

Closed Schools Purchase Still Alive



Efforts continue in Los Osos to purchase Sunnyside School from the School District for use by the community. Photo by Neil Farrell

By Neil Farrell

Efforts continue to try and preserve two long-closed schools in Los Osos and Morro bay but time is becoming of the essence as the school district's deadlines for commitment near.

In Los Osos, efforts are underway led by the Community Services District to purchase Sunnyside School and in Morro Bay the City is leading efforts to potentially obtain Morro Elementary School.

Both were closed in the early 2000s due to declining enrollment. And in Los Osos, after Monarch Grove was built in the later 1990s, the need for three elementary schools in town waned.

Morro Elementary

Opened around 1932, Morro Elementary School served several generations of Morro Bay kids and had a long, rich history in the community. Beloved by native sons and daughters, the school features a Spanish style architecture and huge grassy play area that the community still uses today, even though the San Luis Coastal unified School District hasn't used it for decades.

For many years, several entities including churches and a charter school rented the buildings, in an arrangement that brought some revenue to the school district.

But this past spring, faced with a looming budget deficit due to lost tax revenues from Diablo Canyon Power Plant, the District sought to sell off the two schools. The District also identified

millions in upgrades needed to keep Morro Elementary safe and viable to rent out.

The District's Assistant Superintendent for Business Services, Ryan Pinkerton, said, "We are down to a charter school, Family Partnership. We knew the process could take some time, so we granted them the opportunity to stay while they look for a new home. This will be their last year on site."

A few months ago, while the School Board grappled with bridging a multi-million dollar deficit, Trustees decided to let the unneeded and surplus properties go, and sent out letters to local governments to see if anyone was interested in them.

This is in accordance with State Law, which seeks to keep such publicly owned sites in the public domain, and used by the community.

The City of Morro Bay sent a preliminary letter to the District expressing a potential interest, mainly at the behest of a group of residents who wanted the historic property saved for community uses.

The District, shortly after closing the school and transferring all of its students to the newer, Del Mar Elementary, had asked the City if it was interested in acquiring the property.

A committee was formed to look into it, and besides a potential site for a new City Hall, could not find a need for the site.

Then the District pitched an idea to build workforce housing on the site that would be rented out to its employees in an at-

Local Artist, Author and Historian Dies at 99



Joan Sullivan
1925 - 2025

Joan Sullivan, an integral part of this community since 1970, passed away on August 4, 2025, bringing to a close a life and era that touched many.

Joan was born in 1925 in Jersey City, NJ, where she lived with her brother, Jack, Swedish mother, Esther, and illustrator father, John George Betts. In 1938 her parents separated, leaving her mother Esther to pack up the family belongings and move with her children to Miami, FL. Starting over again, alone with two children was a daunting task for a single mother at that time, but her independence of spirit proved to be a strong inspiration for both her children, and Miami was a beautiful place in which to grow up. In addition to school, both children were encouraged to pursue extra-curricular creative interests like singing, dancing, piano and, for 17-year-old Joan, flying lessons.

Joan took after her father, exhibiting artistic talent early. She got her first job at 16 hand coloring sepia photographs, which she did off and on until color photography replaced the need for hand tinting. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in fine arts from the University of Miami in 1948. A year later she married writer Mendal Johnson.

In 1951, only months after the birth of their first daughter, the young couple moved to Grand Cayman Island where they wrote, painted and, like the islanders, lived without electricity or running water until their money ran out. In 1952, after moving back to Miami, Joan's husband left her before the birth of their second daughter in December. She went back to work tinting

Joan Sullivan Continued on page 17

EPA Gives Vistra OK to Cleanup Moss Landing Fire Mess

By Neil Farrell

It's been nearly eight months since a spectacular fire broke out at a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) plant in Moss Landing, and just last week the federal government gave the green light to plant owner Vistra, to begin removing the burned out and toxic batteries.

"The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency," reads a July 23 news release from EPA, "has reached a formal agreement with Vistra Corp. to safely remove and dispose of the batteries affected by the January 2025 fire at Moss Landing. This agreement clearly defines Vistra's responsibilities and outlines the EPA's expectations for the battery removal process, which will be conducted under strict U.S. EPA oversight."

Unlike the fire that burned out of control for a couple of days leaving firefighters in containment mode, the cleanup will be closely monitored.

"As part of the agreement," reads the news release from EPA's Mikayla Rumph,



Image shows the 300 megawatt BESS before it burned last January. The EPA has just given Vistra the OK to start removing the destroyed batteries.



Google Earth image shows the burned-out portion of the Moss Landing BESS that caught fire last January. In the foreground are rows of battery assemblies of Vistra's second battery plant that was untouched by the blaze.

Moss Landing Fire Continued on page 18

Closed School Continued on page 16

Pay What You Can Farm Stand Opens

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Locally grown organic produce can be a part of a meal plan whether your budget falls a little short or you have the means to give a little more, thanks to a new program in SLO County.

In June of this year, the nonprofit City Farm SLO (CFS) opened their Summer Farm Stand, an opportunity to buy fresh produce while supporting the farm and its tenant farmers. Two months later, the stand now offers the same organic appeal but with a financial twist. The stand follows the increasingly popular "pay what you can" model offering up to \$30 off produce to those

Farm Stand Opens Continued on page 15

Supervisors Accept DHS Equipment Grant

By Neil Farrell

County Supervisors unanimously approved acceptance of a Federal Department of Homeland Security Grant that will be split between the Sheriff's, County Fire and the Clerk-Recorder's Offices despite being bombarded with complaints from misinformed citizens who thought the money was to assist in immigration enforcement.

More than 20 people spoke up at the Aug. 5 meeting to decry accepting the \$316,000 grant they assumed would be used to assist ICE Agents and the U.S. Border Patrol with their nationwide deportation efforts of undocumented immigrants. But reassurance

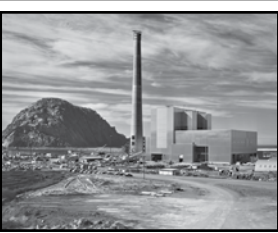
DHS Equipment Continued on page 19



**Art and
History
Page 6**



**Power Plant
History
Page 7**



**Police
Blotter
Page 8**



New Lease for Let's Get Tuned



By Neil Farrell

A popular yoga and sound bath business renting City-owned space can continue to serve the public for at least another two years while the City Council decides what to do with the property.

The Council recently approved a two-year lease extension for “Let’s Get Tuned,” at 781 Market Ave., increasing the monthly rent by a significant amount.

Community Development Director Airlin Singewald’s report said, “With approval of the lease extension, the City would receive \$5,528 a month in rent resulting in a total rent payment for the first year of the lease of \$66,336. This is an increase of \$3,744 per year compared to the previous rent amount of \$5,216 per month.”

At over \$66,000 a year, it would make the City’s take comparable to most of the leases on The Embarcadero. The cost would also increase by the rate of inflation in the second year.

Let’s Get Tuned leased the property starting in August 2023, but it had been slated to expire this month. However, the owners Natalie Teichmann and Jon Nowaczyczk, notified the City last fall that they wanted to stay.

This new lease is now slated to expire in August 2027.

It’s a chance for the City to continue to get some money back from a property it first purchased about 25 years ago, and had sold once to the late-George Salwassar, who along with Ken McMillan of DiStasio’s Italian Restaurant, conducted an extensive remodeling of the upstairs portion of the two-story building that hugs the bluff overlooking the waterfront.

McMillan opened the upstairs restaurant and Salwassar had built a plush wine tasting room adjacent to the restaurant. The two operated for a few years until Salwassar suffered a family tragedy that ultimately resulted in one of the largest bankruptcies in California history.

Though the majority of his holdings were in the Central Valley and the agricultural industry, he also owned numerous properties in Morro Bay including the former Flippo’s and adjacent RV Parks, the property at 781 Market and numerous homes and vacation rentals across the city.

He died owing the City for the Market Avenue property and when McMillan sought to buy the Market Avenue property in the bankruptcy, the City stepped in and reclaimed the property.

McMillan chose to purchase an uptown property at Morro Bay Boulevard and Shasta and move DiStasio’s there, where it remains in business.

The City had a study done to figure out a future use for the Market Avenue property, now renamed Market Plaza, including a large parking lot on the Embarcadero (714 Embarcadero) and a smaller lot at Pacific and Market.

What emerged was a grand scheme to build a parking garage and retail center on the ground level with a motel on top spanning the bluff. It also included a remodeled Centennial Parkway and turning the street end next to Rose’s Landing into a pocket park.

The City has attempted to find a buyer for over a dozen years that was willing to take up that design and transform the area.

There have been interested people but no sale. It seems now they want to put all that on hold.

“In the past,” Singewald said, “the City has considered various proposals to develop a full-service hotel, parking structure, and conference rooms at Market Plaza, which includes the subject property.

“Most recently, the Council decided to postpone further solicitation of such proposals until after adoption of the Waterfront Master Plan currently scheduled for completion in November 2026.”

Having someone occupy the building, which began as the Original Breakers Restaurant (now Dorn’s), will prevent it from sitting vacant for years, as was the case when the former Bran-

nigan’s Reef closed in 1995 and except for a brief stint as another restaurant, remained empty until Distasio’s opened.

Ciano Realty and the Morro Bay Skateboard Museum also occupied the building for short durations in the interim.

“Having tenants occupy the 781 Market building,” Singewald said, “while the City defines a future vision for the property through the Waterfront Master Plan Update will serve to generate income for the City while also ensuring the property is maintained and not left to deteriorate while the City plans for future redevelopment opportunities.”

Whether that future includes a grand hotel and parking garage is debatable, as when the City first pitched the idea to the public it was met with opposition due mainly to the scale.

Some, including then-Councilman the late-George Leage, thought it was too big. Leage owned The Outrigger Restaurant at the time, which is close to the property on the Embarcadero and so had to step down from the dais for the item.

The property also has a major flaw — the lower story that once housed a popular bar and nightclub as part of Brannigan’s Reef (ironically also co-owned by Leage), is inaccessible to handicapped folks under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act that limits the building’s usability.

“The building has two floors,” Singewald said, “but given the lower floor is inaccessible from an Americans with Disabilities Act standpoint (no elevator or ramp), staff does not propose to lease the lower floor.”

Part of Salwassar’s purchase deal from the City included a provision to install an elevator or possibly a funicular (people mover) giving ADA access from the waterfront up the Centennial Staircase to Market and Downtown. But he never got the chance to do it.

Ironically, McMillan’s plans for the building, had the City not stopped the sale in bankruptcy, also included installing an outdoor elevator to reopen the bottom floor bar.

County to Apply for Homelessness Grants

By Neil Farrell

County Supervisors have COK'd seeking a big grant from the State for one of its homeless assistance programs.

George Solis, the administrative services manager at the Department of Social Services asked for permission to apply for a \$2.77 million grant from the “Homeless Housing, Assistance and Prevention Program,” (HHAP) a \$1 billion grant program under The California Department of Housing and Community Development or HCD.

The money was authorized by Assembly Bill 166 that Gov. Newsom signed into law in July 2024.

Solis said the State recently notified the County that it was making some \$760 million available from AB 166 monies. This is the sixth round of grants coming from the State HCD in its efforts to combat homelessness. The grant, if awarded, would be split two ways.

“Under HHAP-6,” Solis said, “the County of San Luis Obispo is eligible to receive \$1,340,780.92 and the San Luis Obispo County Continuum of Care is eligible to receive \$1,431,977.08 for a combined allocation of \$2,772,758.”

The County was designated to be the lead agency at the start of the HHAP program in 2021. There is of course a catch.

Under applicable laws, “eligible applicants must apply as part of a region and be a signatory to a Regionally Coordinated Homelessness Action Plan to be approved by HCD. For purposes of HHAP-6, the term ‘region’ refers to the geographic area served by a county, including all cities and the CoC or CoCs within it.”

The program has lofty goals. “The intent of HHAP 6,” Solis explained, “is to reflect the State’s priorities to prevent and expeditiously reduce unsheltered homelessness through homelessness prevention activities and sustain existing interim housing solutions and permanent housing solutions, including long-term sustainability of permanent affordable housing. To accomplish these goals, HHAP 6 requires applicants to create and implement Regionally Coordinated Homelessness Action Plans.”

The HHAP program has eight specific requirements, some of which sound more like food for bureaucracy than putting roofs over people’s heads. They are:

- Foster robust regional collaboration and strategic partnerships aimed at fortifying the homeless services and housing delivery system. This should be achieved through the formulation of



data-driven and cross-system plans designed to allocate resources in alignment with the State’s priorities for housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness. This means implementing strategies that create and sustain regional partnerships and emphasize Permanent Housing Solutions.

- Ensure all cities and counties in the region are addressing existing unsheltered homelessness, including encampments, and preventing future homelessness by planning for future housing needs and following all state housing laws and the California Interagency Council on Homelessness (Cal ICH) Guidance on Addressing Encampments.
- Ensure the long-term sustainability of housing and supportive services by strategically pairing HHAP 6 funds with other local, state, and federal resources to effectively reduce and ultimately end homelessness
- Demonstrate sufficient resources dedicated to interim housing and long-term permanent housing solutions, including capital and operating costs.
- Demonstrate a commitment to address racial disproportionality in homeless populations and achieve equitable provision of services and outcomes for Black, Native and Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islanders and other People of Color who are disproportionately impacted by homelessness.
- Establish a mechanism for people with lived experience of homelessness to have meaningful and purposeful opportunities to inform and shape all levels of planning and implementation, including through opportunities to hire people with lived experience.
- Fund projects that provide housing and services that are Housing First compliant [under specific State Laws] and delivered in a low barrier, trauma informed, and culturally responsive manner. Individuals and families assisted with these funds must not be required to receive treatment or perform any other prerequisite activities as a condition for receiving interim or permanent housing, or other services for which these funds are used.
- Prioritize the use of HHAP funds to assist people to remain in or move into safe, stable, permanent housing. HHAP funding should be housing-focused — either funding permanent housing interventions directly or, if used for interim housing or street outreach, have clear pathways to connect people to permanent housing options.

An important part of this process is the writing of a so-called, “Regionally Coordinated Homelessness Action Plan,” to be compliant with the HHAP-6 program. That plan ropes together various agencies — both public and private — that work on home-



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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Bear Valley Realty

Steve Auslender, Owner

DRE #01068681

Dianne Blanchard, Broker DRE #01945483

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Los Osos, CA 93402

News

lessness and is supposed to include actual homeless folks with “lived experiences.”

The new plan is supposed to build upon the same plan developed during the previous round of funding, HHAP-5, which Supervisors approved in March 2024.

The plan must identify the partners and spell out their individual rolls and responsibilities. It also puts in place performance measures; and identifies “key actions to improve performance.”

The County gathered up all the various actors in this system soliciting homeless folks as well, and held a series of meetings mostly on Zoom, to gather additional information that they then added to a previous grand scheme the County developed to end homelessness, called “the San Luis Obispo Countywide Plan to Address Homelessness 2022-2027,” which Supervisors approved back in August 2022.

Out of the recent listening sessions, Solis said, “Attendees recommended that the HSOC prioritize funding to sustain existing programs, specifically interim shelter and supportive services, while also prioritizing funding for the development of new affordable housing units.”

They got a better idea of what works and doesn’t work. “Valuable insights were gathered,” Solis said, “from various community members and service providers. Participants highlighted the effectiveness of comprehensive case management, coordinated outreach efforts, rapid rehousing rental assistance, and landlord engagement in helping individuals transition from homelessness to stable housing.”

But, “significant barriers were identified, including a shortage of case managers, application challenges, and limited affordable housing availability. Specific populations, such as older adults and individuals with co-existing mental health and substance use disorders, were noted to require tailored housing approaches.”

The County has a plan on how it will spend the HHAP-6 grants — \$200,000 for permanent supportive housing; \$300,000 for rapid rehousing; \$182,000 for supportive services; \$1.59 million for Interim Housing Services; \$277,000 set aside for youth housing; \$27,000 for management information systems; and, \$194,000 (7%) for administrative costs.

“The funding plan,” Solis said, “emphasizes a balanced approach, addressing both immediate needs and long-term solutions.

“By investing in permanent supportive housing, rapid rehousing, and supportive services, the plan aims to reduce homelessness and improve housing stability. The inclusion of a dedicated youth set aside ensures that the unique needs of transitional age youth are met, providing them with the support necessary to achieve stable housing.”

Solis also reported on the sustainability of the “interim shelter system,” or the various homeless shelters in SLO County, and the picture is pretty bleak.

The County had to show that it had “dedicated sufficient resources to sustain the region’s existing and proposed portfolio of interim housing from FY24/25 to FY28/29. If a gap remains, the applicant must identify other sources to address it.”

Agencies here that run homeless shelter programs are 5Cities Homeless Coalition, Community Action Partnership (CAPSLO); El Camino Homeless Organization; Good Samaritan Shelter; and the Lumina Alliance, that has to estimate their budgets and available funding.

He said the estimated operating budgets total over \$36.03

million but estimated operating resources (income) are only \$27.26M, leaving a shortfall of over \$8.76M.

Supervisors ate into this a bit as they allocated \$25M in the current budget for one time funding for homeless services.

“A portion of this funding,” Solis said, “will help address the anticipated budget shortfall for the interim shelter system. Additionally, these estimates do not include the next five-year allocation of the Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA) program, expected to be released in Fall 2025, which the County plans to pursue.

“The County also intends to apply for HHAP-7 funding, anticipated in the State’s 2026-27 Fiscal Year.”

He anticipates the war to help the homeless will fight on. “The County and its regional partners will continue to identify and pursue new funding opportunities as they arise to sustain the interim shelter system.”

Morro Bay Hires New In-House Attorney

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay’s search for a new City Attorney is over, the City announced last week. And the City is dipping into the County workforce to fill a key position for a change.

“The City of Morro Bay,” reads a news release from Human Resources/Risk Manager, Rachael Hendricks, “is pleased to announce the appointment of Brian Stack as the City’s new City Attorney, effective Aug. 18.”

Stack has a long history with SLO and the Central Coast, having graduated from Cal Poly in 2008 with a bachelor’s degree in political science. He attended Loyola Law School graduating in 2011.

Stack “began his legal career at a civil litigation firm in Los Angeles,” Hendricks said, “before returning to the Central Coast in 2013, where he joined a local firm representing public agencies and small businesses.”

Stack hired on with SLO County in 2017, joining the County Counsel’s Office under the now-retired Rita Neal as a Deputy County Counsel.

“In this role,” Hendricks said, “he advised a wide range of County Departments. He represented the County in administrative proceedings and litigation, particularly involving land use permitting and enforcement.”

He has more than 10 years of experience in public agency law, Hendricks said, with a “deep understanding of land use, coastal zone policy, and environmental regulation.”

Stack has also been active in the community and previously served as a volunteer attorney for the San Luis Obispo Legal Assistance Foundation’s senior legal services program and currently



The Morro Bay City Council will hire Dep. SLO County Counsel Brian Stack as its new in-house City Attorney, effective Aug. 18.

serves as a board member, helping to advance the organization’s mission to provide free legal resources to seniors, veterans, and low-income families.

Mayor Carla Wixom asked the community to welcome Stack to town. “Please join me in welcoming Brian Stack as Morro Bay’s new in-house City Attorney,” the Mayor said. “His expertise and dedication will greatly enhance our commitment to serving our community.”

Stack will have a long commute, as he lives in rural Paso Robles with his wife, dogs, and farm animals. “In their free time,” Hendricks said, “they enjoy camping, trail riding with their horses, and lake activities. Brian is also a passionate aviator and an instrument-rated private pilot.”

Stack’s contract is slated to go to the City Council for approval at its Aug. 12 meeting, Hendricks said, and if approved he would start with the City on Aug. 18.

Schultz, who had previously been Morro Bay’s in-house attorney for 13 years, came out of retirement to fill in after the Council fired its last attorney, a law firm, at the end of 2024.

“The Council also wishes to express its sincere gratitude to Robert Schultz, who has provided steady legal guidance while serving as Interim City Attorney over the past several months,” Hendricks said.

As for how much Stack will be paid, Hendricks said, “new in-house City Attorney will be paid \$222,643 annually. That dollar amount represents Step 1 of the City Attorney salary range. The report will come out this Thursday [Aug. 8] along with the Council Agenda for the August 12 meeting.”

City Extends Commission Application Deadline

By Neil Farrell

Citing poor timing, the Morro Bay City Council extended the deadline to apply to fill a vacant seat on the City’s Planning Commission.

“We recognize the exposure may be limited during summer when people are on vacation,” City Clerk Dana Swanson told Estero Bay News, “and there’s a break between Council meetings, so the recruitment period was extended to Sept. 12.”

The new deadline is set for 5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 12. Applications are available online through the City’s website, see: www.morrobayca.gov/832/Employment-Opportunities?gh_jid=4578235006.

Interested people can apply online through the City website or download the application and print it out. Drop off hardcopy applications to the City Clerk’s Office at City Hall.

The seat is in mid-term of a normal 4-year term and would expire Jan. 31, 2027, according to the announcement. Whoever eventually gets the appointment would have an option to re-apply for a full term in 2027, but the nomination process would be open

Application Deadline Continued on page 4

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Application Deadline From page 3

to other applicants as well.

The Planning Commission deals with issues involving planning and development in the city. Most decisions on development are made through the planning department, which can green light minor, simple projects, such as a new single-family home.

But anything the department approves or denies can be appealed to the Planning Commission for a hearing. The Commission would hear the appeal and make a decision to uphold or deny it.

However, the Commission’s decisions are also appealable to the City Council (some are further appealable to the Coastal Commission depending on their location in town).

The Commission also works with the Planning Department on land use planning documents, such as the Zoning Ordinance, General Plan and Local Coastal Program, making recommendations to the City Council on parts of a document and on the overall document.

The Planning Commission is a 5-member advisory board that has certain basic requirements — you must be a resident and registered voter of the city at the time of your appointment (and continue to live here during your term of office); must be at least 18-years old; and, may not be an elected official, officer, or employee of the City of Morro Bay.

You may however, work for another government agency, such as the County of San Luis Obispo or Caltrans, though in such cases the commissioner might have a conflict of interest and have to step down from for that particular issue.

Normally, the City Council looks for applicants with some expertise or experience in an advisory board’s focus, but in the past, people outside the planning and building world have been appointed too.

According to a news release from the City Clerk’s Office, “The City of Morro Bay seeks a passionate and dedicated community member to volunteer to join the Planning Commission. This role provides an invaluable opportunity to influence City policies and help shape the future of Morro Bay. Whether you’re passionate about local issues, City planning, economic development, or recreation, there’s a place for you to make a meaningful impact.”

General requirements for all of the City’s advisory boards are spelled out in a handbook available from the City Clerk (email: cityclerk@morrobayca.gov) or on the City Website, see: <http://bit.ly/4ojdR3M>.

All advisory board members are subject to financial interest disclosure requirements and operate under the Brown Act, the State’s open meetings law.

How much time spent doing the board’s business varies from advisory board to advisory board, but the Planning Commission has the biggest workload, as it has two meetings a month, on the first and third Tuesdays of the month.

The City cautions applicants about this beforehand. “Before making a personal commitment, a prospective applicant should honestly evaluate whether he/she has adequate free time to attend the meetings, to review and be familiar with meeting materials, and to communicate with the public as well as with department staff.

Advisors also undergo specialized training, including Ethics Training and Sexual Harassment Training, as well as others, which may be mandated, according to the City.

To learn more, see: <http://bit.ly/45veXRy>.

Avila Drive to Close for 40 Days



Computer rendering shows what the roundabout at Hwy 101 and Avila Beach Drive will look like when completed. The County is closing this major road leading to Avila Beach for 40 days starting Aug. 18. Rendering courtesy SLO County

Planning a day trip to Avila Beach to whale watch form the pier or sample some fish and chips? Be aware that there’ll only be one way in and out of the town for over a month.

Starting Aug. 18 through Sept. 26, the Hwy 101 interchange at Avila Beach Drive will be closed for 40 days, while the County builds a main portion of a planned roundabout at the intersection of Avila Beach Drive, Shell Beach Road and the southbound U.S. 101 off-ramps and on-ramps.

“Traffic should use San Luis Bay Drive or Ontario Road as alternatives,” reads an announcement from County Public Works, which is building the roundabout.

“All other roads and businesses, outside of the project limits, will be open through this duration.”

SLO County Public Works Deputy Director, John Waddell, said flaggers will be in place to ensure traffic flows smoothly and roads will remain open to first responders.

“We’re taking every step possible,” Waddell said, “to minimize disruptions for drivers and to make sure safety protocols are fully in place.”

Dist. 3 County Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg, said, “We so appreciate the way residents, businesses, and the contractor worked with our Public Works team to find a timeline that worked for all parties involved.”

Ortiz-Legg added, “During this time, there will likely be more traffic along the alternate routes in and out of Avila, along with delays. While we always knew the roundabout would need a period of complete closure, Public Works has made plans to keep delays to a minimum. All businesses in the area, and of course the beach itself, are open for business.”

According to the County this time for the closure was picked because it’s outside the main summer traffic time to Avila and should mean finishing the project before winter rains hit.

The roundabout itself “will be complete and functional when this closure ends,” the County said. “It will ease traffic delays and improve safety at the intersection of Avila Beach Drive and Highway 101, which currently experiences significant traffic congestion, especially during weekends.”

The \$13.8 million project includes the roundabout, on and off-ramp improvements, a Park-and-Ride lot and transit stop, sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, and a shared path “so people can

safely walk or bike around the roundabout. It should be wrapped up by the end of the year.”

SLO County, Caltrans and the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) are partnering on the project. CalPortland, with facilities in four States — California, Arizona, Oregon and Washington, with an office in Santa Maria and Paso Robles, is the contractor for the project.

For more information, see: SLOCounty.gov/AvilaRoundabout.

Cayucos Vets Hall Open House, Aug. 25

The public is invited to a ribbon cutting ceremony to officially open the Cayucos Vet’s Hall and celebrate the seemingly endless rebuilding project’s completion.

Now dubbed “Cayucos Landing,” the County completely rebuilt the historic structure after it was found to be falling apart and closed in 2016. Though the project was about a year-and-a-half over schedule, the finished product is beautiful.

The ribbon cutting is set for 3 p.m. Monday, Aug. 25 at the Vet’s Hall. An open house for the community to tour the facility is set for Aug. 25 from 4-6 p.m.

The County Parks and Recreation Department plans to open up for reservations on Sept. 1 through the County’s online reservation system.

Also coming up is a three-day celebration of Cayucos’ 150th Birthday Sept. 19-21.

Organized by the Chamber of Commerce, details will follow, but the scheduled events will include a dance on Friday, bounce house on Saturday with live bands, and on Sunday a champagne toast at the Vets Hall open to all.

Online Poll for City Manager



By Neil Farrell

He or she would be arguably the most important person in Morro Bay government, and the City Council is asking the public’s help in making the decision on the next city manager.

With former C.M. Andrea Lueker recently re-hired as interim city manager, the Council is turning now to the search for a full-time person to fill the top spot in city government.

An online survey has begun seeking input into what qualities residents feel are important, as the Council goes about the lengthy

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Community

and involved hiring process.

The City Council chose Executive Recruiter Roberta Great-house of Peckham and McKenney to lead the search for a new manager.

Normal procedure is to advertise the position for a certain time and then have the search firm sift through the candidates to narrow down what could be dozens of applicants.

Then, the top few candidates would undergo a series of interviews with citizens and department heads who would further narrow the field.

A handful of finalists, usually two or three, would then undergo further interviews with the City Council and whoever comes out on top of that would then undergo a full background check before being offered a contract.

The final hiring vote would be made by the City Council in an open meeting. But before all this, the City wants input from the residents.

“The City of Morro Bay,” reads a news release from the City,

“is hiring a new City Manager, and your voice matters. Let the City Council know what qualities and experience you think are most important in our next leader.”

The City Manager’s job is a big one, even in a little town like Morro Bay.

“The City Manager,” the City said on the survey, “is responsible for overseeing day-to-day operations, implementing the City Council’s policy direction, and working closely with staff, community members, and regional partners to ensure the City thrives. Your input will directly inform the Morro Bay City Council as they select the next City Manager.

“This survey gives you the opportunity to share what qualities, experience, and leadership style you believe are most important.”

The survey, which is just a few questions and takes about five minutes to fill out, is posted online at: <https://polco.us/n/res/vote/morro-bay-ca/city-manager-2025?>

The City Council has also hired a new City Attorney. The

City announced last week that they had hired San Luis Obispo County’s Deputy County Counsel, Brian Stack, to take over for interim City Attorney Rob Schultz, who had been filling in for the City since January. (See related story).

Schultz and Lueker served together as the City’s top two employees for about eight years, until both were let go in 2013. Each went on to other government jobs, and both have now come out of retirement to once again serve the City of Morro Bay, but the reunion tour is coming to an end, as Slack is due to start with the City Aug. 18.

These two positions are the only ones the City Council directly hires and fires, under the so-called, “City Manager” system of government.

There, the elected City Council and Mayor function more like a corporate board of directors and turn the day-to-day management over to a CEO (city manager).

The other basic system of municipal government is the so-called, “Strong Executive” system, wherein the elected Mayor acts as the manager of the City’s employees and does all the hiring and firing.

This is the system used in most large cities like New York, Los Angeles and Boston. In that system, the city council acts more as a legislative body and the Mayor rules over all aspects of city government.

ANNUAL SIREN TEST

SATURDAY
AUGUST 23



12:00 PM & 12:30 PM

The SLO County Early Warning System sirens, located throughout the Emergency Planning Zone will be tested on Saturday, August 23.

The sirens will sound at 12:00 pm and again at 12:30 pm for three minutes. During the tests, no action is required by the public.

Local radio and television stations will conduct normal programming during the tests.

If you hear the sirens at any other time, tune to a local radio or television station for important emergency information. When at sea, tune to Marine Channel 16.

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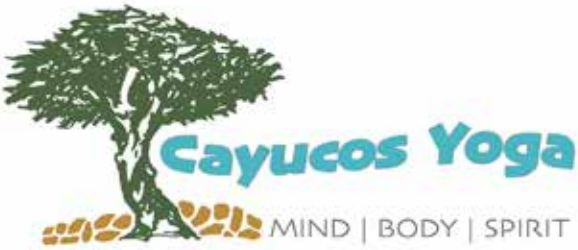
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Community

On Assignment: Historical Society of MB Produces Living History Programs



The cast of the Living Art collection 'Drink Up! It's Legal Now' presented by the Historical Society of Morro Bay. Photo by Glenn Silloway

By Judy Salamacha

Enjoying a Hollywood movie is not only entertainment but can also take us back to bygone eras in our American culture. Thirty, fifty even 100 years ago we see interpretations of how generations before us dressed, their haircuts and mannerisms, neighborhoods, and what they might have experienced whether joyful, disturbing, or just another challenge to overcome.

One of my favorite careers was working for a NASCAR affiliated circle track in Bakersfield, CA. I learned its roots go back to America's wily bootlegging days. My new insights created reasons to appreciate movies like "Smokey and the Bandit" with all its racing scenes around Georgia. Would you believe many of the bootlegging chases were shot in California, specifically Ojai and Ventura?

Recently I attended another delightful form of living history that showcased how Morro Bay survived its own wily era of bootlegging nightlife during the 1860s-1870s. A full house of members and guests appreciated the Historical Society of Morro Bay's (www.historicalmorrobay.org) performance of a fully researched, documented and costumed dramatization of an era of our community's historic lifestyle — and

called for more, more, more!

Kudos go to the producers and cast who produced "Drink Up! It's Legal Now." Just to mention a few: Nancy Castle is the society's official historian; Janice Peters directed the production, and Marlys McPherson researched the documented presentation. Board members morphed into roles, including Donna Stoll and her husband Chuck, Roger Castle and Joe Ingrassia, and Alice Kolb. Additionally, the cast included other friends from By the Sea Productions.

We were entertained while learning answers to curiosities we didn't know happened in Morro Bay's past. For example, did you know SLO County once had a political organization called the Prohibition Party? When states such as California or Missouri were called wet or dry states, the designation related to its climate or how many waterways it could claim? And was it odd that wet states' residents were taxed higher than in dry states? If a man joined the Temperance League of San Luis Obispo County, was it because he needed anger management training? Did Standard Oil of California (ultimately branded Chevron Companies in 1984) operate a boat on Estero Bay/Morro Bay/Cayucos that delivered oil products during the day and moonshine at night? Is it true SLO County

real estate titles mandated farmers plant apple orchard acreage? Might a dairy farmer regularly fill three milk cans with cow's milk and profit more from the one he had also filled with homebrew? If that farmer was caught and arrested by the revenueurs might his sentence be two years in jail with his sentence instantly commuted to two years' probation?

Glenn Silloway, president of the Historical Society said, "We've done three other dramatizations with the intent to present history in a fun way. We stick to the facts the best we can in a story format because we know it is more compelling and likely to be remembered."

Their first living history production was the story about Franklin Riley, the European founder of Morro Bay. Glenn interviewed performer Ed Bischof as Franklin Riley.

The next production was the "Case of the Headless Corpse," which due to its popularity is expected to be rescheduled for a second presentation at a date to be announced. Presenters read and/or perform roles of the main participants during a coroner's inquest in 1867.

"At issue," said Silloway, "was a headless, handless corpse washed up on the beach and discovered by Franklin Riley. We have a copy of the actual report in handwritten form in beautifully written penmanship then!" Wait for it - the cause of death will be revealed during the presentation.

The third living history production was another interview format. Janice Peters, founder of By the Sea Productions, performed the role of a retired Hollywood silent film star, Gladys Walton, who lived on Main Street, Morro Bay, in what folks still call the windmill house. "One of her daughters still lives in Morro Bay," reported Silloway.

But readers need to attend or talk to board members at the Historical Society to discover

how Walton was involved in a famous murder in Morro Bay. Peters researched and wrote the text of the interview that follows Walton through the 1920s as a contract actress with Universal Studios. She was married and divorced four times. She had six children all from one of the husbands. Al Capone was one of her special friends. When she retired to Morro Bay another friend, but not as close as Capone, was California Governor Ronald Reagan. He seemed to know how to fast track a building permit in Morro Bay and fulfilled a special favor for her. William Randolph Hearst watched her on the set one day but only Walton will reveal why he never invited her to Hearst Castle like so many other silent film starlets of the day. She knew Orval League, but like Hearst he could not be called one of her friends.

In her later years she had caretakers. One was a Lynwood Drake who some say was crazy. And there is so much more to her story!

As you might now know the Historical Society of Morro Bay is not only an important group to support as it continues to discover and preserve Morro Bay's past, but it can be lots of fun to participate in or simply attend their events, which always comes with a variety of finger foods.

The Historical Society of Morro Bay is interested in your active support researching, writing, and producing living history and/or receiving alerts when the next show is happening. Membership dues are only \$30 for individuals or \$40 for the entire household. Students are \$15 and businesses \$50.

Meanwhile if you have a burning question about Morro Bay that you believe the organization has not yet discovered, be sure to get in touch with Glenn or another board member. Your question might be the beginnings of a new living history production.

COLLEGETOWN

By Michael Walker



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PG&E Goes Live: Linking Morro Bay to the Grid



This is the third in a five-part series on the history of the Morro Bay Power Plant

The World War II navy base on the landfill that created the Morro Bay harbor infrastructure was perfect for a power plant: flat, close to cooling seawater and the fuel oil facilities supplied by Standard Oil, and as close as you could get from the coast to the Central Valley.

The first product of the plant design was a steam plant with two generators and a single stack (shown almost completed in the photo). The new plant pioneered a seawater-based once-through cooling system with desalinization and innovative aluminum siding to conceal the industrial heart of the plant. When the company turned on this immense and complicated machine it poured electricity into the wires heading to the Central Valley to pump groundwater for agriculture. It did not power the lights in Morro Bay.

The new plant was celebrated with a crowded dedication ceremony on July 8, 1955. The SLO Tribune reported that more than 500 people joined the event to walk around the huge generator “gleaming with new paint.” At the time about 4,000 people lived in Morro Bay so a sizable portion of them (even

allowing for visitors) turned up for this out-of-scale new thing on the Embarcadero.

The power plant was located about where the military had used major federal investments to build the World War II amphibious assault training base in 1941-1943. These investments created the foundation, not just for the power plant, but for the transformation and growth of Morro Bay in postwar years. Commercial fishing grew rapidly after the war, with boats coming from ports ranging from San Pedro to San Francisco to take advantage of the new harbor infrastructure. At the same time, the new land created for the Navy south of Beach Street was changing from hosting fishing landings, a boatyard and other service businesses into a full-fledged tourist attraction.

For the next five decades after the dedication of the new power plant, electricity, fishing and tourism defined the economy and the character of Morro Bay. Its population grew from 4,800 to over 10,000 in the years between 1960 and 1980, driven by these thriving industries.

Do you have an amazing photo-story to share? We'd love to hear from you about that or anything else about our shared history: info@historicalmorrobay.org.



By Theresa- Marie Wilson

State Park Job Openings



Looking for an employment opportunity with your local California State Parks? Check out these openings within San Luis Obispo County.

- Guide Trainee Historical Monument - San Luis Obispo Coast District
- Park Aide (Seasonal) - Oceano Dunes District
- Park Interpretive Specialist (Seasonal) - San Luis Obispo Coast District
- Park Maintenance Assistant - San Luis Obispo Coast District
- Senior Maintenance Aide (Seasonal) - San Luis Obispo Coast District
- Senior Park Aide (Seasonal) - Oceano Dunes and San Luis Obispo Coast District

Get all the details at <http://bit.ly/4InJu9L>

Two New Poly Patents Showcase Innovation in Health Care and Disaster Relief

Two recently awarded patents developed at Cal Poly reflect the university's commitment to solving pressing, real-world problems — from reducing the risk of limb loss to creating better options for rapid, foldable construction.

The patents, developed by biomedical engineering Professor Trevor Cardinal and structural engineering Professor Long Wang, were supported through Cal Poly's Office of Research, which helps faculty protect intellectual property and bring innovations to broader audiences.

Cardinal's patent introduces a new approach to helping patients with clogged arteries, a condition that can restrict blood

Takin' Care of Business Continued on page 9



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Police Blotter



• **July 27:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 10:47 p.m. at some undisclosed location presumably in town. Logs indicated the driver failed his or her sobriety test and was issued a citation for driving on tarantula juice.

• **July 27:** Police responded to a disturbance at 4:15 p.m. at some undisclosed location in town. Logs indicated some mulish person was in contempt of court and violating a stay-the-hell-away order.

• **July 27:** Police were called at 10:39 a.m. by some unknown citizen who reported their vehicle was apparently stolen. According to logs the case involves taking a vehicle without the owner's consent, ID theft and credit card fraud, and stealing something from a motor vehicle, no doubt a case of learning the hard way who your friends are.

• **July 27:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at the suspect time of 12:41 a.m. at some undisclosed location. Logs indicated the driver was nicked for suspicion of driving on the razzle.

• **July 26:** Police were called at 6:26 p.m. to a disturbance at Motel 6 in the 200 block of Atascadero Rd. Logs indicated some groom of the stool was spanked and causing a kerfuffle.

• **July 25:** Police responded at 10:46 a.m. to the La Serena Inn on Morro Ave., for some undisclosed incident.

• **July 25:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 10:31 p.m. at some undisclosed location in town. Logs indicated the driver was cited for suspicion of driving honked and on a suspended license no less.

• **July 24:** Someone came to the police station on Morro Bay Boulevard and turned over some treasure they'd discovered, no

doubt inside Al Capone's secret vault.

• **July 24:** Police at 11:11 a.m. checked out some kind of suspicious incident at the Morro Bay Library at Harbor and Shasta. No word on what they learned.

• **July 24:** At 8:48 a.m. police responded to some hoo-ha-ha down at Tidelands Park. Logs indicated they arrested some nefarious noddcock for alleged possession of illegal drugs and having more than two prior arrests for the same nincompoopery.

• **July 23:** At 3:50 p.m. police responded to Napa Avenue for some undisclosed disturbance at the Roots to Locks Salon. Logs indicated whoever was the source of the mayhem had two bench warrants.

• **July 23:** At 3:14 p.m. police cited a vehicle parked somewhere for an expired registration sentencing the poor sap to life at the DMV.

• **July 22:** At 9:04 a.m. at an undisclosed location police stopped a suspicious vehicle and issued the lead foot a speeding ticket, plus a ticket for no insurance and another citation for no driver's license; but not for conspiracy as to be that stupid takes a plan.

• **July 21:** In what could only be called a crime spree, police responded to five reports of some scoundrel stealing stuff out of cars. Logs didn't say where the cars were or if they were in the same vicinity of each other, but that's the way to bet.

• **July 21:** Police contacted a suspicious fellow at 5:42 a.m. at an undisclosed location. According to logs the hooligan was cited for allegedly possessing illegal drugs and paraphernalia.

• **July 19:** Police responded at 11:05 p.m. to a disturbance on San Jacinto St. According to logs they encountered a pickled fellow causing a ruckus that naturally also had a bench warrant and checked him into the iron bar hotel where room service is given with a scowl.

• **July 19:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle speeding along at 9:21 p.m. at Main and Radcliff. According to logs the driver was nicked for being thick as a tick.

• **July 19:** Police responded to City Park at 5:55 p.m. for some kind of disturbing disturbance. Logs indicated they contacted the disturbed disturber and issued him or her a citation for alleged possession of drug paraphernalia, their stash apparently already gone up in smoke.

• **July 18:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 11:27 p.m., well past the decent folk's curfew in the 200 block of Atascadero Rd., by the Morro Shores Inn & Suites. Logs indicated the driver was nicked for allegedly being tore up from the floor up.

• **July 17:** Police responded at 10:27 p.m. to Albertson's on Quintana to deal with an abandoned vehicle, to which they gave a new home in the impound yard.

• **July 16:** Someone someplace in the 2600 block of Hemlock said they'd lost something, presumably of some value.

• **July 16:** At 8:03 a.m. police responded to a suspicious subject report at Tidelands Park. Logs indicated they contacted the person who was allegedly high on drugs and no doubt low on smarts, and who also was on probation. The naughty fellow was hauled to the hoosegow.

• **July 15:** Someone found something in the 700 block of Butte. Earlier, someone lost something at Coleman Park, as cosmos once again balances out.

• **July 15:** At 8:15 a.m. police contacted some rascal lingering in the 800 block of Morro Bay Boulevard off the Southbound off ramp of Hwy 1 who had bench warrants and was allegedly trespassing, hanging offenses.

• **July 14:** Police responded at 7:03 p.m. to the 400 block of Atascadero Rd., for some kind of loud disturbance. According to logs they nicked some boisterous fellow for suspicion of vandalism and disturbing the peace and quiet of civilized folks.

• **July 14:** Police contacted a suspicious subject at 11:59 a.m. at Surf and Monterey who had a bench warrant. The scofflaw was issued a new disappearance ticket and released to catch again next month.

• **July 14:** Police contacted someone apparently sleeping in a vehicle at 2:58 a.m. in the North Pit Parking lot by Morro Creek. The snoring boor was issued a citation for illegally camping in a public place where they can't collect a bed tax, a case of they'll get you one way or another.

• **July 14:** At 2:16 a.m. police ticketed a car parked in the 900 block of Embarcadero outside Wavelengths Surf Shop for failure to give the DMV its annual bloodletting.

Estero Bay News Briefs

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Gifford Fire Rages



As of August 10 the Gifford Fire burned 114,621 acers and is at 21% containment. The fire that blazes in parts of both San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties, Northeast of Santa Maria by Highway 166, started Aug. 1

Last Friday, evacuation orders and warnings included the Huasna and Lopez Lake areas in SLO County. Arroyo Grande High School is open as an evacuation shelter. Pets are welcome. Call (805) 543-2444 with questions.

Highway 166 was closed as were some roads in Huasna, the Lopez Lake area and Pozo.

Three civilian and seven firefighter injuries were reported. The cause of the fire remains under investigation.

The fire is burning close to where the Madre Fire was last month, which burned more than 80,000 acres and was declared contained on July 26.

Readers who want to look up their area's evacuation zone, go to <http://bit.ly/46OT7uC> and enter your zip code.

SLO Behavioral Health Urges Families to Prioritize Youth Mental Health

The County of San Luis Obispo Behavioral Health Department is encouraging families to pack one more essential

school supply this fall: mental wellness.

With more than 1 in 5 youth nationwide facing a mental health disorder each year, the County says, now is the time for parents, caregivers, and educators to take action. The transition back to school and the learning of new routines can heighten student and parent anxiety, stress, and emotions.

“Back-to-school season should include more than academic readiness — it should include emotional readiness too,” says San Luis Obispo County Behavioral Health Department Director Dr. Star Graber, PhD., LMFT. “We want every caretaker and household to be equipped with tools to help our youth thrive in their schools and communities.

Top Strategies for a Mentally Healthy School Year:

- Start the Conversation Early: Check in with your child before the first day; asking them how they are feeling goes a long way. Make emotional well-being a regular part of your talks.
- Establish Healthy Routines: Children thrive on routines to stay regulated throughout the day. Regular sleep, nutritious food, and exercise help stabilize moods and reduce anxiety.
- Monitor and Limit Social Media Use: Encourage healthy boundaries with social media and screen time. Studies show high levels of screen time have been linked with adverse health outcomes, including poor sleep habits, fatigue, and symptoms of anxiety and depression (National Center for Health Statistics).
- Encourage Belonging: Support kids in joining clubs, sports, or social programs. Encourage students to explore programs like Friday Night Live, a youth-driven club that fosters leadership, connection, and substance-free fun.
- Be Alert to Warning Signs: Parents are encouraged to look for signs that their youth are struggling with their mental wellbeing. Symptoms like emotional withdrawal, academic changes, or mood swings may signal a need for more supports.
- Lead by Example: Adults modeling healthy coping strategies can deeply influence youth behavior. Be honest with your children about your mental wellbeing, even if you are struggling. Showing youth ways you overcome feelings of stress, anxiety, or sadness can signal that you are a role model for wellness, and a resource for them if they have similar feelings that they need help working through.

The SLO County Behavioral Health Department offers year-round support through school-based counseling, youth programs, child and family therapy services, and prevention services. For more information, visit www.slobehavioralhealth.org or call 1-800-838-1381.

Cal Poly Welcomes New Police Chief

Cal Poly has a new police chief. Robert Plastino was sworn in at the end of July.

Plastino's appointment comes after previous chief George Hughes was promoted in summer 2024 to the role of associate vice president, Public Safety, which oversees the police departments at both Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo and Cal Poly Solano Campus, as well as the university's Transportation and Parking Services and Department of Emergency Services.

“With his extensive background in public safety and working collaboratively with an academic community similar to ours, Robert is going to be a perfect fit with our holistic, compassionate and progressive public safety approach at Cal Poly,” Hughes said.

Plastino brings more than 27 years of experience with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's office. In that time, he was in charge of executive management of the department's north county and south county operations, where he oversaw more than 250 sworn and non-sworn staff, as well as criminal investigations.

His experience also includes years of working collaboratively with UC Santa Barbara administration and student populations as well as close community relations with Isla Vista residents.

“I couldn't be more excited to join the Cal Poly community and continue to build on the great work that the department has been doing to foster a culture of excellence, accountability and integrity,” Plastino said. “As we head into a new academic year, we will recommit to teamwork, cross campus collaboration and constant innovation so we can continue to grow trust in our community and increase support on campus.”

Plastino holds a master's degree in public administration as well as a Bachelor of Science in business administration, demonstrating his commitment to continued learning and professional development.

With 22 sworn officers, Cal Poly Police Department is actively involved in the university community and is committed to an educational, responsive, non-escalatory model.





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Cal Poly biomedical engineering senior Erica Duffy replenishes human muscle stem cells with fresh growth media in the Cell Therapy Lab, found in the Frost Center.

flow and lead to amputation, particularly in the legs and among people with diabetes or obesity.

When arteries become clogged, the body can create natural bypasses to reroute blood flow around the blockage. But often, these small vessels don't enlarge sufficiently to keep the downstream tissue alive, Cardinal said.

His patent explores a method to stimulate the growth of these natural bypasses. The idea began during Cardinal's graduate studies at the University of Arizona, where he focused on muscle stem cells and blood vessel remodeling. At Cal Poly, he expanded the research alongside students, transplanting muscle stem cells into mice. Two of his students, Vahid Hamzeinejad and Ethan Tietze, are listed as co-inventors.

"In the lean mice, the cells did nothing, but in the obese mice, they enhanced the growth of natural bypasses," Cardinal said. "That outcome supported our hypothesis that muscle stem cells can overcome the proinflammatory metabolic environment that has limited the effectiveness of other cell therapies explored for preventing amputations when limb arteries become clogged."

The results are particularly promising, given that many vascular disease patients also have metabolic conditions such as diabetes or high cholesterol — both of which have hampered past treatment efforts.

"We don't know if these cells will work in humans yet," he

said. "But our results in mice suggest greater promise for muscle stem cells than other cell types that have already been tested, and found lacking, in clinical trials."

Cardinal said the next steps include replacing mouse cells with human cells and securing additional funding to better understand how muscle stem cells communicate with other cells in the body.

Meanwhile, Wang's patent addresses a very different kind of challenge: how to rapidly construct strong, temporary structures for situations such as disaster relief.

Developed with graduate student Colby Scanlon, Wang's hinge system allows smaller panels to connect and fold into larger, rigid forms that can be assembled and disassembled easily.

"I was looking at deployable structures in space," Wang said, referencing NASA's use of foldable habitats. "Inspired by these concepts, I wanted to adapt them for civil applications."

Their patented hinge, tested using 3D-printed models and wooden panels, forms the backbone of a lightweight, origami-inspired system that folds down for transport and unfolds into a functional structure. Wang said the system offers fast, low-cost construction and could benefit a range of sectors.

"It's not fancy," he said, "but sometimes the simplest solutions are the best."

Wang believes the technology also holds commercial potential — from temporary event setups to mobile structures for military or other rapidly deployable uses. His work is one example of how Cal Poly research can move from concept to real-world application.

San Luis Obispo International Film Festival Announces 2026 Dates

The San Luis Obispo International Film Festival (SLOIFF) already has the dates for the 32nd edition of the festival — April 23 through April 28, 2026.

The Opening Night Reception at the historic



Fremont Theater will kick off the Festival on Thursday, April 23. It presents an opportunity to meet special guests, filmmakers, and major contributors.

Alongside its signature categories and competitions, the festival is launching two additions this year — an Episodic category and a special award recognizing the Best Genre/Horror Film.

Submissions are currently open in all categories including narrative features, short films, documentary features, and doc shorts, as well as episodic and horror. SLOIFF is an Academy Award Qualifying Festival for Documentary Shorts.

"We're really excited to introduce our new Episodic program to the festival," said San Luis Obispo International Film Festival Executive Director Skye McLennan in a news release. "Over the last 10 years, the way we tell stories has changed, and we believe that in addition to traditional film formats, episodics [a fiction or non-fiction work designed for serialized, online, or broadcast storytelling] have a place in our festival too. Adding this category creates a new opportunity for indie storytellers to showcase their work. We are also adding an award for Best Genre/Horror. We have been testing the appetite for this category over the last five years, and each year the demand for and the quality of the films has increased. We believe this is a trailblazing space in independent film. We want to encourage it and bring new works to our audiences."

Highlights of the festival are the much-anticipated Surf Nite, as well as the Music Video Showcase. Central Coast Filmmaker Showcase, Cal Poly Short Cuts, and Filmmakers of Tomorrow put a spotlight on local talent from California's Central Coast and emerging youth filmmakers from around the world.

Submissions are open through the end of November, go to <https://filmfreeway.com/slofilmfest> for more details. More information on the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival can be found at <https://slofilmfest.org>.

New Kind of Movie Magic Comes to Paso Robles Wineries

Looking for a new way to view favorite flicks? Paso Picture Show offers an alternative to the typical night out. Created by

Takin' Care of Business Continued on page 10



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Community

Takin' Care of Business From page 9



Bradley and Wilder Simmons created Paso Picture Show. Photo submitted

entertainment industry veterans, husband-and-wife duo Bradley and Wilder Simmons, this new outdoor cinema series pairs classic films with the unforgettable setting of Paso Robles wine country.

After two decades working in film and television in Hollywood, the couple relocated to Paso Robles in search of something more grounded and community oriented where they launched Paso Picture Show — a traveling, movie-in-the-vineyard experience designed to bring people together through nostalgia, scenic sunsets, and great wine.

“Our local wineries are stunning, but most close before the magic of nighttime sets in,” says co-founder Bradley Simmons. “We wanted to create a cinematic experience that captures the magic of Paso after hours. There’s something special about sitting under the stars, surrounded by vineyards, watching a classic film the way it was meant to be seen, on a big screen with a community of movie lovers.”

The series kicks off with a screening of “Tombstone,” the cult-favorite Western featuring Kurt Russell and Val Kilmer. While Paso Picture Show will travel to different wineries throughout Paso Wine Country, their debut event takes place Saturday, August 16 at Bianchi Winery & Tasting Room in Paso Robles. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the movie begins at 7:45 p.m.

Guests can choose between lawn seating with picnic blankets, reserved group tables, or upgraded VIP fire pit seating. Every guest’s ticket includes a glass of wine and a complimentary bag of San Luis Obispo County’s own G-Brothers Kettle Corn. Pre-show festivities feature a themed photo booth, a movie trivia contest with prizes, and opportunities to taste and explore at the host winery.

For more information, visit www.pasopictureshow.com.

Dignity Health Offers Expert Care and Prevention Tips for Pickleballers

Pickleball, America’s fastest-growing sport, has seen a remarkable increase in participation, with an estimated 22.3 million players in 2024—a 150% jump from previous years. However, this surge has been accompanied by a significant rise in related injuries, particularly among older adults.

According to a recent study published in the Orthopaedic Journal of Sports Medicine in 2024, approximately 90% of pickleball-related injuries occur in individuals over the age of 50, with common injuries including sprains, strains, and fractures. Notably, fractures linked to pickleball have increased 90-fold from 2002 to 2022, with the majority occurring in players aged 60 to 69.



“Pickleball is a fantastic way to stay active, especially for older adults, but like any physical activity, it comes with risks, especially if players aren’t properly conditioned or warmed up,” said Dr. Jonathan Fow, an orthopedic surgeon with Dignity Health in Arroyo Grande and San Luis Obispo. “We’re seeing more cases of knee injuries, shoulder strains, and even hip fractures in patients who jumped into the sport too quickly.”

- To help players stay safe on the court, Dr. Fow recommends the following injury prevention tips:
- Warm Up First: Gentle stretching and 5–10 minutes of light cardio can prepare muscles and joints. Dynamic Stretching before you play and static stretching after.
 - Wear Proper Footwear: Court shoes with good lateral support help prevent ankle injuries.
 - Build Strength and Balance: Strength training and balance exercises reduce the risk of falls and overuse injuries.
 - Take Breaks: Rest between games in the shade, if possible, and stay hydrated to maintain performance and prevent fatigue-related and heat-related injuries.
 - Listen to Your Body: Don’t ignore pain. Early attention to discomfort can prevent more serious issues.

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Festival Mozaic Extends Scott Yoo’s Contract Through 2030



Festival Mozaic gave a five-year contract extension for Music Director Scott Yoo, securing his artistic leadership through the 2030 season, which will mark his 25th anniversary with the organization.

Since joining Festival Mozaic in 2005, “Maestro Yoo has transformed the summer festival into a nationally recognized destination for classical music, celebrated for its world-class performances, adventurous programming, and intimate audience experiences in stunning venues across San Luis Obispo County,” representatives said in a news release.

“I’m honored to continue my work with the extraordinary musicians, staff, and supporters of Festival Mozaic,” said Scott Yoo. “Together, we’ve built something meaningful and joyful, an artistic home where musicians and audiences come together in celebration of great music.”

Under Yoo’s leadership, Festival Mozaic has expanded well beyond its summer offerings to include year-round concerts, educational programs, and new initiatives such as the newly launched Mozaic Fellows, a young artist residency that debuted this summer.

“Scott Yoo is a singular talent and visionary,” said Jeri Corgill, president of the Festival Mozaic Board of Directors. “His artistry, leadership, and devotion to this community are unparalleled. We are thrilled to continue this journey with him as we look ahead to his 25th season in 2030.”

This five-year extension ensures continued momentum as Festival Mozaic plans ambitious projects and collaborations leading up to Yoo’s milestone anniversary. His tenure has included commissioning new works, presenting internationally acclaimed artists, and earning national recognition as the producer and host of the acclaimed PBS series Now Hear This, which has spotlighted his artistic vision and Festival Mozaic’s role as a cultural leader.

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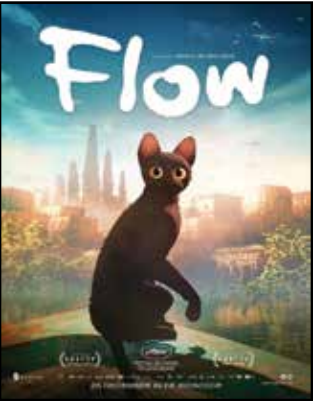
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Community

Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Cambria’s own, no-kill, non-profit cat shelter, The Homeless Animal Rescue Team (HART), will once again put the fun in fundraiser. The Academy Award winning film “Flow” will be shown on the lawn at Parr Collective at Stolo Vineyard to benefit HART. Doors open at 7:30 p.m., movie begins at 8:30 p.m. Wines will be discounted 20%. Bring your own chair or blanket for this outdoor venue, and if you prefer, snacks. Tickets range in price from \$12.56 to \$23.27 and are available at my805tix.com.



Don’t miss Book Talk with Local Author Cate Touryan in the San Luis Obispo Library Community Room, 995 Palm Street, on Sat., Aug. 16, 3-4 p.m. Author Ann C. Hanna, writing as Cate Touryan, will discuss her new novel, “Turning Toward Eden” set in a fictional 1970s Avila Beach. Book description: “For most fourteen-year-olds, California summers in the early 1970s mean sun and surf, despite the Cold War chill. Not for Eden. Her AWOL father has sent her life into a tailspin, landing her in a shabby beach town, stuck caring for her severely disabled brother. Caught in her parents’ own cold war, Eden ditches Dex at every chance—pier fishing with Hollis, playing poker with the grizzled card sharks, and caterwaulin’ in the church choir, laying plain to the Almighty that singing terms ain’t the same as speaking terms, what with the hand he’s dealt her.”



Author, photographer, and kayaker Chuck Graham will take the audience on a tour of Channel Islands National Park during his talk, Paddling into a Natural Balance, at The Bunker in San Luis Obispo on August 15, at 7 p.m. (doors open at 6:30). Through his lens, Chuck captures the amazing beauty, wildness and wonders of this precious ecosystem and brings it to life in vibrant colors, images and stories. Channel Islands National Park has long represented an evolutionary hotbed for plant and animal species, some of which are found nowhere else in the world, and its protection is vital. This event is free to the public.

After the talk, Chuck will have available for purchase and signing his latest book, “Paddling into a Natural Balance: Stories of Kayaking & Conservation Around Channel Islands National Park.” Chuck is a freelance writer and photographer based in Carpinteria, CA. He has long considered the Channel Islands National Park as one of his favorite wild places. He has written about and photographed the islands for 30 years and has led kayak tours at the islands for over 20 years. His stories and photographs have appeared in a variety of publications, including Backpacker, Men’s Journal, National Geographic, BBC Wildlife Magazine, The Surfer’s Journal, High Country News, Outdoor California, Westways, Natural History, and he writes the monthly Unpredictable Wilderness in the Coastal View News. He is also the author of the award-winning book “Carizzo Plain: Where the Mountains Meet the Grasslands.” This talk is part of Ecologistics with the mission is to collaborate with people and organizations around the world to create resilient and healthy communities that are environmentally and economically sustainable, and socially just. This is the second of Ecologistics’ Critical Conversation Series for 2025. You can find more information about Ecologistics at ecologistics.org.

Join Morro Bay in Bloom for some beautification projects. • Saturday, August 16, 9-11 a.m. at Tideland Park. You are invited to participate with Bloomies and National Estuary Program volunteers to address the hot mess of a gateway planting bed which contains the tall anchor and, for the bold, addressing an overgrowth of ivy. • Wednesday, August 20, 9-11 a.m. at the Corner of Beach and Front Streets. A weekly gardening experience that is anything but typical. • Saturday, August 23, 9-11 a.m. at Mariner Park: (next door to Estero Inn, 501 Embarcadero). A clean-up of this pocket park.



Join the fun for Cambria’s 75th Annual Pinedorado Days. Mark your calendars for August 30 - September 1 for an exciting weekend for the entire family. The Pinedorado Parade starts on Saturday at 9:30 a.m. at 950 Main Street with Grand Marshall Joyce Williams. Sunday is the 16th Annual Nate’s Car Show starting at 8 a.m. with live entertainment all three days! Check out the schedule at cambrialions.org for details. Tickets are available now for the Follies with performance times listed on the website. Tickets can be purchased online at cambrialions.org/follies or at the Cambria Chamber of Commerce. It is the Diamond Jubilee! There is a 5k Fun Run on Saturday and American Legion Pancake Breakfast on Sunday.

Free programs at the Los Osos Library, 2075 Palisades Ave., 805-528-1862. • Read Together – Thursday, August 21, 5:30 – 6:45 p.m. Come read a script together. We will provide the script, assign roles, and read it together. Recycled Art – Friday, August 22, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. Join us at the library as we craft beautiful handmade spiral bound notebooks from recycled materials. All supplies provided. Teen Advisory Board – Saturday, August 23, 3 – 4 p.m. Calling all teens. Looking for volunteer or community service hours? Help Librarian Emily run the Teen Advisory Board! Participation can be listed on job, scholarship and college applications. Nintendo – Friday, August 29, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. Master your gaming skills and make new friends with our Nintendo Switch! We will provide one Switch for up to four players at a time — feel free to bring your own too. Games include Mario Kart, Just Dance and Super Smash Bros. School age, tween, and teen.

Upcoming free youth programs at the Morro Bay Library, 625 Harbor St, (805) 772-6394. • DIY Spiral Bound Notebooks – Wednesday, July 23, 3 – 5 p.m. Craft beautiful handmade notebooks from recycled materials. All supplies provided! All ages welcome. • Nintendo Switch – Wednesday, August 27, 3 – 5 p.m. Master your gaming skills and make new friends with our Nintendo Switch! We will provide one Switch for up to four players at a time — feel free to bring your own too. Games include Mario Kart, Super Smash Bros, and Just Dance.



Join the Central Coast Start Parks Association for their second screening of the award-winning feature documentary “Out There: A National Park Story” on Aug. 25 at 5:30 p.m. at The Bay Theater. The film follows a 10,000-mile road trip through America’s national parks, as the filmmaker and his childhood friend share inspiring stories of the incredible people they meet along the way. The last screening at Fremont Theater in San Luis Obispo sold out. Bring your popcorn and candy for a relaxed evening to celebrate the healing power of parks. Tickets are \$17.91 and are available at My805tix.com.

Events Continued on page 12

Edward Jones

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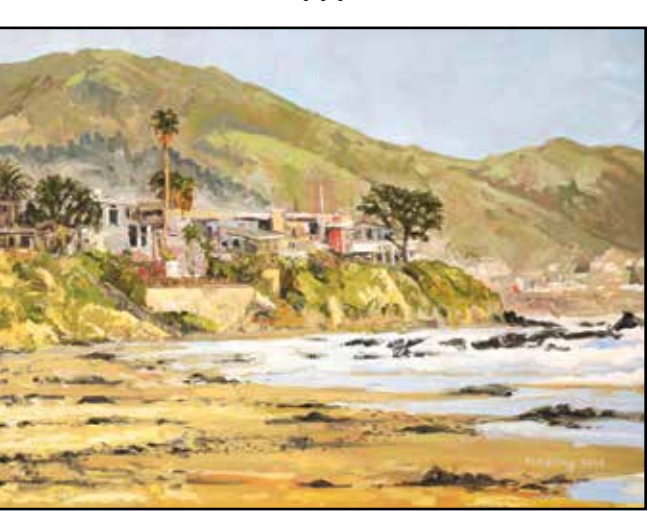
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...
Michael Johnston shows her fine art Photography in Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay, through Aug. 29, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Johnston photography was inspired by an aunt who taught her to develop film and make black and white prints in her darkroom. At retirement she bought a digital camera, and at a local photography school, learned the basics. With that foundation and at workshops led by accomplished photographers such as Tony Stromberg, Scott Trees, Sherron Shepard, and others Michael began to focus on her passion for horses. She traveled to Portugal, Colorado, New Mexico and California to capture the beauty, grace, majesty, and lives of these beautiful animals. Her work centers on photographing horses at liberty in their natural environments, running free. The equine's unique athleticism, form, grace, and herd interactions are captured at those times. She adds elements, textures and rearranges things to emphasize her interpretation and vision.

...
Don't miss Ales for Tails, a comedy show benefit for the local Atlas Animal Rescue and Shiloh's Animal Rescue featuring Leah Bonnema, of "Don't Tell Comedy fame and "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," along with comedy store regulars and local comics. The fun takes place August 29 at Humdinger Brewing, 855 Capitolio Way STE 1, San Luis Obispo. Doors open at 7 p.m. The show is at 8 p.m.

Proceeds will benefit Atlas Animal Rescue and Shiloh's Animal Rescue <https://www.atlasanimalrescue.org> and <https://www.shilohsanimalrescue.org>. Seating is general admission. Tickets are \$28.62 and are available at [My805Tix.com](https://www.my805tix.com). This is an adult content show. Must be 21+ to attend. No recording, or photography of the comic's sets.

...
Take part in the 50th Anniversary spectacular at The Great American Melodrama, 1867 Front St. in Oceano. The first course offers loads of opportunities to boo and cheer, and then we'll serve up two huge helpings of song, dance and comedy, highlighting some favorite numbers from past years along with brand-new material. Tickets are at [americanmelodrama.com](https://www.americanmelodrama.com).



...
Casa Ramos Art Gallery invites the community to an End of Summer Artist Reception on Saturday, August 23, from 4 to 7 p.m. at their gallery space at 1034 Los Osos Valley Rd.. This uplifting event will feature refreshments, surprises, and the joy of being surrounded by colorful, feel-good artwork created exclusively by artists from Los Osos. Casa Ramos Art Gallery is proud to showcase only local talent, and this reception is a chance to celebrate that creative spirit. The gallery is excited to introduce emerging artist Mike Golling, whose impressionistic oil paintings capture the stunning beauty of the Central Coast including Morro Bay, Los Osos, Cayucos, and Big Sur. His expressive brushwork and rich color palettes breathe new life into familiar landscapes. Adding to the excitement, the reception will unveil a new painting by renowned local legend John Ramos: a tribute to the Western Flyer, the storied vessel made famous by John Steinbeck in "The Log from the Sea of Cortez." Whether you're an art lover, a local supporter, or simply looking for a meaningful way to spend a Saturday evening, this free event is open to all. For more information, contact Casa Ramos Art Gallery at (805) 439-0306 or www.losososart.com.

...
SLO REP launches its 2025-2026 season with the hilarious and heartfelt musical revue "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change," opening August 22 and running through September 21. Directed and choreographed by John Keating, artistic director of The Great American Melodrama, this production promises a joyful, laugh-out-loud journey through the modern relationship minefield. This witty and touching musical features an ensemble cast of four powerhouse performers: Joe Ogren, Katelyn Shreiner, Morgan Tapp, and Jeffrey Laughrun. Together, they bring to life over 50 characters in a series of comedic vignettes about everything from awkward first dates to in-laws, breakups, marriage, and everything in between. With music by Jimmy Roberts and book and lyrics by Joe DiPietro, the show is a

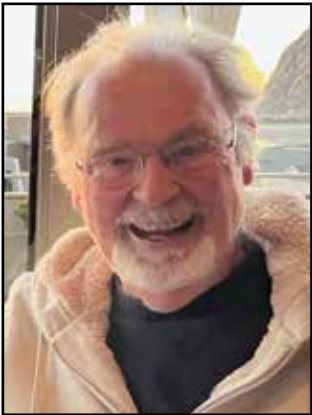
long-running Off-Broadway favorite that speaks to anyone who has ever loved—and lost and loved again. Tickets are available now at www.slorep.org or by calling (805) 786-2440. Performances run Thursdays through Sundays at the SLO REP theatre in downtown San Luis Obispo.

...
A huge art show and sale will be held at Sea Pines Resort (1945 Solano St, Los Osos) on Saturday, August 23, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. A large portion of sales will benefit the Save Cuesta Inlet non-profit, [savecuestainlet.org](https://www.savecuestainlet.org). The goal of this group is to preserve this local gem for public use, a favorite of kayakers, canoes, artists, dog walkers, and all nature lovers. The show will feature some of the finest Central Coast artists with a very diverse selection of art of all kinds. The show will coincide with the regular Concert on the Green that day. For more information, contact Ken Christensen at: kendartman@sbcglobal.net or 805-528-1498

...
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.

Obituary

Patrick Thomas Watson 1949 - 2025



Patrick Thomas Watson, son of Thomas and Miriam Watson, was born in San Francisco, California, January 6, 1949 and passed away in San Luis Obispo on July 19, 2025. Father of Kelly Watson (grandchildren Jaylen and Kira), Eric Watson and Robert Watson (grandchildren Sebastian and Julian). Pat met his former wife Kathy at Greenfield Elementary while teaching English and creative dramas. In 1978, he transferred to the newly opened North Monterey County High School in Castroville, California where he taught English and art. He was also involved with Surf Club activities, which brought students weekly surfing in Moss Landing even traveling to the shores of Baja Mexico during summer breaks.

In the evenings living in Prunedale, California Pat made surfboards and added graphics using the company name Nautilus Surfboards. He also took surf photos that appeared in Surfing and Surfer magazine with his underwater housing for his camera, which local Getty boys didn't like much wanting their surf spot for locals only. A 1989 family move gave Pat time, and he earned a master's degree for teaching the first of college classes in graphic design and digital art videos to Sierra Nevada College located in Incline Village, Nevada, and in 1998 to California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB). Various moves brought Pat to retire while teaching online computer classes at Cuesta College, San Luis Obispo. Pat created many digital graphics works of art. His first showing had critics claim they were surreal. Pat kept up his digital photo career with works shown in San Luis Obispo. Many articles about Pat's Art can be found at [patwatsonart.org](https://www.patwatsonart.org).

Stuart Kalman 1944 - 2025



Stuart Kalman, beloved husband, father, grandfather and brother, passed away peacefully at home with his devoted wife Ann Kalman by his side on July 30 2025. He was 81. Stuart was born in Chicago, Illinois on May 25 1944 to his parents Leo and Ethel Kalman. Stuart and family moved to California where he worked in the aerospace industry. Later he opened a very successful interior design business called Accent Fabrics in Mission Viejo. Stuart retired in Morro Bay. He fell in love with the little town. It's there he met Ann, the love of his life. A woman who Stuart said would changed his life for forever. They were married and spent 30 years together. Stuart loved Morro Bay and cars. You might have seen him on a Saturday driving his gigantic Crown Imperial down to the bakery (La Parisienne) right next to the kite shop. Hanging out with all the other car enthusiasts. Stuart had another great love. His little Terrier Molly. Most likely if you saw Stuart, you'd see Molly. He'd take her to Tide-lands Park for a little walk and to watch the sailboats. Stuart loved to travel with Ann. He loved to go boating at Lake Nacimiento. He enjoyed lots of visits to see his family (grandchildren, daughters, sons-in-laws, and sister). He loved seeing his friends, when he could. He would say he loved you if he knew you needed to hear it. He will be extremely missed by us all. A service will be held for immediate family only. In lieu of flowers, please donate to Woods Humane Society:- Animal Shelter - Pet Adoptions.



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OUT & ABOUT

WITH THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS

THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS

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

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

Walking with Wildlife



By Susan Vasquez

At times, I complain about our rugged American walking life. We have trails, not walking paths. We walk in rustic, remote national parks, not through our cities. I have even, a time or two, been driven away from a walk by nature itself: a downpour, a granite boulder, a black bear. But today, I am offering a tribute to walking with wild things all around. It can be a remarkable and reviving experience of renewal. Isn't that exactly why we walk?

I take a daily stroll around my central California coastal neighborhood. After years living here, it still is refreshingly new. It is also more rugged than refined. The first thing I do is cross a beautiful and dangerous highways. The second thing I do is head for my usual path to the beach, filled with sand and stickers and the changeable route through the dunes.

Today, the third thing I did on this walk was stop in the middle of the path for a long and over-full snake. It was a beauty. The snake didn't move, and I worried. Should I just step around? Should I be concerned for its health? It wasn't a rattlesnake, so I wasn't afraid. It – maybe a gopher snake – looked to me like it had just eaten something quite big, so I knew it might just be in that after-glow of a good meal. Snakes don't loosen their belts, they lull. I retreated, and took a different path through the dunes.

Horses have accompanied me on every single walk I have ever taken on this beach. One or two or sometimes three ride along the tide. Today, a herd was there. Some people were riding bare-back. They frolicked and circled and raced and the riders hooted and laughed. When there are twenty horses and twenty people involved in this amount of hoop-la, it's noticeable, even above the thunder of the surf. Then the horses and riders actually did surf. Or very nearly. They charged into the waves, past where I thought they should go, the people still laughing and the horses seemingly willing. They bounded past, leaving me with quieter companions: the waves, herons and sand dollars.

Soon the steps up the bluff at the turn-around point of my walk came into view. I sat for a while and watched nature's spectacular show. The antics of the dolphins with their dance routines, couple-jumps, and splashes looked like pure fun. I admired the skill of the pelicans: their patient search and precise spray as they entered the water for the catch.

I stared into the horizon, hoping to see evidence of the enormous mammals that inhabit our coastline in the summer. I know they are there. But sometimes, I have to be satisfied with only that knowledge, and not the sight of the gray, blue and humpback whales.

This summer, I have seen a lot of them. They have been almost too close to the shore at times, almost dangerously close. Today they stayed in the hazy distance, treating me with occasional evidence of their seasonal trip. Like the human vacationers who come in droves, the whales also come each summer.

On the way back home, I checked on the overly full snake, but found it wasn't blocking the path any longer. Today's walk was filled with the wildlife I have seen all my life. Not a city-life walk, but a walk peopled with creatures that have been my walking companions for a long, long time.

Visit Susan Vasquez and her walking stories at <https://susan-vasquez.com>.

Chamber Foundation Golf Tourney



The Morro Bay Chamber Foundation is hosting a charity golf tournament that will help local kids and sign-ups are being taken now.

The "Putting for the Kids" Golf Tournament is set for Friday, Oct. 10, 2025, at the Morro Bay Golf Course.

Tax deductible entry fees are \$195 per person or \$750 a team and include an 18-hole scramble tournament format, a golf cart, lunch, side games and good ol' camaraderie, as nothing beats a day on the golf course for a good cause.

Proceeds go to the non-profit Morro Bay Chamber Foundation and "support scholarships designed for anyone in the Estero Bay communities pursuing education — whether you're just starting out or returning to school later in life. Every swing helps open doors and empower dreams."

So, whether you're a weekend golf warrior or just like to have fun, this is a chance to give back to a good cause.

To sign up, see: www.morrochamber.org/foundation.

Morro Bay Chamber Foundation is "committed to shaping a brighter future for the youth of Morro Bay," the Foundation website said. "We believe in nurturing the potential of our young minds by providing them with opportunities to excel. Our primary focus is on raising funds to award scholarships to deserving students of Morro Bay High School, fostering the next generation of leaders and entrepreneurs in our vibrant community."

The Foundation adds, "we offer scholarships that open doors for ambitious and talented students who aspire to make a difference. These scholarships are not just financial aids; they are investments in the future of Morro Bay, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to reach their fullest potential."

If readers don't play golf but support academic scholarships, they can make a donation directly to the Foundation.

To donate mail checks to: Morro Bay Chamber Foundation, 695 Harbor St., Morro Bay, CA 93442.

Be sure to include a return address so they can send you receipt for tax purposes.

Morro Bay Citizen's Academy Accepting Applications

The Morro Bay Police Department is now accepting applications for this year's Citizen's Academy. The Academy, which is open to the public who live and/or work in Morro Bay, is a series of interactive sessions where citizens can learn firsthand how their police department operates, and how law enforcement performs within the community of Morro Bay.

This year's academy starts on Wednesday, October 1 and runs through Wednesday, November 12. The Academy will meet over seven consecutive Wednesdays at the Police Department. Citizens will receive an overview of law enforcement in Morro Bay, and demonstrations from a variety of instructors from the department.

"This is a great opportunity for MBPD officers to collaborate and interact with the community," Officials said in a news release.

This year's academy curriculum will provide a variety of presentations to highlight "how" and "why" police do what they do.

"We look forward to hosting this academy and spending time with the community to present exciting and informational curriculum prepared by the officers," officials said. "The key to a safe community is found in a strong working relationship between the public and its police department. This is a good opportunity to come meet the individuals who protect your community and help make Morro Bay a safe place to live and work."

Contact the City at 805-772-6200, for more information.

Letters To The Editor

Stop Newsom's Power Grab



Governor Newsom has proposed mid-decade redistricting to redraw California's congressional lines - not to serve the people, but to play political revenge games with Texas. This is gerymandering, plain and simple. And a dangerous step backward.

Californians fought hard to end the days of shady, back-room map deals. In 2008, we passed Proposition 11 to create the Citizens Redistricting Commission, an independent body that puts people over politics when drawing district lines. That system works. It's considered the national gold standard. Redistricting belongs to the voters - not to the Governor or any political party.

Now, all that progress is under threat. Mid-decade redistricting will destabilize elections, confuse voters, and undermine public trust in democracy.

The League of Women Voters was a proponent of Prop 11 and continues to advocate for fair redistricting throughout California. San Luis Obispo County fought its own hard-won battle and established an independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to draw county electoral maps in 2024.

Tell the Governor California is not Texas. We cannot go backward. Tell him to abandon this short-sighted, undemocratic effort. Send him a message at <http://bit.ly/45GD0y4> or call (916) 445-2841.

The League of Women Voters SLO County

City of Morro Bay Could Save the Soccer Fields and School

Morro Bay's only soccer fields have been in active and continuous use for decades. The fields are adjacent to the Morro Bay Community Center and part of the Morro Elementary school campus, a 10-acre site. San Luis Coastal Unified School District (SLCUSD) closed the school in 2001 and the site has been leased to community-oriented uses and remains in good repair. SLCUSD has deemed the property a surplus property and intends to sell, with Morro Bay having first negotiating rights. The Morro Bay City Council will be addressing this decision at their August 12 Closed Session meeting.

The Morro Elementary buildings and campus, built starting in 1936, are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The school benefited many local students over the years, including heroes such as world-renowned conductor Kent Nagano, whose enthusiastic support has led to an August 31 benefit concert at the Cuesta College Performing Arts Center. Luminary music teacher and artist Botso Korisheli taught Kent Nagano and many others who are strong advocates for preserving Morro Bay culture, Morro Elementary, and the famous Morro Elementary Band Room.

The Friends of Morro Elementary (Friends of ME) is a community non-profit created to advocate for the future of the

Letters Continued on page 19

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Community

A Dose of Good Dogma



Confidence is Key

by Lisa Ellman

Walking a trail, I encounter multiple people fighting to restrain their dog trying to get to another dog or greet a person. Holding your reacting dog back, tight on a leash, can sometimes, inadvertently, create actual aggression. This is a complicated matter. Perhaps your dog is excited to meet another dog, but the frustration of being tightly held back becomes too much. More often than not, I hear people say to their dog “No, no, no!” with no alternative behaviors being given to the dog to distract from the oncoming encounter. As I’ve mentioned in previous articles, “no” is not a behavior, and it provides no a trace of information about what the dog should do. The word “no” is without structure and without structure, there is chaos.

I bring up this specific behavior because, as a trainer, my real job is to change human behavior. When human behavior changes, the dog’s behavior changes. Our domesticated dogs look to us for guidance, information and security.

Often leash reactivity, whether it be dogs, bikes, scooters, strollers, etc., comes from a place of fear. Perhaps they’ve not been exposed to these situations, sounds or objects before. The way the human responds to these canine outbursts dictates the outcome; you can escalate the situation or calm it down. The dog response depends on the human response. Your dog is always responding to your energy and changing body chemistry. Your dog senses your anxiety or fear, then the leash gets taut, the dog responds by going on high alert. The dog brain goes like this: ‘My person has become fearful or anxious, they’ve tightened my leash, there might be danger so I must be more vigilant to protect myself.’ Yes, I said protect themselves, but that’s a whole other article.

Learning new behaviors can be a daunting challenge if you’ve always done things a certain way. New routines take time and effort on the part of the dog owner, but dogs are often eager to learn new tricks when there are high value rewards involved. Like learning a new language, remembering new behaviors takes a lot of practice and repetition. For your dog, it’s the same. The more often you practice the faster the change will take place. Think about the chaos between dog and human when the doorbell rings. No one knows what to do, so there’s a lot of yelling and grabbing. The ringing of a doorbell can be a trigger but teaching your dog how to react appropriately provides a solid foundation of structure and security. After learning to only give a few barks, to alert you (because that’s their job), they’ve learned the human will take over and respond.

Build your dog’s confidence by being a confident leader. Make a plan, decide what you want your dog to do in each situation and teach them to do it. Provide concrete structure. Make it

a positive learning experience for human and canine. It might be putting the dog in a sit stay or heeling quickly past the distraction or luring them with treats or a toy. Whatever you decide you want the dog to do is up to you, you are in charge.

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

Authors Signing at Volumes of Pleasure

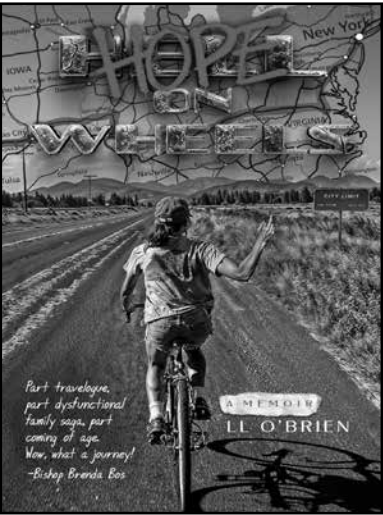
Join Volumes of Pleasure bookstore staff Saturday, August 23 at 1 p.m., in welcoming LL O’Brien and the bookstore’s very own Christine Ahern for discussion, signing, and selected readings from their books.

LL’s memoir, “Hope on Wheels” answers the question — what do you do when you’re a teenager trapped in a large, dysfunctional family? For LL, the answer was clear — escape! In her case that meant riding her bike across the country.

Entertaining at every turn, “Hope on Wheels” is a roadmap for a resilient, fulfilling life.

“Natalie Nevermore Knows Nothing” is Christine Ahern’s second novella. In this gentle, humor-filled book she explores the life of Natalie, an anxious, reclusive, thirty-something who finds herself unexpectedly becoming a sleuth into the life of her mother and, ultimately of herself; because, as it turns out, Natalie Nevermore truly did know nothing.

Light refreshments will be served and copies of each author’s books will be available for purchase.



For more information, call Volumes of Pleasure, 805-528-5565. Volumes of Pleasure is located at 1065 Los Osos Valley Road in Los Osos.

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Food Stand Opens From page 1



Interns Annie and Sophie help run the pay what you can City Farm SLO farm stand in San Luis Obispo. Photo courtesy of City Farm SLO

who need it thanks to a partnership with Harvestly, an online farmers’ market.

“If you shop, and are rung up for \$10 of tomatoes, you could choose to pay \$15. That extra, donation of \$5 will go into the fund, which will then help support someone’s purchase who can’t pay the full tab. We ask that you pay what you can”

“This is part of our efforts to make our nutritious and high value food available to anyone, no matter their income or their means,” City Farm SLO Executive Director Kayla Rutland told Estero Bay News. “We’re a nonprofit regenerative farm, and we believe in equality and food access.”

That effort also includes 7500 pounds of produce annually benefitting the SLO Food Bank.

CFS’s fruits and vegetables are grown regeneratively, a sustainable practice focusing on the health of the soil, on farm plots maintained and harvested by students, community members, and City Farm staff. The small stand sells some of what is produced on CFS’s 19 acres by their organization as well as the collaborative of five farmers that also farm the land.

“It is small,” Rutland said. “It’s not like going to a farmer’s market. It’s like going to a roadside farm stand. But everything’s picked that day. You can see where it’s picked. It’s the most delicious stuff.”

The stand is located onsite at City Farm, 1221 Calle Joaquin Road, San Luis Obispo. It is open every Wednesday from 1 to 5:30 p.m. with Saturday hours to come this month. Shoppers will also find a rotating selection of local favorites, including Bread Bike artisan breads, wool and fibers from their own sheep flock, dried goods and seasonal products., but those items are sold at market price and not available for a discount. While there, customer can chat with some farmers, feed the sheep and chickens, and walk through fields of summer crops and flowers. They accept Venmo, cash, and cards. Be sure to bring a reusable bag.

“When you do come and shop at the farm stand, it’s a great experience,” Rutland said. “Kids love coming and seeing the land that grows the food. They can walk around the different plots; they can meet our animals. So, it’s really about the experience of being there, and we want to make sure that the food is accessible to those who may need a little bit of support purchasing it and make sure that our farmers are still getting a fair price.”



Berries are grown by a tenant farmer at City Farm SLO. Photo courtesy of City Farm SLO

Proceeds directly support local organic farmers and help fund City Farm’s educational programs including farm field trips for K-5th graders where classrooms come out for two hours at a time, and they connect their classroom concepts to hands on work on the farm.

There is therapeutic horticulture for children and young adults with disabilities in the San Luis Coastal School District.

“Each of those students visit every week, so they’re getting a really immersive, deep experience on the farm where they’re building life skills,” Rutland said. “They’re working on coordination, balance, following instruction, social skills.”

Other programs for youth include a regenerative farming internship in collaboration with Pacific Beach High School. Those students are on the farm twice a week. During the summer, CFS offer a youth empowerment program for underserved teens.

“There’s a lot of challenges that are facing our young people today, and a lot of challenges facing those who are pursuing a career in agriculture,” Rutland said. “We need the next generation to be thoughtful and mindful about where their food comes from, and then also have the support and the skills to be successful in a career, to take on the challenges facing our agricultural system. So, we are really focused on health and wellness for our students and building career and college readiness skills so that any student, no matter their background, has the chance to be tomorrow’s leader.”

Funding for CFS comes from government grants, local community foundations, individual donors, corporate partners, and program revenues. Currently, the nonprofit is in a bit of a limbo with the uncertainty of federal monies that have been relied on in the past.

“Some of the grant programs that we had been eligible for in the past, we were applying to, and kind of counting on to move forward, have been canceled,” Rutland said. “The grant landscape has changed, which has a lot of ripple effects for us. We’re shifting our strategy of funding to more individual donors. We’re looking to our community to support us.”

That support can be done via a Friend of the Farm membership with a monthly contribution of any amount. Friends receive invitations to special events, and online recognition. For now, when folks sign up as a Friend, the donation will be matched by an anonymous donor up to \$25,000.

“We’re also turning to the business community support,” Rutland said. “We have a corporate partnership program where socially minded businesses can make a contribution. That comes with different levels of recognition for their company, things like volunteer days that they can attend and things like that.”

Farm tours, both private and community, are available for

small groups and families. The 1.5-hour event allows attendees to learn about regenerative agriculture practices, visit sheep and chickens, go on a taste tour, get your hands dirty with a farm project, and harvest fresh fruits and veggies to take home.

Community tours are held the first Saturday of every month with a suggested donation of \$20 per person. A reservation is required.

In 2023, approximately 47.4 million people in the United States lived in food-insecure households, about 13.5% of U.S. households, according to Feeding America. A significant portion of these individuals, nearly 14 million, were children. Those numbers are increasing.

To find out more about City Farm SLO, take a tour, or to make a donation, go to cityfarmslo.org.

For more information about Harvestly, go to <https://harvestly.org>.

DHS Equipment From page 1

from the Sheriff and the County Fire Department was enough for Supervisors to go ahead and take DHS’s money.

That money comes to the County via the State of California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services or Cal OES, so it never could be used for immigration enforcement work, as the entire State is under a law barring state and local law enforcement agencies from assisting ICE or the Border Patrol in any way to enforce the nation’s immigration laws.

And the Sheriff’s Office has been adhering to Senate Bill 54 a.k.a. the “California Values Act” or the State’s Sanctuary Law, since it was passed in October 2017.

Instead, the DHS “is providing grant funds for efforts such as planning for homeland security and other emergency operations, purchasing of specialized equipment in order to enhance the capability of local agencies responding to emergencies,” according to the report from Scott Milner with the County Emergency Services Department.

And the money was actually part of the Federal appropriations from 2024. And Supervisors authorized accepting it back in November 2023, long before the current aggressive immigration enforcement and stepped-up deportations was a thing.

The only reason it even came to Supervisors now was because they needed to make adjustments within the different departments budgets to account for the money.

The money was doled out in a three-way split with the Sheriff’s Department taking \$219,000 which it will use to buy two small, unmanned aircraft systems (drones); six sets of helmet mounted night vision devices; and eight door breaching tools.

County Fire gets \$75,000 to buy “one mercury vapor detector, one methane gas leak detector, and one ultrasonic leak detector,” according to the report.

And the Clerk-Recorder’s Office will get some \$21,000 to buy and install “electronic door access control locks and Plexiglas security barriers.

How was it decided who would get this money and how much? The County set up a so-called “Homeland Security Grant Authorized Body” consisting of Sheriff Ian Parkinson; CAL FIRE/County Fire Chief John Owens; County Health Officer Dr. Penny Borenstein; SLO City Fire Chief Todd Tuggle; and SLO Police Chief Rick Scott.

Breaking down the awards, the Sheriff’s night vision goggles cost a total of \$73,000; the door busting tools will go to the Sheriff’s and Regional SWAT Teams at a cost of \$99,500; and the drones cost \$47,000.

The mercury vapor detector will go to the County Haz-Mat Team at a cost \$35,000 and the Haz-Mat Team, which is under the control of the fire department, will also get the methane gas leak detector, for \$15,000; and the ultrasonic leak detector too at a cost of \$25,000.

The Clerk-Recorder’s Office’s security barriers, needed to “prevent unauthorized entry into staff restricted areas,” cost \$15,000; and the electronic door locks are \$6,900. Of note, the Clerk-Recorder’s Office will have Public Works install the gadgets.

And if any of the items can’t be had, the report said, “In circumstances where a proposed project is not feasible to procure or the actual cost of projects is less than that identified in the grant, a request may be made to Cal OES to fund an alternate project.

The grant only pays for the items, and any maintenance costs will have to be paid for by the County.

So why did seemingly innocuous spending cause such a ruck-us? It may be because an alert was sent out over the weekend on social media (we saw it on Facebook), with a call to arms to attend the Supervisor’s meeting and protest the grant and apparently even the hint of cooperation with immigration enforcement, an incorrect assumption at best.

Readers can rest assured that the County’s law enforcement agencies are adhering to the State sanctuary law and refusing to cooperate with ICE’s efforts to remove undocumented immigrants from our communities.



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News

Closed School From page 1

tempt to combat the high cost of housing here, a major issue with keeping people on staff.

That idea didn't fly and was dropped. Nothing much had been done there, outside renting space to several entities, until this year, when the District decided to let them go.

The appraised price for Morro Elementary is \$10.2 million, Pinkerton said.

Estero Bay News asked if any other agencies had shown interest in Morro Elementary? "At this point," he said, no one else has shown interest. I did speak with HASLO as well."

HASLO is the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo, a private company that builds affordable housing throughout the county and built a 34-unit apartment complex on Atascadero Road in Morro Bay.

He also said they haven't heard from the City either and time is growing short.

"Mid-August is the timeframe for the City of Morro Bay or the Los Osos CSD to get back to us with a potential offer. We are in discussions with the CSD on Sunnyside on finding a means to extend the timeframe as they are seeking public input.

"We continue to wait for a response from the City of Morro Bay."

Morro Bay Community Development Director, Airlin Singewald, who has been the lead staff person working on Morro Elementary School, said a decision might be forthcoming.

"On Aug. 12," he told EBN, "the City Council will meet in closed session, under real property negotiations, to discuss a potential purchase of the Morro Elementary School property from the San Luis Coastal Unified School District. The City has until Aug. 25, to notify the School District of our intent to negotiate for open space purposes under the Naylor Act."

The City Council has a subcommittee working with the staff and residents on the matter and a source close to that effort said the City Council might only be interested in the playing fields and not the buildings. EBN asked Pinkerton if it would be possible to just buy the grassy area?

"There are many ways that this process can unfold," he said, "we are waiting on the City to respond and will follow through accordingly."

However, there is a large faction of residents that see much value in preserving the old school too, for its historic value to the community and the generations of students who went there.

So what happens if the City decides not to buy it? Would the District then put it on the open market?

"We would most likely move forward with an RFQ/P process," said Pinkerton referring to a request for qualifications and proposals, "to see what the interest level is and who is interested. Each site has zoning and land uses that would have to be approved. Los Osos has water restrictions."

So while the matter has of late been out of the spotlight, the City and the residents continue to work on a good solution. That's what the District wants as well.

"We will continue to work with both the City of Morro Bay and the Los Osos CSD," Pinkerton said, "even if those timelines pass.

"Even if the Board moved forward with an RFQ/P process, we would still be able to continue to work with both groups throughout that process as well.

"We would love to see this be a win for the community as well as the school district."

Sunnyside Up

Turnout for a public meeting a couple of months ago at Sunnyside's Multi-Purpose Room was huge and feelings were high to save Sunnyside School.



Aerial photo shows the Sunnyside School property in Los Osos. Image courtesy LOCSD

Hundreds of people turned out to hear an update from CSD Executive Director, Ron Munds and to hear about work done by the CSD's engineering firm, The Wallace Group, which did some preliminary surveying of the site and came up with some potential ways it could be reused to benefit the community. They also had a few preliminary cost estimates on annual maintenance, which varied depending on the level of reuse.

Here too, the sports fields and play area are a major concern and Wallace, recognizing this looked at how those amenities could be improved to include tennis and pickleball courts, among other things.

The County Supervisors took a hard pass when they were asked if they wanted to buy Sunnyside, despite Dist. 2 Supervisor Bruce Gibson's best efforts to persuade them.

Los Osos has a deficit in adequate parklands given its 15,000 or so residents. Ironically, the County has long considered the



Arial photo shows the layout of Morro Elementary in Morro Bay. Image courtesy City of Morro Bay

four school sites in town (Monarch Grove, Sunnyside, and Baywood Elementary Schools and Los Osos Middle School) when calculating park space, though some in the community disagreed.

While the District has been generous in allowing use of the schools' playing fields for things like Little League, tennis and Youth Soccer, it's not really "public" parklands.

With the County uninterested, it's fallen on the CSD to get this done. A small group of residents calling themselves "Buy Sunnyside School," and organized by Gary Freiberg, has also been working on potential sources of money to help with the \$6 million price the School District said it was appraised at.

They recently produced a report on research they'd done into grant funding. Freiberg said he and retired Doctor Wanda Lo along with retired nurse Kathy Mills did the research into funding sources and produced the report, which they presented to the CSD Board at its July 10 meeting.

"We spent two weeks going through many different programs," Freiberg told EBN, "and filtered the list down to 38 potential fundraising resources including community involvement. (Assemblywoman) Dawn Addis's Office provided an excellent

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16

August 14, 2025 - August 27, 2025 • The Estero Bay News • Your Community, Your News

News

California grant resource.”

He added, “The purpose of the report is to reduce the ask if buying Sunnyside School becomes a ballot measure next year through mitigating fundraising.”

By “the ask” he means how much the CSD will have to ask voters to assess themselves to cover the purchase and for the upkeep of the property, as it appears that is the route this will have to take if the school is to be purchased.

Here too the School District has been renting out space to various organizations, but is now down to only one. The biggest tenant was Cal Fire, which had a training facility on site, but that facility has moved to new digs at Cal Poly.

“Cal Fire moved out,” Pinkerton confirmed. “There is a private school on the property currently. The CSD wanted them to possibly remain as a tenant, so we extended their lease for a year.”

There is much work to be done here. Before putting what is essentially a property tax measure on the ballot, an agency always tries to see if it will likely pass.

Wording of the measure is also key as in California a tax hike or assessment for a specific purpose, like buying open space, requires two-thirds majority approval.

But a tax measure for general purposes, only needs a simple majority (50% plus one). That’s where the CSD is now.

G.M. Munds said, “The next important step in the District’s process is to have a professional polling survey to gauge the community’s interest in acquiring the property.”

“The District has engaged a professional public opinion research firm, FM3, to do the work. The survey will begin around Aug. 18 and take about 10-12 days to complete.”

Los Osos readers should be on the lookout for this survey to let their feelings be heard.

“This will provide important statistically valid data,” Munds said, “to inform the Board on if the project should move forward. We are encouraging all residents that are contacted to agree to take the survey, whether they are for or against the project, so that we hear from a wide, cross section of the community.”

Meanwhile work continues on the cost estimates and listing what needs fixing to better understand what the ongoing costs to the CSD will be.

“We are narrowing down the scope of the project,” Munds said, “so to hopefully make it affordable to residents. The focus will be on acquisition and ongoing operation and maintenance of the property. Improvements will happen over time as funding is available.”

He added that the CSD Board was scheduled to meet in closed session (Aug. 7) to discuss the matter further. He said there’s really no way they can meet an Aug. 15 deadline, and he probably shouldn’t worry too much about that, as Pinkerton said they could probably give the CSD more time since they are seeking to poll the public and considering a ballot measure.

Munds said they are planning on a public outreach effort. “A public outreach strategy is being developed,” he said, “that will include multiple avenues to inform the community about the project. Examples will be tables at Farmer’s Market and Ralph’s grocery store, neighborhood canvassing and presentations to community groups.”

They’ve also contacted the County Clerk’s Office about timing for a ballot measure.

“We have been in contact with the County’s election office,” Munds said, “to discuss the requirements and schedule for the citizen sponsored ballot measure to establish the property tax. The timeline, at this point, is for it to be on the June 2026 ballot.”

And residents will soon get another chance to opine on the subject. “The project team,” Munds said, “is working on having another town hall meeting in late September, the tentative date at this time is Sept. 21, but we need to firm up the location before advertising the event.”

Joan Sullivan From page 1



Joan painted on location hundreds of local ranches for over 47 years in San Luis Obispo county.

photos and, like her mother, raised two young children alone until 1957 when she married her second husband, Bill Sullivan. They relocated to Los Angeles, CA in 1960 with their daughters and new infant son, Dean. Years later, after earning a teaching credential, Joan participated in a painting workshop conducted by Joyce Pike that brought her to the Central Coast where she immediately fell in love with the area and its rich history. She continued to attend workshops until 1970 when she moved from Simi Valley, to what was then the very rural, farm-centered community of Baywood-Los Osos.

The small house she purchased on 10th Street, a dirt road on a scrubby hillside, was the first one on the entire street. Joan loved her new life and turned her hand to whatever work she could get over the years to make ends meet while she studied the history of the area, painted and got to know many of the local ranch families. Jobs included waitressing, teaching stints, and a house-keeping job at Hearst Castle where she had access to their collections, the stories that accompanied them and was allowed to sketch parts of the castle.

In the 70s, Joan started up a location painting group called the “Thursday Painters” for which she scouted scenic locations around the county for the artists, including the mission in downtown San Luis Obispo and numerous ranches around the county. In 1976, she self-published her first book “Sketching Around San Luis Obispo County” that included her own and other artists’ paintings of the area. The Thursday Painters group continued to paint on location around the county long after Joan was no longer able to join them, only recently dis-banding.

Her interest in history led her to also start interviewing the ranchers at the locations where she painted. Her interests were about what it was like to grow up on the ranches where they were born and other details of rancher life. In 1985, she started writing

articles to go with her sketches of the ranches for “The Bear Facts,” which she collected in her second self-published book in 1989, “Sketches of San Luis Obispo Ranches.” That same year she went to work for The Bay News, her son’s newspaper, writing the Art Seen column that led to self-published books 3-6 about the ranches and other historical locations in the county.

In 1996, Joan gathered the sketches she did and stories



Joan at her new home on 10th street approx. 1971 she learned while working for Hearst Castle for her sixth book, “Castle Chronicles, Sketching Around Hearst Castle.” Her last book, “Rounding Up the Ranches, Landscapes From the Past,” was published in 2015.

Joan participated in many local history groups over the years, including San Luis Obispo Historical Society and Friends of La Loma Adobe. For 17 years she created illustrated, hand-lettered

Joan Sullivan Continued on page 19



City Manager Survey

The City of Morro Bay is in the process of recruiting our next City Manager—and we want to hear from you! Your input will help guide the City Council as they select a leader who reflects the values, experience, and character of our community.

Take the survey at <https://polco.us/sxwwn9> or by using the QR code below. The survey should take about 5 minutes to complete. Thank you!



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5/16 - 5/22
THE AMATEUR
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4PM & 7PM
*CLOSED SATURDAY MAY 17

UPCOMING SPECIALS



5/12
LAWRENCE OF ARABIA
(1962)
3 HRS 47 MIN (PG)
5:30PM



5/19
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(2023)
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Moss Landing Fire From page 1

“Vistra is required to submit detailed work plans for EPA review, implement rigorous safety protocols to protect nearby residents and workers during the cleanup, and actively engage with the community to ensure meaningful public involvement throughout the process.”

The Jan. 16 fire in Vistra’s 300-megawatt facility, on the property of the Vistra-owned Moss Landing Power Plant, was a frightening blaze that sent flames shooting hundreds of feet into the night sky at the tiny harbor town in Monterey County. The fire destroyed at least half the facility but left a second BESS plant owned by Vistra seemingly untouched.

The fire scattered black, toxic smoke for miles forcing the evacuation of the surrounding communities and triggering a major response that included agencies on the County, State and Federal levels.

It also brought out fire agencies from every surrounding jurisdiction to help fight the blaze.

The fire took several days to finally burn itself out and concerns were raised immediately for environmental effects on the surrounding areas including the Elkhorn Slough, which sits adjacent to the fire site.

EPA, at Estero Bay News’ request sent several recent photos of the burned up plant along with pre-fire photos for comparison. Roughly half the main building, which was once a power plant building dating back to the early 1900s, is completely destroyed as if a bomb detonated on it.

Scientists testing the Elkhorn Slough’s waters for toxins have raised much concern over

heavy metals, and universities have aided the government agencies in seeking to assess the environmental damage that was done.

Monterey County has a website dedicated to the fire and its aftermath, see: www.ready-montereycounty.org/emergency/2025-moss-landing-vistra-power-plant-fire.

Also, the California State Legislature is working on a bill that would further regulate battery facilities. Called the “Clean Energy Safety Act of 2025,” Senate Bill 283 was introduced in March by local State Sen. John Laird (D-15th District), who has Moss Landing as well as Morro Bay within his district and was highly critical of Vistra in the aftermath of the Moss Landing blaze.

According to a summary on Sen. Laird’s website, Laird said he wrote SB 283 “alongside the CA Professional Firefighters and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers [IBEW] to increase battery storage safety standards. The Bill mandates that new facilities adhere to the National Fire Protection Association [NFPA] 855 Standards — the most comprehensive and widely recognized guidelines for battery storage safety and hazard mitigation.

“SB 283 provides a crucial tool and safeguard to ensure battery storage facilities are built and maintained with the highest level of safety and oversight by our local fire officials. (See: <https://sd17.senate.ca.gov> for more information).

“As California expands battery storage to meet its clean energy goals,” Laid said back in March, “we must prioritize safety at every step.



Aerial image from 2022 shows what the Vistra battery plants looked like before the fire. At the right is a glimpse of Moss Landing Harbor; center is the old as00 MW power plant that Vistra is dismantling; and to the left of that is a BESS facility owned by PG&E. Photos courtesy U.S. EPA

SB 283 ensures that future BESS facilities adhere to the highest fire safety standards, protecting first responders, local communities, and the integrity of our renewable energy transition.”

Vistra had proposed building a BESS twice the size (600 MW) of the one that burned in Moss Landing (300 MW) on 22-acres of its Morro Bay Power Plant property.

The project was moving along what was to be a lengthy review process and well into an environmental impact review, until last October, when the Texas energy company first paused the City review, and in January 2025, formally withdrew its application with the City of Morro Bay.

The pause was made before a key vote in November on Measure A-24, a citizen’s initiative that affected the zoning of the plant property.

Measure A-24, which easily passed, locked in the current zoning at the power plant, which the City had changed to Commercial Visitor-Serving during its recent General Plan update. Meas. A-24 requires the City to get approval from voters before it changes any zoning for projects from Beach Street north to Morro Rock, including the power plant property.

In order to build its BESS here, Vistra needed to have the zoning changed back to industrial. So even though the project was well into the environmental review stages, Vistra decided to pull it out of the City’s purview and seek permitting under a State Law (AB 205) passed in June 2022, which allows projects like Vistra’s to go directly the California Energy Commission and bypass local jurisdiction.

However, despite telling the City that it intended to go the route of AB 205 Vistra hasn’t made a move yet.

Estero Bay News last Tuesday checked the Energy Commission’s website for AB 205 projects (see: www.energy.ca.gov/programs-and-topics/topics/power-plants/opt-certification-program), and the company was not on the formal application list for the Morro Bay project.

However, Vistra recently sent the City a letter requesting a meeting and EBN has confirmed that meeting is scheduled for Aug. 20 with the Council’s Subcommittee on the Power Plant, Councilman Jeff Eckles and Councilwoman Cyndee Edwards.

Details or any kind of agenda for the meeting hasn’t been made public however, Eckles said “My understanding is that this is a check in meeting.”

Edwards said she couldn’t comment on anything that might be discussed in the Aug. 20 meeting but noted that subcommittee reports are made by staff, in this case Community Development Director Airlin Singewald, and he would report on anything that needed reporting.

“I would say,” Edwards commented, “I’m as interested as you are ... always.”

Council subcommittees have a special item listed on all of the Council meeting agendas for reports from its various subcommittees. After the private meeting takes place, it should be expected that the subcommittee would make a report to the council and the public at the

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News

Tuesday, Aug. 26 meeting, assuming that meeting goes ahead on the regular schedule.

EBN sent emails to Vistra’s spokespeople asking for comments on this meeting as well as the status of the Moss Landing plant cleanup but the company has not responded.

Just checking in wouldn’t seem to require a face-to-face meeting and on the off hand chance that this is more than that, speculation brings two basic possibilities to mind — either Vistra will inform the City of its intent to apply to the CEC or of it’s intent to drop the project entirely.

A third possibility is that they could ask to resume the original project review by the City. But a City Ordinance passed earlier this year, now prohibits any “grid scale” battery storage facilities from being built within the City Limits, so that avenue may now be closed to Vistra.

And in the aftermath of Moss Landing, the odds of getting voters to approve of one here twice the size, are slim at best.

And Vistra has already declined a previous City suggestion that the company donate the entire 117-acre power plant property to the City.

But that was before the Moss Landing Fire, which has significantly affected support for the Morro Bay project, indeed support for BESS projects within any community in the State of California.

Letters From page 11

historic Morro Elementary campus and Soccer Fields. To provide research and a confident strategy, the Friends of ME engaged an historic consultant, a land-use attorney, planners and architects, and a construction specialist. These efforts have provided a debt-neutral option for the City to acquire the 10-acre site and

Joan Sullivan From page 17

awards commissioned by the California State Archives Foundation for services given by notable members of our society and was instrumental in preserving and getting the Los Osos one-room schoolhouse moved to its present location near the Los Osos Community Center on Los Osos Valley Road. In addition to writing and painting, she also created a series of video recordings from those interviews that were aired on the local charter network television station. She donated the entire series to the Los Osos Library.

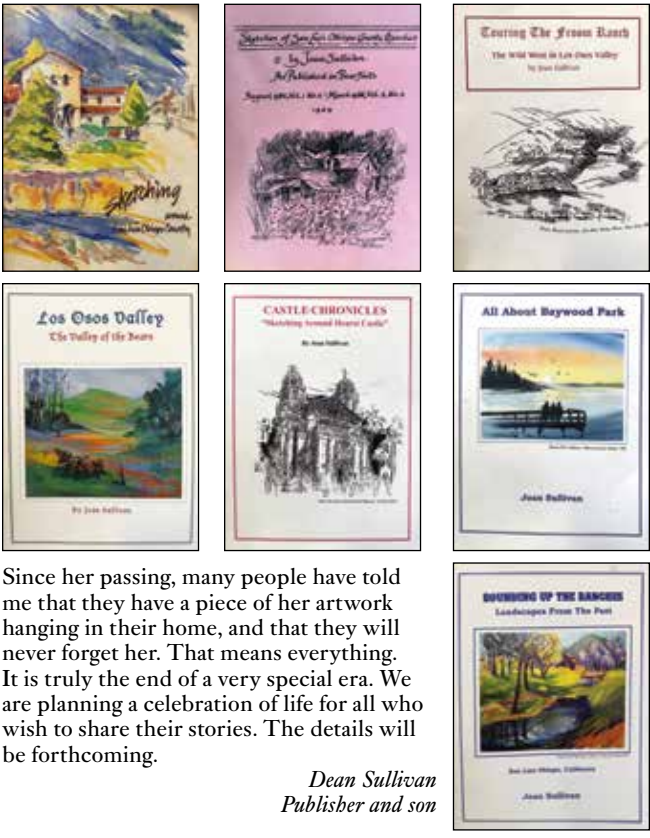
Joan was a big part of starting what was The Bay News in 1989. She wrote stories, edited copy and perhaps became best known for her column, “Art Seen.” She was always ready to help in any way. In her later years, when she could no longer work, she often commented that she missed working for the paper and meeting such wonderful people. She also contributed a column called Coffee With Joan to this publication.

In a few months, Joan would have been 100. She passed a short month after her brother, actor Jack Betts. She is survived by her three children, Lynne Johnson, Gail Johnson, and me, Dean Sullivan, as well as her four grandchildren. She packed a great deal of adventure, grit, and love into that century. She was my mom — a huge influence on me. She was strong, and she taught us to never stop trying. She touched many people’s lives in this community.

buildings to implement a community civic center for this one-time, critical opportunity.

For more information, contact the Friends secretary, Linda Donnelly, (805)459-8982.

Betty Winboltz
Morro Bay



Since her passing, many people have told me that they have a piece of her artwork hanging in their home, and that they will never forget her. That means everything. It is truly the end of a very special era. We are planning a celebration of life for all who wish to share their stories. The details will be forthcoming.

Dean Sullivan
Publisher and son

Free Family Fun Day

Looking for a fun and free way to spend a Saturday with the whole family? Join First Baptist Church of Los Osos for Family Day on Saturday, August 23, from noon to 3 p.m. at 1900 LOVR, Los Osos. This exciting community event features free food, games, and music for all ages. Bring your friends and neighbors for an afternoon filled with laughter, connection, and fun. Everyone is welcome!

For more information, contact First Baptist Church of Los Osos at fbcflsosos.com.

August 8-24

Proof

Written by David Auburn Directed by Samvel Gottlieb

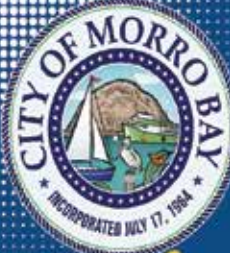
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