

Los Osos Bears Return — Mural Restoration Complete



Members of Celebrate Los Osos, the Los Osos Chamber of Commerce celebrated the completed restoration of the La Cañada de Los Osos mural. Photos by Dean Sullivan

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

A 9-foot bear was spotted in Los Osos to the cheers of those gathered to see it.

About 40 people showed up for a ribbon cutting and celebration of the completions of the La Cañada de Los Osos mural on the side of a building located at the corner of LOVR and 10th Street

Since 1989, the La Cañada de Los Osos mural, on the streetside of the Bay Osos Village Center, has stood as a marker of the first European expedition into Alta California (led by Gaspar de Portolá in 1769). Historically, our valley was named “ravine of the bears” because of the soldiers’ memorable encounters here with the California grizzly. Janice Sharman-Hand designed the original work that was painted by local children at the time.

“By the 2020s the paint had begun to peel, but driving by at 35 mph you may not have noticed,” said Pandora Karner-Nash, president of Celebrate Los Osos (CLO), a community benefit non-profit that was the idea and finan-

cial support behind the project. “To see it today, all the work that went into it and the detail — this is spectacular.”

To restore the mural, the building had to first be repaired. A portion of the mural had originally been painted on wooden panels that had suffered from time and the elements. The wood was removed and a new layer of Quikrete was applied on the upper portion of the building. Weeds, old plant materials and a dying tree were removed as well to make way for the platform required for scaffolding.”

Artist Manuel Cruz, of Pittsburgh, CA, spent close to six weeks working on the mural. He is a realist painter by trade and applied more of that style to the makeover. After cleaning, applying an undercoat and primer, he sketched the original mural from old photographs.

“I love Janice Sharman-Hand’s design and layout — it’s more whimsical. I brought in a little more realism such as the bear’s fur. I was scared by the bears,” Cruz said with a laugh. “I put them on a diet — I chiseled them. That was a challenge. I added a lot of grass and the giant poppies.

“Mural makeovers are far and few for me, but I love

Bear Returns Continued on page 22

Diablo Canyon Gets License Renewal



Acting Director of the NRC’s Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, Jeremy Groom (seated), signs the 20-year license renewal for PG&E’s Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, as dignitaries look on. Among those in attendance at the April 2 news conference were: Dist. 3 SLO County Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg (far right); Congressman Salud Carbajal (second from left) and PG&E CEO Sumeet Singh (third from left). Submitted photo

By Neil Farrell

Another major hurdle has been cleared in the continuing saga over whether a local nuclear power plant can continue to operate years into the future.

Pacific Gas & Electric announced last week that the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has approved a 20-year license renewal for the Diablo Canyon Power Plant. But it’s not the final hurdle in this seemingly never-ending race.

“The NRC’s approval,” PG&E said in a news release, “follows a transparent and public process through which the agency determined that Diablo Canyon is safe and environmentally sound to operate for another 20 years.”

However, “Extending operations past 2030 would require action from the California State Legislature.”

Diablo Canyon had been slated to close its two reactors in 2024 and 2025 when the initial 50-year licenses to operate expired.

In anticipation, over 20-years ago, PG&E applied to the NRC for licenses to continue to operate the reactors for another 50 years. That move was met with overwhelming opposition by anti-nuclear, anti-Diablo Canyon and environmental activists who argued the plant was too old, not in good condition, and in danger from nearby earthquake faults discovered offshore from the plant, among other claims.

Nevertheless, PG&E was pushing ahead with its license renewal until 2016, when it announced a settlement

License Renewal Continued on page 22

No Change to Fire Service Contract



Cal Fire and the Los Osos CSD will continue their contract for fire services for another three years.

By Neil Farrell

The question of whether Los Osos and Morro Bay would merge fire departments has been settled.

The Los Osos Community Services District Board voted to stick with Cal Fire for its fire services, approving a new deal that will keep staffing levels where they are now.

“Under the terms of the agreement,” LOCSO said in a news release, “the Dis-

trict will continue the services as they are now provided. Services will be delivered utilizing a 3-1 staffing model, consisting of three full time Cal Fire personnel and one reserve firefighter.

“This model is intended to maintain effective emergency response capabilities and continue providing a high level of service to the community.”

The decision came at the Board’s April 2 meeting when they were given the options of staying with Cal Fire, under two

County Fire Continued on page 23

Our Stories: Hal Abrams: Radio Is My Identity

By Judy Salamacha



Hal Abrams left Colorado at seventeen headed for Hollywood to become a “Rock Star,” but quickly pivoted from music school to the rest of his life in radio broadcasting.

“I got bogged down in musical theory, so I walked across the street to a broadcasting studio and landed a six-month internship at the station that brought Jay Thomas to Los Ange-

My Identity Continued on page 21

New Lease for Fishermen’s Wharf

By Neil Farrell



The Morro Bay Harbor Department has finalized a new lease for the Fishermen’s Wharf offloading dock, approving the new ownership group and continuing a key facility for the commercial fishing industry.

The City Council in March approved a new lease for Morro Bay Seafood Co., LLC for the wharf at 1231 Embarcadero behind the Dockside Restaurant. Morro Bay Seafood is owned by brothers, Garret Rose and David Rose.

The lease site, which has long been a main fish offloading facility in town had been in “holdover status,” according to a report on the new lease agreement. That’s a leftover

New Lease Continued on page 20

**Parking
Fee Alert
Page 6**



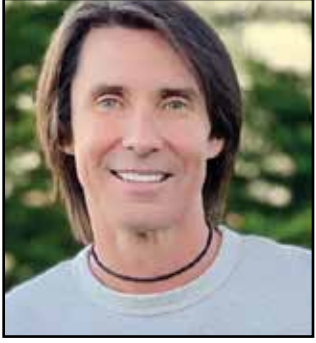
**Police
Blotter
Page 8**



**Eggcellent
Events
Page 19**



Dist. 2 Candidate Forum, April 22



Dist. 2 Supervisor candidates Michael Erin Woody (left) and Jim Dantona will square off in an April 22 forum. Dist. 2 Supervisor Forum, 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 22 at the Morro Bay Vet's Hall.

By Neil Farrell

Candidates for the Dist. 2 County Supervisor seat will square off in a League of Women Voters forum in Morro Bay.

The LWV Forum is set for 5:30-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 22 at the Morro Bay Vet's Hall, 209 Surf St. The forum will be streamed live on slo-span.org and available to watch afterwards on the League's YouTube Channel — see: www.youtube.com/@lwvslo.

Dist. 2 is a match up between Jim Dantona and Michael Erin Woody to replace long-time Supervisor Bruce Gibson, who is retiring from the position he's held since 2007.

It will be the first chance for voters in Morro Bay, Los Osos and much of SLO to vote for Dist. 2 County Supervisor since 2018.

The LWV is partnering with local Rotary Clubs to put on the forum, which is free to attend and open to the public. Arrive early to get a seat, as this promises to be SRO.

"Candidate forums," the LWV said on its website, "are intended to provide the public with an opportunity to learn about the candidates and their views on the issues. Community members are encouraged to attend the forum and to submit questions for the candidates at the forum. Questions should be on the issues and applicable to all candidates."

How these forums normally work is audience members are asked to write down questions for the candidates to answer. Each candidate gets a few minutes to make an opening and a closing statement, and a few minutes to answer each question, trading off who goes first with each question.

The forums are strictly timed and orderly, and run by LWV members.

Participating Rotary Clubs are: the Rotary Club of SLO, Rotary Club of SLO de Tolosa, Rotary Club of Cambria, Rotary Club of SLO Daybreak, and Rotary Passport Club of the Central Coast.

"The League of Women Voters encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

"The League neither supports nor opposes political parties or candidates."

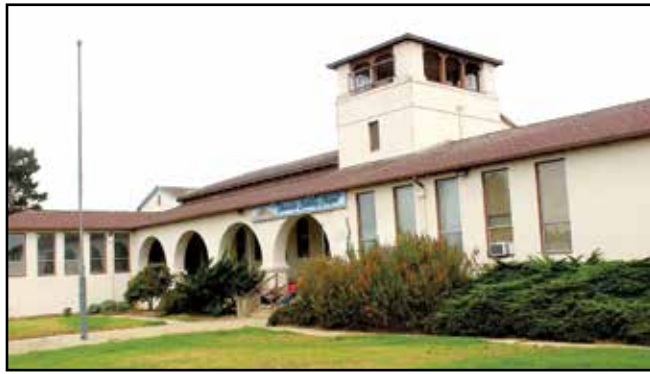
See: www.lwvslo.org for more information about the League of Women Voters, their programs and upcoming events.

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City-School District Agree on Morro Elementary Sale



The City of Morro Bay and San Luis Coastal School District have reached an agreement on the sale of Morro Elementary School, shown here. Photo by Neil Farrell

By Neil Farrell

One down and one to go.

The Morro Bay City Council and San Luis Coastal Unified School District have reached a sale agreement for the long-closed Morro Elementary School, one of two old school sites that the District has declared as surplus properties to be sold.

That leaves Los Osos voters to decide at the June Primary Election whether to tax themselves to raise the money to purchase Sunnyside School, the other surplus property being liquidated.

The Morro Bay City Council approved the sale agreement at its March 10 meeting, with the school district approving it at a March 12 special study session meeting.

The purchase price is \$5.3 million for the 10-acre site with the City putting down \$500,000 with the remaining \$4.8 million due at closing. The school district had appraised the property at \$10 million, so the \$5.3 million is considerably less than the District was trying to get.

According to a report from City Manager, John Craig, the City will now conduct "due diligence" on the property and pay for it too.

"The City will incur due diligence, escrow, and related consultant costs during the due diligence period," Craig said. Due diligence includes a review of the condition of the Property and title, Craig said. They will also conduct an environmental assessment to look for potential hazardous materials, like asbestos and potential soil and groundwater contamination, as well as plan to hire a project manager to steer the due diligence process through. Total costs were listed at \$45,000 plus the project manager's contract.

The City plans to cover these costs within the current budget. This due diligence period is slated to end Aug. 31 with the target closing date of Oct. 31.

Escrow and title costs will be shared equally with the District.

As part of this due diligence work program the City will also inspect the condition of the school's buildings, some of which date back to the original school dedicated in the 1930s. Other buildings were constructed in the ensuing decades with the newest structure — a library that's now a Montessori School — was built in the 1990s.

When the school district looked at the site it concluded the school's infrastructure needed over \$1 million in upgrades and repairs, one of the reasons they decided to sell it. The City will do an "Infrastructure review, including water, sewer, storm water, power, and broadband connections and potential upgrade needs."

Also, the City will be looking at future uses, the zoning, consistency with the City's General Plan, Coastal Zone constraints, and "permit pathways, regarding potential future uses like city offices, housing or other community needs."

Those community needs, especially the large grassy playground behind the school that local youth and adult sports leagues use, were driving forces for citizens who

lobbed the City to buy the old school and preserve it.

When old school sites are deemed surplus and offered for sale, State Law requires the school district to first offer it to local governmental agencies to keep publicly owned property for public uses.

If no agency (City of Morro Bay or Los Osos Community Services District) wants it, they can offer it to local organizations that are certified by the State to build "affordable" housing.

In SLO County there are two — People's Self-Help Housing and the Housing Authority of San Luis Obispo both of which have existing housing developments in Morro Bay.

The due diligence period is intended to uncover most of the aspects of just what the City is getting itself into and though they have a purchase agreement, which the school district approved 6-0-1 (Trustee Ellen Sheffer was absent) and the Council 5-0, it could still all fall apart, depending on what they discover.

Craig's report hedges its bets to a certain degree. "Staff will provide periodic updates to the City Council during the due diligence period and return with recommendations prior to any decision to proceed to closing."

The due diligence period will have at least two chances for citizens to participate, Craig said. "City staff proposes holding two community meetings during the due diligence period, the first for a purchase overview and initial feedback on potential future use concepts, and the second to provide an update on due diligence findings and further feedback on potential future use concepts."

Correction

Last issue's story about the new owners of FitnessWorks misstated the number of members. The SilverSneakers program for seniors has about 600 members and the overall club membership is more than 2,000.

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Adorable SLO cottage with updated features and a view of Bishop's Peak. Conveniently located near Cal Poly bike trail with walking bridge, you can walk to downtown San Luis Obispo's shops and restaurants. There is a studio in the back with a separate address and entry off the driveway behind the main house, with its own fenced in yard. The driveway is long and has plenty of parking which leads to a detached 2 car garage. This lot is zoned R3 and an additional two units may be built, to boost rental income! Entering the main house, you'll see living room with gas fireplace, and a door to the fenced in side yard. Enjoy a cozy night outside at the newly plumbed firepit. Professionally landscaped front yard with automatic sprinklers. The home has two bedrooms connected by a jack-n-jill bathroom updated with a new pedestal sink and glass shower enclosure. The kitchen is newly remodeled with concrete countertops and subway tile backsplash. Dining area has the original built-ins that add to the charm of this home.

News

The first meeting is tentatively planned sometime in April and a second meeting in July. They expect to get the due diligence report back Aug. 10 with the City Council reviewing it and making the final decision to proceed or not on Aug. 25.

Then sometime in early 2027 they'll start looking at potential future uses.

A citizen's group — The Friends of Morro Elementary — formed to push for the purchase has suggested the City could move City Hall to the old school and also make part of the property available for an affordable housing project, while still keeping the playing field available. Classrooms could also be rented out to educational organizations, as the school district has done over the past 20-plus years.

Parking Fees Hiked



Parking fees have gone up at the Morro Bay launch ramp, but the City has increased the ways you can pay the fees. Photo by Neil Farrell

By Neil Farrell

The cost to park at the Morro Bay launch ramp has been increased, and who has to pay was expanded.

As of the start of March, the Harbor Department increased the costs for long term parking in the Tideland Park/boat launch lot at the south end of the Embarcadero and expanded it to include regular parking stalls.

It's also installed a new kiosk pay station and increased the ways one can pay the fees.

"There is no fee for boat launching," the Harbor Department's rules and regulations say, "however, there is a fee for parking."

Single stalls (normal sized parking spaces) are now \$5 a day. They used to be free. And the longer stalls, sized for trucks with boat trailers, are \$12 "for a 24-hour period from purchase."

There are annual passes available from the Harbor Office, \$83 for a single stall and \$200 for the trailer stalls.

The kiosk has three payment methods — using a credit card at the kiosk; paying through a Smartphone app — Park Smarter, or by texting "PAY" to phone number 7747 with the zone number "MORRO."

You must follow the instructions on the kiosk or through the mobile app to complete the purchase. You won't get a ticket to stick on the dashboard.

As for who is enforcing the new system, Harbor Patrol officers will be charged with that duty. A parking citation is \$60 and since it's an "infraction" of a City ordinance, if you want to contest it, there's a City run appeal process to go through instead of traffic court.

Of note, the parking fee is tied to the license plate of the vehicle, so there's no transferring it.

Also, if you don't want to pay for parking while out on the water, there are two other parking lots in the immediate area that remain free — one is at the north end of Tideland Park upland from the side tie dock, and another is further down Embarcadero at the base of the Morro Avenue bluff. There are also a handful of street spaces on the Embarcadero leading to the park.

It does not appear that someone using the park for a short time, perhaps to eat lunch at a waterside picnic table, to use the public restroom or the children's playground will have to pay for parking.

The launch ramp is the only parking lot in town that charges for parking, for now at least.

Sea Lion at Morro Strand Tests Positive for Avian Flu

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

The first ever outbreak of avian influenza among elephant seals in the state was reported at Año Nuevo State Park, just north of Santa Cruz, in February.

In late March, a deceased, young male sea lion found along Morro Strand State Beach has tested positive for H5N1 (avian influenza or bird flu), the first confirmed case in a marine mammal in the county.

While the risk of H5N1 to the public remains low, officials from San Luis Obispo County Public Health Department, the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, and the Central California Marine Animal Response Team urge community members and visitors to avoid approaching marine mammals and seabirds. This is especially important for animals that appear sick, injured, or deceased. Signs of the bird flu include abnormal respiratory and neurological signs, including weakness and tremors.

California State Parks says, "While risk of infection to the general public is low, HPAI can spread between animals and people. Do not touch live or dead seals or allow pets to approach them. This helps protect people and pets and also gives sick animals space"

"People and their pets should avoid all contact with sick or dead wildlife because HPAI can spread between animals and people (and their pets)," Barbie Halaska, a biologist with Central California Marine Animal Response Team, told Estero Bay News in a previous interview. "Although the risk of infection to the general public remains low, beachgoers should not touch live or dead seals or allow pets to approach seals. They should maintain a safe distance of 150 yards or more away. And please respect closures and follow guidance at sites where special precautions are implemented."

Should readers encounter a sick, injured or dead marine mammal in California, Oregon or Washington, call the NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region Stranding Hotline: (866) 767-6114. Do not attempt to move sick wild animals, as this can spread disease and cause stress or harm to the animal.

"While the risk to the public remains low, it's understandable that people may have questions about their own health if they find themselves unexpectedly exposed to a sick or dead animal," said County Health Officer, Dr. Penny Borenstein. "If community members have questions about H5N1 as it relates to human health, our Public Health Department can help answer those questions."

Since the detection of this outbreak, scientists have worked closely with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, California State Parks, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Public Health, local health officials, The Marine Mammal Center, the West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network, and other marine mammal researchers that monitor wild elephant seal populations.

Community members can reach the County of SLO Public Health Department by calling 805-781-5500. To learn more about H5N1 in California by visiting the California Department of Public Health's website at cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/pages/Bird-Flu.aspx



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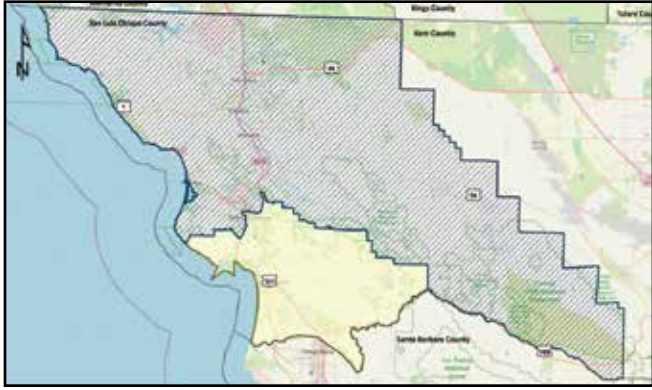


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Port San Luis Expansion Denied



A proposal to expand the Port San Luis Harbor District from its current boundaries (shown in yellow) to include the entire county was denied by the Local Agency Formation Commission. LAFCo. map

By Neil Farrell

An attempt to expand the boundaries of the Port San Luis Harbor District to engulf the entire county has failed.

The Local Agency Formation Commission or LAFCo., Board was asked on March 19 to approve a “Municipal Service Review and Sphere of Influence Study” prepared by LAFCo., staff. But a majority of the Board didn’t support the expansion of the District’s Sphere of Influence (SOI).

Board members questioned the justification for including the entire county in the SOI, when some communities — like Morro Bay, Cambria, and Cayucos — have their own beaches and access to the ocean.

They also have their own challenges keeping up with maintenance of public facilities, which was one of the justifications for increasing the Port’s SOI in the staff’s study.

The Municipal Service Review is a regular function of LAFCo., and every five years looks at the District’s responsibilities under State and Federal Law, comparing the revenue stream with being able to do everything required of them.

PSL’s district boundaries, established along with the Port District in 1954, stretch from South San Luis Obispo to Nipomo, encompassing all of Avila, Shell Beach, Pismo Beach, Grover City, Oceano, Arroyo Grande and Nipomo. It includes parts of Supervisory Districts 2 and 4, and all of Dist. 3. Indeed, Dist. 3 County Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg was the strongest supporter of increasing the SOI.

It currently covers about a third of SLO County’s land mass and has a population of a little over 137,000. The Port currently gets over \$4.66 million a year through property taxes.

Its funding is bolstered by fees and rental income from a boatyard, moorings, piers and other District property. The District owns the Avila and Harford piers, both of which are in rough shape and need major repairs; three public beaches; an RV campground; public restrooms; the Port

San Luis Lighthouse; and over 200 offshore moorings.

They have a Harbor Patrol public safety crew to support, with some 25 employees in all.

The District’s budget is currently in the black, but LAFCo.’s projections showed the District’s revenues eventually falling behind expenses, signaling they would have difficulty fulfilling all of the duties and responsibilities foisted upon them by State and Federal mandates.

It should be noted that LAFCo.’s MSR/SOI study would not have immediately dropped a tax burden on the rest of the County. Rather, an SOI is a planning tool that looks 20-years out and identifies areas where a special district or a City might get tax revenues from in the future.

Port San Luis is different in that it doesn’t provide specific services like water or sewer treatment, as most special districts provide.

SLOCOG Picks Los Osos Safety Project



By Neil Farrell

A proposed road safety demonstration project in Los Osos has been funded by the county’s transportation agency, one of six grant proposals to be given awards.

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) announced the winners of its “FY 2025/26 Bike and Pedestrian Safety Pop-Up Demonstration Grants,” a program funded by the California Office of Traffic Safety.

Earlier this year, SLOCOG sent out a notice seeking proposals for the grant program, looking for easy and inexpensive project proposals designed to increase safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

A project for the intersection of Pecho Valley Road and Rodman Drive was awarded \$1,000.

Others receiving grants were: San Miguel on “L” Street \$6,000; Oceano at 17th and Werner \$2,100; and the City of Paso Robles \$6,000 on North River Road. Two others were listed as “provisional awards pending further info.” They are Strongtowns SLO for \$500 and SLO County Public Works for \$1,500.

One of the people who submitted the Los Osos project, Julia Wallerice, explained that she and Deborah Howe of the Los Osos Community Advisory Council (LOCAC) put the proposal together.

Essentially, it’s a crosswalk, she explained, that is going into a spot on a busy road where there is none.

She said the residents of Cabrillo Estates had expressed concerns because the entrance to that neighborhood at Rodman Drive has no crosswalk for safely getting to the trail system of the state park across Pecho Valley Road.

“The speeds are high,” she said, especially for cars coming downhill from Montaña de Oro. The road is posted 40 mph.

And, “There’s no sidewalk,” she added. “People make a run for it.”

LOCAC had commissioned a study to look at the town’s circulation and identify places where safety improvements are needed, and this stretch of Pecho Valley Road was one of them.

Wallerice said the project involves painting the cross-

walk stripes in paint that isn’t meant to last, unlike real crosswalk paint, which is rubberized and made to last a long time.

She said their project should last a week, but might be shorter. It will include signage to warn drivers there’s a crosswalk ahead, barriers and traffic cones.

They will monitor the situation and see if it slows traffic down.

Another goal is to see if the area becomes safer, will it encourage more people to walk and ride bikes?

“We want to see if people could cross here, they would walk more,” Wallerice said. “It’s a very busy dog walking area too.”

The area is also popular for horseback riders, who follow a trail that starts at nearby stables and winds uphill and through the lower streets of Cabrillo Estates and crosses into the state park trails through the dunes.

The goal is “to let motorists know this is a neighborhood,” she said.

Also, there are several school children that live in the area and their parents drive them to school because of the lack of sidewalk and safe crossing.

She said they will be putting in the crosswalk on May 6, which is fittingly National Walk and Ride to School Day.

SLOCOG’s Programming & Project Delivery manager, John DiNunzio, said, “These community-led projects represent meaningful, place-based efforts to improve safety for people walking and biking across San Luis Obispo County.

“We also want to extend our appreciation to the Road to Zero Committee and our regional partners for your continued collaboration and support in advancing traffic safety initiatives.”

He added that many of the projects would be in place in May, which is Bike Month.

All of the projects are intended to be short-term and temporary, designed to draw attention to unsafe situations that are concerning to residents and agencies.

Should they prove to be effective, they could become permanent additions to the streetscape but that would take a separate process and funding.

Motorcyclist Killed in Hwy 46 Crash



A Visalia man riding a motorcycle ran into the back of a car on Hwy 46 in Paso Robles and was ejected from the bike and died.

According to the Highway Patrol, on March 8 at about 9:32 p.m. the Visalia man was riding a 2024 Harley Davidson motorcycle eastbound on Hwy 46, east of Geneseo Road “at a high rate of speed.”


At the same time, a 21-year-old Shandon man was driving a 2019 Toyota Corolla also eastbound in the fast lane (No. 2 lane). The Toyota was also driving over 65 mph, the CHP said.

Due to the motorcyclist’s speed “the front of the Harley Davidson struck the rear of the Toyota. As a result of the crash, the Toyota traveled out of control across the westbound traffic lanes of SR-46 and came to rest on the westbound shoulder.”

The motorcyclist, identified as Russel Palomino, 47 of Visalia, was thrown from the bike “and suffered fatal injuries,” according to the CHP.

The driver of the Toyota was identified as Antonio Hernandez 21 of Shandon. He was not injured, nor were three passengers also in the car at the time.

The CHP’s Templeton Office is investigating the crash and had not indicated whether drugs or alcohol were a factor.




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Community Invited for 33rd Annual Open House



Cal Poly hosts its 33rd annual Open House from Thursday-Saturday, April 9-11, in the community and on the San Luis Obispo campus.

There are several opportunities for the local community to experience Cal Poly during Open House, which showcases the campus to prospective students and their parents and supporters. About 7,000 potential future Mustangs and their supporters are expected to attend the three-day event.

"The Open House tradition actually stretches back more than a century to 1904, when visitors were invited to campus to tour new buildings, watch ag shows and eat barbecue," said Dale Stoker, director of Cal Poly's New Student and Transition Programs. "While the event has evolved over the decades to showcase the university to future Mustangs, the community remains invited to be a part of the celebration and experience all that Cal Poly has to offer."

Festivities kick off Thursday, April 9, with Campus Preview Night at the Downtown SLO Farmers' Market. Cal Poly clubs and organizations will take over an entire block of Chorro Street to share information about campus programs and services.

The following day, April 10, is Admitted Students Discovery Day, where prospective students will attend college sessions, a resource fair and other activities to give them a glimpse of life as a Mustang.

Community members should mark their calendars for Saturday, April 11, to celebrate the Mustang Legacy

Estero Bay New Briefs

By Theresa-Maria Wilson

during the Poly Royal Celebration with a parade and campus showcase of 300 clubs and organizations and special performances. The parade theme is "Green Roots, Golden Futures: Celebrating 125 Years of Cal Poly, marking the university's quasiquintennial. In addition, the Poly Royal Rodeo and numerous other college, athletics and alumni events will be held throughout the weekend.

Cal Poly Campus Dining Chef Wins Culinary Challenge



Chef Arthur Dulin of Cal Poly Campus Dining earned first place in the National Association of College & University Food Services (NACUFS) 2026 Pacific Culinary Challenge.

The live cooking competition took place on March 24 at the University of Washington as part of NACUFS Engage: Pacific, a leading conference for campus dining professionals.

Dulin's standout performance earned him the regional title and a prestigious silver medal from the American Culinary Federation (ACF), which judged the event. Dulin's winning dishes — Thai Red Curry Catfish with Okra and Crispy Coconut Rice Cakes, and Catfish Pomelo Salad Garnished with Crispy Okra — secured his place at the NACUFS 2026 National Conference in New Orleans beginning on July 15, where he will compete against top chefs from across the country.

"I'm just proud to have a chance to compete," Dulin

said. "Hearing my name called brought a lot of smiles and happiness. I'm very thankful for the opportunity to showcase what I can do."

Dulin, who enjoys bringing his experience in Southern, South American and Southeast Asian cuisine to campus dining at Cal Poly, said advancing to nationals is something that energizes both his team and the students he works with.

At the NACUFS national conference, finalists will compete for the highest honors, a cash prize, and national recognition in Campus Dining Today, the official magazine of NACUFS. Since 2001, the NACUFS Culinary Challenge has spotlighted the exceptional skills of collegiate dining chefs nationwide. Each competitor must craft an original, nutritionally balanced dish featuring a designated protein, and is judged on organization, technique, and taste using a rigorous 100-point scale.

Fire Inspections in Los Osos Underway

Cal Fire South Bay – Station 15 and Los Osos Community Services District advise Los Osos residents and property owners that the Annual Fire Hazard Abatement Inspections have begun.

All properties within the District boundaries containing hazardous vegetation and other flammable

materials, that constitute a public nuisance, must be removed as per Los Osos CSD Fire Code, Health and Safety Code and Public Resources Code. Hazardous weeds are defined by the California Health and Safety Code Section 14875, as dry grass, brush, poison oak, litter, or other flammable material that created a fire hazard.

- Acceptable methods of fire hazard reductions are:
- Mowing grasses and small shrubs to a height of not more than 4 inches;
 - Cutting dead brush and thin brush patches and remove it by hauling or chipping over a scattered area;
 - Hauling other flammable debris, and trash to a landfill.

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.




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News

San Luis Obispo County Joins City Nature Challenge



Put your smartphone to good use and help track nature. For the second consecutive year, San Luis Obispo County will take part in the City Nature Challenge (CNC), a global citizen science initiative that invites anyone with a smartphone to help document local wildlife. This year's observation window runs April 24–27, followed by an identification period from April 28 through May 10.

The City Nature Challenge began in 2016 as a friendly competition between the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles and the California Academy of Science. It has since grown into a worldwide movement, with hundreds of cities and regions participating each year. During a four-day window at the end of April, community members use the free iNaturalist app to photograph and log as many wildlife observations as possible, including plants, animals, fungi, and more (domestic animals excluded).

“Research shows that bioblitzes like the CNC give local governments a cost-effective way to build real biodiversity data, illuminating understudied groups like insects and fungi, informing land management decisions, strengthening community stewardship, and supporting evidence-based policy,” officials said in a news release.

This year's effort is coordinated by a coalition of local organizations:

- Pismo Beach Stewardship and Educational Outreach Program / Pismo Beach Conference and Visitors Bureau
- Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP)
- San Luis Obispo Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS-SLO)
- California Central Coast Chapter of The Wildlife Society (CCCC TWS)

Together, these organizations are bringing programming to communities across the county for the second year of SLO County's participation in the challenge.

The Central Coast is home to overwintering Monarch butterflies, nesting snowy plovers, native bunchgrasses, and an extraordinary range of pollinators, many of which are poorly documented in scientific literature. The City Nature Challenge gives everyday residents the tools to change that. Every photo submitted through iNaturalist becomes a verified, permanent record that researchers, land managers, and conservation planners can draw on for years to come. For a region navigating habitat loss, drought, and wildfire recovery, that kind of community-generated data isn't just interesting, it's actionable.

In 2025, SLO County's first year of participation, the challenge produced impressive results with 5,261 observations, 1,345 species, 532 identifiers, and 221 observers.

In-Person Events

Community events are planned for the weekend. More details on all of these events will be posted on the SLO County CNC project journal page.

Fire Scar Hike Saturday, April 25 - Time TBD
Led by Kristen Nelson of CNPS-SLO, this moderate-to-hard hike explores fire-affected landscapes and the wildlife rebounding within them. Details and meeting location to be announced. Check the SLO County CNC project journal page for updates.

Pismo Beach Earth Day - Saturday, April 25, 12 – 2 p.m., Pismo Beach Pier

Join Emma Rhoads from the Pismo Beach Stewardship and Educational Outreach Program for an Earth Day celebration that doubles as a CNC observation event. Families and first-time iNaturalist users are especially welcome.

Paso Robles BioBlitz - Sunday, April 26, 11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., Paso Robles

Join The Land Conservancy of SLO and Team Learning Among the Oaks to participate in a guided bioblitz in the heart of Paso Robles. This free event includes guided instruction and lunch. RSVP on Eventbrite.

You don't need to attend an in-person event to take part. Participation is open to everyone, wherever you are:

- Download the free iNaturalist app (iOS or Android).
- Search for and join the “City Nature Challenge 2026: San Luis Obispo County” project.

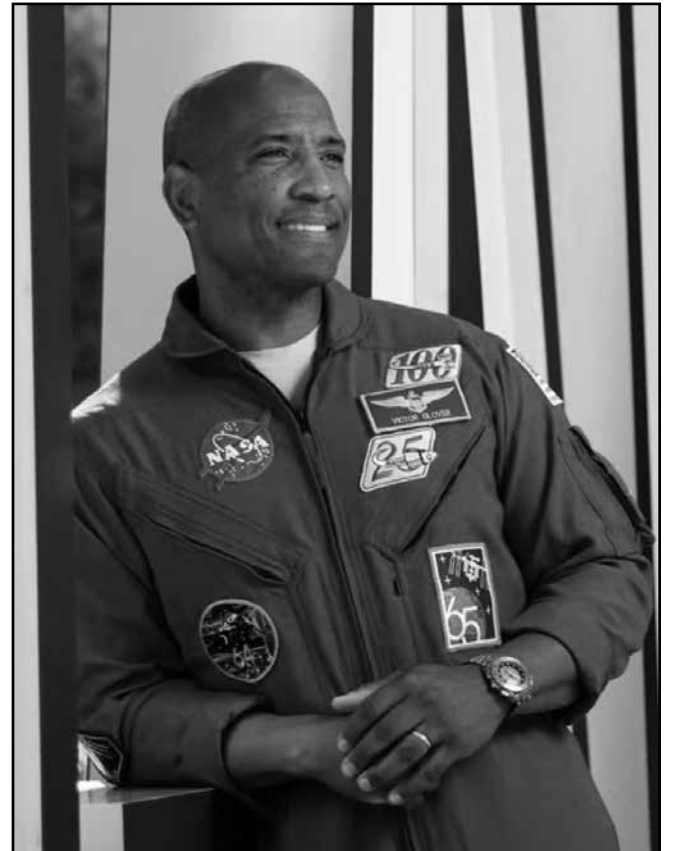
- Between April 24–27, photograph any wild plant, animal, or fungi you encounter — in your backyard, neighborhood, or out on the trail.

- From April 29 to May 10, help identify observations submitted by others. If you have expertise in birds, plants, insects, or any other group, your identifications make the dataset more valuable for researchers and land managers alike.

All planned events and tips will be posted on the SLO County CNC project journal page at: inaturalist.org/projects/city-nature-challenge-2026-san-luis-obispo-county.

Learn more about the global challenge at: citynaturechallenge.org.

Cal Poly Alumnus Pilots NASA First Lunar Mission in 50 Years



Cal Poly Alumnus Victor Glover pilots NASA's first lunar mission in 50 Years on Artemis II.

The goal is to “confirm all the spacecraft's systems operate as designed with crew aboard in the actual environment of deep space,” which will hopefully lead to future lunar surface missions and establishing long-term lunar science and exploration capabilities, according to NASA.

The mission will last approximately 10 days. For about two days, as they remained relatively close to Earth, the crew tested Orion's systems and performed a “targeting demonstration test” before continuing on toward the moon.

The trip took the crew on a wide orbital path around the moon, which could bring them farther from Earth than humans have ever been before.

In addition to Glover, the other members are Commander Reid Wiseman, Mission Specialist 1 Christina Hammock Koch, and Mission Specialist 2 Jeremy Hansen.

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July 20 - Roots of our maritime history and the Salinan Tribe

July 27- Maritime Skills - Knot tying, and more!

August 3 - Morro Bay Estuary Program!

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2025 RECIPIENTS

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- Morro Bay Maritime Museum
- Morro Bay Police Explorers
- Morro Bay Police Volunteers
- Morro Bay Rotary Club
- Pregnancy & Parenting Support of SLO County
- Noor Clinic Foundation
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Police Blotter



- **March 29:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 6:50 p.m. in what sounds like a possible Skynyrd song. Logs indicated the driver was allegedly drunk and armed with a loaded gun, and then pointed the gun at somebody, in a possible 'give me three steps' scenario.
- **March 29:** Someone found something somewhere and gave it to some cop sometime around 12:41 p.m.
- **March 29:** Police cited a vehicle for violation of the City's parking-in-one-place-too-long law, with possible impoundment the next step.
- **March 28:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 9:26 p.m. on the Morro Bay Boulevard Hwy 1 off ramp. Logs indicated the driver was nicked for suspicion of being roasted.
- **March 28:** At 9:29 a.m. police cited another vehicle for a 72-hour parking violation, a hanging offense in some parts.

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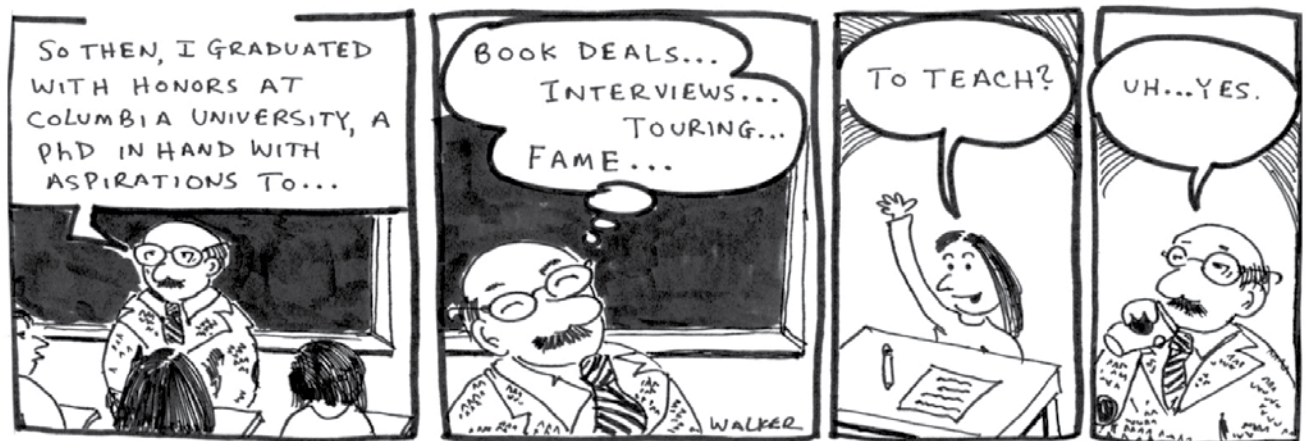
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- **March 28:** At 6:20 a.m. police responded to a hairy crack up crash someplace in town.
- **March 28:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 2:13 a.m. when all vehicles on the road are suspicious in this town. Logs indicated the driver had not offered up his annual blood sacrifice to the DMV, which no doubt led to his then being cited for alleged possession of illegal drugs and paraphernalia, as sometimes a ham sandwich is really baloney.
- **March 27:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 7:55 p.m. at Bottle Liquors in the 900 block of Main. Logs indicated the driver was cited for suspicion of being schwasted.
- **March 27:** Police caught up to another bail jumper at 5:54 p.m. at an undisclosed location.
- **March 27:** Police responded at 9:28 a.m. to a disturbance and started a case for alleged spousal battery.
- **March 26:** Police contacted a suspicious subject at 11:18 p.m. who was apparently on probation. Logs indicated a subsequent search determined he or she was allegedly in possession of drugs and has more than two priors for drugs, so they got tossed into the hoosegow.
- **March 26:** Police responded at 5:05 p.m. to a disturbance at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated it was a case of misdemeanor battery or simple assault, though the victim might not agree.
- **March 25:** Police responded at 10:39 p.m. to the 700 block of Quintana at Albertsons' Market where they'd apparently caught somebody taking the ol' five-finger discount.
- **March 25:** Police were called at 10:18 a.m. to a reported felony vandalism. Logs didn't say where it happened or if it was graffiti or some form of wanton destruction.
- **March 24:** Police responded to the 500 block of Morro Bay Blvd., at Ariana's Mexican Market where someone bounced a check.
- **March 24:** Police at 12:12 a.m. contacted some apparent worm hanging out at the public library on Harbor Street who had a bench warrant.
- **March 24:** Police were called at 10:43 p.m. to the 600 block of Quintana after some groom of the stool was spotted hanging out at O'Reilly Auto Parts.
- **March 23:** Police contacted a suspicious subject at 10:13 p.m. at City Park on Harbor Street. The Mamaluke had a bench warrant, was cited and advised to take his shoes for a walk.
- **March 23:** Police were called at 9:47 a.m. with a report of some sneak thief obtaining money by false pretenses. Logs indicated Bank of America reported the matter, but they fled Morro Bay years ago.
- **March 22:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 9:15 p.m. at an undisclosed location and whoopsy-poopsy the driver got nicked for suspicion of driving spanked.
- **March 22:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at the highly suspect time of 12:24 a.m. somewhere in town. Logs indicated the driver was busted for suspicion of driving battered and allegedly battering a police officer too, a suspected case of booking a 1-way ticket to Palookaville.
- **March 21:** Police stopped yet another suspicious vehicle at 8:42 p.m. again at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated the stultified driver was arrested for resisting arrest and driving on a toot. He or she was checked into the iron bar

- hotel with the zero-star rating.
- **March 21:** Police responded to an apparent car crash at 12:34 p.m. Police didn't indicate where or the extent of the carnage.
- **March 20:** Police responded at 11:04 p.m. to a disturbance at Bayshore Bluffs Park. Logs indicated some ruffian tool was arrested for suspicion of assaulting an elderly person and being a drunk and disorderly choleric boulder.
- **March 20:** Police stopped another suspicious vehicle at an unreported location at 9:42 p.m. for no doubt some trumped up code violation. Logs indicated the driver was cited for suspicion of being deep in his or her cups.
- **March 20:** Police responded at 12:05 p.m. to the public boat launch on the Embarcadero where some thieving bilge rat committed petty larceny.
- **March 20:** Police responded at 7:49 p.m. to the 700 block of Market for a report of scalawag stealing something at Let's Get Tuned.
- **March 20:** Police contacted a suspicious subject at 6:08 p.m. at the north parking lot of Morro Creek, affectionately known as The Pit. The scofflaw had a local bench warrant and was likely issued a second disappearance ticket and released to catch another day.
- **March 20:** An unknown citizen at an undisclosed location reported identity theft by an unidentified rapscallion with unreported the loss somewhere north of \$400.
- **March 20:** At 12:39 p.m. police caught up to another model citizen with a bench warrant, issuing another citation with another court date to ignore.
- **March 20:** Police responded at 9 a.m. to a reported car burglary. Logs didn't indicate where it happened or what was taken, however it was listed as a felony, for what that's worth.
- **March 20:** Police responded at 8:19 a.m. to a report of a deceased person.
- **March 19:** Police responded at 11:06 p.m. to a disturbance at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated some bent idjit was busted for suspicion of being drunk & disorderly or just another Thursday night.
- **March 18:** Police responded at 4:07 p.m. to an undisclosed location after someone said they'd been threatened with bodily harm by some angry nodcock.
- **March 18:** Police ticketed a parked vehicle for expired registration, which is no doubt why the State is swimming in red ink.
- **March 17:** Police responded at 7:23 a.m. to a car crash at an undisclosed location. No word on injuries, but we all hope for the best.
- **March 17:** Police responded at 7:23 a.m. to a car crash at an undisclosed location. No word on injuries, but let's all hope for the best.
- **March 16:** Police contacted a suspicious subject hanging around The Dollar Tree in the 500 block of Quintana who had a bench warrant. No word on what became of the slacker but cite-release is the way to bet.
- **March 16:** Police contacted another suspicious subject at 1:27 p.m. at Morro Rock who had a bench warrant. He or she was cited and released as part of the new catch-and-release job security program.
- **March 16:** Police were notified of graffidiots leaving their mark at the Centennial Parkway and at Morro Rock.

COLLEGETOWN



By Michael Walker

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Community

No King's Protest in Los Osos



Photo by Dean Sullivan

No King's protests took place across the nation and SLO County on March 28. Marchers carried American flags and signs at the corner of South Bay Boulevard and Los Osos Valley Road in Los Osos.

Demonstrators protested President Trump's and his administration, the war in Iran, and immigration enforcement.

Rallies were also held in Cambria, San Luis Obispo, Atascadero and Grover Beach.

Get outside for Snapshot Day

By Christine Heinrichs

Help protect your local watershed and monitor water quality in the Central Coast! Volunteer for the 26th annual Snapshot Day and become an essential part of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary water quality monitoring team.

On Snapshot Day, participants will have the unique opportunity to collect water quality samples from streams that flow into the Monterey Bay NNS. The data you gather helps sanctuary staff understand and protect the health of our local waters.

What's Involved?

- Sign up via this <https://bit.ly/4tpRLyu>
- Attend a one-hour training session, either in person or online.
- Collect water samples and field data with your team on May 2 from 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Anyone interested in learning about water quality is invited to participate. Under 18? No problem—just bring a guardian and transportation.

Training sessions take place April 18, from 3 – 4 p.m. at the Coastal Discovery Center (CA-1 and SLO San Simeon Rd, San Simeon) or online on April 20, from 6 – 7 p.m. via Zoom

After signing up, volunteers receive emails with all the details, including training reminders, event logistics, and any paperwork. Share this opportunity with friends, family, and colleagues! The Sanctuary relies on volunteers for the success of this important effort.

Christine Heinrichs is the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council SLO At-Large member. Follow her on Facebook, Bluesky, LinkedIn, and Substack.

In Print and On Line



esterobaynews.com



Blessing of the Fleet



The late-Pastor Roger Evey sings a song at the Blessing of the Fleet from 2014. File photo by Neil Farrell

By Neil Farrell

One of Morro Bay's touching traditional events, the Blessing of the Fleet, has gotten a little divine intervention.

With the death last year of Pastor Roger Evey of Four-square Church, organizers had been looking for someone to take over leading the event.

But that concern has been lifted after Estero Bay News put organizers in touch with Pastor Ed Compean of Shoreline Calvary Chapel, who is also the Chaplin for the Morro Bay Police Department. Pastor Compean had taken part in past Blessings of the Fleet along with Pastor Evey. Other local clergymen have also stepped up to participate.

Blessing of the Fleet traces its origins back centuries in Mediterranean fishing communities, according to the event flyer.



Fr. Ed Holterhoff sprinkles Holy Water on a Coast Guardsman during the 2014 Blessing of the Fleet.

The practice "is a blessing from the local priest and pastors that is meant to ensure a safe and bountiful season."

In Morro Bay the purpose has been expanded as a ceremony designed to impart blessings and safe travels to all who venture onto the ocean, be they Coast Guard, sport fishers, Harbor Patrol, pleasure boaters, surfers, commercial fishermen and even game wardens.

Another highlight for Morro Bay's ceremony was the recitation of "For Whom the Bell Tolls," by the late-Chaplin Bill Houston (U.S. Navy, Ret.), with his larger-than-life baritone voice.

If any local actors would like to take over this role, the bell tolls for you, email Trudy O'Brien at: trudy2150@gmail.com.

This year's Blessing of the Fleet is scheduled for 1 p.m. Sunday, May 3 at the North T-pier. A free barbecue lunch will be served at the Vet's Hall, 209 Surf St., following the ceremony.

Lunch is being provided by Tognazzini's Dockside.

Bring your friends and family to honor our local mariners for a safe and prosperous season with God's blessing.



By Theresa-Marie Wilson



The Los Osos Valley Garden Club (LOVGC) will hold its Spring Plant Sale Fundraiser Saturday, April 11, at the historic Red Barn, 2180 Palisades Ave, Los Osos. This year's event is shaping up to be the biggest and most exciting sale in the club's history, offering everything a local gardener needs to kick off the season.

The main attraction features over 30 specialty tomato varieties locally grown right here in Los Osos at Clearwater Color Nursery. These robust 4-inch tomato plants are priced at just \$7 each, and many were specifically chosen for their proven success in our unique coastal climate. Beyond tomatoes, shoppers can browse a massive selection of tomato companion plants, spring vegetable and floral 6-packs, native plants, landscape plants, succulents, fruit trees, flowers, herbs, houseplants, garden art and even vermi-compost extract.

Visitors can enjoy a festive atmosphere with free coffee and treats, fun activities for the kids, and expert advice from the UC Master Gardeners "Plant Doctor" booth. As a special thank you, free certified organic compost will be available with any purchase or donation while supplies last.

All proceeds directly benefit the LOVGC's efforts to promote environmental responsibility and keep Los Osos beautiful.

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Community

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Join Greenspace-The Cambria Land Trust and True Earth Market to celebrate Earth Day in Cambria on Sunday, April 19 from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Creekside Reserve, 2264 Center Street, Cambria. The event includes family friendly fun, eco-education and free admission as well as classes at the learning center, movement in the meadow, music, storytelling, docent tours, eco-vendors, animal ambassadors, face painting, kids zone, kids art contest with prizes, local food and beverages for purchase and more! We will have classes on native plants, mushrooms, bats and yoga classes in the meadow. Docent tours of the historic Chinese Temple and Native Demonstration Garden will also be provided throughout the day. No pets allowed to keep animal ambassadors safe.

For more info, call Greenspace at 805.927.2866, or email admin@greenspacecambria.org and check out the website at greenspacecambria.org.

...

On April 26, the Grover Beach Community Library will join The Caffeinated Cat Café for a Reading to Cats Family Event from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at 1601 W. Grande Ave, Grover Beach.

Grover Beach Community Library will provide books for attendees to cozy up with a cat and a complimentary beverage. Attendees can also shop \$1 books. Reserve early for a free Library book bag! This is for children 6-years and old and adults. Register for one of two \$18 sessions here <https://bit.ly/4s7u1Op>.

...

On Saturday, April 11th, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., the San Luis Obispo Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS-SLO) will offer the 2026 Central Coast Native Garden Tour. Gardens on the tour span the Central Coast, from Cambria to Arroyo Grande. Each garden has unique plants and soil, and garden hosts will be on site to answer your questions. Tickets are \$15 and will help support the organization's scholarship and education funds. Registered visitors will receive a tour program in advance with locations and descriptions of the gardens. Link to the CNPS-SLO event page here: cnpslo.org/event/central-coast-native-garden-tour.

...

The American Association of University Women, Morro Bay Branch welcomes CAPSLO representative, Lori Leiding to the April 11 meeting beginning at 10 a.m. at Saint Peter's Episcopal Church, 545 Shasta, Morro Bay. Leiding will discuss an overview of the services provided by the Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County, or CAPSLO. It delivers services to children, adults-in-need and seniors on the Central Coast. Attendees will learn how to contribute to the health and vibrancy of



our community through CAPSLO.

The final preparations for AAUW Morro Bay's Annual Garden Tour, on April 26, from noon 4 p.m. will be discussed. Tickets and posters will be available. Tickets can also be purchased from My805tix.com. This year we will have four fabulous gardens to view. Nancy Nagano will be playing her cello in one of the gardens and refreshments will be served at another.

We welcome anyone to attend our meetings, who is interested in the AAUW mission to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy and education. For membership information, contact Mary Jo Rogers, gold-coastmj@gmail.com.

...



Celebrate 25 years of Carrizo Plains National Monument on April 10 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Carrizo Plain National Monument's Goodwin Education Center.

Members of San Luis Outdoor Painters for the Environment, SLOPE, were invited to exhibit original paintings and fine art prints during at the Goodwin Education Center celebrating nature's abundant wildflower display.

This year's bloom was early and wonderful and a super treat. It doesn't occur every year, and when it does SLOPE artists get invigorated to go there and capture it on canvas and paper and preserve those special moments and color for posterity.

SLOPE, features some of our region's top landscape artists, who use their art to raise awareness, funding and education for the Central Coast's treasured open space, ranches, farmland and wildlife. A portion of the proceeds from sales at this event will benefit Friends of the Carrizo Plain. They will be showing and selling Carrizo Plain artworks.

Participating Artists: Jan French, Dotty Hawthorne, Sandi Heller, Joe McFadden, Laurel Sherrie and Gisele Thompson. Image Antelope Roam by Joe McFadden

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Costa Gallery, 2087 10th Street in Los Osos, presents Ca Collector's Show Fundraiser, a special exhibition and event supporting the Economics Of Being A Woman financial education programs for women. To date, the program has helped more than 35,000 women financially empower themselves.

The exhibition runs through April 26 and features the

personal collection of Andrea Wasko and Meaghan Gilbert. The show highlights a curated selection of fine art, decorative objects, and unique collectibles, offering visitors an engaging and meaningful gallery experience.

A featured Reception and Fundraiser takes place on Sunday, April 12 from Noon to 4 p.m., inviting the community to enjoy an afternoon of art, DJ and dancing, food and drinks, and a silent auction benefiting financial education for women.

Gallery hours are Thursday through Sunday from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Guests may make tax-deductible donations during or before the event at charity.pledgeit.org/economicsofbeingawoman. For more information, contact Costa Gallery or visit during exhibition hours.



...

Pianist and music Professor Emeritus W. Terrence Spiller will give a recital titled "Suites and Dances" at 7:30 p.m. Friday, April 24, in the Pavilion of the Performing Arts Center. The program of dance-inspired repertory will include J.S. Bach's "Partita No. 2 in C Minor," Béla Bartók's "Dance Suite," Maurice Ravel's "Valses nobles et sentimentales," three Mazurkas by Frédéric Chopin, and Isaac Albéniz' "Rondeña" and "Triana" from his "Iberia," Book 2. Tickets are \$22 for general and \$12 for students. They can be purchased at pacslo.org.

...

The Cayucos Elementary School PTA will host its annual Spring Gala, "Sparkles & Spurs," on April 18, bringing the community together for an evening of entertainment, food, and fundraising in support of students at Cayucos Elementary School.

This adults-only event will feature live entertainment from performer Monty Mills. Known for his dynamic performances and engaging stage presence, Mills will headline the evening while guests enjoy a festive atmosphere that includes specialty tastings, hosted food, and exciting auction opportunities.

One of the highlights of the event is the Silent Auction, featuring hundreds of items donated by businesses throughout the Central Coast and beyond. Guests will have the opportunity to bid on dining experiences, local goods, entertainment tickets, and unique packages.

The evening will also feature a Live Auction showcasing premium experiences, including luxury travel packages and a special Kentucky Derby prize package.

Proceeds from the event will directly benefit the Athletic Department at Cayucos Elementary School, a TK-8 public school serving the Cayucos community. Funds raised will support improvements to school athletic fields and the purchase of a van to provide transportation for students traveling to games and competitions. These resources are not fully funded through district budgets, making community support essential to maintaining athletic opportunities for local students.

Community members interested in supporting the event, purchasing tickets, or participating in the auction should go to givebutter.com/c/GiddyUpGala2026.

Events Continued on page 12



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Community

Events From page 11

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It's time to Spring Clean for Homeless Cats! HART (Homeless Animal Rescue Team) is hosting a Goodwill Drive on April 10 and 11 from 10 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Can't make those dates? Early drop-off will be available the Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 12-4 prior to the event.

Clear out your garage, closets, attic, and cupboards, and turn your gently used clothes and household items into much-needed support for HART's cats and kittens. Every trailer we fill helps fund their care—so your donations truly make a difference. Gather your new or gently used, working items and drop them off at HART (2638 Main St., Cambria). Not sure if something is accepted? Check here www.ccgoodwill.org/donate/what-to-donate.

...

Free programs at Los Osos Library, 2075 Palisades Ave., Los Osos, 805-528-1862

- **Current Featured Wall Artist:** Randy Ayala paintings on wood and canvas.
- **Current Featured Display Case:** Faylla Chapman – All kinds of eggs!
- **Storytime** - Thursdays, 10:30 – 11 a.m. Stories, dance, and music for toddlers and preschoolers.

- **Hexbugs** – Friday, April 10, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. Create mazes for these motorized bugs, race them and more! Preschool, School Age, Tween.
- **Bears Book Club** – Tuesday, April 14, 6 – 7:30 p.m. "The Centaur," by John Updike. Drop in. Adults.
- **Pacific Wildlife Care** – Thursday, April 16, 3 – 4 p.m. Meet and learn about rescue animals. All Ages. Across the street from the Library at South Bay Community Center.
- **Earth Day Crafts** – Friday, April 17, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. Join us at the library as we craft beautiful handmade things from recycled materials. We'll have a button maker, DIY notebook binder, collage supplies and more! School Age, Tween, Teen.
- **Teen Advisory Board** – Saturday, April 18, 3 – 4 p.m. Calling all teens! Looking for volunteer or community service hours? Help Librarian Emily run the Teen Advisory Board! Participation can be listed on job, scholarship and college applications. Snacks provided. Tweens and Teens.
- **Nintendo Switch** – Friday, April 24, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. Master your gaming skills and make new friends with our Nintendo Switch! We will provide one Switch for up to four players at a time, feel free to bring your own too. Games include Mario Kart, Just Dance and Super Smash Bros. School Age, Tween, Teen.
- **Poetry Night** – Thursday, April 30, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Join us for Poetry Night! Program TBD. Adults.

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Morro Coast Audubon Society's Annual Members' Meeting and the Fourth Annual Birds of SLO and Northern Santa Barbara Counties takes place in person on April 20 at 7 p.m. at Unitarian Universalist Church of San Luis Obispo, 2201 Lawton Ave., in SLO. Retired field botanist Judy Neuhauser will present the Program of Birds of San Luis Obispo and Northern Santa Barbara Counties. This slide show, featuring photos from some of the best photographers in the area, showcases the splendor of birds that live and migrate through the spectacularly varied habitats in our counties. The wide range of birds that live in

or pass through these landscapes is truly amazing. Join us as we get a close-up look at these birds as they live their lives. The program will be set to recorded music by Aria DiSalvio, a cellist from Santa Cruz, and her musical collaborators, and by Cafe Musique, a local San Luis Obispo County band.

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

No signup/registration is required to attend. The recorded program will be posted on our YouTube channel.

Send questions to Wendy McKeown, programs chair at commprograms@morrocoastaudubon.org. Image Pigeon Guillemots by Alice Cahill

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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.

The Rock Fires 'Up in Smoke'



Tommy Chong (left) passes the world's biggest joint to Cheech Marin in the counter-culture classic film, 'Up in Smoke,' playing April 20 at The Bay Theater, a benefit for The Rock Community Radio.

By Neil Farrell

Comedic legends Cheech & Chong return to the big screen in their counter-culture classic comedy film, "Up in Smoke," a benefit for 97.3 FM The Rock.

Up in Smoke will play at 4:20 p.m. Monday, April 20 at The Bay Theater, 464 Morro Bay Blvd. in Downtown Morro Bay.

Doors open at 3:20 p.m. with a pre-show party and a hippy-dippy costume contest, plus The Rock's famous Rock Raffle.

Among the top prizes is a gift basket from event sponsor, Perfect Union, cannabis shop in Morro Bay (License # C10-0000749-LIC).

There will be Firestone Walker Brewing Company

Up in Smoke Continued on page 14

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Community

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By Theresa-Marie Wilson

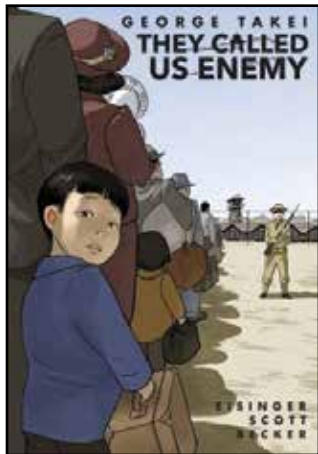
One Book, One Coast Featuring George Takei

County of San Luis Obispo Public Libraries are joining more than 140 libraries across California, Oregon and Washington for One Book, One Coast, the largest book club on the West Coast.

Community members are encouraged to read and discuss "They Called Us Enemy" by George Takei, Steven Scott, and Justin Eisinger and illustrated by Harmony Becker. Readers can reserve a copy of the eBook, physical book, or Spanish language book at slolibrary.org.

"They Called Us Enemy" is a graphic memoir written for young adults. It recounts Takei's childhood experience of incarceration alongside more than 120,000 people of Japanese descent, most of whom were U.S. citizens, following Executive Order 9066 in 1942.

George Takei is a renowned civil rights activist, social media icon, Grammy-nominated recording artist, New York Times bestselling author, and pioneering actor whose career has spanned over six decades. Best known for his



role as Hikaru Sulu in Star Trek, Takei has appeared in more than 40 feature films and hundreds of television episodes. He has leveraged his public profile to champion social justice, LGBTQ+ rights, and marriage equality.

One Book, One Coast runs through May 31 and culminates with An Evening with George Takei on May 31 at the East Los Angeles Library. Registration is required.

Locally, several free events are planned, encouraging discussion about the book which confronts questions of patriotism, family, loyalty, and community. Find out more about these events at slolibrary.org.

'Sixth Sense' Actor to Spotlight 32nd SLO International Film Festival

The actor famous for seeing dead people in the film "Sixt Sense" will be honored at the 32nd San Luis Obispo International Film Festival (SLOIFF) this month.

SLOIFF will present actor Haley Joel Osment the festival's Spotlight Presentation: Craft in Focus Award. His new film "How to Date Again," will have its World Premiere at this year's edition of the SLO Film Fest. The feature film was primarily shot in San Luis Obispo County.

New to the festival this year, the Spotlight Presentation: Craft in Focus Award celebrates standout talent from the festival program through in-depth conversations



exploring their past and current work, creative journeys, and perspectives on filmmaking.

The festival runs from Thursday, April 23 through Tuesday, April 28. The Spotlight Presentation, conversation with Haley Joel Osment, and the premiere of "How to Date Again," are scheduled for Saturday, April 25 at the historic San Luis Obispo Masonic Lodge.

"Haley first captured audiences with his standout childhood performance in "The Sixth Sense," and we're looking forward to reflecting on his notable career as well as spotlighting his evolution into comedy and his continued commitment to championing independent film," SLOIFF Director Skye McLennan.

Osment is an Academy Award, Golden Globe, and two-time Actor Award-nominated actor with a robust career spanning across genres. On the TV side, he appears in the latest season of "Poker Face" for Peacock. He can be seen in season two of Tim Burton's hit Netflix series "Wednesday."

With a slate of over 100 films from 25 countries including narrative features, short films, feature documentaries, and doc shorts, this year brings two new categories - Episodics and a special award recognizing the Best Genre/Horror Film.

Also on tap are the Festival's signature events, Surf Nite, the popular Central Coast Filmmaker Showcase, Cal Poly Short Cuts, Music Video Showcase, and Community of Skate.

Additional programs include short films curated by R.A.C.E. Matters, and Filmmakers of Tomorrow, featuring short films by those 18 and under.

McLennan said, "This year our tagline is 'Where Our Stories Live,' highlighting that both our festival and San Luis Obispo are home to storytellers and storytelling.

We believe film festivals are a powerful opportunity to showcase a diversity of perspectives and stories, and when we share them, we can truly be in community with one another."

Other feature film highlights include the West Coast

Up in Smoke From page 12

beer and wine available for purchase in case you've got cottonmouth.

Tickets are \$15 a person and available online at: TheRockCommunityRadio.org and my805tix.com.

"Up in Smoke" was released in 1978 and marked the film debut of Cheech & Chong, who had been laughing it up on stage and on record for a decade before they pulled together some of their classic bits into a screen play.

It was of course panned by the square film critics but loved by audiences, raking in \$104 million at the box office at a time when tickets were \$1.50. Clearly, the stoners out there loved it.

In 2024, "Up in Smoke" was selected for the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress for being "culturally, historically or aesthetically significant."

Starring Cheech Marin, Tommy Chong, Tom Skerritt, Edie Adams, Strother Martin and Stacy Keach as Sgt. Stedenko, the clueless lawman who leads a team of goofball cops trying to thwart a marijuana smuggling operation with a new menace — fiber weed.

Cheech & Chong, who had been deported to T.J., pick up a fiber weed van and drive it across the border back to L.A. where they take part in a Battle of the Bands contest.

The screening is another benefit for The Rock Community Radio, a non-commercial, volunteer-run radio station dedicated to providing the Central Coast with an alternative and diverse range of music and community programming that is often overlooked by mainstream media.

Tune to 97.3 FM in Morro Bay, and 107.9 FM in Paso Robles, or stream The Rock at TheRockCommunityRadio.org.

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Premiere of SLOIFF Alumni Giselle Bonilla's feature directorial debut and dark comedy "The Musical," starring Rob Lowe; the Sci-Fi Thriller "April X," starring Connie Storr; the Brazilian production "The Blue Trail," winner of the Silver Bear/Grand Jury Prize at Berlin; festival-circuit award-winning favorite "Adult Children"; Venice Film Festival and Image Awards winner "The Fisherman from Ghana;" and "Valentina," directed by Tatti Ribeiro, winner of "someone to watch" at the 2026 Independent Spirit Awards.

There will be a special screening of "Left Handed Girl," the directorial debut of Shih-Ching Tsou and co-written and edited by Sean Baker, her longtime creative partner. The Sunday, April 26 screening will be followed by a Q&A with the director.

Other special presentations include "Sender," a psychological thriller starring Rhea Seehorn, Britt Lower, and Jamie Lee Curtis; and Billy Wilder's timeless Noir about Hollywood, "Sunset Boulevard" (1950), newly restored.

Documentary features include "American Pachuco: The Legend of Luis Valdez," winner of the Audience Award at Sundance for US Documentary; "Birds of War," winner of World Cinema Documentary Special Jury Award at Sundance; and award-winning "Steal This Story, Please!" that goes behind the scenes with Amy Goodman of Democracy Now!

SLOIFF is an Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences Qualifying Festival. As a result, films that win in the category of "Best Documentary Short" at SLOIFF may be qualified to enter the 99th Academy Awards (2027) making them eligible to win an Oscar. This year's nine documentary short films include "Love Birds," documenting the discovery of homosexuality in seagulls that ignited a cultural and political firestorm; "The Right Fit," about a legendary jean store, its unique owner and its connection to the community; and "Swim Sistas," a visually stunning love letter to water, sisterhood, and the enduring strength of Black women across generations.

With films from Iran, Brazil, Lebanon, Colombia, Estonia and the U.S. among other nations, the diverse Narrative Short category brings drama, fantasy, horror, science-fiction, romance and comedy to the SLOIFF screens. The French/South African production "Vultures; What If They Bomb Here Tonight," from Lebanon; the romance "Never Never Never" from the U.K.; the fantasy film "I Have Wings But I Cannot Fly" from the U.S.; the drama "Summer Triangle" from Iran; and from Estonia, a horror film, "Breadsong," are among the selected films.

New to the festival this year is an Episodic category, with five pilots scheduled to be showcased: the World Premiere of "Too Romantic" starring Rivkah Reyes, the comedies "Dick Bunny" and "Pour Decisions," the trans drama "One For The Team," and the world premiere of "Savage" directed by Josh Bowman.

Surf Nite in SLO, the film festival's signature one-of-a-kind surfing film event, is featuring "The Blind Sea." This thrilling documentary follows the remarkable career of Australian surfer Matt Formston, a 3-time World Champion with just 3% vision, as he attempts the most dangerous challenge of his life: riding the monster waves of Nazaré. Pushing beyond prejudice and physical limits, Matt chases a world record for the largest wave ever surfed by a vision-impaired athlete. The film is both an adventure and a powerful testament, redefining what's possible for anyone facing adversity. The evening kicks off with a set by popular

local band Riff Tide and guests are encouraged to enjoy drinks and mingle in the Fremont Theater's art deco lobby prior to introductory comments and the screening of the film.

Complementing Surf Nite is Community of Skate, a much-anticipated event at the historic Bay Theatre in Morro Bay that starts with an exhibition of skateboard designs and live-screen printing by the San Luis Obispo High School Advanced Graphic Design class. Two films will be screened that celebrate the culture, community, and challenges of skateboarding: the documentary feature, "N-Men The Untold Story" with Tony Hawk and Tony Alva; and the documentary short, "Pat Ngoho: A Meditation On Creativity."

This year, the festival will also present the Music Video Showcase and an opportunity to experience an eclectic mix of creative music videos with an acoustic set at the historic, and dramatic, San Luis Obispo Masonic Hall. With videos from Brazil, Austria, China and the U.S., many of the filmmakers will be in attendance to talk about their work.

Every year, a regional collective of writers, artists, historians, chefs, surfers, and philanthropists sponsors a film series grouped around a theme close to the creative spirit of the Central Coast. This year, they are presenting Between Doubt and Devotion: Three Films in Search of the Sacred, comprised of "The Master" (2012), "Samsara" (2011) and "The Seventh Seal" (1957).

R.A.C.E. Matters teams up again with the film festival to present a program entitled "Stay True." In an intentionally confusing world, truth matters, including truth to self. These five short films tell stories of people who stay true to what motivates them, inspires them, feeds them, heals them. This program is open to SLOIFF ticket holders and the general public.

Now in its 20th year, Filmmakers of Tomorrow continues to inspire young filmmakers from around the world to share their talents with the SLOIFF audience. This year the showcase presents fifteen short films, from three to seven minutes in length, from elementary, middle, and high school students from Spain, Canada, New Zealand, China, Singapore, and the U.S.

The Central Coast Filmmakers Showcase highlights the work of ten talented filmmakers from Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara counties. The one feature and nine shorts range from documentary, to comedy, drama and suspense.

Cal Poly Short Cuts features six short films created by Cal Poly students under the mentorship of Professor Randi Barros and James Werner, associate professor of Art & Design. These emotionally charged stories explore love, loss, discovery, and unexpected moments of connection.

A panel of more than 100 screeners evaluated over 2,000 submissions to finalize the SLOIFF Official Selections. The finalists in competition are juried by a panel of film and media professionals, and cash prizes will be awarded during the Closing Night Ceremony on Tuesday, April 28. Full Jury bios are available at www.sloiffest.org.

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

Dirty Cello to Play Bay Theater

The world traveling band Dirty Cello lands at the Bay Theatre in Morro Bay on April 19, at 2 p.m. Having played everywhere from an Icelandic cowboy festival, to a monastery in Italy, the Dirty Cello band will bring their high energy Americana, blues and rock.

"Last year we turned the Bay Theatre from a movie theater into a live rock concert venue," says cellist/vocalist and leader of the band, Rebecca Roudman. "We had a full house, and it was so much fun, we're going to do it again. We even brought in a stage that we built that morning, a great sound system and lighting."

The Dirty Cello band features classical cellist gone rogue, Roudman on cello and vocals, who is backed up by a top notch rhythm section. The band will perform a wide variety of music including favorites like "Orange Blossom Special," "House of the Rising Sun," "I May Not Be Perfect, But I'm Pretty Damn Good" and lots more. Their shows include audience participation



and engagement, sing-alongs, and a casual and fun environment. Additionally, Roudman reports that the band has a variable set list with song choices determined by what the audience is most into.

Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased at DirtyCello.com.

A Dose of Good Dogma



Park Place

By Lisa Ellman

There's a lot of controversy among dog people regarding dog parks. Infrequent, but occasional, scuffles or fights can be traumatic; I consider the benefits to outweigh the risks. Sometimes, when I'm out of town, I visit the local dog park, without a dog. So many nuances and subtleties of canine play, behavior and communication to observe and learn.

I often remind people that, unlike children, humans cannot teach dogs how to play, or socialize, with other dogs. We can't, just accept it. Dogs teach other dogs how to play.

Normally, dogs will learn rudimentary communication and social skills from their littermates. But sometimes puppies that have been taken away too early, or too late, have missed the opportunity to learn.

Here are some suggestions to make the dog park less intimidating, and safer, for you and your pup if you choose to drop in.

First, always follow the rules. They are posted at the entrance.

The space between the two entrance gates is a "staging area" or "sallyport". This is where you unleash on arrival and re-leash on departure. Do not let your dog into the park while still leashed.

Remove choke chains or pinch collars (which I do not recommend using at all). During play, a tooth or nail hung up in a metal loop can cause great panic and injury.

Never leave your dog unattended. Watch your dog like you watch your child at the playground. Clean up after your dog. Get off your phone.

Do not bring food into the dog park.

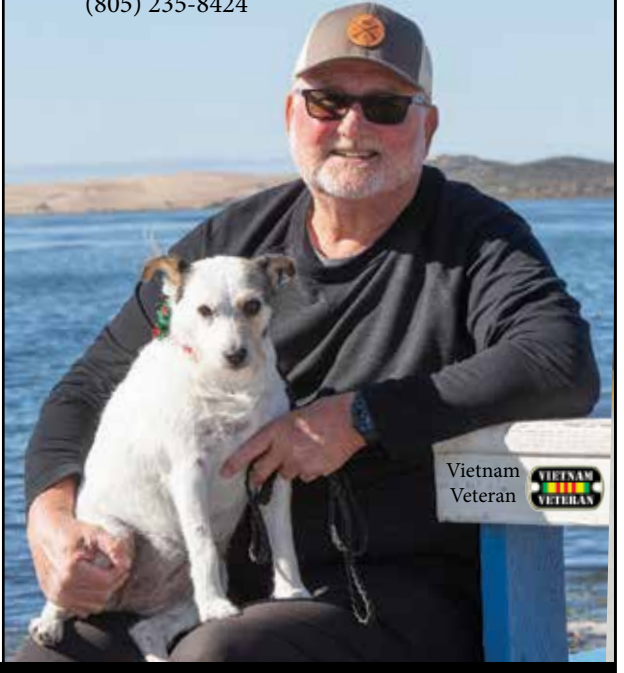
Mounting behavior is normal. It is not a sexual act.

Males mount males, females mount females. You cannot yell at your dog often, or loud, enough to stop it. The mountee will let your dog know when it has had enough by growling or snapping. If the mountee is too submissive to react, then you must go and collect your dog. If the behavior continues, remove your dog from the park.

Most dog parks have two separate areas. One for littles and one for bigs.

Dogma Continued on page 16

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News

Dogma From page 15

I suggest not bringing small children into the large dog section. They can easily be knocked down, frightened or hurt by the inattention of dogs at play.

Make sure your dog is fully vaccinated.

Make sure your unaltered female is not in heat.

Familiarize yourself with your dog's body language and style of play. Some dogs are vocal and like to play rough, others want to chase or be chased.

Keep in mind there will be dogs that your dog just does not like or want to play with.

If your dog is bullying, you must step in. The bully will pin a dog to the ground and not let it up. The bully sets its sights on one single dog, chasing and nipping relentlessly. Give the bully a time out or leave the park.

If you encounter an "aggressive" dog, or a dog that makes you nervous, leave the park and return another time.

Don't be a helicopter parent. The closer your dog is to you when meeting other dogs, the more likely it is that a scuffle will be set in motion. Whether the dog is being territorial, resource guarding or more confident because you're there, I don't know. Take a few steps back and give them space when meeting.

It's ok to carry Pet Corrector with you in case of emergency. Available online.

Remember that dogs need to run. Full Out. Run. Running is crucial to building muscle mass and contributes to stronger, healthier bones as your dog matures.

Be cautious, but polite, about taking any advice about your dog's behavior from other park goers.

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

Gatherings for La Katrina's "Let's Paint" Nights



A group of novice and skilled painters gather at La Katrina Authentic Mexican Cocina in Morro Bay for a 'Let's Paint' night. Photo submitted

By Judy Salamacha

Today's Bookshelf Writers edition celebrates another Estero Bay business that encourages a sense of belonging — where all feel valued, respected, and included. Morro Bay's La Katrina Authentic Mexican Cocina located at the south end of the Embarcadero offers more than delicious meals at affordable pricing. Whether a local or visitor, everyone will receive a warm welcome from Wendy and Hector Morales and their partner Rafael Mendoza, plus a

sensory-rich atmosphere that encourages return visits whether for breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

I've discovered the family-owned restaurant is always looking for ways to offer their customers more than anticipated. They regularly participate in Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce events, area soccer programs, and even offer meeting space for nonprofits. Another popular activity they call "Let's Paint!" began last year and happens monthly on the first Thursday. It is a collaboration with Michelle Ducas, a

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Two Condos in Cayucos



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Stellar Site for this short-term licensed condo in a renowned oceanfront complex. Beach access and sweeping views of Estero Bay, Morro Rock, Pier and Cayucos put this unit on repeat for vacation time or a desirable income producing rental.

The efficient plan has no hallways and easier access than levels above. Access from the wide deck is via door, or sliding door and the great room looks beyond the expansive deck to the changing ocean scenes. Storage just inside is ideal for deck and beach gear. The kitchen has ample counter space, a special pantry cabinet and its own ocean views. The bathroom functions ensuite for the bedroom via a sliding door. On-site laundry facilities and covered parking and gated entrance add to the convenience. Unit can be purchased fully furnished. Don't miss this array of features and benefits!

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Community

Los Osos artist, who's "Canvas Club" business has offered painting and craft get-togethers since 2023.

While La Katrina offers special discounted snacks and beverages, Michelle leads a business or private group or a variety of registered friends and community neighbors through the process of replicating a painting based on a chosen theme, sometimes holiday related. Michelle believes, "Painting is great for team building, helping employees (and/or acquaintances) engage, relax, and de-stress."

During the Christmas holidays, my daughter-in-law, Rena Salamacha, invited me, her sister-in-law, Jody Hollier, and her good friend, Julie Galloway, to a La Katrina "Let's Paint!" night. I agreed to enjoy a girls' night out, noting Jody was the only artist in our group. When we arrived, the restaurant's entire large dining room was set up as an artist's studio with Michelle's easel at the entrance showcasing what we would be creating. At each artist's station we were equipped with a smaller easel, a blank canvas-ready-made for framing, dabs of required colorations of paint on a paper in varying amounts and three paint brushes.

We were greeted by Michelle showcasing the finished painting of a stylized Grinch while Wendy and Hector offered snacks and adult beverages before the work was to begin. Michelle's casual and yet confident introduction of what we were all about to accomplish was reassuring even to me, whose only artistic talents growing up were paint-by-number, which I admit were sub-par. But Michelle's confidence – or the numerous drawings for take-home prizes – allowed me to think I might even get this painting looking like the Grinch or at least win a prize.

Our instructor led our painting experience step-by-step – layer-by-layer – the right color and the right brush at the right time. When one section was finished, we could stretch, walk around and meet our fellow artisans – in truth, checking out how our masterpiece compared. I heard from several they too were never known to be artistic, and yet by following step-by-step and not getting in too far ahead of

the instructor, these paintings began to model the Grinch we were all intended to eventually take home.

BUT THEN...one wrong swipe and my subject began to look like a new green species instead of a Grinch. Yes, it was still holiday themed and had an elongated body and spindly legs, a menacing eye and protruding mouth. Yikes, where did I go off script? Hector, I think I need a cerveza refill!

I summoned Jody to fix my disfigured Grinch. She pondered, then said it looked like a Demogorgon. I pretended to know what a Demogorgon looked like! The fact Jody recognized it looked like something that I then learned was a creature in the "Stranger Things" television series that my husband and I had recently enjoyed, I relaxed and decided it was all okay. I hadn't failed! I was simply the only one in the room that had veered off to create another green creature barely known by my generation. I decided my art was just fine – unique among the group. I also thought my five-year-old great-grandson might appreciate it, so I included it in his holiday gifts. Hmm! Haven't heard if it is hanging in his room!

I wholeheartedly agree with the Facebook kudos offered for Michelle's "Let's Paint!" at La Katrina. She made it fun and comfortable. And if 99% of the guests can follow instructions and create their own masterpiece, then she's excelling at her job. Plus, the food and social company were worth the experience. I will do it again!

Coming up on Thursday April 16 at 5:30 p.m. spring is celebrated with a beautiful painting called "Lavender Falls." The May 7 edition will showcase Cinco de Maya with a memorable holiday painting "Fiesta Margaritas."

Check out La Katrina's Facebook photos to see my "Let's Paint!" sold-out crowd of happy participants. You'll probably recognize some of your friends. Tickets are available by QR-code on flyers you can obtain at the restaurant or at La Katrina's Facebook or Instagram pages.

Cat Noir CC

That moment when someone won't stop talking



Photo by CatNoirCC.com

The Many Faces of Virgil

Virgil has so many facial expressions he cracks the human up. Here he looks like any minute he will start drooling from sheer boredom listening to what I have to say.

I wonder how often he gives me this look when I am wandering around the house talking to them. My neighbors must think I am a loon when I am outside having conversations with the cats.

This morning I was telling Daisy how cute and smart she is while she was typing across the keyboard I was trying to use. She purrs and puts a paw on my chest then spins, then goes back the other way and starts it all over again.

Then I thought that maybe human compliments are not really kudos a cat wants to hear. Cats are judgy about almost everything, but not appearance or fur color or so many other things some humans get all crappy about.

I came up with list of things to use when telling your cat how fantastic they are: you are so ferocious, what an amazing hunter, your purr is so powerful, the moon is made of tuna, humans don't need raises, the entire bed belongs to you, there's the kitchen – help yourself, my bank account number is

The gang at Cat Noir CC thanks the anonymous person who sent funds to help pay for Daisy's medical bills to us in care of Estero Bay News. Thank you for your kindness and thoughtfulness. We all appreciate it.

Follow Cat Noir CC on Facebook and Instagram for daily photos.

'The Q Inn' Ready to Open



Rendering of the Quonset Hotel. Submitted photo

Morro Bay's newest lodging property is ready to open. The Q Inn, 1141 Main St., is the latest motel project for Joan and John Solu, who have owned, remodeled and sold several motels in town.

Over the years the Solus owned The Villager, Beach Bungalows, Pleasant Inn, and 451 Embarcadero, formerly the Estero Inn. But this latest project is unique.

The Solus purchased a World War II-era Quonset Hut, a leftover from the old WWII Naval training base that used to be at what's now a closed power plant.

The hut was moved up into town, one of several repurposed Quonset Huts left after the base closed down.

Over the decades the hut has served many uses, including a meeting room for scouts organizations, and for many years it was an antique store.

The Solus' project, which kicked off in March 2025, has transformed the cavernous metal, half-pipe building into 10 motel rooms and promises to offer guests a unique lodging experience.

The Q Inn will host an open house and Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting at 5 p.m. Wednesday, April 22. The event is free to attend and open to the public.

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Letter to The Editor



Caucus Opposes Offshore Oil Drilling

We, the co-chairs of the California Legislative Central Coast Caucus (CLCCC), strongly oppose the continued federal pursuit of offshore drilling expansion. We will not stand by while the Trump administration prioritizes oil profits over our communities, coastal economy, and environmental health.

The CLCCC includes California state legislative representatives from communities across the Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties. Collectively, we represent close to 400 miles of coastline, more than two million Californians, and more than \$194 billion for the nation's gross domestic product (GDP).

The waters off California's coast are of the highest economic and ecological value. Our coastal economy contributes over \$44 billion to California's GDP, with tourism and fishing being major contributors. Expanding offshore drilling in this region will not only affect the health and wellness of our coastal residents, but it will also be devastating for our economy, which relies on the pristine quality of our natural environment.

Recently, the Trump administration illegally directed the Sable Offshore Corporation to restart the damaged Refugio pipeline in Santa Barbara County and open our shores to dangerous drilling. This is the very same pipeline that burst in 2015, spilling over 140,000 gallons of crude oil and damaging 150 miles of coastline and 2,200 acres of ocean habitat. Local businesses and residents are still recovering from the economic impact of this spill. With the pipeline reopened without the necessary permits and safeguards, this community now faces the threat of another spill.

Moving forward with this process will open the door to increased offshore oil leasing and drilling, directly threatening the health of California's coastal environment and economy. No amount of California oil will make up for the President's reckless domestic and foreign policy decisions.

We strongly urge the administration to stop its expansion of drilling off California's coast. Increased drilling would only bring more pollution to our region and take away from the economic avenues and natural beauty our coast provides.

*Dawn Addis, co-chair, 30th Assembly District
Gregg Hart, co-chair, 37th Assembly District
John Laird, vice chair, 17th Senate District*

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

The views expressed are solely those of the authors and do not reflect the views of the newspaper, its staff, or its publisher.

Email letters to editor@esterobaynews.com.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY of MORRO BAY

Abalone in Morro Bay

Part 1 of 2

Local native American tribes ate abalone they were able to find in the intertidal zone along rocky shores. In the nineteenth century, Asian immigrants—first the Chinese in roughly 1850 – 1920, and then the Japanese 1897 – 1941—brought a taste for abalone with them and they also fished for abalone.

The Chinese fished the intertidal zone, like the Native Americans before them, using rods or poles to knock the abalone from the rock. They sent it most of the catch back to China, where the demand for it was strong. There was no competition for the abalone at that time because the European Americans had no taste for it!

In 1897, a Japanese university sent Gennosuke Kodani to research the potential of the abalone near Monterey. He recognized that the fishery could support a big industry which led to the formation of several Japanese companies to pursue the abalone in about 1900. As these companies expanded Cayucos became one of several places along the coast where abalone could be landed and processed.

The Japanese had heavy diving gear that used surface-based compressed air for the diver—the big helmets of these suits are the iconic image of deep-sea divers. This style of suit allowed fishermen to dive more deeply and take more abalone and was the method used into the 1960s.

The commercial abalone fishery grew steadily during the early decades of the twentieth century. Morro Bay was a natural fit for the business because of the somewhat sheltered harbor and proximity of rich abalone beds. Native and European American families shared this business with the Japanese until the advent of World War II, when the Japanese were frozen out.

One of Morro Bay's best known abalone fishing families, the Pierces, got their start in 1928 when Bill Pierce put on his Japanese-style heavy dive gear and walked into the ocean from the beach. Soon the family had bought a boat and opened a processing plant at 580 Monterey Street.

Most of the work out of Morro Bay was done by small scale operations similar to the Pierces that used open boats as diving platforms with the air compressor on the surface feeding an airline down to the diver. Div-



Abalone have long been harvested by divers along the Central Coast. Photo source: Steve Rebeck via HSMB

ers spent long hours in the intensely cold Pacific, protected only by their vulnerable suits and warmed by layers of woolen clothes. This was not a job for the faint of heart.

The industry inherited a much-improved harbor infrastructure after WWII thanks to the U.S. Navy, which had built the Embarcadero in the early 1940s to support a Navy base. Commercial fishing in general, including abalone, grew rapidly in the postwar years.

From these small beginnings grew a prosperous industry that made Morro Bay one of the leading sources of abalone on the West Coast.

Do you have an intriguing photo of a past event somewhere in Estero Bay? We would like to hear from you about that or anything else: info@historicalmorrobay.org.

Cayucos Dog Parade Brings Pups and Peeps

Danna Dykstra-Coy

More than 500 pups and their peeps joined in the Cayucos Easter Dog Parade, a tradition in this quirky little beach town that falls on the Saturday preceding Easter each year. The Cayucos Lioness Club sponsors the event to raise funds and awareness of their popular Mutt Mitts program, which supports the maintenance of 55 dispensers and purchase of more than 300,000 doggie waste bags at all beach accesses, parks, the Estero Bluffs State Park and locations throughout the downtown area to help keep Cayucos clean.

Locals and visitors alike were encouraged to dress their dogs in festive spring costumes for a group loop that began at Cayucos Pier at noon. The Easter Bunny led the pack in a decorated golf cart blaring dog-themed rock tunes up Front Street to Ocean Avenue and back to the pier. Some pet owners dressed to match their doggos' fur-bulous ensembles. Businesses along the parade route set out several water bowls that keep thirsty parading pups happy. People without pets watched from the sidelines, snapping photos and cheering the stream of leashed walkers on. All in all, the parade was a doggone great start to a fun holiday weekend in Cayucos!

For more information about donations to the Cayucos Lioness Club's Mutt Mitts program, visit www.cayucoslioness.org/projects



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Community

Bay Osos Kiwanis Easter Egg Hunts Draw Crowds

Photos by Dean Sullivan

The Bay Osos Kiwanis Club held an Easter Egg hunt and festivities for both children and adults to enjoy the holiday at the South Bay Community Park.

About 400 people attended the event that also included both a costume and a best home-decorated egg contest, cotton candy, a visit from Cinderella, played by Lily Blanchard, and storytime by Sarah from the Los Osos Library. Dianne Blanchard took care of the egg and candy ordering and sorting into the age categories, and the Los Osos Middle School Kiwanis Club Builders Club helped during the event. Thank you to Andy Kulikowskifor doing the sound.



Morro Bay Celebrates Easter at Tidelands Park

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Photos by Katie Finley

Two hundred people gathered at Tidelands Park on April 4 to create welcoming spaces at three local parks, plant trees downtown, and create public art coming straight from their "Morro Bay lovin' hearts" followed by a prize-filled egg sprint on a sunny Spring morning. The event was put on by Morro Bay in Bloom, Visit Morro Bay and The City of Morro Bay.

"Building a strong and resilient community can be achieved through fun, creativity and service," said event organizer Walter Heath of Morro Bay in Bloom. "Each of our sixty volunteers is grateful to Morro Bay Public Works and Recreation Services staff for sharing our vision and helping us produce this third annual event."

Learn about upcoming Morro Bay in Bloom events at morrobayinbloom.org.



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New Lease From page 1



Morro Bay Seafood Co., LLC is the new lease holder for the Fishermen's Wharf fish offloading facility in Morro Bay. Photo by Neil Farrell

status from the previous tenant, Morro Bay Fish Co., which had previously been called Santa Monica Seafood.

"On Nov. 21, 2023," reads the report from Harbor Vitality Director Chris Munson, "Morro Bay Fish Company (Santa Monica Seafood) informed the City it was incurring significant operating losses at the Morro Bay fish landing facilities due to recent developments in the fishing industry and would be vacating the premises effective Dec. 31, 2023."

Among the developments in fishing is a rockfish fishery closure from Jan. 1 to April 1; complete closure of salmon season for the third year in a row; and a lack of boats fishing the quota system, among others.

The report said to "maintain a fish wholesaler and avoid disruption to commercial fishing, Morro Bay Seafood Company (MBSC) was assigned the lease for the remainder of the term, expiring June 30, 2025. With the agreement MBSC was not required to pay rent during the short-term."

That placed the lease on holdover, and the new tenants approached the City before the lease expired last June.

"They provided a proposal and notified the Harbor Department of their desire for a new lease prior to the expiration," Munson said. "MBSC appears to be successful, and the owners are eager to maintain and expand commercial fishing in Morro Bay."

Meanwhile a pair of fishing organizations stepped up to donate money to help with needed repairs to the wharf.

"In 2025," Munson said, "the Harbor Department collaborated with the Central Coast Joint Cable/Fisheries Liaison Committee and the Morro Bay Community Quota Fund to pursue funding for repairs of the wharf under the lease site. The agencies granted \$400,000 and \$150,000 respectively, which will be used by the Morro Bay Commercial Fishing Organization for wharf repairs."

The wharf was inspected by the City as part of a comprehensive review and evaluation of the City-owned facilities — docks, wharves, slips, seawalls and rip rap — that estimated the overall repairs at up to over \$50 million.

The fishermen's wharf (lease site 129W) has serious structural repair needs, including a deteriorating seawall and missing supports and piles, among other issues.

The two donations will lock in the future use for a couple of decades. "As a condition of the grants, the repaired lease site must be dedicated exclusively to commercial fishing use for a period of 20 years. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining this commitment will be presented to City Council at an upcoming meeting."

Despite having over half a million donated to the repairs, it won't be enough.

"Associated Pacific

Constructors provided an estimate for the repairs and organized the work into two priorities levels. Priority 1 repairs were quoted at \$572,900 and Priority 2 at \$235,000, plus \$10,000 for inspection/monitoring for a total of \$817,700.

"After \$550,000 in grant funding, there are approximately \$22,900 more needed to fully fund the Priority 1 repairs."

According to Associated Pacific's estimate, entitled Morro Bay Fish Company Roadside Pile Cap Repair and Pile Repairs, Priority 1 entails "all the major structural repairs necessary to return wharf to a structurally sound condition."

Priority 2 is "wrapping existing piles to prevent future pile deterioration and replacing and or flipping deck boards that are structurally sound but show signs of wear."

All the deck boards were replaced over 20 years ago when the wharf was operated by Driscoll's Seafood and its owner, the late-Jerry Driscoll.

He made extensive repairs to the wharf and transformed what used to be a fish cutting shed, into a retail fish market and takeout café that's been further improved into what is now called Dockside, Too, owned by Mark Tognazini and his Family.

Associated Pacific did its own inspections and assessments of the damage. "Our inspections were primarily at low tide and diver visual inspection of submerged portions of piles.

"Generally, all the cross bracing will need to be replaced as well as piling that have 50% or more of deterioration."

They have different ways to fix the rotten support piles. "Some will require pile encasements, which is cleaning the pile and encasing it in a fiberglass sleeve, filled with high strength grout. To protect the remaining piles over



This industrial ice maker was installed in 2007 and is an integral part of the fishing industry, and now under the new lease for Morro Bay Seafood Co., LLC. Photo by Neil Farrell

the long term it is recommended that they have the cleaning and HDPE pile wrap system. Fender piles are listed separately, since it is a commercial wharf, these should be addressed."

Fender piles are used to soften the blow when a big fishing boat, laden down with fish in the hold, bumps the wharf as it comes in to dock.

It's an involved job needing 12 pile stubs repaired; 19 pile encasements; wrapping 25 piles; 36 pairs of cross bracing replaced; and 25 linear feet (LF) of pile cap along the adjacent access roadway.

But at least the lease site will once again start to bring in some money to a Harbor Department that has been looking to increase its revenues for over a decade.

Under the new lease Morro Bay Seafood gets 10 years and three months, starting April 1, 2026, and expiring June 30, 2036, "unless sooner terminated," reads the lease.

There's of course a catch. The new lease is "conditioned upon the leaseholder's commitment to complete specified capital improvements and maintenance obligations, including remodel of the dock office building, maintenance of freezer containers, contribution toward Priority 1 wharf repairs, and ongoing maintenance of the ice facility."

Like all Tideland's Leases, the tenants have a lot of responsibility for maintenance, repairs and payments.

For the 10-year lease Morro Bay Seafood will have to:

- Remodel the dock office building for up to \$15,000 within 24 months;

- Maintain and repair two freezer containers;
- Maintain the current icehouse with maximum expenditure of \$10,000 per year;

- Payment of \$22,500 toward Priority 1 repairs — plus any associated monitoring/inspection costs up to \$10,000.

And if they contribute to the completion of Associated Pacific's Priority 2 repairs, they can have a 10-year extension to June 2046.

That industrial ice machine is an essential facility for commercial fishing operations. It was obtained by the City in 2007 and funded through the Joint Cable-Fisheries Liaison Committee, Coastal Conservancy and the City. It replaced an old icehouse that used to hold giant blocks of ice bought from an ice making facility in Oceano, and grind it into flakes, filling fish holds before the boats left the harbor.

Without ice, a boat's catch is in jeopardy of spoiling before they can get it to the dock.

The new base rent is set at \$15,000 per year for the 10-year initial lease. That base rent would be subject to annual adjustments for inflation under the Master Lease Policy.

The new lease won't solve all the Harbor's maintenance issues, but it's better than what they've been getting for over a year.

"Harbor staff believe the new lease agreement addresses the three main priorities. While the terms do not generate significant revenue, compared to retail and non-Measure D sites, they are consistent with past and current wholesale operations in Morro Bay. The benefit of this agreement is its support of the local commercial fishing industry."

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My Identity From page 1



Hal Abrams at work at The Rock radio station at 97.3 and 107.9 on your radio dial as they used to say. Photo submitted

les.” In 1986, Thomas relocated to LAs’ KPWR “Power 106”, where he hosted the station’s top-rated morning show until 1993 and is now in the Radio Hall of Fame. Hal continued, “He was the new morning drive guy and quickly the #1 show in LA. I was 18 years old earning a big paycheck and living the life. Five years later I wanted to get my son out of the LA scene.”

When asked to do afternoons in Kauai, Hal began his radio-nomad years working at seventeen different stations around the United States. “When I was in Virginia the SPCA was one of the station’s major sponsors. I did my show sitting in a doghouse for two weeks.” It was a fundraiser for the animal nonprofit group. Hal continued, “I decided I wanted to do something positive to raise funds for animals, so I returned to the West Coast and created “Animal Radio.” Petco became the sponsor of a 20-market tour benefitting Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Kanab Utah.

Meanwhile I had met Judy (Francis) while working for a Q-105 in Oxnard. Hal joked, “She was caller number five, and I was the booby prize.” About six months into touring “Animal Radio,” I asked her to quit her job and join me. After two years it was time to come back to California — always my home away from home. We lived in our RV in Shandon until Judy got tired of going to town in the big RV for groceries and laundry.” They found a place in Morro Bay where they created a home-studio to produce and broadcast “Animal Radio” and at the same time Hal worked on establishing the community radio concept that gave us Estero Bay Community Radio.

In my opinion, Hal finally achieved “Rock Star” status when 97.3 The Rock, began broadcasting in Morro Bay,



The Rock volunteer staff at a Rocky Horror Picture Show fundraiser at The Bay Theater. Photo by Abe Perlstein

Los Osos and Cayucos April 8, 2014. Today he continues to be the lead voice among his band of 80 volunteers — all vocal musicians or aficionados, storytellers, community advocates, broadcasting technicians and industry promoters. However, he is also quick to say Estero Bay Community Radio is and has always been a team effort. He might have been the pitchman back in 2011 but once established “...everyone brings their own talents, and I’ve learned how to delegate.”

For the record Estero Bay Community Radio 97.3 The Rock is a 501(c)(3) non-profit started by Hal Abrams in December 2011, licensed in March 2014 and hitting the air in April 2014. In 2014, the radio station expanded operations in Paso Robles, Atascadero and Templeton at KZSR-LP 107.9 FM and is online at EsteroBayRadio.org. The signal was originally licensed to the City of Morro Bay for emergency broadcasting, then purchased by the non-profit for \$1 with the agreement to continue to be the area’s emergency broadcast station.

This is a milestone year for Hal Abrams and Judy Francis. They will celebrate their 30th anniversary playing tourists in Kauai and after twenty-five years producing “Animal Radio,” they said goodbye to their colleagues and listeners on January 17. Hal and Judy had hosted industry notables to answer questions from call-in listeners about their pets. The popular program was syndicated on 130 AM-FM station and XM Satellite Radio and recognized as the most-listened-to pet-talk show.

Hal explained, “It was profitable and we loved producing the program, but we questioned if it was the best use of

our time and efforts.”

Hal quickly filled his extra time. “When our antenna blew down (November 2023) it had a silver lining. It changed everything for the better. People were so supportive with direct donations. Local media — like Dave Congalton, KCBX, KSBY, Estero Bay New — all were trying to help our little radio station get back on the air. We were able to build a much stronger market presents. I wanted our antenna up on Black Hill where the City’s signal is, but it just didn’t work out. [Morro Bay Police] Chief Amy Watkins stepped up and offered space at the police station. It turned out to be the best option after all.”

Volunteers had also been working on needed maintenance and upgrades of the 14-year-old equipment, emergency messaging, and a new generator that can tolerate area outages. Hal said, “Next the upgrades will be for the Paso Robles station.

Two years ago, they also changed their fundraising strategy. “We used to create concerts in the parks and at the Community Center,” Hal explained, “but we discovered our most consistent source funding for our annual operations budget are our donation package ticket sales and partnering with Cameron Wilson quarterly at the Bay Theater. Everyone loves to see a great movie on the big screen and our team has fun with the movies we have chosen. We did a costume contests for ‘The Big Lebowski.’ When I was a kid the ‘midnight movie’ intrigued me so we have sponsored “Rocky Horror Picture Show” and ‘Tommy.’”

Their next movie presentation is “Cheech & Chong” on April 20 (see page 14). They will offer a silent auction before the movie. And if you’re waiting for their next annual give-away package, the winning ticket will be drawn in July. Jon Elliott, one of the on-air talents, has offered Mike’s Barber Shop to headquarter ticket sales.

Estero Bay Community Radio’s Board of Directors includes Drew Ross, president, who retired as program manager from KOTR and according to Hal “is my right-hand man” even though Drew splits time between Morro Bay and Oregon; DeadAir Dave is our personality and spokesperson; Frank Hayes is manager of SLO’s Fremont Theater; and Eric Riddiough is with Cal Trans.”

Hal also wanted to give a big shout-out to Sheryl (The Camillion) Wells “who is always smiling.” She handles promotions and onsite radio remotes.

Hal summed up Estero Bay Community Radio, “Everyone is a volunteer in this operation. Many have been with us from the beginning. Why do we do it? Radio gives us purpose — we find our creativity. Just ask Abe Perlstein, Dr. Robert, Carole Truesdale or Lisa Ellman to name a few of the talents that have been there.”

For the entire 97.3/107.9 The Rock on-air talent list and schedule check out www.esterobayradio.org.

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Bear Returns From page 1



Left: Timothy Rich, Lisa Smith, Will Kastner (pointing) and Juliet Meece, some of the originators of the mural idea in 1989

doing them. It just brings things back to life and makes people happy. Anything I do in my career is to make people happy and make them happy.”

Cruz said the detailed birds flying near the top of the mural were the most difficult to paint. It’s not that he finds avians a hard subject matter to paint, but that the space in that area is stucco.



Artist Manuel Cruz signs his work

“There was a lot of prep work,” Cruz said. “The hardest part was the stucco; it’s like painting on cottage cheese. The birds took six hours each.”

The total cost for the mural artist, materials, equipment and paint came to about \$21,500. A grant paid for \$2,500, and the remaining amount was donated by community members and local businesses.

“We asked the community, and they responded generously,” Nash-Karner said. “It is just who we are. Sometimes it takes rolling up our sleeves and doing some labor, and sometimes it takes money, but the community always responds. They are so wonderful.”

CLO is looking at updating the town’s other murals and exploring new projects including mini murals. Los Osos has two additional murals by Sharman-Hand and one done by Barbara Rosenthal, which is located at Los Osos Rexall Drug and Gift at 989 Los Osos Valley Road.

“Supporting public murals is important because they offer cultural, social, and economic value to communities by enriching the physical environment, fostering social connection, and honoring local history,” Nash-Karner said/

“Unlike art in museums or galleries, public murals are freely accessible to everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status or background, democratizing the art experience. They serve as educational tools and create a deeper awareness by community-centric storytelling”.

Janice Sharman - Hand
Sharman-Hand currently lives in Eureka, California and continues to be an active artist, painting with watercolor, reflecting her love for nature. She no longer paints murals.



The original La Cañada de Los Osos mural in Los Osos from 1989. Photo submitted

Under Janice’s guidance and using the markings of the basic scene she created in August of 1989, about 150 children in the community carefully filled in the outlines on the wall. Janice then continued the same philosophy and technique of public art via public participation for the next two historical murals, “Chumash Bear Dance Community Mural,” at the intersection of 9th Street and Los Olivos Avenue, and “Portola’s Sacred Expedition Community Mural,” at the intersection of Los Osos Valley Road and 9th Street.

License Renewal From page 1

with opponents and labor unions, and declared it would drop the renewal efforts and shut down the two reactors when their licenses expired.

That started the company on another path to plan for decommissioning and the ultimate disposition of the 12,000 acres of coastal lands surrounding the plant’s relatively small footprint.

Then starting in 2020 the State experienced rolling brownouts in summer due to demand exceeding supply from the power grid. The cause was blamed on solar and wind energy and the inadequacy of these sustainable energy producers. It became apparent that the state was not yet ready to switch over full time to these green, carbon-free, sustainable and renewable energy sources.

In 2022 the State asked PG&E to extend the life of Diablo Canyon, which produces some 2,200 megawatts of power — about 10% of the entire power grid — when both reactors are running full blast, to help with the reliability of the power grid to satisfy demand and to help the State meet its ambitious climate goals. Diablo Canyon is considered a carbon-free energy source, so its output could be counted as helping to fight climate change.

The State asked for five more years of operations, setting a deadline of 2030 for the state’s last nuclear plant to close.

PG&E agreed and asked the NRC for an extension of the old license. But the federal agency said “No” it would only award a 20-year license renewal, and PG&E would have to undergo a full licensing process.

That process has been ongoing for over three years now and appears to have been completed last week with the granting of the 20-year license.

“The NRC’s approval of Diablo Canyon’s license renewal application,” PG&E CEO Sumeet Singh said, “marks an important milestone for California’s energy future. Diablo Canyon is the state’s largest source of clean energy and a cornerstone of reliability. Every day, we maintain an unwavering focus on operating a safe, reliable, affordable and clean energy system that can meet growing demand in a changing climate.”

“The NRC’s thorough and thoughtful review underscores the strength of our commitment, and we are proud of Diablo Canyon’s continued role in supporting California’s focus on net-zero energy.”



Aerial view of Diablo Canyon with its twin containment domes, brown power building and seawater outfall into Diablo Cove. Submitted photo

According to PG&E, the NRC’s license renewal process “also included approvals from State and Regional agencies including the California Public Utilities Commission, the State Lands Commission, the California Coastal Commission and the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.”

It should also be noted that the Trump Administration’s Department of Energy also called for the plant to remain open.

Jeremy Groom, the Acting Director of the NRC’s Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation, said, “Today’s milestone reminds us that when discipline, science, responsibility and vision all come together, we can build an energy future that is both sustainable and secure.”

Groom added, “Diablo Canyon’s procedures and oversight have evolved throughout the years and through rigorous review, continuous inspection and technical refinement. This license renewal reflects that strength of commitment and confidence earned through a thorough and transparent NRC review.”

Diablo Canyon marks the 100th license renewal for nuclear power plants by the NRC.

But of course, the story doesn’t end there, as the State Legislature and, in turn, the Governor have still only approved a five-year extension.

Support for the 20-year deal has been strong locally, as almost every local government agency has signed on to a letter from the Board of Supervisors to the State Legislature urging it to increase its extension to 20 years.

Another issue remains unsolved. When PG&E agreed to close a decade ago, it was granted the ability to depreciate the plant’s value for tax purposes to zero. This means the company no longer pays millions in property taxes specifically for the plant.

The County and San Luis Coastal Unified School District were the big losers with that move, as both received millions in property taxes annually from Diablo Canyon, and the depreciation left ever-growing holes in their budgets.

PG&E did pay tens of millions in upfront payments to all the agencies that were going to lose these revenues, but those payments are now over and done with.

With a 20-year renewal now becoming a reality, the various agencies have sought to restart Diablo’s tax flow, an argument that was included in the letter the County and cities sent to the State.

Diablo Canyon has nearly 1,300 employees and is one of the largest private employers in SLO County.

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News

Fire Dept From page 1

different scenarios or to accept a proposal from Morro Bay that increased staffing levels to four full-time firefighters, all paramedics all the time, at an increased cost to the community.

The LOCSO has an assessment district in place that taxes property owners to fund the fire service, a system that predates the CSD and used to be under the moniker of South Bay Fire.

Over 20-years ago, the recently formed CSD decided to enter into a contract with Cal Fire/County Fire and have the much larger department take over management of the single station fire department.

That arrangement worked well for many years but in recent times, cost increases have led to the CSD facing a tight budget.

And with the contract coming up for renewal soon, last May the Board wanted to explore options, which it turns out it also couldn't afford without increasing taxes.

"The contract," the release said, "will take effect following the conclusion of the current agreement and will remain in place for a period of three years."

Current levels

The current LOCSO contract — and in turn what will be going forward — calls for three full time firefighters on duty at all the times, supplemented by one reserve firefighter. Four firefighters on duty is the preferred minimum standard for staffing in California's fire service. Having one of these people be a reservist is common though not ideal.

Two of the four must be certified paramedics, a necessity for emergency medical calls. COVID threw a monkey wrench into this system.

"This model was working well until around 2020 when the COVID pandemic hit," the LOCSO report said. "Since then, there have been fewer qualified applicants and substantial turnover once the reserve firefighter was trained and certified and able to work for another agency as a regular employee."

That's been a nagging problem for years with the reserve system, which replaced the old "volunteer" fire department model.

Under modern standards, reservists must do the same

training and earn certifications as full time firefighters, meaning that once certified, they have the skills to seek a full time job, often with a different department, and leave.

"The post pandemic world has meant unreliable staffing for the Los Osos Department, impacts to response times, and potential safety concerns."

But just because the staffing in Los Osos doesn't meet the ideal goals, doesn't mean the community isn't well served. LOCSO has an excellent record of service, that is bolstered by a mutual aid system for big incidents.

But costs, especially employee costs are tied in with the greater costs of the statewide Cal Fire, so when the union negotiates a new contract in Sacramento, it trickles down to affect the local contract costs as well.

Cal Fire Costs

Cal Fire's 3-year proposal pegs the first year overall costs at more than \$3.84 million, including staffing benefits, dispatch costs, uniforms and "minor vehicle operational cost and a 10.77% administrative fee."

Personnel costs alone are projected at more than \$3.75 million of that total. Some \$94,000 would be for dispatch costs.

Dispatch is handled through the County Fire's new dispatch center in Templeton, which also houses law enforcement dispatching for the County Sheriff and several cities.

The proposal includes a 3.5% increase annually for inflation for each of the 3 years.

Cal Fire also submitted an interim 3-year proposal that LOCSO General Manager, Ron Munds said was basically the same thing they have now.

Both proposals called for three firefighters, two of which would be paramedics, and a reservist manning the station. But the costs for a reserve program aren't included.

"The estimated budgeted cost for fiscal year 2026-27 for the reserve program is \$315,225," Munds said. "The actual expenditures vary from year-to-year based on the hours worked by the reserves and recruitment costs. The downside is the continued reliance on the reserve program to provide the fourth employee."

The costs for that interim proposal are \$3.11M overall and \$3.08M personnel including dispatch.

Cal Fire also has an agreement to respond to calls for service in Montaña de Oro State Park and if offered extra benefits to the District to keep that arrangement going.

Morro Bay's Proposal

What did Morro Bay offer? That proposal was for four full time firefighter staffing, a standard the City has had in place for a couple of years now.

Among the assumptions are: salaries at highest levels; all personnel are paramedics; retirement calculated at Tier 1 (the highest) level under PERS; and PERS unfunded un-accrued liability cost of \$408,000, according to Munds' report.

Overall costs were: \$3.66M personnel; \$150,000 dispatch; and 5% administrative costs (percentage of personnel costs only, about \$158,000).

Morro Bay also proposed a 6-month transition period, in order to hire a dozen new firefighters to staff the station, train and equip them. Munds estimated these "start up" costs at \$202,000.

The City's proposal was also for 15 years, instead of three.

Fire Fee Increasing

Though the levels of fire service will stay the same, that doesn't mean the costs to Los Osos' citizens is staying the same.

Also on that April 2 meeting agenda was a proposal for the regular increase in the fire tax.

The Board was asked to approve increasing the special fire tax 3.02% to account for inflation. That rate hike will raise the fire tax 66¢ per unit of benefit to \$22.46 per unit.

According to a report from the LOCSO's engineering firm The Wallace Group, "A residential single family dwelling is equivalent to five units of benefit; multiple dwellings in a parcel except apartments and mobile homes are configured to be four units of benefit per dwelling unit; while apartments and mobile homes are configured to be three units of benefit per dwelling unit. Therefore the annual increase from this CPI increase will range from \$1.98 to \$3.30 per household."

But according to Munds, the fire tax is not keeping up with the rising costs. "A future Special Fire Tax increase will likely be necessary to support higher service levels."

Marian Regional Receives Excellence Award

Marian Regional Medical Center achieved the 2026 Patient Safety Excellence Award from Healthgrades, a highly rated site used to find a doctor or hospital. This award puts the organization in the top 10% of hospitals nationwide for patient safety.

"This award from Healthgrades truly belongs to every single person at Marian Regional Medical Center," said Sue Andersen, president and CEO of Marian Regional Medical Center, in a news release. "Their commitment to our patients' well-being is something I see every day, and it's what makes this achievement possible. We've worked hard to foster a culture where everyone feels empowered to speak up for safety, whether through continuous staff training, investing in the latest technology to prevent errors, or constantly refining our processes. Knowing that this shared effort directly translates into safer care for our community is incredibly rewarding and motivates us to keep striving for even better."

Marian's achievement is based on patient outcomes. To determine the national leaders in patient safety, Healthgrades evaluated risk-adjusted complication and mortality rates from approximately 4,500 hospitals nationwide across 13 patient safety indicators (PSIs), with each PSI representing a serious, preventable complication.

Healthgrades' annual analysis revealed significant performance gaps between the nation's highest- and lowest-achieving facilities, making it increasingly important for consumers to seek care at a hospital with top safety ratings. During the 2022-2024 study period, 167,228 preventable safety events occurred among Medicare patients at U.S. hospitals, with four preventable safety incidents accounting for nearly 78% of all incidents. Patients treated at Marian and other award-winning facilities had a profoundly lower risk of experiencing these leading complications:



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- Pressure sores or bed sores acquired in the hospital (71.9% less likely)

"The data behind this year's Patient Safety Excellence Award highlights how measurable improvements in safety can prevent thousands of complications," said Dr. Alana Biggers, MPH, medical advisor at Healthgrades. "By prioritizing evidence-based safety practices, Marian is achieving better clinical outcomes and cultivating a culture where patients come first."

For additional guidance on finding safe, high-quality care in 2026, visit healthgrades.com.

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