May 1, 3 - 5 p.m.

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

• **Create a Tree of Life Series** -

Wednesday, May 8, 3:30 - 5 p.m.

Wednesday, May 15, 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, May 22, 3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

Trees of life are a beautiful part of the pottery and ceramic traditions of central highlands of Mexico. Learn about their history and how to make your very own with presenter Luna! For ages 5+. These programs will be presented in Spanish and English.

• **Sensory Playtime** - Saturday, May 11, 10 - 11 a.m.

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

•••

The Harold J. Miossi Art Gallery at Cuesta College announces the return of the Student Annual Art Exhibition, showcasing the creativity and talent of Cuesta College art students. This year's exhibition opens runs through May 17, providing a diverse display of student artistic work curated by interdisciplinary artist and Cal Poly assistant professor Makia Sharp. The exhibition features a remarkable collection of ceramics, drawings, graphic design, digital art, painting, photography, printmaking, and sculpture.

"This exhibition is an exciting opportunity for the students to showcase their creative talents to a wider audience and for art enthusiasts to experience some exceptional artwork and witness the potential of young artists," said Harold J. Miossi Art Gallery Coordinator Tim Stark.

The Harold J. Miossi Art Gallery is in Room 7170 at the Cuesta College San Luis Obispo campus. Admission to the gallery is free. Call (805) 546-3202 for a schedule of exhibits and hours of operation. For additional information, email timothy_stark@cuesta.edu.

•••



San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre presents "The Thanksgiving Play" by renowned playwright Larissa Fasthorse. Set to hit the stage on May 3-19, this thought-provoking comedy promises an engaging exploration of cultural appropriation, identity, and the complexities of modern day Thanksgiving celebrations. Directed by Rachel Tietz, the production features an incredible cast who will bring Fasthorse's witty and insightful script to life.

The Thanksgiving Play follows a group of well-intentioned but misguided theatre artists as they attempt to devise a culturally sensitive Thanksgiving play for a school presentation. Faced with their own biases and limited understanding of Indigenous culture, the characters navigate a series of comedic mishaps and unexpected revelations. Through Fasthorse's sharp writing and nuanced characterizations, the play prompts audiences to reflect on the ways in which history, tradition, and privilege intersect in contemporary society.

Shows are Thursday-Saturday at 7 p.m. and Saturday-

Sunday at 2 p.m. at the San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre, 888 Morro Street, SLO. Tickets range from \$30-\$42 and available at www.slorep.org or 805 786-2440.

•••



SLO Skiers, a local, non-profit sports and social club for adults is having its next monthly meeting at Dairy Creek Golf Course Clubhouse in San Luis Obispo at 5:30 pm on Tuesday, May 1. Meetings are free and yearly membership is \$65. Social hour from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Meeting follows. Social and sports activities occur year around.

•••

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

Featured Wall Artist: Spencer Poulter Display Case: TBD

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

Come and read your favorite book to Berkeley!

She's at the Los Osos Library on Wednesday afternoons. School Age.

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

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

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

Stories, dance, and music for toddlers and preschoolers.



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May 2, 2024
Thursday 7:00 PM




Harold J. Miossi CPAC
May 4, 2024
Saturday 3:00 PM



VocalArts.org

805-541-6797



Concert series sponsored by Joan G. Sargen

We have added a third concert.
Sunday, May 5, 2:00 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church in San Luis Obispo

Community



• Art Party - Friday, May 3, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

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

• Messy Art Playtime - Saturday, May 4, 10 - 11 a.m.

Encourage your child to get creative through painting and other messy art processes! Leave the clean-up to us. All materials will be provided. Wear clothes that can get messy! For ages 6 months and up.

• Dungeons & Dragons for Teens - Saturday, May 4, 2 - 4 p.m.

Teens and tweens: Local Dungeon Master John will take us on a voyage to The Enchanted Woods! You and your friends are attending a school for wizards, but on a field trip to the Enchanted Woods you get separated from your group! Work together with your friends, watch out for dangers, and get help from the forest's residents to get safely back to your class before night falls!

For ages 11-18.

Space is limited so please register!

• Hexbugs - Friday, May 10, 2:30-4:30 p.m.
Create mazes for these motorized bugs, race them and more! All ages welcome.

• • •



Guest violinist Sarah Saviet, who performs extensively as a soloist and ensemble player of contemporary classical music in Europe, will present a master class and recital Thursday, May 16, in Room 218 of the Davidson Music Center (Building No. 45) at Cal Poly.

Saviet will coach students active in the Music Department's string chamber music program at 11:10 a.m. and then will give a solo recital at 5:30 p.m.

For the recital, she will perform new music for solo violin, including her own compositions as well as works by avant-garde composer Iannis Xenakis, Swedish composer Lisa Streich, and Timothy McCormack of the Boston Conservatory at Berklee.

Saviet's debut solo modern classical album "Spun" (released last August by Coviello Contemporary) was recently nominated for the German Record Critics' Award for new music. Her recording on HCR/NMC records of Liza Lim's 2015 violin concerto "Speak, Be Silent" with the Riot Ensemble, which includes some of the top European soloists in new music, was selected as one of The New Yorker's best recordings of 2019.

The presentations are free and open to the public and are sponsored by the Music Department and Instructionally Related Activities program. For more information, visit music.calpoly.edu/calendar/ or call 805-756-2406.

• • •

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.

OUT & ABOUT

WITH THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS

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

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

Walking the Refuge by the Sea



Asilomar, also known as Refuge by the Sea in California.

By Susan Vasquez

One place along the California coast pulls me back time after time. Stone walkways from the last century, historic buildings, and boardwalks through dunes appear like wishes from a better life. The place is called Asilomar, or Refuge by the Sea. If you are looking for tranquility, this is a good place to start.

A short two and a half hours from Estero Bay, Asilomar rests between Pacific Grove to the north and Pebble Beach to the south. It is owned by the State of California and there for anyone, anytime to come and walk its pathways. This open-ended invitation offers a rare sense of welcome. There is no entrance fee. You will find no entrance gate. If you wish to be there, you have simply to walk from one existence into another.

The refuge calls to wandering folk. The climate and fresh air revive you. Wide pathways crisscross the grounds.

Walking the Refuge Continued on page 12

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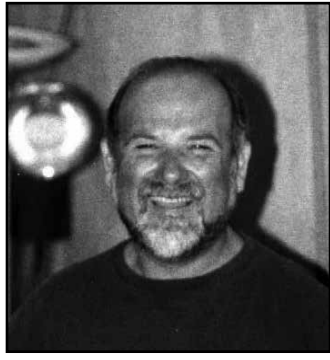
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Obituary

Larry Brebes 1949 - 2024



Larry Brebes, born on December 4, 1949, in San Luis Obispo, peacefully passed away on March 15, 2024, in San Luis Obispo. He was a talented musician, excelling in various instruments such as lead guitar, vocals, and the French horn.

Larry proudly served in the United States Army and was a dedicated artist throughout his life. He was the creative force behind Brebes Studios, showcasing his skills in glassblowing, oil painting, sculpture, and large cast bronze installations. His artistic contributions extended to national projects for Nascar, NHRA, Coca-Cola, Kellogg's, and the NBA, leaving a lasting impact on the art world.

A graduate of Morro Bay High School and Cuesta College, Larry's passion for art and music defined his career. He is survived by his partner, Patsy Dow, son Garrett Brebes, and daughter Misty Rowland.

Anyone wishing to make a donation in Larry's name can send contributions to Woods Humane Society in memory of Gizmo.

In Print & On Line



esterobaynews.com

Community

Walking the Refuge From page 11

You can pick any route and wind up somewhere that is a complete surprise. Stop along the way and admire rustic buildings on the grounds. Even if you feel lost, you won't be for long. Just continue the loop and you will return to the spot where the trail began, with a sense of calm that is Asilomar's gift to everyone who walks there.

This refuge keeps the natural geography so that as you walk, it's a reminder of what coastal California looks like untamed and undeveloped. The dunes shift daily. Plant life follows a craggy growth, sculptures-in-the-making. Tiny flowers bloom in the sand. Wooden walkways give you the right to step into a place that only asks you to be at peace.

The trail from the center of the property to the beach will wait patiently for your footstep. Sit on a lawn chair in front of Hearst Social Hall before you go or when you return, the choice is yours. Sooner or later, though, you will choose to follow the call of the Pacific. Walk to the bluffs above the beach and take in the extensive ocean view before you return to the Asilomar grounds. Or you can continue to stroll along the wooden boardwalk north on the bluffs fronting the ocean. Really ambitious walkers can hike to Cannery Row in Monterey, the next-door community. You can also add a tidepool to your adventure.

My favorite walk is to take a right-hand turn onto the pathway off the main boardwalk just before the beach. You are still on Asilomar's compound, heading up an easy incline. Once at the top of the dune, you can walk along a ridge, or take a seat on a bench. This boardwalk also offers side-trips for exploring. One of the walkways takes you to an end spot where you can sit, especially at sunset, looking north past a wooded gully, south to the long curling beach,

or west onto the ever-present roll of the Pacific.

Most walks are the daily habits of people on-the-go. Routine, known, and often appreciated, these customary treks help our days have meaning. Others challenge each person in different ways: a physical test or a mental task. Any walk you take in Asilomar, this refuge-by-the-sea, will transport you to a place that, with one small step onto the grounds, brings an enormous sense of peace.

Susan Vasquez has taken walks in many of the world's most interesting spots, but especially enjoys her strolls around Estero Bay. She is the author of four books, blogs at One Small Walk and is a member of the Bookshelf Writers, four Estero Bay women whose writing can be found at <http://www.thebookshelfwriters.com>

Festival Mosaic Announces Summer Schedule

Festival Mosaic, has announced the schedule for its 2024 San Luis Obispo Summer Music Festival, July 18-27, 2024. Twenty-one events over 10 days — from free recitals to a climactic orchestral concert — encompass performances by music director and violinist Scott Yoo, as well as marquee soloists and artists from the nation's finest orchestras.

Unlike some performing arts series, Festival Mosaic is not confined to a single genre, venue, or even the indoors. The natural beauty and architectural splendor of San Luis Obispo County shine throughout the lineup, as music lovers experience the best in Baroque works, chamber pieces,

May 3-19

Lunenburg

Written by
Norm Foster

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Directed by
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Community

world premieres, jazz, and Americana among/in missions and vineyards.

This season, Yoo appears in his familiar guises as violinist, conductor, and host, adding a new role: composer. The opening night chamber concert (July 19) includes not one but two world premieres, Yoo's "Piano Quartet, op. 1" and Canadian piano virtuoso Stewart "Goodyear's Octet."

The program concludes with the expansive Piano Quintet by Sibelius. One of Festival Mozaic's signature events, Baroque in the Vines, takes place the following evening, featuring works by Telemann and J.S. Bach at the hilltop Serra Chapel. The picturesque, historically-styled building is just over 30 years old, but its beauty and sweeping surroundings are timeless.

The historic Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa was founded in 1772; the same year, Mozart wrote his sprightly Divertimento in D Major, K. 131. It will be heard at the mission (July 24), on a program including Ravel's Introduction and Allegro for harp and chamber ensemble.

Music for Everyone

Festival Mozaic presents a wide range of music in forms ranging from free midday mini-concerts to a family concert with dancers (Peter and the Wolf, July 22) to exploratory lecture-recitals called Notable Insights (July 18, 25), in which Yoo, host of the PBS program Now Hear This, guides festivalgoers through what makes masterworks tick. During this year's Notable Dinner (July 22), he will discuss Felix Mendelssohn's youthful Sextet at Cass Winery in Paso Robles.

The See Canyon Fruit Ranch hosts not one but two jazz groups (July 21), the musically omnivorous Quarteto Nuevo and San Luis Obispo's own Ron McCarley Jazz Quartet opens, while local singer-songwriter Melody Klemin opens for Americana artists Tim Bluhm and The Coffis Brothers appearing at the Dana Adobe Cultural Center in Nipomo (July 25).

The festival is screening two films: Chevalier, based on the life of Black violinist and composer Joseph Bologne, "Chevalier de Saint-George" (July 22); and "Earl Kim," about one of Yoo's musical mentors. Kim's Where Grief Slumbers for soprano and chamber ensemble is a highlight of the fourth chamber concert (July 26), including Tchaikovsky's passionate "Souvenir de Florence" for string sextet.

Orchestral Finale

When Yoo auditioned for the music directorship of Festival Mozaic in 2004, he conducted Beethoven's "Fifth Symphony." His July 27th performance of the work with the Festival Orchestra to close this summer season creates a symbolic bridge to the 2025 festival, which marks the 20th anniversary of his appointment. This concert will also feature Mozart's "Magic Flute Overture" and Wagner's lush "Wesendonck Lieder" with German soprano Sarah Traubel.

Single tickets are on sale now at festivalmozaic.org, or call (877) 881-8899, or stop by the festival office at 265 South Street, Suite G San Luis Obispo, Mon.-Fri. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Tibetan Monks Visit Morro Bay



Photos by www.photobyvivian.com

The Tibetan Sacred Arts Tour with seven delegates/monks from the Drepung Gomang Monastery in South India recently visited Morro Bay for three days. Let's Get Tuned Sound and Yoga Studio invited all to "immerse themselves" in the experience and view a mandala creation, meditation, and cultural celebration.

At the conclusion of their sacred sand mandala art creation, which the monks had spent four days creating, they said a prayer to bring good fortune and end suffering in our community. Then there was a dissolution of the mandala by carefully sweeping it away then collecting the sand and handing it out to all the children and attendees. The sweeping away of the mandala represents impermanence and non-attachment.

A procession to the bay followed where a prayer was said by the water to return the beautiful art to Mother Earth and all sentient beings as a wish for peace, compassion and relief of suffering.

"The Monks said they felt the immense support of this community, with between 500-700 people visiting from all over the county, state and even out of state visitors who traveled to be here for their visit," said Jon Nowaczyk, who owns Let's Get Tuned Sound and Yoga Studio with Natalie Teichmann.

During the Monk's stay, visitors were able to visit a marketplace featuring handcrafted goods created by Tibetan artisans. Donations were welcomed for the viewing, requesting private or business blessings, attending special meditations and sound healing events.

Proceeds from the tour benefited the Tibetan refugee community and the Drepung Gomang Monastery in South India, helping preserve their sacred traditions and culture.



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Sports

Six Named Athletes of the Month for April

Story by Neil Farrell

The Morro Bay High School Athletic Boosters Club has named six student athletes with Athlete of the Month Honors for April 2024.

"As the Spring sport season is in full swing at Morro Bay High School," the Boosters said, "the MBHS Athletic Boosters would like to commend all coaches and athletes that are representing our school. The commitment and dedication to your sport is commendable. Go Pirates!"

Athletes honored for April are: Quentin Crotts, Marley Socarras, Jade Andres, Jackson Hanson, Wendy Wilson and Otis Kelly.

Baseball

Pirates baseball coach, Jared Zill named Quentin Crotts as Athlete of the Month.

shares the following about Quentin Crotts,

"Crotts has been our most consistent player so far this year," Coach Zill said. "Crotts shows up to practice every day with a positive attitude and is always the first guy to volunteer to help out around the field. A quieter kid that leads by example."



Baseball player Quentin Crotts is the team's April Athlete of the Month.

Swimming and Diving

Coach Jim White from the swim and diving team named Ella Meyer as Athlete of the Month.

"Ella is a freshman at Morro Bay High School currently competing in swimming and diving for the spring sports season. Even though it's her freshman junior varsity season, Ella has already produced some impressive athletic performances and competitive times that have her competing at the same level as some of her varsity teammates. She has demonstrated a dedicated work ethic and is always a supportive presence to her teammates. Ella has had a strong start to her athletic career at MBHS and we look forward to seeing her growth going forward. Congratulations Ella!"

Girls Beach Volleyball

Girls' Beach Volleyball Coach Kate Yarbrough named Marley Socarras and Jade Andres Athletes of the Month.

Coach Yarbrough said of Socarras and Andres, "Marley has played most of our season at the Varsity No. 1 seed — the highest rank — and has handled the competition and pressure with a calm confidence. Only a sophomore, Marley plays with a very advanced understanding of the game as shown in her physical athleticism, communication on and off the court, and quick decision-making skills.

"She perfectly balances brawns with brains and is the player on our squad who is never seen without a smile on her face. Her coaches and peers respect her abilities, dedication, and attitude and she is someone we are proud to have representing and leading our program.

Her other choice, Andres, does it all. "Jade is one of the most considerate, thoughtful, and cerebral players we have on our team this year," Coach Yarbrough said. "She is the first to help set up, pack up, and offer to help in any way possible. Her team-centered mindset is exactly what our program hopes to instill in growing players, and Jade reminds us every day to care for each other and take care of each other."

She understands the game well. "During practices," the coach said, "her questions are specific and show a deep



Girls' Beach Volleyball player, Jade Andres, was named an Athlete of the Month for April.



Sprinter, Wendy Wilson (left) is the Girls Track & Field Team's Athlete of the Month. Senior distance runner, Otis Kelly is the Track & Field Teams' Athlete of the Month on the boy's side.



understanding of the game. Coupled with her incredible speed and agility, Jade has come out as a formidable opponent and highly valued teammate.

"When she is not contributing to wins, she is constantly contributing to our positive outlook, abilities to believe in ourselves, and validation that there is no substitute for hard work and a good work ethic."

Boys Tennis

Boys' Tennis Team Coach Jason Hanson named Jackson Hanson Athlete of the Month. A senior, Hanson, "is team captain and undefeated in singles in Ocean League tennis," Coach Hanson said.

Sports Continued on page 19

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Community



NATURAL HISTORY NUGGETS

Wind Just Gets Old



An oak tree by Baywood School sculpted by the wind. Photo submitted

By Dean Thompson

One of the first peregrine falcon eyries I watched was at Diablo Canyon. I sat on the southern point of Diablo Cove and stared northwest over the water to Diablo Rock just offshore. I had no shelter, so I sat nestled among the stunted, prostrate forms of the coastal buckwheat, golden

yarrow and deerweed. Dressed in my long johns, down jacket, beanie and gloves, the cold April winds raked across me and made me one with the vegetation. By the end of the day the salty sea air coated my sunglasses, scope and binoculars, and I could feel fine particles of sand and grit along my face. The falcons were smart, they nested on the warm, sheltered, south-east side of the rock.

Late in the afternoon, driving home through Avila Beach I saw all the folks lying out on the beach in their swim trunks and bikinis. Such a contrast, but a perfect illustration of the various microclimates we have here in our little slice of paradise.

The winds off the ocean in the springtime can get so annoying when they persist for days on end, especially if you want to surf or recreate on the water! But these winds are an integral part of the shape and productivity of so many of our Central Coast ecosystems.

In Los Osos and other areas along the windward, northwest facing coasts, the wind is responsible for the structure of the oaks, cypresses and other trees that can be found there. Traditionally, around the end of March, our live oaks, and other trees, undergo bud burst. Tender new shoots of leaves sprout forth on the tips of branches only to be blasted by the salty air and grit picked up by the NW gales off the ocean. The Elfin Forest is a perfect example of what happens to these oaks. They end up stunted and twisted, growing long, rather than tall.

Another example of this effect which, ecologists call Krummholz (German: krumm, "crooked, bent, twisted" and Holz, "wood") can be found with the eucalyptus on your walk out to Hazzard Reef in Montana de Oro, or with

Just Gets Old Continued on page 19

AAUW Presents 36th Annual Springtime Garden Tour



Alaine and Frank Nadeau's Morro Bay garden offers bountiful purple blooming Nemesia and a gorgeous mixed spring bouquet of colorful annuals. Photo by Monique Bender

The American Association of University Women's annual Garden Tour takes place Sunday, April 28. The tour is self-guided and features three gardens in Los Osos and one in Morro Bay.

Bruce & Sue Morgenthaler started with a clean slate and a steep hillside. Inspiration took hold while reading Michael Pollan's "Beyond Wilderness and Lawn" book., which states "Gardening, as a cultural activity, matters deeply, not only to the look of our landscape, but also to the wisdom of our thinking about the environment."

As a result, you'll find drought-tolerant plants, a magical rock-terraced garden as well as magnificent views of the Estero Bay.

Tara Noland & Frank Perea want you to see their garden as a "peaceful sanctuary" not only for us, but for the many birds and pollinators that visit the garden. Twenty years ago, their lot was mainly sand but through soil amendments they have been able to grow fruit trees, garden beds, native shrubs and trees. This place is a true labor of love. A must-see piece includes a large black sage brush that doubles as a quail sanctuary.

Ann Hodges' garden is a work-of-art featuring succulents, ferns and other unusual plant species commingled with her own mosaic and glass work. Additionally, Ann will sell selected pieces of her creative mosaics and stepping-stones at the garden tour.

Described as harmonious splendor, Alaine Nadeau and her husband Frank have cultivated a diverse and colorful

Garden Continued on page 16



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Cambria Wildflower Show, April 27-28

The old adage says, "April showers brings May flowers," and folks in Cambria plan to celebrate the spring burst of life.

The 16th Annual Cambria Wildflower Show is set for noon-5 p.m. Saturday, April 27 and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, April 28 at the Cambria Vet's Hall, 1000 Main St.

Admission is \$5 at the door and free for students of all ages. The show features the myriad of wild flowers that bloom on the Central Coast and ring in Spring and summer with bursts of vibrant colors.

"San Luis Obispo County is rich with wildflowers," reads a news release from Friends of Fiscalini Ranch, who organize the flower show, "and there's no better place to understand the full range of botanical beauty."

The show takes visitors on a "comprehensive tour of the flora diversity of Northern San Luis Obispo County from the Monterey County line to the Morro Bay Estuary and from the coastal bluffs to the ridge of the Santa Lucia Mountains. It showcases the remarkable range of floral colors, scents, and sizes found right here in SLO County," the Friends Group said.

The show features hundreds of bouquets of fresh flowers arranged by plant family and labeled with botanical and common names. It features rare and endan-



A young girl admires the variety of wildflowers at the Cambria Wildflower Show. Submitted photo

gered, invasive and poisonous plants; and an array of antique bottles and interesting vases holding the specimens.

There will be botanists on hand to answer questions and identify photos of wildflowers, and treats and light fare from the "Wildflower Café." There will also be field guides, seeds and merchandise for sale from the Friends of Fiscalini Ranch Preserve and the California Native Plant Society.

The show is sponsored by Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve and seeks to "enhance the public's enjoyment of wildflowers by highlighting the county's flora diversity and aiding in identification."

And in case readers are wondering about rare plants being picked for a flower show, "Permitted and trained teams of collectors collect the flowers from habitats with large populations so that people can learn to enjoy plants in their natural habitats without picking the flowers them-

selves," the Friends explained.

The Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve was founded "to protect and restore a 430-acre jewel of public open space on California's Central Coast," the non-profit group said. The group's mission, "is to protect the beauty of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve and sustain its diversity of life for everyone to enjoy."

The Fiscalini Ranch is a large open space parcel located on the Cambria Coast. See: fiscaliniranchpreserve.org for more information.

A woman tends to one of the displays at the Cambria Wildflower Show. Submitted photo



Junkyard/Backyard Dogs

A Dose of Good Dogma



By Lisa Ellman

Have you ever wondered why "junkyard" dogs always seemed so vicious? It's not because they were ever specifically trained to protect or guard the property, that would be way too expensive; it's because they were never socialized to people or considered part of

the family pack. Their fierce aggressiveness was most likely borne out of fear of humans coming onto their territory. I doubt those dogs ever had much interaction involving play or bonding with their owner in any way. That wasn't their purpose.

I mention all this because, although not necessarily in junkyards, there are still people who think that letting their dogs live in the yard night and day is just fine. It's not.

Domesticated dogs did not evolve as solitary creatures. More than any other domesticated species, dogs are pack animals that thrive on the companionship of others. As companion animals to us hairless apes, they rely on the bonds and trust that comes from their human pack.

One way that bond is developed is by

Junkyard Continued on page 17

Garden From page 15

garden with annuals from poppies, nemesis, love in the mist mixed with salvia and peekaboo pink lilies. There is nowhere that Alaine would rather be than her garden. She has been gardening since she was a young girl. Her earliest gardening memory is planting nasturtium seeds at 9-years-old and buying lilacs and gardenias from a local nursery.

Tickets are \$15 with all Sunday afternoon to explore the four gardens. They 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 and with any AAUW member. www.morrobay-ca.aauw.net (805) 550-5216.

This is the major fundraiser for the Morro Bay Branch of the American Association of University Women. The proceeds are used for high school scholarships in Morro Bay and to send several 7th grade girls to a TECH summer camp at CSU Monterey Bay in July to study STEM subjects.

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News

Junkyard From page 16
sharing a den.

Unfortunately, through no fault, or choice of their own, there are still dogs that are relegated to living outside, alone and separated from the pack.

You can find these dogs in almost every neighborhood. It might be tethered to a stake or tree in the backyard or left in the garage while the people are away. Perhaps it's attached to a long line that can move across the yard from above. Maybe there's shelter, maybe not. Food and water may be absent, empty, or just beyond the dog's reach.

Isolated and captive, the backyard dog suffers. Think of the barking, whining or the destructive behavior you've heard or seen in people's backyards. That dog is trying its hardest to attract attention, of any kind! Even getting someone to come outside and yell at them offers the reward of contact.

People that consistently keep their dogs outside often rationalize, saying they spend time with the dog while working in the yard, taking the occasional walk or spending a few minutes throwing a ball when they have a chance. It's possible that someone may be providing food, water and some engagement on a regular basis, but the dog remains alone and isolated for a majority of the time. Alone and abandoned outside the pack, dogs become stressed, anxious, bored and frustrated, contributing to behaviors like fear and escape. These components are what lead directly to aggressive, destructive and inappropriate behaviors and destroy two of the dog's strongest instincts, denning and human sociability. And, as with humans, a dog that is constantly stressed, anxious and agitated, is more likely to develop serious health issues.

All of this is not to say that one must spend every minute devoted to catering and entertaining the dog. Training and socializing will allow the dog to learn the rules of being indoors. Play, exercise and enrichment activities will burn up energy so that once indoors, the dog can enjoy a chew toy and calmly be with you as you watch TV or read a book. Often, your dog will happily curl up under your feet and sleep.

The crucial thing to remember is that being incorpo-

rated into the family pack is both comforting and necessary for your dog's physical and mental wellbeing.

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

Letter To The Editor Enforcement Equality is Questionable



Unequal enforcement is alive and well in San Luis Obispo County, especially now with the ongoing influx of corporations and big money into the Paso Robles and Templeton areas.

My family has a small farm and farm stand on Vineyard Drive, and we are hosts for RV travelers with the Harvest Host program. We do not pay to be a host nor are we paid by our guests. There is no water or power or hookups of any kind. The RVs are self-contained. No section of any county ordinance was violated.

And yet county code enforcement found my family guilty of running a commercial RV park without proper permits. I was tried and fined. I never received a visit from code enforcement or a letter informing me that they suspected a violation. I was never given a chance to cure and correct. No due process. I simply received a copy of a violation notice in the mail. It cost us thousands of dollars. In the end, we were able to resume our activities.

On the other hand, our new corporate neighbor, an owner of Riboli Family Wines and San Antonio Winery in

Los Angeles, purchased Jada Winery across the street and is allowed to run a wind machine for frost protection on a new section of vines, [allegedly] with no repercussions. The noise and wind from this machine rattles our windows and makes it impossible to sleep.

Despite the manufacturer's specifications showing a 1000 ft setback, the fan is about 130 ft from our barn, 300' from our house, and right across from our Harvest Host RV guest parking spaces.

Even though under the county "Right to Farm" ordinance, this wind machine is a nuisance and not allowed as it violates CA Civil Code Section 3479 ("Anything which is injurious to health, or is indecent or offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the use of property, so as to interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property....is a nuisance."), it appears the owner feels it is his right to run the wind machine because "wind machines used for direct climate control" are exempt under the county noise ordinance.

The county has failed to follow through on their 2022 request for standards and practices for wind machines, even though, under board direction, staff formed a committee with the ag department, the Agricultural Liaison Advisory Board, and other entities and drafted the document.

So now, a giant corporation is dictating the quality of surrounding neighbors' lives, as the wind machine droned on Friday night from 10:18 p.m. until 7:30 a.m. and Saturday night from 2:30 a.m. until again about 7:30 a.m.

While I had the book thrown at me for allowing travelers to spend a night at our farm, the winery owner is able to disrupt the lives of neighbors with no consequence.

Claire Mamakos
Templeton

Letter Policy

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



Chamber Corner

Shop, Sip, Stroll and Mixer Fun



Owner of Morro Bay Butcher and Deli Geoff Montgomery and his new baby, Magnolia.



Lynsey Hansen, membership director of the chamber spreads her wings at the April mixer, held at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden. Photo by Jodi Hollier

The Spring Downtown Shop, Sip & Stroll, organized by the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, drew crowds and rave reviews! Over 160 attendees flocked to enjoy tastings of wines, ciders, cocktails, herbal elixirs, cold pressed juices, coffee and delicious food.

The Spring Embarcadero Shop, Sip & Stroll will be held on April 26th. Tickets are available online on the Morro Bay Chamber's website and will be available at check-in at the Giant Chessboard located on Front Street during the event.

Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce's April Mixer, held at San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden on April, offered guests a perfect evening out. Attendees reveled in a picturesque garden tour, relished a delectable charcuterie spread, and delighted in Harmony Cellars' fine wines. Lucky winners of four door prizes capped off the evening with added excitement.



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Kevin says,
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News

Contracts Settled From page 1

to work out, increased costs potentially totaling over \$2.4 million. The city appears to have gotten off fairly cheaply in the negotiations.

The "City has negotiated final resolution of \$2,422,876.46 in outstanding potential change orders from FBV for a payment of \$575,674," Kwolek said.

So with a budget of \$79 million, cutting down on the change orders and claims made by FBV, they saved "about \$1,800,000 in settlement of all outstanding PCOs from FBV."

The original contract for the treatment plant was closer to \$68 million but the project ran into difficulties almost from its start in March 2020.

In May 2020, heavy rains caused a significant landslide on the site, an event that added nearly \$300,000 to the costs.

There was also a major burglary at the plant site, the largest theft case in town history, with over \$150,000 worth of tools and construction materials vanishing from the WRF site in March 2021.

Anvil Builders also had one of its storage containers sitting on Quintana Road hit at the same time. Those cases were never solved.

They also had some issues with plant start-up, as the initial sludge brought in to start the biological treatment of wastes didn't take.

"Initial seed sludge biology," Kwolek's report said, "was significantly weakened due in part to a lack of sufficient food and development of unfavorable water quality conditions." Translated that means the first batch of microbes brought in to activate the digesters all died and seeding the biological part of the treatment process had to be done over. Then last October they had another incident.

"On Oct. 11, 2023," the report said, "there was a slug of poor quality raw wastewater from the City's existing plant that overwhelmed and killed the biology at the WRC requiring a re-seeding of the plant." The report lists the issues with the sludge at \$125,000.

The State Department of Drinking Water (DDW) caused the most costly overrun. "The Department of Drinking Water," the report said, "required additional testing in two phases for the UV [ultraviolet] system of the WRC."

The plant uses ultraviolet light to disinfect the wastewater before it is discharged into Estero Bay or further filtered through a reverse osmosis plant for eventual recycling. DDW's extra testing was listed at \$1.38 million.

Mother Nature also struck a blow. "The 2022-2023 rainy season proved to be an above average rainfall event for the City of Morro Bay." Cleaning up and making repairs after the big storm was listed at \$181,000.

The big Jan. 9, 2023 storm that flooded a big swath

of Main Street hit the new treatment plant too, causing "significant erosion and structural damage to the newly constructed V-ditch drainage system." That drainage system runs down the side of the new plant. FBV re-designed the ditch and made repairs.

"FBV made design improvements to prevent any back channeling erosion of the V-ditch foundation," the report said, "and to improve the soil and structure interface of the drainage feature. FBV re-hydro seeded the hillside as well as installed a temporary irrigation system to ensure that the hydro seed established. It should be noted that the V-ditches have currently not had any issue during the rainy season this year." FBV sought over \$669,000 to do this work.

Also, the drainage ditch had a gap in the fencing and FBV was asked to plug the gap with a welded wire mesh screen, which they sought \$80,000 for.

FBV had been awarded a design-build contract meaning that the company, a partnership between Filanc and Black & Veatch, designed the whole plant and then built it, too. Carollo Engineering was hired as project managers to watchdog the project and try and keep it going and on budget.

With a final price tag of \$79 million, it actually comes in some \$123,000 "under budget" as the City's new budget was \$79.1 million. That's about \$10 million above the original bid of \$69 million. There were a total of 10 contract amendments made for the treatment plant.

Conveyance System

The City has also closed out its contract with Anvil Builders, the Bay Area company brought in to install needed pipes and lift stations.

Here too the project had unforeseen cost overruns, which the City negotiated and settled in its favor as well.

Anvil's original bid was for \$31 million and the final cost is over \$37.2 million. The contract had nine amendments and when the pipes were all laid and the new sewer system up and running, the company was still trying to get over \$2.5 million in overages.

"Anvil currently has unresolved change orders and



August 2022 photo of the new treatment plant's activated sludge digesters before microbes were introduced and the plant started taking in sewage. These ponds were set back when sludge brought in to activate the plant died and the process had to be repeated.

claims submitted to the City for the Conveyance Facilities," reads another report from Public Works Director, Kwolek, "totaling \$2,586,370. Amendment No. 9 and the proposed settlement agreement with Anvil builders closes out all change orders and claims for the Conveyance Facilities Project for \$880,000."

That doesn't include another \$200,000 the City is withholding while it works out a solution to a nagging problem discovered by the heavy winter rains last year, its brine disposal line can't handle all the flow to the plant.

It's long been an issue in town that with wet winters and heavy storms, infiltration by groundwater into the sewer lines greatly increases the flow to the plant, by almost double at times.

A persistent issue with the City's old sewer treatment plant, it cropped up with the heavy winter last year and is apparently still unresolved. The report says there is "a \$200,000 retention by City pending outfall hydraulic final resolution concerning brine line effluent pipeline."

With this ninth contract amendment, Anvil's final payout totals \$37.2 million.

But it could have been worse. "Anvil originally submitted a claim for \$4.2M for additional compensation for changes in the scope of the project work," the report said. "With this Amendment No. 9 and Amendment No. 8, already approved by the Council at the May 27, 2023, meeting, the total being approved for all final claims is \$2.3M."

Breaking down Anvil's portion the original bid was for



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News

\$31.4M. The first approved conveyance system construction budget was at \$34.7M; and contract Amendments 1-8 added \$4.8M.

Amendment No. 9 for \$880,000 for final settlement of change orders brought it up to \$37.2M.

The City transferred \$123,000 it “saved” from the treatment plant portion to the conveyance contract to cover some of Anvil’s extra charges and it used up over \$2.4M from the overall project budget, too.

But still outstanding is that sticky problem with the discharge system.

“As to the brine line effluent pipeline,” the report said, “\$200,000 in retention will be withheld by the City pending the outcome of the investigation of the conveyance capacity problem. If, after considering that investigation City determines, in good faith, the conveyance capacity problems were caused, in whole or in part, by construction defects, then City will continue to withhold the \$200,000 in retention until Contractor remedies the problem to the satisfaction of the City, then release such withheld retention to Contractor, in accordance with City’s payment process.”

“If City, after considering the investigation, in good faith determines the problem was not caused by construction defect, then City will release withheld retention to Contractor, in accordance with City’s payment process.”

Recycling Water

Though it might seem that \$160 million should surely finish this story, the City is still working on the third major part of this project — actually recycling the treated wastewater.

The City initially intended to recycle some 825-acre feet a year of triple treated (tertiary level) wastewater and then pushed through an RO filtering system.

The plan was to pipe it back into town and inject it into the ground in the Morro Creek Basin to potentially be used for additional drinking water (“indirect potable reuse”) and as a block to potential seawater intrusion.

The City reached a settlement with Vistra, owners of the power plant property, for a utility easement and a well site by Morro Creek. Infrastructure to access that well site was constructed.

The idea of recycling the wastewater played a huge roll in being able to tap a State loan program that provided some \$100 million in low-interest loans.

Recently, the City Council and Public Works Advisory Board, at a joint meeting, got a clearer picture of what is required of the project’s recycling portion in order to satisfy the SRF loan.

“At that meeting,” Director Kwolek wrote in a March 12 report, “City Council directed staff to move forward with the recommended initial phase of the Recycled Water Program and initiate environmental, permitting and design activities necessary for program implementation. Included in the motion for approval was an amendment to allow these activities to move forward after the WRF Subcommittee approved a letter prepared by staff to the lending agencies requesting written clarification of the minimum recycled water implementation requirements. In subsequent meetings with the WRF Subcommittee, it was determined that only a letter to the SWRCB DFA was needed as the SRF Loan Agreement was understood to have the most

stringent recycled water implementation requirements.”

In a letter to the State Department of Water Resources, which runs the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, Kwolek wrote, “The WRF Program has been a financial pain point for Morro Bay. It is by far the largest public works project (\$160m+) the City (pop. 10,700) has ever undertaken. The City has incurred significant costs associated with the property/easement acquisition, environmental mitigation requirements, construction contract change orders, schedule delays, related attorneys fees, a pandemic (i.e., Covid-19 delays and associated labor shortages and supply chain issues), and natural disasters (i.e., historic flooding in winter 2023).”

He sought to clarify the City’s position. “The recycled water usage estimate provided in the City’s SRF application was based on an amount of wastewater available under a future buildout condition. However, we are unsure if the City will ever reach this projected amount within the duration of the SRF loan due to increased water usage efficiency, lower than anticipated population growth rates, and potential future population declines in California. These reductions in water demand and associated reductions in wastewater generation may make it difficult for the City to reach the recycled water usage targets included in the City’s SRF application.”

They didn’t reach a very sympathetic ear. In the State Water Board’s response, Michael Downey, the Acting Assistant Deputy Director Division of Financial Assistance pointed out that the City has more than once listed “indirect potable reuse facilities” in its project specs.

Downey points out that the City back in July 2021 in its agreement for the SRF loan, said the “project scope includes indirect potable reuse facilities, including recycled water pipeline to convey treated water from the Water Reclamation Facility (treatment plant) to the injection location, as well as injection well.”

He adds that this recycled portion of the project made it attractive to the State Water Board. “On Oct. 21, 2020,” Downey wrote, “the City submitted a User Connection Schedule, as part of the application, that detailed an estimated planned recycling water usage of 825 acre-feet per year for both existing and future uses.”

He added that the project’s Plans & Specifications, “submitted by the City with the Final Budget Approval package, for both the WRF and the conveyance phases of construction, set a clear expectation that the City intends to build the project to include Indirect Potable Reuse components.”

He goes on to say under the loan terms, the “eligible project capacity is 825 AFY, 412.5 AFY must be delivered to existing users within 5 years of completion of construction. The remaining 412.5 AFY may be reserved for future use.”

He concludes with a not-so-subtle warning. “Failure to comply with the terms of this agreement may be construed as a material breach of the Agreement,” Downey wrote. “The occurrence of material breach would result in the City’s immediate reimbursement of all grant and loan funds to the State Water Board.”

The City got a \$10 million planning grant from the State Water Board to kick off project planning, and later secured the low-interest SRF loan that was combined with



Morro Bay City Council members wearing COVID masks went along on an October 2020 tour. Pictured from left are: Jeff Heller, Marlys McPherson, Mayor John Heading and Dawn Addis, who is now our State Assemblywoman.

a Federal loan under the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) and provided the money for the project. The City still has some \$9.4 million to be used for the recycling portion.

Long, Winding Road

The origins of this whole saga wind back to 2003, when the City and its former partner, the Cayucos Sanitary District, received a letter from the Regional Water Quality Control Board asking that the old sewer plant on Atascadero Road be upgraded to full secondary treatment.

The water board wanted to get rid of a 301-h permit under the Clean Water Act. That permit allowed for a mix of primary and secondary treated wastewater to be discharged into the ocean south of Morro Rock in about 120-feet of water.

This was done rarely by the plant, which was completely rebuilt in the early 1980s. The permit was needed for times with very high flows, like summer holiday weekends when both towns are packed with tourists.

The first iteration of a project was to add to the existing plant the necessary capacity to properly treat all that extra flow, and continue using much of the plant, at an estimated cost of about \$38 million.

Problems arose almost immediately, with some advocating for increased treatment — to tertiary levels. Then FEMA pointed out that the old portions of the plant would be in the flood plain of Morro Creek, so the plans were changed to replace the entire plant using an adjacent property the City owns but is currently being leased to Morro Dunes RV park for storage. That project estimate jumped to about \$58 million.

Some 14 different appeals were filed with the Coastal Commission over that project and a push was begun to move it away from the coast and to recycle the water.

Also, a sea change in the makeup of the City Council occurred during the over 2 years the project languished at the Coastal Commission, with the new majority favoring tearing up the plans and moving the plant.

The notion of future reuses of the beachfront property, once the sewer plant was moved, also began to be explored.

The Coastal Commission denied the project at the behest of the new Mayor, and ordered it to be moved inland somewhere to avoid “coastal hazards,” i.e. tsunamis, and flooding; and to address climate change and sea level rise.

The Coastal Commission suggested the Righetti Ranch, a sizable ranch property on Hwy 41 at the eastern edge of the City Limits, would be a good site.

That idea was estimated to add millions to the project to pay for piping the water a little over a mile, to a new treatment plant.

But an appraisal of the ranch came in too far below the asking price, and a deal couldn’t be struck. Also, residents on a hillside overlooking the ranch protested and threatened to sue the City to stop it.

The next site was just down the road at the Rancho Colina MHP and RV Park. The City also started considering moving its corporation yard there too. But negotiations on that property also broke down and the City started looking at numerous other properties, including potentially going south to Toro Creek Road.

During all this, the relationship with Cayucos broke down and the CSD divorced itself from a partnership with Morro Bay on a new plant, and instead built its own treatment plant on Toro Creek Road. That plant opened years before Morro Bay’s and cost less than \$30 million.

The City Council investigated dozens of potential new sites and settled on the South Bay Boulevard site, as it had the fewest detractors and seemed the safest place politically. This new site required an array of conveyance pipes to be installed running about 3.5 miles out to the new plant, plus two new lift stations had to be built.

The project has seen countless political struggles, and been shaped by the growing issue of addressing climate change. It has pit friends and neighbors against each other, brought environmental activists to town arguing for one treatment method or another, broke up a partnership that went back several decades, and been bounced from location to location, all the while going up in complexity and rising in costs.

A project that started in 2003 is now almost completed in 2024; actually not all that long a time, as sewer projects go.

Sports From page 14

Coach Jennifer Frere honored girls standout, Wendy Wilson and boys distance runner, Otis Kelly with Athlete of the Month.

“Wendy is our 800 meters leader this season,” Coach Frere said. “She also runs the 400m, 200m, 1600m, and is the anchor for our 4x800m relay.”

Wilson has a great work ethic. “She is a leader in workouts and always has a positive attitude,” Coach Frere said. “She is a fierce competitor and is skilled at running specific paces to run her fastest times. We are looking forward to seeing how far Wendy can go in competition this season.”

Kelly, a State Meet Qualifier in Cross Country last season, is going the distance for the Pirates on the track. “Otis is specializing in the 1600m and 3200m this season,” Coach Frere said. “He has improved his speed by racing the 800m this season as well. He always wants to do more in practice and is willing to put in the work he needs to get stronger and faster. He brings the team together and is looking forward to CIF.”

His collegiate future is already set. “Otis has committed to Cal Poly Humboldt to run Cross Country and Track,” Coach Frere said, “and major in geospatial science.”

Estero Bay News congratulates all the honorees for April 2024 and wishes them and their respective teams continued success the rest of the season.



Boys’ Tennis Team Captain, Jackson Hanson, was named Athlete of the Month for April 2024. Photos courtesy MBHS Athletics

Just Gets Old From page 14

the Monterey Cypress’s at San Simeon Point. The northwest facing side of San Simeon Point is a hedge of twisted trees while the wind sheltered side houses taller more stately specimens.

The wind also plays a huge factor in the productivity of our ocean along the coast. Due to the Coriolis effect, when the wind blows along our coastline it causes the water at the ocean surface to move at about a 90 degrees angle from the wind direction. Along our coast that shoves the surface water offshore. Taking its place, water rises up from deeper in the ocean in an important process called “upwelling.”

The water that moves up to the surface is usually cold and rich in nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus, which come from the decomposing bodies of dead sea creatures. These extra nutrients are essential for phytoplankton populations (tiny plants) that float near the surface of the ocean. Then, zooplankton (tiny floating animals) numbers can explode with the abundant food as they eat the phytoplankton. Next, fish like schools of anchovies come in to eat the zooplankton; following them come the seals, sea lions, pelicans, cormorants and eventually humpback whales.

These upwelling zones throughout the world can be incredibly rich with marine life, and about half of the fish caught in the world come from upwelling areas.

And it all starts with those annoying spring winds. So, let’s try not to get too irritated with them, they’re part of what makes this place so special. We just need to be flexible like the trees, or maybe we should just enjoy flying kites.

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

News

Redistricting From page 1

Members must also be eligible to serve according to State Law (California Elections Code Sec. 23003), governing qualifications of commissioners for independent redistricting commissions. The law lists:

- Cannot be appointed by the legislative body.
- In the eight years preceding a person's application, the person or person's spouse: May not have served an elected or appointed position in the local jurisdiction.
- May not have served as an officer of, employee of, or paid consultant to a campaign committee, candidate for elective office, political party or elected or appointed member of a political central committee in the local jurisdiction.
- May not have served as a staff member or consultant to, or who has contracted with, or currently serving elected officer of the local jurisdiction.
- Been a registered lobbyist to a local jurisdiction.
- Contributed \$500 or more in a year to any candidate for an elective office of the local jurisdiction.

These same requirements also apply to a candidate's family members — parent, sibling, child or in-law — but only would go back four years, instead of eight.

And not just anyone would do. According to Neal's report, each applicant must:

- Possess experience that demonstrates analytical skills relevant to the redistricting process and voting rights and possess an ability to comprehend and apply the applicable state and federal legal requirements.
- Possess experience that demonstrates the ability to be impartial.
- Possess experience that demonstrates an appreciation for the diverse demographics and geography of the County of San Luis Obispo.

SB 977 must still navigate the State Legislature and various committees in both the Assembly and Senate, and once approved by both bodies, it would go to the Governor for his signature. Neal predicted that might happen sometime in August. Should Gov. Newsom sign it, it would go into effect Jan. 1, 2025. But there won't be any need to worry about it now, as Supervisorial Districts only come up for changes after each U.S. Census, with the next one due in 2030.

The redistricting commission was the Board majority's way to avoid the kind of shenanigans that occurred over the past two election cycles.

In 2021, the Board majority adopted a new district map that was very different from the one in effect since the 1980s.

That map took Morro Bay and Los Osos plus a sizable chunk of San Luis Obispo out of Dist. 2.

Morro Bay and roughly half of SLO were combined into a new Dist. 3 and Los Osos was put into Dist. 5. Dist. 2 added Atascadero, about half of Templeton and San Miguel (plus Cayucos and Cambria). Dist. 5 included the sparsely populated eastern portion of the county and the extreme southern end of the County and Nipomo.

The change meant SLO, Los Osos and Morro Bay were denied a chance to vote for County Supervisor in the 2022 elections.

Dawn Ortiz-Legg, who was appointed to the Dist. 3 seat in 2020, after the death of former Supervisor Adam Hill, had to face voters to keep her seat.

But under the Election Codes, the voters from the old Dist. 3 (Pismo and Grover Beach, Avila and part of SLO) got to vote again. She won a 2-year term (to finish out Hill's 2020 term) and had to face voters once again in 2024.

The new 2021 map was used in the 2022 Elections when Dist. 2's Bruce Gibson and Dist. 4's Lynn Compton were up for re-election. Gibson and Compton's challenger, Jimmy Paulding won that election. That coupled with Ortiz-Legg's win, flipped the majority over to liberal from conservative. The new board threw out the 2021 map and in 2023, approved a map that basically returned to the same districts as before.

That moved SLO, Los Osos and Morro Bay back into Dist. 2, however, it also took away their ability to vote in the Dist. 3 2024 Supervisorial Election, and the second straight election they missed.

The biggest benefactor in this mess was Ortiz-Legg,

who got to stay in Dist. 3 and ran unopposed in the March 2024 Primary Election, taking the win in a near walkover and getting a full, 4-year term. (There was a weak, write-in candidate who also ran, but garnered less and 1,000 votes.)

The independent commission will be chosen from a field of up applicants who will first be vetted by the County Elections Office to make sure they qualify. Sixty names will come out of this initial vetting.

The County Clerk would then divide the applicants by District, and select one name from each district to seed the panel, figuratively, pulling a name out of a hat.

The chosen members would then select a second member from the list of qualified applicants in each District. The at-large member would be chosen from the remaining qualified applicants and can be from any of the five districts.

This method would seem to remove it from the highly partisan politics that muffed up the previous two election cycles and twice denied about 30,000 voters a chance to pick their County Supervisor.

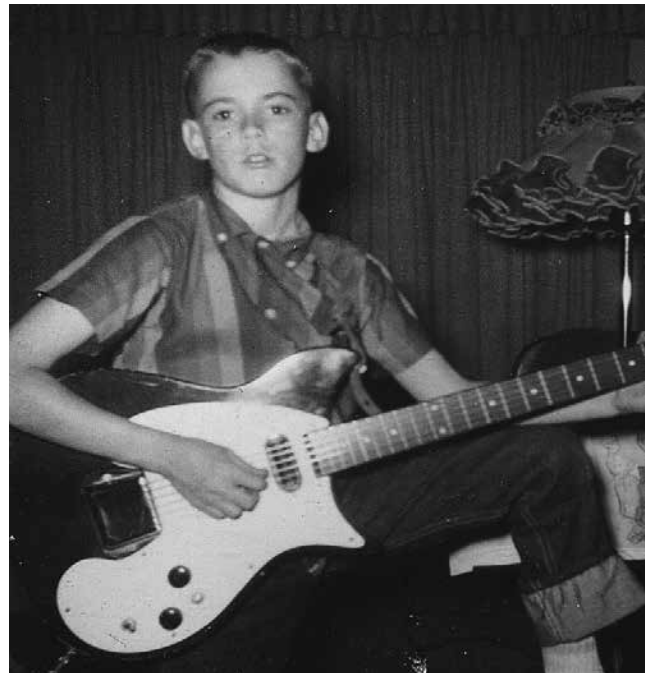
It should be noted that County Supervisor seats here are non-partisan positions, meaning that their party affiliations cannot be used in official election literature — the Sample Ballots, Candidate Statements — and do not appear with a candidate's name on the actual ballot.

This redistricting commission won't be cheap. "The County," Neal said, "will incur anticipated costs to support a citizens' redistricting commission. Costs include consulting costs for administration, outreach, demographic analysis, translation services, mapping tools and map preparation, audio/visual support, and legal counsel to support the independent commission.

"Additionally, County staff costs from Elections, County Counsel, and the County Administrative Office will be incurred."

She estimated the costs to run between \$750,000 to \$1 million "for the 2030 redistricting process."

Moving Forward From page 1



Mike McCabe as a kid jamming on his guitar. Photo submitted

A November 2019 study confirms the concept can be documented. Their journey can be discovered in The Harvard Gazette (www.news.harvard.edu), which concluded, "... across societies, music is associated with behaviors such as infant care, healing, dance, and love (among many others, like mourning, warfare, processions, and ritual)."

Music is everywhere on the Central Coast. I was born and grew up where the Bakersfield Sound was created, so music appreciation is in my DNA. When we moved to Morro Bay over 20 years ago, our first festival — and probably still my favorite — was produced by Morro Bay's renowned banjoist Gary "Goofy Graphics" Ryan. It was downtown at three or four venues and the attendees moved during set breaks to catch all headliners in a more intimate setting than an outdoor park or concert arena. I hoped it would

return annually, but Gary told me he was a musician with lots of musical friends that he performed with throughout our nation who loved coming to Morro Bay, but he was not an events' planner, and no one had stepped up to organize the wintertime festival. Any savvy planners ready to make it happen in 2025?

But I digressed. My curiosity since moving to the Central Coast has always been whether a local musician could make a living sharing his/her musical talent. Recently, Mike McCabe was offering background tunes at a Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce monthly mixer hosted by Savory Palette on the Embarcadero. I had enjoyed other sessions when Mike entertained at Tognazzini's Dockside II, the Morro Bay Maritime Museum Family Fun Day, and Open Mic Thursdays at Savory Palette. It was time for me to ask my burning question.

What I discovered was Mike McCabe's DNA probably dates to a wandering minstrel who roamed during the Middle Ages somewhere between the 11th and 15th centuries. He followed the music wherever it took him — although roads always led back to the Estero Bay. Mike has lived the life of a travelling musician and singer since his teen years.

"No one in my family was musical except maybe my grandfather who played the harmonica," Mike said. "I remember I was six when I watched Ricky Nelson on 'The Ozzie & Harriet Show.' Ricky always seemed to get the girls. So, I started music lessons and loved it."

He grew up in Torrance, CA and played in a rock 'n roll band in high school. "Performing is an addictive process...if they like you," he said. And audiences have continued to like him for 50 years.

Mike followed friends to Maui, Hawaii, when he was nineteen. "I bought a round trip plane ticket then cashed in the return ticket." He stayed a year before traveling back to the mainland, his first taste of living on the Central Coast. "Because I met a woman — the downfall of any good man," he said with a smile. "That was 1973, when we met and married too young. Connie lived in Cambria and was attending Cuesta. Her true instrument was her voice." They performed together in the 1974-5 era of Café Porta Via in Cambria, a pizza and beer coffee house. Their marriage lasted "a whole 25 months." He and Connie McCabe are still good friends, he was pleased to say.

But Mike was able to connect with several musicians during the time, including Mark Ellery, who he still performs with. Those early days they performed Latin Jazz at Sea Chest Oyster Bar while people waited for their table. "Then we played the little Italian place by the Fremont in SLO (Buona Tavola) and enjoyed Sunday afternoons at the Mersea's Restaurant at the end of the Pier in Avila."

Mike found his muse for a while in Santa Cruz, then returned to SLO in 1995. His groups were The Bushman and Rough House Band. There was three years in Arizona playing with the group Pretty Slick before Hawaii called him back. He was with Rough House again. They introduced honky-tonk and rock-a-billy to the Islands.

"We played the resort hotels, but when we had to play too many backtracks, I knew it wasn't my style," said Mike. He returned to the Central Coast. "I love a live performance. You can do that in the SLO music scene. And if you make a mistake — it is all part of playing live."

Wanderlust bit him again in September 2015. He bought a motorhome and for over four months toured the USA stopping for gigs along the way. "I played 32 venues loving the time." He said he especially liked Memphis, The Sun Studio, Graceland, Nashville, New Orleans, and the Key West piano bar that American author Ernest Hemingway frequented.

Today he's settled back into the SLO life and enjoying playing a variety of musical gigs. He seeks them out or they come to him — background like we heard at the chamber mixer or restaurant and wine bar entertainment like the Savory Palette and Tognazzini's Dockside II. His wanderlust is now enjoying duo trips "...with my girlfriend, Irene Saurwein. We love to travel together." Portugal has become their go-to place when they aren't in the Estero Bay.

So, can a musician make it financially playing his/her music on the Central Coast? Probably helps to have some retirement funds and the willingness to play lots of gigs. And if the musician or group has established a name and a



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News

following, Mike agrees the 2024 music scene offers plenty of venues to share one's music. "We play for the love of music – that addiction for playing to a live audience."

Find Mike at Tognazzini's Dockside II on Wednesday and first Saturdays of the month typically with Mark Ellery and Michael Hollier. The group is Deuce's Wild. Mike accepts invitations for other gigs – individually or with the group – when he is available and not playing the life of a traveling minstrel. Most Thursdays you'll find him on the list of performers who sign up to share their music at Open Mic at Savory Palette at Marina Square on the Embarcadero from 6:30 p.m. – 10-ish. Professional musicians or those working their way into the Estero Bay music scene are welcome.

Or maybe you've always wondered what it would be like to play for a live audience. You, too, are welcome at Open Mic Night. Just show-up, sign-up, and play your set to an appreciative audience and then cheer on your fellow musicians.

"We live in a community that loves live music and encourages us to play." Mike said.

Earth Day From page 1

use of pesticides. The mulch for the project came from a tree that had to be removed.

"It's kind of a nice full circle," said Nash-Karner.

The project is a win-win in a world where even lower priced projects are tabled.

"That is the best part, Nash-Karner said. "We are providing volunteer assistance for something that would have to be paid for by the County. With volunteers it will get done months earlier at no cost to the County."

Nash-Karner, who serves as a county parks commissioner, said that parks are an important part of keeping a community healthy and happy, but they need maintenance to keep up with those goals.

"They can only deal with it, if they have staff," she said. "Over the course of the last 30 years we've only had one new ranger hired in the entire county parks system. We have over a million more users. With COVID, we have people out and we have less staff time than we had before."

Jamie Wallace, of Visit Los Osos and project volunteer, echoed the lack of funding for work that needs to be maintained.

"Parks are underfunded," Wallace said. "They need help, and this is what this project is about. Los Osos comes together; we really do. This is what we can do on a small level. It's good for the locals and for our visitors too."

The all-volunteer Celebrate Los Osos began in January 2008 with the motto "making a difference, one project at a time." Since then, they have continued to work on improvement projects of public spaces in Los Osos and Baywood



A San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation Department employee prepares to toss a trash can full of weeds into a dump truck. Photo by Pandora Nash-Karner



Tanny Koeppel pulling weeds Near the tennis courts at the popular park. Photo by Pandora Nash-Karner



A San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation Department employee prepares to toss a trash can full of weeds into a dump truck. Photo by Pandora Nash-Karner

Park to stimulate community pride by working together while leaving a legacy for all to enjoy.

To volunteer for future opportunities, sign up with Ellie at Volunteer@CelebrateLosOsos.org.

Recent projects include the refurbishing and repair of "Udderly Osa" the Cow-Bear in Baywood. Plans are in the works to refurbish both bridge bears and the South Bay "Welcome to Los Osos Baywood" sign.

"We are still fundraising for new chairs at the Red Barn," said Nash-Karner. "Last year we bought new banquet tables for the space. Other projects include an interpretative sign at the Red Barn and potentially a Baywood beautification project."

There is an ongoing fundraiser to support repairs and upkeep on the median located on Los Osos Valley Road by Ralph's grocery store. The area required a major overhaul after an alleged drunk driver drove through it. Plants, waterlines and more were replaced, but the area needs regular upkeep and money to pay for water in the drought resistant, street oasis.

"Our September fundraiser went a long way to pay for these, but we still need money for on-going maintenance of existing projects, new projects and the water bill at the median," said Nash-Karner. "The County requires us to provide a licensed and insured professional landscape company to maintain the median, and those fees must be paid monthly."

To make monetary donations, go to celebratelososos.org and hit the "Donate" button.

Earth Day

The first Earth Day was held April 22, 1970. Environmental activism during the 1960s inspired Wisconsin Sen. Gaylord Nelson to create a national celebration uniting the environmental movement, states the Nationalgeographic.org website. With the help of Denis Hayes, a graduate student at Harvard University, Nelson organized the first Earth Day educating participants in the importance of environmental conservation. Attended by 20 million people across the United States, the event strengthened support for legislation such as the Clean Air Act (updated in 1970) and the Endangered Species Act (1973).

In 1990, Hayes organized a global Earth Day, with more than 200 million participants in more than 140 countries. Earth Day now brings together citizens and activists from around the world to raise awareness and take action regarding such environmental concerns as global warming and renewable energy.

News

Tax Hike From page 1

proposal for a sales tax hike of 0.5 % to be included on the November General Election Ballot.

Acting County Administrative Officer, Rebecca Campbell, said, "Transportation funding for future infrastructure falls well short of the need, as demonstrated in the 2023 SLOCOG Regional Transportation Plan [RTP], which projects a shortfall of \$2.3 billion for regional transportation projects and programs, including a shortfall of \$400 million for needed pavement maintenance alone."

As with many governmental things, the available tax monies aren't cutting the mustard. "Tax revenues," Campbell said, "traditionally used for improvement, operation, and maintenance of public transportation infrastructure have not kept pace with needs and escalating construction costs. Existing State and Federal funding are based upon an antiquated 'gas tax' system of cents per gallon of fuel."

The issue is that the gas taxes were set up at a time when cars used a lot more fuel and the government wasn't pushing so hard for everyone to buy get electric vehicles, which don't use gas or diesel fuel and pay no gas taxes.

"The system," Campbell said, "predated the proliferation of miles per gallon improvements to vehicles, hybrids, ethanol fuels, and electric vehicles. While the cents per gallon fuel tax for the State is fixed to inflation, EVs [less than 20% of new car sales in California] will erode the total gallons purchased, decreasing the tax revenues collected. Further, the Federal gas tax has had no adjustment in over 30 years; thus, available revenue from fuel taxes have not kept up, and will only diminish over time."

The State in 2017 passed Senate Bill 1 (SB 1), which increased the fuel taxes and DMV registration fees, among other tax hikes, generates some \$5 billion statewide and about \$1.2 million annually in SLO County and is used for street repair projects. SB 1 helps but apparently it too isn't going far enough.

"This additional revenue has been helpful," Campbell said, "however, the costs for needed road maintenance and transportation improvement projects and programs of most

cities and counties still often exceed the resources available."

What do cities and counties do when tax revenues flat line? They seek more taxes.

"To address these issues," Campbell said, "many counties and cities in California have chosen to tax themselves for transportation services and infrastructure and not rely solely on the State and Federal funding sources that can be volatile and unreliable. A dedicated local transportation sales tax has been approved in 25 counties in California." There are 58 total counties in California and these so-called, "Self-help Counties" represent about 89% of the entire state's population.

With tax revenues falling behind pace to fix the roads, the Self-help Counties can be more competitive, especially with grants they must compete for.

"Local transportation sales tax measures," Campbell said, "can provide regional and local authorities with access to a stable funding source to allow for delivery of timely, cost-efficient transportation improvements to their communities, and provide additional leverage and 'local match' contributions to compete for outside state and federal grant funding."

She added that passing a local sales tax for transportation needs, could give SLO County a leg up on its competitors for tax dollars.

"Adding San Luis Obispo County to this list," she said, "would help unlock hundreds of millions of dollars in additional transportation funding, guaranteeing, and delivering much-needed transportation improvements and repairs for our residents and to our communities."

The SLOCOG Board, in February, told its staff to go out into the county and make the pitch for support from to city council, as well as the Board of Supervisors, which holds five seats on the SLOCOG Board of Directors (the others are filled by one representative from each incorporated city and one special district representative).

As a special tax designated for use on transportation, the sales tax hike needs two-thirds support of voters, or 67% to pass. It's a steep hill to climb and the last time it was tried, it failed to garner enough support, albeit losing by a nose.

"A previous half-cent transportation sales tax measure [Measure J] was presented to San Luis Obispo County voters in 2016," Campbell said, "and received 66.3% support, just shy of the 66.67% [2/3rds] super-majority support threshold required for special tax measures in California."

She said Measure J's loss cost SLO County big time. "With the failure of Measure J," she said, "the region lost out on over \$180 million in funding over the last six years, which could have easily doubled by leveraging these funds towards competitive State and Federal grants."

The roads are not getting any better and Campbell said it was time to try again for the sales tax hike.

"Transportation conditions and needs have not notably improved in the region since 2016," she said, "while transportation funding through gas tax revenue faces its latest challenge with a growing share of electric vehicles."

SLOCOG's February vote to start lobbying the cities and County, and presenting a proposed "investment plan

and funding distribution formula."

It would include so-called "safeguards" that would lock in the uses for this money. And while the State can confiscate tax revenues from things like property taxes and DMV fees, and has done so in the past to balance the State budget, locally passed sales taxes at this time can't be touched.

"Proposed safeguards with this measure," Campbell said, "include a required 20-year sunset date, independent auditing and reporting, a cap on allowable administrative costs, and requirement for an independent taxpayer oversight committee."

SLOCOG's plans is for three distinct uses for this money, projected to raise about \$35 million a year, they are:

- Twenty-year sunset clause;
- Raise \$35 million a year and \$700 million over 20 years; and,
- Having money available to leverage State and Federal grants that require local matches.

SLOCOG also has a distribution scheme in the works:

- Divide the County into four regions (as defined in SLOCOG's Transportation Plan) for allocation — North Coast, South County, Central County and North Coast;
- Some two-thirds (66%) of each region's allocation would be distributed by population for local projects — plus a \$3 million increase to the four smallest cities with the remaining 34%.

Eligible uses include road repairs and "community road safety and congestion improvements."

It could also be used for safety improvements on regional roads (like South Bay Boulevard or LOVR on the North Coast), and "mobility for all" projects that include public transit, senior services and "active transportation."

But on the North Coast, Morro Bay is the lone "city" and all other communities — Los Osos, Cayucos, Cambria and San Simeon, are unincorporated towns. Nevertheless, those towns would also get funding, with projects going through County Supervisors and County Public Works.

"Unincorporated areas and communities would be guaranteed a population share of their sub-region funds for local road repairs, safety improvements, congestion improvements, safe routes to school, local interchanges, downtown improvements, etc.," Campbell said.

As it's laid out now, the North Coast would be eligible to get \$45 million (over 20 years); North County \$61 million; South County \$58 million; and Central County Communities \$25 million. It should be noted that the Central County is entirely the City of San Luis Obispo, under SLOCOG's plan.

The SLOCOG staff had yet to make its pitch to the Morro Bay City Council and a few other bodies to get comments and drum up support, but the plan is to return to the SLOCOG Board May 1 with the results of its lobbying efforts. If it all continues as it has, the issue should appear on the November Ballot and voters, who pay these taxes, will have the final say.

It should be noted that in Morro Bay, there is already a 1.5% local sales tax that is used to support public safety — police and fire departments — street and storm drain repairs. That tax, plus the State's 7.25% sales taxes (total of 8.75%) would climb to 9% if this proposal were to pass.

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News

Bay/Osos Filipino Community Assn hosts Annual Fiesta and Coronation Ball



The Bay/Osos Filipino Community Association held its Annual Fiesta & Coronation Ball last Saturday, the largest fundraising event hosted by BOFCA benefitting college-bound students at Morro Bay High School. The dinner/dance is also an opportunity for the Filipino community of Los Osos to celebrate their children, families, and culture.

Evelyn Gaoiran of Livermore was crowned as 2024 Fiesta Queen. She said she is thankful for the opportunity to “serve, share, and be a role model.”

Illuminada Plunkett was named First Princess, and Mona McKelvy was Second Princess, both are Los Osos residents.

Recipients of the “Uliran Award” (Family of the Year) was the Gaoiran family of San Luis Obispo, honored for their service and dedication toward the community. The award acknowledges the fulfillment of the American dream — success, and making a difference. Dr. Kathryn Gaoiran of San Luis Obispo was given the “Isang Puso Award” for outstanding community service.

BOFCA fundraises year-round with similar events. They also host regular barbecues at Ralphs in Los Osos benefiting scholarships.

To support BOFCA or for more information, contact BOFCA president Albert Calizo at arcalizo@yahoo.com.



First Princess Iluminada Plunkett (left) escorted by Tim Pendergast (center) 2024 Fiesta Queen Evelyn Juan Gaoiran escorted by Tony Gaoiran Jr. (right) 2nd Princess Mona McKelvy escorted by Kiki McKelvy

Cayucos Chamber Host Fall Antique Street Faire

The Cayucos Chamber of Commerce will host its twice-yearly annual Antique Street Faire from 7a.m.-3p.m. on Sunday May 5, in downtown Cayucos.

“We are excited to be hosting antique and vintage vendors from up and down the state” says Marshall Moens, Antique Faire event manager. “We are expecting a large turnout, the event is free to the public, and our antique malls will be open for additional antique and vintage treasure hunting”.

A fun, family-friendly event for antique and vintage enthusiasts, the faire will host more than 80 dealer booths and food vendors. Shoppers will find antiques, collectibles, furniture, art, décor, apparel, and more for sale from independent retailers.

Vehicle traffic along N. Ocean Ave will be closed from Cayucos Drive to E Street along N. Ocean Ave and parts of D Street, with detours posted between the hours of 3am and 6pm.

The event is free to visitors with free parking throughout downtown. Many businesses and services in downtown will remain open for standard Sunday hours. Visitors can enjoy the street faire, hang out at the beach, and support the town’s unique shops, restaurants, and activity centers. Proceeds from vendors booth fees help support Cayucos Chamber programs and services.

The Fall 2024 event will be held Sunday October 20, 2024.

Details regarding the event are available at www.cayucoschamber.com/antique-faire.

Peace Pole Planted



Walter Heath and Ruth Ann Angus of Morro Bay in Bloom



Jen Ford, Councilperson, Ruth Ann Angus of Yes We Can Pecebuilders, and Mayor Carla Wixom

The first Morro Bay Peace Garden complete with an artist rendered peace pole was dedicated at the Peace & Planet for Earth Day event at upper Centennial Park on Market Avenue in Morro Bay on Sunday, April 21.

The event originated with Yes We Can Peacebuilder’s Director Ruth Ann Angus in collaboration with Walter Heath and the volunteers from Morro Bay in Bloom. Angus has desired a peace garden for Morro Bay since 2016 when she entered the City of Morro Bay into the national Nonviolent Cities Project of Peace Bene Nonviolence Service.

“I am so grateful for the collaboration and work of the volunteers of Morro Bay in Bloom and Walter Heath,” Angus said, “Between them, the kids of the Sunshine Spreaders club at Del Mar Elementary School, Rotary Club of Morro Bay, City Councilperson Jen Ford, and the maintenance crew of Public Works, this dream of mine has finally come to life.”

The event opened with an Earth Connect Blessing by yoga master Dawn Feuerberg and the sounding of the gong by Jon Nowaczyk of Let’s Get Tuned Sound & Yoga Studio. Attendees then enjoyed a short talk by Angus telling the story of this dream, and ended with everyone singing along with the Ukeldies of Morro Bay.

The site is now newly planted, and Heath announced that plans are for a 48-inch bench to be installed as well as a kids labyrinth that will have gaily painted rocks that will be done by participants in The I Love Morro Bay event on April 27. Photos by Kelley Welch.



COLLEGETOWN

By Michael Walker




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Property Description:

Discover this inviting residence in the heart of Los Osos, boasting four bedrooms spread across two levels. This well-appointed home offers a prime location, partial bay views, and gardening opportunities. Enjoy the convenience of single-level living with one bedroom and bathroom located on the main floor. Step out onto the newly stained wooden balcony off the kitchen to enjoy evening sunset views. The two-car garage features laundry hookups and provides generous storage space. Downstairs, three additional bedrooms and a full bathroom offer access to the spacious backyard, complete with a patio and large wooden deck - perfect for entertaining guests al fresco. Fresh exterior and interior paint updates have rejuvenated this residence.

OPEN HOUSE

Thurs., April 23rd 9:30 a.m. - 12 p.m. • Sat., April 27th 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Property Features:

Bedrooms: 4 Bathrooms: 2
Year Built: 1971 Approx. Size: 1,521 Lot Size: 4,625 Large shed & deck

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This San Luis Obispo home has six bedrooms with one and three-quarter bathrooms, allowing for a multitude of options. Built in 1942 and zoned R2, it is on a large (6,250 sq ft) lot allowing for many possibilities, including adding an ADU.

With Cal Poly, downtown, several restaurants, Santa Rosa Park and freeway access all near by, it is in an optimal location. This hard to find property is ideal to use as a home or an investment.

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