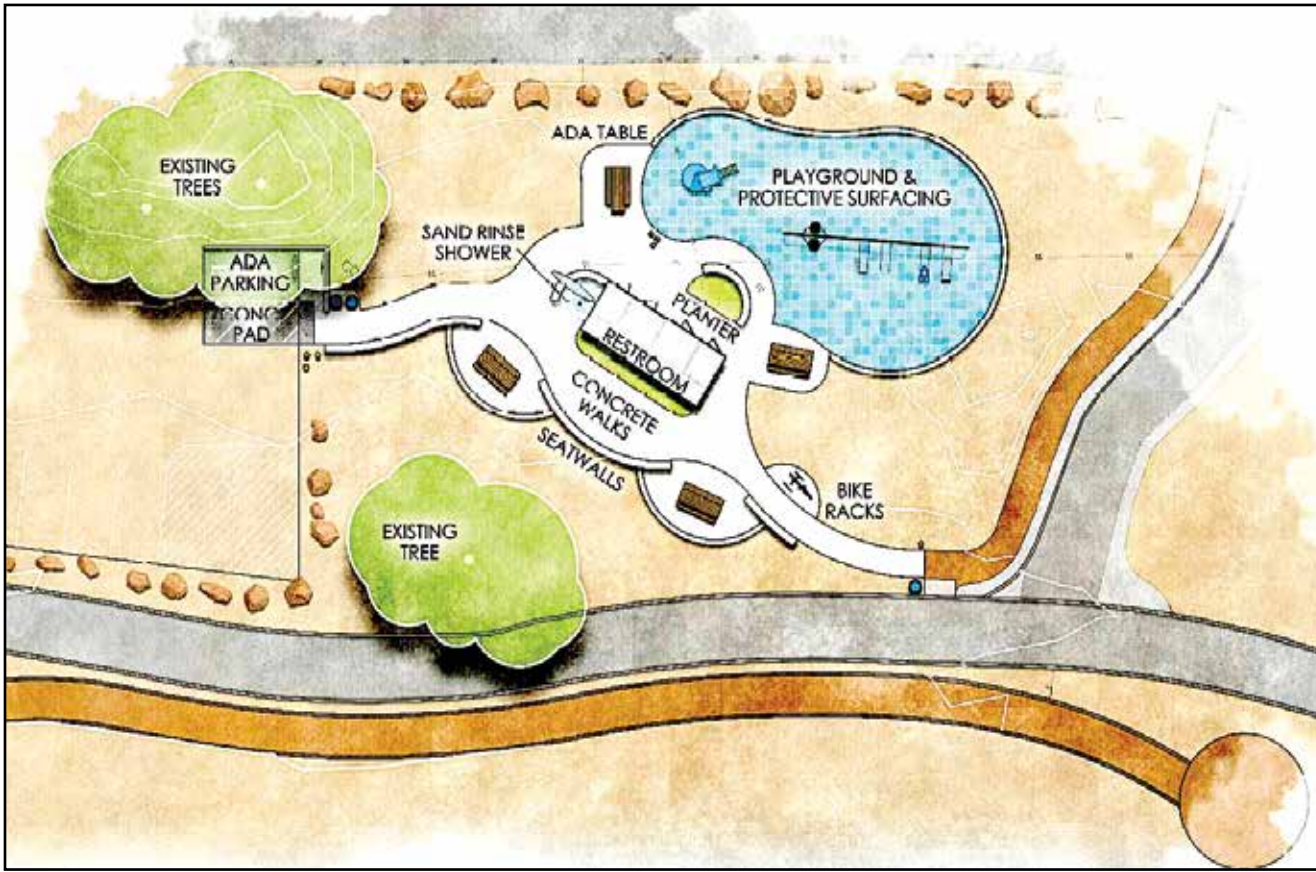


Coleman Park Rebuild Phase 1 Out for Bids



Here's the design for Phase 1 in the rebuilding of Coleman Park. The City is reviewing bids now for a construction contract.

By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay's saddest looking public park will be getting a makeover, and the first phase of the transformation should soon have a contractor onboard.

Coleman Park, one of two City parks sitting adjacent to the harbor, has been on the radar for rebuilding for several years.

Earlier, the City hired RRM Design to design the improvements for the harbor-side park, which were developed by the City after several meetings with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

The park currently has a swing set, a basketball court, two small dirt parking areas and two paved parking areas, a trio of picnic tables and not much more; and is covered in loose sand. The Harborwalk pedestrian and bike paths run along the southern edge of the park.

It used to have a public restroom, but that concrete block building was condemned several years ago and torn

down. But a rebirth is on the horizon.

The City is out for bids now for "Coleman Park Improvements — Phase 1," and the deadline to bid was set for Feb. 17.

Once the new City Engineer and the Public Works Department go through the bids and compare pricing, a recommendation for approval will be taken to the City Council to award a contract.

"For this project," City Engineer Nate Stong told Estero Bay News, "Phase 1 is located just west of the intersection of Coleman Drive and the Embarcadero."

The Phase 1 work will include grading, installing concrete walkways leading to a new pad that would be plumbed for water and sewer service. The plan is to have another company come in and install a "prefabricated" new restroom.

The City Council approved paying \$333,000 to CXT for a pre-cast concrete building that can be done in various layouts and used for different things.

Coleman Park Continued on page 21

Spending Plan Approved for November Tax Hike Vote



Map shows how the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments divides up SLO County with regards to transportation funding. Map courtesy SLOCOG

By Neil Farrell

San Luis Obispo County voters will be asked in November to approve a sales tax hike to fund road repairs and leverage even more money out of the State and Uncle Sam.

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) board recently voted to approve the "San Luis Obispo County Transportation Expenditure Plan," the general outline of how the agency plans to spend a half-cent sales tax, if voters go along with the plan.

The tax hike would raise \$35 million a year according to SLOCOG, which is in the process of asking local city councils to endorse the plan. The Morro Bay City Council is slated to hear the spending plan at its Tuesday, March 10 meeting (6 p.m. Vet's Hall), according to a schedule put out by SLOCOG.

The Morro Bay City Council was given the draft plan in early January, but no action was taken. The Council had just two members of the public comment on the matter, with one suggesting a change in who decides the local road priorities and the other opposed to the tax hike and calling on SLOCOG to lobby Caltrans for a fairer distribution of gas tax monies.

Interest in the tax hike should pick up considerably as the November Election nears.

Tax Hike Vote Continued on page 22

Our Stories: Mike Gerson, a Morro Bay Entrepreneur



SLOFAST Board members Mike Gerson and Bob Brennen announce the SLO rifle range will reopen Friday, February 27 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Picture by Judy Salamacha

By Judy Salamacha

Foremost, Mike Gerson is a family man. He and wife Bridgette live in Morro Bay and enjoy being involved with whatever their children, Hayden, 17, and Myla, 10, might be focused on as they grow towards

adulthood. But his concept of family also extends to those in his various chosen business and community affiliations. When Mike decides to get involved you can count on him being all-in.

For example, his latest undertaking has been working with passionate board

Our Stories Continued on page 22

News President and General Manager of KCBX Named

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



After 45 years, the Central Coast's National Public Radio member station, KCBX, has a new general manager. Chris McBride has been named to the position of the station founded in 1975.

"I am just thrilled to be part of a cherished community organization with passionate, loyal and generous listeners and supporters," McBride told Estero Bay News. "People really believe in the importance of what we do, and that's inspiring."

New President Continued on page 23

State Designates County as 'Pro-Housing'

By Neil Farrell



The State of California has recognized San Luis Obispo County for efforts to ease the "housing crunch," and changing its General Plan to be more pro-housing.

"The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)," reads a news release from the County, "has announced the County has earned the prestigious 'Pro-housing Designation.' It is a recognition reserved for cities and counties that go above and beyond in enacting bold, locally driven policies that accelerate housing produc-

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Lease
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Blotter
Page 8**



**She Said
Yes
Page 12**



Council Approves Campaign Donation Limit



By Neil Farrell

With three seats up for election in November, Morro Bay City Council candidates will have new limits on campaign donations, after the City Council unanimously approved setting individual limits far below what State Law allows.

The City Council approved a local ordinance (Ordinance No. 675, Chapter 2.50) setting the campaign limits at \$500 for “candidate-controlled committees,” reads the report from new City Attorney, Brian Stack.

So, anyone who wishes to donate to their favorite city council candidate is limited to \$500 total within 90 days of an election.

However, a candidate can donate or loan his or her campaign up to \$100,000 under State Law.

The interest in a local campaign limit ordinance started last October when the Council voted to have such an ordinance come back for discussion, Stack said.

“Prior to 2021,” Stack said, “there were no campaign contribution limits on local political races unless the jurisdiction established their own limits. Like Morro Bay, many local jurisdictions did not have local contribution limits.”

In 2021, he added, Assembly Bill 571 went into effect and put in default limits for donations for local offices. “Local jurisdictions,” Stack said, “could still establish their own limits, but if they did not the state limits would apply by default.”

The default limits were set at \$5,500 with a clause to adjust for inflation and are now \$5,900 per donor per election.

The personal contributions made by the candidates themselves were not included on “First Amendment” principles. However, “There is a \$100,000 cap on personal loans from a candidate to their controlled committee, unless the local jurisdiction establishes their own contribution limits,” Stack said.

And if a donation blows past the limit, the candidate could be in trouble.

“Contributions either in the aggregate or on their face that exceed the established limit,” Stack’s report said, “shall be deemed not to have been accepted if returned within 14 days of receipt, so long as the committee did not make use of the contribution.”

“Existing city penalties and enforcement mechanisms (specifically administrative citations, criminal prosecution, and civil actions) would be available in the event violations occur that are not remedied by the candidate within 14 days.”

There are advantages to setting the campaign limit so low.

Stack explained, “Establishing local campaign contribution limits of less than \$1,000 would simplify reporting requirements for campaigns, as there would be no need for treasurers to prepare, or the City to accept 24-hour contribution reports for contributions of \$1,000 or more in the 90 days leading up to an election.”

And such low donations fall below the threshold where a council person would have to disclose it or recuse himself “related to business and land use permitting.”

By passing its own campaign limit ordinance, enforcement now falls entirely on the city’s election official, the city clerk and prosecution would fall to the city attorney. The State Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) would no longer be the go-to enforcement agency.

The standard penalties that the City has for breaking its local ordinances would apply. “This includes administrative fines beginning at \$100 per violation up to \$500 for repeat violations, criminal prosecution as an infraction or misdemeanor, and civil actions for injunctive relief and civil penalties.”

“The local campaign contribution limits,” Stack continued, “and regulations being proposed are straightforward, provide a reasonable grace period and would likely be self-enforcing given existing reporting requirements that would remain unaffected by the local ordinance.”

The new ordinance, however, does not mention campaign contributions for ballot initiatives. In the November 2024 General Election, none of the city council candidates were opposed on the ballot and the only thing Morro Bay voters faced was Measure A-24, a citizen’s initiative that sought to throw up a roadblock to a proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Project being proposed by power plant owners, Vistra.

Two citizen-led camps arose in the fight over Meas. A24 — Citizens For Estero Bay Preservation in support and Morro Bay Citizens Opposed to Measure A-24 against it.

In the run up to the election the opposition forces were greatly bolstered with some large campaign donations from outside political entities.

On Sept. 23, (2024) the Opposed Citizens’ Group filed paperwork listing a \$26,000 donation from the “Local Jobs & Economic Development Fund” based in Dover, Del.

Two days later, a second form showed the Local Jobs & Economic Development Fund donated another \$22,800 for a total of \$48,800.

It was by far the two largest donations to a Morro Bay election campaign in town history.

Outside money continued to roll in as the opposition folks filed paperwork on Sept. 28 recording a \$7,000 donation from “Green Light Action” out of Washington, D.C. and another \$15,000 donation on Oct. 1 from Green Light Action.

Ironically, Vistra, which had the most to lose, stayed out of the fray.

In comparison the supporters of Meas. A-24 reported getting about \$19,000 for the entire campaign.

All told, the opposition to Meas. A-24 amassed the largest war chest in the town’s history at some \$90,000, but it was for naught, as the measure was approved with some 59% of the vote.

At the time, the city clerk said the big donations were perfectly legal. “Contributions to ballot measure committees are not limited by State Law,” City Clerk Dana Swanson said back then.

AB 571 does not put any donation limits on ballot initiatives, whether they are local, countywide or statewide.

The new ordinance will be in effect in November, when Mayor Carla Wixom and Councilwomen Zara Landrum and Cyndee Edwards will be due for re-election.

The official nomination period doesn’t happen until the end of summer. It remains to be seen if all three run again and if anyone steps up to challenge them for the seats.

In 2024, the three council spots were uncontested and Mayor Wixom and Councilmen Jeff Eckles and Bill Luffee won by default. It was the first election where all three council seats were uncontested.

County-PG&E Renew Communications Center Pact

By Neil Farrell

A special media center, used in times of natural disasters, will continue to be in use, after the County Supervisors approved a new agreement with Pacific Gas & Electric.

Called the “Joint Information Center” or JIC, it is “used to coordinate emergency services communications to the media and the public,” reads a report from the County Office of Emergency Services or EOC.

The new agreement is the second amendment of the original agreement and adds up to 10 years to the pact.

The JIC was established in 1999 inside a Coun-

ty-owned building on Kansas Avenue next to a County maintenance yard.

“The County,” the report said, “issued a Use Permit to PG&E to allow PG&E to place two modular buildings at this location for the JIC.

“The JIC is used to coordinate all incident-related public information activities. It is the central point of contact for all news media at the scene of an incident.”

The facility allows the County, PG&E and other emergency agencies to work together to disseminate public information.

“The goal of the JIC,” the County report said, “is to increase public awareness and increase collaboration and communication between agencies within the County with the goal of improving disaster preparedness and response; to be prepared for any type of disaster that may occur; to communicate information to the public quickly, accurately and effectively during an emergency; and to get the facts to the public in a timely manner before misinformation can spread.”

The agreement dates to January 2009 with a “Media Center Lease,” the report explained. That agreement had provisions for two, 3-year lease extensions that were approved in January 2012 and 2015. It ended at the end of 2017. An amendment to the original lease was approved in 2018 and expired at the end of 2025, the report said.

This second amendment of the lease was backdated to Jan. 1, 2026, and expires at the end of 2030. From there it allows for annual extensions for another five years. But both can also back out of the pact.

“The Parties both have the right to terminate upon 180 days written notice at any time during the term, or any extensions thereof. The Amendment updates and adds select lease provisions to align with current County standards.”

The lease costs nothing to PG&E, but the company continues to own both buildings. PG&E also pays for routine maintenance costs, and the County is only on the hook for minor operating costs for supplies and incidentals, which are budgeted as normal operating costs.

The JIC almost got removed. The site on Kansas Avenue was the first choice for a new, co-located Sheriff’s and CAL FIRE/County Fire dispatch center.



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News

But the decision was made to move the dispatch center and build the new center in Templeton. That new dispatch center handles all CAL FIRE/County Fire dispatching plus the Sheriff's calls, as well as 9-1-1 calls for both fire and police for several cities in SLO County. Morro Bay police and fire departments are dispatched from the new communications center.

In a related County OES matter, the City of Morro Bay and County OES have renewed an agreement that makes the Morro Bay Community Center available for emergencies.

Morro Bay Fire Chief, Daniel McCrain said in a Jan. 13 report to City Council, "the County of San Luis Obispo is responsible for providing emergency services to protect the safety and welfare of county residents during a state of emergency proclaimed by the Governor of the State of California or a local emergency proclaimed by the County Emergency Services Director or the Board of Supervisors or during other times of need and/or emergencies."

County OES approached the City about using the Community Center as a "disaster shelter."

"The County," Chief McCrain said, "will use the facilities to provide shelter for impacted residents of the emergency on an as-needed basis. The County will provide the required staffing, food, transportation, and supplies for displaced individuals requiring use of the shelter."

He stressed that the Community Center "is not for the purpose of a warming or cooling shelter [for the homeless], only for a temporary shelter in the event of a disaster or local emergency."

The Community Center has been used for an emergency shelter before.

"The community center was utilized for an emergency evacuation shelter during the 2023 flooding events," Chief McCrain said, "without support of the County. City staff coordinated staffing of the facility and provided supplies until County OES was able to deliver a supply trailer."

"Having this agreement in place will streamline this process and help ensure adequate liability protection for both parties."

The Community Center was also set up about 25-years ago as a City Emergency Communications Center, and was the site of several drills the fire department coordinated to train City staffers from various departments — police, fire, harbor, finance, community volunteers and public works — to set up emergency communications and have one central place where disaster response could be coordinated.

When the City completed the new, Harbor Street Firehouse, that function was moved to the new fire station.

In March 1995, when torrential rains caused major flooding in town, the fire department set up an overnight emergency shelter at Morro Bay High School.

And though the school's new gym was set up to take in about 100 people, no one actually stayed there, and the water had receded by the next morning.

\$250K Going to Cayucos Beach Stairway Repairs

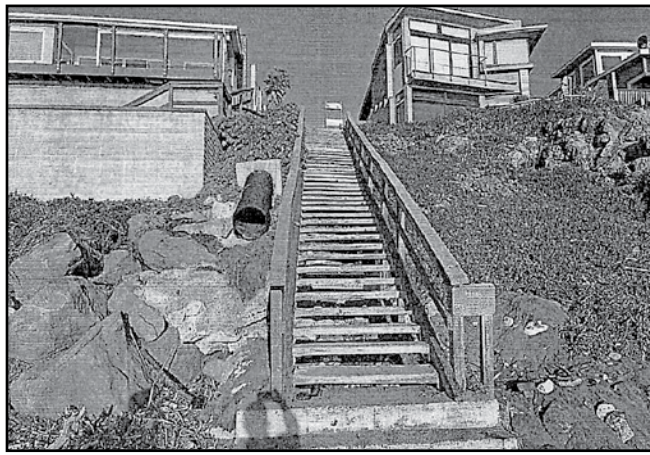


Photo shows the Mannix Avenue public access way staircase in Cayucos looking upwards from the beach. Photo by SLO County

By Neil Farrell

County Supervisors approved an agreement that will get the ball rolling on replacing a public access stairway from the Cayucos Bluff down to the beach, and an orthopedic surgeon who wants to shore-up his house will foot a significant portion of the bill.

Dr. Marshall Lewis, an orthopedic surgeon in the Central Valley had applied to build a seawall in Cayucos shoring up the bluff below his home.

When his project, an approximately 145-foot long and 30-45-foot tall seawall that would improve an existing seawall, went before the Coastal Commission, the board concluded that his project would cause significant environmental impacts.

The decision was that the project impacts could be mitigated through "various measures." Those included Dr. Lewis working with County Parks and Recreation on a project to replace a public access way at Mannix Avenue, which had deteriorated so badly it's been closed to the public for some time. Mannix Avenue is a short 1-block street off Studio Drive in South Cayucos.

The Commission's conditional approval of a Coastal Development Permit called for "the restoration of the stairway at the Mannix Avenue coastal access way," a County report quoting the Commission's decision reads, "to in as good or better condition as it's last significant overhaul, including concrete foundation and wooden stairway improvements."

He also has to remove invasive plant species and re-plant with native plants along the stairway, and improvements to a storm drain that empties onto the beach adjacent to the stairway.

The County and Dr. Lewis' agreement involved him paying \$250,000 towards the overall project, which the

County estimates will cost upwards of \$1.3 million.

Overall, "The plan includes replacement of the beach access stairway in its entirety with similar or better-quality materials; including, but not limited to: (1) installing a new storm drain inlet, public access signage, a bench with an accessible landing, and garbage receptacles; (2) replacing the asphalt transition from the street to the pathway and concrete pathway leading to the stairs; and (3) addressing various accessibility-related deficiencies," the County report said.

The quarter-million-dollar payment will just get the paperwork done. "The \$250,000 funding contribution from Dr. Marshall Lewis," the report said, "will enable the Public Works Department to initiate the project by preparing design plans, completing environmental review, and obtaining necessary permits."

Once they get that preliminary work completed, Public Works will have a better idea on the costs.

"Public Works Department will refine the cost estimate," the report said, "and return to the Board with a request for the funding necessary to complete construction by the Commission-established deadline of Jan. 1, 2028."

The stairway's condition and subsequent closure was discovered through the County's "Facility Condition Assessment Program," an inspection and survey of County-owned public facilities like the beach access ways in Cayucos, which were created by the Coastal Commission decades ago.

Over the years several of these steep stairways have fallen into disrepair and been closed. A major one at 1st Street and Pacific Avenue, was closed for some 12 years before the County could make repairs, which are always very costly.

The 1st Street project cost some \$271,000 when it was completed in 2019.

How the program works is, "each facility is assigned a Facility Condition Index ("FCI") which is the ratio of the cost to correct all deferred maintenance deficiencies within a facility divided by the current replacement value of the facility.

"The FCI is structured such that the lower the rating, the better relative condition."

Mannix Avenue access way had an 83% FCI rating, but once it gets replaced and repaired, the rating will drop to zero.

Cayucos has some 24 beach access ways scattered from 1st Street down to the end of Studio Drive.

"Furthermore," the County said, "upon completion of the project, the beach access way will be reopened to the public, and an ongoing maintenance plan will be established and implemented by the Parks & Recreation Department."

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Bike Park Gets New Lease



This mountain biker caught some serious air when the Morro Bay Bike Park opened in 2015. File Photo by Neil Farrell

By Neil Farrell

Off road bike riders can continue enjoying a local track after the City Council and the property owner agreed to a new lease.

The City Council approved a new, 5-year lease for the Morro Bay Bike Park, a constructed dirt track with hills and whoop-to-dos designed for off-road riders.

The entrance to the Bike Park and a small parking area are on Little Morro Creek Road and is part of the overall park owned by Pacific Gas & Electric and is the property involved in the lease.

The bike track sits on city-owned property and spans the area from Little Morro Creek Road down to Main Street.

The City and PG&E entered into an initial 5-year lease in 2015, when the Bike Park was built by the Central Coast Concerned Mountain Bikers or CCCMB.

That initial agreement called for the City to pay the lease costs and be reimbursed by CCCMB.

The City is the official licensee, “for insurance requirements,” said a report on the agreement.

In 2020, the two sides approved a new, 5-year agreement. “However, PG&E never billed the City until the final year when the City received a bill for the full 5-year, \$2,500 amount. After negotiation, PG&E agreed to waive this cost. This agreement expired in August of 2025.”

As with most things having to do with utility companies, the costs in the new agreement have gone up.

“PG&E,” the report said, “indicated that they would seek an increase in fee for the 5-year agreement starting in 2025, with \$600 in the first year and increases of \$100 per year thereafter during the term of the agreement.

“Staff negotiated this increase to \$550 in the first year with increases of \$50 per year during the term of the agreement.”

Again, the Mountain Bike group will reimburse the lease costs, according to the report.

The Bike Park was built after a tiny dirt bike track at Flippo’s Skate Harbor on Atascadero Road was closed as part of a project to expand an RV park.

Bonnie Johnson a long-time city employee and the support services manager at the police department decided to organize local parents and kids to raise money and build a bike park.

At the time, Johnson had a teenage daughter who was a downhill mountain bike racer. Johnson said back in 2015 that she used to take her children to the Flippo’s track when they were little and sought to recreate a place where families could go for some outdoor recreation.

The non-profit, CCCMB got involved too and while it took nearly three years to get it built, they got it done.

A professional BMX track designer, Alex Fowler of Action Sports Construction of Santa Cruz, was hired to design and build the dirt track. The Bike Park remains free to use and suitable for any non-motorized, off-road bicycles – not just the BMX style bikes.

Diablo Canyon Looking For Panel

Folks looking to get involved in future plans for Diablo Canyon have the opportunity to serve on a dedicated panel.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) is pursuing the steps to continue operating Diablo Canyon Power Plant (DCPP) up to 2030 as directed by the state, PG&E will continue to provide opportunities for community input regarding future decommissioning plans and potential future uses of the Diablo Canyon site. The utility and the Diablo Canyon Decommissioning Engagement Panel (Panel) announced that applications are now being accepted to join the Panel.

“New members are sought to join this local, non-regulatory stakeholder group who have been providing community input to PG&E since 2018 regarding ongoing decommissioning planning activities,” said PG&E representative Carina Corall in a new release. “There are several positions subject for appointment or reappointment consistent with the Panel’s Charter. The 30-day application period ends March 22.”

Members of the community who are interested in joining the Panel can obtain more information on how to apply at pge.com/engagementpanel.

Current Panel members not seeking reappointment, as well as one representative from PG&E and the California Public Utilities Commission, will select candidates who broadly reflect the diverse stakeholder viewpoints in proximity to DCP, according to the release.

Public meetings will continue to provide members of the Panel with opportunities to learn about the technical aspects of the decommissioning process and provide input. This forum will also provide opportunities to engage with PG&E on the potential future use of the lands that surround DCP and potential repurposing of its facilities.

Consistent with the Panel’s Charter, elected officials and current PG&E employees and their immediate family members will not be considered eligible for community membership on the Panel.

Fines Increased for Vacation Rental Violations

By Neil Farrell

Owners of vacation rentals could get hit with a hefty fine for violating the City’s “Short-Term Rental Ordinance,” after the City Council voted to amend its municipal code.

The Council has set fines for violations to the STR Ordinance at just \$100 for a first-time offense; \$200 for a second offense within a year; and up to \$500 for a third and subsequent citations in the same year.

But a 2021 change in State Law, Senate Bill 60 (SB 60), changed everything.

SB 60 allows local jurisdictions to greatly increase fines for STRs “that pose a threat to health or safety,” reads a report from Community Development Director Airlin Singewald.

SB 60 hiked the fines up to \$1,500 for a first offense; \$3,000 for a second offense within a year; and, \$5,000 for additional violations within a year, according to the report.

The amended City Ordinance has a broad definition of public safety threats. “As specified in the proposed ordinance,” the report explained, “violations that pose a threat to public health or safety include but are not limited to the operation of a short-term rental without a valid short-term vacation rental permit, material false representation on any short-term vacation rental application or self-inspection form, or a material violation of any operational requirements.”

Singewald’s report continued, “There are limitations on how these fines can be imposed. For example, they cannot be imposed on first-time failures to obtain necessary STR permits. As required by the State Law, the proposed ordinance also references the hardship waiver process.”

That hardship process basically says that anyone getting an administrative citation has the right to request an



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administrative hearing. A written request must be sent to the police department.

The cited person must be notified of the sharing date no less than 309 days in advance, and if there's a report on the violation written by the City staffer involved, the cited person must receive a copy of that report no less than 10 days before the hearing.

The City Manager picks the hearing officer, who cannot be a City employee, according to the Muni Code (Sec. 1.03.080).

Under the City's STR program, the number of "full home" permits is capped at 175 for residential areas, and there's no cap in commercial zones. There is also no cap on so-called home-share STRs, wherein the owner lives in the home and rents out a room or two to visitors.

STRs also cannot be in close proximity to each other, with a 175-foot buffer required between them.

STRs are also subject to the City's Transient Occupancy Tax of 10% of the cost of a night's stay, and STRs are also included in the Tourism Business Improvement District, a 3% of a night's stay charge that funds the local tourism bureau, dba Visit Morro Bay.

The City hired a company, HdL to search the Internet for STRs being advertised in Morro Bay and used that report to compare to its list of permitted STRs to root out anyone illegally operating within the City.

As of Jan. 1, 2025, the City started requiring "all existing STR permit holders to renew their permits, as required by the STR Ordinance. This will involve completion of a renewal application and City inspection to verify compliance with applicable standards, including, but not limited to, parking and signage requirements."

When the STR License Program first started, the permit limit was set at 250 but was later reduced to 175 by the City Council. There are more than that who hold permits and the City is not issuing any new permits for residential zoned STRs until the number drops below that 175 limit, through attrition.

Cal Poly Partners Open New Building in Technology Park



The second building at the Cal Poly Technology Park is open. Photo courtesy of Cal Poly

Cal Poly Partners opened the second building at the Cal Poly Technology Park, marking the start of phase two of the project, which is planned to grow into a 120,000-square-foot campus focused on innovation and workforce development.

The new two-story, 16,200-square-foot facility is designed to enhance collaboration between Cal Poly students and industry partners while advancing the university's Learn by Doing mission.

Tenants in the new building include SLO County Fire/CAL FIRE, the Cal Poly Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Institute, the U.S. Geological Survey California Water Science Center, Harrow Services – Career Consulting and The Forward Thinking Company.

The Tech Park looks for technology-based tenants with a focus complementary to Cal Poly's technical programs and demonstrated success in applied research and

workforce development. As the Tech Park continues to grow, Cal Poly Partners hopes to expand its broad array of technology areas that draw from Cal Poly's curricular strengths and faculty expertise.

"The completion of this second building represents an important milestone for the Technology Park and for Cal Poly's partnerships with industry," said Jim Dunning, associate executive director of Real Estate Development and Services at Cal Poly Partners. "This space strengthens our ability to connect students with real-world experience while supporting innovation and economic growth."

The Cal Poly Technology Park is an innovation hub that connects industry, public partners and researchers with Cal Poly students and faculty to support applied research, workforce development and hands-on learning. Located on the Cal Poly campus, the park offers modern facilities, high-quality infrastructure and direct access to Cal Poly's Learn by Doing environment.

Mud Flow Closes Hwy 1 Again



Rocks, mud and debris overtopped a concrete barrier on the northbound shoulder of Hwy 1 at Regent's Slide, forcing Caltrans to close the highway again, after reopening it in mid-January after nearly two years being closed. Photo courtesy Caltrans

By Neil Farrell

A little over a month after reopening early, Caltrans had to again close Hwy 1 at Regent's Slide, after heavy rains washed mud and rocks down the barren slope onto the roadway.

"A 6.8-mile segment of Highway 1 near Regent's Slide remains closed due to ongoing debris cleanup as a result of ongoing winter storms," reads a news release from Caltrans spokesman, Kevin Drabinski dated Feb. 17.

Hwy 1 was closed from 2-miles north of Lucia, Drabinsky said, to 1-mile south of the Esalen Institute. Message and directional signs are in place to alert travelers in advance of this closure."

Regent's Slide, which first came down Feb. 9, 2024, closed the scenic highway to through traffic until it was reopened Jan. 14, a date that was over two months earlier

HWY 1 Continued on page 6

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Estero Bay New Briefs

By Theresa-Maria Wilson

Lifesaving Equipment Installed in City of SLO



Jessica Bower, the senior director of cardiovascular services for Dignity Health Central Coast, and Greg Larsen, AED program coordinator at French Hospital, pose with an AED unit. French Hospital has received a grant that will help distribute 20 AEDs throughout the City of San Luis Obispo.

French Hospital Medical Center has launched a vital new Automated External Defibrillator (AED) program, significantly enhancing sudden cardiac arrest preparedness throughout the City of San Luis Obispo.

"With heart disease being the leading cause of death in California, and over 80% of cardiac arrests occurring outside of a hospital, immediate access to an AED can be the difference between life and death," said FHMC's Joe Baily. "Survival rates decrease by 7-10% for every minute defibrillation is delayed. This new program aims to bridge that critical time gap for residents."

The French Hospital AED Program, launching in February to coincide with American Heart Month, will provide qualifying organizations with an AED unit, a wall-mounted cabinet, accessories, and essential online training for staff, all at no cost. The program prioritizes businesses and groups that:

- Are located in San Luis Obispo.
- Have over 100 employees or have meeting spaces with a capacity of more than 100 people.
- Currently lack an AED on their premises.

This new initiative was made possible by a \$28,000 grant from The Harold J. Miozzi Charitable Trust. This contribution will fund the purchase and strategic distribution of 20 AEDs to high-occupancy businesses and public meeting spaces across San Luis Obispo.

"We believe this program will improve our community's ability to respond to medical emergencies and save lives," Baily said.

Addis Bill to Close Food Chemical Safety Loopholes

Assemblymember Dawn Addis (D-Morro Bay) introduced Assembly Bill 2034 (AB 2034) to close federal loopholes that allow companies to label certain additives as "generally recognized safe" (GRAS) without clear oversight or public disclosure.

"Healthy foods are essential to a healthy life, and Californians deserve clear, honest information about what they're putting in their bodies," said Addis. "For far too long, companies have exploited vague labeling and federal loopholes to conceal dangerous chemicals in the foods that families trust. AB 2034 will close those loopholes and strengthen transparency. No one should have to guess what's in their food or worry that they're unknowingly exposing themselves or their children to harmful chemicals simply by sitting down to eat."

Sponsored by the Center for Science in Public Interest, AB 2034 would grant California health officials the authority to independently review potentially harmful food chemicals and would require companies to disclose ingredients often hidden behind vague terms such as "artificial flavors," "natural flavors," "spices," or "artificial colors." Those disclosures would be filed in a publicly accessible

database managed by the California Department of Public Health.

"Consumers deserve to know what's being added to their foods and to have confidence that those chemicals are truly safe," said Thomas Galligan, Principal Scientist at the Center for Science in the Public Interest. "For too long, the FDA has let Californians down, and AB 2034 will rectify that."

AB 2034 now awaits referral to committee.

Los Osos Spring Clean Up week March 2 - 6.

Mission County Disposal customers in Los Osos can put extra trash out for free pick up with some "bulky" items requiring special notifications March 2 - 6.

Residents can set out up to six bags of trash (32-gallon capacity each), with a maximum weight of 25 pounds and length of 4 feet per bag for no additional cost.

If you have bulky/large items, you can schedule a special pick-up at a discounted rate during Clean-Up Week.

For discounted bulky items, customers must call at least three days prior to your collection day to schedule 805-543-0875.

For more information, go to sanluisgarbage.com/residential

Mission County reminds folks that there are local resources for reducing and reusing items other than a landfill. Have larger items that are still in decent shape? Try Habitat for Humanity, they might even pick up certain things. Got e-waste? Perhaps iFixit can get you the hard-to-find parts, and share the know-how, to get it done. Otherwise, most e-waste is accepted free of charge at our Cold Canyon Landfill, and some local retailers.

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

HWY 1 From page 5

than Caltrans had predicted and touted by Gov. Gavin Newsom as a major accomplishment. Mother Nature apparently had other ideas.

"The slope above the roadway at Regent's Slide remains stable," Drabinsky said. "However, the catchment area at the base of the slope has filled with debris that has eroded during recent rains.

"This erosion activity is an expected outcome following recent slide repairs and will continue as the slope seasons over time."

The mud flow washed over the concrete barriers that were set alongside the roadway at the base of the 450-foot slide scar.

Large rocks and a lot of mud collected on the roadway forcing the closure so cleanup crews can get to work.

"Crews will begin to clear debris from the catchment

area during upcoming breaks in the rain," Drabinsky said. "This cleanup effort is dependent on weather and site conditions. Updates will be provided as work progresses and at present there is no estimated time for a full reopening."

A low-pressure system offshore of California that came in Feb. 15 brought up a fierce storm from the south that drenched the Central Coast with, at times, down pouring

HWY 1 Continued on page 17

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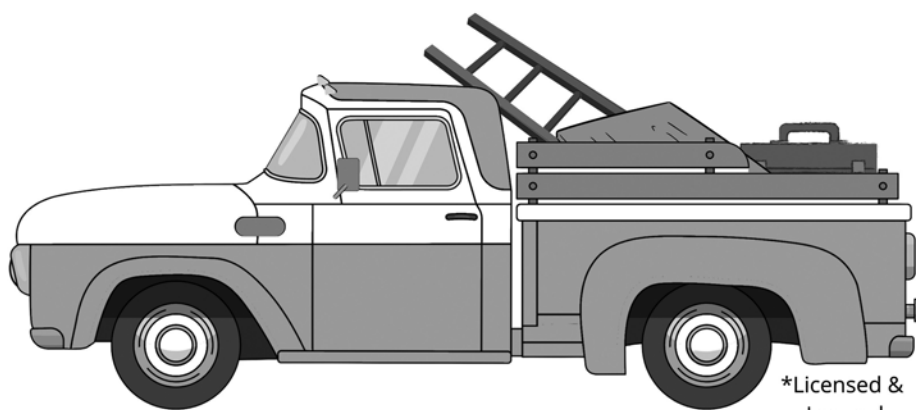
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Police Blotter



- **Feb. 15:** Police responded at 8:56 a.m. to chase off some meat sack who was refusing to skeddaddle from the Human Bean, in the 800 block of Morro Bay Blvd., across the street from the police station.
- **Feb. 14:** Police were called at 10 a.m. after some apparently evil valentine broke into a business at an undisclosed location and made off with some unlisted treasure.
- **Feb. 14:** Police responded at 11:54 a.m. to a traffic collision somewhere in town. No word on the severity of

the damage or the suffering of those involved, but we can always pray for the best outcome.

- **Feb. 14:** Police responded at 3:08 a.m. to an undisclosed location after someone reported a smash-n-dash crash.
- **Feb. 14:** Police were called at 3:05 a.m. to deal with some sort of disturbance at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated the disturbance was caused by some disturbed dingus who was drunk, which itself is disturbing.
- **Feb. 13:** Police responded at 6:19 p.m. to a reported abuse of an elderly/dependent adult, someplace in town. Logs deemed it an aggravated assault but no further details were given.
- **Feb. 13:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 2:07 p.m. someplace in town. Logs indicated the driver hadn't paid the DMV its pound of flesh and that he or she was allegedly in possession of nitrous oxide or laughing gas, which is nothing to laugh about and no doubt wiped the smile off their face.
- **Feb. 12:** Police contacted a suspicious subject at 6:13 a.m. somewhere in town. Logs indicated the apparent scruffy Philistine was arrested for resisting arrest, trespassing, being a "public nuisance" and having an open container of booze, which explains a lot.
- **Feb. 12:** Police responded to a disturbance at 9:17 p.m. at an undisclosed house involving alleged battery of a spouse by some louse.
- **Feb. 12:** At 1:06 p.m. somebody found something someplace and turned it over to police to do something with.
- **Feb. 12:** Police responded at 1:22 p.m. to the 800 block of Embarcadero after some undesirable fellow walked into the Harbor Walk Inn and then refused to leave.
- **Feb. 12:** Someone found something somewhere and brought it down to the police station.
- **Feb. 12:** At 9:06 a.m. police cited another scoundrel who'd left his or her car parked too long in the same spot, a hanging offense in some places.
- **Feb. 12:** Police contacted a suspicious subject out and about at 1:38 a.m. when all are suspicious in this town at that hour. Logs indicated the annoying flesh monkey was allegedly stoned on drugs and in violation of his or her parole.
- **Feb. 11:** At 10:47 p.m. police stopped a suspicious vehicle at Anytime Fitness on Quintana Road. Logs indicated they nicked the driver for suspicion of boosting the vehicle without the owner's permission and in violation of parole.
- **Feb. 11:** Police responded at 9:20 p.m. to Albertson's Market on Quintana for someone using the help-yourself aisle. Logs indicated the sticky-fingered sneetch was also tanked up on hooch, proving once again there's more to the elephant than the tusks.
- **Feb. 11:** Police responded to a disturbance call at 1:54 p.m. at Morro Rock. Logs indicated the problem was some inebriated Mamaluke who was apparently having a bag lady moment.
- **Feb. 11:** Someone found a no doubt valuable treasure

and turned it over to police at the stationhouse.

- **Feb. 10:** Police responded at 7:32 p.m. to a disturbance at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated they started a case for felony spousal abuse and let's hope they put the sinister scamboogah away.
- **Feb. 10:** Police responded at 11:10 a.m. to a report of somebody with stolen property. No word on if they stole it themselves or got it from some other weasel.
- **Feb. 9:** Someone called police at 9:13 a.m. to report their identity was stolen, and we've no idea who they are.
- **Feb. 8:** Police responded at 10:24 p.m. to the Rockview at Sunset Apartments for some sort of informational incident that apparently didn't amount to much.
- **Feb. 8:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 9:06 a.m. at some undisclosed location. Logs indicated they spanked the driver for suspicion of driving loaded and apparently with a child in the vehicle, which they declared was felony child abuse.
- **Feb. 7:** Police responded at 12:17 p.m. to a disturbance somewhere in town. Logs indicated it was apparently a crazy case for County Mental Health.
- **Feb. 7:** Police were called to a disturbance at 1:39 a.m. at a legendary Downtown watering hole in the 900 block of Main. Logs indicated they nicked some rabble rouser for suspicion of being on the razzle at Legend's Tavern.
- **Feb. 6:** Police contacted a suspicious subject at 2:38 p.m. at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated the person was busted on suspicion of possessing illegal drugs and got tossed to the wolves.
- **Feb. 6:** Police responded at 10:16 a.m. to a disturbing guest at the Morro Inn & Suites on Atascadero Road. Logs indicated the disturbing disturber was allegedly high on drugs and crashed in the County lockup.
- **Feb. 4:** Police responded at 5 p.m. to the abandoned former Rite Aid store on Quintana Road where some hooligan had reportedly snatched a purse from someone.
- **Feb. 4:** Police responded at 1:07 p.m. to an undisclosed location for a report of some scalawag breaking into and stealing items out of an assumed parked vehicle.
- **Feb. 3:** Police responded to a suspicious subject report at 11:22 p.m. at the closed but apparently still popular Rite Aid store on Quintana Road. Logs indicated they contacted the hoodlum and busted him or her for suspicion of possessing illegal drugs, and having more than two prior convictions for the same nincompoopery; possession of drug paraphernalia, and of course a bench warrant, a case of thunderation man, there must be a safer place than Rite Aid to get stoned.
- **Feb. 2:** Police cited an apparently offensive vehicle at 3:57 p.m. someplace in town for violation of the parking-in-one-place too long law.
- **Feb. 2:** Police responded at 11:24 a.m. to the Cypress Morro Bay RV and MHP in the 1100 block of Main for a report of grand theft involving money, labor or property, all of which seem despicable.

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Cal Poly Instructor Arrested

San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Detectives served a search warrant in the city of San Luis Obispo as part of an ongoing investigation into the alleged sexual exploitation of children.

On February 18, as a result of the search warrant, detectives arrested 38-year-old Kevin Coulombe of San Luis Obispo on multiple charges, including contacting a minor with the intent to have sex and arranging a meeting with a minor for



Kevin Coulombe

sexual purposes.

"Search warrants were served at Coulombe's residence, his vehicle, and at Cal Poly, where he is currently employed as an instructor," said Sheriff's spokesperson Tony Cipolla in a news release. "Further investigation revealed Coulombe was previously employed as a teacher at San Luis Obispo High School and Menlo-Atherton High School in Atherton, CA, prior to his employment at Cal Poly."

Anyone with additional information related to this investigation is asked to contact the Sheriff's Detective Division at 805-781-4500.

This investigation is part of the Sheriff's Office's continued effort to serve and protect San Luis Obispo County and to proactively target those who victimize the most vulnerable members of our community.

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News

County Releases Tourism District Report

By Neil Farrell

County Supervisors approved continuing with an assessment district of lodging businesses to continue with tourism promotions but could do so under a different State Law.

Supervisors received the County Business Improvement District (CBID) annual report at their Feb. 10 meeting, outlining the activities of the CBID and reporting on how much it brought in and how the money was spent.

The report from Tessa Cornejo, the County's principal administrative manager in the Executive Office, reported that the CBID brought in some \$2.83 million in Fiscal Year 2024/25 through a 2% assessment on the cost of a room night stay. Included in the CBID are motels, hotels, B&Bs, and vacation rentals in the unincorporated areas of SLO County.

Out of that total, the report said, 2% or \$56,000 was retained by the County for administrative costs and VR licensing; 50% of the remainder was spent on "regional CBID marketing and visitor initiatives;" and 50% was returned to the tourism boards from each community to spend in that community.

Part of the regional tourism marketing included the Highway 1 Road Trip promotion, and "Stewardship and Sustainability Programs."

The regional monies were doled out to some 18 contracted vendors and totaled \$1.48M, which exceeded the take of \$1.41M. The County dipped into "carryover" funds to cover the shortfall.

"CBID admin expenses," the report said, "include H1TA non-profit services [shared admin expenses], financial support, County general administration and County District administration fees totaling \$152,089, which represents 8% of total income and 10% of total expenses of \$1,497,395 [marketing and other]."

"General administration and County District admin-

istration fees are shared expenses with the local fund areas based on their percentage of contribution."

Direct costs totaled \$663,000 or some 44.38%. And there are 18 business contracts "and represent 32 people that work directly on CBID business, with \$833,000 in contractor fees or 55.7%."

The local tourism boards collectively got \$1.41M and had \$1.28M of it under contract. Typically, the local tourism boards have just one marketing contractor, either an individual or an ad agency, the report said.

From July 2024 to December 2025, the report said, the local tourism boards spent \$334,000 on 34 local special events and infrastructure projects.

Since CBID started, the report said, they've collectively spent \$1.69M on 218 special events.

In calendar year 2024 they spent \$95,000 and \$115,000 in 2025. There were 11 events in 2024 and 11 in 2025 that they funded.

As for the survey of CBID properties, "Overall perceived value of the CBID was rated above neutral," according to the report.

"Tourism marketing and promotion emerged as the top priority. This includes both regional CBID-level marketing efforts and local tourism board activities. Marketing initiatives were most frequently ranked as the highest priority and received the strongest perceived impact ratings."

Events and festivals were ranked second most important, followed by beautification and infrastructure.

And, "Stewardship initiatives were generally ranked lower in priority, though still viewed positively."

The majority of respondents said they had a high or moderate understanding of what CBID does, and the minority said they didn't know, with those folks being mostly newcomers to the lodging industry. And, "Approximately 75 percent of respondents indicated interest in greater engagement or learning more about CBID programs."

The survey had a pretty good response at 235 total. Among those five of 32 B&Bs (16%) responded; 45 of 50 motels (90%); and 185 of 1,406 vacation rental owners (13%) responded. Of note, licensed zero-rent properties, 747 of the 1,406 total vacation rental licenses, responded,

some 24%.

Also, "93 of the 185 were from individual owner/operators not vacation rental management companies."

As for the governing law, the CBID was formed and has operated under the 1984 Streets and Highways Code, which applies to assessment districts of all types. It has drawbacks.

"The 1989 law," the report explained, "does not require a comprehensive district management plan, provides fewer statutory standards related to governance structure and advisory body composition, and includes more general provisions for reporting and accountability."

In 1994, the State passed the Tourism Business Improvement District Law to better address these shortcomings.

"The 1994 law requires adoption of a detailed District Management Plan that clearly defines district boundaries, assessment methodology, governance structure, program categories, and benefit rationale," the report said. "It also provides enhanced transparency and accountability provisions, including clearer reporting expectations and renewal procedures, and offers greater flexibility to tailor governance and cost apportionment to reflect how different lodging businesses receive benefit."

Switching the governing law means having to disband the old CBID and re-forming a new one. The County will have to go back to the assessment members and sell them on changing the governing law to the 1994 one.



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Big Contract Let for Watershed Management Plan



Photo shows the flooding at Atascadero Road and the Embarcadero in January 2023. File photo courtesy Becka Kelly

By Neil Farrell

The City of Morro Bay continues to deal with the fallout from the floods of January 2023 and is now embarking on a study to write a management plan for the Morro Creek Water Shed.

The City Council recently approved a \$1.37 million contract with Stillwater Sciences, Inc., an engineering firm specializing in science-based water shed and environmental studies. Stillwater has offices up and down the state including one in Morro Bay.

Officially called the “Morro Creek Watershed Management Plan,” the new study seeks to encompass the entire Morro Creek water shed, which stretches to the east along Little Morro Creek Road and into County-controlled lands.

But it also will focus on protecting a key piece of Morro Bay’s drinking water system as well as look at the flooding issues that have plagued the area of Morro Creek at Main Street, with repeated flooding.

“Following the flood events of January and March 2023,” reads a report on the contract award, “the City successfully applied for funding under

FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) through the California Governor’s Office of

Emergency Services (CalOES).” The grants were for two specific projects:

- Flood-proofing the brackish water reverse osmosis (RO) plant; and,
- Storm drain assessment.

The City’s RO plant is located in the City Corp Yard on Atascadero Road. It was originally a desalination plant, but the City decided it didn’t need an RO desalination plant and instead turned it into a plant that filters brackish

groundwater from its Morro Basin wells at Lila Keiser Park.

The plant’s filters were switched out several years ago to treat brackish groundwater (fresh water) rather than the water it was pulling from wells strung along the Embarcadero (seawater).

When the big floods of 2023 hit, the area along Atascadero Road was hit pretty hard.

“Although the RO building itself was not flooded during the 2023 storms,” the report said, “the building is within the 100-year floodplain as mapped by FEMA.”

As for the storm drainage problem, the focus is on the Main Street corridor adjacent to Morro Creek, which has flooded repeatedly in the past 30 years or so. Each flood leaves the private property in the area awash in mud.

“This initiative,” the report said, “focuses on conducting a hydrologic and hydraulic analysis, as well as identifying project alternatives to address flooding from Morro Creek in the Main Street, Radcliff Avenue, Preston Lane, Errol Street, and Atascadero Road areas.”

The State OES and FEMA grants won’t pay for more than studying the two problems. “The proposed grants,” the report said, “will not cover construction costs for the implementation of the solutions found in this study/preliminary engineering phase of the project. The City will need to seek additional funding for the construction phase of the proposed projects.”

The City also contracted with the Coastal San Luis Resources Conservation District (RCD) to have them manage the grants. According to the report, RCD would be paid \$33,000 out of the RO plant flood-proofing grant; and \$68,000 for the storm drain assessment portion, with Stillwater Services doing both studies.

The City also has skin in this game, as local matches for the grants topped \$400,000 — \$95,000 for the RO Plant portion and \$336,000 for the storm drain assessment part. Overall, the budget for the study tops \$1.72M.

Stillwater’s contract spells out an entire scope of services including several types of surveys and mapping, as well as conducting a series of public meetings to inform the public of the project and its progress.

The flooding along Main Street first happened in March 1995, when about 13-inches of rain fell overnight and overwhelmed the Morro Creek channel. In that case, debris piled up at the Main Street bridge, washed down from higher up in the water shed. The water backed up and flooded Main Street to Radcliff up to 6-feet deep in some spots.

It washed over onto Hwy 1, closing the highway and effectively cutting the town in half.

By morning the water had drained away leaving a thick, muddy mess from Radcliff to Atascadero Road and covering about a square mile.

In 2023, the creek flooded again, inundating the area

at Main and the creek, though not to the same extent as the big one in ‘95.

The January 2023 flooding happened during two days of fierce rain. The same area along Main Street was hit again when runoff overwhelmed the creek channel, and along Atascadero Road, the heavy runoff collided with a storm surge on top of a high tide and also flooded the intersection of Atascadero Road and the Embarcadero, under about 4-feet of water.

In each of these flood events, the water drained away fairly quickly, as the natural flow to the sea returned once the rain let up.

Sheriff Nabs Suspected Booze Thief

The Sheriff’s Department announced the capture of a man they said pulled off a major grand theft of thousands of dollars’ worth of alcohol from a grocery store in South County.

The case started Feb. 2, according to a news release. “On Feb. 2,” Sheriff’s spokesman Tony Cipolla said, “Sheriff’s deputies investigated a theft at the Vons grocery store in Nipomo in which the suspect allegedly stole approximately \$4,000 worth of alcohol over the course of about 1 hour.”

The suspect reportedly removed individual bottles from their boxes, Cipolla said, and concealed them under his clothes and in a backpack before leaving the store.

“The suspect returned to the store multiple times during the theft,” Cipolla added.

No description of a getaway vehicle was obtained, though that much booze would obviously have to be transported via some sort of vehicle. Cipolla didn’t say



The Sheriff’s Department arrested a San Diego parolee that was wanted in connection to the theft of thousands of dollars of alcohol from a Nipomo grocery store. The photo, which was released by the Sheriff’s Department shows the suspect in the midst of his alleged grand theft.

Morro Bay

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News

what kind of alcohol was taken — whether it was bottles of wine or hard liquor.

The department asked if anyone could identify the suspect, or if they might have information about similar thefts and someone apparently did, because a few days later, they nabbed the suspected brazen booze thief.

On Feb. 19, Cipolla announced the arrest, which occurred Feb. 12 during a traffic stop.

The suspect was identified as Georgian Lovesmith, 23, no known local address, and a parolee out of San Diego. He'd apparently been busy.

Deputies also recovered a total of over \$10,000 worth of suspected stolen items when they made the arrest, according to the second news release.

The public provided key information in the case. "The Sheriff's Office," Cipolla said, "would like to thank the community for their assistance and cooperation, which played a key role in bringing this case to a successful conclusion."

New Trouble on Hwy 1

As winter's grip on the Big Sur Coast continues, a new troubled spot has opened up on Hwy 1.

Caltrans announced Feb. 20 that it had put in place 1-way traffic signal controls at Post Mile 54.9, north of the Big Sur Lighthouse.

A photo released by Caltrans shows the edge of the highway with signs of slippage, as a large crack in the pavement has opened on the downslope side.

"This signalized control," reads a news release from Caltrans Dist. 5 in San Luis Obispo, "will be in effect over the next weeks as crews work to stabilize and repair the embankment at the edge of the southbound lane. Updates will be provided on the progress of repairs.

"Travelers can expect delays of up to five minutes. Please allow for extra time during your travels through the area."

For road information and updates see Caltrans Dist. 5



Social Media platforms: Twitter at: CaltransD5, Facebook at: Caltrans Central Coast (District 5) and Instagram at: Caltrans_D5.



3CE's 2025 Annual Report Out



The local energy provider has issued its annual report for 2025, touting the good it's doing with ratepayers' money.

Central Coast Community Energy (3CE), the public agency energy company that provides electricity for some 1.2 million customers — from San Cruz County to Santa Barbara County — said it "invests revenue back into the community to deliver clean electricity while advancing economic development and climate action."

The report delves into 3CE's "community investments, customer-driven programs, and clean-energy milestones in fiscal year 2025 (from Oct. 1, 2024 through Sept. 30, 2025) demonstrating how local control translates into measurable benefits for the communities it serves."

The report details "the \$15 million in rebates distributed by 3CE in its fiscal year 2025, including \$6.2 million supporting equity-focused projects alongside major milestones in clean-energy delivery, customer enrollment, and local engagement.

"Since launching service in 2018, 3CE has invested nearly \$38 million to help electrify Central Coast homes, businesses, transportation, and agriculture."

See: <https://3cenergy.org> to view the full Annual Impact Report.

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Community They Will



Photos by Dean Sullivan

There's something special about two locals finding their way back to each other.

Last Friday, February 20, Connor Sullivan — son of Estero Bay News Publisher Dean Sullivan — proposed to his longtime girlfriend, Adriana “Addie” Linhares-Cegueda at Sweet Springs Nature Preserve. She said yes.

Connor and Addie are both Estero Bay natives. Born just two months apart at Sierra Vista Hospital, they grew up in the same community and graduated from Morro Bay High School in 2019. While they shared hallways in high school, they never met.

It was Connor's sister, Aly Sullivan, who gave fate a nudge with an Instagram post encouraging “ladies, hit him up.” Addie did just that. Their first date? A ride up Hang Glider Hill in Cayucos in Connor's 1997 Toyota 4Runner — a Central Coast beginning for sure.

They've now been together for four-and-a-half years. Addie is the daughter of Tessa and Paul Hannula (her step-father) of Los Osos and Erick Cegueda (her father). Her family's roots here stretch back generations. Her great-grandmother immigrated from Spain as a child, and the family has called this area home ever since. A first-generation college graduate, Addie earned an Associate of Science in pre-nursing from Cuesta College and now works in Los Osos as a dental assistant. She plans to continue her education in dental hygiene. Friends and family also know her as a talented craftsperson, always creating something beautiful by hand.

Connor's family history on the Central Coast also runs deep. His great-grandfather owned a Buick dealership on Monterey Street in San Luis Obispo in the 1950s. Connor's mother, Shari O'Connor Sullivan, grew up in the 5-Cities but ventured away to Los Angeles, San Francisco and Humboldt before ultimately returning home to Los Osos. His



father, Dean Sullivan, settled in Los Osos as a child in 1970 after some formative years in Southern California.

Connor attended Cuesta College before transferring to Cal Poly, where he is set to graduate this June with a degree in computer science.

Together, Connor and Addie enjoy hiking and traveling — especially to backcountry destinations — along with cooking and tending to an ever-growing flock of chickens.

Two families with long Central Coast histories, one well-traveled 4Runner, and a proposal that keeps it all close to home. We wish them a lifetime of happiness as they begin this next chapter together.

Chamber Breakfast Programs 2026

By Judy Salamacha

The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce kicked off its 2026 monthly Breakfast on the Bay February 18 introducing Morro Bay's new city manager, John Craig, the new Chamber CEO, Tina Clark, and outgoing Visit Morro Bay Executive Director Michael Wambolt.

Craig noted, “in a small town you need to protect your character, and, unlike elected officials, staff doesn't change so we're accountable. We need to be predictable, responsive, effective, and remain true to the identity the community already has. I know I'm an outsider, so I need to hear from you what matters.” And he already realizes and appreciates many in the community are willing to speak up. He believes Morro Bay needs to protect “our values and assets by supporting our small businesses, investing in our roads and water system, protect and leverage our own identity, and build partnership so we are all rowing in the same direction.”

Some areas Craig intends to work on include developing a resilient harbor and waterfront, tourism “that works for us,” and housing for our needs to keep the city function-



The City of Morro Bay's new City Manager John Craig was introduced at the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce's return of Breakfast on the Bay program. Photo submitted

ing.

“I like a community that cares enough to show [up].” Craig said and promised, “I will do what I say.” And said he is ready to “move forward without losing my identity.”

CEO Clark also appreciates the positive reception she has received by the council, city staff, chamber members and folks in the community that she's had a chance to visit with over the last few weeks.

“People care in Morro Bay,” she said.

Clark has a background in government and regional planning as well as nonprofit organizations. Her pledge is to develop working partnerships connecting business and local government. She has enjoyed being out and about to meet with businesses and hopes to expand and hear more from the current members. Clark noted the Breakfast program is the 3rd Wednesday of the month and open to the public. Other events to watch out for this year are the Gala Awards Banquet May 30, a fall re-make of AvoFest, and, in April, join businesses in town for Shop, Sip and Stroll.

Wishes for continued good fortune was heard when Michael Wambolt announced he had accepted a comparable position in Cody, Wy. next to Yosemite National Park. Regarding tourism promotion for Morro Bay, he mentioned Cal Trans' recent reopening of Hwy 1 was a bonus since for the past couple of years Visit Morro Bay has had to develop alternate ways to attract visitors. Promoting the essence of who we are — “our outdoor activities and beauty of nature” permeated Visit Morro Bay's outreach marketing.

International travel invitations were targeted to the UK and Germany. Visit Morro Bay worked more actively with local nonprofits and groups sponsoring events to bring visitors during the off season.

Visit Morro Bay is currently interviewing for his replacement and hopes to have someone on board soon. His new position's board of directors has been patient since Wambolt hoped to stay around to help through this transition. He said, “It was not without a heavy heart to accept this position but living next to Yellowstone Park and with our love of the outdoors, we had to try it.” He will miss Morro Bay and will be missed, but family here will also bring him back to visit.

Susan Stewart, owner of Beads by the Bay and Chair of the Chamber's BAC/Business Advocacy Committee, concluded the program by saying, “There's lots to be gained by using the past to move forward towards economic stability.”

And she then opened the last 20 minutes for announcements: Rich Man Poor Man is celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2026; A-1 Auto Glass is looking for a new Morro Bay site; John Solu plans to open his unique hotel in a redesigned historic WWII Quonset on Main Street on April Fool's Day; Kendall Welch said tickets are available for the May 18 showing at the Bay Theater supporting the Morro Bay Maritime Museum. The movie “Hunt for Red October” features MBMM's biggest exhibit, the DSRV submarine. Morro Bay's downtown has a new retail business 805 Fearless which moved from a home-based business to 844 Main Street. The Safety Resource Center offers safety products and will continue to offer self-defense programs like Damsel in Defense.

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AAUW
Morro Bay (CA) Branch

AAUW empowers women in the workplace through social and racial justice and access to public education. We provide scholarships to young women in middle school high school and at the college level, through nursing as well as a variety of fields, with special emphasis for women re-entering college to improve their economic outlook.

The annual local garden tour is our major method of earning scholarship funds.

This year we have four excellent, yet diverse gardens, two in Los Osos and two in Morro Bay. This year's tour is Sunday, April 26 from noon till four.

Nancy Nagano will be playing the cello in Sherry Woods garden in Los Osos.

Tickets are \$20 and gardens can be viewed in any order.

Community

Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Join the Pismo Beach CVB Stewardship & Educational Outreach Program for an evening of wine, education, and advocacy in support of Western monarch conservation on Feb. 28 from 6 to 9 p.m. at The Cliffs Hotel and Spa, Pismo Beach. Wine and Wings: An Evening for Monarch Conservation will bring together education, wine, and community action to celebrate and protect one of nature's most remarkable migration stories.

- **Welcome Reception:** Sip tastings from five SLO Coast wineries, enjoy light bites, and connect with stewardship partners from across the Central Coast.

- **Panel Discussion:** Hear from local researchers, conservation advocates, and industry leaders on the current state of Western monarch populations and habitat protection along our coastline.

- **Keynote Speaker:** Science writer and environmentalist Mary Ellen Hannibal will share a compelling narrative on the monarch butterfly — exploring migration patterns, the challenges facing Western populations, and meaningful ways individuals and communities can make a difference.

This event is sponsored by the Pismo Beach Conference and Visitors Bureau, with a portion of every ticket benefiting Western monarch conservation efforts, including the California Central Coast Stewardship Partners Association and the Atascadero City Monarch and Pollinator Native Garden Corridor Project.

Tickets are \$20 and available on Eventbrite.



Upcoming free youth programs in March at the Morro Bay Library - 625 Harbor St, (805) 772-6394.

- **Beaded Art Party** - Wednesday, March 4, 3 - 5 p.m. Use your imagination to make unique art pieces using beads, paper, pens, pencils, scissors, glue and more. Creative options available for ages 3-12.

- **Engineer a Fairytale** - Wednesday, March 11, 3 - 5 p.m. Engineer a happy ending to your favorite fairy tales! Build a chair even Goldilocks can't break or a bridge for the three billy goats gruff or a house strong enough no wolf can blow it down! STEM fun for ages 3+.



The Cal Poly Jazz Combos Winter Showcase is set for 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 5, in the Pavilion of the Performing Arts Center. There are four jazz combos which explore a wide spectrum of jazz performance, from modern and traditional styles to original compositions and arrangements, Afro-Cuban and Brazilian-influenced repertory,

and classic standards. Tickets are \$22 and available from the Cal Poly Ticket Office.

Don't miss the Punk Rock Drag Show fundraiser for Colectivo Mariposa on Sunday March 8 at 6 p.m. at Humdinger Brewery, SLO. This is an 18 and over show. Tickets are \$15 advance, \$20 at the door and are available at my805tix.com. The night features band performances by Martirio, Lot in Life, and Bone Maggot. Drag performances by The Shimmer, Marceline Powerchord, Vicky Jean, Carbon Bard, and Estrella Electrica.

Colectivo Mariposa is a local mutual aid group based in Santa Maria that provides food, diapers, and miscellaneous small items to families who have had a family member arrested by ICE. The number of families that they service have drastically increased in recent months to roughly 200 families. As a result, Colectivo Mariposa is in need of funds to purchase food and other items for the families, and they are organizing benefit shows to fundraise.



The Cal Poly Choirs' "Cantus Novus" Concert at 8 p.m. Friday March 6, in Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, will feature Renaissance and Renaissance-inspired works by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, Claudin de Sermisy and Cristóbal de Morales among others. PolyPhonics and the Chamber Choir will join to perform the featured piece of the program, "Mass in G Minor" by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

University Singers will open the concert with one of the most iconic choral works of all time, "Sicut cervus" by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina who was born in 1525. Last year marked the 500th anniversary of the composer's birth. The choir will also perform works by 15th-century composer Claude de Sermisy, as well as modern works in Latin by Joseph Martin and Kyle Pederson.

The Chamber Choir will present a very special requiem mass by Spanish Renaissance composer Cristóbal de Morales. "Missa pro defunctis" was composed around 1554. PolyPhonics and the Chamber Choir will join to perform the featured piece of the program, "Mass in G Minor" by Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Tickets are \$22 general, \$12 students and are available at pacslo.org.

The San Luis Obispo Symphony invites the community to experience the brilliance of history's greatest composers including Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven at Classical Hits at Performing Arts Center San Luis Obispo. As part of its ongoing community access initiative, the Symphony is continuing its limited \$20 ticket program to make live orchestral music more accessible. These tickets require no promo codes or special qualifications and are available on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last.

Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 highlights the lively interplay between multiple soloists and the full orchestra, offering several SLO Symphony musicians the opportunity to shine. Mozart's luminous Clarinet Concerto in A Major brings elegance and warmth, spotlighting one of the most beloved concertos in the classical canon. The evening concludes with Beethoven's groundbreaking Symphony No. 3 "Eroica," a bold and heroic work that redefined the scale and emotional depth of symphonic music and continues to inspire audiences more than two centuries later.

Standard tickets, starting at \$32, and the limited \$20 community tickets are available through the SLOSymphony box office. For tickets and information, go to slosymphony.org.

ny box office. For tickets and information, go to slosymphony.org.

Canzona Women's Ensemble's upcoming concert, Renaissance, Baroque, and Beyond: Sacred and Profane, takes place on Sunday, March 1, at 3:00 p.m. at the San Luis Obispo United Methodist Church.

This concert takes audiences on a journey through centuries of music, blending sacred and secular works for women's voices. Highlights include a Renaissance "Magnificat" by Isabella Leonarda, 16th-century Renaissance Marian motets composed by an Italian nun, Medieval and Renaissance antiphons and madrigals in English, French, and Italian, early Baroque duets and trios, and the 20th-century "Litanies à la Vierge Noire" by Francis Poulenc, featuring organist Janis Johnson.

Special guests Grace Seng and Amethyst Shanks will join on violin to enhance the Baroque Magnificat. The concert is generously sponsored by Cricket Handler and Jerry Boots in honor of Jill Anderson, Canzona's co-artistic director.

Tickets are available at the door or through Canzona's website. For more information about the concert, visit www.canzonawomen.org.



Costa Gallery will feature acclaimed painter Flo Bartell with her vibrant exhibition "Color Play" in tribute to her milestone 85th birthday. This striking contemporary collection will be on view through March 29.

Flo's new painting series focuses on deep, saturated colors using the ancient art form of encaustic's materials and techniques. She uses beeswax, pigment and resin, with applied heat to create her fascinating treasures. The result is a supple & durable surface, best enjoyed in person.

The San Luis Obispo artist was originally attracted to the depth of color she could achieve with the waxy medium. Flo's early encaustic work was bright and colorful, then evolved to a more neutral palette in her narrative designs and compelling 2D and 3D art creations.

"Now, after more than a decade of working primarily in cream, gray, and black, I feel an urgent need to return to strong, rich colors," Flo said. "I want to see my favorites--red, coral, teal, and citrus green--melt in my pans and ooze from my brushes. I'm also ready to take a break from heavily content-focused work to enjoy a period of play in my studio."

"Color Play" will be shown in conjunction with Costa Gallery owner Michael J Costa's new photography exhibit of his recent Nepal trek, "Learning to Breathe: The Upper Mustang Valley." Explore these two inspiring exhibits for a visual treat.

Enjoy a neighborly vibe at 2087 10th Street, Los Osos. For more information, call 559.799.9632 and check out flobartell.com. Costa Gallery is open Thursday-Saturday, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., and Sunday, 12-4 p.m.

Building A Better SLO presents Community Land Trust: Placekeeping for the local Placekeepers at the Penny, 664 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, on March 5, from 6-7:30 p.m. welcoming Ofelia Bello to San Luis Obispo to talk Community Land Trusts and their growth throughout

Events Continued on page 14



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Community

Events From page 13
the US.

Ofelia is the program director of Community Owned Real Estate at Epcando and Pahali Community Land Trust in her hometown of East Palo Alto. Prior to her staff role, she served on the Pahali Board of Directors for six years. She has a passion for housing justice, civic engagement, youth development, social movement work, and brings eight years of experience in tenant rights' organizing, and public policy, with an emphasis on housing policy. She will cover the following topics:

- Intro to history of Community Land Trust movement in the U.S. and CLTs
 - Intro to PAHALI Community Land Trust and EP-ACANDO partnership
 - Resources to continue learning and connecting to the California Community Land Trust movement
- Tickets are \$17.91 and are available at my805tix.com.

•••



The Cal Poly Mustang Marching Band has been invited for the 11th time to participate in the Alaska Airlines Chinese New Year Parade — named by the International Festivals and Events Association as one of the top 10 parades in the world — on Saturday, March 7, in San Francisco. The parade celebrating the Year of the Fire Horse will be broadcast live on ABC 7 and streamed on Hulu.

The band's more than 220 members, from academic disciplines across the campus and nearly all of Cal Poly's six colleges, perform at nearly 50 campus events each year, including athletic games and university functions.

Before the parade, starting at 3 p.m., Mustang Band will continue the tradition of performing some of its favorite pep and postgame tunes in front of the landmark Ferry Building, the gateway to San Francisco, which is visited annually by millions of visitors, on The City's Embarcadero.

The parade began in the 1860s as a means for the Chinese community to educate and share its culture with the greater community. Nothing like it had ever been done in their native China. The parade and festival have grown to be the largest celebration of Asian culture outside of Asia.

•••

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.



NATURAL HISTORY NUGGETS Grass

By Dean Thompson

When I drive in L.A. I'm a different person. Having spent my youth in the area, I revert to a more aggressive, hyper-vigilant, defensive driver, especially on the freeways. It's necessary, one must adapt to the ribbons of asphalt lanes filled with metal and plastic compartments streaming along, all containing humans habituated to suicidal behavior. Stopping distance? Ha! That's a pipe dream. It isn't until I'm heading home and get north of Santa Barbara that I find myself relaxing, especially this time of year when the hills, green with grass, welcome me back to the Central Coast.

Back when Native Americans were the only folks around this area, the hills didn't quite look like this. Instead, botanists think they had a more textured, bumpy appearance from the native bunchgrasses that grew over the area. These grasses didn't produce prodigious amounts of seeds. It wasn't necessary; they were perennial with extremely deep roots, perfectly adapted to the dry soils in which they grew. Some individuals lived as long as 200 years! The space between the bunches was filled with bulbs and wildflowers, creating the colorful quilt-like appearance of flowers and grass reported by early California settlers.

The arrival of the Europeans with their cattle, horses, and sheep changed all of that. Unlike the native elk and antelope which only ate the tips, the domestic livestock grazed them to the ground, often uprooting them. To add insult to injury, the imported livestock deposited European grass seeds either stuck on their coats or, more often, dropped in their dung from the imported European feeds. Having a longer evolutionary history with these grazers, these grasses like oats, rye, foxtail barley, and bromes, were genetically superior to the bunchgrasses in dealing with these new conditions. They produced more seed and outcompeted the natives so that now our green hills are largely composed of annual grasses and "weeds" from the old world.

Around Los Osos and Montana de Oro, another grass from another part of the world has also made its impact. It is a native of the Veld grasslands in the southernmost part of the African continent, Ehrharta calycina, otherwise known as African Veldt grass. It is all too present in our central coastal communities. It was originally imported for



A healthy clump of veldt grass in Los Osos. Photo submitted

erosion control and fodder for cattle in our area, but also in Australia, New Zealand, Portugal, Spain, India, and several other countries. It especially likes disturbed areas and sandy soils. In many of these locations, it's become a major invasive plant pest.

When the veldt grass moves in, it takes over, and the diversity of plant species plummets. This has a ripple effect on the habitat suitability for animals, so their numbers decrease as well. Take a walk into the dunes north of Spooners Cove in M.D.O. State Park, and one can see that the area is predominantly veldt grass with a few tenacious native shrubs scattered about. Without the grass, the area would house numerous other species of shrubs and wildflowers.

Unfortunately, eradicating it is a never-ending labor-intensive task. Just ask the folks who maintain the El Morro Elfin Forest. Only through diligent hand-weeding efforts year after year have we been able to maintain the preserve relatively free of this invader. Every spring, a legion of "Weed Warriors" spreads out through the preserve to search and uproot these plants; after all, just one plant can produce thousands of seeds. Yes, some grass can cause us aggravation, but many grasses are essential for our survival.

Trees can make paper and give us fruits, bushes can provide berries, herbs, and flowers, but when we look at the big picture, grasses are unsung heroes. Grasslands cover 20% -40% of the world's land area, and there are over 10,000 species of grass. Not to mention, ten of the top 15 food crops are grasses. One would be hard pressed to find meals that don't rely in some shape or way on grass seeds like wheat, corn, rice, rye, oats, barley, and more. Whether eaten directly or as food for animals that we use, grass does indeed feed the world, cause us frustration at times, and give us our green hills of spring.

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

OUT & ABOUT

WITH THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS

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

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

RV Camping in Your Own Backyard Santa Margarita Lake Regional Park

by Debbie Black

SLO County Parks does it again — providing another hidden gem in our county. I'm chagrined that I'd never been to Santa Margarita Lake, perhaps thinking it would be too hot, too sunny, arid, and merely a small reservoir. It is none of those, not when we visited in November. The weather was a comfortable 73 degrees. Oaks and pines

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Community



What a jewel is Santa Margarita Lake! It's the "little dragon" version of Nacimiento's "big dragon"-shaped lake.

shaded the hills that sprouted new winter grass, and the vast size of the lake caught us by surprise. It's like finding a secret room in the house you've lived in for decades! I suspect most of you discovered Santa Margarita Lake (SML) years ago. But if you haven't, and your soul could use a calm reconnection with Nature or some peaceful bass fishing, please book yourself a camping retreat at this tucked-away lake nestled under craggy sandstone bluffs where eagles soar and anxieties disappear.

Our delightful 4-night stay started with camp host Brian's smile at the entry kiosk. I don't know where Parks finds their employees, camp hosts, and rangers, but, to a person, they were all amazing, engaging, friendly, knowledgeable, and helpful: Brian, Ranger Jeremiah, Ranger Alan, camp host Wendy, county employee Anna, Marina General Manager Staci, and dock hand Andie. Thank you all for making our stay like a visit with family.

Camping: The park has four well-maintained camping areas: Roadrunner, Coyote, Grey Pine, and Osprey. The first three are dry camping with clean vault toilets and numerous water spigots. Osprey has electric hookups, flush toilets and coin-operated showers, but no water spigots. Roadrunner has 6 sites on a small, oak-shaded knoll right above the lake, all with lake views including covered site #6. Note: Roadrunner's narrow, winding gravel road only accommodates RVs under 20' max. and no trailers! Coyote

has 13 generous and relatively level sites. Osprey has 10 level "parking lot style" sites right on the water, across from a seasonal swimming pool. Only Osprey sites #3-10 have electric hookups. Grey Pine sits higher above the lake by the entry kiosk with 24 campsites that are more open and exposed—some with lovely views. SML has no cell service. For WIFI, stand in front of the ranger station. Cross your fingers and stand on one foot.

Bring a full water tank or use the unmarked water fill-station located to the right of the entry kiosk. The nearest dump station (\$30) is at the KOA campground .5 miles before the SML entrance. If you have a long rig, call the park kiosk. They'll help you find a suitable site. There isn't a bad campsite in the park. But if you'd like my personal rating sheet for the best sites, contact me through my website: www.debbienobleblack.com/rv-camping-in-your-own-backyard.

Boating: SML is a water source for the City of SLO, so no swimming (dogs/people), water skiing, or paddle boarding allowed. But you can still play on the water just not in the water! There are two boat launches, one at the Marina and the other a mile along the eastern shore. Bring your own watercraft (check quarantine rules), or rent a kayak, pedal boat, canoe, 16' fishing boat, or large pontoon boat at the Marina. Rates are reasonable.

Fishing: Most people come to SML for fishing, best in the spring after the lake is stocked. You'll catch trout, catfish, bass, crappie, bluegill, and redear. Fish from shore or from a boat or kayak. Bring your own pole but the Marina Store has full fishing supplies. Ask the entry kiosk for the info-packed sheet about the six fish species in the lake, the best seasons to catch them, and what bait and equipment to use. I have a copy I can share.

Night Sky: Plan your camping trip during moonless nights for a brilliant star show. Bring lounge chairs and hot chocolate!

Hiking: Ask the rangers about hiking opportunities—there are many, from easy to moderate, shady to sunny, level to inclined—most with photo-worthy views of the lake. At a minimum, do Mackey Hill, please!

Birding: Get your Merlin app ready to record and ID

dozens of birdsongs!

Dogs: Hallelujah! I'm impressed that, unlike state parks, the county lets your leashed dog join you on all the trails. Thank you! We saw no abuse of that policy and, as dog owners, we appreciate being able to hike with our golden retriever, Chase. You can even take dogs with you on rental boats.

Kids: Plenty of fun! Riding bikes, swimming in the pool (summer), kayaking, fishing, hiking, counting satellites, playing Bird Bingo, and getting an ice cream at the Marina store.

This is the perfect time to book a campsite for spring at www.slocountyparks.com. I'll probably see you in camp!

Spring Ahead with BBQ from Morro Bay Rotary



Rotary Club of Morro Bay's Jeff Jones and Rich Riedel barbecuing. Photo courtesy of Rotary Club of Morro Bay

Spring is almost here and so is the first barbecue of the year for Rotary Club of Morro Bay on Wednesday, March 25 at Carla's Country Restaurant, 213 Beach Street in Morro Bay from 5 to 6 p.m. This is a drive-through event, and you will want to get your tickets by March 10.

There is succulent, premium tri-tip roast, enough to feed six. Ranch style beans, Sourdough garlic bread loaf, and a garden salad included for the price of \$75.

Purchase your tickets at www.morrobayrotary.org.

What could be easier for your spring barbecue fun? Place your order online, pay the fee, and then just drive up and friendly Rotary members will hand you the delicious package.

All funds raised from this event give Morro Bay Rotary the opportunity to help many organizations who do a variety of humanitarian functions, like meals for the homeless, beautifying our town, scholarships for Morro Bay High school seniors, and organizations like Morro Bay in Bloom, Los Osos Resource Center, Kindness Coalition, Infinite Music, ECHO, and many more.

Takin' Care of BUSINESS

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

SLO Film Fest Nominated, Votes Needed by March 2

The San Luis Obispo International Film Festival (SLOIFF) has been nominated for Best Film Festival as part of USA Today 10 Best's Readers' Choice Awards, recognizing outstanding film festivals across the country.

For the second year in a row, the nomination places



Takin' Care of Business Continued on page 16

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News

Takin' Care of Business From page 15

the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival among an elite group of festivals celebrated for excellence in film programming, community engagement, and cultural impact. Winners are determined entirely by public vote.

Voting runs through Monday, March 2 at 11:59 a.m. EST. Readers may vote once per day. The Top 10 winners, as selected by readers, will be announced on Wednesday, March 11 at noon EDT.

Supporters are encouraged to cast their votes and help bring national recognition to the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival by going to bit.ly/4rv3Z8r.

The San Luis Obispo International Film Festival is dedicated to celebrating innovative storytelling, showcasing diverse voices, and fostering a vibrant film culture on California's Central Coast. For more information about the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival, visit www.slofilmfest.org.

Petco Love and Woods Announce Free Quarterly Pet Vaccine

Woods Humane Society with support from Petco Love will hold new monthly and quarterly free pet vaccine availability in 2026.

The nonprofit will offer more than 100 local pet parents access to free, appointment-based pet vaccinations through quarterly, public Pet Vaccine Clinics. The first of these will be held at both Woods locations on Saturday, March 14, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The next quarterly clinics are slated for July 10, September 12, and December 11.



Additionally, Woods has announced free walk-in vaccine hours at its SLO location on the first Wednesday of each month from 2- 4 p.m., beginning February 2026.

"Vaccinations are vital to protecting our beloved pets from life-threatening but preventable diseases," said Chelsea Staley, president of Petco Love. "Our goal is to make these critical vaccines accessible to as many pet parents as possible, breaking down financial barriers and strengthening the human-animal bond."

The free vaccines distributed at these events are the DAPPv Canine and HCP Feline vaccines. These are made possible through Petco Love's national vaccination initiative, Vaccinated and Loved, which is providing an additional one million free pet vaccines to existing animal welfare partners, including Woods Humane Society, for family pets in need.

Parvovirus and distemper in dogs and panleukopenia in cats — the most prevalent deadly diseases affecting pets — are preventable with a simple vaccine. An estimated 30% of pet parents do not take their pet to a veterinarian annually for preventative care. Pet parents must make an appointment in advance for the quarterly, appointment-based clinics by visiting WoodsHumaneSociety.org/Vaccines.

To qualify for free vaccines, pets must be six weeks or older, healthy, and owned (community outdoor cats do not qualify). Vaccines will not be administered if the pet has a history of vaccine reactions or has shown any signs of illness within the past 48 hours. Additionally, dogs must be on a leash; puppies under the age of four months must be carried; and cats must be in a secure cat carrier.

During clinic appointments, optional services such as rabies vaccines, Bordetella vaccines, flea treatments, microchips, dewormer, and tapeworm treatments are also available at low-cost. Woods Humane Society notes that services will be provided without a full veterinary exam. Payment for additional services is due at the time of booking the appointment. More information is available at WoodsHumaneSociety.org/Vaccines.

"We are thrilled to help improve access to lifesaving care year-round through our new, quarterly free pet vaccine clinics and monthly walk-in hours, with the help of Petco Love," said Woods Humane Society CEO Emily L'Heureux. "We hope SLO County pet parents will take

advantage of these free resources to ensure the health and wellness of our community's pets."

In November 2024, Petco Love's Vaccinated and Loved initiative reached its goal of distributing three million free pet vaccines for family pets, and the organization is determined to reach even more pets in need by providing an additional one million free vaccines. The campaign was launched in August 2021.

For more information about vaccine distribution, contact Woods Humane Society by calling (805) 543-9316, or visiting 875 Oklahoma Ave., San Luis Obispo, or 2300 Ramona Rd., Atascadero. Woods is open to the public daily from 12 - 5 p.m., with adoption hours from 12 - 4 p.m. Learn more about Petco Love's lifesaving impact at PetcoLove.org.

SLO Buy Local Bonus Brings in Nearly \$650,000 in Local Spending in 2025

The results are in, and the City of San Luis Obispo's 2025 Buy Local Bonus program funneled \$737,675 into the local business community.

For the sixth year in a row, the City partnered with the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce to bring the Buy Local Bonus Program to the community and incentivize local spending during the holiday season. The City purchased more than two dozen \$25 gift cards from 159 qualified local businesses, including 49 businesses participating for the first time. Then, from Black Friday on November 28 until it sold out on December 20, 2025, shoppers who spent \$100 or more at local retailers and saved their receipts were eligible to qualify for a \$25 gift card as a reward for supporting local businesses in the city of San Luis Obispo. This resulted in shoppers spending an additional \$638,300, a 642% total return on investment.

"The Buy Local Program is really popular with our customers," said Jenny Kompolt, co-owner of Junk Girls. "Many of them save their holiday purchasing for the Buy Local Bonus program to take advantage of the benefits for both their wallets and supporting our community. It's a win-win all around, and we're grateful to be a part of it."

This year's program was so successful that it sold out four days sooner than anticipated. Combined with the City's investment, the total direct local economic impact reached \$737,676. While \$100 in local spending was needed to qualify for a \$25 gift card, the average amount spent per qualification was \$160.42. In total, there were 3,975 qualified entries from shoppers who submitted 6,357 receipts.

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Prime Cayucos location with Ocean view. Residence is located across from the 3rd Street Park which provides expansive green views and plenty of parking. This stylish single level Craftsman style single home was completely rebuilt in 2000. The exterior features white pillars with shake siding and an inviting portico and courtyard. The courtyard fencing and garden are lovely and creates an extension of the house. Inside the house has a spacious great room with vaulted ceilings, open beams and skylights with a big window area that provides ocean views. The kitchen is well equipped, nice appliances, custom cabinets, with abundant granite counter space. The primary and guest bedrooms have vaulted and beam ceilings in both, as well as skylights, and open to the spacious backyard by sliders. The primary bath has a corner shower with a large jetted soaking tub with backyard views. The bedrooms enjoy an abundance of light with generous size, skylights, and sliders to the backyard. The lovely and spacious backyard is south, facing, and boasts an easy care landscaping, mature trees, hard scape, and wood decking. It gives a very private sanctuary atmosphere. A very desirable location for this single level residence, with easy access to town and just steps to the sand.

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Community

"The Buy Local Bonus program is a true win-win for our community," said Garret Olson, president and CEO of the SLO Chamber of Commerce. "It's fantastic and incredibly impactful to see so many people rally behind their favorite local businesses during the holiday season, and we're thrilled to ignite our local economy in partnership with the City."

Since 2020, the Buy Local Bonus program has generated more than five million dollars in direct local impact to businesses in SLO.

HWY 1 From page 6

rain.

The Big Sur area recorded 5.29-inches in that multi-day storm and got 1.34" overnight (Feb. 16-17).

In Morro Bay the Fire Department recorded 1.95" for the Feb. 16 storm.

Papich Const., got the contract, expected to top \$80 million, to repair Regent's Slide and used some high-tech equipment including remote-controlled excavators to remove a massive amount of loose debris on the slope, as well as the debris that buried the roadway.

During the work, two other slide areas — one above and another to the side — of the main slide started to open up and Papich went to work dealing with those areas, too, adding greatly to the duration of the closure.

Road information and updates can be found on Caltrans Dist. 5 Social Media platforms: on Twitter at: CaltransD5; Facebook at: Caltrans Central Coast (District 5); and on Instagram at: Caltrans_D5.

The Highway Patrol has traffic incident information available online as well, see: cad.chp.ca.gov; and traveler information is at: quickmap.dot.ca.gov.

As winter appears to not yet be done with us, readers are reminded to slow down in construction zones and slow down in general when rain is falling.

Letters To The Editor



Really Enjoy the Paper

I was enjoying a cup of coffee with my wife when I found a copy of your newspaper. We were killing time waiting for an appointment.

I started reading about the Diablo Canyon nuke [Nuclear Power Plant] and the tax implications of the planned closure of the plant. I found the article engrossing and ended up reading portions to my wife. I subscribe to the Tribune and have never seen nor read any in-depth coverage of Diablo Canyon that equalled what your newspaper wrote.

Cambria Chamber Appreciation Dinner

Photos by Cambria Chamber of Commerce

The Cambria Chamber of Commerce celebrated their Appreciation Dinner Gala on February 11 with local leaders and supporters in attendance.

Tala Romero was honored at the Citizen of the Year 2025 and Red Moose Cookie Co. Business of the Year 2025.

"Congratulations to the honorees," said Katherine Gillen, Chamber director of membership and marketing. "We are so proud of you and your community service and dedication to Cambria."

Honorees were commended by local government officials Board of Supervisors 2nd District candidate, Jim Dantona, and Clint Weirick, representing State Senator John Laird. The event was held at the Joslyn Center in Cambria and catered by Linn's Family Restaurant in Cambria.

I continued to read the paper cover to cover reading more choice tidbits of unknown (to me) local Central Coast news to my wife. She knows something about newspapers, as her grandfather ran a small local newspaper in Ouray, Colorado. She also received an MA in communications from the University of Washington and advised a student newspaper at Highline Community College. She helped guide the student paper through the process of going digital. The paper ultimately garnered a national award for excellence.

My wife and I both agree that Estero Bay News is an excellent example of what any newspaper, let alone a small local paper, should be and do for its readers. Specifically, to publish well-written, researched and useful information.

I congratulate you on a job well done. Please keep it up. You could teach a thing or two about how to run a newspaper to some of California's regional newspapers.

Bill Alexander
Atascadero CA

Right or Happy?

Democratic voters have to choose between a gubernatorial candidate in the June primary who we may agree with but does not have a real chance OR choosing a Democratic candidate who can come out in the top two in June — Your choice.

Both Republicans splitting the GOP vote are ahead of all the Democrats splitting our votes. That could mean the two Republicans win the primary and Democrats do not have a candidate on the November ballot. It means that the Republican Governor would not protect us from ICE invasions, concentration camps, cuts in federal support of vital programs, environmental catastrophes, outrageous dangerous clown shows & unhappiness.

Your Choices

• Vote for your favorite in June and be very unhappy in November, or

• Make a sensible good choice in June, California Democratic Party front runner Eric Swalwell and be happy in November.

Take Action

• Tell your friends and neighbors about the danger of supporting Democratic Party candidates that have no chance in the June primary.

Ellis Goldberg
Danville, California

Did Estero Bay News Miss the Point?

I have had enormous respect for Mr. Farrell's reporting for many years and I still do. He reports the facts. I have no doubt his recent coverage of Sheriff Ian Parkinson's presentation to the SLO County Board of Supervisors as required by the TRUTH ACT (and other State ordinances) was 100% accurate.

But I am surprised and disappointed that the article didn't explain why there were so many unhappy residents

at the meeting! Isn't that the story after all?

I think maybe the Sheriff, the District Attorney, and The Estero Bay News are missing the point.

Think about it.

Jeff Heller
Morro Bay City Council, 2018-22

Viewpoint

This is No Longer America

I am twenty-one years old, and I've lived in America, in the same town, my whole life. I am a citizen, I am white, and I am privileged. I never got into politics much aside from my own core beliefs of human compassion and empathy. I never felt a desire to. Yet now, our country is facing a crisis, and it is not one to take lightly.

America, or as it stands now, the hollow shell of America, has become a place of fear and violence. What was once a country that many fled to for safety and new opportunities has become the place that they now flee. Fear is commonplace. Unrest is just another normal day.

The country shifts with its people in tense anticipation of what is to come next. I no longer recognize the so-called land of the free. That star-spangled banner that once flew at liberty so proudly in the sky is now a symbol of oppression and violence to those innocent scapegoats, the sacrificial lambs. Our people are being profiled and unlawfully detained in the streets for the color of their skin or the way they speak. Our friends, our neighbors, our elders, our veterans, mothers, fathers, children, and everyone in between are no longer safe. Nothing is sacred. Nothing but the rich white men. They forget just what this country was built upon, or perhaps, they remember only the worst and bloodiest parts of it. Perhaps that's what they idolize most.

Protests arise, a true phoenix from the ashes, yet that majestic bird is spat upon and caged with no remorse. Freedom of speech is now a caveat for violence, as more and more people are threatened and killed for exercising it. Our right to bear arms is now circumstantial. All humans have rights, but some have more rights than others. And yet, despite it all, the people speak out. Those who sit in their golden thrones, upon the bones and rotting corpses of those they were meant to lead and protect, fear the people; we outnumber them, and we are more than they will ever be.

Civil unrest continues as our citizens cry out for the injustice, for those who have perished fighting for what is right or simply for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Their voices only grow, ringing out loudly, echoing in the hollow shell of what used to be America.

This is not a letter of nihilism, nor is it one that encourages the people to give up. Discard is sown through indecision, ignorance, and apathy. Instead, I wish this letter to be one of hope. Let the people never give up, for our hope is big brother's fear. The tides are changing, and though the stress and panic may weigh us down, we are resilient. For

Viewpoint Continued on page 18



Tala Romero, recipient of the Citizen of the Year award, 2025



Clint Weirick, representative for Senator John Laird presents the 2025 Business of the Year to Red Moose Cookie Co owners, Monica and Tyler Nichols.

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Viewpoint From page 17

those of us who are protesting and screaming for our voices to be heard, for those who help and protect in even the smallest ways we can, we are the only true Americans left. And we can be the ones to bring her back to life. May those who were violently killed for exercising their rights, though they will try to twist their stories and defame their characters, may they rest in peace knowing their mission will be fulfilled. Their lives should have never been sacrificed for a cause that should have never have had to exist in the first place. It is tragic and outrageous. However, I hope they rest assured that their deaths will be mourned and never in vain.

Change is coming, and America, she gasps with hope that she will one day become what she once stood for in the first place. From there, I believe a vast improvement is on the horizon for this country to become greater than ever before; we simply mustn't give up. We will succeed, the people always do, and those people who sow disarray and promote violence, lest we forget, they are somehow human, will pay for all that they've done. Do not fear them as monsters or something above humanity; they are just men like the rest of us. There is no need to cower from such spineless sheep who only hurt those who can't fight back, for they are the most pathetic and weak of us all. I do not believe in violence; it can only create more problems, but justice will be served properly, and the universal karmic debt will one day soon be paid. And we shall rejoice.

From an angry, yet hopeful, human being.

Alex Astor
Morro Bay

M.B. Spring Clean-up Week, March 2-6

Customers of Morro Bay Garbage Co., can toss away extra unwanted junk for free during the Annual Spring Clean-up Week, set for Monday-Friday, March 2-6.

And since in Morro Bay garbage pick-up service is mandatory, that means everyone.

MB Garbage Company customers can put extra trash out for free pick up with some "bulky" items requiring special notifications. Customers should have already been notified of the Spring Clean Up Week via email, according to a company representative.

According to a post on the City of Morro Bay's website, "Residents may place up to six additional 32-gallon size bags of trash at no charge. Residents may also place bulky items on the street for an additional charge and must contact Morro Bay Garbage at 805-543-0875 to schedule the pick up."

Be sure to put your extra bags out on the curb on your regular garbage pick up day, along with your regular garbage wheelers.

And March 20-22 is the 25th Annual Morro Bay City-Wide Yard Sale, so you'll have a chance to start compiling more, uh treasures, to replace the stuff you just threw away.

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The Mysterious Case of the Headless Corpse: Part 2

The source of this story is the historical document whose signature page is in the included image. This doc has helped us summarize the testimony provided before a coroner's jury held on July 28, 1867, in "Moro." The jury was charged with determining the cause of death of a body found on the beach by Franklin Riley, the acknowledged founder of Morro Bay. What made the body unusual is that it was missing its head and both its hands. Riley identified the body, based on its "boots and pants," as that of Sheldon Parsons, a neighbor who had been missing for a couple of months.

The jury of nine men heard conflicting evidence about Parsons' state of mind and intentions from the five people who provided sworn testimony. All had talked with Parsons in the days before he disappeared. Was he "melancholy" because he owed people money and the reaper he bought with the money was broken? Or was he intending to sell his horses and reaper and leave town? He had received encouraging news from J. H. Hollister, a prominent landowner, who testified and was the jury foreman: the reaper wasn't damaged too badly and Hollister knew someone who could fix it.

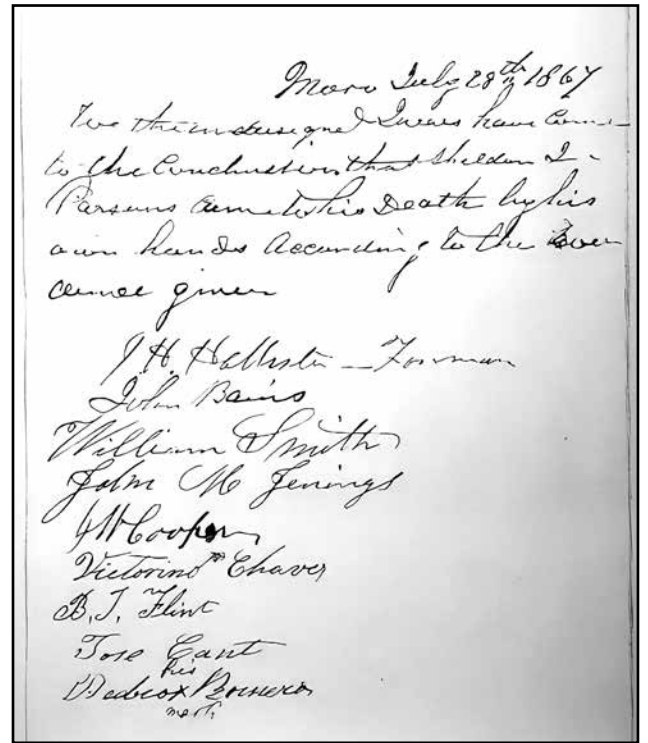
Here are the actual words of the jury: "We the undersigned jurors have come to the conclusion that Sheldon J. Parsons came to his death by his own hands according to the evidence given."

While this is a euphemism for suicide, we wonder if the jury found it as ironic as we do today. No indication was given for how he may have killed himself.

But the mystery continues because the following day, July 29, 1867, Dr. W.W. Hays testified before the coroner. It turns out that a head – missing its body – was found near San Simeon! Dr. Hays was asked to determine if the head belonged to the body identified as Parsons.

He examined both the body and the head and concluded that the head was not that of Parsons. His reason was that the bones did not match up and the teeth were not those of Parsons, who a year before had a cavity filled by Dr. Hays, which the head did not have.

In examining the body believed to be that of Parsons, Dr. Hays noted that there were no wounds or marks of



violence. He thought the head was probably torn off by the action of the waves or by sharks. The same was true of the hands. The body was "much decomposed" and had been in the water for a long time.

As bizarre as this story is, it's true. But the mystery remains: was it the body of Sheldon Parsons? If so, did he kill himself and how? Or was it an accident or even murder? What happened to Parsons' horses, grain and reaper? Who did the head belong to? This mystery will never be solved.

Source: The original document is in the collection of the History Society of SLO County. Do you have an interesting photo and story to share? Contact HSMB by email: info@historicalmorrobay.org.

Cat Noir CC

Human's List of Chores



like that. A quick search of Dr. Google, and it turns out he is pregnant. WTH! AND, especially with the overwhelming use of AI, now we proved why the internet is not the place to go to get medical information,

Follow CatNoirCC on Facebook and Instagram for daily photos.

By Michael Walker

COLLEGETOWN



Community

Costa Gallery Artist Exhibition Opens



On February 22, Costa Gallery hosted a vibrant dual exhibition of artists and their work. The first showcase featured encaustic artwork by Flo Bartell, titled “Color Play.” At 85-years-old, Flo’s stunning use of color continues to inspire and draw a devoted following.

The second exhibition, “Learning to Breathe: The Upper Mustang Valley,” by gallery owner Michael J. Costa, showcased breathtaking photography with vibrant colors that beautifully complemented Flo’s work.

“The event was a tremendous success, with attendees expressing their admiration for the art and the inspiring journey of the artists,” said Costa. “The positive energy



Live music was performed by James Scoolis. AKA, Burning James



and engaging conversations about art truly highlighted the community spirit.”

Costa Gallery is open Thursday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. They are located at 2087 10th St, Los Osos and can be reached at 559-799-9632. The current exhibit runs through March 29. Photos by Dean Sullivan

GoFundMe Account for Young Man with Acute Leukemia



Max McGraw

A GoFundMe account for the grandson of a longtime North Coast family. Max McGraw, a member of the Van Beurden family

who have been in Morro Bay and the surrounding areas since around the 1960s, is a 20-year-old junior at San Francisco State who grew up in SLO County. His family says he is a devoted son, grandson, nephew and loyal friend — “the kind of person who makes people feel seen, included and genuinely cared for.”

Earlier this month, Max and his family received the shocking news that he has acute leukemia.

“It is not something anyone expects at this age,” said fundraiser organizer Brenee Staples on GoFundMe. “But if there is one thing we know about Max, it is that he is strong and has an army standing behind him.”

Max is currently being treated at UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital in San Francisco, where he will undergo aggressive chemotherapy for an undetermined period. His parents, Share and Ineke, are by his side as he begins the fight of his life.

This fundraiser was created by friends of the McGraw family, to help ease the financial strain that comes with a diagnosis like this, including hospital stays, treatments, medications, travel and significant lost income as his parents step away from work to support him.

“Our goal is simple: to surround this family with enough support that their focus can remain on Max’s healing,” Brenee said on the online fundraiser page.

Every dollar raised will go directly to Max and his family during this incredibly difficult time.

“If you are able to give, thank you,” Brenee said. “If you are not in a position to donate, please consider sharing the page. You may also donate directly via Venmo to @inekemc. “We will share updates here as Max moves through treatment so you can follow along, send encouragement and celebrate the victories, big and small, together.”

Readers who want to donate, are asked to go to <https://gofundme.com/df74623cc> or go to gofundme and search Standing with Max McGraw in his Battle with Leukemia.

The Real Estate Show



1985: Cheap Housing? Head Out to Los Osos?

By Greg Astle

By the time 1984 had unfolded, I had left my hometown of Newport Beach. Sure, Newport was a great place to live and a wonderful place to grow up during the 1960s and ‘70s. But the crowding and over-development, the 405 Freeway and the lifestyle changes had taken their toll.


I sold my home in Newport and landed where my siblings lived in the Rogue River Valley, namely Jacksonville, Oregon. Jacksonville was charming, and it was great being close to kin again, but it wasn’t long before I started to feel, literally, like a fish-out-of-water.

California was calling the surfer in me home. It just so happened that longtime friends, Ernie Ball and family, were settling into their new company headquarters in San Luis Obispo. A fortuitous phone call resulted in a job offer and by mid-March of ‘85, I was back in California, an employed San Luis resident.

SLO immediately felt like home and I started my hunt for a new house after just a couple of months in town. When I inquired as to “affordable housing near SLO,” several folks replied, “go check out Los Osos.” Really? Since when do you go to the coast to find cheap housing? But they were right—Los Osos had affordable housing. And, while I ended up buying my first home in San Luis, I vividly recall that Los Osos still provided some of the least expensive housing in the entire county. Those were the days!

Fast forward to 2026 where Los Osos has matured into much more than a bedroom community for SLO. Most visitors to Morro Bay are pleasantly surprised when they discover a quieter version of seaside living in nearby Los Osos. But that newfound popularity has brought with it prices that are now on par with much of Coastal SLO County. Here’s some Los Osos sales history*

	Median Sale Price	Avg Lowest Sale/Highest Sale	Days on Mkt
1995 -	\$156,750	101	\$65,000 / \$590,000
2010 -	\$361,500	86	\$98,000 / \$1,395,000
2025 -	\$895,000	28	\$550,000/\$2,700,000



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News

Pro-Housing From page 1

tion, lower costs, and expand opportunities.”

In a State that has its share of bureaucracy, SLO County is being honored for the opposite.

“Pro-housing jurisdictions,” the County said, “are recognized for cutting red tape and permitting timelines, unlocking land and funding, and zoning for more housing types. They are doing so while protecting affordability, equity, and sustainability.”

Part of the test for this is a County’s being accountable.

“In addition to adopting a robust slate of pro-housing policies, each designated jurisdiction must meet and maintain a high standard of accountability,” the County said. “That includes having a certified housing element [housing plan], staying current on annual progress reports and policy and program commitments, completing required re-zonings, maintaining good standing with State housing laws, and having an approved encampment response plan.”

SLO County “was recognized for lowering permit barriers for affordable housing,” the County said, “incentivizing higher density through land use changes, and creating a new local trust fund to support nonprofit housing development.”

The designation is a key to receiving funding help from the State.

“The Pro-housing Designation,” the County explained, “unlocks benefits for jurisdictions — including priority and bonus points in state housing, infrastructure, and planning programs like the Pro-housing Incentive Program, Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning Grants Program, Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities, and more.”

In response, Supervisors made some changes to the General Plan’s Housing Element, “to support greater housing production. The Board updated land use regulations and incentives for builders, leveraging local dollars to bring additional State and Federal funds into the region.

“The changes are aimed at encouraging more affordable and higher density housing to help meet housing demands from local workers and residents.”

Supervisors had formed a subcommittee including private business interests.

“A sub-committee comprised of local builders, non-profit affordable housing developers, building industry stakeholders, Dist. 3 Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg, and Dist. 4 Supervisor Jimmy Paulding worked with County planning staff to develop creative solutions to the County’s housing challenges.”

Board Chairwoman, Ortiz-Legg, said, “With a collaborative effort, we have successfully streamlined the process for creating more housing. By encouraging multifamily development in commercial zones, this initiative will provide vital relief for families, young professionals, and employers throughout SLO County.”

Among the changes to the Housing Element that have been enacted are:

- Multi-Family Dwelling Regulation Updates. “Amend-

ments will be made that are designed to streamline and increase flexibility in policies governing multi-family dwelling development,” the County said. “These changes are designed to support more multi-family housing construction, which can help address housing shortages and affordability challenges in both inland and coastal communities.”

The County continued, “Updated policies and reduced procedural barriers should help developers, housing non-profits, and other stakeholders move projects forward more efficiently.”

• Regional Housing Incentives & Regional Housing Fund. The County plans to establish a “Regional Housing Incentive Program” and create a “Regional Housing Fund” that leverages local dollars to bring in additional State and Federal funding.

“These measures are intended to fill the current funding gap for approximately 280, previously-approved affordable housing units that are ready for construction,” the County said.

“The Regional Housing Fund will create a dedicated financial mechanism to support affordable housing projects, and the incentive program will encourage development in regions with infrastructure capacity.”

It should be noted that SLO County voters in 1990 passed a growth management ordinance that limits the maximum number of dwelling units that can be built in the unincorporated county rural areas and towns in a calendar year to no more than 2.3%.

“The number of new dwelling units to be allowed,” reads Title 26, Chapter 26.01 of the County Codes, “shall be based on the number of existing county unincorporated housing units.”

In essence, the law allows the County to set the number of units that can be built in a given year by limiting the “allocation” of permits and the limit is set annually by County Supervisors. It’s intended to tie growth in with available resources, mainly water.

There are of course exemptions to this law. For example, secondary or accessory dwelling units (granny units) are exempt, so too are replacement dwellings, farm labor housing, already vested subdivisions, and so-called affordable housing are listed specifically as being exempt from the growth limit.

“Proposed new dwelling units,” the law reads, “which will be affordable housing for persons and families of low or moderate income [as defined by California Health and Safety Code Section 50093], with long-term affordability guaranteed as provided by all applicable sections of the Land Use Ordinance, Title 22 and the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, Title 23 of the county code.”

So while someone wanting to build a new single family home might come up against this growth limit, the ready-to-build affordable units cited by Supervisors should not hit this brick wall.

But some areas, Cambria and Los Osos in particular, have even more restrictions on growth. Both communities have a “waiting list” for allocations to build.

In Los Osos the rules state: “The historic “building moratorium” on undeveloped parcels was lifted by the County Board of Supervisors. The residential growth rate in Los Osos may never exceed 1%, includes accessory dwelling units and deed-restricted affordable housing units, and must be based on review of the best available groundwater monitoring data.

However, Supervisors “established a 0.4% growth rate for calendar year 2025 allowing 25 new dwelling units in the community.”

That same rate of 0.4% growth was carried into 2026. (See: www.slocounty.ca.gov/departments/planning-building/grid-items/communities-villages/los-osos for further restrictions.)

In Cambria, the maximum annual allocation rate is set at zero.

“This means,” the County said, “that no new allocation requests can be approved other than those accompanied by an intent-to-serve letter from the Cambria Community Services District for replacements, transfers, and grand-fathered water meters.”

Coleman Park From page 1



Photo is of the new public restroom the City purchased to install at Coleman Park. Made by CXT, it’s a pre-fab concrete structure that comes ready to install with a crane. The restroom is scheduled to arrive on Memorial Day.

The buildings require a minimum of site preparation and are lifted into place with a crane.

The design rendering shows the new restroom with an outdoor shower/sand rinse station. Originally, Phase 1 had more amenities listed when the City applied for the State Parks grant, but recent cost overruns led the State to suggest a pared down project.

“Based on current cost estimates for the Coleman Park project,” reads a report from last September to the Rec & Parks Commission, “staff recommends focusing funding on a new restroom facility; ADA-compliant parking; accessible playground replacement; ADA pathways connecting these features.”

The new restroom is clearly the priority for this part of the project. It will arrive ready to go.

“Our buildings are prefabricated and delivered complete and ready to use,” reads the website for LB Foster the parent corporation for the CXT buildings, “including plumbing and electrical where applicable. Interiors are designed to resist abusive wear and can be cleaned quickly with warm soapy water and a brush.”

The City’s purchase agreement for the restroom had a delivery date of Memorial Day. The City is buying the building from CXT Precast Concrete Products of Spokane Valley, Wash., also a division of LB Foster.

The City is also using a middleman to save some money. “This purchase is being made through Sourcewell,” the City said in a report, “a national cooperative purchasing program that provides competitively solicited contracts available for use by public agencies. Utilizing Sourcewell contracts allows the City to procure goods and services that have already been bid.”

CXT’s bid was well under the other two it received. Remtec, which builds on site, came in at \$562,000 and PRC, also a prefab building, came in from \$350,000-\$375,000.

The City checked out all three with other agencies who have used them and found no problems with any of them. So, they went with the cheapest one, CXT.

After the restroom buy, the overall budget of some \$918,000 still has over \$400,000 left.

In a report the funding breakdown for the project includes Deferred Maintenance Fund, \$31,500; Castle Wind Community Development, \$40,000; Park Fee Fund/1975 Quimby Act, \$69,500; Proposition 68 Per Capita Program Grant, \$177,952; and Rural Recreation & Tourism Grant, \$600,000.

Castle Wind was the company that initially came to the City in 2016 with the idea of putting in floating wind turbines offshore. Castle Wind missed out on winning one of the three lease areas that the Federal Government auctioned off.

The Quimby Act is a program where developers pay in-lieu fees instead of building a public park within subdivision projects. The City often uses these monies for major improvements at existing parks.

RRM’s design contract was for \$182,000 and the restroom came in at \$333,000, leaving \$403,000 in the project fund balance.

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Satellite view of Coleman Park as it looks now. Photos courtesy City of Morro Bay

The belief is that the construction contract will come in under that amount and the City won't have to go hunting up more money.

The design doesn't have any improvements for those who like to launch kayaks or enter the water to scuba at Coleman Beach, which is currently accessed via short, somewhat tricky and narrow pathways from the Harborwalk down to a tiny, calm-water beach.

The basketball court is also not part of this project.

Given its location adjacent to the harbor, Coleman Park has been eyed for a lot of things. The park was used briefly by the Harbor Department during its short-lived attempt to establish bayside campsites for RVs.

The program, which was given a pilot permit during the COVID pandemic, sought to use several public areas along the Embarcadero for RV camping, and Coleman Park had three campsites set up.

But public outcry against the camping program — especially the highly-visible Coleman Park sites — convinced the City Council to nix the program, despite it being pretty successful at raising new revenues for the Harbor Department.

The basketball court too has been somewhat controversial. Initially it was

where the City established a skateboard park, with several ramps and other apparatus installed on the pavement.

But that too didn't set well with the public and eventually it was moved to a Teen Center on Atascadero Road.

But the Teen Center, which took over a former miniature golf and arcade business in a bankruptcy sale, had a relatively short shelf life.

It now sits vacant and unused, the mini-golf courses since removed, though one can occasionally see skaters using the ramps in the front parking lot.

When the skate park moved, the City converted the paved and fenced area into a basketball court. And while some folks do use the court it hasn't really caught on in popularity.

Coleman Park was also once eyed for a proposed boat haul out and repair facility about 25-years ago by members of the Harbor Advisory Board. But that idea also never went anywhere.

Now Coleman Park is mostly used by families picnicking by the bay and by walkers and bicycle riders who traverse through it on the Harborwalk.

It's the beach, used for launching kayak, paddleboard and scuba excursions in the kelp forest along the rocks, that seems to make the most use of the park.

Lasca Ann Gaylord, 1980 - 2026



Lasca lived a wonderful and full life of 45 years. She was born in Placerville, California, on November 18, 1980, and lived locally in the foothills of El Dorado County where she attended Ponderosa High School. It was there that she lettered in both cross country and track each year. In 2010 she graduated cum laude from Cal Poly with a degree in landscape architecture.

As a member of the San Luis Obispo County Parks & Recreation Department, she started her career as a Parks Aide and retired in 2025 as a Supervising Park Ranger. Lasca was a spirited colleague and trusted friend to those who worked beside her. She had a deep passion for her work and her community - bringing warmth, dedication, and an infectious smile that

lifted everyone around her.

Lasca loved being outdoors in nature — kayaking across the bay, hiking in flip-flops, exploring local tidepools, back packing in the mountains, and diving in oceans in numerous locations including the Galápagos. She had an artist's eye for beauty, capturing coastlines and wildflowers in sketches and watercolor. Along the way, she delighted in quizzing us on plant names. She embraced nature, her friends, and her family with joy, gratitude, and deep respect. Her absence leaves a space as wide and enduring as the landscapes she loved. We will forever see her in all that is beautiful.

For information on how her family will be honoring Lasca's beautiful life, contact Mary, a friend of the family, at 805-550-2952.



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Tax Hike Vote From page 1

As a special tax for a specific purpose, the measure will need to get two-thirds majority approval, a tall ask that SLOCOG narrowly failed to get several years ago the first time the agency proposed a sales tax increase to fund road repairs.

General use taxes require only 50% approval, but SLOCOG's sole focus is on transportation projects.

As it stands now, State and Federal gas taxes make up the overwhelming majority of roads monies. They are mainly handed out to counties and cities based on population.

SLO County, at about 230,000 residents, is on the less populated side in California, so grants when they come in, are not as high as what other, more populated counties receive.

SLOCOG's spending plan for the projected \$35 million a year, would spend 55% (some \$19.25 million) on local road repairs and improvements; 40% (\$14M) on regional corridor roads; 4% (\$1.4M) on mobility services; and, 1% (\$350,000) on administration, according to the spending plan.

Beyond these direct benefits is the idea that having a local source of funds makes SLO County more attractive for the big competitive grant programs. It could be leveraged as a local match for the big money grants, something that is becoming a greater necessity for limited tax monies handed out through these grant programs.

"What we really want residents to understand," SLOCOG Executive Director, Pete Rodgers said, "is that with more funding and more control locally, we, as a region, can better compete for and win larger amounts of funding from state and federal grants, bringing our fair share back to SLO County."

According to SLOCOG, 89% of the counties in California are already so-called, "self-help counties," with local money for transportation needs.

Under the spending plan, the biggest share (55%) would go to local road repairs and improvements, which the spending plan said includes:

- Local road maintenance, rehabilitation, and repair.
- Safe Routes to School and Safe Routes to College programs.

• Local intersections, operational and traffic safety improvements.

• Bridge safety and seismic retrofits.

• Bicycle and pedestrian improvements (sidewalks, crosswalks, multi-use paths).

• Community enhancements tied to transportation (streetscape, lighting, landscaping, way finding).

• Traffic signal improvements and synchronization.

• Piers, walkways and other pedestrian or bike paths in and around waterfront and river areas.

• Transit services including local trolley services may be funded if desired by a City.

In Morro Bay the City's share of the \$19 million a year could be added to the town's regular pavement management project allowing more surface streets in town to get paved.

Morro Bay already has a half-cent local sales tax (Measure Q) that provides money for this as well as funding for the needs of the police and fire departments.

But before readers start seeing dollar signs in their dreams, the SLOCOG money would also be allocated based on population. Morro Bay is one of the smallest cities in SLO County, so whatever money comes out of SLOCOG's tax hike, the City could be expected to get a smaller share than places like Paso Robles, Arroyo Grande and even Atascadero, which have much greater populations. Only Pismo Beach is smaller in population than Morro Bay.

County Supervisors would decide how the County's share would be spent, however, the money is to be divided equally among the five Supervisorial Districts, according to the spending plan.

Dist. 2, which covers the entire North Coast from Los Osos to San Simeon, has most of its population living in unincorporated towns and with Cayucos and Cambria being major tourism spots, Dist. 2 would probably generate a large portion of these sales taxes.

Under "Regional Corridor Improvements" the plan's uses for the \$14M include:

- Highway and major corridor congestion relief such as van or carpool lanes or other congestion relief measures.
- Safety and interchange improvements.

• Regional bicycle and pedestrian connectors between communities like the Bob Jones Trail.

• Interagency Transit Access.

• Mitigation impacts for proposed improvements.

• Other projects consistent with the adopted Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

According to the spending plan, "Mobility Services" directs the \$1.4 million towards seniors, veterans and the "mobility challenged."

The spending plan says, "Funds shall support improvements to mobility programs that prioritize services for seniors, veterans, and mobility challenged."

As for the "administration" costs (\$350,000 a year) the plan says, "No more than 1% of annual revenues shall be allocated by the Authority for administration, reporting, auditing, and program oversight."

The tax measure in November will also set up an organizational hierarchy for the spending with SLOCOG's 13-member board — that consists of all five County Supervisors plus one representative from each of seven cities and one from a special district — designated the Authority Board.

The measure would also establish an oversight committee. "This Expenditure Plan provides for the creation of a Citizens' Oversight Committee to ensure transparency and accountability."

The oversight committee will have 12 members, one appointed by each of the seven cities and one each by the five Supervisors.

If the name is any indication, the Citizen's Oversight Committee would be made up of non-elected citizens as opposed to elected officials. SLOCOG's Board already has elected officials.

But who will sit on this Citizen's Oversight Committee isn't spelled out in the spending plan.

The idea of a sales/transportation tax almost didn't fly at all. SLOCOG had to get the State Legislature's help to allow the half-cent tax hike to even be put to a vote.

State Sen. John Laird (Dist. 15, Santa Cruz), who represents SLO County, authored Senate Bill 333, a law that allows a higher than normal sales tax hike in SLO County.

According to the Legislative Counsel's Summary of SB 333: "Existing law authorizes various local governmental entities, subject to certain limitations and approval requirements, to levy a transactions and use [sales] tax for general or specific purposes, in accordance with the procedures and requirements set forth in the Transactions and Use Tax Law, including a requirement that the combined rate of all taxes that may be imposed in accordance with that law in any county not exceed 2%."

The Legislative Council's summary continues, "This bill would authorize the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments, by an ordinance adopted by the council, to levy a tax pursuant to the Transactions and Use Tax Law at a rate not to exceed 1%, for general and special purposes, subject to voter approval on or after January 1, 2026, and before January 1, 2032. The bill would authorize the board

to exceed the 2% limit described above to impose the retail transactions and use tax."

Several cities in SLO County, including Morro Bay, already have local sales taxes approved by voters. In Morro Bay it totals 1.5% (Meas. Q and E-20) and the overall sales tax here is 8.75% (7.25% goes to the State).

Because several SLO County cities already have local sales tax initiatives, Morro Bay included, SLOCOG wouldn't have been able to apply its tax hike of 0.5% in those areas. SB 333 cleared the way for the voters to decide the matter and for it to be collected throughout the County.

Sen. Laird said, "For years, San Luis Obispo County has worked to maintain a growing transportation system with dwindling resources, all while state tax limits made it harder for local communities to help themselves. SB 333 changes that by giving residents the chance to decide their own future."

"It allows SLOCOG to go directly to voters with a proposal to fix local roads, improve safety on corridors like Highways 46 and 227, and keep our communities connected."

If EBN readers want to check out SLOCOG's Expenditure Plan for what will officially be called, "The Local Roads First Self-Help Initiative" on the November ballot, see: www.localroadsfirst.com.

Our Stories From page 1

members and volunteers to reopen the gun range on Hwy 1 just south of Morro Bay. Historically, the practice range was a training facility for Army and Marines during World War II. The new nonprofit is called San Luis Obispo Firearm and Safety Training (SLOFAST — for more details contact INFO@SLOFAST.ORG) As of Friday, February 27, the rifle range will reopen for public use. Opening day is 9 a.m. — 9 p.m., while typically open hours are 9 a.m. — 4 p.m. except Tuesday and Wednesday which are closed. But how did Mike ultimately elect to become one of the five board members to rescue this facility for area recreational shooters?

First, it was family that first brought him to live and work out of Morro Bay 20 years ago. In January 2006, his Uncle Chuck Gerson encouraged him to relocate and understudy for the ownership position at his Central Coast based pet supply distribution company.

"After four years Uncle Chuck asked if I wanted to buy the company so he could spend his retirement traveling." Mike continues to build his own team at General Distributing & Sales Co., Inc. He notes pet flea and tick products are the mail order company's most popular products. Distribution is national encompassing local as well as anywhere from New York to Hawaii.

A Morro Bay 4th of July Fireworks display he attended with his family sparked the next company he developed. Skylihter, Inc. retails fireworks products, but his real interest was producing fireworks displays especially for com-

A Dose of Good Dogma



Tasmanian Devils, Be Gone!

By Lisa Ellman

It's a disturbing, scary situation. Leash reactivity. Characterized by your leashed dog lunging, jumping, twirling, barking, or all of these behaviors combined, like the Tasmanian Devil when your dog sees another dog. Whether that other dog is at a distance or close by, all you want to do is get away.

It can be difficult and confusing to determine the reason(s) for leash reactivity, especially if you have a dog that's great off leash. There are several factors that could explain the reactivity. Perhaps there was no leash socialization as a puppy, perhaps it's fear, maybe your dog feels "trapped" and vulnerable on the leash because they can't get away, or don't trust you, as a leader to have their back. Perhaps you're even inadvertently reinforcing the reactivity without being aware of it.

You have a dog that's reactive on walks. You see another dog approaching, you automatically become anxious; your body chemistry changes, you tighten up the leash. At this point the dog has become "on alert" and perhaps senses that there is some tangible danger. You become frightened, you have no plan other than dragging the dog off in the opposite direction. The threat ceases because the dog is taken out of the situation and you continue the walk until the next dog appears. Lather, rinse, repeat.

No matter the reason for the reactivity, removing the

dog from the situation will not change the behavior. Reactivity is not easy to rehabilitate, it takes consistent work, every day.

The first thing to do, to change the dog's behavior, is to change the human behavior. The thing is that by leaving the situation the dog learns nothing. No alternative behavior has been taught and often people just give up walking their dog! Not fair to the dog or you.

Learning to provide alternative behaviors with positive reinforcement and practicing calm focus are primary steps to recondition the dog's response. We want to change the dog's experience from a negative to a positive. Have a plan, so that you can redirect your dog. If the human doesn't know what to do, the dog doesn't know what to do and chaos ensues. First, breathe and stay calm. Scan and anticipate a reaction burst, you know it's coming. Be aware of your dog's body language and signals before it starts to react. Catch the dog before it reacts and reward any non-reaction with a high value, tasty treat (or ball). Seeing another dog can now bring good things, not negative responses. Teach "look," put the dog's focus on you, the calm confident leader. Use clicker training if you're comfortable with it. Be aware of your dog's critical distance. Start far enough away from the stimulus, where your dog is not reacting, so you can get your dog's attention. As the dog becomes more comfortable and less reactive at that distance, gradually, over time, move a bit closer. Teach your dog "leave it". Walk quickly past other dogs while engaging your dog with treats or words, keep the focus on you. Don't slow down or stop.

Learning to be confident and manage the behavior is going to make a huge difference in your walks. Working privately with a trainer to train new responses will help you be consistent, accelerate progress and build your confidence.

Follow the protocol of the Yellow Ribbon Project. Put a ribbon on your dog's leash: red for unapproachable, yellow for caution or green for an approachable non-reactive dog. Explain and share the significance to others. If you want your dog to meet and greet another dog, look for a ribbon and always make contact with the other owner first to ask permission.

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News

munities. “Seventeen years ago,” Mike said, “I was feeling particularly patriotic that night. I decided I wanted to learn the business and see how I could provide fireworks shows for others so they might experience the same feelings.”

Again, it required he adopt the role of understudy working for licensed fireworks showmen to learn the trade. He helped set up shows in various areas, mostly Idaho and Southern California. After five years of traveling, he got his license as an independent contractor and is currently the operator for the Pismo Beach 4th of July fireworks display.

“Every year I get fired up again. We set up and tear down the shows in a day, but for weeks before it takes time to get permits and design the shows. I finally got tired of being away from my own family on 4th of July, so I gave up traveling and plan to focus on the Pismo show here at home.”

In between operating his bread-and-butter distributing companies and his creative time designing fireworks shows, his family had invested in rental properties that needed managing. He learned it was important to “to keep a pulse on the marketplace,” so he studied and tested for his real estate license. He is currently licensed with Comet Realty in Morro Bay.

He quickly realized his venture into real estate demanded he network to broaden his community associates. Good friend, Tom Hay, owner of Hay Printing since 1980, suggested if he wanted to be more involved in the Morro Bay community, he might consider joining Morro Bay Rotary Club. Once Tom took him to a Rotary meeting, he knew he’d found another family. Tom became his sponsor.

Rotary leadership often alludes to the “gift of Rotary.” Mike explained, “For me I have learned to build a stronger team at work so I could feel comfortable delegating responsibilities to my staff and spend more time involved in community activities.”

Again, mentorship was his guide when Rotary Past President Dan Costley passed on his chairmanship for Rotary’s quarterly barbeques. For two years he led and marketed the drive-through fund raiser based out of Mayor Carla Wixom’s parking lot on Beach Street in front of Carla’s Country Kitchen.

Mike continues to be part of the Rotary BBQ team and is quick to promote that on March 25 he’ll be barbecuing locally sourced premium Tri-Tip while Mayor Carla, also a Rotarian, “donates all the fixings.” Tickets are currently on sale at www.morrobayrotary.org for the fund raiser.

It was soon after October 2025, when it was announced a leadership group was forming to reopen the gun range, Mike volunteered to become one of the five board members. Lou Salceda is president, Nick Young, secretary, Bob Brennen treasurer and Lorin Wingfield and Mike are executive advisors.

Mike flashbacked to growing up in Huntington Beach, “My interest (in SLOFAST) may be from when I enjoyed collecting bullet shells with my dad at the fairgrounds after cowboy shows. I’ve always been a Second Amendment supporter, so when I heard the gun range on Hwy 1 was closing and looking for new operators to reopen, I was interested in checking it out. It was John Solu (a Rotary past president) who convinced me to see what was going on. It might have been his joke or a final prod when John said, ‘I’ll do it with you.’ I picked up the 60-page application and toured the facility. Since there were several others interested in refurbishing and reopening it, John gets a pass and I joined the board.”

The land is officially owned by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife. The plan is to open in phases – first the rifle range, then pistol range followed by the archery range.

“It has always had great community support from the department and the community. Once it was announced,” Mike continued, “our group started working to reopen it. We’ve received lots of donated help.”

Besides necessary funds for essentials, donations have included loans of equipment and help with weed spraying. “At least 30 guys have been out there helping with clean-up every Tuesday.” He encourages volunteers to come out to help paint targets, with roofing, pick up ammunition lead embedded in the dirt, etc. “We plan to build a bridge to the archery range and need help. And our equipment needs repairing like the quads we need to get around the property.”

The California Department Fish & Wildlife oversees

SLOFAST, a nonprofit, to ensure the ‘shooting range operates at the highest standards of safety, professionalism and transparency’ and department rangers offer hunter education classes. Area law enforcement groups rent the facility for correctional officer and law enforcement gun training. The education hall is also available for the public to rent for special events. For example, Gals with Guns Women’s Shooting Group meets there regularly.

Mike, looking out over the green hills of his newest venture, invites all to come out during the next few months to check out their operation. “The scenery alone has one of the best views of our county’s green grassy hillsides.”

New President From page 1



Caption: Chris McBride is the new general manager of KCBX. Photo submitted

The general manager is responsible for all aspects of the operations of the station, and McBride has some goals she plans to reach.

“Of utmost importance is making sure we are financially secure and ready for the additional costs related to the elimination of federal funding,” she said. “Beyond that my focus is on three areas: expanding our KCBX news team, growing our community engagement through events and activities for our listeners, and evaluating our programming, to ensure we’re serving our listeners and the Central Coast community.”

McBride has been with KCBX since 2023, when she was hired as development director to oversee fundraising and outreach activities for the station, including the biannual pledge drives. The following year, she was promoted to assistant general manager to support executive leadership while simultaneously continuing her work as development director.

Why is public radio important to the airwaves and communities far and wide?

“Public media reaches 99% of the U.S. population and serves millions of Americans every day,” McBride said. “Each station is locally managed and makes programming and service decisions to address unique community needs and interests. For example, at KCBX these programs and services include the national shows like NPR’s “Morning Edition,” “All Things Considered,” and “Wait Wait Don’t Tell Me,” as well as 24 locally hosted music shows like “The Morning Cup,” “The Road Home,” “Broken Spoke” and “Global Spin.” KCBX also airs local news and information shows along with being part of the lifesaving emergency alert system.”

Of all that the station offers, NPR’s “Morning Edition” and locally “Morning Cup,” hosted by Music Director Neal Losey, are the most listened to shows.

The station has been a constant part of McBride’s life

well before her hire date, from listening to news and music to attending the Live Oak Music Festival, 8 to 10 times with her family.

For fun, Estero Bay News asked about skits such as on Saturday Night Live and others that poke fun at perceptions about public radio personalities and crew.

“I think most of the skits and jokes about public radio capture the essence of public radio people - a little bit quirky, a little bit nerdy, great storytellers and over the top knowledgeable about music or current events.

McBride succeeds KCBX’s previous President and General Manager Frank Lanzone, who will now serve as executive director of Live Oak Music Festival. “I believe Chris to be an outstanding choice to meet the expected and unexpected challenges ahead of us,” Lanzone said in a news release. “Her expertise in planning, fundraising, collaborating, and troubleshooting will serve KCBX well. Chris has also been a longstanding member of the community with deep roots in San Luis Obispo County, just like KCBX, making her a great match for this position.”

Prior to joining the team at KCBX, McBride worked in development, communications, and marketing. She served as director of annual giving for over a decade at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo and as the first outreach director at the Performing Arts Center San Luis Obispo.

That fundraising experience could be vital to the future of the station after Congress’ rescission of funding for public media in 2025, which led to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) ceasing operations.

“Federal funds, allocated by Congress and distributed to stations like KCBX through CPB, have been instrumental in building a public radio network that now reaches 99% of the U.S. population,” Frank Lanzone said at the time. “For KCBX, our first CPB grant, received in 1978, provided a launch point to help the station grow listener support, pay for programming, and bring in paid staff. Since that time, just as the system has grown and changed, so have we.

“KCBX must now secure a total of \$420,000 per year to fully replace the funding previously provided by CPB. CPB provided direct funds, in the form of grants, for programming and infrastructure costs and paid in-direct expenses for music rights, satellite interconnections, and emergency alerts. This represents a significant 40% increase in our annual fundraising efforts.”

McBride resides in San Luis Obispo with her husband, where they spend most weekends riding bicycles along backroads throughout the Central Coast and enjoying the outdoors together with their dog, Red.

KCBX has 11 full-time staff, plus part-time staff and more than 30 volunteers that serves an average weekly audience of over 35,000 listeners in Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo and south Monterey Counties.

For those tuning in on the radio, KCBX FM broadcasts on 90.1 in San Luis Obispo, 91.1 in Cayucos, 95.1 in Lompoc, 91.7 from Paso Robles to Salinas, and 90.9 in Santa Ynez, Goleta, Avila Beach and Cambria. KCBX streams online at kcbx.org. Live Oak tickets are on sale on the website.

BAY

MAIN EVENTS AT THE BAY THEATRE
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CLOSED THURSDAYS
SHOWTIMES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

 2/13 - 3/4 WUTHERING HEIGHTS (R) 2 hr 16 min Fri-Sat & Tues-Wed 3:45 pm & 7 pm Sun 12:45 pm & 4 pm	3/6 - 3/11 SPLIT FEATURE 3/6 - 3/11 TRAIN DREAMS (PG-13) 1 hr 42 min Fri-Sat & Tues-Wed 4:15 pm ONLY Sun 1:15 pm ONLY		
 3/6 - 3/11 BUGONIA (R) 1 hr 58 min Fri-Sat & Tues-Wed 7 pm ONLY Sun 4 pm ONLY	MONDAY SPECIALS * ONE SHOWING ONLY AT 5:30 PM <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;">  3/2 THE STING (PG) (1973) 2 hr. 9 min. </td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center; vertical-align: top;">  3/9 THE PRODUCERS (PG) (1967) 1 hr. 28 min. </td> </tr> </table>	 3/2 THE STING (PG) (1973) 2 hr. 9 min.	 3/9 THE PRODUCERS (PG) (1967) 1 hr. 28 min.
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