

Cuesta Inlet in Escrow with Non-Profit Intent on Public Use



The Save Cuesta Inlet organization is in escrow to purchase the Cuesta Inlet property. They recently kicked off a fundraising campaign. Pictured are Allan Parks, Marcel Stieber, Linda Parks, Sandy Chandler, Liz Hale, Margaret Schmidt, Beth Crizer, and Cathy Guadagni.

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Los Osos non-profit has six months to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to preserve property open to the entire community.

Save the Cuesta Inlet (SCI) formed three years ago with the goal of saving the Inlet that borders the southeast end of the Morro Bay estuary at 1745 Doris Ave. The beloved piece of property that was privately owned, but kept open for public use, was for sale.

Last April a private buyer was in escrow for the 13-acre site which crosses three parcels of land.

SCI had renewed support after word got out about the potential private buyer who would have the right to deny access to members of the community who cherish the property that is enjoyed by kayakers, boaters, walkers, bird watchers, photographers and painters with easels in hand. That buyer later backed out.

"We were more than a little concerned, but we are the 'Group that Won't Give Up,'" Margaret Schmidt, SCI treasurer-secretary, told Estero Bay News. "Instead of thinking it was over, we turned to the community and asked for help and support. The response was overwhelming, so many people came forward, signed petitions, volunteered to spread the word, and rallied around their Inlet. We know that response from the community is what turned the tide, encouraging the buyer to do

further investigation."

SCI hopes to preserve public use in perpetuity. The task won't be easy. The property is appraised at \$735,000 with an asking price of \$1 million. SCI raised \$200,000 prior to escrow. About \$25,000 of that went towards an appraisal and fundraising expenses. An IRS rule limits nonprofits to paying no more than the appraised value of the property, yet the SCI offer was approved.

"We really couldn't believe it at first," Schmidt said. "We all believed this day would come, but when it actually happened, we were all just bowled over."

With so much more left to raise, SCI is reaching out to the community for help. A capital campaign kicked off at the Inlet on June 7 resulting in about \$40,000 in funds in less than two weeks. A Baywood family, that wishes to remain anonymous, has donated \$100,000 in matching funds, a great way to kick off fundraising efforts that that now have a slightly less than six-month deadline of November 29.

"It is daunting; it keeps me up at night," Schmidt said. "This is a generous community, and so many love the Inlet. Over the last three years, many supporters have promised to donate once we were in escrow; they understood that getting to this point was not guaranteed. In order to move negotiations forward, we took a deep breath, put our faith in the community, and agreed to the six-month escrow."

Cuesta Inlet Continued on page 19

City Picks SLO Firm for Waterfront Plan Update

By Neil Farrell

A consultant has been chosen to update the master plan for the heart of Morro Bay, taking the first step in rewriting the planning document for the first time in over a generation.

The City Council approved awarding a \$714,000 contract to Santa Ana-based, Placeworks, Inc., which has offices all over the state including one in San Luis Obispo, to update the Waterfront Master Plan and prepare an amendment to the existing Environmental Impact Report the City completed during the update of the General Plan, a process that produced the "Plan Morro Bay" document.

Community Development Director, Airlin Singewald's report said they would use a \$750,000 grant they got from the Coastal Commission to pay for the update work.

"The Draft Fiscal Year 2025-26 City



Map outlines the old and new boundaries of the Waterfront Master Plan, which is being updated by the City for the first time since 1996.

Map courtesy City of Morro Bay

Budget," the report said, "includes \$375,000 in anticipated grant revenue and professional services expenditures for the Waterfront Master

Waterfront Plan Continued on page 18

The End is Near for Cayucos Vet's Hall Rebuild



The groundbreaking ceremony held for the Cayucos Vet's Hall Restoration Project in December 2022. Photo by Neil Farrell

By Neil Farrell

The end is nigh for the completion of the rebuilding of the Cayucos Vet's Hall, though the exact date has yet to be announced by the County.

It looks however, like the Hall, which many consider the heart of the community, won't be available for the big 4th of July Celebrations. Normally, the Lions and Lioness Clubs use the Vet's Hall on Independence Day for a community barbecue and to play Bingo.

County Public Works has a website dedicated to the project (see: www.slocounty.ca.gov/departments/public-works/current-public-works-projects/cayucos-vets-hall-restoration) and the latest post gives hope that the Vet's Hall will be opening soon, if not before the biggest tourism day of the year.

"We are pleased to announce that the restoration of The Cayucos Landing is nearing completion!" reads the post. "The renovation of the historic Cayucos Veterans Hall is on track for completion by late June to early July 2025."

That's well over 8 months behind schedule, as the hope was that the Hall would be finished by the start of this year. Indeed, the Parks & Recreation Director even held a town hall meeting last November at the Cayucos School to explain how the Vet's Hall, once completed, would be directly managed by the County.

The website goes on to say that reservations for the Vet's Hall are not yet being taken through the County Parks' Online Reservation System.

"Reservations are not currently being accepted, but an interest list is available for those who wish to be notified when reservations open," (see www.slocounty.ca.gov/departments/public-works/current-public-works-projects/cayucos-vets-hall-restoration).

"A website with information on rental requests, fees, facility rules, and the reservation process will be launched closer to the opening date."

The post goes on to say they will be having a ribbon-cutting ceremony when the time comes, just as the County held a big cer-

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Supervisor Bruce Gibson Won't Run in 2026

By Neil Farrell

For the first time in over a generation, San Luis Obispo County's Dist. 2 Supervisor race will be wide open, after the record-serving incumbent announced he would not seek a sixth term.

Dist. 2 Supervisor Bruce Gibson announced in his monthly newsletter on May 29 that he would not run again.

"I'm writing today," Gibson said, "to let you know that my current term will be my last: I won't be standing for re-election in

Bruce Gibson Continued on page 14

County Renews Successful Housing Contract

By Neil Farrell

County Supervisors renewed the contract for a successful program that helps chronically homeless people find and hang onto a place to live.

Transitions Mental Health Association (TMHA) has held a contract for the past two years at a cost of over \$2.22 million (combined), intending to "provide housing placement and supportive services for 80 chronically homeless individuals through the Housing Now Program," reads a report from Laurel Weir with the County Social Services Department.

Weir asked Supervisors to extend the same contract for

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To a Friend
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News

CSD Looks to Tax Measure to Buy Sunnyside



Photo shows a satellite image of Sunnyside School property (outlined in red) in Los Osos. A partnership of groups has formed to try and buy it. Photo courtesy LOCSD

By Neil Farrell

Attempts to obtain the old Sunnyside School in Los Osos for the community’s benefit continue, and a Community Services District standing committee was slated to take up the project schedule at its regular meeting, June 17 (after Estero Bay News’ deadline).

According to the meeting agenda posted by the CSD last week, the effort to save the town’s oldest school and use it for recreation purposes for the community, have been progressing, with a partnership being formed between the CSD’s Parks & Rec Committee, a citizen’s group called “Buy Sunnyside School Coalition,” and a subcommittee of the Los Osos Citizens Advisory Council (LOCAC) working together on a timeline for action that appears heading towards asking voters to pass a special tax measure to buy the old school from the San Luis Coastal Unified School District.

CSD General Manager Ron Munds said, “Staff have been exploring the potential for partnership with other organizations to determine if there are any cost-saving opportunities available to the community for acquisition and ongoing maintenance of the property. LOCAC has formed a Parks & Recreation Subcommittee to assist in organizing community outreach and stakeholder groups to gauge the interest of the community to pay for the purchase and ongoing operations and maintenance of the property.”

The CSD is also working with their engineering consultants, The Wallace Group, on nailing down the ongoing maintenance costs that would come with the property, if they manage to buy it.

“The working group,” Munds said, “has been evaluating the tasks and timeline to meet the deadlines to move a tax initiative forward.”

His report included a timeline for the myriad of steps needed to be taken if they are to get a tax measure before voters at the June 2026 Primary Election. Though Primary Elections tend not to draw a large voter turnout, that election will include the race for Dist. 2 County Supervisor, after Bruce Gibson announced recently that he would not seek a sixth term in 2026, so turnout might be healthy. As the tax would be for a specific purpose, it would need two-thirds majority (66%) for approval.

“The documents provide a comprehensive look at the time it will take and the work to be done to reach the goal of acquiring Sunnyside School.”

According to their tentative schedule, they hope to have the petitions drafted, gone over by lawyers, reviewed by the CSD and LOCAC, and ready to be circulated for signatures, by the end of July.

Meanwhile, they will be planning a “Notice of Intent,” a formality that must be done before a petition is circulated. They plan to publish their Notice of Intent in Estero Bay News, sometime in July. Once the intent notice is published, they have to file it with the County Clerk’s Office and pay a \$5 fee.

July and early August will be spent organizing petition gatherers and getting set up for the big push for support. The plan is to gather signatures of support from Aug. 19 through Dec. 31 (103 days).

Petitions are due next Jan. 22 to qualify for the June Ballot.

The plan is to spend next February-May campaigning for the measure ahead of the June vote, which if passed would add a specific charge to property tax bills. How much is still being figured out.

But it all depends on whether the CSD and partners can make a deal with the school district to allow the community time to buy the old school, which closed over 20-years ago.

The school district board of trustees declared Sunnyside and Morro Elementary Schools “surplus properties” earlier this year and intend to sell them to help with a significant budget shortfall caused by a loss of property taxes from the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant.

Pacific Gas & Electric was planning to close Diablo Canyon after reaching a settlement with environmental and anti-nuclear groups, who had been fiercely fighting against a move by the company to obtain new operating licenses for its two reactors, which were supposed to run out in 2024 and 25.

PG&E was forced by an act of the State Legislature to pay a lump sum to the affected agencies (some \$9 million to the school district) to make up for lost taxes, with the County actually getting the lion’s share. That law also allowed PG&E to quickly devalue the plant for tax purposes, which is now near zero.

But the State in 2022 called on PG&E to keep Diablo Canyon open until such time as they can reliably replace its 2,200 megawatts of power generation with renewable sources like wind and solar. But that vote did not restore the property taxes, which are set at 1% of the assessed value of the plant.

This left the school district looking at a big hole in its budget and turning to the sale of Sunnyside and Morro Elementary to help bridge the funding gap.

A similar effort to buy Morro Elementary is underway in Morro Bay with the City and a citizen’s group joining forces along with a City Council Subcommittee (Zara Landrum and Bill Luffee) to work together on the matter.

Opponents Challenging

\$426M Humboldt

OSW Grant

By Neil Farrell

Opponents of offshore floating wind farms in the Pacific, are attempting to hit the fledgling industry where it hurts most — in the wallet.

“On June 6,” reads a news release from the REACT Alliance, the local opposition organization, “a coalition of NGO’s [non-governmental organizations], and independent scientists and lawyers petitioned the federal government to terminate a half-billion dollar Department of Transportation, INFRA grant issued during the Biden administration to support the development of a floating offshore wind terminal/port in Humboldt Bay.”

INFRA stands for the “Infrastructure for Rebuilding America” grant program, part of the Department of Transportation’s “Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight & Highway Projects” program.

According to the DOT website, INFRA “awards competitive grants for multimodal freight and highway projects of national or regional significance to improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of freight and people in and across rural and urban areas” (see: www.transportation.gov/grants/infra-grant-program).

The grant program is intended to go to: a State or group of States; a metropolitan planning organization that serves an Urbanized Area with a population of more than 200,000 individuals; a unit of local government or group of local governments; a political subdivision of a State or local government; a special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function, including a port authority; a Federal land management agency that applies jointly with a State or group of States; a tribal government or a consortium of tribal governments; a multistate corridor organization; or a multistate or multijurisdictional group of eligible entities listed above, according to the DOT website.

The list of potentially eligible projects circles around hauling freight or improving the moving of freight on existing highways, in particular highways that connect major population centers. The goal appears to be reducing emissions from trucks, trains and ships that carry the freight; and is for projects of national or regional importance.

The opponents of OSW claim that awarding a \$426 million grant, awarded in January 2024, to the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District is a misappropriation of funds under this specific program.

“The undersigned organizations call for the return to the U.S. Department of Transportation any unspent disbursed INFRA funds,” reads the letter sent to DOT Sec. Sean Duffy, “and

to terminate the awarded grant as a misappropriation of federal funds.”

The letter was drafted by attorney Saro Rizzo of Los Osos who is a REACT Alliance board member and lawyers for NOAA, the national alliance of organizations opposing OSW projects on both the East and West Coasts.

The letter lists several justifications for clawing back as much of the \$426 million INFRA grant as possible.

“According to the INFRA Grant eligibility guidelines,” the letter reads, “grant projects must be ‘projects of national or regional significance to improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the movement of freight and people in and across rural and urban areas.’”

The letter also claims that eligible projects must be “within the boundaries of a freight rail, water [including ports], or intermodal facility must be a surface transportation infrastructure project necessary to facilitate direct intermodal interchange, transfer, or access into or out of the facility and must significantly improve freight movement on the NHFN [National Highway Freight Network].”

The letter claims that Humboldt Bay isn’t a “designated national multimodal freight network facility” and therefore not even eligible to tap into this grant program.

“The Humboldt Grant is clearly designed to accommodate a non-existent floating offshore wind industry,” Rizzo’s letter reads, “and is defined as a heavy lift terminal capable of assembling and handling wind turbine components. Obviously, the project meets none of the INFRA guidelines for grant approval.”

The letter goes on to give one more example of why this grant should be terminated.

“The President’s Executive Order on offshore wind directs all Departments to assess prior approvals for deficiencies” and this offshore wind grant certainly meets that standard.”

President Trump signed the OSW Executive Order last Jan. 20, on his first day in office. It essentially withdraws the entire outer continental shelf — the undersea edges of the North American Continent — from being leased for OSW projects.

“I hereby withdraw from disposition for wind energy leasing,” the EO reads, “all areas within the Offshore Continental

Correction

In the “Odd Fellows to Send Students on Pilgrimage” article (EBN Vol. 8 Issue 10) we incorrectly spelled Vena Fryer’s name as Vena Frier.



Dean Sullivan

Owner - Publisher

dean@esterobaynews.com

Theresa-Marie Wilson

Editor

editor@esterobaynews.com

Neil Farrell

Reporter

neil@esterobaynews.com

Shari Sullivan

Marketing Director

shari@esterobaynews.com

Joan Sullivan

Cambria Contributors

Keith Pendleton

Connie Pendleton

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2506 Rodman Drive
in Cabrillo Estates

SOLD

Steve Auslander, Owner
DRE #01068681
Cell: 805.801.4444
BearValleyRE.com

Dianne Blanchard, Broker
DRE #01945483

This home was taken down to the studs and completely remodeled! Serenity is the word that comes to mind when entering this home. Soft, cool tones make give this home a truly peaceful feeling. Open floor plan has a kitchen large enough to entertain family and friends. Entertaining will be a breeze having the deck and patio right off the dining area. Enjoy the view of the back bay from the private yard or read a book under the trellis. The primary bedroom/bathroom are first in line followed by 2 more spacious bedrooms and full bathroom down the hallway. Head on down to the lower level where you will find another family room area to gather, a bar with under the counter fridge, bathroom, storage and a bonus room for a private gym or office.

900 Los Osos Valley Road Suite A Los Osos, CA 93402

News

Shelf (OCS).”
The EO continues, “This withdrawal temporarily prevents consideration of any area in the OCS for any new or renewed wind energy leasing for the purposes of generation of electricity or any other such use derived from the use of wind.”

The order makes an exception for oil and gas exploration and environmental projects. “This withdrawal does not apply to leasing related to any other purposes such as, but not limited to, oil, gas, minerals, and environmental conservation.”

The President’s EO also orders an end and immediate review of OSW leasing. “In light of various alleged legal deficiencies underlying the Federal Government’s leasing and permitting of onshore and offshore wind projects, the consequences of which may lead to grave harm — including negative impacts on navigational safety interests, transportation interests, national security interests, commercial interests, and marine mammals — and in light of potential inadequacies in various environmental reviews required by the National Environmental Policy Act to lease or permit wind projects, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Energy, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the heads of all other relevant agencies, shall not issue new or renewed approvals, rights of way, permits, leases, or loans for onshore or offshore wind projects pending the completion of a comprehensive assessment and review of Federal wind leasing and permitting practices.”

The President’s Order calls for evaluating environmental impacts of OSW on birds, marine mammals and other wildlife. It also wants to consider the costs of the electricity produced by OSW projects, which some analysts have said could be as much as three times as high as wind energy installed on land, where the turbines are more easily accessible and more economically maintained.

“The assessment,” President Trump’s EO reads, “shall also consider the economic costs associated with the intermittent generation of electricity and the effect of subsidies on the viability of the wind industry.”

Though the target of the DOT letter is the two OSW projects being planned for the Humboldt County Coast, the local opposition believes it could affect the three wind farms (3 gigawatts total generating capacity) being planned off the Coast of San Simeon, in the so-called “Morro Bay Call Area.”

In a news release from REACT Alliance, Alliance President, Mandy Davis, said, “If the grant is terminated, the plans for California’s planned floating offshore wind industry will be severely hamstrung, and the future of the necessary industrial ports to service the controversial and experimental floating offshore wind industry will be negatively impacted.”

Currently the two companies holding offshore wind leases off Humboldt are: RWE Offshore Wind Holdings, and California North Floating.

The three companies with leases in the Morro Bay Call Area are: Equinor/Atlas Wind U.S., Golden State Wind, and Invenergy California Offshore, but Davis said the State has much bigger plans for wind farms in the ocean, including designating near shore areas from Mexico to the Oregon Border.

She said the Government has big plans for hundreds of wind farms. “Currently there are five active federal leases on the Central and North Coasts of California,” Davis said, “with numerous others planned for the future in an effort to reach the governor’s and Assembly Bill 525 project goals of 35 gigawatts of output and

the leasing of a total of 4,483 square miles of Coastal waters to offshore wind developers by the year 2045.”

Davis pointed out that OSW is very expensive energy and unproven technology. While wind turbines have worked well when installed in windy areas on land, putting them floating on the open ocean in very deep water presents unique engineering challenges.

“The floating offshore wind industry is highly controversial and contested,” the release said, “and the technology largely untested and undeveloped. Development of industrial ports on the California Coast in areas that are highly dependent on fishing, tourism and various ocean user industries and are not conducive to ocean industrialization, is a strategy that Gov. [Gavin] Newsome and the proponents of AB 525 will find to be more difficult than they ever imagined.”

She goes on to say, “Offshore wind is THE most expensive energy source in the world; one that demands non-existent infrastructure, necessitates the kind of support, building costs and operational hazards that prove the claims of ‘green, reliable and sustainable’ mischaracterizations, and will ultimately prove the industry to be an unsuitable match for California’s burgeoning energy needs.”

Progress on the OSW projects here has been pretty much put on hold by the three companies, who Estero Bay News queried last January on their plans for 2025.

Equinor/Atlas Wind’s spokesperson, Tibi Dean, said, “At this time, Atlas Wind does not have any surveying or offshore work scheduled in 2025. Members of the team will use this time to analyze the substantial data already collected from last year’s survey activity.”

Golden State Wind CEO, Tyler Studds told EBN, “Golden State Wind believes in the potential of our offshore wind project to provide new energy generation to meet increasing demand for electricity.”

They planned to push forward this year, with an eye on the long term. “Just as floating offshore wind in California is a long-term energy resource,” Studds said, “it is also a long-term development process. We will continue to progress our project in 2025.”

As for Even Keel Wind, they also plan to continue with their environmental studies. “Even Keel Wind,” reads a statement from Invenergy’s Daniel Runyan, the Senior Vice President and Head of Offshore Wind Development, “is in the early stages of a decade-long offshore wind development process in support of California’s energy goals.

“Our focus is on relationship building across the Central Coast Region, while also advancing early-stage development priorities, including planning for future survey work.”

Of note, the California State Government has sued the Trump Administration over his OSW Executive Order, even as it is being sued by local commercial fishing organizations, who decry the loss of a 400-square mile patch of ocean, where the wind farms are being sited here, and which is expected to be deemed off limits for all vessels and especially fishing boats.

A similar battle is being waged on the East Coast where numerous offshore wind projects are in various stages of completion. But on the East Coast the water is considerably shallower than in the Pacific, and those turbines are being installed embedded in the seafloor as opposed to floating on the ocean surface, as is being proposed in these initial West Coast projects.

SLO Accepting Cannabis Permit Applications July 1

The City of San Luis Obispo is accepting applications for all Commercial Cannabis Operator Permit, but time is short.

Anyone interested in operating a cannabis business in San Luis Obispo can begin applying for a business license and permit at [slocity.org/cannabis](https://www.slocity.org/cannabis).

Here are a few key notes about this application period:

1. Applications are due by July 31, 2025: The application period for Commercial Cannabis Operator Permits in San Luis Obispo is open from July 1, 2025, to July 31, 2025. Mark your calendars and submit your application during this period.

2. Some permit types are limited: The City is accepting applications for both competitive and non-competitive permits. Competitive permits include retail storefront permits and cultivation permits. There are a maximum of three retail storefront permits allowed in San Luis Obispo and two have already been issued. This application period would be for the third and final retail permit. Additionally, the cultivation permits are limited to a cumulative of 70,000 square feet of canopy, which makes that permit type competitive as well. There are no limits on the number of non-competitive permits the City may issue, which includes commercial cannabis delivery, manufacturing, testing labs, and distribution. Applications for non-competitive permits that score an average of 70% or higher based on all available points will qualify for a Contingent Operator Permit. Applications for competitive permits will also be ranked, and the highest-ranking application(s) will qualify for a Contingent Operator Permit.

3. There is a fair and transparent application process: To apply for a Commercial Cannabis Operator Permit, follow the step-by-step guidelines provided in the Cannabis Operator Permit Application Procedures located at <https://bit.ly/4mYxH-kj>. Get familiar with the process, review all the application review process details, and complete and submit all the required information and supporting documents.

4. There is a non-refundable fee to apply: A non-refundable fee is required at the time of application submittal.

5. Applicants must pass a background check and meet requirements: All owners, principals, and property owners of record listed on the application must pass background checks before a Final Operator Permit will be issued. The City has additional disqualifiers beyond those of the Department of Cannabis Control (DCC) in its background check process. If granted an operator permit, the permit-holder can then begin working with the City’s Community Development Department on the necessary use permits. This information and more can be found at www.slocity.org/cannabis.



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AIDS/LifeCycle Ride 2025

Photos by Neil Farrell

The 2025 California AIDS/LifeCycle Ride blew through San Luis Obispo County in early June making its annual pit stop in Cayucos on their route from San Francisco to Santa Monica to raise money and awareness of the continuing AIDS Epidemic. According to the event website: The Ride began in 1994 and was called the “California AIDS Ride.” In 2002, it was rebranded as AIDS/LifeCycle. Since 1994, participants have raised more than \$300 million for the HIV and AIDS-related services of the Los Angeles LGBT Center and San Francisco AIDS Foundation.



County Changes Speed Limits in Cambria, South County

Attention all lead foots... speed limits have been changed in several key stretches of roadway, including two in Cambria. County Supervisors approved changes to the speed limits on County maintained roads in rural San Luis Obispo, Nipomo and two in Cambria, one of which concerns the town’s main drag — Main Street. County Public Works asked for the changes as part of the regular reviews of speed limits on County roads, according to County Engineer II, Riley Gajdos’s staff report.

“Posted speed limits are required to be routinely substantiated with an Engineering and Traffic Survey [E&TS],” the report said, “to remain legally enforceable.” Governed by the California Vehicle Code (CVC), speed limits get set through the E&TS studies done by a public agency (County Public Works in this case) and entail analysis of roadway condition, collision reports, and “examination of prevailing speed of vehicular traffic. A safe and reasonable limit is set at or below the speed at which 85% of vehicles travel.”

And while the Sheriff’s Department is the primary law enforcement agency in county areas and towns, the California Highway Patrol enforces speed limits on county roads.

The latest E&TS report identified three stretches of County roads where speed limits should be lowered, they are:

- Moonstone Beach Drive in Cambria, lowering the speed limit to 30 mph (it was 35 mph), from “Windsor Boulevard to Weymouth Street,” the report said, “and from a point 3,750 feet northwesterly of Weymouth Street to State Route One.”
- Main Street, Cambria — “between Windsor Boulevard and Bridge Street there are four



intermixed 30 mph and 25 mph speed zones. Public Works has received numerous complaints regarding the inconsistency.” Now it’ll be 25 mph the length of Main Street through both the East and West Village areas.

• Thompson Avenue in Nipomo — lower speed limits (35 mph) throughout the 7-mile, main, Nipomo road, which traverses a variety of landscapes — from urban neighborhoods to open spaces and agricultural lands.

• Orcutt Road through Edna Valley — posted at 55 mph from the start of Orcutt in SLO, through the valley to Arroyo Grande. The new speed limit will be 45 mph from just north of Rightetti Road to Moretti Canyon Road.

The only real expense, other than the cost of the E&TS studies, is \$2,250 for new Speed Limit road signs, the report said.

Sheriff’s MAPS Team Sent to L.A. Riots

A team of San Luis Obispo County Sheriff’s deputies, plus several local police officers have been sent to Los Angeles to help with quelling the so-called I.C.E. Riots, the Sheriff’s Department announced on Friday the 13th.

Some areas of Los Angeles have been under civil unrest since Friday, June 6, as protesters attempted to interfere with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) actions to round up undocumented aliens who’ve reportedly

committed serious crimes in the U.S. After mobs attacked Federal agents and threatened to storm the Federal Courthouse and Detention Facility in Downtown L.A., President Trump federalized the California National Guard and deployed a reported 2,000 Guardsmen to the scene to reinforce the agents. He later stood up about 800 Marines to be ready to go in if needed. What ensued were several days and nights

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Estero Bay News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

More PG&E Customers Eligible for 18% Electric Discount

More than an estimated 150,000 additional Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) customers are now eligible for an 18% discount on their electric rate.

The Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) program is expanding to include one- and two-person households. Under previous eligibility guidelines, only households with three or more people were eligible.

The discount does not apply to gas rates.

Eligibility is based on income and household size. For example, a household with one or two people making up to \$52,875 a year could qualify for assistance. A complete list of income guidelines and information on how to apply for the monthly discount is at <https://bit.ly/4e47cpD>. Customers can also call the FERA program at 1-877-660-6789 or send an email to CAREandFERA@pge.com.

In 2024, more than 39,000 FERA-enrolled PG&E customers received discounts totaling more than \$21 million. Customers saved an average of more than \$45 per month on their electric bill.

“Expanding the criteria for FERA discounts can provide meaningful savings to more households,” said Vincent Davis, PG&E’s Senior Vice President, Customer Experience. “We encourage our customers to apply for the monthly assistance and spread the word to others who may qualify.”

The California state legislature passed Senate Bill 1130 in 2024 revising the eligibility guidelines, which eliminated the three or more persons’ requirement to qualify for FERA. It also requires PG&E and other investor-owned utilities in California to report efforts to enroll customers in the program to the California Public Utilities Commission. three or more persons’ requirement to qualify for FERA. It also requires PG&E and other investor-owned utilities in California to report efforts to enroll customers in the program to the California Public Utilities Commission.

Poly Cat Program Seeks Summer Volunteers and Foster Homes



The Cal Poly Cat Program (CPCP) is urgently seeking summer volunteer support from the San Luis Obispo community. The group needs volunteers and foster homes to care for rescued cats and kittens while Cal Poly students are on summer break June 14 through Sept. 18.

Founded in 1992, CPCP is a 100% volunteer-run 501(c)(3) nonprofit and official Cal Poly club dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation and adoption of feral and domesticated cats and kittens. Run by Cal Poly students, faculty, staff and community volunteers, the program provides a safe and nurturing environment for cats and kittens awaiting adoption or return to the wild through its Trap, Neuter and Release (TNR) program.

“I’ve been volunteering with CPCP since 1992, because helping these cats is truly rewarding,” said Sharon Dobson, the group’s faculty advisor. “It feels good knowing I’m making a real difference — and I’ve met so many great people along the way who love cats just as much as I do.”

Fostering is flexible, and all expenses are covered. Short-term foster placements are available — just a few weeks of care can make a critical difference.

Volunteers are also needed to help with daily shelter tasks

such as cleaning cages and litter boxes, refreshing food and water and general upkeep. Training is provided, and shifts are flexible.

To date, CPCP has placed over 3,000 cats and kittens in loving homes and continues to manage the feral cat population in San Luis Obispo County through humane, research-based practices.

Community members interested in making a meaningful impact this summer are encouraged to get involved.

To learn more visit: calpolycatprogram.org

League of Women Voter’s Condemns Calling National Guard

The League of Women Voter’s came out against the deployment of the National Guard against protest in Los Angeles that escalated following immigration raids in the city that were met with protest.

“The President villainizing protestors is nothing but a performance to direct violence against the American people,” said League of Women Voters of California Executive Director Helen Hutchison and League of Women Voters of the US CEO Celina Stewart in a joint statement. “By deploying the National Guard, against the wishes of state officials, the administration intends to cause fear and distract from their inhumane immigration raids.

“This administration is assaulting concerned Americans to silence voices of dissent. The President’s overreach signals a larger crackdown on protests across the country meant to intimidate us from speaking out.

“The President declared the protests as rebellion against the United States, a characterization he uses as his basis for overstepping his presidential powers to subvert the First Amendment right to association and protest.

“A functioning democracy must ensure that we the people can hold our government accountable without fear of violence from the government.

The League of Women Voters called on the Secretary of Defense to call back the National Guard.

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

of a tense standoff as L.A. law enforcement — LAPD and the Sheriff’s Department — sparred with protestors repeatedly until at least June 12, when calm seemed to return to the area. Then Israel attacked Iran.

In what’s likely anticipation of there being renewed unrest following the Iran-Israel conflict — the call was put out for help.

On June 13, reads a news release from SLO County Sheriff’s spokesman, Tony Cipolla, “the Sheriff’s Office received a request from the State Office of Emergency Services to provide mutual aid to the City of Los Angeles in response to ongoing civil unrest.”

Sheriff Ian Parkinson ordered up a contingent of 23 Sheriff’s Deputies — including from the Mutual Aid and Public Safety (MAPS) Team. Cipolla said, MAPS is a “mobile field team, which is the primary responder to mutual aid callouts ranging from

natural disasters to civil disturbances. They will remain deployed as needed until further notice.”

Cipolla added, “These deputies will be deployed only for public safety and protecting government properties. They will not be used for immigration enforcement, as California State Law prohibits local law enforcement from assisting ICE.”

Cipolla said the Arroyo Grande Police Department also sent four officers and the Grover Beach PD sent two officers and a police commander with the MAPS Team.

The Sheriff’s Department is hoping these officers stay safe. “It is our hope,” Cipolla said, “that peace and calm is restored to Los Angeles, and our local law enforcement members are able to safely return to their homes.” And, God speed from Estero Bay News.

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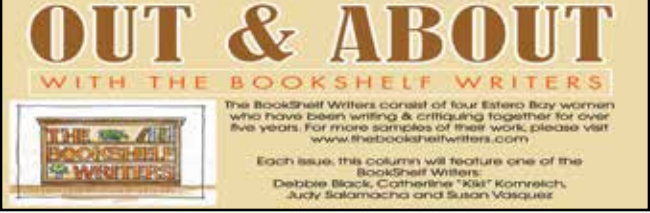
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Honoring Linna Thomas: A Local Author’s Very Good Friend

By Judy Salamacha

If you are a follower of the Bookshelf Writers column you have read the works of Debbie Noble Black, Susan Vasquez, Kiki Kornreich and my submissions. The four of us have been the core of a writers’ group for over eight years. One year we decided to volunteer for the San Francisco Writers Conference and on the drive home we brainstormed the possibility of a column in Estero Bay News. Since I was already writing my “Moving Forward” column, I was comfortable asking my editor, Theresa-Marie Wilson, if EBN might be interested.

If we could provide content of interest to the newspaper’s readers and be reliable and consistent meeting our deadlines, she was interested. Debbie struck gold tapping into Estero Bay’s avid camper community’s interest in navigating California’s campgrounds; Susan describes the beauty SLO nature walks, and Kiki makes readers smile with her thoughtful insights and original images about everyday happenings.

I was faced with the dilemma of choosing a topic that was different from my interviews with local businesses and personalities. And then it came to me! My good friend Linna Thomas, owner of Coalesce Bookstore featured local authors by honoring us in a “locals” section, promoting book signings at the store, hosting author-led events in the garden and even hosting the Cuesta College Central Coast Writers Conferences social events for several years. And on rare occasions Linna accepted an author that sparked her love of excellent writing by publishing their book through Coalesce Press.

That was it! As always, Linna was my muse for interesting stories. I realized I could expand Linna’s support for local authors by featuring them in EBN’s acceptance of our Bookshelf Writers’ column. Many of the authors that have been featured over the past four years have been recommendations I sought from Linna. She never steered me wrong and was honored each time Coalesce Bookstore was mentioned. Her



consistent hope and prayer was that neighborhood bookstores would always be present and a welcoming place for readers of all ages and persuasions to find their books and meet the authors.

There were only two occasions she requested I consider featuring a local author. Carol Alma McPhee authored two books, “A Small Town Women’s Movement” and “Releasing the Light.” The first contained community information Linna was adamant that all SLO County women should know. Indeed, SLO County played an active role in the Women’s Movement. The second was another way she might help her friend get through the trauma and joys of caring for a loved one with terminal cancer.

I, on the other hand, asked her for several “favors” both for authors and the community. Just to name a few besides the Cuesta College’s CCWC social events, Linna graciously hosted Bertha Tyler’s book launch for “Life Ashore with Human Parents” and Morro Bay Rotary Past President John Solu’s Fund Raiser after the devastating earthquake in Turkiye. She carried

my book, “Colonel Baker’s Field: An American Pioneer Story” and accepted a meeting with Debbie Noble Black and determined her Ghost Clothes Series, the award- winning “Deetjen’s Closet” and her recently published “The Old Secret at Hotel Oregon” would definitely be worthy fiction to be published by Coalesce Press.

I know I speak for my Bookshelf Writers sisters when I say it will be difficult to walk into

Coalesce Bookstore and know Linna Thomas will not be smiling and greeting all who enter her world. She would often modestly say, “I’m just an old hippie.” Maybe so but never was there “an old hippie” so savvy about the retail book and publishing business or a more generous friend to her family, friends, patrons and community – worthy of the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year in 2022. Her community is already missing her.

New Photo Book Celebrates Iconic Morro Rock

By Neil Farrell

Morro Rock is one of the more picturesque spots in the State of California, with amateur shutterbugs snapping spectacular photos of the wildlife, sunsets and stormy skies the Rock is known for, and posting them to social media.

Now, lovers of fine photography can get a new picture book by one of the world’s great photogs — Cambria resident, Arthur Tress.

The new book, entitled, “100 Views of Morro Rock,” was compiled from hundreds of photos Tress has taken over the years and is written and edited by David Weisman of Morro Bay.

Each photo contains an image of Morro Rock, sometimes barely visible in the background and sometimes dominating the scene. Morro Rock serves as the binding that ties all the images together.

The new book comes on the heels of a one-man, career retrospective Tress had last year at the famed, Getty Museum in Los Angeles. Weismann said more of Tress’ photos will be part of a new exhibit at the Getty starting this week.

The photos are printed in a unique diamond shape, which Weismann said were shot that way and not just cropped.

PR for the book kicks off with a book signing event with the artist and writer set for 5:30-7 p.m. Friday, June 20 at the History Center of San Luis Obispo, located at 696 Monterey St., SLO (see: www.historycenterslo.org/tress.html for details).

Then from 1-3 p.m. Saturday, June 21 the Bay Theater in Morro Bay will hold a special screening of the documentary, “Arthur Tress: Water’s Edge,” an 80-minute exploration into Tress’ life and career, followed by a Q&A session with the photographer.

Tickets to the showing are \$10 a person and available online at: <https://my805tix.com/e/arthur-tress-waters-edge>.

“With a nod to the classic work of 19th



One of the ‘100 Views of Morro Rock’ images contained in a new book of fine art photos of the same name by renowned photographer and Cambria resident, Arthur Tress.

Century woodblock printing master, Katsushika Hokusai’s “100 Views of Mount Fuji,” Tress’ goal “has been not to capture Morro Rock, per se, but rather show the microcosm of life that springs up around it. Tress fills his frame with the social ecology of homes, restaurants, fishermen, tourists, surfers, workers and residents, as well as the flora and fauna that surround the Rock and its environs. The results are a meditation that encompasses both solemn quiet poetry as well as wryly whimsical observations.”

A New York native, Tress took up photography as a teenager. He’s worked himself into an established fine art and commercial photographer, with his work moving into documenting “urban social conditions, often using the visual language of dreams and myths to create a kind of photographic social surrealism,” Weismann said in a news release.

Tress moved to California in 1990 and has taken his art back to a simpler form of “poetic realism, dealing with man’s relationship to

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Community

nature and the built environment.”

He uses a large format, Hasselblad camera, shooting in black & white film. He has an impressive list of galleries and museums where his art has been shown including the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York, the Whitney Museum, Corcoran Gallery, SFMOMA, with the most recent showing at the Getty Museum.

For more on Arthur Tress see: www.arthurtress.com.



NATURAL HISTORY NUGGETS

Feed the Birds



A pair of House Finches at a bird feeder.
Photo by Joshua J. Cotten via Unsplas. Photo submitted
By Dean Thompson

While back, it was a busy day out at Morro Rock near the area where everyone likes to watch the otters. Many folks were taking in the sights, when my eye was drawn to a car that had several gulls perched on the roof and hood. The driver's side door was open, and about four or five ground squirrels were crowded around the ground. The smiling woman just inside was throwing what looked like cheese puffs out for the squirrels and gulls to eat. One of the bolder squirrels was taking food out of her hand when she spilled her bag of snacks on the car floor. Seeing the bounty before its eyes, the rodent hopped inside to take advantage of the feast.

This was too much for the woman; her smile switched to shock as she tried to shoo it out, but the squirrel went the wrong way, bouncing off the glass of the opposite window, and then panic ensued, both from the human and the rodent. The woman trying to herd the squirrel out of the car, and the squirrel desperately finding all avenues of escape blocked by glass. Finally, she opened all her doors, and the squirrel bounded out and into the rocks by the water's edge. After I got done laughing, I felt a little sorry for the traumatized squirrel, the woman not so much so; after all, there are signs out there asking people not to feed the wildlife, but they are regularly ignored.

I realize this can be a touchy subject for some, but what is it about people wanting to feed wildlife? Around 40% of Americans feed birds. It is widely accepted that feeding birds, for the most part, is not harmful and may even be beneficial. It has been shown to help birds survive winters and increase their success rate in nesting and chicks fledged. The exception I would caution people about would be specifically feeding crows or gulls. They need no help as they are plentiful and quite resourceful at finding food. Many times, crows will even prey on other songbirds' nests. I've seen nests destroyed and nestlings carried off by them in my neighborhood.

While feeding birds may be fine, feeding mammals, on the other hand, is a different story. I do not doubt that most people who do it are animal lovers and have good hearts. They want to see them up close, to have a personal experience or connection with the creatures, but are largely unaware of the potential harm they can cause.

At Morro Rock, for example, the squirrels are fed so much that the abundance of food allows them to have an abundance of babies. There are so many squirrels out there that any green plant that dares to sprout is eaten. If you compare that bare dirt area where people feed the squirrels by the otters to the rest of the shoreline where there are fewer squirrels, you'll notice a big difference in the number of flowers and plants growing. Plus, cheese puffs, French fries, potato chips, and other junk food are not healthy for those creatures. As a result, I have seen squirrels suffering from obesity, mange, tumors, and other maladies in that area.

Feeding deer, or other wildlife found around our homes, is also a bad idea. They are perfectly capable of finding their food and have special gut bacteria designed to help them digest their natural wild foods. It is unhealthy to throw pet food or other non-natural food items out for them.

Then there are the examples from communities throughout the west where the feeding of deer has attracted mountain lions into their communities, resulting in attacks on the deer, on pets, and in some cases, like Boulder, CO, attacks on people.

So, in the end, for all you animal lovers out there, go ahead, feed the little birds; no need to help the crows or gulls. And if you truly care about furry creatures, please don't feed them, you're not doing them any favors.

Dean Thompson is a naturalist and storyteller who has worked as an educator and field biologist for the past 42 years, primarily in the Estero Bay area. His writings, titled "BrainFodder - Ruminations of a Naturalist", can also be found on Substack.

COLLEGETOWN



By Michael Walker

Events Continued on page 9

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Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Locally based online bookstore, The Cove, is hosting a Boozy Book Fair for adults in celebration of Pride month on Friday, June 20 at Two Broads Ciderworks, 860 Capitolio Way, San Luis Obispo, from 5-8 p.m. in partnership with The Gala Center. The event features a diverse selection of books by queer authors, bookish merchandise, fun games and more.

The Cove is an online bookstore owned by local New York Times bestselling author, Kalyn Josephson, which sells signed copies and special editions of books by local authors and best-sellers alike in addition to hosting pop-up events like the book fair throughout San Luis Obispo County.

While the main focus of the event highlights The Cove's curated selection of books, it will also include other local craft vendors, drinks from Two Broads Ciderworks, and a fundraising opportunity for The Gala Center. Attendees will have the option to buy and donate a discounted book to The Gala Center's growing library of queer fiction.

Can't make it? The next author event is already scheduled. Join The Cove at SLO Ranch Farms & Marketplace on Saturday, June 28t at 10 a.m. for a reading, Q&A, and signing for Josephson's middle grade novel, "Ravenfall," a supernatural mystery series that follows a family of psychics who live at a sentient inn at the crossroads of the human world and the Otherworld. This is a free event.

...

Unity in the Community SLO Presents: Unity in the Community, a of live music, local food and drink, and meaningful community connection, on Saturday, June 21, from 2 – 10 p.m. at SLO Brew Rock, 855 Aerovista Place, San Luis Obispo.

This all-ages celebration features high-energy performances by local music powerhouses and a fun, dynamic nonprofit fair from 2 to 7 p.m. spotlighting 30 impactful organizations serving the Central Coast. It's a chance to dance, connect, and make a difference—all in one place.

Police Blotter



• **June 1:** Police at 7:31 p.m. responded to a call in City Park as some apparent Groom of the Stool was acting-up some kind of a crap-storm and scaring all the straights. County Mental Health was apparently called to the take charge.

• **May 31:** Police towed off three offensive vehicles that committed the sin of having expired registration. Logs didn't say where they were located at the time of their demise.

• **May 31:** Logs indicated that someone somewhere found something somebody lost at a "salon," though a saloon might be more likely.

• **May 30:** Police got a report at 2 p.m. of suspected child abuse without great bodily injury or death, which the California Penal Code defines as a non-violent family offense and a misdemeanor. Logs no longer indicate if such lice get arrested.

• **May 27:** Police responded at 8:05 a.m. to the Mobile Gas Station on Morro Bay Boulevard after some swindler used a fake credit card and made off with an undisclosed amount of food, gas or smokes.

• **May 27:** Police responded to an unlisted location at 8:06 a.m. after an unnamed caller of unknown gender and age said an un-sub broke into their car and stole some undisclosed valuables.

• **May 30:** Two more had their vehicles towed away because they failed to let the DMV bleed them dry.

• **May 29:** At 4 p.m. police contacted a suspicious subject somewhere in town and, whoopsy-poopsy, they had a bench warrant. The scofflaw was cited and told to take your shoes for a walk.

• **May 29:** Police contacted an urban camper at 12:41 p.m. at an undisclosed location, presumably in town. Officers cited the fellow under the City's anti-sleeping-where-we-can't-collect-a-bed tax law.

• **May 29:** At 9:08 a.m. police responded to a reported traffic collision at an undisclosed location in town. No word on injuries, or an indication of the extent of the carnage.

• **May 27:** At 10:39 p.m. police contacted a suspicious subject at Hinson's Tire & Auto Shop on Quintana Road. Logs indicated the unnamed apparent globster had a local felony warrant and a bench warrant from out of town, and was allegedly in possession of illegal drugs, also a felony, a case of "say goodnight Gracie!"

• **May 27:** At 8:18 p.m. at an undisclosed location in town, police contacted yet another model citizen with a bench warrant. The apparent Lollygagger got issued another disappearance ticket and was unleashed back into the wild.

• **May 27:** Police responded at 11:48 a.m. to a local business that said they'd taken in a fake check and got taken by some scam-boogah fraudster.

• **May 27:** Police responded at 8:06 a.m. to the Dollar Tree Store in the 400 block of Quintana Rd., for three felony and one misdemeanor reports of someone using a fake or stolen credit card. One case had an over \$950 loss, no doubt a new record for a dollar store.

• **May 27:** Police responded at 8 a.m. to Del Mar Park for a reported vandalism as apparently graffidiots had left their mark sometime overnight.

• **May 27:** Police at 6:20 a.m. responded to the Blue Sail Inn on Market Avenue after someone reported finding some unlisted treasure of some unknown value, and whatever it is, police have it now.

'No Kings' Day Protests in Los Osos



“No Kings” protests were held across the country on June 14 with some estimates saying 4 to 6 million people attended 2000 organized events. Demonstrators carrying signs and flags marched in protest of what they see as authoritarianism by President Trump and denouncing recent immigration raids by ICE in Los

Angeles. Protests in SLO County took place in Los Osos, San Luis Obispo, Cambria and Atascadero. Pictured is the demonstration at South Bay Boulevard and Los Osos Valley Road in Los Osos. Photo by Lance Cochrane

Morro Bay Police Department Promotion



The Morro Bay Police Department has promoted officer Art Vasquez to sergeant. “Through unwavering dedication, leadership, and a commitment to excellence, Sergeant Vasquez has earned this recogni-



tion and continues to set the standard for service and integrity,” Morro Bay PD said in a news release. “We are proud to have such a strong leader in our ranks and look forward to the continued impact he will make in this new role.”

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Community

Events From page 7



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Outdoor Stage - 2 – 5 p.m. Eric Cotton & One Love Bomb
Indoor Stage
5 – 6:15 p.m. IMVA
7 – 7:45 p.m. Oso Sol
8 – 10 p.m. Zongo All-Stars
Nonprofit Fair from 2 – 5 p.m.
Mingle with 30 local nonprofits leading the charge in helping our community thrive. Get inspired, find volunteer opportunities, and win cool prizes while supporting grassroots change-makers.
Admission is free for outdoor music and nonprofit fair and ticketed at \$15 for the indoor stage. Photo by Jake Schmit.



Join Morro Coast Audubon Society for their MCAS Community: Today and Tomorrow — an afternoon of connection, celebration, and community impact on June 21 from 12 to 3 p.m. at the San Luis Botanical Garden. This community fundraiser brings

together local educators, students, conservation leaders, and supporters to highlight the people and programs shaping a more inclusive, resilient future for conservation on the Central Coast. Enjoy light refreshments, a curated silent auction of local experiences and handcrafted items, and a short program of speakers reflecting on community impact and our shared path forward. Attendance is free, however RSVPs (tickets) are available at www.morrocoastaudubon.org.
Featured Speakers include Andrea Jones, executive director, Audubon California who will share reflections on MCAS's leadership, impact, and role within the Audubon network; Paso Robles High School students and AVID teacher Angela Logan who will highlight their journeys in the FEATHER program and the power of youth-led environmental education; and
Torrey Gage-Tomlinson, program director, and Nancy Foley, board president who will offer updates on organizational growth and a vision for inclusive, community-driven conservation.
All proceeds will provide flexible, mission-driven support for MCAS's work across San Luis Obispo County including environmental education, habitat restoration, outreach, stewardship, and new community partnerships.



Members of the Rotary Club of Morro Bay headed up by Mike Gerson and Phil May are firing up their BBQs on Wednesday, June 25, in support of our community. Take home a full-sized premium tri-tip roast along with ranch-style beans, garden salad with ranch dressing, hot sourdough garlic bread loaf and salsa. This is a complete meal that will serve six. Tickets must be purchased by June 23 All proceeds go to the club's "Help Us

Help Others" Campaign which provides services to our community. Tickets are \$75 and are available at morrobayrotary.org Pick-up your meal from 5 – 6 p.m. on Wednesday, June 25t at Carla's Country Kitchen at 213 Beach St. Morro Bay.
...
Art Center Morro Bay presents "By the Sea," members only exhibit drawing inspiration from the ocean's vast beauty, mystery, and power. This theme offers a canvas to explore the sea's many faces from tranquil shorelines and sunlit horizons to tumultuous waves and the unknown depths below. Artists can capture the sea's connection to nature, memory, emotion, or mythology, interpreting its influence on human life and imagination. Through this theme, artists are encouraged to reflect on the ocean as both a source of calm and chaos, inviting viewers into its ever-changing world.
The Central Coast Printmakers presents the exhibition Pressing Forward. With more than 30 diverse, active members, CCP's mission is to maintain the tradition of making original art prints by designing plates (or "substrates" from which a print is made) by hand. The group has been encouraging making, enjoying and learning about printmaking for more than 40 years in SLO County. Processes include etchings, engravings, lino & woodcuts, silkscreens, lithographs, monoprints and more.
Both exhibits run June 26-August 4. There is an artist's reception on Sunday, June 29 from 2 – 4 p.m. at Art Center Morro Bay, Main St, Morro Bay. For more information, go to www.artcentermorrobay.org or call 805-772-2504.

If you like jigsaw puzzles, the Morro Bay Odd Fellows has solutions for you. The Bay-Rock Lodge, I.O.O.F. is holding another "Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange" fundraiser set for 2-4 p.m. Saturday, June 21 at the Odd Fellows Hall, 710 Harbor St., Morro Bay.
Cost is a \$10 entry fee and they will have over 100 puzzles of varying sizes and by various manufacturers to peruse. Bring your old puzzles and take home new puzzles to assemble, and help the non-profit organization raise money for its many



Events Continued on page 10

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June 19, 2024 - July 3, 2025 • The Estero Bay News • Your Community, Your News 9

Community

Events From page 9

community programs. Manufacturers include: Springbok, Ravensburger, Willow Creek and many more. Sizes range from 300 pieces to over 1,000. Themes include holidays, animals, shaped puzzles, Americana, nostalgia and more. Proceeds from the puzzle exchange support the Odd Fellows' scholarship programs.



Downtown SLO, alongside title sponsor Sunset Honda present the 29th season of San Luis Obispo Concerts in the Plaza. The 2025 series kicks off on the Summer Solstice Friday, June 20, with a rare performance from local Americana group Moonshiner Collective and opening act Vintage Renegades. "Concerts in the Plaza has always been our favorite celebration of the local community," says Dan Curcio of Moonshiner Collective. "Our music is rooted in inspiration from the Central Coast, and this concert series feels like the best way to honor that love with the people who make this community vibrant." Every concert in the series features a Main Act and an Opening Act comprised of musicians from SLO or Santa Barbara counties. The series spans 13 weeks, every Friday except July 4, through 12 with twelve concerts and more than 50 local musicians. Opening Act: 5 – 5:45 p.m. and the Main Act: 6 – 8 p.m.

Get ready for Pride Month with a Pride Macrame Plant Hanger Class! This event is open to the public and is a great way to get creative. The class takes place Sunday, June 22 at 2 p.m. at Gala Pride and Diversity Center at 1060 Palm St. in San Luis



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Obispo. During the class, you'll learn how to create a beautiful macrame plant hanger using colorful cord, choose from rainbow or Trans flag colors. All necessary supplies will be provided, and you'll receive expert instruction from a skilled macrame artist. You'll also enjoy beverages from the sparkling juice bar and take home the Central Coast Pride cup you use. Tickets are \$60.76 at my805Tix.com and include all supplies, instruction, drink and your choice of pot and plant.



Join the series Wisdom of the Four Directions and step into the wisdom of the south on June 22 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at Central Coast Body Therapy in Los Osos. This immersive experience invites people to embrace the energy of summer, a season of growth, abundance, and embodied joy. Through the lens of ancient teachings and the healing resonance of sound, we journey into deeper presence and integration. Rooted in the time-honored Wisdom Teachings of the Four Directions, this gathering honors the cycles of nature and the vibrant energy within you. Through guided experiential and reflective practices, you'll explore how the South's dynamic energy can support your sense of purpose, passion, and aligned action in the world. The session concludes with an Integrative Sound Journey, where the vibrations of crystal singing bowls, gongs, and other sacred instruments will help anchor your insights—igniting the fire within and harmonizing body, mind, and spirit. In this class:

- Connect with the wisdom and symbolism of the South and how it reflects your inner landscape
- Explore the relationship between nature's cycles and your creative life force
- Experience the transformational power of Integrative Sound Alchemy to energize your intentions
- Cultivate passion, courage, and authentic expression as you step into your full bloom

Tickets are \$23.27 and are available at my805tix.com. Space is limited. For more information, contact Dee DiGioia at 805-270-5523.

Local aMembers of the Estero Amateur (ham) Radio Club are participating in the national Amateur Radio Field Day exercise June 28 and 29, 2022 at The Cloisters City Park in Morro Bay. Since 1933, ham radio operators across North America have established temporary ham radio stations in public locations during Field Day to showcase the science and




skill of Amateur Radio. This event is open to the public and all are encouraged to attend. For more than 100 years, Amateur Radio — also called Ham Radio — has allowed people from all walks of life to experiment with electronics and communications techniques, as well as provide a free public service to their communities during a disaster or emergency, all without needing a cell phone or the Internet. Field Day demonstrates ham radio's ability to work reliably under any conditions from almost any location and create an independent communications network. More than 40,000 people from thousands of locations participate in Field Day each June. A ham radio license testing session will also be available at 1 p.m. Saturday for all three license levels. A reservation is not required. Field Day operations begin at 11 a.m. on Saturday 28 June, and run through 11 a.m. on Sunday. A person does not have to be a ham radio licensee to attend or talk on the radio at this event. This is a great chance to see what ham radio is all about and learn how to get involved. More information can be found at www.arrl.org and www.slradio.net.

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

Takin' Care of BUSINESS


By Theresa- Marie Wilson

Volumes of Pleasure Celebrates Pride with Book Signings




Authors Alicia Gael, Laina Villeneuve, and Jen Lyon are part of the Pride celebration at Volumes of Pleasure Bookshoppe. Photo submitted

Join Volumes of Pleasure staff in celebrating Pride Month by welcoming three accomplished authors who celebrate queer women in fiction for book signings on June 21, from 1 to 3 p.m. **Meet the Authors** Alicia Gael (she/her) started writing stories when she was twelve, but didn't publish her first novel until she was sixty-five. Now she's doing the two things she's always wanted to do; be a full-time writer and live near the ocean.



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Community

When not writing, you can find her kayaking, reading (she averages 100 books a year,) learning to play the ukulele, or drinking Prosecco with her wife Donna.

Gael's books include "Murder on Castaway Island," a murder mystery with queer characters; "Murder, Mayhem & Sex on the Beach," a suspense/ romance blend with lesbian main characters, set in SLO. Read more at aliciagael.wordpress.com.

Jen Lyon (she/her) is the award-winning author of "The Senator's Wife." When she isn't writing, Jen can be found sailing, browsing the shelves of her local bookstore, cheering ardently at a National Women's Soccer League match or training horses at her Southern California horse ranch, where she lives with her wife, Donna, and their dogs and horses.

Lyon's other books include "Caught Sleeping: Book 2," "Whistleblower: Book 3," and "The Colonel's Daughter: Prequel, which is coming soon. For more information, go to www.jenlyonauthor.com.

Laina Villeneuve (she/her) lives in Southern California with her wife and three children. To paraphrase her website, Laina lives on a diet of words which includes protein from mountains of essays from her college students, a steady supply of nonfiction which provides fiber; general fiction is her source of fruits and veggies; and she finds lesbian romance — like her own — to be the perfect dessert

Villeneuve's books include "Take Only Pictures," "The Right Thing," "Such Happiness as This," "Return to Paradise" and "Kat's Nine Lives" Check out more at bellabooks.com/category/bella-author-laina-villeneuve.

Volumes of Pleasure is located at 1016 Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos.

Morro Bay Chamber Ribbon Cutting



The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting at the grand opening of Ocheltree CPA's new Morro Bay location on June 5.

Ocheltree CPA is a full-service, California-licensed accounting firm known for its affordability, experience, and friendly service. The firm offers a wide range of financial and tax services tailored to business owners, executives, and independent professionals. Check them out at ocheltreecpa.com or call at 805.776.8900.

Pictured: Steve and Carolyn Ocheltree (center with scissors) are open for business.

KFK Gallery and Studio Open in Morro Bay

A new gallery has open in Morro Bay. KFK Gallery and Studio, 875 Main St., features abstract



paintings, watercolor, fiber arts, photography, 3D printed sculpture, jewelry, and fair-trade items. All of the artwork on display was created by the Ferguson-Hanson family: Kelly, his wife Karen, their son Liam, and Karen's mother, Mary Ann.

Kelly's mediums include acrylic abstracts, 3D printed sculptures, cartoon prints, and greeting cards.

Karen produces immaculate cross-stitch works and unique earrings.

Liam's medium is photography with an eye towards all things aeronautical.

Mary Ann paints stunning, incredibly detailed watercolors.

The gallery also carries products from Thistle Farms, a non-profit organization that helps women survivors of addiction, incarceration, poverty, and human trafficking by giving them the skills to get back on their feet.

"We are always completing new works and adding new items, so that every visit is a unique experience," said Kelly.

Gallery hours are: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Wednesday through Monday (except on Saturdays when they open at 10 a.m. and close at 6 p.m. The gallery is closed on Tuesdays. Readers can follow them on Instagram at kfk_gallery.studio.

Dignity Health's Hands-Only CPR Training



In recognition of National Safety Month and CPR and AED Awareness Week, Dignity Health Central Coast took proactive steps to equip community members with life-saving skills the Downtown SLO Farmers' Market on June 5. About 100 people took part in the free hands-only CPR demonstrations.

June is National Safety Month and CPR and AED Awareness Week was the first week of June.

Every year, more than 350,000 Americans experience sudden cardiac arrest, a leading cause of death, with about 70%

of these events occurring at home, often with loved ones nearby. While waiting for paramedics, immediate CPR can double or triple a person's chance of survival, yet less than half of cardiac arrest victims receive the immediate help they desperately need.

"Imagine the power of knowing you could save the life of a family member, a friend, or even a stranger," said Cherie McKinley, MSN, RN, clinical and healthcare simulation educator at French Hospital. "Hands-only CPR is simple to learn, and it empowers ordinary people to become lifesavers. We want to make sure our community has the knowledge and confidence to act quickly in a cardiac emergency."

Hands-only CPR involves two steps: calling 911 and providing continuous chest compressions until professional help arrives. When combined with the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), which delivers an electrical shock to restore a normal heart rhythm, the chances of survival increase dramatically.

"Hands-only CPR is very simple to learn," McKinley added. "And by taking the time to learn CPR skills, you could be the difference between life and death for someone you love."

Cambria Xmas Market Tickets on Sale Now



The Cambria Christmas Market is preparing for its 14th season. Tickets and hotel packages are available now.

"Each year, we challenge ourselves to outdo the last — and 2025 is shaping up to be our most magical season yet," said Mike Arnold, event director. "With new displays, expanded attractions, and more vendors than ever, it's the perfect year to visit."

Attendees can wander through a winter wonderland of over 3 million twinkling lights, shop a German-inspired artisan market, sip cocoa or a local brew to live music, ride the festive train, and visit Santa.

The holiday cheer takes place November 28 – December 31 except for December 1–2, 8–9, and 24–25. General Admission ranges from \$27 to \$45, depending on the date, and children 5 and under are free. Purchase tickets in advance. Once a date sells out online, tickets will not be available at the door. If available, ticket price increases by \$10 at the door.

Overnight hotel packages are available at Cambria Pines Lodge, Sea Otter Inn and The J. Patrick House and Inn. Tickets and hotel packages at CambriaChristmasMarket.com.

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Obituary
Lavonne Rodgers
1926 - 2025



Lavonne Rodgers, of Morro Bay, California, passed away peacefully on May 31, 2025, at the age of 98. She was born Lavonne Elizabeth Heryford in Coalinga, California, to Ethel and Daryl "Po" Heryford on November 30, 1926. Lavonne graduated from Coalinga Union High School in 1944 and soon after married her high school sweetheart, Ben Rodgers, who was serving in the U.S. Navy. Their early years together took them to various parts of California before settling in Morro Bay in 1962, where Ben worked for Pacific Gas and Electric. Known for her warm hospitality, Lavonne loved hosting gatherings for friends and family, including a post-Thanksgiving golf tournament she and Ben organized for over 30 years. She was deeply involved in community service, dedicating over 60 years to the Order of the Eastern Star and contributing to Little League, Camp Fire, and the PTA. Summers were often spent at Bass Lake, water skiing and fishing — a beloved family tradition for generations. Lavonne also held several professional roles, including in the Cal Poly admissions office and later as a successful real estate agent in Morro Bay. In retirement, she became an avid golfer, playing well into her 90s, winning tournaments at Sea Pines, and remaining a longtime member of the Morro Bay Women's Golf Club. In later years, she enjoyed dice, cards, and bingo with friends and family. Her greatest joy was her family — her children, grandchild-

dren, and great-grandchildren. With Ben, she rarely missed a sporting event, whether it was just down the road or even across the country a time or two. While she was a quieter presence in the stands than Ben, keeping her own score at ball games just in case, her pride in her family was unmistakable to everyone around her. Lavonne was preceded in death by her husband, Ben, and two sons, David and Danny. She is survived by her daughter, Cathy Garcia (Domingos); daughters-in-law, Cindy Rodgers and Sue Rodgers; five grandchildren: Michele (Curt), Justin (Diana), Ben (Valrie), Joe (Nicole), and Jenna (Charlie); and twelve great-grandchildren: Sierra, Nolan, Ellyn, Zane, Shae, Bella, Marie, Ben, Leo, Natalie, Romeo, and George. A church service will be held Saturday, June 28 at 11 a.m. at Estero Bay United Methodist Church. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Estero Bay United Methodist Church or Woods Humane Society in her name.

Dr. Craig Gordon Loveridge
1951 - 2025



Dr. Craig Gordon Loveridge, DMD, passed away on May 30, 2025. Craig was born September 28, 1951, in Provo Utah to Dr. Floyd Gordon and Jean Loveridge. Craig grew up in Sacramento with his siblings Karen and Mike while their father finished his service in the Air Force and opened his dental practice. Craig would eventually come back to work with his father Gordon after attending Brigham Young University, Utah and Washington University Dental School in St. Louis graduating in 1977.

Mike's attendance at Cal Poly introduced Craig and first wife Katherine to Los Osos where he opened his own dental practice in 1981 on the corner of South Bay and Los Osos Valley Road. Not long afterwards they had their only child, Sean, in 1982. In 1983, he lost Katherine (Kitty) to cancer. He remarried in 1986 to Melody and added two daughters, Juli and Kelley who are now decorated educators having taught grades K-5th abroad in seven different countries. In 1996, he met his current wife Cathy of 30 years. They recently moved to Arizona after Craig's retirement. Craig enjoyed a full life as an engaged father, hunter, fisherman, expert-level alpine skier, skilled handgun match shooter, and lastly, a beloved dentist in Los Osos from 1981 - 2019. A Celebration of Life will be on July 12 at noon at Sea Pines Golf Resort. Friends and family are welcome to come catch up with one another while enjoying some of the sights and sounds of the past that defined Craig Loveridge.

A Dose of Good Dogma
Blah, Blah, Blah, Ginger...
By Lisa Ellman

"I want my dog to listen to me." This is often the response I get when I ask clients what their goal for our training sessions is. My pat response: "Your dog IS listening to you. Your dog hears everything you say." But the problem is that their dog isn't doing what they want. Let's figure out why. Do you constantly chatter to your dog when out walking?

Blah, Blah, Blah Continued on page 13

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Happy Jack's Then and Now

Although it's gone through several names and multiple owners, Happy Jack's Tavern, now The Siren, has been a bar in the same location longer than any other type of business in Morro Bay. The bar's original owner, Jack Williams, opened the tavern in 1926 during prohibition. The building was probably built around the turn of the 20th Century, and the bar got its name because of Jack's smile and good nature.

Jack originally came from the farming community of Burrton, Kansas, and he lived in a stucco house on North Main Street that he built himself. His father was a black man who married a white woman. He was lynched, after Jack was conceived but before he was born, in Burrton because of that.

Given when it opened, it's likely that Happy Jack's Tavern continued to operate during the prohibition years 1920-1933, possibly by bootlegging its liquor. Canadian whiskey arrived on ships that offloaded their contents at several places along California's central coast, including Morro Bay.

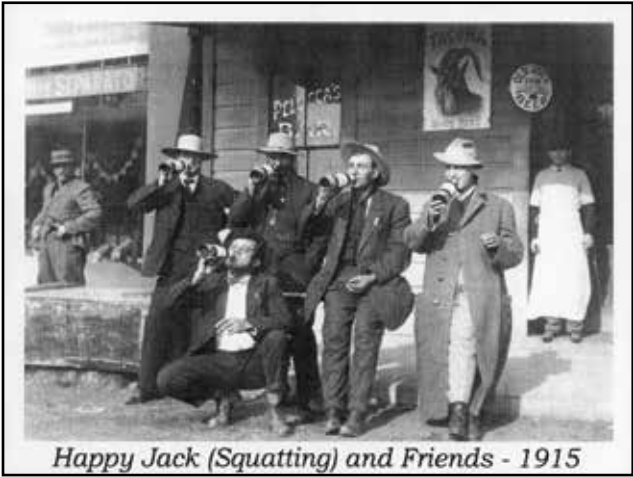
Jack sold the bar to Milton Rohrberg just before World War II began. The business undoubtedly served the troops stationed in SLO County, and the owner cashed thousands of paychecks, which required a security guard on paydays. Apparently, there were lookouts on the roof spotting for enemy ships.

Before and during the war, Morro Bay was a wild town, and Happy Jacks was apparently a rough place. Heavyweight boxing matches were held in a ring behind the bar on Friday nights. When fights broke out in the bar, the participants — men or women — had to return the following Sunday afternoon to duke it out. According to Dave Tope, owner of the bar for over two decades, Happy Jack's also served as an unofficial city hall before Morro Bay became a city. There used to be a telephone connecting the county courthouse to the bar.

Under Tope's ownership, Happy Jack's was expanded into an adjacent building, and an outdoor patio and restaurant were added. The bar has a long history of providing live music on weekends dating back to the 1970's. Casey Kelso, current owner of Legends bar, located on the opposite corner, also owned Happy Jacks for 13 years and renamed it "The Fuel Dock."

The musical tradition was expanded under current owners, Paul and Kelly Boisclair, who bought the bar in 2014 and renamed it The Siren. But you can still find the old Happy Jack's sign in the bar and the Fuel Dock, sign on the patio.

Do you have an old photograph with a story to tell, or would you like more information about the Historical Society of Morro Bay? Contact us at <https://info@historicalmorrobay.org>.



Happy Jack (Squatting) and Friends - 1915



Blah, Blah, Blah From page 12

Or moving about the house, or at feeding time? Do you ask for multiple behaviors at once? For example: "No, stop it, leave it, sit down." This kind of word spewing frequently leads to your desired message getting lost in the cacophony of other sounds. And, ultimately, it's ignored, or not heard, by the dog. I'm not implying that you shouldn't talk to your dog, but if you're looking to communicate a behavior to them, it should be free of other chatter. Your dog is always listening to you. Most of the time waiting for or anticipating cues on what to do.

The constant chatter from students sometimes confuses me. One can only imagine how the dog feels. I frequently find myself telling my human student, "Stop talking."

Here's an interesting phenomenon. I will ask the person straight out, "What do you want your dog to do," in response to a particular situation such as when the doorbell rings. The human will inevitably say, "Well, I don't want her to jump at the door." But read that again. That wasn't my question. And the human response to the question is essentially the problem. Unfortunately, and habitually, the human will tell their dog what NOT to do. If your dog is always looking to you for information about how to behave, and you're telling it what NOT to do, the dog will behave in any manner, appropriate or not.

Another example is pulling on the leash. What do you want your dog to do? "I want it to stop pulling." So, the human may say to the dog, "Stop pulling!" Stop pulling is not a behavior the dog understands. It also doesn't give them information about what to do instead or provide an alternative behavior, e.g. "heel." For dogs that are leash pullers, teach the dog to follow you or walk beside

you. Similarly, telling your dog "No" is not a solution to inappropriate behavior. No what? What is it that you do want?

I think you get the gist of what I'm saying here. You, the human, as a leader, must have a plan. Teach an alternative concrete behavior for the dog to respond to. If chaos ensues when your doorbell rings, that's not the dog's fault. That is the human not knowing what to do. The solution involves making sure that your dog is familiar with basic command cues, like sit, stay, leave it, down and off, and then having a structured plan when the stimulus is triggered.

Dogs thrive on routine and structure. I like to teach a dog that, when the doorbell rings, bark a few times (because that's your job) then go to a prearranged place and sit (or down) and stay there until I give you permission to go greet the guest. But that doesn't have to be your plan. You get to decide what you want them to do. It can be anything you choose, you make the rules, you're in charge. Except don't lock them outside or in a room, because that teaches them nothing at all. Your dog is totally open, and excited, to learn new behaviors.

Help your dog understand what it is you want by clearly and succinctly communicating. Make sure they have been taught what actions those words mean.

Once you do this, and eliminate the extraneous chatter, you will realize that your dog does listen to you and is happy to respond for calm verbal praise or a nice, tasty treat!

Good Dogma has been helping dogs with people problems since 1996. Readers are invited to submit questions to gooddogma@botmail.com. Contact information for all offered services can be found on our website www.GoodDogma.net

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Letters
To
The Editor
Don't save SAVE



A current bill in Congress aims to make voting harder for everyone.

The Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act has the potential to disenfranchise millions of American voters. SAVE would require a passport or a birth certificate to register to vote or update voter registration information.

It is currently illegal for non-citizens to register and vote and voter fraud is exceedingly rare.

Even if you have voted in every election, you may be among the millions of eligible voters who do not have the documentation required by this law. Of San Luis Obispo County's approximately 219,000 citizens of voting age, as many as 53,000 married women who changed their name upon marriage could be at risk of losing their vote.

Married women who changed their surname may be required to secure updated documentation to match their married name. A birth certificate, marriage license, or REAL ID alone would not suffice as proof of citizenship.

Under the SAVE Act voters must show citizenship documentation every time they register.

SAVE will deny eligible voters their rights. The League of Women Voters urges you to tell our Senators Alex Padilla and Adam Schiff to strenuously oppose this dangerous bill.

*Ann Havlik
Elizabeth Manak, PhD.
Co-Presidents
League of Women Voters of San Luis Obispo County*

Graduation Issue

Thank you so much for publishing the photos and names of our local high school graduates! Seeing those beautiful smiling faces warmed my heart and lifted my spirits. That was very generous of you to give the students and their families this wonderful keepsake.

*Linda Olson
Los Osos*

Why the Pride Flag Still Matters in Morro Bay

By Aimee Brantley of Morro Bay

Historically, June is a month when we dust off our rainbow flags and don our regalia in celebration of decades of triumph over adversity. We commune with our siblings and allies to mark progress and honor those who came before us in brave elegance and hearty aspiration. There are moments of great joy and celebration, but also times of marked solemnity. Pride is a time of family and remembrance — but also a time to regroup and map the work that still needs to be done.

When news broke that Morro Bay planned its final Pride flag raising, we shared a message on our business website encouraging folks to attend the proclamation earlier this week. Almost immedi-

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Community

Letters From page 13

ately, a commenter left a crude and loathsome response. Over the past calendar year in SLO County, we have witnessed an anti-LGBTQ+ hate crime death, along with several assaults and acts of vandalism rooted in queer hate. In the Southern U.S., we've heard preachers openly calling for the execution of LGBTQ+ individuals. And now, the current president has re-centered focus on making LGBTQ+ people once again targets of scorn and contempt. This is the backdrop that makes it clear: the decision to rescind the Pride flag ordinance did not happen in a vacuum.

When City Councilmember Jeff Eckles publicly called for the removal of the ordinance that allowed the Pride flag to fly, he offered scant and misleading justifications. Those justifications rang hollow as speaker after speaker faced the dais and systematically dismantled every point. Attempting to persuade the audience that his actions were rooted in the rosy ideal of "neutrality," the councilmember's words failed to resonate with the packed room of LGBTQ+ individuals and allies.

It was a shameful insult to recast the rainbow Pride flag — a symbol that has stood for welcome, affirmation, and acceptance for nearly 50 years — as something divisive or exclusionary. Calling it a step toward "tribalism" is disingenuous at best. It is intellectually dishonest to argue that allowing three councilmembers to decide whether a symbol of unity and inclusion may fly is somehow a "gross overreach of government." If so, wouldn't removing it by that same process also constitute overreach?

What is the point of representative government if not to represent all the people? While cities across the state and country are expanding Pride visibility, how is it that our small town of 10,000 cannot find the courage to take a principled stand in support of roughly 10% of its population? The Pride flag stands for progress, safety, integrity, and inclusion. It does not pander to the willfully ignorant or those clinging to outdated, false narratives. It pushes back against the long history of violence, exclusion, and discrimination that LGBTQ+ people have endured — and still endure.

The claim that this decision affects all commemorative flags, not just the Pride flag, falls apart under scrutiny. No other flag has been requested to fly. And we've heard the same tired false dilemmas: "What if someone wants to fly the Nazi or Confederate flag?" There is a process. Council votes on each request. If the council cannot distinguish between a flag that honors inclusion and one that glorifies violence and genocide, we have a much deeper problem than flag policy.

We are not asking for rainbow crosswalks or high-dollar lighting displays. We are simply asking that the Pride flag continue to fly, one month out of the year, to show that our town supports and represents all of its residents and visitors.

The council has now rescinded the ordinance and chosen to limit flags to the Morro Bay flag, the California flag, and the U.S. flag. Some who spoke in favor of the decision said they wanted to return to "unity under the American flag." But here is the rub: the Stars and Stripes have not always symbolized unity. For many, they have represented prejudice, bullying, and violence. And now, more than ever, the U.S. flag divides in new ways. Over the past decade, it has increasingly come to represent one political party. Often, it flies alongside banners promoting a leader who has actively worked to strip away protections and freedoms from the LGBTQ+ community—freedoms that should be guaranteed under that very flag.

Unity under one banner sounds like a noble idea. But until we have a shared definition of liberty and equality, the Rainbow Pride flag must continue to fly. It is not a substitute for the American flag — it is a bridge that spans the divide between our country's promises and the lived reality of many of its people. Until the Stars and Stripes can fulfill their promise for everyone, the rainbow must remain.

Bruce Gibson From page 1

2026."

First elected to office in 2006, Gibson was the Dist. 2 Planning Commissioner under former Dist. 2 Supervisor, the late-Shirley Bianchi, who herself had been a planning commissioner under her predecessor, Bud Laurent 8-years earlier. Before he was appointed to the planning commission, Gibson had been very active in local Cayucos politics, serving for many years on the Citizen's Advisory Council and working with the Cayucos Land Conservancy, something he continues to be involved with now.

Gibson has had several planning commissioners over the five terms in office and the current commissioner is Anne Wyatt, who was also his first appointed commissioner in 2007. Wyatt returned to the post in 2023.

Gibson said he'd given the matter of running for an unprecedented sixth term a lot of thought.

"Near the midpoint of my 19th year as San Luis Obispo County's Dist. 2 County Supervisor," Gibson wrote in the newsletter, "I've been thinking a lot about what lies ahead for us as citizens, as a county, a state, a nation — and what role each of us should have in shaping our shared future."

He added, "In past election cycles you'll likely remember I've usually been gearing up another run for office about now, so I've been getting a lot of questions about my intentions.

"I wanted to tell you about my decision now because you deserve to know, and because we all have a lot of work to do to protect and defend our common values and special places."

Answering the most obvious question, Gibson said, "You may be curious about the 'why?' of this decision. The short answer: 'It's time.' I'll have more to say about that in coming months."

He hinted about a potential run for higher office. "Down the road," Gibson said, "in a different role, I'll be focusing on some specific public issues, including the mess we call our national government."

The 2026 Election cycle has a Primary Election in June, with a possible Run-off Election in November 2026, if no candidate wins over 50% of the vote. Whoever eventually wins the seat will take office in December 2026 for a 4-year term.

He said it was also important to step aside early, "to energize the next cycle of leadership in Dist. 2.

"Certainly, the work of local government goes on and has never been more important to our way of life."

Gibson adopted a few Democrat talking points, warning about the growing threat from the Administration.

"We're also seeing growing local and national outrage at the chaos, corruption and cruelty that continue to cascade from the Trump Administration," Gibson said. "I'm committed to supporting the growing effort to defeat this assault on our democracy and have been buoyed by the energy and tenacity of the many SLO County residents I've encountered at local street rallies."

He put out a call to arms. "Your engagement in these local and national efforts is essential to the future of SLO County and our nation," Gibson said. "That's why it's crucial for you to get



Dist. 2 County Supervisor Bruce Gibson has announced that he will not seek a sixth, 4-year term in 2026, opening the District for the first time in over a generation.

involved in the local 2026 elections.

"The contest to elect the next Dist. 2 Supervisor gives us a chance to elevate the values we've long held dear — support for every member of our community and protection of our incompatible environment — and an opportunity to voice our unwavering commitment to local democracy.

"The voters in Dist. 2 are smart, caring and devoted to those values. We'll certainly demand that same devotion from any candidate seeking the Dist. 2 seat."

Gibson has an impressive list of major accomplishments under his tenure including the completion of the Los Osos Community Sewer System, which after four decades of strife and outlasting three Supervisors (Bill Coy, Laurent and Bianchi) was finally completed in 2016, during Gibson's third term.

Other accomplishments include the rebuilding of the Cayucos Pier and the Vet's Hall, which is nearing completion after a multi-year rebuild (see related story).

He also worked on a new library for Cambria and has helped steer Los Osos through the mountain of red tape that the sewer — or lack thereof — caused. As it stands now, Los Osos has an approve General Plan and the building restrictions centered around water supply, have been addressed, so that the County is beginning to process new construction permits for the first time since 1988.

Just who might be a candidate for the seat? As mentioned, recent history — going from Laurent to Bianchi and then Gibson — one might look to the planning commission and Wyatt, whose regular job is running the non-profit organization, Smart Share Housing Solutions in San Luis Obispo.

Estero Bay News inquired of Wyatt to see whether she was planning to run for the seat? Wyatt acknowledged that whoever does win the seat, "has some big shoes to fill." She would not rule out running for office in the future, but has no plans to seek this office in 2026. She said she's focused on affordable housing right now.

Other possibilities include any of the elected Morro Bay City Council members. Councilman Jeff Eckles ran for the seat before. Eckles was second in a 3-man race in the June 2018 Primary Election. Gibson garnered over 59% of the votes to avoid a November Run-off Election that year.

In 2022, running in a revamped Dist. 2 after redistricting in 2021 redrew the Supervisorial Map, Gibson won by the narrowest of margins, just 13 votes. That Dist. 2 map was dramatically different than the one before, as Morro Bay and Los Osos, plus a large part of San Luis Obispo was cut out of Dist. 2. Morro Bay and SLO made up a new Dist. 3 and Los Osos was lumped into Dist. 5.

The new boundaries encompassed Atascadero, part of Templeton, San Miguel and the traditional towns of Cayucos and Cambria.

EBN sent emails to all five city council members to see if anyone wanted to announce their plans but only heard back from the Mayor and Councilman Bill Luffee before deadline.

Morro Bay Mayor Carla Wixom seems to have made up her mind. "I'm a definitely NOT [running for Dist. 2]," the Mayor told EBN. "I LOVE and am honored serving my city/community, but I have no aspirations beyond that."

Luffee responded. "I have no intention on running for the Supervisor role. I have a hard enough time moving through the complexities of the bureaucracy of the City of Morro Bay in trying to accomplish anything."

As for Gibson, he said this is not good-bye. "While this is not by any means a farewell note," he wrote, "I want to end by thanking so many of you who have been such generous and steadfast supporters of my adventure in elective office. You've given me energy, purpose and hope, and I'm deeply grateful."

Housing Contract From page 1

another year without having to go through the lengthy process of seeking new bids. There's an apparently good reason for it, too — it's working well.

"TMHA continues to meet or exceed program outcomes, and the program continues to be an important resource for ending homelessness among people experiencing chronic homelessness."

The new contract calls for paying TMHA over \$1.17M through June 30, 2026. The County plans to go out for bids again on this program early in 2026 to be ready for a potential change next July 1, the start of the next fiscal year.

The contract calls for "comprehensive services," to be provided leveraging this money with "resources from existing community programs while meeting individualized needs," Weir's report said.

Those services include housing placement, case management and individual supportive services including landlord engagement, rental and move-in assistance, and "retention assistance to ensure long term housing is sustained."

In short, the program finds housing for people who need it, helps them move in and subsidizes the monthly rent, too.

TMHA works with the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo or HASLO on this program, making federal housing vouchers available to qualified people.

HASLO "screens for eligibility to Housing Choice Vouchers and if eligible enrolls participants in the voucher program," Weir said.

The recipients make certain promises to remain in the program. "As with the prior contract," the report said, "once clients are placed into housing, participants must agree to meet regularly with their case manager, pay rent on time, comply with terms of their lease, and be a peaceful neighbor."

These vouchers can amount to over \$13,000 a year in rental assistance, the report said, and there are about 69 vouchers for 1-bedroom units in use at a given time. That gives the voucher program an annual value of over \$923,000.

The vouchers are meant to bring housing down to an affordable level. According to the report, it's been almost astonishingly successful for a government program.

Housing Contract Continued on page 19

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Sports

MBHS Names Spring Sports Awards



Morro Bay High's Spring Sports' 'Platinum Pirates Award' winners were (not in order): Carter Wade — Boys Tennis; Jane Taylor — Girls Beach Volleyball; Swimming — Boys, Aesa Vidati, Girls, Ava Beckett; Golf — Jonas Smith; Baseball — Quentin Crofts; Boys Volleyball — Stuart Colletti; Track — Liam Burton, Lilah Green; Stunt — Georgia Hughes; and Softball — Vena Fryer. Photo courtesy MBHS

By Neil Farrell

Another prep sports school year has wrapped up and Morro Bay High celebrated the best athletes from the various Spring Sports Teams and named it's Male and Female Athletes of the Year.

Taking the Athlete of the Year honors were CIF Champion wrestler, Shea Dawson and State Cross Country Medalist, Shelby Taylor, who was also third at the CIF Master's Track Meet and qualified for State, but didn't get past the prelims.

Dawson took the Central Section Div. III 138-pound title and moved on to the Master's Meet. Earlier in the season, then took third at the Pirate's California Invitational Tournament (C.I.T.). Dawson is slated to wrestle at San Francisco State University next year.

Taylor is going to be a junior next year.

On the Boy's Tennis Team, Carter Wade was named MVP; Connor Schachter was Most Improved and also took the Coach's Award. MBHS also hands out a Platinum Pirate Award for each program — boys and girls teams — and Carter Wade got the Tennis Team Award.

As for Junior Varsity, the Boy's didn't field a team this year in tennis.

In Girls Beach Volleyball, the school's newest sport, Marley Socarras was MVP; Philline Asuncion was Most Improved; Josslyn Finch got the Coach's Award; and Jane Taylor got the Platinum Pirate Award.

On the JV squad, Ella Meehas was MVP; Ava Schmidt was Most Improved; and Nora Wilson was the Coach's Award winner.

In the Swimming & Diving team for the boys, Jude Moore was MVP; Koenraad Hook was Most Improved; Alexander Roberts got the Coach's Award; and Aesa Vidati got the Platinum Pirate Award.

Boys JVs named Ezra Bariel MVP; Carson Clark was Most Improved; and Benjamin Hague got the Coach's Award.

For the Girls Team, Caroline Muff was MVP; Devyn McLaughlin was Most Improved; Taylen Robson got the Coach's Award; and Ava Beckett was the Platinum Pirate Award winner.

Girls JV Swimming Team named Talia

Roberts MVP; Elah Mckinney Most Improved; and Poppy Johnson and Megan Phipps both got Coach's Awards.

On the Boy's Golf Team, Jonas Smith was MVP and received the Platinum Pirate Award; Reno Hallmeyer was Most Improved; and Nathaniel Landwher got the Coach's Award.

On the JVs, Reid Heffner was MVP and Kaleb Bates was Most Improved.

For the Baseball Team, Tanner gray was MVP; Evan Davis was Most Improved; Ben Erkenbrecher got the Coach's Award; and Quentin Crofts got the Platinum Pirate Award.

On the JV Team, Benjamin Walker was MVP; Carson Gailey was Most Improved; and Jakobi Orozco got a Coach's Award.

On the Boys Volleyball Team, Asa Selverton was MVP; Keoki Romero was Most Improved; Luke Konjoyan got the Coach's Award; and Stuart Colletti was named Platinum Pirate.

The JV Volleyball Team named Eduardo Medina Ohna MVP; Jordan De La Rosa Salgado Most Improved; and Logan Spaulding got the Coach's Award.

And on the Track & Field Team Boys co-MVPs were Abe Gade and Colton Janovec; with Wendt Wilson and Shelby Taylor co-MVPs for the Girls Team.

Most Improved were Dexter Parks for the boys, and Maiya Massie for the girls. Coach's Awards went to Oliver Rodgers and Dylan Wynns for the boys and Ariana Kong and Phaedra Fernflores for the girls. And Platinum Pirate Awards went to Liam Burton and Lilah Green.

The Stunt/Cheer Team named Loraine Chaney MVP; Cambria Shorey Most Improved; Tobias Rojas got the Coach's Award; and Platinum Pirate went to Georgia Hughes.

And in Girls Softball, Reese Kelly was MVP; Krystal Patricio was Most Improved; the Coach's Award went to Julia Brown; and Platinum Pirate went to Vena Fryer.

It should be noted that MBHS did not have JV teams in Track & Field, Stunt/Cheer or Softball.

EBN congratulates all the athletes on a good year in sports. Whether you won a championship or not, you worked hard, did your best and you'll get 'em next year.

Account Set Up for Local Following Brain Surgery



Lara (right) seen here with her good friend Jodi Hollier from the Morro Bay Chamber. Photo by Dean Sullivan

A GoFundMe.com account has been set up for Lara Rapcinski, the owner of Harbor Floral in Morro Bay who recently underwent brain surgery.

Lara will have to close her shop while she recovers, which means a loss of income at a critical time.

"If you've ever walked past her little shop, you've probably noticed the blooms that seem to brighten the whole street," fund organizers said. "That's Lara — always sharing beauty, kindness, and care. Lara has always shown up for

others. She's brought flowers to the retirement home, volunteered in community fundraisers, and donated her time — and petals — to charity events. Now it's our turn to show up for her."

Contributions will help cover essential living expenses while the shop is closed, medical and recovery-related costs not covered by insurance and keeping the shop afloat until Lara is strong enough to return.

To make a donation, go to gofundme.com/f/help-lara-through-her-recovery.

Spring Sports Name All - League Honors

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay High athletes dominated many of the athletic leagues' All-League teams, according to the awards announcement from the Central Coast Athletic Association (CCAA).

That's the association of San Luis Obispo County school districts formed a few years ago when the whole county moved from the Southern California Region of CIF to the Central Valley Region for playoff competitions.

Baseball



Morro Bay's junior pitcher, Eli Brown was named First Team All Ocean League for the Pirates. Photo by Neil Farrell

The Pirates' baseball team dominated the Ocean League season going undefeated to win the crown, but Santa Maria players took the top individual honors.

Dominic Martin, a junior, was named Most Valuable Player; and Julius Medina, also from Santa Maria High and a junior, was named Pitcher of the Year.

But Morro Bay took up a big chunk of the First Team All-League list as juniors, Quentin Crofts, Eli Brown and Colton White all made First Team.

Other First Teamers were: Jordan Medina and Mateo Pineda of Santa Maria; Logan Hobbs and Aidan Willis of Nipomo; and Jaxon Glover and Tate Minus of Santa Ynez.

Morro Bay's Cruz Wilkinson and Davis Evans, both juniors, made Second Team

All-League. And Jack Deovlet of Morro Bay made Honorable Mention All-League.

Softball

The Ocean League Girls Softball Champions were the Nipomo Titans and their coach, Robert Oliver was Coach of the Year. MVP went to Ava Camacho of Nipomo and Pitcher of the Year was London Sutton of San Luis Obispo High.

Morro Bay's team had just one player, junior Reese Kelly, named Second Team All-League. Eva Panian was named Honorable Mention.

Boys Golf

Morro Bay's Links Team topped the leaderboard for much of the Sunset League as Jonas Smith was named MVP and Stone Hawk made First Team All-League.

Swimming & Diving

In the Boys' Swimming and Diving competition, Cabrillo won the Sunset League Team title, but Morro Bay had a couple of swimmers make First Team.

Caelen Josey, a sophomore took the 1-meter dive First Team All-League honors; and junior Jude Moore won the 100 Fly and made Second Team in the 100 Backstroke. Moore was also Second in the 400 Freestyle and swam one leg of the Second Team All-League 400 Free Relay Team, as well. Moore shared that honor with teammates Aesa Vidati, Alex Roberts, and Josey.

Anders Schuerfeld, a sophomore, was Second Team All-League in the 1-meter diving.

Lucas Malloy was Honorable Mention in the 100 Fly; and the relay team of Moore, Vidati, Josey, and Roberts was Honorable Mention in the 200 Free Relay.

And, Morro Bay's 400 Free Relay Team — with Westley Riley, Brodie Rossel, Casey Anthony and Connor Maluszewicz — was Honorable Mention All-League.

Girls Swimming

Cabrillo dominated the Girls Swimming and Diving season as well, taking the Sunset League Championship. But it was Jay Bohnet of Santa Ynez and Kylie Bell of Templeton who shared co-MVP honors.

Morro Bay's Carly Muff was First Team All-League for the 500 Free. Muff also swam a leg on the First Team All-League 400 Free Relay Team along with Ava Beckett, Taylen Robson, and Tessa Standridge. Standridge, a senior, was also Second Team in the 100 Breaststroke.

Carla Peterson, a senior, was Second Team All-League in 1-meter diving.

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Sports

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On the girls side, the Pirates dominated the Honorable Mention Honors as Jayda Adams in the 1-meter diving; and 200 Medley Relay Team of Kirra Doherty, Standridge, Amara Sarrouf-Lev and Beckett teamed up to take those honors. Hazel Hubbard, a sophomore, was Honorable Mention in the 200 Free. Beckett added Honorable Mention in the 50 Free, as did Robson in the 100 Free.

Track & Field

Morro Bay's Track & Field Boys Team had just one athlete make First Team All-League — Liam Burton in the Pole Vault, as Lompoc won the Team Championship. Track MVP was Damien Adams of Lompoc with Jude Anderson of Cabrillo the Field Events MVP.

Second Team All-League went to senior, Oliver Rodgers of Morro Bay in the 100 meters. Burton got Second in the High Jump and sophomore Lucas McAlpine was Second Team in Pole vault.

Morro Bay's Abe Gade, a sophomore, was Honorable Mention in the 1600m, and John Myers was Honorable Mention in the 110 Hurdles. Junior, Quinn Heidt, was Honorable Mention in Pole Vault for Morro Bay.

For the girls, Santa Maria was Sunset League Champions. Morro Bay's Lilah Green and Santa Maria's Maria Navarro were co-MVPs for Track Events and Field Events MVP went to Lompoc's Mia Jansen.

Senior Wendy Wilson was First Team All-

League in the 800m; Phaedra Fernflores took the 1600m; Shelby Taylor won the 3200m; and Green won the 100m Hurdles. Wilson, Green and Taylor would go on to medal at CIF Sectionals and the Master's Meet. The three also qualified for the State Meet but didn't get past the Prelims.

Green also was First Team in the Long Jump and Second Team in the 100m. Taylor was Second Team in the 800m and Fernflores got Second in the 3200m.

Morro Bay's Parker Brigham was Second Team All-League in the High Jump; and Maiya Massie was Second in Pole Vault.

Honorable Mention All-League went to the Pirates' 4x400m Relay Team (names were not available).

Boys Volleyball

Righetti High won the team Championship in Boys Volleyball, with co-MVPs Alex Cortez and Isaiah Hin. Coach of the Year was Righetti's Chasity Lavata'l.

Morro Bay didn't land anyone on the First Team All-League, which has only seven spots, but senior, Luke Konjoyan was named Second Team All-League.

Making Honorable Mention All-League for Morro Bay were Asa and Aesa Selverston.

EBN congratulates all the All-League athletes in all the sports. We salute your dedication and determination and celebrate your success this year and into the future.

Four Compete, Three Place at Master's Track Meet



Four Morro Bay High Track & Field Athletes advanced to the CIF Central Section Master's Meet, from left: Lilah Green, Wendy Wilson, Shelby Taylor and Liam Burton. Green, Wilson and Taylor each medaled at the competition and advanced to the State Meet but did not get past the Prelims. Photo courtesy MBHS

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay High sent a handful of Track & Field athletes deep into the CIF Playoffs and on to the State Meet but came up short of competing in the State Finals.

Coach Jennifer Frere said they had four athletes — three girls and one boy — make it to the Central Section Master's Meet where the top scorers from each Divisional Meet compete for berths at the State Meet.

Pole vaulter, Liam Burton qualified for Master's but Coach Frere said he failed to get a mark and didn't go further.

Hurdler Lilah Green placed third in the 100-meter hurdles, setting a school record of 14.89 seconds in the process.

Distance star, Shelby Taylor, was third in both the 1600m and 3200m setting school records in both events, the coach said. Taylor's 1600m time was 4-minutes 55.74 seconds and in the 3200m she ran 10:44.24.

Taylor capped off a great year having previously placed fifth at the State Cross Country Meet last November.

Wendy Wilson placed third in the 800m

setting a new school record of 2:12.85. That meant that all three girls advanced to the State Meet where their seasons ended in the prelims.

"Lilah, Shelby, and Wendy all qualified for the CIF State Meet," Coach Frere said. "They competed on Friday at Prelims but did not advance to finals."

Baseball

In baseball, the Pirates, who went undefeated in the Ocean League and finished the regular season 23-5, posted arguably the best baseball season in school history.

After a CIF first round, extra-innings win over Garza H.S., the Pirates beat up on Mission Oak, 10-3 in the second round of Div. III.

In the third round, the Pirates blanked Hoover High 7-0, to advance to the Section Finals against Fowler.

The Pirates lost to Fowler, 10-1 to take Second Place in CIF, and qualified to play on in the State Tournament.

In Round 1 at State, the Pirates were shut out by Carmel, 9-0 to end their season with a very respectable 26-7 record.

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Angels Take Home Big Win

Congratulations to the CAAA-Angels for winning the Coast Little League AAA Championship!

The AAA-Angels won a hard-fought seesaw battle against the AAA-Cubs on May 31 at Monarch Elementary Baseball field, eventually coming out on top 13-11.

Behind Hank Hibbard, Jay Lechtenberg and Madden Smith on the mound, the AAA-Angels' defense was tested but was able to record two double plays and a pick off on 3rd base behind catcher Ozzie Wollett's cannon. Hank Hibbard also recorded 7 RBIs in the game, including a 3-run Home Run. In the 5th inning, Dylan Bingham scorched a 2-run double to produce the game winning RBI.

"This was an all-out team effort, with excellent base-running, defensive backups and relays, great discipline at the plate with many walks and runs produced," said Assistant Coach Joel Pace. "We couldn't have excelled without the coachability, camaraderie and brotherhood of all the players."

Head Coach Braden Lloyd, and assistant coaches Dave Smith and Pace thank the awesome parents and the "Dirtbag Dad Crew" for all the support and amazing fandom all season long, contributing to a 12-1 overall record.

"Coast Little League experienced tremendous adversity this year and we want to recognize the dedication of its leadership and thank the members of the board for a fun and successful season," Pace said.

Coast Little League is located in Los Osos and operates several divisions of various age groups for participants from Los Osos, Morro Bay, and Cayucos. Readers who want to be a future sponsor, should go to <https://www.coastll.com>.



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Join us for the Official ECR Project Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at 5 PM at The Plaza (Across from Sunken Gardens)

- Check out the ECR Project's newly completed streetscape, added parking & improved safety features
- Meet Local Businesses
- Shop & Dine Downtown
- Enjoy Great Music, Live Performances & Party in the Street

EVENT INFO: [Visitatascadero.com/events](https://visitatascadero.com/events)

JUNE 27TH 2025

5-9 PM

@foundintown #ECRProject

Join members of Atascadero's City Council , city staff, government partners, and downtown businesses at the official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the El Camino Real Downtown Safety and Parking Enhancement Project (ECR Project) on Friday, June 27 at 5 p.m.

The kickoff location starts at The Plaza on El Camino Real, across from Sunken Gardens, with an official ribbon cutting, followed by a Downtown Block Party for the entire community. The Offices of Senator Laird, Congressman Panetta, and the SLO Council of Governments, who all helped make this project possible through grants and advocacy will also be in attendance.

Following the official toast and ribbon cutting, join downtown businesses for an exciting block party packed with fun and entertainment. Enjoy a Disco Ball Scavenger Hunt, local dance performances by 805 Movement and Performance Arts, music from Traffic Records DJ's, live radio broadcast from KJUG, exclusive interviews with What's Up North County, extended hours at shops and restaurants, plus more surprises in store.

This exciting event offers a chance to connect with area business owners as you shop, dine, dance, and take part in an evening full of festivities!

"This event marks a historic milestone for our enhanced Downtown," said Atascadero Mayor Charles Bourbeau in a news release. "Increased safety, over 100 additional free parking spaces, improved infrastructure, and a fresh new look and energy that matches the momentum we're experiencing in Atascadero. We hope our entire community AND our neighbors will join us in celebrating and patronizing our businesses and community!"

This project enhances a 0.6 mile stretch of the downtown corridor to strengthen public safety, boost economic vitality, expand parking, and create a more beautiful, welcoming downtown. Years in the making, and shaped by input from residents, businesses, and key stakeholders, this community-driven project is a true celebration of collaboration, vision, and progress.

To find out more about the details of the construction project, visit atascadero.org/ECRproject, or to learn more about the Block Party, visit atascadero.com/events

Morro Bay Group Raises Funds for Fire Victims



The Morro Bay Active Adults...55+ group sponsored a fund-raising event to help the Altadena Senior Center which burned down during the January fires.

The June 8 event, "Greenwich Village Coffeehouse Night," took place at the Morro Bay Community Center. Organizers said that the evening was initially intended to attract a small crowd to the musical event, but the word soon "spread about this great fundraising opportunity and the ticket sells exploded."

More than 100 attendees turned out to enjoy the show and to purchase art, jewelry and silent auction items that were all donated. Local Ray Riordan gathered a group of fellow musicians who performed songs from the 60s in Greenwich Village including tunes written by the likes of Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, John Denver, Peter, Paul and Mary and many other famous songwriters.

Morro Bay Active Adults...55+ offered to match all funds up \$2500 for the cause, and along with their generosity, the monetary donations from individuals, help from Recreation services, Rudie's Coffee, Rich Rolson sound, and healthy spending the night of the event, nearly \$7000 was raised to help the Altadena



seniors rebuild their programs.

Donations are still coming in and will be accepted until June 20. For more information about the Morro Bay Active Adults...55+, go to morrobayseniors.org.

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Rendering shows the design of the Cayucos Vet's Hall looking back from the Pier.

emony marking the beginning of construction in December 2022. According to a published job schedule, it was originally slated to be done in 2024. That date was pushed back a few times and construction was last slated to be completed sometime in May. Estero Bay News asked Dist. 2 Chief of Staff, Blake Fixler, who works for Supervisor Bruce Gibson, if he had a better idea when this all might happen? “July 4,” Fixler told EBN, “was the collective goal for a soft opening but it doesn’t look like we are going to be able to accomplish that. Public Works is wrapping things up with the contractor, JG Construction, namely getting final approvals and addressing any concerns from the Fire Marshall. “At that point we’d get a Certificate of Occupancy and turn the building over to County Parks to get things set up for their management of the building as an events space. “Things like getting chairs and tables, stuff hung up on the walls, etc., that was estimated as taking about a month to get the space ready for use. “In short, we don’t have a date certain from PW but it is getting very near the conclusion of the construction phase. Once that occurs, we will begin announcements of a soft opening or grand opening event.” It’s been a long haul by the community and the County to get to this point. The Vet’s Hall is owned by the State Parks Department and has been leased to SLO County since the 1950s. The Cayucos Lions Club had a contract with the County to manage the Hall for decades, and the environment has played hell on the circa-1870s

building, which was originally the Cass Warehouse, and the hub of the shipping and import operations of Cayucos founder, Capt. James Cass. A routine inspection of the Hall in 2015 uncovered extensive rotting of the floor and sagging beneath the Hall’s stage and the huge, peaked roof was no longer properly connected to the walls. The fear was that if a big enough wind were to blow through, it might blow the roof off the building. In 2016, the Vet’s Hall was closed to the public and later condemned by the Office of the State Architect. The historic hall’s future was never in doubt as the community and the County decided right away it should be saved. However, its status as a historical landmark meant taking special measures when rebuilding it, and while Capt. Cass would most likely have torn it down and built back better and bigger, the County was forced by State Law to stay true to the historic nature of the structure. That added a lot to the cost as well. Money soon became a huge issue. County Parks & Recreation Director Tammy Richardson said at that November town hall, that their initial project was estimated at \$5.4 million and they soon got a \$1.9 million grant. But that left the County \$3.5 million short according to the engineer’s estimate. When the bids came in, that \$3.5M shortfall was reduced to wishful thinking. The bids came back much higher, Richardson explained, at over \$11 million. The County went hunting for more grants, and a citizen’s committee was also formed to help raise money. “We had a funding gap of \$3.5 million,” Richardson said. The County eventually turned to bond financing in Fall 2022 to bridge the gap. The Vet’s Hall along with a co-dispatch center nearing completion now in Templeton, and a future Probation Department headquarters slated to be built on Johnson Avenue in SLO, were the three big projects the County is funding with general obligation bonds. That means the debt would be repaid out of the General Fund and doesn’t have a dedicated tax attached to it. Richardson said the Vet’s Hall’s share of the debt — including the annual estimated operating costs — will be about \$254,000



Historic photo shows the old Cass Warehouse back when it was a hub for shipping and imports. Photo: Dean Sullivan Collection

per year for 25 years. County Parks, she explained, is responsible for repaying this debt. The decision was made to have the department handle booking and maintenance of the Vet’s Hall, which used to be handled by the Lions Club. County Parks, she said, will operate the Vet’s Hall at 100-percent cost recovery. The fee schedule is also not yet available to the public and won’t be until they have a definitive reopening date. It’s expected to be much higher than the old rates. “They will be higher rates,” Richardson said, “for much improved facilities.” She believes when it’s finally available, the Cayucos Vet’s Hall will rival any of the privately owned event centers in SLO County. The Cayucos Art Association, which lost its gallery space when the Vet’s Hall closed in 2016, is expected to have another gallery space in the corner of the new Hall. The new hall will also have several smaller meeting rooms, allowing a group that just needs a little space to not have to rent the entire facility. There will also be an hourly rental fee available. One sad point, however, is the Hall will no longer have a built-in, elevated stage for concerts and other performances. The picnic area out back looks to be much larger than the old area, and they’ve rebuilt the big barbecue pits. Also, the new Hall has a wrap-around elevated walkway that overlooks Cayucos Beach; and the Pier Plaza, which still has Dale Evers’ dolphin statue, is also much different.



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Waterfront PlanFrom page 1

Plan Update. The balance of the contract amount [\$339,275] would be budgeted in FY 26-27.” Singewald added that they held back 5% of Placeworks’ contract — some \$35,000 — “for unanticipated expenditures. This amount could be used to pay for temporary staff [e.g., an intern] or additional consultant support during the planning process.” The Plan Morro Bay update of the General Plan, which includes the Local Coastal Program document, calls for the City to finally update the Waterfront Master Plan (WMP), which hasn’t been overhauled since 1996, some 29-years ago. Such plans are supposed to be updated every five years. The new WMP will have to reflect the State’s new priorities, like including a “sea level rise adaptation plan.” That’s why the Coastal Commission generously awarded the City the \$750,000 grant. The old WMP had boundaries that encompassed what most Morro Bay residents would consider the waterfront — the stretch of developed business district along the Embarcadero corridor on both sides of the road and extending out Coleman Drive to Morro Rock. The City Council previously told the staff it wanted to include planning for the Morro Dunes RV Park property, which the City owns and leases out, the old sewer treatment plant, and an old concrete batch plant both on Atascadero Road. The City owns the concrete plant property and co-owns the old sewer plant with the Cayucos Sanitary District. The final disposition of the old treatment plant is the last big issue remaining for the former partners — the City of Morro Bay and CSD — to resolve before their decades-long relationship completely dissolves. Negotiations between the two parties have been ongoing for

some time but are being held close to the cuff. The City recently had an appraisal done of the treatment plant property but declined to release the report when Estero Bay News requested it under the California Public Records Act. The WMP update will also include the old Power Plant property, some 117 acres owned by Vistra Energy of Texas. Vistra had been pursuing a Battery Energy Storage System or BESS project for about 22-acres of the property, but recently formally withdrew its application with the City. The company’s stated intent was to seek permits through the California Energy Commission under a special provision of the law, but no announcement of the company making application has been made so far. Whatever the WMP decides for the power plant property, RV park and industrial sites on Atascadero Road, they will have to be done in compliance with Meas. A-24, which voters approved last November. That measure locked in the existing zoning (from Plan Morro Bay’s Zoning Ordinance) on the entirety of the waterfront from Beach Street to Morro Rock and out the dirt portion of Embarcadero and around Atascadero Road. A-24 calls for the City to get approval from voters should any future development project wish to change the zoning, which Vistra’s BESS project needed to do. Placeworks was one of 10 bidders for the contract, Singewald’s report said. They disqualified one of the bids, because “the City did not receive a hard copy by the [March 21] deadline.” The City put together a committee to sift through the bids and make a recommendation to the City Council. Committee members included three people off City advisory boards — Stephen Peck, Mary Witkowski, and Cherise Hansson; Public Works Director Greg Kwolek; Harbor Director Chris Munson; City Planner Susana

Waterfront Plan Continued on page 19



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The Cuesta Inlet is a favored place among Los Osos residents and beyond for passive activities and launching watercraft.

SCI is asking folks to host neighborhood fundraisers such as coffee, or wine and cheese gatherings with their friends. A representative from SCI would attend to answer questions, talk about the Inlet, and accept donations.

In addition to a GoFundMe account, gofundme.com/f/savecuestainlet, they have PayPal and Venmo options and donations can be made at savecuestainlet.org/donate. Due to related fees with e-commerce sites, the group says a check is the best way to ensure donations go the furthest. They are also working on a campaign to appeal to people who must make the required minimum

distributions from their retirement accounts. Schmidt says the Inlet goes beyond a beautiful body of water and desirable property for Los Osos residents.

“Despite our proximity to Montana de Oro and other open spaces, many of which require a car to reach, Los Osos is under-parked. Cuesta inlet is within walking or biking distance to most of Los Osos, is suitable for small watercraft launching, and provides easily accessible paths for dog walking, birding, picnicking, and other passive activities. The Inlet is home to diverse plants and animals; it is part of a wildlife corridor that connects

Montano de Oro and the estuary.”

The non-profit met with city and county leaders concerning the long-term management of the Inlet and determined the best way to achieve the community’s vision is to keep the management and ownership in local control. With that in mind, SCI is working with the Los Osos Community Services District (CSD) and evaluating SCI’s evolution into The Friends of Cuesta Inlet as a foundation for the management and ownership of the Inlet.

“Our goal has always been to secure the Inlet for the people,” Schmidt said. “This goal has led the board to investigate keeping ownership of the Inlet with the community. This type of ownership is not unprecedented in our community. Sweet Springs Preserve and the Elfin Forest are both locally owned and managed. The idea of local control and stewardship is very appealing; it will require a dedicated group of volunteers and ongoing community support.”

As of press time, the [gofundme](https://gofundme.com/f/savecuestainlet) page had raised \$279,866. There are donor levels that come with plaques, community recognition and more listed on the site as well. Checks made out to Save Cuesta Inlet can be mailed to Save Cuesta Inlet Inc, PO box 6976, Los Osos, CA 92412.

The Inlet was originally owned by a group of five people, however one person passed away. All owners must agree to move forward.



Fundraising is underway. Donate to Save Cuesta Inlet at savecuestainlet.org/donate or at gofundme.com/f/savecuestainlet. Photo by Marcel Stieber

Waterfront Plan From page 18

Toner; and Community Development Director Singewald.

It was apparently an involved selection process. “The selection committee,” Singewald’s report said, “reviewed, rated, and ranked nine proposals, and interviewed the top four consultant teams. The interviews narrowed the field to three consultants. After the first round of interviews, the City Planner and Community Development Director held meet and greet interviews with the project managers from the top three firms and started negotiations with Placeworks, Inc.”

Selecting Placeworks doesn’t seem a stretch, after all, they also wrote other Morro Bay planning documents.

Placeworks, Inc., has “significant local experience,” the report explained, “as their team prepared Plan Morro Bay, including the existing sea level rise analysis, and the City’s 2017 Downtown Waterfront Strategic Plan.”

They even proposed the same person who did Plan Morro Bay to work on this newest update.

“Placeworks’ project manager, Amy Sinsheimer,” Singewald’s report said, “has over 20-years of local planning experience. As the former project manager on Plan Morro Bay, Amy Sinsheimer worked closely with the General Plan Advisory Committee [GPAC], the model for the WMPAC.”

The advisory committee has already held its first meeting, according to Singewald’s report. On June 5, the committee was to meet to get an introduction to the old plan and go over Placeworks’ scope of work under the contract.

Under that scope of work, the City has work schedule laid out that starts with the June 10 approval of the contract by the City Council. The contract anticipates 18 meetings with the advisory committee and the first sub-report — SLR Analysis, and Market Study— due in November.

A draft WMP update is due in June 2026 with City Council slated to get the draft in October-November 2026. Once the City is done with the document it must go to the Coastal Commission, which will no doubt make whatever changes they see fit, for ultimate approval.

Along this path, the City is expecting to hold at least five public workshops on various aspects of the WMP, discussing key points like background, visioning, evaluation of different land uses and circulation of traffic, and during the review period after the draft document is released.

As for the environmental reviews, Singewald’s report said Placeworks will just have to “document that the WMP Update is consistent with the environmental analysis and conclusions of the EIR for Plan Morro Bay.

Housing Contract From page 14

According to the report, over the first three quarters of FY 2024-25, the goal was to house 65 chronically homeless people, and the program housed 100.

Half of those newly housed people had to say their self-sufficiency had improved and 100% said it had.

The goal was to reduce the time these folks spent sitting in jail by 50% after a year, and the report said those who reached their 1-year mark “had a total of 65 days in jail prior to housing and zero days in jail post-housing, equaling a 100% reduction in incarceration days.”

Those who had a history of citations and arrests when they were homeless the goal was to reduce citations and arrests by 50% and through the program, there was a 100% reduction in citations and arrests.

The program also wiped-out hospital visits and stays among the clients; and none had to go into a psychiatric health facility once they had a roof over their heads.

As for longevity, the goal was to have 60% of new clients remain in housing for at least 6 months, and they reached 73%. Some 79% stayed in housing for 2 years, which beat the goal of 60%.

The program sought to track the time it took to find housing for these folks and the time from referral to placement “ranged from six to 43 days with an average of 17 days.”

What’s happened to the folks who left this subsidized housing situation? It’s been mostly positive outcomes. Weir said, “75% exited to positive destinations, 2% passed away and 22% to other destinations.”

As for the vouchers, the contract required TMHA to track the status of Section 8 housing vouchers used by these clients. At the end of the third quarter, 69 vouchers were in use housing 75 persons, the report said.

Weir told Estero Bay News that the housing types range from studios and 1-bedroom apartments to multi-bedroom houses with several clients sharing the home like roommates.

They lost a handful of the vouchers. “Five units are not in use,” Weir’s report said, “due to a fire towards the end of the third quarter.”

In sum, of the 17 different metrics the County set up to track the success of this program, TMHA’s efforts met or exceeded all of them.

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4PM & 7PM
SUNDAYS AT
1PM & 4PM

6/27 - 7/10
FI
2 HR 36 MIN
(PG13)
3:30PM & 7PM
SUNDAYS AT
12:30 PM & 4PM
CLOSED 4TH
OF JULY

MONDAY SPECIALS

6/23
PRIDE
(2014)
2 HRS (R)
5:30PM
PRESENTED BY
BABYDUDES
W/FOOD PAIRING

6/21
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WATER'S
EDGE
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