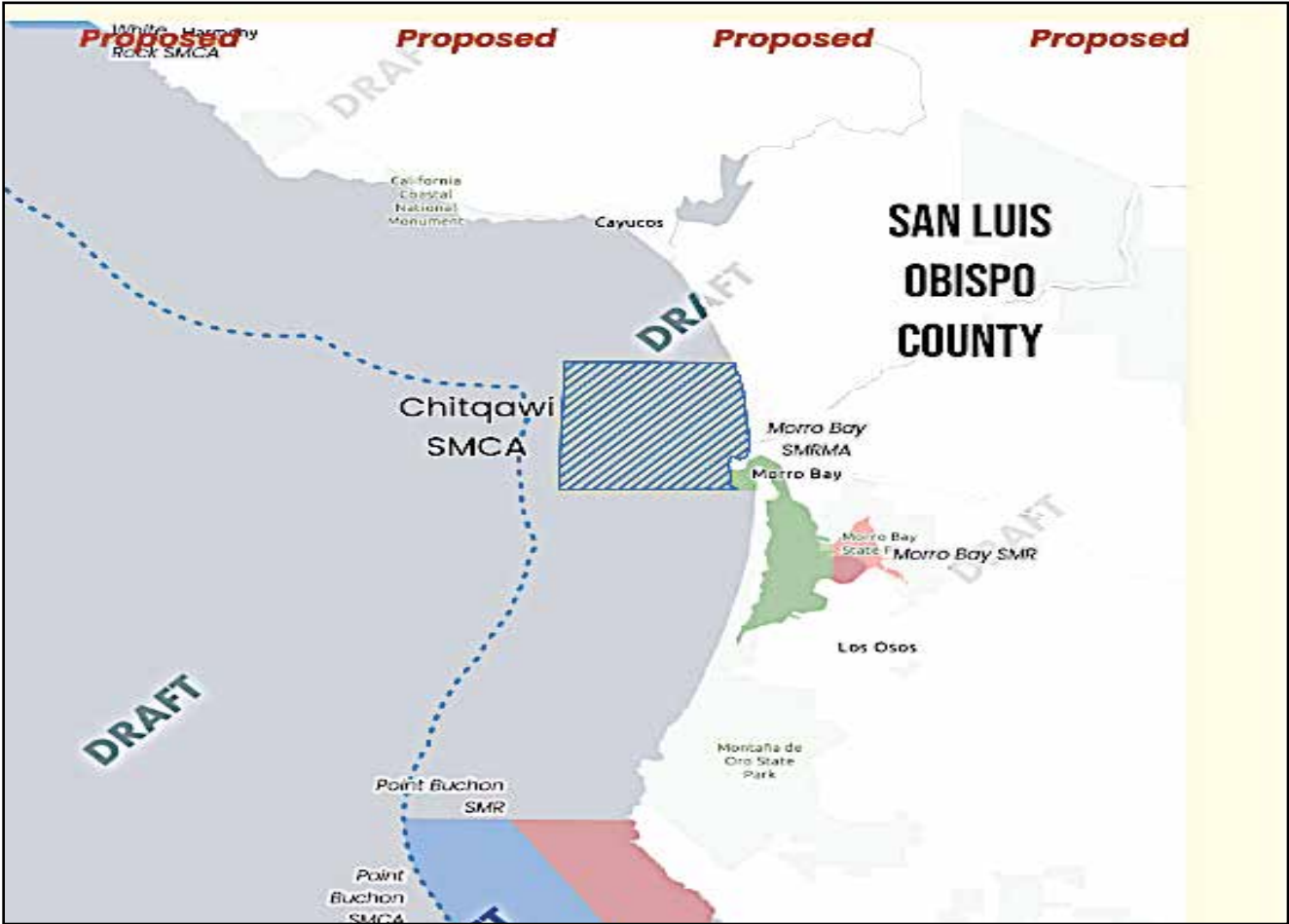


State Proposing New Protected Area in Estero Bay



The State Fish and Wildlife Department is contemplating the establishment of a new Marine Protected Area in Estero Bay that could place a large segment of the bay off limits to fishing, except for members of the Santa Ynez Chumash Tribe who would be exempt from the ban. Map by CDFW

By Neil Farrell

A huge section of Estero Bay could soon be placed off limits to all fishing except by certain Native Americans, if the California Fish and Wildlife Commission agrees to create another protected area in local waters.

The Commission is expected to hear a proposal by the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Mission Indians to establish the “Chitqawi” State Marine Protected Area over a large square of ocean that stretches from just south of Morro Rock up to about Toro Creek and out a couple of miles from the beach.

If it is approved, it would be the second such MPA in local waters after another chunk of ocean was so designated off Point Buchon and Montana de Oro many years ago.

The tribe also proposed changes to three other MPAs — one off Point Sal south of the Oceano Dunes and another off Point Buchon.

Under the MPA program, various marine activities including the taking of so-called finfish is prohibited.

The proposal was first made in 2023 after the Fish and Wildlife Department put out a request for proposals for other MPA sites up and down the California Coast. The agency received over 20 proposals including the ones from the Chumash in Santa Ynez.

Then a year later, the proposal here was amended to exclude members of the Santa Ynez Chumash Tribe from the fishing ban, meaning if someone can show they belong to the tribe, they would be allowed to fish in the protected waters subject to the normal fishing regulations everyone has to adhere to.

Why is this needed? According to the proposal submitted by Sam Cohen a lawyer representing the Tribe, “To ensure 30% of California waters are fully protected by 2030 and to foster Tribal engagement and co-management of MPAs, this Petition submitted by the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians (SYBCI) recommends an additional MPA for the Central Coast Region MPA network. There is no Tribal MPA for co-management within this regional network.

“The SYBCI are co-managers of four south coast SMCA. The Tribe is recommending the adoption of a new MPA between

Protected Area Continued on page 21

Cemetery District Looking to Expand



The Cayucos-Morro Bay Cemetery District continues attempts to build a new location to meet needs. Photo submitted

By Neil Farrell

If you think it took a long time to get your project through the County’s planning process, the Cayucos-Morro Bay Cemetery District has been trying for 14 years to get permission to build a new cemetery.

And the time constraints are starting to put the squeeze on the District.

“We have six-and-a-half to seven years of sales left,” said the Cemetery District Manager, Dale Guerra. A cemetery’s plot sales outpace its actual burials, and Guerra said it would be a few years after that when there’d be no room left in a cemetery that was founded in 1883. The Cemetery District was formed in 1940.

It’s one of just a dozen cemeteries in all of San Luis Obispo County a ratio that equates to

Cemetery District Continued on page 22

Art and Kindness to Help Students Heading to School



Bobby deLancellotti, co-founder of the Estero Bay Kindness Coalition, and volunteer, Theo Moreno, with backpacks for the organization’s weekend nutrition program, Got Your Back, at Del Mar Elementary. Photo submitted

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Classrooms in the San Luis Unified School District will fill up with students on August 20. New friends, new homework, and, for some, new worries. Late summer is the time of year when backpacks, clothing and other school essentials can reduce a family’s budget. A local non-profit is raising funds to help make things a little easier for those in need.

The Estero Bay Kindness Coalition and Ramos Art Gallery are joining forces hoping to give some relief from financial stress during the school year. There will be an Art Show and Fundraiser August 2 from 1 to 5 p.m. at Casa Ramos Art Gallery, 1034 Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos. Billed as an open-house celebration of community and creativity, the event features live art by Jonny Miller and Mike Golling, live music from Shane Stoneman and Ms. Leo & The Handsome Fellers, community art, pours from durham cider + wine co. and scoops from Harmony Valley Creamery.

“Art has always been a powerful way to bring people together, and that’s exactly what this event is about,” Kathryn deLancell-

Art and Kindness Continued on page 21

Skate Cambria Reaches Final Funding Goal

By Keith Pendleton



The building of a skatepark is once again back on track in Cambria.

Dick Clark of the Cambria Community Council (CCC) delivered the astounding news to a standing-room-only Cambria Community Services District (CCSD) board meeting on July 9 that another shortfall in the Cambria Skatepark construction project would be covered by the CCC. An anonymous donor and bequeath income formed the funding stream for a \$175,000 gap between the lowest construction bid and funds held in escrow and promised grants.

Final Funding Continued on page 20

Our Stories: Getting to Know Barry and Vivian Branin

By Judy Salamacha



The Estero Bay has attracted many life-experienced residents from afar willing to share their perspectives with those who grew up or already relocated here. The goal is to maintain core values that have defined our mutual paradise. And collectively our pooled talents, connections, and experiences will enrich the future of where we all call home.

Recently, I requested an interview with Morro Bay’s Barry Branin for the sole purpose of discovering more about him. What

Our Story Continued on page 23

Police
Blotter
Page 8



Renaissance
Festival
Page 12 & 13



July 4th
Celebration
Page 19



News

House Destroyed by Fire in Los Osos



Story by y Theresa-Marie Wilson
Photo by Dean Sullivan

Smoke and flames could be seen billowing out the roof and windows of a single-story home that was destroyed by fire in Los Osos.

Firefighters from Cal Fire South Bay Station 15 and the Morro Bay Fire Department battled a house fire on the 1400 block of 7th Street on July 8 that was reported at about 5:46 p.m.

“The cause of the fire is under investigation,” Cal Fire Public Information Officer Toni Davis told Estero Bay News noting that the structure was 100 percent consumed.

Estero Bay News Publisher Dean Sullivan was at the scene and witnessed flames shooting out windows and the roof of the home. Sheriff’s deputies and bystanders rescued several pets from the home.

Three people were in the home at the time; they suffered no injuries. Davis reported that one dog and two cats were believed to have perished in the fire, but three dogs and four cats were rescued.

Fire crews reported the fire was knocked down by 6:15 p.m.

American Red Cross Disaster Action Team volunteers responded to the fire “providing support to residents displaced by the disaster,” Taylor Poisall, regional communications director said in an email to EBN. “Volunteers offered care and comfort items, immediate financial assistance for urgent needs and information about recovery resources available to help our neighbors begin the recovery process.

“The Disaster Action Team) serves as a critical link between first responders and community members during local disasters, most often home fires. In San Luis Obispo County, DAT volunteers assist an average of 30 families each year, helping ensure those impacted have access to emergency support when they need it most.”

Folks can learn how to prevent home fires, create an escape plan, understand the importance of escaping within two minutes and access recovery resources by visiting the Red Cross home fire safety information at redcross.org.

A GoFundMe account has been set up at www.gofund.me/1bc214c77.

New Year; New Assessments



It’s a new fiscal year and that means property assessments are on the rise.

The Los Osos Community Services District Board on July 2 approved an item to levy the annual assessments the CSD uses to pay for specific services.

And while most apply to the entire community some just affect certain neighborhoods and pay for specific services. And since the assessments are tied into property taxes, there’s no escaping them, if you own a piece of land.

“Annually,” reads the report from Laura Durban, the LOCSD’s Administrative Services Manager, “various assessments are placed in the tax rolls for collection by the San Luis Obispo County. In accordance with legislation and the County’s rules, resolutions need to be adopted to legally place these in the tax rolls.”

The Resolution covered a slew of assessments including one that’s brand new, but was approved by voters at the June Primary. Ther assessments covered were: Bayridge Estates Annual Service Charge; Vista de Oro Annual Service Charge; Drainage Special Tax; Fire Protection and Prevention Services Special Tax; District No. 1 Wastewater Assessments; District Delinquent Water Charges; District Delinquent Solid Waste Charges; and, the LOCSD Parks and Recreation assessment.

That last one was approved by voters in June and is intended to provide funding for the purchase of the old Sunnyside School property that will eventually become a public park space, as well as potentially many other uses.

Some of these assessments haven’t changed from the previous year, but others have been increased by the rate of inflation, baked into laws approved over a century ago.

“The rate or amounts for Bayridge, Vista de Oro and Drainage Special Tax are the same as in prior years,” Durban’s report said, “the Fire Special Tax includes the 3.02% adjustment approved by the Board on April 2, 2026; and, the base assessments for the Wastewater Assessment District No. 1 includes a total Administrative Charge of \$24,081.90 to be spread among all assessed parcels to cover trustee fees, assessment fees, assessment process fees and disclosure reporting, and credit status maintenance. This administrative charge is authorized under the provisions of the Municipal Improvement Act of 1913 and the Improvement Bond Act of 1915.”

The wastewater charges are tied to a bond the CSD issued about 20-years ago that was tied into a failed attempt to build a community sewer system that ended when the board was recalled.

“The bond assessments [for the Wastewater Assessment District No. 1] may vary by a few cents each year, due to the varying rates of maturing bonds, however, the total assessment for each parcel remains the same for the whole life of the bond which will

all mature by 2034.”

How much and how calculated is a bit different for each of these assessments.

The Bayridge Estates cost is \$68.46 per parcel per year and raises just \$9,900, and the Vista de Oro assessments are \$82.18 per year per parcel, raising just under \$6,000 a year.

The Fire Protection assessment runs \$22.46 per unit of benefit, and raises over \$715,000 a year.

The drainage costs run just \$16 per parcel and generate \$96,000 a year.

The wastewater bonds amount to \$201 per parcel and generate \$1.03 million a year. This amount is simply to service the debt from the bonds and expires in 2034 when the bonds are retired. It is separate from the charges the County levies for the actual community sewer that was completed in 2016.

And the Parks & Rec assessments are \$185 per parcel for the first 15 years while the CSD pays off the purchase price, which is being negotiated with the school district, and then drops down to \$100 a year after that.

This assessment will continue until another voter initiative is passed to change or end it.

In addition to these annual costs, the LOCSD Board also approved a list of water and garbage customers who are delinquent on their bills, as both the water and garbage bills are linked to property taxes, should the customers fall behind.

This is done to ensure the CSD and the garbage company get the money owed to them for their services because if they are not paid, a lien can be placed on a property until the debt is satisfied, which is a process in itself.

Protest Period Starts for Water Rate Hike

The County has started the clock on a water rate hike for the south end of Cayucos and a public hearing is scheduled for Sept. 1 when it all will come to a head.

County Supervisors were asked to approve introduction of an ordinance that would increase water rates for County Services Area 10A, which provides drinking water and fire hydrant water to some 050 customers in southern Cayucos. CSA 10A covers the town from roughly 24th Street and Ocean Boulevard encompassing both sides of Hwy 1.



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347 Garden St, Los Osos

Listed at: \$849,000

Rare opportunity to own a home in a desirable Los Osos location directly across from the Cuesta Inlet, offering scenic water views and views of iconic Morro Rock. This single-level home sits on a spacious lot with established landscaping and plenty of room to enhance and personalize. The property offers a small yet functional floor plan and solid potential but is ready for updating and cosmetic improvements, making it an excellent opportunity for buyers looking to build equity and create their own coastal retreat. Enjoy the peaceful setting, abundant wildlife, and proximity to bay access, hiking trails, beaches, and all the natural beauty the Central Coast has to offer. Whether you're seeking a primary residence, vacation getaway, or investment opportunity, this property presents a chance to transform a well-located home into something truly special. Separate detached studio with a 3/4 bath .

1332 15th St, Los Osos

Listed at: \$824,000

Nestled near the peaceful Elfin Forest in Los Osos, this property offers a compelling mix of coastal charm, artistic character, and strong rental potential. Currently used as an income-producing rental, it's an ideal opportunity for investors or those seeking a versatile coastal getaway. The home showcases unique design elements throughout, including a spa-inspired bathroom with a jetted soaking tub, warm textured finishes, and creative lighting. The kitchen features durable tile countertops that complement the home's eclectic aesthetic, blending function with style. A standout feature is the bright, enclosed sunroom/greenhouse space, filled with natural light and accented by stained glass details—perfect for relaxing, gardening, or creative pursuits. The outdoor areas continue to impress with a flagstone patio ideal for entertaining.

Bear Valley Realty

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News

It also includes the water treatment plant below Whale Rock Dam that treats the lake water for all three water purveyors in town — two private companies and the County’s CSA 10A.

The vote begins a Proposition 218 process wherein water customers will have a chance to protest the rate increase in advance of the Sept. 1 public hearing for adoption. Protests must be in writing and delivered on Sept. 1 at the Supervisor’s meeting or in advance.

Water customers should be getting notifications of the matter in the mail soon. And a summary of the rate increase is required to be published in a newspaper of record, most likely the Tribune.

The County Public Works Department report said this is routine and necessary.

“As a standard practice for water utilities,” reads the report from Program Manager Laura Holder “rates are periodically reviewed to ensure revenues remain sufficient to support the safe and reliable operation of the system.

The proposed rate increase is necessary to address rising operations and maintenance costs, meet debt service obligations, plan capital projects, and rebuild reserves following recent infrastructure investments.”

The report indicates CSA 10A has paid for “major infrastructure improvements to enhance the reliability and safety of the water system.

Holder mentions two water line projects — the Hacienda Pipeline Replacement and Chaney Waterline Upgrade — that were done to reduce water loss and repair leaks. The CSA 10A went into debt to get the jobs done.

“These improvements were financed through a combination of reserve funds and a parent fund loan, which reduced reserve balances and created ongoing annual debt service obligations.”

The water rate was last changed in 2018 and was based on the needs that were known at the time, the report explained. Times have changed now.

“Operational costs have increased, significant infrastructure investments have been completed, and the Consumer Price Index [inflationary] rate adjustment authority expired in 2023, causing rates to remain flat despite rising expenses.

“As a result, current revenues are no longer sufficient to support operations and maintenance needs, meet parent loan obligations, plan future capital improvements, and rebuild reserves.”

CSA 1-A’s current rates generate some \$1.18 million a year, according to the report. By next fiscal year (2026/27) the report said costs will top \$1.35M and go up from there and in FY 2030/31 the costs will top \$1.53M, leaving a projected shortfall of some \$160,000. And it gets worse from there. “Without an increase in revenue this shortfall will continue to grow,” the report said.

The costs are increasing in both fixed costs and operational costs.

“Fixed costs include staffing, contracted services, water treatment and testing, administrative support and debt payments,” the report said. “These increases reflect economic conditions and operating pressures that have developed since rates were last established in 2018.”

So the County is proposing a graduated increase in rates — 15 percent the first year and 5% annually of the next 4 years. The usual inflation increases that get baked into such rate structures is not being applied to this 35% overall rate hike.

How much are we talking about? If the increases survives the

Prop. 218 protest vote, the bi-monthly base rate would increase from \$217.79 to \$250.45 for up to 14 units of water. Any additional usage above the 14 units would be charged at \$13.88 per unit.

By the fifth year the base rate would be \$304.42 and the extra charges would be \$16.87 per unit.

That big jump the first year is meant to cover the immediate projected shortfall and by the end of the 5 years, CSA 10A water bills would generate an additional \$420,000 a year.

The increase has been a long time in the making. The report lists six Cayucos Citizens Advisory Council meetings when it was discussed dating back to August 2025. The last time it was brought up was in May.

With 850 potential votes (water customers) in CSA 10A, it will take 476 “No” votes (50% plus one) to successfully fight the rate increase. Not voting at all is counted as a “Yes” vote.

Prop. 218 or “The Right to Vote on Taxes Act” was approved by voters in 1996 but successfully stopping a rate hike or tax increase through the protest vote process is rare, but not unheard of.

County Renews Opioid Clinic Contract

By Neil Farrell

The County has renewed a contract with a private firm to provide medial treatment for people addicted to opioids approving a new, 3-year pact that projected to be a moneymaker for the County.

County Supervisors on July 7 were asked by Director of Behavioral Health, Dana McEwen, to retroactively approve a contract with Aegis Treatment Centers, LLC, to continue to provide drug addiction care under the State’s “Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System” or DMC-ODS program through the 2028-29 fiscal year. Contract costs are \$4.02 million per year.

The treatment program is run under the California Department of Health Care Services, with County Behavioral Health acting as the administrator and Aegis delivering actual services under the “Narcotics Treatment Program” or NTP.

SLO County “contracted Narcotic Treatment Program provider and delivers the required component of DMC-ODS continuum of care,” reads McEwen’s report. “The current contract with Aegis expired on June 30, 2026.

The County’s renewal contract was still being finalized, McEwen said, but the State said to go ahead and renew contracts and it would allow the reimbursements to be applied retroactively.

Aegis runs two drug treatment clinics in SLO County and a third in Santa Maria. Though the Southern Border is now mostly closed, and smuggling of illegal drugs like heroin, fentanyl and methamphetamine have slowed considerably, SLO County continues to have a drug problem.

“San Luis Obispo County continues to experience the impacts of the opioid epidemic,” the report said, “making access to evidence-based treatment for opioid use disorder a critical

component of the County’s behavioral health system.

“Aegis provides outpatient medication-assisted treatment, including methadone and buprenorphine, drug testing, and individual and group counseling at licensed treatment centers in Atascadero, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Maria.

“Aegis also coordinates with the County’s Drug and Alcohol Services Division and County Jail to support continuity of care for individuals entering and leaving custody.”

The County needs to continue this contract to help people who seek to break their addictions. “Medication-assisted treatment [MAT] provided through Aegis improves access to outpatient substance use disorder treatment, promotes long-term recovery, and reduces the risk of overdose while helping individuals remain engaged in care.

“The partnership also strengthens coordination across the behavioral health continuum by supporting collaboration between community providers, Drug and Alcohol Services, and the County Jail to ensure continuity of treatment during transitions into and out of custody.”

The contract and this treatment program are also called for in the Department of Behavioral Health’s 2024-2029 Strategic Plan.

“Maintaining these services supports the Strategic Plan’s vision of expanding access to high-quality behavioral health care, strengthening community partnerships, and improving health outcomes for San Luis Obispo County residents.”

McEwen said the State’s reimbursements will likely cover the entirety of the contract and not require the County to pay into it, as has been needed in the past.

In a chart included in the report, Aegis charged \$2.5 million in FY 2023-24; \$3.186M in 2024-25; and is projected to bill \$3.6M in 2026-27.

Under revenues, the County lists \$2.14M from Medi-Cal for 2023-24 with the County putting in an additional \$496,000. For FY 2024-25 Medi-Cal’s portion was \$3.66M and the County’s \$519,000l and in FY 2025-26 Medi-Cal’s part is projected at \$3.72M and the County’s share is zero.

With the new contract, the County is being projected to make money from the program. For FYs 2025-26 through 2028-29 revenue from Medi-Cal is listed as \$4.72M but expenses are \$4.02M giving the County \$704,000 extra each year.

“Approval of this contract,” the report said, “will not increase the level of General Fund support required by the Department of Behavioral Health. Projected DMC revenue associated with these services is expected to exceed contract expenditure, resulting in a

Opioid Clinic Continued on page 8



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News

Caltrans Plans
Ramp Closures



Caltrans has begun a series of overnight on and off ramp closures as they work to maintain safety to the traveling public. “Travelers,” reads a news release from Caltrans Dist. 5, “will encounter full overnight closures of several on and off-ramps in San Luis Obispo County beginning Monday, July 13. “The closures will take place at different on and off-ramps along Highway 1 and US 101 from 7:30 p.m. to 7 a.m. The locations on Hwy 1 are:

- South Bay Boulevard Morro Bay northbound and southbound off-ramps;
- Morro Bay Blvd. MB northbound and southbound off-ramps;
- Main Street MB northbound and southbound off-ramps;
- San Jacinto St. MB Intersection northbound and southbound off-ramps;
- Yerba Buena St. MB Intersection northbound and southbound off-ramps;
- Old Creek Road/Studio Dr. Cayucos Intersection northbound and southbound off-ramps;
- 13th St. Cayucos northbound and southbound off-ramp;
- Cayucos Dr. Cayucos northbound and southbound off-ramps; and,
- Highway 41 Morro Bay northbound and southbound off-ramps.

Hwy 101:

- Prado Rd. San Luis Obispo northbound off-ramp; and,
- Madonna Rd. SLO northbound off-ramp and southbound on and off-ramps.

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Crews will be removing existing ramp striping and replacing the delineation configurations, according to Caltrans. Drivers should be on the lookout for potential ramp closures when driving at night. The work is expected to be completed by Aug. 7.

City Releases STR
Emergency List



By Neil Farrell

With summer now in full swing, Morro Bay residents have been given a new tool to help keep an eye on visitors staying in their residential neighborhoods. The City recently launched a new online tool that lists the emergency contacts for short-term rentals (STRs) legally licensed to operate in town. Though a relatively new concept in vacation stays, STRs have exploded in popularity as homeowners have turned houses into what are essentially lodging businesses situated often in otherwise entirely residential neighborhoods. And while the majority of STRs appear to be professionally managed there are some with somewhat looser rules governing who is moving in for a short stay on any given weekend. The possibility of having unruly visitors that don’t respect the quiet or privacy of residents caused a great deal of consternation among full time residents and made the process of establishing a governing ordinance more difficult. So too did the issue of on-street parking, which many residents worried could be taken up if visitors arrived in numerous vehicles with just a single driveway in which to park. The allure of STRs is self-evident as some can fetch upwards of \$800 a night, depending on location and size of the home, which translates into capacity. The possibility of having whole extended families and friends gathered under one roof for a vacation is part of the appeal of STRs. It’s also one of the reasons the Coastal Commission believes them to be an essential component of “affordable accommodations,” something called for under the California Coastal Act. While many residents would probably have preferred there be zero STRs in neighborhoods, few opposed them in commercial and tourism areas of town. The City’s ordinance includes signage that must be posted along with emergency contact information, though if a party of visitors gets too unruly, the best option is to call police to handle the situation. “This resource,” reads the City’s announcement on the website, “is intended to help residents quickly identify and contact the designated 24/7 emergency contact for a permitted short-term vacation rental when immediate concerns arise, such as noise, parking, or other issues requiring prompt attention. The City encourages residents to contact the listed emergency contact first when appropriate.

“If an issue poses an immediate threat to public safety or requires emergency assistance, please call 9-1-1. Non-emergency concerns that cannot be resolved through the designated emergency contact may be reported to Code Enforcement or the Morro Bay Police Department’s non-emergency line — 805-772-6225.” The City Code Enforcement Officer is Jason Nefores, and his phone number is 805-772-2223, email: jnefores@morrobayca.gov. As an indicator of the popularity of STRs, there are several relatively new, commercial, STR developments — one is on Front Street next to Frankie & Lola’s Restaurant; another is further up the Embarcadero across from the Shell Shop; and the newest is at the corner of Harbor Street and Market Avenue. The STR Ordinance was approved in 2020 and allows property owners to operate an STR within the City Limits, according to the City’s website, “provided they comply with permit requirements and standards to minimize neighborhood impacts.” One of the first things someone must do is obtain an STR permit. They must also get a business license and a Transient Occupancy Tax or bed tax account “prior to operating an STR.” The STR Permits must be renewed annually and there is a mandatory inspection every 4 years. Originally, the City Council set the permit limit at 250 but that was later reduced to 175, full-time rentals in residential-zoned areas. The ordinance calls that number a “cap” or the maximum number allowed in residential zones. They also can’t be too close to one another. “Such rentals,” the ordinance said, “are also subject to a ‘buffer’ that requires new STRs to be separated by at least 175-feet (measured from property lines).” However, “This limitation does not apply to a home-share STR in residential zones, or STR in commercial and mixed-use zones.” It should be noted that while there are 175 active STR permits in residential zones; the City also has a waiting list with over 130 potential permit seekers. Readers can access the emergency contact list at: www.morrobayca.gov/1085/Short-Term-Vacation-Rentals, along with other information about the program.

Cayucos Pool Closed
for Summer



The County-owned Hardie Park Pool in Cayucos will not open this summer after the County discovered it has structural problems that make it unsafe to use. Photo by Neil Farrell

By Neil Farrell

Cayucos’ Hardie Park won’t be filled with the delighted squeals and splashing of children this summer, after the County Parks

Pool Closed Continued on page 6



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Pool Closed From page 4

Department closed the town’s sole public pool for the summer after it discovered it was badly in need of major repairs. According to an official notice affixed to the closed gate at the pool, which was posted May 5 and headlined: “Hardie Park Pool — Closed for Summer,” the County discovered the problem while planning to do another renovation project.

“Due to major structural and safety concerns discovered during planned renovation work,” the County notice reads, “the Hardie Park Pool will not open this summer.

“Initial repair plans expanded after significant soil and structural damage were identified. A full engineering analysis is now required to determine repair options, costs and next steps.

“This assessment is expected to take approximately 9 months.”

The County determined that the in-ground, cement pool was unsafe to use.

“For the safety of the public, the pool will remain closed until necessary repairs can be completed.”

The closure hasn’t set well with the public, including John Winthrop, who in a letter to the Editor of EBN wrote: “The pool across from Hardie Park remains closed for the summer, and also for the foreseeable future, because it has a very bad leak, and NOBODY knows where it is, how bad it is, or how much it will cost to fix it. So those who live here in Cayucos will just have to tough it out and go elsewhere if they want to recreate in fresh water.”

The issue was also raised during a Dist. 2 Supervisor candidate’s forum at the Boradori Garage, held shortly before the June Primary Election. That forum focused on Cayucos issues.

Supervisor-elect Jim Dantona — a Cayucos resident — won that race against Morro Bay’s Michael Erin Woody. Both candidates were critical of the pool situation, Woody more so than Dantona, who will take office in December when long-time Dist. 2 Supervisor Bruce Gibson’s fifth term is up.

If the County’s closure notice holds up and it indeed takes 9 months to fix the pool that would mean it would be at least until next February before it opens again, however, that would be in time for next summer. But the County notice is noncommittal on that detail.

“We understand this is disappointing for residents and visitors who enjoy the pool,” the County notice said, “and we appreciate your patience and understanding as the County evaluates the future of Hardie Pool.”

The County has several other swimming pools it owns and operates, with the nearest one to Cayucos in Cambria at Shamel Park. There are also County pools in Shandon, Templeton, San Miguel, Lopez Lake and Santa Margarita Lake.

Morro Bay High School has a great swimming pool that the City Recreation Department uses for its aquatics program. The Rec Department has a whole array of swimming programs including swimming lessons for different skill levels, mommy and me classes, and recreational swimming, among others. See: www.morrobayca.gov/1019/Aquatics for the schedule.

Ironically, for over 15 years Morro Bay high didn’t have a swimming pool and the Hardie Park Pool was one of two local pools (the other being Cuesta College) that the school’s swimming & diving teams and its water polo teams used for workouts.



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Estero Bay New Briefs

By Theresa-Maria Wilson

Los Osos CSD Offers Food Scrap Pails

Don’t drive into San Luis Obispo for all your recycling needs.

The Los Osos Community Service District, which oversees the Solid Waste Franchise for Los Osos, offers some of the services in town that Integrated Waste Management Authority/Waste Connections provides.

“We offer battery recycling for regular household batteries, we purchase the compost that is a giveaway item for residents of Los Osos and the Nursery, and we always make sure we have food pails available in our office for residents to pick up,” Laura Durban, Los Osos CSD administrative services manager told Estero Bay News. “All of these services are offered free of charge to the residents. For the compost, you do have to show your ID at the nursery to prove you are a local resident.”

For those not in the know, the Food Scrap Pails are nifty little containers that can slide under your kitchen sink or sit on your counter. All food scraps can go in including meat, cheese, grains, fruits, vegetables, expired food, and more that then go into in your green curbside bin. Once picked up, the waste goes to the Anaerobic Digester, where they get turned into organic compost, fertilizer, and green energy.

For more information on what can be placed in the Food Scrap Pails go to ivma.com/free-food-scrap-pail. District Office hours are 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. Monday-Friday at 2122 9th Street, Suite 110, Los Osos.



Central Coast Caucus Bill Priorities

The California Legislative Central Coast Caucus, co-chaired by Assemblymember Dawn Addis (D-Morro Bay) and Assemblymember Gregg Hart (D-Santa Barbara) and vice chaired by Senator John Laird (D-Santa Cruz), unveiled its bill priorities for the 2026 legislative session.

“The Central Coast Caucus again has a priority bill package that uplifts the importance of our natural world to California’s economy and values,” said Addis. “As the federal government attacks our state, putting our coastline, climate, and pocketbooks at risk, I’m proud to co-chair a Caucus that is steadfast in defending California’s biggest assets – our people and our environment.”

The 2026 legislative package is currently comprised of ten bill priorities, each poised to address critical issues facing the region:

- AB 1744 (Addis) would make it illegal to label a sun-screen product as “reef safe,” “marine safe,” or any or any other phrase that leads the consumer to believe that the product is ocean friendly, unless the product is free of chemical ultraviolet filters.
- AB 2254 (Addis) would require certain cities to adopt monarch butterfly overwintering site protection policies.
- AB 1934 (Bennett) will require the State Fire Marshal to develop a home hardening certification program to help reduce

the risk of property loss as a result of a fire by January 1st, 2028.

• SB 599 (Caballero) would require the Department of Water Resources to research, develop, and implement tools that produce atmospheric river forecasting.

• AB 2461 (Hart) clarifies existing law by explicitly applying bonding and financial assurance requirements when a company acquires or assumes control of an oil well or facility.

• SB 575 (Laird) re-establishes the California Sea Otter Voluntary Contribution Fund to allow taxpayers to continue supporting sea otter conservation efforts through voluntary tax return donations.

• SB 963 (Laird) streamlines the California Coastal Commission’s appeal process by establishing requirements for filing appeals and setting deadlines for reviewing and deciding appealed coastal development permits.

• SB 1261 (Laird) will ensure that Aging and Disability Resource Connection programs can continue to operate during times of transition.

• AB 1668 (Pellerin) extends the welfare tax exemption on open space used exclusively for the protection of native plants and animals, biotic communities, geological or geographical structures of scientific or educational interest, or open space land used exclusively for recreation or for the enjoyment of scenic beauty, to January 1st, 2032.

• AB 1919 (Pellerin) allows voters, through a qualified initiative placed on the ballot by the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District Board of Directors, to approve a transaction and use tax.

Further updates on the progress of these bills are anticipated as they move through the legislative process in the State Assembly and State Senate.

Poly Funds Projects Through Mini Grant Program

Cal Poly’s Office of Research announced 26 awards for the 2026-27 Teacher-Scholar Mini Grant (TSMG) program cycle.

“The Teacher-Scholar Mini Grant program demonstrates Cal Poly’s institutional commitment to advancing research, discovery, integration, application and engagement in the context of teaching and learning,” Cal Poly representatives said. “The Teacher-Scholar Mini Grant program is supported by funds from the Office of the Provost and provides enhanced internal funding to support all areas of teacher-scholar activities.”

Of the 104 proposals received, more than \$350,000 has been awarded to 26 selected projects.

“The Teacher-Scholar Model embodies the very best of Cal Poly’s mission, where excellence in teaching and discovery are inseparable. These projects demonstrate how faculty scholarship enriches student learning while generating new knowledge and creative works that benefit our communities and our society,” said Dean Wendt, Cal Poly’s interim associate vice provost of research.

Phil Costanzo, chair of TSMG Review Panel, commented that “Cal Poly’s faculty continue to grow and develop a culture of research and innovation that is being felt all over campus including the classroom and research space.”

A list of the 2026-27 awarded projects can be found <https://research.calpoly.edu/>.

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.

Santa Maria Man Drowns at Lopez Lake

A Santa Maria man drowned in Lopez Lake after falling into a distress while swimming with friends.

According to Sheriff’s Spokesman, Tony Cipolla, at about 4:15 p.m. Tuesday, June 30, dispatchers got a report from Lopez Lake of a swimmer in distress.

“Witnesses at the scene,” Cipolla said, “reported that a 20-year-old male had been swimming with friends when he appeared to be in distress and went under water.”

Cipolla said a boat nearby tried to save him. “A nearby boat,” Cipolla said, “was flagged down and the occupants were able to locate the swimmer and pull him from the water.”

The rescuers immediately started administering CPR to try and revive the man, and he was taken to Arroyo Grande Community Hospital but was pronounced dead at the hospital. It’s

unknown if he ever regained consciousness after the heroic efforts to revive him.

“The Sheriff’s Office,” Cipolla said, “extends its sincere condolences to Mr. Martinez’ family and loved ones during this difficult time.”

Lopez Lake is a County-owned drinking water reservoir and a popular active recreational area and campground managed by the County Parks Department and patrolled by park rangers and the Sheriff’s Department. It is in the hills above Arroyo Grande.

Lopez Lake differs from other drinking water reservoirs — like Whale Rock Reservoir and Santa Margarita Lake — because people are allowed to launch motorized boats at Lopez Lake as well as go swimming.



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News

Morro Bay High Grad Killed in Chico Shooting

By Neil Farrell

One of two men killed in a mass shooting at a Chico public library was a Morro Bay High School graduate.

Jacob “Cody” Hull, 46 of Chico, along with Robert Johnson, 74 of Orland, was killed June 22 when an 18-year-old recent Chico High School graduate pulled a shotgun out of his vehicle and went on a shooting rampage at a Chico Public Library. Hull was a 1997 Morro Bay High School graduate.

According to news reports, it was about 5 p.m. June 22 when Bradley Scott Sayer, 18 of



Bradley Scott Sayer, 18 of Chico, Calif., stands accused of two counts of murder following a shooting spree June 22 at the public library in Chico. Photo courtesy Chico P.D.

Chico, Calif., walked unarmed through the Butte County Library’s Chico branch.

He then left the building to go to a parked car in the lot and retrieved a shotgun out of the trunk. Near the library entrance he reportedly shot Johnson twice, killing him. He entered the library where he fired several more shots including one that hit and mortally wounded Hull, who was rushed to Enloe Health Medical Center where he died from his injuries.

A 16-year-old girl was reportedly injured by flying glass. She was treated for her injuries and released from the hospital the same day.

Chico Police said Sayer fired eight rounds from the shotgun in the short rampage,



Jacob Hull, 46 of Chico, Calif., a 1997 Morro Bay High School graduate, was one of two men killed during a shooting rampage at a library in Chico. Submitted photo

which was ended when officers arrived at the scene within about 2 minutes. They were able to capture Sayer when he fled the library out the back door after police breached the building.

Officers had the place surrounded at the time and he fled straight into custody without further shots being fired.

A police spokesman said when they searched Sayer’s car, they found two more firearms in the vehicle.

Sayer was booked into Butte County Jail and has since been charged with two counts of murder, plus special circumstances, among what is likely to be many more charges before he goes on trial. Prosecutors have said they will not seek the death penalty.

According to WFMY News 2, a CBS affiliate TV station, Hull was killed while trying to shield an 8-year-old girl from the gunman.

“Jacob Hull was remembered by friends as someone who acted to protect others during the shooting,” WFMY reported. “Phillip Brun said his 8-year-old niece was injured in the shooting and credits Hull, whom he described as a father figure to her, for saving her life.

“Brun said his understanding is that Hull was trying to stop the shooter from moving farther into the library.”

“From my understanding,” Brun said, “he was preventing the shooter from getting further into the library and that is what had led him to being shot.”

Sayer was described in news reports as having just graduated high school two weeks prior to the shooting. He was also described as being “on the ‘highly-functioning’ autism spectrum.”

According to police and repeated in news reports, Sayer was fascinated with the April 1999 massacre at Columbine High School in Columbine, Colo.

Sayer reportedly was a fan of the two senior students — Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold — who carried out the massacre, killing 13 students and one teacher and also trying to set off homemade explosives inside the school, which fortunately did not detonate.

Harris and Klebold shot themselves to death before police could capture them.

According to an FBI agent, Sayer was wearing a T-shirt with “natural selection” written on it, reportedly a reference to one of the Columbine killers.

The entire Butte County Library system was closed for several days after the shooting, and the Chico branch is not expected to reopen until the end of August.

County to Continue Mother-Child Health Program



County Supervisors approved applying for a State program that includes Federal funding and would help with health issues for expectant mothers, infants and toddlers.

The report from Liz Merson the Provisional Deputy Director of Public Health, asked Supervisors at their July 7 meeting to retroactively approve applying for over \$3.9 million from the “California Department of Public Health Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health” program covering this year and the next two fiscal years (2026-2029). Throw in County matching funding and the grand total for the program here tops \$7.9 million.

The move would “support program mandates, ensure access to maternal, child, and adolescent health services and supports, reduce health disparities within the local maternal, child and adolescent population, and continued support for 10.50 FTE [full time equivalent] existing staff positions,” the report explained.

The grant money includes “Title V Block Grant, Title XIX Federal Financial Participation Match, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) Allocation” monies.

The County has been running this program for a long time.

“The Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health (MCAH) Program,” Merson said, “is a longstanding state and federally funded public health program that supports local health jurisdictions in improving the health and well-being of women, infants, children, adolescents, and families.

Mother-Child Continued on page 9



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Police Blotter



- **July 5:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 9:53 p.m. somewhere in town apparently because of having a brake or headlight out. Logs indicated the driver got nailed for suspicion of driving hammered.
- **July 5:** Someone found something at some undisclosed someplace in the North Morro Creek parking lot, aka The Pit.
- **July 5:** Police were called at 1:56 p.m. to a disturbance at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated the problem child was tossed into the gaol for suspicion of getting bent in public.
- **July 5:** Police responded at 2:50 a.m. to a disturbance at the Inn at Morro Bay on St5ate Park Road. Logs indicated they arrested some apparent drug addict for suspicion of possessing illegal drugs with at least two prior arrests for the same thing, possession of paraphernalia and violation of probation. The naughty fellow went to jail.
- **July 5:** Police responded at 12:23 a.m. to a report of some reveler shooting off illegal fireworks at Morro Rock.
- **July 4:** Police responded at 11:50 p.m. to a reported domestic dispute at an undisclosed location. Police started a report for suspicion of spousal battery.
- **July 4:** At 10:31 p.m. police stopped a suspicious vehicle on Morro Avenue at Ascott Suites. Logs indicated they nicked the driver for suspicion of being half cut behind the wheel.
- **July 4:** Police responded to Morro Rock at 9:15 p.m. after someone reported finding some lost treasure.
- **July 3:** At 11:42 p.m. police stopped a suspicious vehicle at an unnamed location. Logs indicated the driver was popped for suspicion of driving gassed and a bench warrant.
- **July 3:** Police responded at 5:27 p.m. to a suspicious subject at City Park on Harbor Street. Logs indicated they arrested some brawler for suspicion of resisting arrest and battery on a police officer. The apparent anarchist was tossed into the dungeon.
- **July 1:** Police responded at 2:10 p.m. to a report of a suspicious subject at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated the model citizen had a bench warrant and when police searched him or her the allegedly found a pocket full of dope on the mope and paraphernalia as well. They were injected into a cell.
- **July 1:** At 10:09 a.m. police contacted a suspicious miscreant at an apparently suspicious location. The scamboogah was hauled away for violating a court order to behave himself.
- **June 30:** Police picked up three candidates for citizen of the year with bench warrants at 10:54 a.m., 12:49 p.m. and 8:49 p.m., in an apparent clean sweep of meat sacks in town.
- **June 30:** Police responded at 11 a.m. to a car crash somewhere in town. No word on the extent of the carnage.
- **June 29:** Police responded at 6:27 p.m. to a report of someone having sticky fingers at an unnamed local store.
- **June 29:** Police at 9:33 a.m. contacted some apparent layabout taking up space and oxygen at City Park. The chap had a bench warrant and was issued another useless citation to ignore.
- **June 28:** Someone found something at Tidelands Park at 8 p.m. and gave it to police to worry about. Let's hope it was a parking pass.
- **June 28:** At 6:20 p.m. police were sent to a report of grand theft at Morro Rock, apparently other than the stolen land.
- **June 28:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 4:20 p.m. at an

undisclosed location presumably in town. The driver was nicked for being ripped and when he arrived at the Parkinson Plaza, he allegedly was discovered to have a pocket full of suspected illegal drugs, in this week's example of why they call it dope.

- **June 28:** Police responded at 2:05 p.m. to the Pitt parking lot for a reported disturbance. Logs indicated some apparent bent fellow had accosted and then assaulted innocent folks and was sent to the hoosegow for suspicion of being a drunken jerk in public, assault with a deadly weapon and uttering offensive words in a public place and no doubt shattering the serenity of setting.
- **June 27:** Police were called at 8 p.m. to a disturbance somewhere in town. Logs indicated some ruffian had battered some no doubt innocent person.
- **June 27:** Police responded at 11:54 p.m. to a suspicious subject call. Logs indicated the dingus involved was arrested for suspicion of possessing illegal drugs and paraphernalia.
- **June 27:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 10:22 p.m. at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated the driver was cited for a suspended license that was taken for a previous DUI conviction, and he or she is no doubt thankful they weren't drinking this time too.
- **June 27:** At 7:38 p.m. police contacted a suspicious subject hanging around at the Dollar Tree Store on Quintana Road. The hooligan of course had a bench warrant and was issued another disappearance ticket and let loose once again on an unsuspecting world.
- **June 27:** Police contacted a suspicious subject at 8:39 a.m. at Morro Rock engaged in something he hadn't ought a been. His probation was revoked and he was sent back to jail where he apparently belongs.

Opioid Clinic From page 3

positive net fiscal impact to the County.”

Aegis’ program works fairly well in some regards, but not so good in others.

“Aegis has the capacity to assist 325 eligible Medi-Cal beneficiaries at a given time,” McEwen’s report said, “with an average enrollment of 236 patients per month since the beginning of 2020. Aegis’ attrition (drop-out rate) was 9%, which met the target of achieving no more than 20% attrition.”

The numbers aren’t as good when it comes to relapses. “Aegis’ opiate relapse rate was 17.11%, which did not meet the 15% target.” But whether or not someone relapses into drug use varies for several reasons.

“Targets on relapse rate may not be met each year for a variety of complex reasons,” McEwen said, “including the retention of the clients may affect the relapse rates as clients are more likely to relapse in the first 90 days, so if the program has admitted an unusual high rate of new clients, which is a good thing, the relapse rate may be higher.

“Relapse rates can also depend upon the drug testing proce-

- **June 25:** Police responded at 6:09 p.m. to a report of some sinister zhlub assaulting a child.
- **June 25:** At 1:37 p.m. someone brought into the police station something they’d found somewhere in town.
- **June 24:** Police responded at 5:23 p.m. to a car crash at an undisclosed location. Not only do logs not say where it happened or who it happened to, they also don’t indicate if it was an injury crash or a minor fender bender, in today’s broad new world of transparency.
- **June 24:** At 11:52 a.m. police contacted a regular customer at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated the master criminal had both a felony and misdemeanor warrant and we can only presume was hauled off to the County lockup.
- **June 23:** At 11:12 a.m. police contacted an apparent Swagman sleeping in public and cited the squit for illegally camping where they can’t collect a bed tax.
- **June 23:** Police responded at 9:50 a.m. to a disturbance at Morro Elementary. Logs indicated some mulish bonehead violated a restraining order.
- **June 23:** Police responded at 8 p.m. to a reported grand theft at Albertson’s Market, as no doubt someone took combatting the affordability crisis a bit too much to heart.
- **June 22:** At 12:05 p.m. police responded to an undisclosed location in town after someone was discovered deceased.
- **June 22:** At 11:47 a.m. police responded to a report of someone shoplifting at the Mobil Station in the 900 block of Morro Bay Blvd. Logs indicated the alleged thief was also nicked for being drunk as a skunk in public, which no doubt explains why he thought he could get away with thieving.

dures, the frequency of drug testing, and the regular and consistent attendance of the clients.”

The new contract includes some performance goals to improve success rates.

“Performance measures in this renewal contract,” the report said, “require Aegis to strive to continue to improve these rates by at least one percentage point annually:

- Attrition: Aegis attrition rate (drop-out rate) shall be no more than 20% among patients during the first 90 days of treatment.
- Relapse Rate: Aegis illicit opiate relapse rate shall be no more than 15% (excluding the first 90 days of treatment) and no more than 25% for all illicit drug relapse rates.”

Aegis runs drug treatment clinics throughout California and is a division of Pinnacle Treatment Centers, a nationwide drug treatment company.

If readers need help fighting an opioid addiction the Aegis Center in SLO is at 1551 Bishop St., Suite 520. Call 805-208-3300. In Atascadero they’re at 6500 Morro Rd., Suites C & O. Call 805-461-5212.

Cat Noir CC

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Virgil asked the human to spill some tea about his brother.

Virgil: Tea? It was treacherous!

Human: Here it goes. The human hung blankets over patio chairs outside to let them get that sunshine smell. I love that smell. Okay, it is a little disturbing that the glorious, fresh smell is a result of the UV lights breaking down odor molecules.

Virgil: Hello diversion, back to the story about evil Boris and his murderous plot.

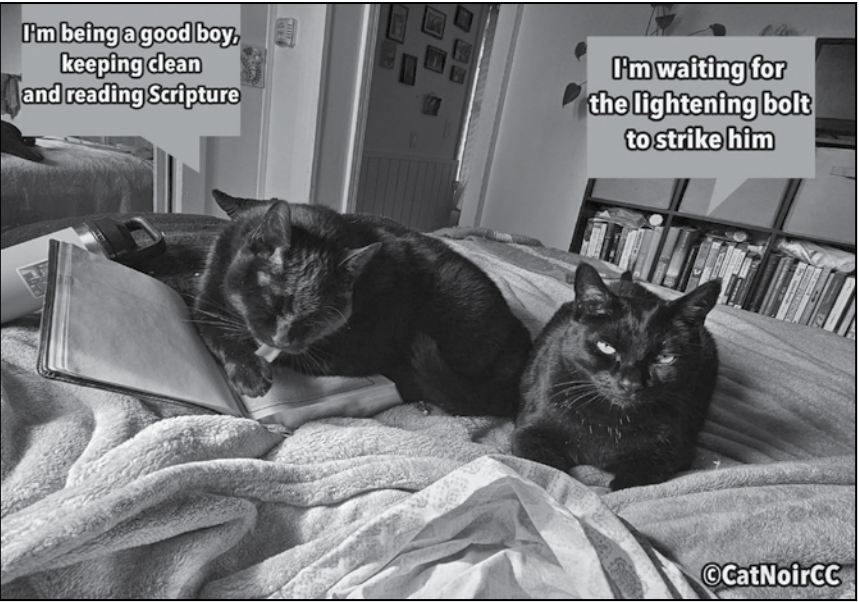
Human: After kitty dinner, an official no-go-outside time of day for the furry set, I went out, shut the door behind me, grabbed two blankets, opened the door a crack and slunk back inside. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a dark blur that I assumed was the two or three brown birds that had been hopping on the ground sniffing flowers, perching on pots and chirping away.

It was a fraction of a second later when my mind told me that the dark blur was actually a black blob running low to the ground with a belly flap swaying to the beat of the ominous kek-kek-kek emitting from the blob.

Virgil: Blob, haha, I love that for ol’ oaf-a-dope.

Human: Boris had darted out under the blankets I was bringing in and thought he was going to have a feast. I, of course, became the neighbor yelling “Cat, cat, go birds, go,” at the top of my lungs. Did I mention how many people walk on my street for their evening exercise?

The fowl gods were on our side, the birds and mine, and they took flight before Boris could get to them. I have not seen him move that fast and low in a long time. The neighbors were then



treated to a lecture of having enough food and “We don’t kill in this house.”

Virgil: Is that a new rule? I’m pretty sure I saw you putting out snail bait the other day.

Human: Virgil, every truth doesn’t have to be told. You are not George Washington standing in front of a felled cherry tree.

Virgil: That is a myth. He lied all the time. A biographer made up that story. Say, aren’t you a liar ... I mean writer?

Human: We need to go, Virgil needs a bath and a trip to the vet.

Virgil: Whhhhhhaaat!

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Mother-Child From page 7

They also instituted “a protocol to ensure individuals are referred for health insurance enrollment and receive recommended preventive care.”

By Neil Farrell

And since retirement benefits are tied into a percentage of salary, their retirement costs to the County will go up as well.

By Neil Farrell

She also noted that while some of those who attend the Monday Dinners are homeless, the dinner is open to anyone in the community. The clothing is given away through a freewill offering that she said is organized like a mini clothing shop.

Clothing Drive Continued on page 10



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Donated men's shoes are among the offerings at the Lions Club's Monday Night Community Dinners. The club is holding its annual men's clothing drive now through July 24 with Fitness Works in Morro Bay acting as the drop-off site. Submitted photo

Lions Club member Linda Winters, who oversees the clothing drive and volunteers on Monday nights, credited Patricia Gordon with coming up with the idea. They've always accepted clothing donations for the community dinners and had sectioned the clothing off into three sections — men and women plus a separate rack where the nicer articles — coats and jackets — are hung on display. They also have toiletries on a separate table, she said.

"We use the whole Vets Hall," winters told EBN. And while the giveaways have always been successful, they ran out of men's clothing quickly. Gordon posed the idea of specifically doing a men's clothing drive, she said.

"I want to thank Patricia Gordon for spearheading this worthwhile effort," Winters said. "She is an angel in disguise."

Last year, she explained they received more than 50 bags of donated clothing, and already this year, in the drives first few days; they've gotten six bags dropped off at Fitness Works. "It's been very successful," Winters said.

And the Lions Club and the 18 volunteers that typically show up on Monday nights too are angels in disguise. Winters explained that the community dinners are now in their 11th year and in all this time — like the Post Office — they've never missed a Monday night.

EBN readers are encouraged to bring donations to Fitness Works, which is acting as the donation collection site. They are open Mondays-Fridays from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sundays 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

See: morrobaylions.org for more information on the club and its many good works in the community.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY of MORRO BAY

Prohibition on the Central Coast

Humans have had a love/hate relationship with liquor throughout recorded history. In the 1860s and 1870s in the United States many people benefitted from the sale of liquor (not to mention those who regularly imbibed). But there was growing political support for the belief that alcohol was "an evil that must be stopped by law." This movement was organized by the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Anti-Saloon League, and the Prohibition Party. In 1920, the Prohibitionists were successful in forcing the U.S. Congress to pass the 18th Constitutional amendment outlawing all intoxicating liquors.

However, enforcement of the Act was impossible, and seasoned drinkers ignored it. It led to bootlegging, gangsters, speakeasies, and corruption. By the early 1920s bootlegging was an important part of the Central Coast economy. Much of the illegal liquor came down from Vancouver, Canada where it was legal. The most popular locations to off-load illegal liquor were Spooner's Cove, Pismo Beach, Avila, and Morro Bay. It was easy to do because there were no Coast Guard or federal law enforcement officials between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

During the night the Canadian ships would dock outside the three-mile limit, send signals to shore, and boats would go out to meet them and unload the cases of alcohol. A single shipment could be worth as much as \$50,000. The cases would be brought to shore where canvas-covered trucks were waiting. The trucks had to find local farmers who were willing to hide the trucks during the day until the next evening when they would take their cargo to Los Angeles.

There were also local farmers who distilled their own alcohol for personal use or to sell to local speakeasies, which were in basements, back rooms, or upstairs apartments often disguised



as a different establishment. Happy Jack's saloon (now The Siren) opened during Prohibition. Of course, everyone involved in the operation was paid some money and/or got to keep some of the contraband.

The U.S. Treasury Department appointed local Prohibition Officers, also called Revenuers, to help enforce the law. And not everyone escaped the Revenuers. One prominent case involved Alden Spooner's grandson, Quincy, who served two years in prison and paid a \$2,500 fine for using the cove and ranch for trafficking liquor. Reportedly he was turned in by the rumrunners themselves who turned coat and joined the I.R.S. Quincy apparently made a deal with federal authorities so that his younger brother, Carson, could avoid conviction.

In 1933, after 14 years of trial — and failure — the 21st Amendment was passed, repealing the 18th Amendment and ending Prohibition.

Do you have a good story to share about Estero Bay history? We'd love to see your great photo and hear about it: info@historicalmorrobay.org

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One-Way Continued on page 14

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READY TO TAKE A TRIP BACK IN TIME?

Once you arrive at the Central Coast Renaissance Festival, you'll leave the modern world at the gate.

For two magical days, Laguna Lake Park becomes Tilbury, a 16th-century English village alive with the clash of steel, the cry of hawks, the laughter of fools, and the irresistible smell of a feast well underway. Queen Elizabeth I herself has graced our humble village on her summer progress, and the entire kingdom has turned out to celebrate.

In the hours ahead, you'll find armor-clad warriors doing battle in the arena, master craftspeople selling wares they made entirely by hand, musicians playing instruments that haven't changed in five hundred years, and a turkey leg with your name on it. Whatever you came for — history, spectacle, food, family, or simply the joy of a day unlike any other — you will find it here.

This is our 40th year, and we are more grateful than ever for the loyal patrons and first-time visitors who make this village come alive. The performers, vendors, and volunteers you see today have poured their hearts into this celebration.

Now it's yours to enjoy.

A DAY IN THE VILLAGE: YOUR GUIDE TO THE LIVING RENAISSANCE

The Central Coast Renaissance Festival returns July 18–19 — forty years of merriment and counting. Whether it will be your first visit or your fortieth, everything in the village has a story, and knowing even a little of it makes the whole day come alive. Here's what you'll really be seeing, hearing, tasting, and wearing.

THE CLASH OF STEEL

The armored combat you'll hear echoing across the grounds is a tradition nearly a thousand years in the making. Born of medieval tournament culture, these contests evolved by the Elizabethan era from battlefield training into prestigious sporting events — Queen Elizabeth I herself was an enthusiastic spectator.



EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY

Feasting was central to Renaissance culture — how lavishly you fed your guests announced your status as clearly as your clothing. At grand banquets, whole roasted animals arrived at the table and sugar sculptures decorated the spread; sugar was so costly that displaying it was a power move. (Elizabeth loved sweets and, by middle age, had the blackened teeth to prove it.) Common folk ate dark bread, pottage, and ale, and viewed the newly arrived tomato as poisonous. Turkey, though, was already a celebrated feast bird — meaning the turkey leg in your hand at the faire will be a surprisingly authentic Renaissance experience. Raise a cup. The Elizabethans would approve.

THE VILLAGE MARKET

Market days were the heartbeat of every Elizabethan town. Craftspeople trained for years in guilds before earning the right to sell their goods, everything was made by hand, and reputation was livelihood — a dishonest baker could end up in the pillory with stale loaves hung around his neck. Haggling wasn't rude; it was respected. As you browse the festival's merchants — jewelry, leather, glasswork, clothing, and more — you'll be part of that same tradition of craft and commerce. Go in the morning, when vendors have time to chat and the lanes are still quiet.

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR DAY

Wander early, before the crowds thicken. Check the stage schedule and pick two or three shows you won't miss. Indulge in the food — seriously. And above all, lean into it: talk to the performers, try on a costume, let the kids get wonderfully lost in the magic. The modern world will still be there when you get home.

WE CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU IN THE VILLAGE. HUZZAH!

Stage Schedules			
Glorianna Stage		Poor Man's Globe	
10:30	Tea & Strumpets	10:30	The Story Wrens
11:00	Much Ado About A Headdress	11:00	Merchant of Miracles
11:30	The 3 Falconeers	11:30	79 Ways To Die
12:15	Ramtop Morris	12:15	Minstrels of Misrule
1:00	Much Ado About A Headdress	1:00	Merry Wives of Windsor
1:30	Tea & Strumpets	1:30	Barleycorn Country Dancers
2:00	The 3 Falconeers	2:00	Stark Ravens Players
2:45	79 Ways To Die	2:30	Merry Wives of Windsor
3:30	Tea & Strumpets	3:00	Stark Ravens Players
4:00	Ramtop Morris	3:30	The Story Wrens
4:30	Much Ado About A Headdress	4:00	Barleycorn Country Dancers
5:00	79 Ways To Die	4:30	Merchant of Miracles
		5:00	Merry Wives of Windsor
		5:30	The Story Wrens
Buccaneer Stage		Arena Stage	
11:00	Dotter's Knot	10:30	Professor Peanut
11:30	Morro Bay Mutineers	11:00	Wild Thyme Larks
12:00	Claire-Michael and Friends: Kids' Corner	11:30	Daring Daniel
12:30	Buccaneer Boot Camp	12:00	Knight Fight
1:00	Climb Aboard	1:00	Daring Daniel
1:30	Kid's Costume Contest	1:30	Wild Thyme Larks
2:00	Claire-Michael and Friends: Kids' Corner	2:00	Professor Peanut
2:30	Wild Thyme Larks	2:30	Daring Daniel
3:00	Climb Aboard	3:00	Knight Fight
3:30	Minstrels of Misrule	4:00	Professor Peanut
4:00	Climb Aboard	4:30	Morro Bay Mutineers
		5:00	Dotter's Knot
Puppet Stage		Eastern Star Stage	
11:00, 12:30, 2:00, 3:30		Random Shows All Day	

The armor is no costume. A full suit of plate from the 1500s weighed up to 65 pounds, yet was engineered so precisely that a fit knight could run, climb, and even cartwheel in it. The fighters of Armored Combat World-wide carry that tradition forward: they train year-round, fight in historically accurate steel, and compete worldwide — some familiar from the History Channel's *Knight Fight*. The weapons are real. The contact is full force.

Battles run daily at 12:00 PM and 3:00 PM — they draw the biggest crowds, so claim your spot early.

A BIRD ON THE GLOVE

When a hawk launches from a gloved fist, you're witnessing a partnership over four thousand years old. During the Renaissance, falconry was literally the sport of kings: strict laws dictated who could fly which bird. A king flew a Gyrfalcon, an earl a Peregrine, a yeoman only a Goshawk — flying above your station was illegal. The leather hood you'll see on a bird at the festival serves the same purpose it did five centuries ago, keeping the hawk calm. Falconry even shaped our language: "haggard," "hoodwinked," and "under your thumb" all trace back to the falconer's craft.

THERE WILL BE PIRATES

What do pirates have to do with Queen Elizabeth I? Quite a lot. Spain was shipping staggering amounts of New World gold back to Europe, and Elizabeth, unable to afford open war, found another solution: she hired pirates. Through "letters of marque," private captains — privateers — were licensed to raid enemy ships and share the plunder with the Crown. Sir Francis Drake delivered so much treasure that Elizabeth's share of a single voyage reportedly paid off the entire national debt. Spain called him a pirate. Elizabeth knighted him.

So when you see the pirate ship, you're not straying from the Renaissance — you're sailing into one of its most thrilling chapters. **Sunday, July 19 is Pirate Day — don't miss the Treasure Hunt and Buccaneer Boot Camp.**

Community

Events From page 13

of iconic hits, featuring local powerhouse horn band Brass Mash and music from The Beach Boys, Titanic, Billy the Kid, Rodeo, Michael Jackson, The Killers, Led Zeppelin, and more. Bring your own picnic or enjoy a selection of food trucks available on site. Drinks will be available for purchase from Avila Beach Golf Resort. Bring an empty reusable water bottle to use at the complimentary water bottle refill station. No outside drinks are permitted, and ice chests will be inspected upon entry.

- Tickets
- New! Cabanas - Only three available, includes tickets and seating for six, in front of Mulligan's, \$1000 each
 - Beach Club Balcony – Six high top tables available, includes tickets and seating for four, \$320
 - Sponsored Tables: Contact us to sponsor a table at Pops by the Sea and support the SLO Symphony!
 - Preferred Tables of 10 - \$800 / table
 - Reserved Seats - \$80 / seat
 - General Admission: Lawn seating is \$25 for adults and \$15 for minors ages 13 to 17. Bring a blanket or a lawn chair.
 - Kids 12 and under: Free
 - NEW: "Mash Pit" - General admission, low back chairs only, immediately in front. Very limited availability - will sell out quickly!
- Kids age 12 and under are free, but don't forget their ticket. Tickets at my805tix.com.

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Join more than 600 strawberry growers, researchers and industry representatives for Cal Poly Strawberry Center's Tenth Annual Field Day on Thursday, July 23, 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event, held on campus at the Strawberry Center, is the strawberry industry's largest research and education event, celebrating the innovative collaboration between the California Strawberry Commission and Cal Poly. Participants will rotate through five interactive stations showcasing over 20 dynamic demonstrations led by students, staff and industry partners. Topics include the newest automation technology, arthropod pests and predators, soil-borne pathogens of strawberry and much more. Learn more at strawberry.calpoly.edu/field-day-2026.

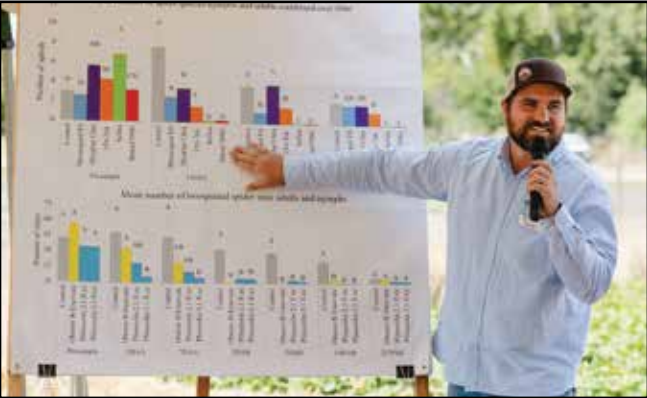
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By The Sea Productions 's summer show is "The Butler Did It," a delightful spoof of the golden age of murder mysteries. A group of mystery writers, each assuming their detective hero character, gather at Ravenswood Manor, where of course, a murder occurs. Written by Tim Kelly and directed by Samvel Gottlieb, this whodunit will keep the audience guessing and laughing, and then guessing again.

The cast is a collection of favorite local actors and some new faces, too: Jenn Beck, Rick Bruce, Nicki Butler, Kira Dobson, Wren Hall, Christian Henry, Norm Reiss, Laura Richie, Amanda Robinson and Landen Scott "The Butler Did It" plays July

24 - August 9, at 545 Shasta Ave. in Morro Bay. Performances are Friday and Saturday evenings at 7 p.m., and Sunday at 3 p.m. Get tickets at my805tix.com.

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Cal Poly's Grimm Family Center for Organic Production and Research will host its Fourth Annual Organic Field Day on Thursday, July 23, from 1 to 4 p.m., at Cal Poly's Organic Sandbox on Highland Ave. The free event is open to the public and designed for farmers, agricultural professionals, students and anyone interested in organic agriculture. The event offers attendees hands-on access to ongoing student-led research in organic nutrient and pest management, a workshop with the Coalition for Food Safety and Sustainability and a discussion of trap crops for flea beetles and cucumber beetles. Participants can expect guided field tours, live demonstrations and direct conversations with Cal Poly researchers and faculty working on practical solutions for organic producers. Learn more at organic.calpoly.edu/field-day-2026.

...

Resonance, San Luis Obispo County's premier a cappella choral ensemble, presents "All Things New," a powerful choral experience featuring music with themes of endings and beginnings. The concerts will take place at three different locations throughout San Luis Obispo County, with one concert each day on August 7, 8, and 9. The Friday evening concert will be held in Paso Robles, Saturday afternoon in San Luis Obispo, and Sunday afternoon in Arroyo Grande.

Founded in 2012 by composer and conductor Paul Osborne, Resonance is a 35-voice ensemble comprised of top-quality vocalists from throughout San Luis Obispo County. Resonance's repertoire focuses on Renaissance polyphony, contemporary compositions, and music of the Lutheran choral tradition. The ensemble's latest program, "All Things New," explores themes of innovation, rebirth, death, resurrection, and hope for a glorious future through a rich collection of contemporary and classical choral works.

The concert features compositions by Eric Whitacre, Carl Orff, Frank Martin, Paul Osborne, and many others, offering audiences a moving and inspiring musical journey that reflects on life's endings while celebrating new beginnings. The program is divided into four sections, and each one includes three short works by composers from the Middle Ages through to the 21st century.

Individual tickets are \$30 for general admission and \$20 for students and are available for purchase at www.my805tix.com.

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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.



NATURAL HISTORY NUGGETS

The Many Tongued Mimic



Northern Mockingbird begging from parent. Photo by Marlin Harms

By Dean Thompson

It seemed like it went on all night long, over and over, with the same repetitious songs. My roommate hated it, but it didn't really bother me, I can sleep through most anything. The music didn't come from next door but from the thick tangled hedge bordering our two houses. The culprit was a medium-sized gray, black, and white bird. Unfortunately, the Northern Mockingbird can be famous for its nighttime singing. Some think they do that because there's less competition from other noises and bird songs at night, others think those are the lone males still calling for a mate. Whatever the reason it drives some folks crazy.

I've always enjoyed mockingbirds and love having these characters as my neighbors. Not only do I like their versatility in songs, but also their bold plumage pattern and aggressive way of protecting their territories. I've observed mockingbirds swooping and diving on known egg-stealing birds like crows and jays, but also on cats, dogs, and sometimes people. They are prolific breeders making multiple nesting attempts in a single year. One female set a record of laying 27 eggs in a single season!

Landscaped neighborhoods are perfect habitat for them as they like to nest in dense hedges and thickets, and search for food in open areas like lawns where they can spy insects. If you've ever watched one hunting, they do a thing called "wing-flashing" where they walk a few steps then flick their wings out over their back, walk a few steps and flick again. The white patches and movement hopefully produce a startle effect on insects trying to remain still to avoid the predator. If the insect is startled its movement betrays its otherwise camouflaged body and the mockingbird will dart in and grab it with its bill.

It is their songs however that make the mockingbird stand out. The mockingbirds scientific name is *Mimus polyglottos*, which literally translates to "many-tongued mimic" (a polyglot is a person who speaks many languages). While mockingbirds are known to sing hundreds of different songs throughout their range of North America, they are not the only bird that can mimic other birds. Lyrebirds, mynas, parrots and even crows and jays can

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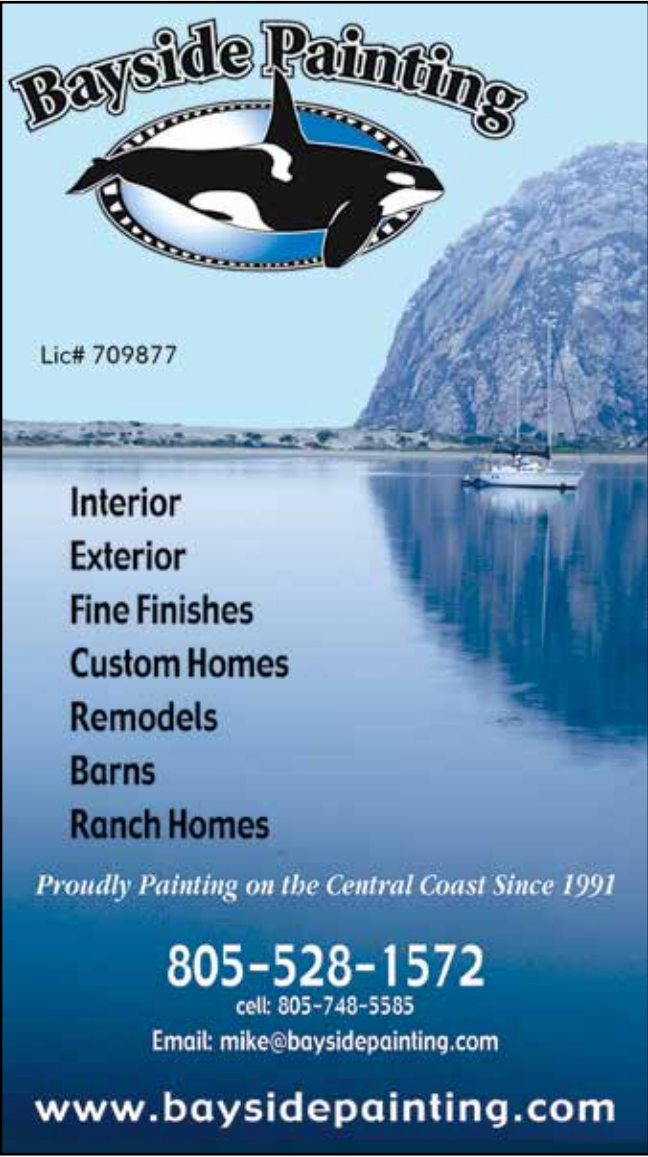
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Community

mimic other birds. In fact, scientists have compiled a database of known vocal mimics that comprised 339 species from 43 families. When the mockingbird really gets into his singing, he'll stand on an exposed perch to perform. There he'll babel away his various songs flapping and jumping into the air to add a physical element to his concert.

What I find fun about listening to mockingbirds is trying to decipher just what they are mimicking. Most of the time they are just making up their own creations but if we listen closely, sometimes we can parse out some things they are imitating. An individual mockingbird can imitate over 150 different sounds and some of the ones around my home have surprised me with their choices. Many of their songs are their own creations but I've heard them imitate kestrels, titmice, woodpeckers, blackbirds, California quail, Red-shouldered hawks, and other birds but I have also heard them mimic treefrogs, cellphones and even car door chimes.

Due to the mockingbird's vocal talents, back in the 19th century there was an illegal trade in these impressive singers, so much so their populations were depleted along the East Coast. The best singers were worth up to \$50 in 1828, that's over \$1,000 in today's dollars.

To me they are one of our many priceless neighbors enriching our neighborhoods with their striking plumage, character and songs. Even if they do sing until the wee hours of the night.

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

OUT & ABOUT

WITH THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS



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

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

Lonely Bird

By Susan Vasquez

As I sit outside today, I glance every so often at Merlin app's list of birdsongs. I am nervous. I've been out here 12 minutes. In January, the list would have been long, sometimes 15 different kinds of birds singing in the morning. On this new summer day, I understand it is no longer winter, when many birds seek this mild climate. I also know spring has ended. Bird families are scattering, away from the nests they built in March. But today, after 12 long minutes, there is only one bird on Merlin's list. A very lonely Black Phoebe.

I see it on top of my roof. Its piercing and quick call repeats, flashing over and over on



Only One Phoebe

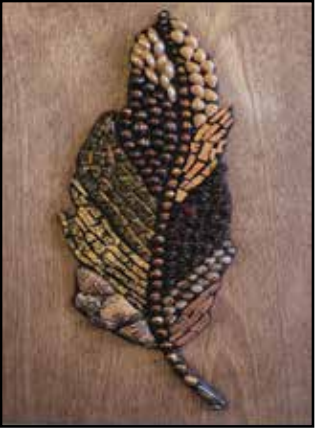


Artists Dianne Brooke, Margo Ternstrom, Cam Arnold, Karen Franscioni, Pat Willmott, Janet Morrell, Holly McCain, Cindy Stiles are part of the pop-up at Cambria Center for the Arts on July 25 Photo by Jeni McCormic

Local art will pop up in Cambria during a one-day open-air show and sale featuring more than a dozen local artists. The first-ever Cambria Artists Pop-Up Marketplace will set up shop outdoors in on Saturday, July 25, in front of the art center from 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. Artists will offer a variety of original artwork for sale, including paintings, sculpture, jewelry, ceramics, mosaics, prints and more. They will demonstrate their techniques, and kids and adults will have the chance to express their own creativity with a special project. Admission is free.

"We will have something for everyone who loves original work by local artists," organizer Susan McDonald says. "So, pop on by." Doors to current art center exhibits will also be open to visitors that day from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The current show in the studio, titled "What Is Revealed," is a reflective collection of peaceful, flowing paintings by Margaret Biggs. And in the Gallery,

artist George Scribner shares his explorations of the world through his oil paintings with, "It's The Journey." Along that same theme, the gallery features dozens of works by local artists. All are on display through Aug. 30. Cambria Center for the Arts is located at 1350 Main Street, Cambria. Go to cambriaarts.org for more information.



A leaf mosaic by Karen Franscioni. Photo submitted

Merlin's screen. The sound makes me think of a longing, a call to past good times and loved ones too far away to hear. I know there is a bird meaning to this Phoebe's call, but I am the one listening, one human putting my own meaning into the only avian voice in the garden. To me, it sounds lonely. As I listen, I don't resist the human need to connect to nature. It's complex, but many times there's an urge to understand the natural world in people terms. We personify what we see. We look at a rock, a lizard, even water or trees and think they have feelings and opinions. Like most people, I want to give meaning to voices across the natural divide. This Phoebe, to me, announces the loneliness of summer, with its heat and its sameness after the changeable glories of winter, when birds arrive and jostle in their attempts to get to know each other and claim their spot in the neighborhood. And spring – a time to nest, to get comfortable, to eat and to see a new generation. The freedom of an emerging summer stands alongside this lone bird as it calls into the morning sky, one voice after the many that sounded in January. I hear it this morning as one Phoebe's bid for seasonal change. I hope this Black Phoebe is content with its freedom. I assume its yearly job is done. Where its companions are, I don't know. This one is the only song I hear, the only bird I see. Where are the White-throated Sparrows, the Yellow-rumped Warblers?

Even the other Phoebes are absent this morning. Their seasonal jobs are tiring; perhaps all the others are resting. I have watched during these past months as they have gone about the busy-ness of bird life. So many growing things in our yard have welcomed their winter and spring adventures. It's strange to think of summer as melancholy. Isn't it a time to celebrate, a vacation season, cheerful, with sunshine? But this Phoebe is alone this morning and I am feeling the melancholy of its call. It could also be that the Black Phoebe is singing to me of change, of looking at things in a different way. I could be wrong about what I hear in its voice and see in its singular shadow on my roof top. But I do sense some meaning in its presence so nearby. Along with the melancholy, I feel grateful to sit by myself, also alone, as the Black Phoebe sings. That doesn't mean I won't hope for more bird voices tomorrow. Visit Susan Vasquez and her stories at <https://susanvasquez.com/>.

Costa Gallery to Celebrate 6th Anniversary

Costa Gallery is celebrating their 6th anniversary by presenting three exhibitions in one location. Check out "Body • Legends • Explosive" with striking ceramics, vibrant portraits and inspiring photography by three California artists. Keagen A. Mackey is a talented emerging pottery artist from Fresno, CA. A knowing old soul seems to touch this exuberant artisan's vessel series "Body." His forms, whimsical facial details and deep glazes, captivate viewers. "We hope you'll visit to explore this newcomer's unique collection of vessels and functional ceramics in person," said Costa Gallery owner Michael J. Costa. Elizabeth Chaney-Hall is a former accomplished designer, art director who currently focuses her fine art on fascinating paintings and glass mosaics. Elizabeth wants this colorful showcase to reflect the humanity, complexity, and raw character beyond mere celebrity of the figures she has painted. "We're thrilled to feature her "Legends" portrait series of internationally-known musicians, icons, and leaders," Costa said. Costa, himself, has a new photography exhibit "Explosive."

Costa Gallery Continued on page 21

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July 16, 2026 - July 29, 2026 • The Estero Bay News • Your Community, Your News 15

Obituary

Ronald Duane Adams

1941 - 2026

With deep sympathy our family would like to let you know of the passing of our dad Ronald (Ron) Adams. Dad passed away peacefully on Sunday June 7, 2026, at home with family and his dog Misti beside him.

Dad was born Ronald Duane Adams on February 4, 1941, in Michell South Dakota to Charles Arthur Adams (Chuck) and Artis Ardell Leighton Sdanz (Twig). His siblings included brother Edwin Edward Adams and Timothy Russell Adams, and sister.

Dad was a caring father, husband, granddad and great granddad. He also genuinely cared for everyone whose life he touched, and there were a lot of people.

He was the Coalinga milkman in the day! He went into people's homes and stocked their refrigerators or left dairy on the porch. He supplied every school, store, ranch house and restaurants for miles. He also delivered so many tons of Ice.

He sponsored all the local team sports and was a loyal member of the Elks, Eagles and the Coalinga Chamber of Commerce. He loved the communities he supported including Coalinga, Kettleman City, Avenal, Huron and Cambria.

Dad went on to open a Store in Kettleman City and supported that community and its people with the only market in town. He then purchased his dream of living and operating a business in Cambria. Dad loved the weather there and acquired Cambria Towing and did what he does best — helping people whether that be a late-night ride, tow, jumpstart, battery or lockout — he showed up with a smile.

Dad taught us a lot, how to work for what you want and to expect only what you earn; be independent, resourceful and helpful. Some of the best times were working with him, being there all day, sleeping in the truck, lockouts, food stops, chocolate milk, walk-in beers and snacks from the ice cream freezer. We also had camping trips with the cousins, horses, hunting, pets and a home we could come to.

I could go on and on. We Love You Dad. You left us way too soon and will be missed deeply. Join us for a celebration of life at the Coalinga Elks Lodge #1613, 200 Cambridge Ave, Coalinga CA on Saturday, July 25 starting at 11 a.m. Robert, Wade, and Tawnya.

Bettye Joy Landino

1944 - 2026

Bettye Joy Landino, 82, of Los Osos, California passed away on June 27, 2026. Bettye was born on May 24, 1944 in Arkansas in a simple and rural community. She persevered and bettered herself and her surroundings, eventually coming to California and becoming a schoolteacher.

Bettye worked for many years in Atascadero and Los Osos schools, helping young people to grow and develop, primarily teaching 2nd grade. In 2006, Bettye retired from teaching and was able to travel the world with her husband Michael, visiting many destinations around the world such as Bhutan and New Zealand. They loved games and were avid mahjong and bridge players.

Bettye was a member of the Central Coast's The 540 Bridge Club. Bettye is Survived by her husband Michael, her two adult children, three adult grandchildren and six great grandchildren, for whom Bettye was an influential part of each of their lives.

All who wish to take a moment to celebrate and remember Bettye are invited to meet at the Los Osos Monarch Butterfly Preserve on July 19, from 12 - 2 p.m. for an open remembrance.



Takin' Care of BUSINESS

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Nominations Now Open for Morro Bay Chamber Awards Gala

The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce is accepting nominations for the 70th Annual Awards Gala, scheduled for November 7. The Chamber will present awards for winners in four categories: Business of the Year, Citizen of the Year, Living Treasure

and Nonprofit of the Year. Nomination submissions close August 30 and cover the January 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, timeframe.

"The Annual Gala signifies a time to recognize and honor valued businesses and citizens who have gone above and beyond in their contributions

to the community," Chamber officials said.

The theme at this year's Gala is "Seaside Soirée: Celebrating Seventy Years," and takes place from 4:30 to 8 p.m. at the Morro Bay Community Center on 1008 Kennedy Way.

Nominees who have previously received awards will not be considered. To make a nomination, go to <https://www.morrochamber.org/events/gala-seaside-soiree>.



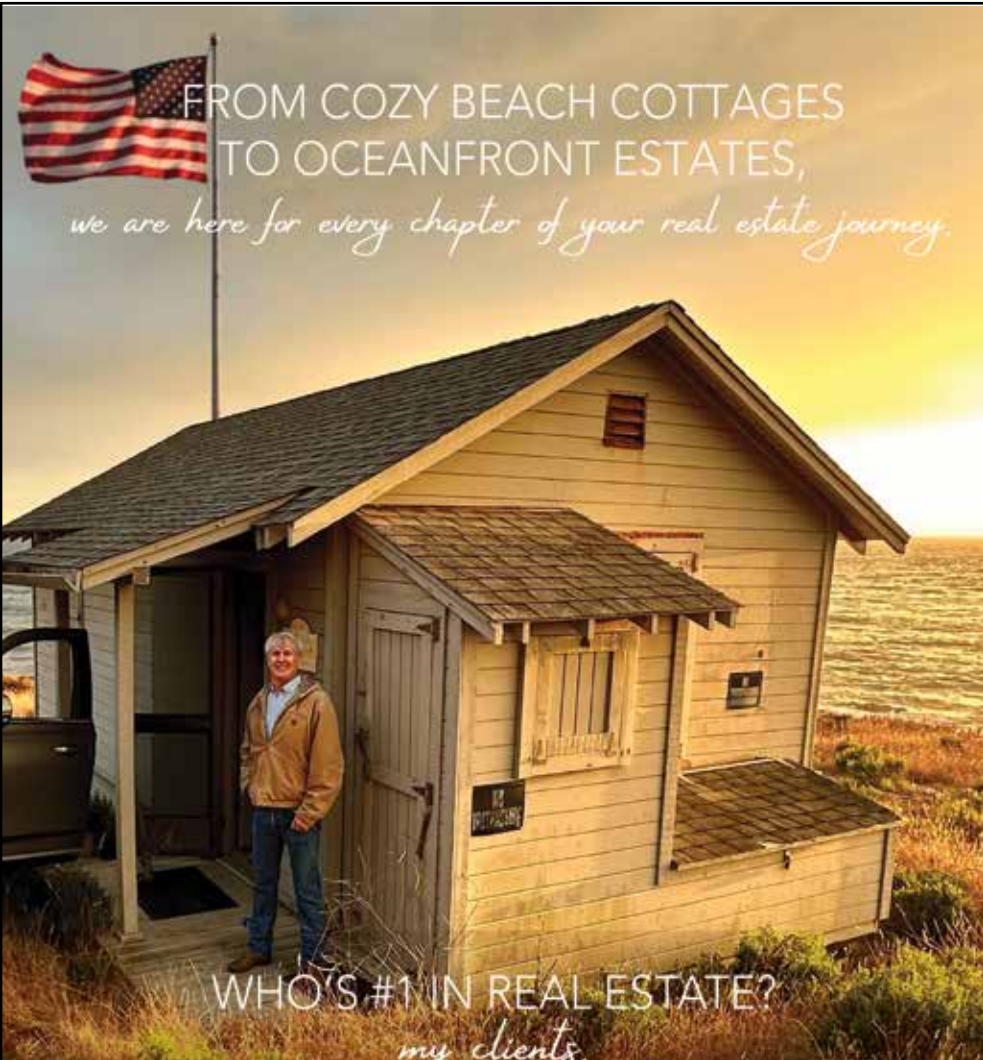
Kai Shave Ice Grand Opening

Looking for a new treat with a little aloha spirit to cool you down in the summer heat? Kai Shave Ice, a Hawaiian-inspired shave ice shop, will hold its grand opening Sunday, July 19, at 255 Morro Bay Blvd. in Morro Bay from 12 to 4 p.m.

The celebration kicks off with an official ribbon cutting ceremony hosted by the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, welcoming Kai Shave Ice as the newest member of the local business community. Guests are encouraged to arrive early to be part of this milestone moment and enjoy the first tastes of Kai's signature shave ice creations. At 2 p.m., the festivities continue with a live performance by Hālau Hula Na Mele o ke Kai, a talented ensemble of traditional Hawaiian hula dancers and musicians. Their performance will bring the spirit of the islands to the shores of Morro Bay, honoring the Hawaiian roots and culture that serve as the heart and soul of Kai Shave Ice.

"We wanted to bring something truly special to Morro Bay — a taste of aloha that the whole community can enjoy," said the owners in a press release. "Kai Shave Ice is more than a business — it's a place where families, friends, and neighbors can come together, cool off, and experience the



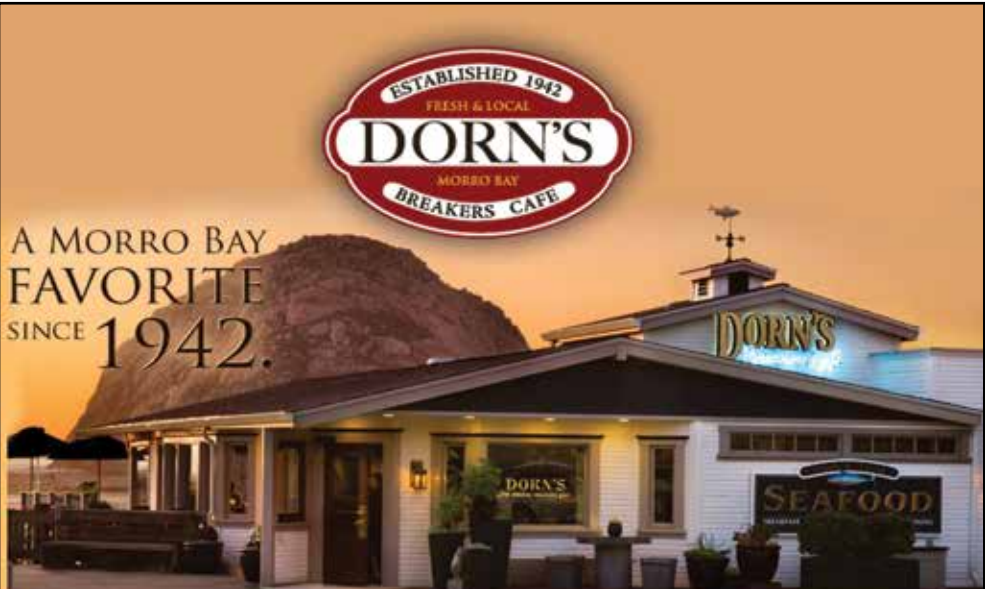


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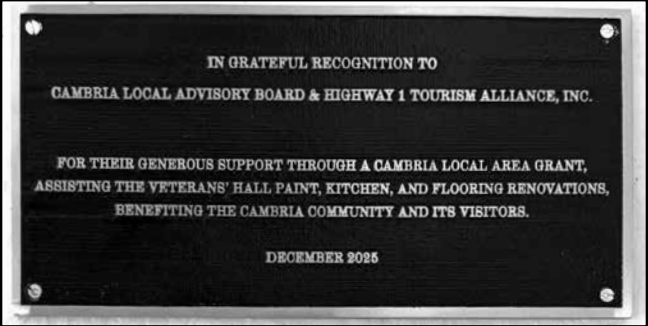
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801 Market Ave. • Morro Bay

Community

warmth and joy of Hawaiian culture right here on the Central Coast.” Kai Shave Ice offers a vibrant selection of premium shave ice featuring bold, tropical flavors crafted with quality ingredients, capturing the authentic taste of Hawaii. Admission is free and all are welcome.

Tourism Board fund Renovations at Vets’ Hall



The Cambria Veterans' Memorial Hall renovations are complete via support from Cambria Tourism Board. Photos submitted.

The Cambria Tourism Board (CTB) announced the successful completion of renovations to the Cambria Veterans’ Memorial Hall, a cherished community landmark that serves both residents and visitors throughout the year. The Cambria Tourism Board contributed \$60,000 to the Veterans Hall Renovation Grant, supporting improvements that enhance the facility’s functionality, accessibility, and long-term value as a community gathering space. “The Cambria Veterans’ Memorial Hall has long served as a venue for community meetings, celebrations, cultural events, and visitor-related programming,” said CTB in a press release. “The recent renovations ensure the historic facility can continue welcoming guests while honoring the service and sacrifice of local veterans.” The Cambria Community Services District (CCSD) recently recognized the Highway 1 Tourism Alliance and the Cambria Tourism Board for their partnership in completing the project. In a formal letter of appreciation, Harry Farmer, board president of the CCSD, noted that the renovations “enhance both the functionality and aesthetic quality of the facility, ensuring it remains a welcoming, safe, and accessible space for residents and visitors alike.” As the destination marketing organization for Cambria, the Cambria Tourism Board is committed to investing tourism-generated funding into projects that enhance visitor experiences while providing lasting benefits for the community. “Improvements to community assets, such as the Veterans’ Memorial Hall, help preserve the character and authenticity that make Cambria a unique destination along the Central Coast.”

Planning Effective Year-End Giving Campaigns

Annual appeal campaigns are more than simply sending a fundraising letter and hoping for results. In this session, Rob Grayson, Creative Director at Boone Graphics, will guide attendees through the process of planning and executing a direct mail piece as part of a comprehensive year-end fundraising strategy. Spokes for Non-Profits presents Planning Effective Year-End Giving Campaigns on July 29 from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. via Zoom. The cost is \$45 for members and \$25 for nonmembers. Learn how to plan and execute a direct mail piece as part of a successful year-end fundraising strategy, from donor segmentation and outreach to effective messaging, imagery, and production coordination.



Instructor Rob Grayson

- Topics include:
- Creating a plan and setting goals for a successful year-end fundraising campaign
 - Segmenting donor lists and organizing targeted donor outreach
 - Crafting direct mail appeals and engagement pieces with strong messaging and imagery that connect with donors at different giving levels
 - Managing campaign production, including working with printers and mail houses
- Instructor Rob Grayson brings more than three decades of experience spanning nonprofit leadership, fundraising, and creative direction. A graduate of University of California, Santa Barbara, he began his career as an HIV Counselor, a role that led to a 24-year career in nonprofit leadership and development. During that time, he worked as both a development officer and consultant for dozens of nonprofits. He now serves as creative director for Boone Graphics, where he leads Studio B, the company’s in-house design studio. This class is online; link will be sent with registration acknowledgement. Register at spokesfor nonprofits.org.

City Farm SLO Opens Nominations for Inaugural Event

City Farm SLO is now accepting nominations for the inaugural Rooted in SLO Award, a new annual recognition celebrating women and nonbinary leaders whose work has strengthened

agriculture, food systems, education, and community well-being throughout San Luis Obispo County. Nominations are open through August 1. For more information and to submit a nomination, go to cityfarmslo.org/hoedown. The award will be presented during City Farm SLO’s 2nd Annual Farm Games Hoedown on Saturday, August 15, from 5:00–8:30 p.m. at Rancho Toro y Oso in San Luis Obispo. The inaugural award coincides with the United Nations’ International Year of the Woman Farmer, recognizing the essential role women play in feeding communities, stewarding natural resources, and shaping the future of agriculture. While farming has historically been male-



City Farm SLO Farm Operations Coordinator Kate DiTrani leads a farm tour. Photo submitted

dominated, the number of women farmers in California has grown by 13% over the past decade, reflecting a new generation of leaders bringing innovation, collaboration, and resilience to the field. “As a female-led farm, City Farm SLO sees firsthand the incredible impact women have across every part of our local food system,” said Kayla Rutland, executive director of City Farm SLO, in a news release. “This award is about recognizing the people who quietly and consistently make our community healthier, more connected, and more resilient. We know those leaders exist throughout San Luis Obispo County, and we’re excited to celebrate them.” The Rooted in SLO Award seeks to recognize women and nonbinary individuals whose contributions extend beyond their own organizations. Nominees may be farmers, educators, nonprofit leaders, advocates, or community builders whose work reflects a commitment to sustainable agriculture, environmental stewardship, education, and strengthening the local food system. Ideal nominees demonstrate one or more of the following:

- Leadership within the agricultural or broader community, including quiet or behind-the-scenes leadership.
- A commitment to sustainability, environmental stewardship, and agricultural education.
- Lasting contributions that have strengthened farming, food access, or community well-being in San Luis Obispo County.

All nominees will be recognized during the Farm Games Hoedown, where the award recipient will be announced live. To ensure nominees can attend the celebration, each nomination includes the purchase of a discounted Nominee Guest Ticket for \$75. Nominees will be honored guests at the event, and the individual or organization submitting the nomination will be recognized.

Takin’ Care of Business Continued on page 18

Don't have a passport yet? There's still time to purchase one and start tasting your way through the community **until August 15th**. Join the fun, support local restaurants, and savor every bite!

Just \$40 each — or grab two for \$70 and share the flavor-filled fun! Passports are available for purchase online or in person at two convenient pick-up locations:

LOBP Chamber office
2141 Bush Drive, Suite D
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 10 am - 2 pm
• Saturdays 10 am - 2 pm

Brightside Pizza
1236 Los Osos Valley Road

- Baby ‘O Cafe
- Beerwood
- Brightside Pizza
- Caliwala (3rd Street) Bakery
- Carlock’s Bakery
- Celia’s Garden Cafe
- Grocery Outlet
- Hanna’s
- High St. Deli
- La Palapa Mexican Cuisine
- Los Cabos
- Mirazur
- Nardonne’s
- Noi’s 2nd Street Cafe
- Sea Pines Clubhouse
- Subway
- Valley Liquor
- Yogurt Paradise



805.528.4884
info@lobpchamber.org



‘Handmade Hop’ to Celebrating Local Artisans

The creative pulse of the Central Coast will be highlighted through the inauguration of the free “Handmade Hop” on Sunday, July 26, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. This Coastal community craft crawl connects 12 dedicated supply and material shops across Los Osos, Morro Bay, and Cayucos for a day of discounts, demos, gifts, and creative inspiration. Developed with the vision of honoring and connecting the network of businesses that support local creativity, the Handmade Hop invites community members and visitors alike to explore the region’s unique artistic infrastructure. Participants can pick up a Handmade Hop passport at any Hop location, as they enjoy this self-guided journey visiting the participating coastal businesses. Hop attendees will be greeted at each of the 12 stops with a variety of exclusive offers: demos, discounts, freebies, and enthusiastic community connection. Fully stamped passports will be entered into a grand prize raffle at the end of the event.

Handmade Hop Continued on page 23

LOST

Please Help Find!

Lost in the Morro Bay, Cambria, or Los Osos areas.

Gold oval, fluted bangle bracelet with a hinge.

This is a sentimental piece given to me by my deceased mother. Hoping a kind, honest person has found it and just doesn’t know where to take it.

Please
text or call Shawn
(818) 424-8574

Community

Takin’ Care of Business From page 17

ognized as their nominationsponsor. Up to two discounted nominee tickets are available with each nomination. Community members, businesses, nonprofits, schools, and agricultural organizations are encouraged to nominate deserving individuals from across San Luis Obispo County.

SLO Rep’s Business of Acting Class

SLO Rep presents The Business of Acting with Erik Stein running Sundays from August 30-October 4 from 5 – 7 p.m. for people 15 and older. The cost is \$225. The class is all about the side of an acting career that almost nobody teaches auditions, agent representation, headshots and resumes, and how to navigate the acting and performing profession. The class is taught by Erik Stein, actor and resident artist, artistic associate, and former casting and recruitment director of PCPA Pacific Conservatory Theatre. This is a rare chance to learn directly from someone who has sat on both sides of the casting table and who genuinely wants actors of all ages and stages of their career to walk away with real industry tools and knowledge.

- What will be covered across six classes:
 - Audition Checklist & Finding Monologues/Songs
 - Headshots/Resume & Building Relationships with Decision Makers
 - Where do I fit in the Industry? and should I take this job?
 - Where do I want to live? and combined auditions
 - Agents and managers interviews
 - How to make yourself valuable as an actor and navigating the peaks and valleys of life as an actor.
- For more information and to register, go to slorep.org and click the education tab.



Actor Erik Stein presents the class The Business of Acting. Photo submitted

Paso Author Publishes Memoiron Faith and Cancer

Central Coast Resident Tony Ventimiglio has released his memoir drawn from six years of living with Stage 4 prostate cancer. Ventimiglio lives in Paso Robles with his wife, Andrea. In 2020, he was diagnosed with Stage 4 prostate cancer. “It’s A Glorious Day: A Memoir in Reflections” is drawn from his personal journals — written while he was living the experience rather than assembled in comfortable hindsight. It is a book about what it looks like to face a serious diagnosis with faith, resilience, and an unwillingness to quit. “This book is for anyone who has ever been handed something they didn’t ask for and had to figure out how to carry it,” Ventimiglio said in a press release. “For me, that was a Stage 4 diagnosis. I wanted people to know they are not alone in the fight.” “It’s A Glorious Day” is available now on Amazon in hardback, paperback, and Kindle. A second book, “Glorious Days On The Dirt Road: Reflections Along the Way” is scheduled for release August 6 of this year. For more information, go to tonyvent.com.

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.





A FREE SUMMER STEM PROGRAM FOR KIDS AGES 8-12
MONDAYS, 10AM-12PM AND 1-3PM AT THE MORRO BAY MARITIME MUSEUM



June 15 - Launch! Tour of the museum, see our new exhibits! Build your own boat or submersible with different materials.

June 22 - Navigation, Lighthouses, and more!

June 29 - Create a Weather Station - A fun STEM project!

July 13 - Sea Life! Octopuses and Squids, and more! *Plus: Special visit from the Central Coast Aquarium on Tuesday, July 14!*

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!

August 11 - Sea Shanties Workshop / Tall Tales of the Sea

Letters To The Editor

San Luis Obispo County Adopts A. I. Policy

What are the implications of using artificial intelligence apps, or chatbots, such as ChatGPT by OpenAI, Claude by Anthropic, Microsoft’s Co-pilot, DataRobot’s AI platform, Google Gemini, GROK, Meta AI, Mistral Le Chat and Perplexity AI? Why were college students booing at their graduation ceremonies whenever the term AI was mentioned? Many AI news articles speak to job replacement and scarcity fears or personal identification security or theft. But there are also governance issues like what is the local city, county, state or even national governments doing with residents’ data/ private information? Earlier this year, the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors approved a resolution addressing those concerns regulating the use of AI tools by county employees, volunteers and contractors. The March 24 vote was unanimous with all Supervisors present and voting according to the SLO County Board of Supervisors website. The guidelines balance data governance with technological efficiency. The resolution oversight includes confidentiality, employment restrictions, employee liability and procurement security: Each county department is mandated to outline a list of restricted, confidential information including social security numbers, medical histories, and criminal records and other county files of a personal nature gathered for internal departmental use that can never be searched or submitted into public AI tools. AI is also strictly prohibited for use in employee hiring processes or performance management that

could lead to prejudicial bias or discrimination. County staff are personally responsible for verifying the accuracy of any AI-generated content to avoid plagiarism and misinformation in documents they produce. Using these guidelines, the SLO County Information Technology Department is actively evaluating and developing secure AI software using local storage and encryption for safe handling of confidential information for all county departments. **Statewide implications** The state of California was forced to disclose it is currently using six automated systems to make consequential decisions concerning the lives of Californian residents according to a recent Cal Matters article. The state report included examples of departments: predicting whether incarcerated people will re-offend, evaluating whether unemployment claims are fraudulent, administering exams remotely for California State University students and detecting when college students use generative AI to write reports and class assignments. The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) managed by Elon Musk breached many forms of private data and personal information in their efforts to streamline agencies and processes. Many lawsuits resulted from those disruptions to American citizens’ lives. Apparently, it is up to individual citizens to be proactive and vigilant to protect their lives and livelihoods, and the current graduating class generation is sounding the alarm. Keith Pendleton Cambria

In Support of Offshore Wind Efforts

“All politics is local,” and the July 2 Estero Bay News story “State to Sue over Offshore Wind Collapse” is proof in the pudding. Offshore wind companies spent years investigating and exploring West Coast viability in providing wind energy to the region. After clearing the hurdles set by multiple regulatory agencies (the highest hurdle being the Department of Defense), permits were granted and Wind Energy Areas were assigned. The Trump administration had filed suit to halt the construction of these wind farms. Having failed in the courts, the administration has pivoted to making direct payments for develop-

ers to walk away from projects already underway. This represents a loss of millions of dollars paid to the U.S. Treasury and state and local agencies. California is seeking to obtain information about the terms of the agreements between the Feds and the developers. To the EBN inquiry, a state information agent responded, “California will continue to lead the way toward a cleaner, more reliable grid powered by domestic resources. Offshore wind remains an essential component of that work.” I support that effort. Carol Swain Morro Bay

Murmurs of the 4th

It’s 9:30 p.m., and the 2026 4th of July fireworks are done here in Cayucos. Chairs for the parade- watchers are being pulled out of the streets, cars full of tourists are heading elsewhere, and my noise-crazed and confused neighborhood cat has gone to ground. Hooray! It’s finally over for another year, with tens of thousands of dollars spent by people who think an expensive fireworks show is just a terrific way to bring people into Cayucos for the day and evening. Who knows, maybe they’ll even spend some money with what few merchants bother to stay open for the festivities. You know, those who own the bars and eateries down by the pier. Meanwhile, the pool across from Hardie Park remains closed for the summer, and also for the foreseeable future, because it has a very bad leak, and NOBODY knows where it is, how bad it is, or how much it will cost to fix it. So those

who live here in Cayucos will just have to tough it out and go elsewhere if they want to recreate in fresh water. But the fundraising for next year’s fireworks show is already in motion, and I guarantee you it will cost more than this year’s event. Obviously, it’s a matter of civic priorities, along with “Give ‘em what we think they want “. And anyway, “That’s the way we’ve always done it.” To me, an old-fashioned fireworks show in this day and age is really, really old hat, and altogether from another era entirely. It’s also just not a good bargain — after all, it’s all blown up in one night! In my old age, I have seen enough fireworks shows to last a lifetime. And anyway, I’d much rather go for a swim in the pool. In your heart of hearts, wouldn’t you? John Winthrop Cayucos

What I Learned from the District 2 Supervisor Race

By Nicole Dorfman Morro Bay Here are my observations about the SLO County District 2 Supervisor election, and they aren’t pretty: **1. Kindness Is for Losers** – In this race only one candidate engaged in negative campaigning, and he won. Jim Dantona sent out nasty mailers about his opponent focusing on material from nearly a decade ago, with much taken out of context. For example, Mr. Dantona hammered his opponent for supporting ICE in the past, despite the fact that at that time, President Obama also backed ICE. Michael Erin Woody never supported the current ICE raids or tactics, but rather, publicly, repeatedly and forcefully stated his grave concerns and opposition to the current situation. All smiles in person, Mr. Dantona’s printed material was downright malicious. Dirty campaigns like Dantona’s effectively degrade important con-

versations and inevitably pit neighbor against neighbor in our small towns, creating division within the Central Coast communities he will now serve. Meanwhile, in the face of repeated attacks, Mr. Woody made a clear choice to maintain his honor and integrity by refusing to parrot his opponent’s ugly rhetoric. **2. Diversity Doesn’t Really Matter** – Despite the steady drumbeat advocating for greater diversity among our elected officials, the voters chose another white man over a Native American. Indigenous people in this county are seriously underrepresented in elected positions of power, yet given a chance to support an Indigenous candidate as our County representative, voters instead elevated partisan politics over supporting diverse candidates. And Michael Woody is not just any Native person, but one whose background as a licensed professional civil engineer, with a master’s degree from Harvard in Public Administration, and extensive record of community involvement, is beyond

News

qualified for the position. But, as the saying goes, actions speak louder than words, and by their actions the majority have shown us that the notion of diversity as strength is just another feel-good, but meaningless slogan. Even in this non-partisan race, partisan politics proved to be the deciding factor for a majority of District 2 voters, diversity be damned!

3. Money in Politics is A-OK – Campaign finance reform was one of Mr. Woody’s election priorities. His campaign accepted a maximum of \$500 per person and refused corporate, union and PAC monies completely. Mr. Dantona declined such restraints and instead embraced untraceable PAC money from who-knows-where, as well as numerous large donations from Democrat political organizations, bundles of funds from various unions across California (many with business before the County),

and other special interest entities, raking in nearly 10 times the cash as Mr. Woody. The corrupting influence of unlimited riches flooding our elections is well understood, but when there was a real candidate in front of us, with strong financial ethics, who actually put his money where his mouth is, the voters shrugged and turned away. So much for the evils of Big Money in our elections.

In summary, what I learned from this election is that if a candidate runs a clean campaign, sticks to the issues, and refuses big monetary contributions, they are likely to lose, despite their background and qualifications. Everyone in District 2 who claims to believe in the values of kindness, diversity, and getting money out of politics, yet who flung those values aside for this one election, is likely to do so again and again whenever partisan politics comes calling, even in what is supposed to be a non-partisan race,

like the SLO County Supervisors. Those same voters need to look in the mirror the next time they complain about the lack of civility, diversity and campaign finance reform in our elections and acknowledge that they too are part of the problem. Mr. Dantona is the only winner in this election. The rest of us have lost where it matters most.

Letter Policy

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

Cayucos Celebrates 250th National Birthday

Photos by Neil Farrell
Firework Photos by Danna Dykstra-Coy

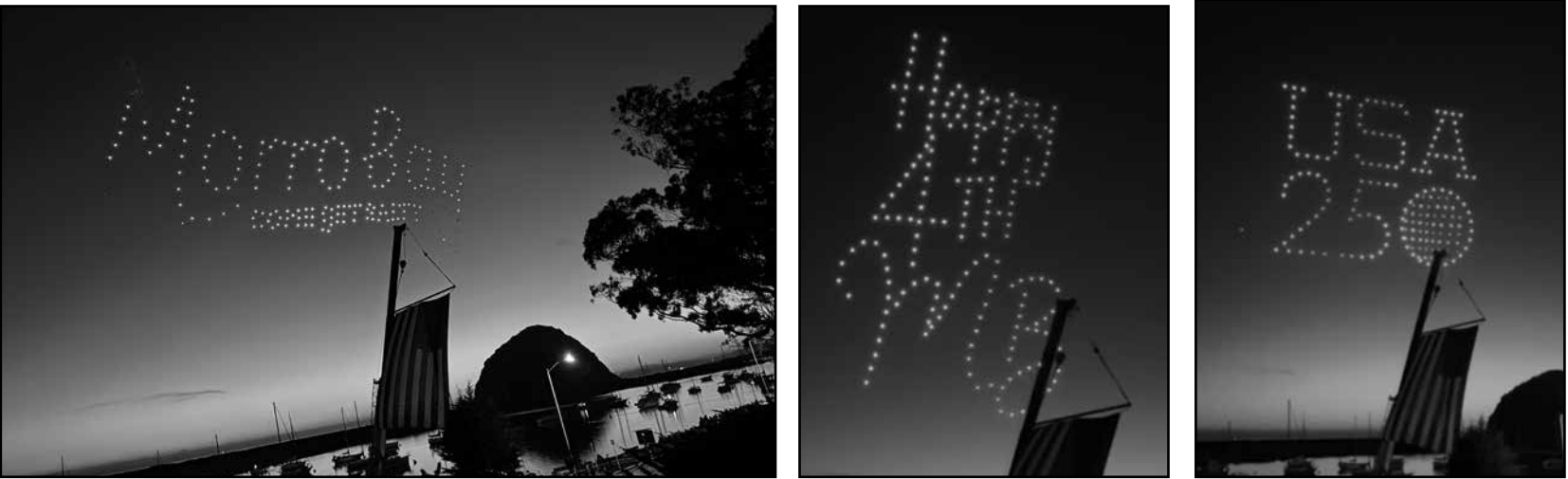
Tens of thousands of people turned out July 4 for the Annual Cayucos Lions Club Independence Day Parade, and the festivities were as boisterous as ever as the nation celebrated the 250th Anniversary of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence. The entries were bedecked in the traditional red, white & blue, as the costumed characters pranced down Ocean Avenue waving to the crowd and throwing candy to the children who scrambled about picking up the sugary treats. The day dawned overcast and chilly, but the sunshine broke out before the 10 a.m. start of the parade. The night was capped by a terrific fireworks display from the Cayucos Pier for the delight of the throngs of revelers scattered on the sand below.



Morro Bay’s First Drone Show Lights up The Sky

Photos by
Amy Levinsohn

The City of Morro Bay put on a drone light show for the 4th of July celebrating the the United States’s 250th anniversary of independence. The sky art, provided by Sky Elements, was part of a weekend event that included a hot dog eating contest, a bike parade, live music and carnival games.





A screen shot from the meeting footage shows Juli Amodei, project manager of Skate Cambria, speaking to the Cambria Community Services District board concerning the Cambria Skatepark on July 9.

Two contractors had placed bids to build the park at 1000 Main Street, next to the Cambria Branch San Luis Obispo County Library. The low bid was received from Newton Construction.

While some might have predicted a cantankerous meeting, following the announcement everyone was all smiles, offering effervescent compliments and thank-yous for all those efforts that brought the skate park this far.

Juli Amodei, project manager of Skate Cambria, was the first to speak when the meeting was opened to public comment on the topic. “Before I even begin, I want to thank the Cambria Community Council, and I just want to give them a tremendous round of applause for their generosity.” She brought a handbell with her and rang it before continuing, “Every time the bell rang it brought us closer to this moment. Each donation brought us closer to this moment. Today we ring the bell to celebrate the generosity of our community and to thank everyone who helped. Every ring mattered. It is an epic day in so many ways. The word epic means something extraordinary, an accomplishment achieved through dedication, teamwork and determination. As we approach the finish line of the skatepark project, there is no better way to describe the journey.”

The skateboard park project went out to bid after more than six years of fundraising efforts by Skate Cambria, intertwining negotiations with CCSD and coordination with CCC. All this fueled by the youth who would use the park and their parents.

The project budget is \$1,020,461 for the 6000 square foot skate area. Along with skateboarding, the park will be used for other wheeled sports including roller skates and rollerblading, scooters and even wheelchairs, according to the Skate Cambria website.

The low bid came in at \$1.344 million, on a total project funding of \$1.69 million. Some of the project monies have previously been spent on design, permitting, and other pre-construction tasks.

As part of Clark’s presentation, the budget items were discussed included the following funds in the package: Maintenance Fund, \$69,312; Construction Fund, \$623,000; and Mechanics Account, \$14,274.

CCC will provide the \$175 thousand in funds to cover the bid gap by moving money from the Fiscalini Ranch Disk Golf Course to the Cambria Skate Park project and by using income from funds bequeathed to the CCC. The latter will also create a dedicated account for the \$201,000 contingency fund for possible project over-runs.

CCSD Board Vice President, Karen Dean, was quick to compliment everyone on CCSD staff and board for working with CCC and Skate Cambria to move the project to this outcome.

Board members Tom Gray, Deborah Scott, Harry Farmer, Michael Thomas, Karen Dean voted unanimously for the State Park’s continuance.

Thomas concurred with other board members thanking and congratulating the CCC, especially Clark, for following through with integrity, the responsibility to fund the gaps, and contingencies. Board President, Harry Farmer, echoed the relief many felt because a confrontational meeting was avoided. When asked how he was doing earlier in the meeting, Farmer answered the courtesy

with “Ask me in about four hours.”

The pre-construction process should take four to six weeks. No timetable was stated for construction and completion.

“Skate park construction should commence in four to six weeks, but don’t hold me to it” Timothy Carmen, legal counsel, said, “These are just off the top.”

Matthew McElhenie agreed to coordinate staff efforts to work out the funding agreement and keep the CCSD board current with progress or any issues that arise.

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News

Protected Area From page 1

Morro Bay and Cambria for the Central Coast Region.” (SMCA stands for State Marine Conservation Area, another designation under the umbrella of the Marine Life Protection Act. The inner harbor and back bay in Morro Bay are also protected under the law as marine reserves.) Fish and Wildlife has been working on the various proposals they received back in November 2023 and divided them into two categories relating to the difficulty of getting them approved. The one off Morro Bay meets most of the criteria except that it is expected to meet with a lot of opposition, as a ban on fishing for everyone but a true Chumash, would greatly effect the local commercial and sport fishing industries, as well as the recreational fishermen who visit town almost daily when its fishing season. The agency held a public meeting recently that apparently took most people by surprise and prompted the Moro Bay City Council to send a letter to Fish and Wildlife Director Meghan Hertel and Eric Sklar the President of the Fish & Wildlife Commission.

In the letter signed by Mayor Carla Wixom and Harbor Vitality Director Chris Munson, the City Council criticized the department for inadequate noticing of the issue and specifically a “public meeting” that was held, which the City only learned about hours before it happened.

“To our knowledge,” the letter said, “the City of Morro Bay was not notified, consulted, or invited to participate in the petition review proceedings conducted to date, including the Tribal Committee meetings of August 2025 and April 2026, or the Fish and Game Commission meetings of April 21, May 5-6, and May 19, 2026.”

The letter goes on to state the City has a strong interest in this issue as the ocean plays a vital part in the town’s economy. “We believe that the communities living and working along the coast, including our commercial fishermen, recreational users, and harbor businesses, bring essential local knowledge and a legitimate stake in these decisions.

“A process that excludes local municipalities risks overlooking real-world impacts and undermining the public trust that is essential to successful, long-term marine stewardship.”

The letter demands that Fish and Wildlife include the City in any further meetings or discussions regarding the MPA proposed for here, as well as the expansions proposed off Point Buchon and the others further south.

The letter requests that the City be formally recognized as an affected local stakeholder in the review,

They City also wants “advance notice of, and an opportunity to provide public testimony at, all future Commission meetings, Tribal Committee meetings, and Marine Resources Committee meetings at which these petitions are discussed or acted upon.”

They called for the agency to conduct a briefing with City representatives and harbor stakeholders “to explain the current status, proposed regulatory changes, and potential impacts.”

And, “That the City be afforded a meaningful opportunity to submit written comment and participate in any environmental or economic review process conducted prior to a final decision on any of these petitions.”

The Fish and Wildlife Commission website has a section dedicated to the Marine Protected Areas program and the dos and don’t associated with them.

What’s the impact to people’s ability to legally fish if this gets approved? According to the agency’s website: “MPAs and the Marine Life Protection Act are intended to complement existing fishery regulations and are not intended to replace existing regulations. MPAs address a broad array of ecosystem concerns and, in particular, allow for interactions between both fished and un-fished species to occur in a more natural setting.

“If any changes to fisheries regulations were required in response to MPAs, this would occur through existing systems established in fisheries management plans and other regulatory frameworks.” So it seems any fishing regulations stemming from this process would be piled on top of regulations out of the regular Fish and Wildlife Commission’s actions, as well as the federal Pacific Fisheries Management Council, and the National Marine Fisheries Service, as well as other governmental agencies. See: wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Marine/MPAs#news for information on the overall MLPA program. To get general information about the proposed new MPA petitions, see: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/27e78c-677dca484ebfb37120abc59d10>. And if readers want to submit a comment about the proposal go to: <https://fgc.ca.gov/Regulations/Submit-Comments>. Be sure to reference MPA No. 2023-19MPA with any correspondence.

Art and Kindness From page 1



Kathryn and Denise deLancellotti of the Estero Bay Kindness Coalition at a 2025 fundraising event at the Bay Theatre. The “love” hats will be sold at an upcoming fundraiser on August 2. Photo submitted

lotti, marketing manager for the Estero Bay Kindness Coalition, told Estero Bay News. “Rather than hosting a traditional fundraiser, we wanted to create an afternoon where the community could gather, enjoy local artists and musicians — all centered around the idea that creativity and kindness both strengthen a community. It’s more about using art as a way to inspire generosity and connection. Casa Ramos Art Gallery will donate 40% of art sales at the event to the Kindness Coalition! It’s a perfect time to purchase local art while giving back to the community.”

There will also be a raffle at the event with a grand prize of two nights at Treebones Resort in Big Sur and dinner for two at The Lodge Restaurant. Raffle tickets are 1/\$10 3/\$25 15/\$100 and are available at Casa Ramos Art Gallery in Los Osos and Divers in Morro Bay, as well as at the event. If you can’t pick up raffle



Two members of the Dale Kaiser Real Estate Team pack backpacks at the Estero Bay Kindness Coalition’s Morro Bay food pantry. They volunteer once a week and pack backpacks for kids at Cayucos Elementary. Photo submitted

tickets in person, send an email to kindnesscoalitionesterobay@gmail.com and they will arrange tickets for you. Winners need not be present.

“Every raffle ticket, every donation, and every person who comes through the door helps our vulnerable neighbors,” Kathryn said. “As we head into the school year shortly after the event, many parents will face impossible choices between groceries, school clothes, and everyday necessities. This fundraiser allows us to step in with food, clothing, and support when families need it most, and to remind them they’re not facing those challenges alone.”

The Kindness Coalition, started by Kathryn’s parents, Bobby and Denise deLancellotti, along with a group of volunteers, began in 2017. Bobby, a retired pastor, wanted a way to help kids at Del Mar Elementary, which had a lot of children on the free lunch program. They now help kids from Cambria, Cayucos, Los Osos, and Morro Bay.

Today, the Kindness Coalition consists of three programs, 130 volunteers, and two food pantries. It’s partnered with eight schools, 41 for-profits, 25 nonprofits, and 11 churches.

The programs under the Kindness Coalition umbrella consist of the Bags of Love, Sunshine and Seed, and Got Your Back.

Bags of Love is the weekly food assistance side of the non-profit serving families with children enrolled in area elementary and middle schools. They source supplies primarily through partnerships with the SLO Food Bank, local farms, and community donations. About 285 households, the equivalent of about 1200 people, receive two bags of shelf-stable and refrigerated groceries, plus one bag of fresh produce.

To make the logistics possible, every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, volunteers gather in Morro Bay and Los Osos, unloading trucks, unpacking boxes, loading shelves, assembling grocery bags, and delivering to those in need.

Sunshine and Seed is the by appointment only, cost-free youth clothing store with locations in Morro Bay and Los Osos. The program offers free, gently used clothing to elementary school children. Like the other program’s the schools’ administrations identify potentially families.

“Since opening, Sunshine & Seed has provided clothing to more than 100 children on the Central Coast,” Kathryn said. “Demand continues to grow, and many local families schedule private shopping appointments so they can shop in a welcoming, dignified environment at no cost.”

Got Your Back is a weekend nutrition program serving about 100 students across four schools. Each backpack contains two breakfasts, two lunches, two dinners, snacks, and juice.

“While each program serves a different need, they all share the same goal: helping our neighbors feel supported, cared for, and treated with dignity,” Kathryn said.” The rising cost of groceries, housing, utilities, and other everyday expenses has placed increasing pressure on many working families who may never have expected to need assistance. We’re serving more households than ever before, and we continue to hear from schools and community partners about families who need support. That’s one reason this fundraiser comes at such an important time. As children will be preparing to return to school, we’re working to make sure they have healthy food, appropriate clothing, and the basics they need to start the year with confidence.”

To make monetary or clothing donations or to volunteer, go to esterobaykindnesscoalition.org

Costa Gallery From page 15

It is the culmination of his 3-year quest to capture the Big Island volcano Kilauea erupting in Hawaii. His images illuminate the energy force he experienced when he arrived at nature’s big blast and photographed Pele’s monumental force during Kilauea’s 40th episode in January 2026. The result is a remarkable, emotional collection of images.

The anniversary celebration and exhibit take place on Sunday, July 26, 12-4 p.m. Meet the featured Artists, mingle with neighbors, and enjoy light snacks. while listening to Jill Knight perform.

Explore these three diverse exhibits in one location, along with original designs by our 20 regional artists at 2087 10th St., Los Osos. They are open Thu-Sat, 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Sun, 12-4 p.m. Stay tuned for exciting surprises during the exhibit July 23-Au









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News

Cemetery District

From page 1
one cemetery for every 23,343 citizens, according to a report by Oasis Associates, the consultant that represents the District in the matter.

The District looked for a new property adjacent to the existing cemetery, which is at the north end of Ocean Boulevard in the shadow of Whale Rock Dam, but hasn't had any luck.

In January 2017 the District Board, which is appointed by County Supervisors, had a breakthrough when the Cayucos Sanitary District approached them about property the CSD owns on Toro Creek Road.

That's where the Sanitary District built its new water recycling facility after divorcing itself from Morro Bay. The CSD purchased parcels totaling over 83 acres that were owned by Chevron as part of its Estero Marine Terminal, an oil shipping facility that operated from 1929 to 1999 when it closed.

Chevron owned about 12 parcels fronting Hwy 1 and running down Toro Creek Road, including Dog Beach and vast ranchlands east of Morro Bay's Del Mar Park.

Those ranchlands are in the process of being purchased for open space by land conservation organizations in Cayucos and Morro Bay.

Chevron had been leasing its parcels out for various farming and ranching operations until about 10-years ago when the company put all of them up for sale.

The CSD bought several and turned one over to the County for a future regional park. It gave Dog Beach to the City of Morro Bay to manage as an off-leash, dog-friendly beach.

The CSD also recently leased part of its holdings to the Marine Mammal Center for a new triage facility; a project that is being reviewed now by the County.

"Unable to secure properties directly adjacent to the current site," the Oasis report said, "in January 2017 the CMBCD Board was initially approached by the Cayucos Sanitary District about the opportunity to purchase a portion of their property."

In response the Cemetery District Board conducted a study of some 290 potential sites but it came back down to the CSD's property.

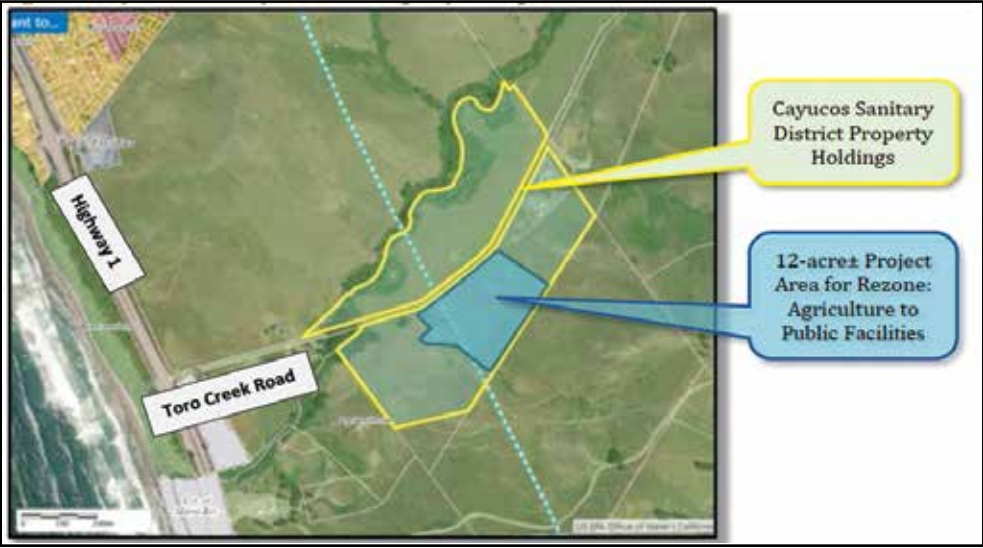
"In February 2020," Oasis reported, "the CSD again approached the CMBCD Board with an offer to purchase the CSD property located on Toro Creek Road."

Those talks led the two agencies to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the intent for the Cemetery District to buy a portion of the CSD's treatment plant property.

That MOU was followed by a period of due diligence and study of the CSD's property and finally settling on a 12-acre portion that's west of the CSD's treatment plant. But there is of course a catch.

That property is zoned agricultural (AG) and while the law allows a sewer treatment plant to be built on AG lands; a cemetery isn't an allowed use.

"While the CMBDC is a public-owned and operated facility," Oasis' report said, "cemeteries are not an allowed use in the



This map shows the large parcel owned by the Cayucos Sanitary District with the potential site of a new cemetery in blue. The straight dotted line is the boundary of the Coastal Zone and cuts across the western edge of the property. Map courtesy Cayucos-Morro Bay Cemetery District

Agriculture zone, therefore, the need to request the general plan amendment/rezone to Public Facilities to accommodate the cemetery expansion."

Further complicating the issue is the Coastal Commission, which frowns on rezoning of agricultural lands in the Coastal Zone, where its authority lies. The Commission commented on this, and that led to this stalemate that has now lasted over a decade.

"A portion of the proposed project site is within the Coastal Zone," Oasis said, "while the balance is outside the Coastal Zone."

County Supervisors were asked at their July 7 meeting to approve an item that would instruct the County planning staff whether to start the process for amending the General Plan, a process that has to go through the Coastal Commission anyway, or to pick another way forward.

But the scheduling was a surprise to the Cemetery District. Guerra said they expected it to be on the Supervisor's July 28 agenda. So too was Dist. 2 Supervisor Bruce Gibson surprised by the scheduling and asked that the matter be pulled from the agenda and rescheduled, which it was.

So now the Cemetery District's request for a zoning change and General Plan Amendment will likely be heard on the 28th. It was scheduled as a public hearing item on the July 7 agenda.

The County's report said the Cemetery District wants to establish a new cemetery with in-ground burials and a columbarium, and irrigate the new grass with reclaimed water from the CSD's treatment plant just down the road.

A columbarium is a structure where cremated remains are kept. It's similar to a mausoleum, but with urns instead of vaults with caskets inside.

One hurdle has already been cleared. "To develop a cemetery and columbarium in the PF [public facilities] land use category," the County's report said, "approval of a Development Plan and Conditional Use Permit would be required."

"On Dec. 13, 2022, the Applicant-requested Fee Waiver for the General Plan Amendment Application (for up to \$100,000) was approved by the Board for the purpose of amending the land use category designation from AG to PF, so that the cemetery and columbarium use can be established on the Project Site."

The County's work on the matter has already cost more than \$21,000, according to the County report.

The report discusses various options including simply



changing the zoning from AG to public facilities, but even that has potential problems.

"PF would be the most appropriate land use category designation for the purpose of the Cayucos-Morro Bay Cemetery District establishing a cemetery and columbarium use," the County said. "However, the applicant has encountered issues relating to Coastal Commission comments that may discourage 'rezoning' lands primarily for agriculture uses to lands primarily for non-agriculture uses."

"The other issue is the applicant meeting Fire Code access requirements (dead-end road standards implications that may impact other properties beyond the Project Site)."

According to the County report, the Cemetery District has proposed amending the planning documents specifically to allow the cemetery use on this one property, "to establish site-specific standards."

"This approach could avoid the issues relating to Coastal Commission comments on 'rezoning' and meeting Fire Code access requirements for neighboring properties."

"However, this approach would make standards applying to a site-specific area inconsistent with the allowable land uses for lands under the AG land use category by making allowable land use that is explicitly not allowable in that land use category. This practice is not recommended to remedy inconsistent land use category designations."

The County staff would rather change the allowable uses within the AG zoning for the entire county.

"The objective," the County report said, "would be to amend Coastal Zone and Inland Land Use Ordinances to allow cemetery and columbarium land use in the AG land use category if certain standards are satisfied, and those standards would be established through this process via public and stakeholder engagement."

Another alternative is to have County staff work with the Cemetery District on finding another site for their new cemetery.

"This option could mean avoiding the need for a General Plan Amendment and changes to land use policies, as the goal would be to identify potential sites where such land use is currently allowable. Additionally, if successful, this would reduce impacts on staff capacity and costs."

Assuming the staff report is simply carried over to the next Supervisors' meeting and not revised, the Board will be asked to give direction on which of these alternative paths should be taken.

By Michael Walker

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News

Our Story From page 1

is typically an hour interview for me became 2.5 hours of sharing backgrounds and thoughtful conversation while barely scratching the surface how we might be of further service to our community.

First of all, congratulations to Barry and Vivian Branin! They recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary with four generations of their family. Surprisingly it has only been close to nine years since the couple officially relocated from their Southern California home to their retirement ranch near Morro Bay and Los Osos.

“We grew up on farms in Washington,” Barry shared, “but didn’t meet until we attended college in Oregon.” Vivian graduated in three years from a small teacher’s college. It’s been renamed Oregon State University and was about 19 miles away from the then Oregon State University. Barry graduated with degrees in mechanical engineering and business administration. “I would work summers to earn enough to pay for my education.” Both would go on to earn masters’ degrees in the early 1960s. Vivian’s degree is in education earned while teaching in Oregon as Barry expanded his expertise in finance, business development, and marketing.

The California oil industry was booming so they decided Barry would have more career options in Southern California. “Our parents helped us with what they could.” The total was \$300 and after Barry strategized, one of his talents, and he discovered the perfect area for them to live and raise a family. “It was 1963,” he explained. “We bought in Redondo Beach for \$1,000. I had mapped all the coastal areas to live outside the fog-belt. Our home was just east of it but still near enough to the beach.”

Vivien had no trouble finding a teaching position job and Barry was successful finding work in the oil industry, which was actively looking for employees with engineering expertise. He interviewed with five oil companies. He accepted the Mobil Oil job in operations and would eventually train and work in its maintenance and marketing departments. The original offer came with a “critical skills deferment” during the Vietnam War allowing him to stay home with the family while his chosen industry was still considered to be serving the cause.

“After working at Mobil for five years, I moved to Continental (Conoco) Oil Companies for another five years in their oper-



The Branin family during their 65th Wedding Anniversary Celebration: Barry, Vivian, daughter Brenda, grand-daughter Shaylah, daughter Linda, eldest grandson Alex. Photo courtesy of Barry Branin



Four generations of Branins: Vivian, Brenda, great-grandson Casper, grandson Matthew, Barry. Photo courtesy of Barry Branin

ations and marketing departments.” His assignments focused on supply distribution and marketing of gasoline, oil and grease. At one point he managed development of the company’s California’s expansion of new truck loading facilities with focused efforts on installations of vapor recovery during the service station construction boom in Southern California.

During his decade with Douglas Oil, a subsidiary of Continental Oil (Conoco) he said, “I was primary engineer in California in charge of new self-serve gasoline stations in construction under the name Fast Gas. This was during California’s rush to build freeways to keep traffic moving. The industry’s goal became establishing a gas station at the end of the off ramp of every freeway.”

When you do a good job, you are asked to solve new challenges. The company wanted to transfer Barry to Texas to build more gas stations. Not wanting to uproot the family, he risked everything and left corporate life to take on the personal challenges of

business ownership. He said, “We bought one of the California stations I had developed. I operated PetroQuip for 30 years.” During the transition time to self-serve fueling stations, Barry had learned all he needed about the appropriate equipment to solve future environmental issues, especially smog. PetroQuip would also transition to become a major distributor of the service station dispensers, pump hoses and related equipment within the LA-Orange County areas. Although inactive, Barry still holds a C-61 contractor’s license with a HAZ certificate for service station petroleum related issues.

Meanwhile during that 30-years the couple would raise their two girls and rebuild their nest egg for their future retirement plans. Profits from his growing business was invested in real estate purchases. In 1989 their investments in area apartment buildings would provide the funding to purchase their ranch — “just outside the coastal fogbank, of course!” — plus multiple commercial properties. In 1993 they would purchase the previously leased Morro Bay commercial property on Quintana Road where Burger King, Morro Bay Urgent Care, State Farm Agent Karen Perlette and Perry’s Parcel & Gift continue to do business.

Meanwhile Barry has always enjoyed flying and sailing. He’s held a private pilot’s license for 47 years. He was often a commuter-by-air from LA to SLO to check on their ranch and commercial properties until they retired and moved to the ranch permanently almost nine years ago. They also loved sailing. A favorite sailing trip has been to and from Catalina.

The Branins are very proud of their daughters and their families. They have four grandchildren and a their very special great-grandson Casper, who reached one-year on June 8. They have enjoyed their retirement lives working the ranch, getting involved in community affairs, and traveling. Barry serves on the Morro Bay’s Citizens Financial Advisory Committee (CFAC) and is an active member of the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA). He is currently restoring an antique 1932 WACO biplane. Barry and Vivian are also active members of the Morro Bay Seniors that helps sponsor the Morro Bay Recreation Department’s September Thursday night music in Tidelands Park.

Travel has always been a high priority for both of them. They particularly enjoy their USA road trips “away from the freeways and interstates” exploring smaller communities in America. They just returned from a road trip visiting roots, friends and family they formerly enjoyed in Washington and Oregon.

Estero Bay Handy Man

Ryan Hilton-Sullivan
(805)235-9639

Handmade Hop From page 17

“The Central Coast has a rich history as an active, thriving artist colony,” event organizers said in a press release. “The Handmade Hop is our way of honoring that story and the creative heartbeat of the Central Coast. We hope to spotlight the brick-and-mortar shops that keep that creative fire nurtured and glowing

today. Whether you are a lifelong master artisan, a novice that likes to take a deep dive, or a nomad that explores all the mediums, this event is designed to weave our community closer together through the joy of handmade craft.” This event is free.

For more information, a full list of participating storefronts, or other details, go to www.handmadehop.com.

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