

Reimagined Morro Bay Avocado Festival Returns Saturday, September 12



AvoFest returns to Morro Bay's Waterfront on September 12 for a full day of music, displays, games and gastric enjoyment. Photo by Dean Sullivan

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 relocated here. And, occasionally, I believe we need to come together to help create, promote and then support those unique events that intend to showcase our mutual paradise that we can all call home.

Mmmm-Mmmm good! AvoFest is back on the Waterfront! Let me entice you with a myriad of menus options to enjoy a locally grown Morro Bay avocado this Saturday! For breakfast, you might start with an Avocado Smash prepared on the griddle with jack cheese or an avocado cream-filled Beignet Pastry. Time for brunch? Try an Avocado Crepe with tomatoes and chicken topped with mozzarella or a Spinach Avocado with pesto, arugula, and pickled onions. Not there until noon? Discover the savory albacore tuna stuffed on top of an entire half of an avocado or BBQ stuffed avocados or avocado stuffed lobster salad then top off any avocado dish with yummy guacamole served up by the MBHS Softball Team.

Indeed, this Saturday numerous community volunteers have been working with the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce

all year to enrich the City of Morro Bay's economic vitality. A reinvigorated Avocado Margarita Street Festival 2026, nicknamed AvoFest, hopes everyone will enjoy a full day of music, displays, games and gastric enjoyment on the city's waterfront Saturday, September 12 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

According to Lexy Jacobs, president of the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors, "It's the perfect time to bring AvoFest back. Morro Bay has such a strong sense of community, and events like this give both locals and visitors a reason to come together, celebrate what makes our area unique, and support our local businesses. The Chamber is excited to see it return and appreciates the support of our sponsors and volunteer partners. We intend to bring energy and community pride back to Morro Bay!"

Many changes to this historic event and the Chamber's organization have been in development since the last festival in 2022, including the installation of its new CEO, Tina Clark, who accepted the position earlier this year. She explained, "The Board decided to bring back the festival as part of a broader strategic goal to expand the Morro Bay Chamber's role in producing events that will support our local economy. Like many organizations, the Chamber needed to step back from events' production during and

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Cayucos Rejects Water Rate Hike



By Neil Farrell

Residents of South Cayucos submitted enough protest votes to thwart a County-proposed water rate increase and sent the staff and Supervisor back to the drawing board.

Sept. 1 marked the official hearing and official date for a Proposition 218 "protest" vote on the rate hike for County Services Area 10A's water rate hike.

According to County Public Works staffers who brought the rate hike to Supervisors in July and started the clock ticking down to the hearing, there are 880 eligible properties in CSA-10A and there had to be at least 441 protest votes — equaling 50%-plus one more vote — in order to defeat the rate increase.

According to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, who counted the votes, some 525 valid, written, "No" votes were received before the start of the public hearing, which is more than enough to defeat the proposed rate hike.

Prop. 218 — the Right to Vote on Taxes Act — is a voter passed State Law that gives the public a say on proposed local tax hikes, including fees for services.

Though it's written into law, successful protest votes are rare. But as Dist. 2 Supervisor Bruce Gibson, who represents the North Coast including Cayucos said, "it does happen."

The County said CSA-10A's revenues were not keeping up with expenses forcing the County to dip into reserves to cover shortfalls.

The County said currently the budget runs short by some \$165,000 a year and in 5 years the shortfall will be some \$420,000.

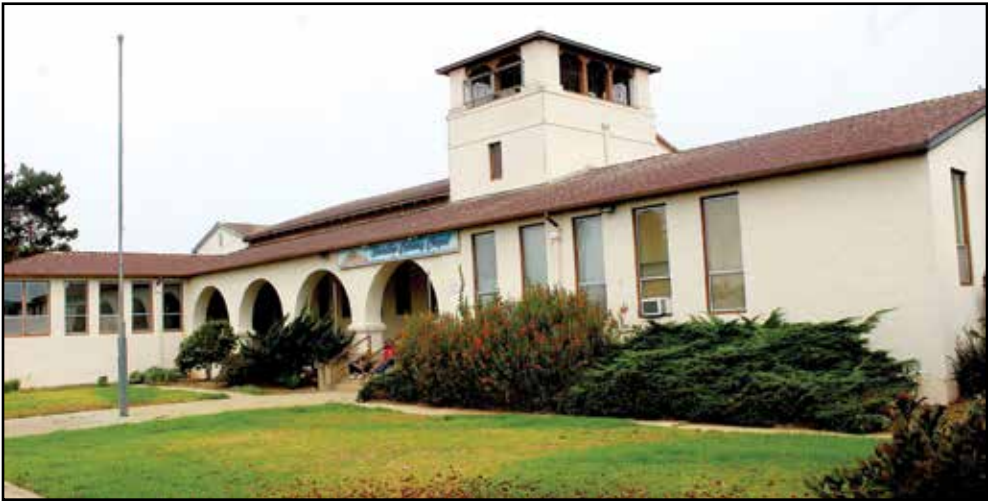
So, they proposed a 15% immediate rate hike and 5% hikes for four consecutive years, or some 35% overall.

Laura Holder, the County's program manager, said current bills run about \$217 every 2 months and using 14 units of water. Any water use above 14 units gets charged at just over \$12 each unit.

Under the proposed rate increase the first year's bills would

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City Council Green Lights Buying Morro Elementary



The Morro Bay City Council voted to go ahead with the purchase of Morro Elementary School. Shown here is the historic main school building, built in 1936. Photo by Neil Farrell

By Neil Farrell

The Morro Bay City Council has bitten the proverbial bullet and voted to move forward with purchasing a long-closed elementary school.

The Council voted unanimously Aug. 25 to go ahead with the \$5.3 million purchase of

Morro Elementary, a historic school that's been closed since the early 2000s.

City Manager John Craig's Aug. 25 report to the Council indicated the meeting came just days before an Aug. 31 deadline to either move forward with the purchase or back out and lose a \$500,000 down payment already made to the property owner, the San Luis Coastal Unified

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City Council Oks Second Fire Station Rebuild



By Neil Farrell

Morro Bay's long-closed fire station in North Morro Bay recently passed a major hurdle after the City Council denied an appeal of the Planning Commission's approval for the project.

Called the Bonita Street Station and located at 460 Bonita St., the old fire station was once the home of the volunteer fire department that served the Town of El Morro, which is what North Morro Bay was called before incorporation in 1064.

That consolidation with Morro Bay proper led to the consolidation of the two fire departments as well and the move into

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Cayucos Election Comes Up Short, Too

By Neil Farrell

Elections for seats on the Cayucos Sanitary District's Board of Directors has followed a similar path of the Los Osos Community Services District, in that not enough candidates signed up to run for the seats available.

The Sanitary District had three seats up for election — Divisions 2, 3 and 4.

Current office holders are: Div. 2 — Justin Smith, and Div. 3 — Joe Clark; and Div. 4 is currently vacant. The other two sitting

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News

County Pushes for Government Ambulance Service



San Luis Ambulance has held the County’s emergency medical transport contract since 1945. Photo courtesy San Luis Ambulance

By Neil Farrell

For the first time in decades, San Luis Obispo County might get a new ambulance service provider, and one that’s government run.

The Morro Bay City Council was scheduled to take up a proposal for a public-private partnership led by Paso Robles to put together a bid for a mutual ambulance system that would bring all the cities in SLO County and the unincorporated areas as well, under an umbrella to take over providing emergency ambulance service.

According to a report from Morro Bay Fire Chief Daniel McCrain that the Council was slated to address at its Sept. 8 meeting, SLO County hasn’t gone out for bids for contracted ambulance service for many decades.

According to the San Luis Ambulance website, the company has had the contract since 1945, some 80 years (see: <https://san-luisambulance.info>)

“The San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors,” Chief McCrain said, “holds the statutory authority to contract for ambulance services within the County by the State EMS Act.

“Ambulance transport services are currently provided to the entire county by San Luis Ambulance Services. The County is preparing to release a competitive process to award the ambulance services contract, which represents a critical opportunity to modernize and improve EMS delivery Countywide.”

The County’s bidding process will follow other bidding rules. “The County will receive bids for the provision of these services, and the County alone will decide what entity will provide those services throughout the County.”

It should be noted that this action only involves ambulance service not the normal emergency duties of a local fire department.

“Currently,” the Chief said, “the City of Morro Bay, through its Fire Department, is responsible for providing fire, EMS (emergency medical service) first-response, hazardous materials mitigation, and rescue operations within our jurisdictional boundary. However, ambulance transport services are contracted through the County.”

Though the State Law recommends going out for bids every 10 years, Chief McCrain said the County has kept its contract with San Luis Ambulance for many decades, extending it repeatedly. The County Grand Jury has twice looked at the situation, and both times recommended Supervisors go out for bids on what is an exclusive contract.

Last year Supervisors authorized the staff to seek bids on a new contract, which is up for renewal sometime soon. The idea of having local governments collectively put together a bid and take over the service has been slow cooking for months. And a board made up of the city managers and another with the local fire chiefs has endorsed the idea.

“The seven incorporated cities’ city managers and the San Luis Obispo County Fire Chiefs Association,” Chief McCrain said, “have unanimously expressed their support for the City of Paso Robles, acting as the Lead Agency, to submit a bid for the County ambulance services contract on behalf of the cities that join the endeavor.”

If this co-op bid wins the contract, it would mean signing a Memorandum of Agreement and forming a new agency with a committee to oversee the new system.

“If this bid is successful,” Chief McCrain said, “the provision of ambulance services will be managed by all cities that opt to join the ambulance association. This initiative is intended to foster a community-based EMS model with stronger accountability and transparency.”

The main difference appears to be who is in charge of the contract. Currently, the Supervisors oversee the private ambulance company. Under the new-fangled approach, the committee

would oversee Paso Robles, which would operate the ambulance service under a contract with a private company. And yet, adding more middlemen and putting a government committee in charge of oversight, would apparently bare beneficial fruits for citizens.

Chief McCrain’s report said, “The Paso Robles-led model will:

- Provide an innovative EMS delivery model where the City of Paso Robles serves as the lead agency, subcontracting to a private ambulance provider, with oversight provided by an executive committee made up of the seven cities’ city managers ensuring transparency and accountability.
- Enhance service delivery with greater local involvement and oversight.
- Provide additional funding for EMS-centric programs and allow reinvestment into City EMS services.
- Foster regional cooperation by uniting the cities, community service districts, and fire agencies in a shared vision for EMS improvement.
- Support proactive and preventative programs addressing mental health, substance abuse, and services for un-housed community members.
- Reinvest excess revenues after operational costs back into local communities to improve public health outcomes.

The report asks the City Council to approve a Resolution in support of moving forward with the framework for putting together a bid, which is a process that would be open to San Luis Ambulance, as well as any other private ambulance service company that might be interested.

The idea has been met with some resistance at another board made up of all the Mayors in the county.

One potential concern for Estero Bay communities is that San Luis Ambulance has a base office on Bonita Street in North Morro Bay where the ambulance crew that serves Morro Bay, Cayucos and Los Osos resides. If the company loses the contract, the community could lose that base of operations and a new one would have to be established.

Also, the start-up costs for a government-run service have not been announced, but it could be expected that as a new agency starting from nothing, the costs could at least initially be high.

Chief McCrain said this system is catching on elsewhere. “Multiple counties throughout the state are transitioning away from traditional service delivery models to public private partnerships,” he said. “These partnerships combine the strengths of government oversight, transparency, and accountability with the service delivery expertise of the private ambulance industry.”

The ambulance proposal sounds a lot like the community energy system that swept the state, including SLO County.

There, a non-profit quasi-public agency with a governing board made up of elected officials, took over purchasing and delivery of electricity, using the utility company’s actual distribution system to bring the power to customers.

Community energy companies have also set up programs to return a portion of their profits to customers and to promote so-called renewable green energy sources.

This new-fangled electric delivery system wasn’t touted as a cost savings, rather, it was sold as a way to fight climate change by supporting the green energy industry and promised to purchase electricity only from renewable, non-carbon emitting sources like wind, solar and hydroelectric.

Hwy 1 Blocked for Wildfire Fight

By Neil Farrell

As wildfires rage through the mountains along Hwy 1 in Big Sur, Caltrans has lifted one roadblock but left the second in place in support of firefighting efforts.

“As of 6 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 3,” reads a traffic alert update from Caltrans, “the northern closure of Highway 1 in support of Timber Fire operations will be lifted.”

The Timber Fire is raging through the mountains starting just south of the Little Sur River (post marker 45) to just south of the Big Sur Post Office.

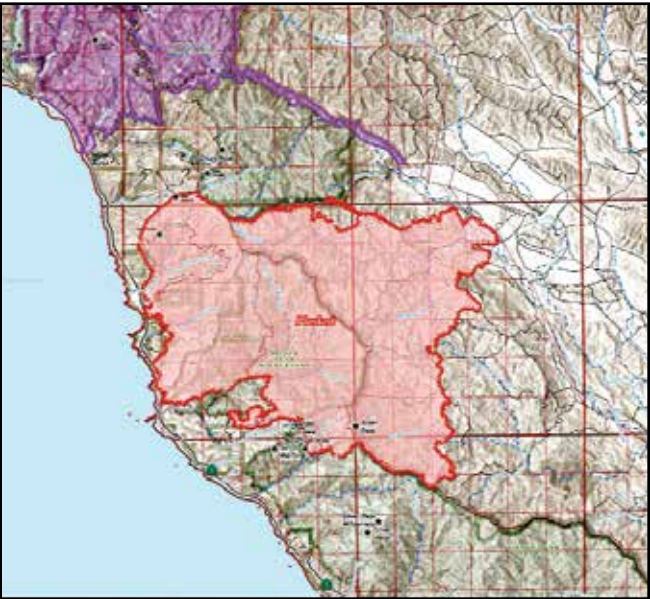
Unfortunately for folks heading north from San Luis Obispo County, the road is blocked at the Monterey County Line.

“The southern closure supporting Plaskett Fire emergency response along Highway 1,” Caltrans said, “remains in place from Pacific Valley at Post Mile 16 to Post Mile 0.0 at the Monterey/ San Luis Obispo County line.”

Caltrans’ electronic message boards planted along Hwy 1 starting south of Cambria, will keep travelers updated on the status of the road closures.

“Avoid any unnecessary travel through the area, Caltrans advised. “Drivers should use U.S. 101 as an alternate route.”

According to the Cal Fire website, the Plaskett Fire started at 11 a.m. Aug. 26 in the Los Padres National Forest in Monterey



Map from Sept. 3 shows the Plaskett Fire outlined in red and the Timber Fire in purple. To see an updated map of the fires go to: www.app.watchduty.org/i/117569. Map courtesy watchduty.com

County.

As of Sept. 4, it had burned over 29,000 acres and was 19% contained. It appears on maps to be spreading southeast. The Timber Fire looks to be spreading more to the northeast.

Cal Fire has issued evacuation orders for residents of the area and set up shelters at the Carmel Mission and Carmel Veterans Memorial Building.

The SLO County Air Pollution Control District has issued air advisories for the North Coast and North County warning of moderately poor air quality. That means anyone unusually sensitive to smoke should limit their time outdoors.

The smell of smoke has been somewhat light, and smoky skies have made for spectacular sunsets the past several days.

There have also been news reports of a light dusting of ash falling as far away as Santa Maria. Readers should probably regularly dust off their vehicles if you leave them parked outside



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PTYPE	St#	St Name	City	Area	L/C Price
Land	0	Pasadena	OSOS	OSOS	\$475,000
Land	1406	5th	OSOS	OSOS	\$213,000
Land	1334	17th	OSOS	OSOS	\$160,000
Land	1738	7th	OSOS	OSOS	\$145,000
Land	0	3rd ST	OSOS	OSOS	\$125,000
Land	1924	Nevada CT	OSOS	OSOS	\$295,000↓
Land	1120	Pasadena	OSOS	OSOS	\$395,000↓
Land	2050	9th	OSOS	OSOS	\$149,000
Land	200	Madera ST	OSOS	OSOS	\$750,000↓
Land	0	Pasadena	OSOS	OSOS	\$475,000↓
Land	1434	5th	OSOS	OSOS	\$175,000
Land	1412	5th ST	OSOS	OSOS	\$213,000↓
Land	1420	5th ST	OSOS	OSOS	\$175,000↓
Land	1455	13th ST	OSOS	OSOS	\$129,000
Land	1107	Pasadena DR	OSOS	OSOS	\$699,000
Land	2021	9th ST	OSOS	OSOS	\$159,000

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News

overnight. According to Cal Fire, the Timber Fire started at 8:36 a.m. Aug. 8, also in the Los Padres National Forest. As of Sept. 4, it had burned over 25,000 acres and was 23% contained. The causes of these fires have not been announced. There also have been no reports of injuries from the blazes. Road information updates can be found

on Caltrans’ Dist. 5 Social Media platforms: on Twitter at: @CaltransD5; Facebook at: Caltrans Central Coast (District 5); and on Instagram at: Caltrans_D5. Caltrans added, “We want to thank the community and the public for their patience while we continue to support the emergency fire operations.”

City Taking Street Repair Bids



Road workers repair a stretch of Harbor Street in 2015, during the City of Morro Bay’s annual street paving repair job. Photo by Neil Farrell

By Neil Farrell

The City of Morro Bay is out for bids now on the 2026 Annual Street paving job, and the City has put together an impressive amount of money to do the work. The notice for bidders went out Sept. 1 and the deadline to put in a bid is 2 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 29. The City Clerk is slated to open the sealed bids at that time and read them aloud in what is supposed to be a public meeting in the conference room at City Hall. If too many folks turn out for the big reveal, they will do it outdoors in front of City Hall, according to an announcement from City Engineer Nate Stong. Under “Scope of Work,” Stong wrote: “The work shall include, but is not limited to, providing all tools, materials, labor, equipment, and incidentals necessary for the rehabilitation of asphalt concrete roadways utilizing a combination of treatments including slurry seal, grinding and localized dig outs, full rehabilitation, and construction of concrete facilities including curb, gutter, sidewalk, curb ramps, valley gutters and spandrels. All utilities not called out to be replaced will be protected in place.

“Manholes and other utility access frames and covers will be protected in place or adjusted to grade. The work will also include any required traffic control, signage, public notifications, storm water control, vegetation removal, formwork, and all other work necessary to render the infrastructure/facility complete and operational, as shown on the Project Plans and Specifications, as specified herein, and in accordance with City of Morro Bay Standard Specifications and Drawings, and Caltrans Standard Specifications.” Potential bidders have to get the bid package, including the list of proposed street repairs, through ASAP Reprographics on Quintana Road for a \$25 fee. The street repair project is an annual thing for the City, as officials and road engineers comb the streets in town grading their condition and classifying them under the amount of work needed to either extend the life of the current pavement with treatments like slurry seals, to the worst conditioned streets that require being dug up and new base put down along with new pavement. The amount of work every year has varied

depending on the amount of money the City has pulled together from various sources. Among these is the City’s Measure Q half-cent sales tax, which was pledged to be partially used for street and sidewalk repairs. The City also gets money from the State through Prop. 1 and from the normal State and Federal gasoline taxes. This year the City has what’s believed to be a record amount of money to spend. Understandably, the City doesn’t want to tout how much money it has or what its engineer’s estimate is. “The City does not wish to publicize the engineer’s estimate of the project cost,” Stong wrote in the Notice to Bidders, “since this information may tend to influence the number and nature of bids received. “However, for the bidder’s convenience and bonding estimating, the engineer’s estimate falls within a range of \$2,750,000 to \$3,250,000 for the base bid and approximately \$500,000 for each additive alternate.”

Normally a basic bid covers things like set up, materials and the basic list of work to be done. Additives are additional work the City may decide needs to be done now and bidders include a separate cost for which they are willing to tackle those items too. Stong added that the allotted time for construction is 90 working days from the time the City awards the contract, expected to be in early October. Awarding a contract is normally taken to the City Council for a look before being approved. As usual, residents can expect to have a road crew leapfrogging from street to street during construction. The City is expected to publish notices for when any particular street might be closed or have traffic controls in place. And the public will be reminded to drive carefully in construction zones and obey the men and women flagging traffic for everyone’s safety.

County Pulls Sales Tax Hike

By Neil Farrell

SLO County voters will not be asked to raise their sales taxes to help fix roads. The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) had been seeking to raise sales taxes to provide a pool of money that could be leveraged to get more State and Federal tax monies. But SLOCOG did an about-face and requested the Board of Supervisors pull it from consideration. Measure H would have added a 0.5-percent sales tax hike throughout SLO County. “Following additional review and community feedback,” reads an Aug. 5 press release from SLOCOG, “the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments Board voted today to request removal of Measure H from the November 2026 ballot. “The decision means SLOCOG will not move forward with Measure H.

This measure would have allowed voters in San Luis Obispo County to consider a half-cent sales tax dedicated to local transportation improvements.” The timing was apparently not good to ask voters to increase their taxes. “With an emphasis on responsible financial stewardship,” the release said, “the SLOCOG Board determined it was not the right time to move forward with the cost of placing Measure H on the ballot. Continued community engagement led by the citizens group ‘Better Roads for All SLO County’ also indicated economic concerns and uncertainty among residents could present challenges to the measure’s success.” As a special tax, Meas. H would have needed to garner two-thirds majority to win approval. A previous attempt by SLOCOG to raise a sales tax for roads several years ago fell just short of the two-thirds majority needed. Measure H was promoted as a way to raise

Sale Tax Hike Continued on page 4

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News

Grover Beach Molester Gets Life in Prison

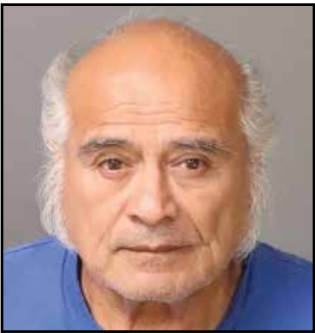
Bad Neighbor Gets Jail Time

A Grover Beach man has been sentenced to 73-years to life in prison after being convicted of sexually abusing three girls and one woman, over a nearly 30-year period.

D.A. Dan Dow's Office announced in June that George Rodriguez Recio, 74, had been convicted on 20 felony counts of sexually abusing the victims from 1996-2024. His sentence was handed down Aug. 25.

"Three victims," the D.A. said, "were between the ages of 6 and 12 when the abuse occurred, and one victim was 25-years old. The crimes occurred in Grover Beach."

Judge Michael Frye in handing down the sentence also issued a criminal protective order "prohibiting Recio from having contact with the victims and ordered him to register as a sex offender for life."



George Rodriguez Recio, 74 of Grover beach was sentenced to 73-years to life in prison for sexually abusing three young girls and one woman over a 28-year span. Submitted photo

A Templeton man who pled guilty to harassing his neighbors has been sentenced to County Jail, formal probation and restitution, the District Attorney's Office said in a news release.

David Allen Leader, 71, received 30 days in County Jail and 2 years of formal probation after pleading to one felony vandalism and seven misdemeanor harassment charges stemming from a campaign of troublesome acts against his neighbors.

"The plea agreement," he release said, "resolved two consolidated criminal cases arising from a prolonged pattern of alleged vandalism, harassment, and repeated violations of a civil harassment restraining order directed at several Templeton-area neighbors."

Leaders' crimes started in October 2024 and involved his neighbors along Orchard Road in Templeton. His acts of vandalism and harassment continued for several months eventually involving eight people in the neighborhood.

"On Oct. 17, 2024," the release said, "Leader maliciously damaged and defaced personal property belonging to another in an amount exceeding \$400. In the months that followed, Leader repeatedly disobeyed a Civil Harassment Prevention Temporary Restraining Order issued by a San Luis Obispo County Superior Court Judge on Dec. 26, 2024."

His harassment involved some childish acts. "The conduct underlying the violations," the news release said, "included revving his vehicle's engine so it could be heard by his neighbors and their surveillance cameras, driving on the wrong side of the road and exceeding the posted speed limit, staring at neighbors and making hand gestures toward them, slowing or stopping across from their properties, and shining lights at their homes and cameras at night."

The felony came when he destroyed private property. "The felony vandalism charge is related to Leader's defacing and destroying private signage owned by the property owners."

His probation is in lieu of a 2-year jail sentence and if he violates probation, he could be immediately sent to County Jail to serve the full 2-year term. He agreed not to seek an early end to his probation and also "agreed that he will not drive an ATV, quad, or motorcycle on Orchard Road during the entire term of his felony probation." He was ordered to pay \$684 in restitution to two victims and a hearing on restitution for the others is set for Nov. 4.

Leader was also ordered to stay away from his victims as a condition of his probation. The victims in the case were present at his sentencing hearing and provided impact statements to the Court.

D.A. Dan Dow said, "Neighbors don't have to like one another, but they do have to respect the law and one another's right to live in peace. When disagreements arise, the answer is to resolve them in a civil and lawful manner — not through vandalism, intimidation, or a relentless campaign of unwanted contact and harassment."

"It is never okay to terrorize the people who live around you. Our office will continue to stand with victims and to hold accountable those who choose criminal behavior over civil resolution."



David Leader, 71 of Templeton, has been sentenced to County Jail for a campaign of harassment and vandalism aimed at his Templeton neighbors. Submitted photo

The cases were investigated by the County Sheriff's Office and prosecuted by Dep. D.A. Jerry Lulejian. Victim Witness Supervisor, Beth Raub, and Witness Coordinator, Kellie Navarro provided victim support services.

Found Remains are those of Missing Arroyo Grande Man

The Sheriff's Department has identified human remains found in June as an Arroyo Grande man who disappeared nearly 20 years ago under suspicious circumstances.

Sheriff's spokeswoman Grace Norris said in a news release, "In June 2026, the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff's Office Detective Division began investigating a report of possible human remains located in a rural area of San Luis Obispo County.

She added that detectives from the Major Crimes Unit, the Coroner's Unit and the department's forensic specialist responded, located the remains and determined them to be human.

The remains went to a forensic anthropologist who identified them as those of Patrick Jay Valente, a 58-year-old Arroyo Grande man who had been reported as missing by his family back in July 2008, nearly 18-years ago.

"The circumstances surrounding Valente's disappearance in 2008," Norris said, "were considered suspicious and were investigated by the Sheriff's Office. Detectives with the Major Crimes Unit are investigating this newly discovered evidence in connection with the ongoing investigation into Valente's disappearance."

The Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team was brought in to assist with recovery efforts and gathering possible evidence at the scene of Valente's discovery.

The Sheriff's Department is asking the public help in the case. "Anyone with information regarding Valente's disappearance or the circumstances surrounding his death is encouraged to contact the SLO County Sheriff's Office Detective s Unit at: 805-781-4500 or Crime Stoppers at: 805-7867 or online at: www.slotips.org.



The remains of Patrick Valente, 58 of Arroyo Grande, were found in June, nearly 18 years after he was reported missing by his family. Submitted photo

The three oldest victims attended the sentencing and gave victim testimonies, and a victim's advocate read a statement from the youngest girl.

According to the D.A., one victim said, "I am mad that you betrayed me and my trust. You were my friend. You were my Tio Pepe. Now you are my worst nightmare. You are the monster behind the closed door. Today, I create my own peace." "Tio" is Spanish for "uncle."

D.A. Dow said, "This sentence cannot undo the profound harm inflicted on these victims or restore the years of safety and peace that were taken from them.

"But it does ensure that this defendant will be held accountable and no longer be able to victimize others in our community. The courage of these four victims —to come forward, tell the truth, and endure an extraordinarily difficult legal process — made this result possible."

He added, "Today belongs to these survivors. Their voices were heard, their rights were honored, and their strength helped secure accountability.

Victim Advocate Dona Reed and Witness Coordinator Kellie Navarro of the Christopher G. Money Victim Witness Assistance Center supported the victims throughout the case.

The case is a chance for the D.A.'s Office to assure victims of sexual abuse that help is available and they are not alone.

"Confidential support, advocacy, and assistance are available through the District Attorney's Victim Witness Assistance Center and community partners. Survivors may seek services regardless of whether they are ready to report abuse to law enforcement. When a survivor chooses to report, law enforcement and victim-service professionals can help investigate the crime, pursue accountability, enhance safety, and connect the survivor with available resources."

In Print and On Line



www.esterobaynews.com

Sales Tax Hike From page 3

local transportation monies and make SLO County more attractive for State and Federal competitive grant monies to come here.

It would have meant joining more than half of California's other Counties with a local source of funding. SLOCOG's director said the need for the taxes remains.

"The work around Measure H helped bring important transportation needs into focus," SLOCOG Executive Director Pete Rodgers said, "and we are grateful to everyone who participated in that process. SLOCOG will continue working with cities, the County, and community partners to pursue funding solutions.

"Unfortunately, until a measure like this is voted on and passes, we will not be able to meet the desired transportation needs of our local communities."

It should be noted that SLOCOG had to go to the State Legislature to get a special law passed that allowed for its sales tax

increase to move forward. This is because State Law limits the amount of local sales taxes that could be approved in any given county or city and at least two of the seven SLO County cities — Morro Bay and Pismo Beach — are already near to that limit. The special law gave an exception for SLOCOG to attempt to pass the countywide sales tax increase.

Over the past several months, SLOCOG representatives have made presentations to City Councils showing a work program suggesting the ways in which the additional money would be split. That included a percentage going back to the cities for their local road repair programs. The idea was to seek support from the local government bodies and hope that translated to support at the polls.

SLOCOG did not indicate how much these lobbying efforts cost, nor when a similar tax increase might come back for voters to consider.

Free Passes for State Parks for Fourth Graders



Just in time for the 2026-27 school year, State Parks is updating its free pass program for fourth graders with a simplified name and new sign-up period. Now, incoming California fourth graders in public school can get their Free Fourth Grade Pass at the same time as all their other school supplies and start the new academic year with unlimited free access to 54 participating state parks. Parents and guardians can download the free pass for their incoming fourth graders at ReserveCalifornia.com.

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Estero Bay New Briefs

By Theresa-Maria Wilson

Prepare for El-Nino

This year could have a volatile winter as far as weather is concerned. Are you prepared? Each month, members of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) programs throughout San Luis Obispo County gather to exchange ideas, discuss current topics, and welcome new people to the group. On September 16, the Meet and Greet will be at the Morro Bay Community Center, 1001 Kennedy Way in downtown Morro Bay, from 6 to 8 p.m. The guest speaker is John Lindsey, a well-known meteorologist in the area, who will talk about the Super El-Nino Effect. The public is welcome, and there is no charge. Lindsey is a media relations representative and marine meteorologist. He worked for Pacific Gas and Electric Company at Diablo Canyon Power Plant for 16 years. Prior to that, he worked for Tenera Environmental as a marine meteorologist and research scientist. John also served in the U.S. Navy for 24 years where he completed the U.S. Navy Aviation Meteorology and Oceanography Program at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida. He has forecasted weather and oceanographic conditions along the Central Coast of California for more than 30 years. Following Lindsey’s talk is a discussion of the consequences of the Super El-Nino effect – area flooding, stream and river flooding, and coastal flooding. Factors that could compound the flooding situation by lack of preparation, burn scars, extreme high tides, and storm surge will also be discussed as well as preparations to make for the upcoming fall and winter months.

ECOSLO Needs Cleanup Volunteers

For the 21st year, ECOSLO will host the annual Creeks to Coast Cleanup, San Luis Obispo County’s local celebration of California Coastal Cleanup Day. On Saturday, September 19, from 9 a.m. to noon. Volunteers from across the county will come together at nearly 40 cleanup sites, stretching from San

Simeon to Nipomo, to protect our beaches, creeks, parks, lakes, trails, and neighborhoods. “Our goal this year is to bring together 1,000 volunteers to make this our biggest Creeks to Coast Cleanup yet,” said Executive Director Kendra Paulding, in a news release. Every volunteer makes a difference, and we hope everyone will join us on September 19 at a cleanup site near them to help protect the places we all love.” In 2025 alone, more than 7,300 pounds of trash were removed by dedicated volunteers, helping keep litter out of our waterways and our ocean. This year, they’re hoping to make an even bigger impact by removing even more debris while collecting valuable data that helps local agencies better understand and prevent pollution throughout San Luis Obispo County. Every piece of litter picked up matters. Whether you’re cleaning a neighborhood creek, a local park, a lake, or one of our beautiful beaches, you’re helping protect wildlife, improve water quality, and preserve the places that make San Luis Obispo County so special. Creeks to Coast Cleanup is free and open to volunteers of all ages. Find a cleanup location near you, invite your friends and family, and join hundreds of community members working together to keep San Luis Obispo County clean, healthy, and beautiful. To register or learn more, go to www.ecoslo.com/creeks-to-coast, call (805) 710-8021, or email info@ecoslo.org.

Trash To Treasure

Fall Clean-Up week is coming to the communities of Morro Bay, Los Osos, Cayucos and Cambria, and the Integrated Waste Management Authority is hoping to help redistribute land-fill-bound items by hosting a trash to treasure community wide treasure map. Trash to Treasure is a free, interactive map where residents can post items they no longer want (“treasure”), and treasure hunters can follow the map to retrieve them! During the posting window of Thursday, September 17 - Thursday, September 24, residents of participating communities can post items on the interactive Treasure Map at iwma.com/



trash-to-treasure. Then, place your treasure on the curb on Saturday, September 26 by 7 a.m. in the morning, so treasure hunters can find it! Post-able items include clean, still functional items that you no longer want, such as furniture, bikes, home decor, yard items, etc. Household trash, hazardous waste, and construction debris are not allowed. If your items do not get taken through the weekend, you may schedule a bulky item pick-up with Waste Connections, taking place on your normal service day during the week of September 28 - October 2. Restrictions and fees may apply, call Waste Connections for more details. You are also encouraged to take unclaimed items to a local thrift store! Do not leave items on your curb after the event, instead, bring them in until you have a pick-up. Send your news, community, and business briefs to EditorEBN@gmail.com. Be sure to include the who, what, why, where and when information along with a contact person.

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“Fostering a lifelong connection with nature and the outdoors starts at a young age,” said California Governor Gavin Newsom in a news release. “With California’s Free Fourth Grade Passes for fourth graders and their families, we are giving more school kids the opportunity to experience all the natural wonders of the Golden State. With the school year kicking off, California’s fourth graders will lead the charge as the next generation of environmental stewards.” The pass is now valid for up to 13 months, through Aug. 31 of the following year, so it can be used from the time students start fourth grade until they begin fifth grade. “California State Parks is committed to making it as easy as possible for fourth graders and their families to experience California’s unparalleled natural and cultural treasures. The updates to our Free Fourth Grade Pass program do exactly that,” said State Parks Director Armando Quintero. “As the new school year begins, I encourage every California fourth-grade family to get their free pass and start exploring the nation’s largest and most diverse state park system. Parks are living classrooms filled with opportunities to learn, discover, and create lasting memories together.” The free pass is a cornerstone of Outdoors for All, Governor Gavin Newsom and the First Partner’s commitment to equitable park access, ensuring all Californians can enjoy the physical, mental and social benefits of the outdoors. Since the free pass program was launched in September 2021, more than 100,000 passes have been distributed to fourth graders and their families. Along with all fourth graders in public school, California residents from all walks of life — including families receiving public assistance and anyone with a library card — can access free parks passes as part of Outdoors for All: California State Library Parks Pass: Allows library cardholders to check out a pass from any public library for free vehicle day-use entry at 200-plus state parks. It’s just like borrowing a book, with more than 33,000 passes available at over 1,100 public and tribal libraries in the state. Golden Bear Pass: This free annual pass provides vehicle day-use entry at over 200 state parks for families who receive CalWORKs, individuals who receive supplemental security income, income-eligible Californians over age 62, and participants of California’s Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. To date, Californians have received more than 145,000 Golden Bear Passes. State Parks also recently completed a wildly popular free promotion of its Historian Passport, which saw more than 454,000 passes downloaded in just over two weeks. Benefits of Spending Time Outdoors The 54 participating state parks help complement the fourth-grade curriculum, bringing to life what fourth graders are learning in the classroom. Fourth grade is a unique time in a child’s development where they begin to better understand how the world around them works in concrete ways, and they are more receptive to engaging with nature and the environment. Studies indicate that access to parks and green space can lead to improvements in children’s physical well-being, social-emotional learning and academic outcomes, with children experiencing reduced stress and demonstrating more enthusiasm for school. How to Get Your Free Fourth Grade Pass Signing up for the Free Fourth Grade Pass is easy. A parent or guardian can apply on ReserveCalifornia.com (account required) to download the pass. The only information required is a name, address, phone number and email address. For more information about the Free Fourth Grade Pass program, go to parks.ca.gov/4thGrade.

Community
History, Civil Rights, and a Good Time



The La Cuesta Pullman Dining Car, a 1926 Pullman observation open-platform car donated to the SLO Railroad Museum. Photo by SLO Railroad Museum

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Step back in time and take a “swift ride on the Soul Train” in celebration of the first Black labor union.

The NAACP San Luis Obispo County Branch is partnering with the SLO Railroad Museum for “From Pullman to Soul Train,” a fundraiser celebrating the centennial of their vintage Pullman lounge car and the 101st anniversary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids.

The event honors the legacy of the porters and maids, whose labor, organizing, and determination played an important role in the advancement of Black workers and the broader American civil rights movement.

“The overall significance of the event is to celebrate our shared history of American rail travel and the parallel tracks of our country’s progress in civil rights and social equality,” John King, who serves as the chairperson of the Freedom Fund of the NAACP of SLO County, told Estero Bay News. “We hope to highlight the importance of the work the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids contributed to the Black community while providing an important service to the country and all of its citizens.”

Organized in 1925, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP) was the first Black labor union. It represented porters employed by the Pullman Company, the largest employer of Black people that purposefully hired “formerly enslaved people to achieve the high-quality customer service the Pullman cars were known for,” according to the Library of Congress.

Sleeping car porters shined shoes, made up beds, woke passengers, and provided other services to ensure a comfortable trip. They had to pay for their own meals, uniforms, shoe-shine supplies, and lodging while away from home. They were also held financially responsible for company equipment or passenger thefts, such as stolen towels or water pitchers. On top of which, they were forced



A celebration of the 101st anniversary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters is part of an event put on by the local branch of the NAACP and the SLO Railroad Museum. Photo submitted

to work long hours, subjected to discrimination and racism, and had no voice to confront these issues.

Pullman maids and wives of porters participated from the union’s founding as well. Because maids faced severe retaliation and firing from the company for organizing, wives and women relatives formed local Women’s Economic Councils to collect dues, circulate secret correspondence, host meetings, and distribute literature safely.

The formation of the BSCP Under the landmark April 1937 collective bargaining agreement, secured transformative improvements with the Pullman Company.

• Capped Work Hours: Reduced monthly requirements from roughly 400 hours down to a 240-hour work month.

• Significant Wage Increases: Provided substantial baseline pay increases, reducing extreme dependence on passenger tips.

• Overtime and Preparatory Pay: Guaranteed pay for terminal delays, preparatory work, and overtime hours worked over 260 hours.

• Grievance and Due Process Rights: Established formal dispute mechanisms, ending arbitrary firings by supervisors and granting workers representation during hearings.

In 1938, the union officially chartered the International Ladies’ Auxiliary to the BSCP, granting women full national officer voting rights and formal membership.

The union had a further reach across the country allowing for the growth of the Black middle class; showing that nonviolent, coordinated pressure could successfully challenge major corporate and government institutions; and creating the blueprint for the civil rights movement.

The local branch of the NAACP (naacps-locty.org) has 400 members and is open to any race, background, or identity committed to civil rights and equality.

“Although San Luis Obispo County has a smaller than average Black population, Black-owned businesses, educators, students, and residents throughout the county benefit from the programs and assistance provided by our organization,” King said. “Since we don’t restrict our membership racially, we have many non-Black members in our ranks performing important roles in the organization’s efforts to bring equality to all members of our community.”

The event will also commemorate the

100th birthday of the La Cuesta Pullman Dining Car, a 1926 Pullman observation open-platform car donated to the SLO Railroad Museum. It was one of five cars built as café-lounge cars. It all takes place Saturday, September 26, from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum, 1940 Santa Barbara Avenue, San Luis Obispo.

The aim is to connect generations of Black history “from the elegance and perseverance associated with Pullman rail service to the music, fashion, and cultural influence of the ‘Soul Train’ era.” Guests are encouraged to embrace the evening’s theme by dressing in “Pullman Elegance or Soul Train Vibes.”

The celebration will feature a live DJ playing Motown, funk, soul, and classic favorites; museum tours; a Soul Train dance line; retro awards; food and soft drinks; and wine available for purchase. Guests are encouraged to dress in Pullman Elegance (1920s–1930s formal travel wear) or Soul Train Vibes (1970s funk flair).

“Moving from Pullman to ‘Soul Train, traces Black American history from early 20th-century labor organizing and civil rights struggles through the late-20th-century explosion of Black joy, artistic self-expression, and cultural mainstreaming,” King said

Tickets are \$75 per person and include admission to all activities, food, and soft drinks. They are available at https://w3hjkml.sgy/f8mgQL.

King said the proceeds from the Freedom Fund will support the ongoing work and mission of the NAACP SLO County Branch to “advance civil rights, equity, civic engagement, and opportunities for communities throughout San Luis Obispo County including higher education scholarships for local minority and underserved youth; community civil rights advocacy, legal redress, and educational outreach programs; and local events and youth empowerment initiatives.”

Founded Feb. 12, 1909, the NAACP is the nation’s oldest, largest, and most widely recognized grassroots-based civil rights organization. It’s more than half-million members and supporters throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities, campaigning for equal opportunity and conducting voter mobilization, according to their website.

As Don Cornelius, the host of “Soul Train,” said when signing off, “love, peace, and soul.”

Endless Summer in Cayucos, September 17-19

By Neil Farrell

The Friends of Cayucos, a coalition of non-profit organizations, service clubs and community groups are teaming up to host the Endless Summer Festival, a 3-day celebration of local history, family fun, live music, food, beer and wine and more.

The festival starts Thursday, Sept. 17 with, “History Beneath the Waves,” a presentation by the Cayucos Historical Society starting at 7 p.m. at Cayucos Landing (the former vets hall).

Stuart McDowell will present the story of the oil tanker, Montebello, which was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine and sank off the coast of Cambria in December 1941, just some 3 weeks after the Attack on Pearl Harbor that started World War II in the Pacific.

Friday, Sept. 18 is Family Movie Night at Cayucos Landing and sponsored by the Cayucos Land Conservancy.

From 6-7 p.m. representatives from the Cayucos Land Conservancy, California State Parks, the Morro Coast Audubon Society, and other local organizations will share information about the incredible outdoor spaces, wildlife, and natural resources found along the Central Coast.

The movie starts at 7 p.m. and will feature Disney’s G-rated nature film “Earth,” featuring the remarkable family migrations of elephants, polar bears, and humpback whales. The film runs approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Bring your family, a picnic, get comfortable, and enjoy an evening celebrating nature and the Central Coast.

Saturday is the big day for the Festival, with several special events taking place.

The Chamber of Commerce is hosting a street faire from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. along Ocean Avenue and Front Street.

There will be lots of local vendors and activities for the kids all in the heart of Downtown



Dante Marsh & The Vibesettors will perform at the Cayucos Endless Summer Festival, Saturday, Sept. 19 at Cayucos Landing.

Cayucos.

At Cayucos Landing, the day starts with a breakfast and family activities hosted by the Cayucos Lioness Club from 9-11 a.m.

From 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dante Marsh and The Vibesettors will play a live music dance party at Cayucos Landing.

“The Vibe Setters,” reads the band’s website, “are a soulful, funk band with tasty grooves and colorful melodies. Dante Marsh leads this award-winning group based out of San Luis Obispo, receiving both Best R&B song and Best Performance awards from New Times Magazine.”

The Cayucos Rotary Club will host, “Toast to the Coast,” a wine tasting at Cayucos Landing from 1-4 p.m. Tickets are \$40 a person. See: www.cayucoschamber.com/endlesssummerfestival and scroll down to the link to order tickets online.

And the Cayucos Lions Club will barbecue in the rear picnic area at Cayucos Landing from 3-6 p.m. to close out the festival.

The Endless Summer Festival marks one of the first major community events to be held at Cayucos Landing after the County rebuilt the old Cayucos Vets Hall, in a multi-milliondollar project that took over 2 years to complete.

The newly Christened, Cayucos Landing,

Endless Summer Continued on page 23

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Police Blotter



• **Aug. 30:** At 9:36 p.m. police contacted a suspicious subject at an undisclosed location. The misbegotten knave was allegedly discovered to be in possession of and transporting illegal drugs for sale and possession of some kind of weapon, as apparently the Second Amendment is no excuse with a pocket full of dope.

• **Aug. 29:** Police were called at 9:23 p.m. to deal with a pest at the Community Center in the 1000 block of Kennedy Way. Logs indicated the allegedly stultified idjit was arrested for resisting arrest, violating probation and being drunk as a skunk in public, in this week’s example of why the nail that sticks out gets hammered.

• **Aug. 29:** Police responded at 8:45 p.m. to a disturbance in the 800 block of Embarcadero where some juiced up bonehead was having a bag lady moment at the Sun ‘N Buns Bakery.

• **Aug. 29:** Some apparent anti-treasure hunter turned in something he or she found on the beach at Morro Rock.

• **Aug. 29:** At 11:29 a.m. someone called police about finding somebody who’d taken the Stairway to Heaven.

• **Aug. 29:** Police were called at 11:52 a.m. for a sticky-fingered shopper helping himself at Bottle Liquors.

• **Aug. 29:** At 8:14 a.m. police towed away a car that was parked too long at Morro Rock.

• **Aug. 28:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 9 p.m. presumably somewhere in town. Logs indicated the driver was cited for suspicion of driving in the horrors.

• **Aug. 28:** Police contacted another disturbing fellow at 5:15 p.m. somewhere in town. Logs indicated the bent squit was nicked for allegedly being spifficated where the tourists can see him.

• **Aug. 28:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 10:24 a.m. Logs indicated the driver was DMV’d for having a fake registration, though given what this State charges, one can hardly blame them.

• **Aug. 27:** At 11:18 p.m. someone turned in something he or she had found to officers at the police station on Morro Bay Boule-

vard. Sorry, logs didn’t say what the apparent treasure was, so good luck claiming it.

• **Aug. 27:** Police were called at 5:14 p.m. to deal with some pesky pesterer being a pest at Albertson’s Market on Quintana Road. The scoundrel was advised to take his shoes for a walk.

• **Aug. 27:** The warrant squad was busy catching up to two bail jumpers at 11:26 a.m. and 2:59 p.m.

• **Aug. 26:** Police responded to a disturbance at 1:55 p.m. at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated they encountered a smashed potato head using the help-yourself aisle. The apparent thief was charged with felony counts of vandalism and probation violation and misdemeanor shoplifting, no doubt something that wasn’t worth the consequences.

• **Aug. 26:** At 9:13 a.m. police snatched up another miscreant with a bench warrant. He or she was likely issued another disappearance ticket and unleashed back into the wild.

• **Aug. 25:** Police responded at 5:47 p.m. to a report of some maniacal madman making criminal terrorist threats, which, as a misdemeanor, apparently sounds worse than the law gives credit.

• **Aug. 25:** At 8:56 a.m. police were called to the 1200 block of the Embarcadero. Logs indicated they arrested some reprobationer after finding he or she was in possession of illegal drugs with multiple priors, both felonies, a case of landing in the hoosegow at Morro Bay Landing.

• **Aug. 24:** At 1:03 p.m. some mandated reporter notified police of a suspected case of child abuse.

• **Aug. 24:** Police were called at 2:36 p.m. to a disturbance somewhere in town. Logs indicated they arrested some Groom of the stool for being fitshaced in public.

• **Aug. 24:** Some apparently conscientious wanted fellow turned himself in at 10:43 a.m. at the police station for a bench warrant.

At 11:06 a.m. police caught up to a felonious bond breaker at another undisclosed location.

• **Aug. 23:** Police responded at 7:45 p.m. to a found property report at Taco Bell, let’s hope it wasn’t contagious.

• **Aug. 23:** Police responded at 9:07 a.m. to a report of a car crash at an undisclosed location, no doubt someone’s morning commute just went kaput.

• **Aug. 22:** Police responded at 10:55 p.m. to a disturbance at an undisclosed location, an apparent case of unhappy hour.

• **Aug. 22:** Another traffic collision was reported at 6:25 p.m. somewhere in town. No word on the extent of the damage or the carnage.

• **Aug. 22:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 3:49 p.m. at an undisclosed location in town. Logs indicated the driver got nailed

for allegedly driving hammered.

• **Aug. 22:** Police responded at 2:03 p.m. to a found property report at O’Reilly Auto Parts. No word on what was found, but it probably wasn’t car parts.

• **Aug. 22:** Police responded at 10:34 a.m. to a report of felony vandalism at an undisclosed location, as the anarchists have apparently been running amok.

• **Aug. 21:** At 10:26 p.m. police mobilized at the Mobil Station to demobilize some toddy stricken scofflaw with a bench warrant who was causing a kerfuffle.

• **Aug. 21:** Police responded at 3:52 p.m. to the 800 block of the Embarcadero to pick up something some daffy left at the Carousel Taffy.

• **Aug. 21:** Police responded to a disturbance at 3:43 p.m. somewhere in town and discovered that some sinner had assaulted an elderly dependent adult.

• **Aug. 21:** Police responded at 3:49 p.m. to a reported hit-n-split crash at the Rockview on Sunset Apartments.

• **Aug. 20:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 9 p.m. at a location logs naturally didn’t divulge. Logs indicated the driver was allegedly schnoekered and cited for driving on a toot.

• **Aug. 19:** Police contacted a suspicious subject at 12:35 p.m. hanging around the USA Gas station on Main. Logs indicated the apparent gaggle head was cited for playing ring around the nosey and possessing drug paraphernalia.

• **Aug. 19:** Police responded to another car crash at 11:37 a.m. at yet another undisclosed location.

• **Aug. 19:** Police at Morro Bay High School documented the unlawful transmission of harmful obscene sexual content sent to a minor with apparent nefarious intent.

• **Aug. 19:** Police cited another annoying flesh monkey with a bench warrant at 9:49 a.m.

• **Aug. 18:** Police responded at 2:36 p.m. to a reported shoplifter — an apparent cheapskate one at that — at the Family Dollar discount store on Quintana.

• **Aug. 17:** Police stopped a suspicious motorcyclist at 3:24 p.m. and cited the master criminal for the heinous offenses of failing to attach their rear license plate, not having evidence of current registration, no proof of insurance, and driving a motorcycle or scooter without the proper license.

• **Aug. 17:** Police contacted another sinister slugabed with a bench warrant at 3 p.m.

• **Aug. 17:** Police responded at 11:36 a.m. to a disturbance at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated some ruffian battered somebody and no doubt for no good reason too.

G

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By
Theresa-Marie Wilson

Shoutout to all the firefighters and first responders fighting to keep people, animals and land safe from the Plaskett and Timber fires. Be safe, look out for each other and return home soon to your families and friends.

Remember to check with slocleanair.com for air quality rankings across SLO County and keep your pets and yourselves inside when it is called for.

Sending support and gratitude to firefighters battling blazes near us.

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Community

Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

The American Association of University Women, Morro Bay Branch will meet on Saturday September 12, at Saint Peter's Episcopal Church, 545 Shasta in Morro Bay, at 10 a.m. Our Tech Trek Scholarship recipients will speak about their Tech Trek summer camp educational experiences. Interest Group chairpersons will describe what each group does and encourage members to join the various groups. After a break for refreshments, a business meeting will commence. We welcome anyone to attend our meetings, who is interested in the AAUW mission to advance equity for women and girls through advocacy and education. For membership information, please contact Linda Briney, membership chairperson at (805)225-1063.

...

Join Central Coast Comedy Theater for the six-week Fundamentals of Improv on Tuesday nights at The Bunker, 810 Orcutt Rd, in SLO, starting Sept. 15 from 6-8 p.m. Whether you're brand new to improv or looking to sharpen your game, this six-week class is built around the fundamentals that make great performers — and gives you plenty of chances to put them into practice. You'll build essential skills like listening, agreement, commitment, collaboration, heightening, and making strong choices, while learning how to use short-form games to think quickly, embrace spontaneity, connect with your scene partners, and stay present under pressure. And every Monday, take those skills to the stage with an optional Scrimmage Show: a fun, supportive environment where you can get the reps you need to fine-tune your performance, experiment with new techniques, and develop your skills as both a performer or host. Play the games. Get the reps. Become a stronger performer. All experience levels welcome. Cost is \$261.50. Register at My805tix.com.

...

The Morro Bay Maritime Museum will host Rock the Waterfront, an evening fundraiser celebrating Morro Bay's waterfront heritage and supporting the museum's preservation,

education, and community programs. The event takes place Saturday, September 19, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Morro Bay Yacht Club. Guests will enjoy signature cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, music, and a silent auction featuring distinctive local experiences, artwork, dining, and other donated items. Proceeds from Rock the Waterfront will help preserve and share the stories of Morro Bay's historic working waterfront, support the museum's exhibits, and fund its 2027 Maritime Explorers STEM program for children. Funds will also help maintain the museum's distinctive collection of vessels. Among the museum's most significant vessels is the historic tugboat Alma, which will mark her 100th year in 2027. Built in 1927, Alma is a familiar presence on the Morro Bay waterfront and an important link to the region's maritime past. The museum is beginning to look ahead to that centennial milestone while continuing its daily work of caring for the vessels and stories entrusted to it. The Morro Bay Maritime Museum is free to visit and welcomes thousands of visitors each year. Its outdoor collection includes historic vessels and exhibits that tell the story of commercial fishing, harbor life, military service, boating, and the people whose lives have been shaped by the sea. Tickets for Rock the Waterfront are \$125 per person, or \$100 for museum members. For more information go to morrobaymaritime.org or contact info@morrobaymaritime.org.

Love Me, Maybe? A Live Dating Show is a hilarious and interactive night of connection, dating, and live entertainment at Central Coast Brewing The Hub, 1701 Monterey St., SLO. Start the evening at our 21+ mixer, where guests can mingle, make new connections, and enjoy drinks before the show, or come at 7 p.m. for the live dating show, where host Nevada Gibson puts hand-selected singles through fun games and dating challenges on stage. Whether you're single, coupled up, or just here for the laughs, come see if love is in the air—or if it's maybe. Tickets range from \$23 to \$55 and are available at My805tic.com. me.org.

Free programs at the Los Osos Library, 2075 Palisades Ave. Los Osos. Storytime - Thursdays, 10:30 – 11 a.m. Stories, dance, and music for toddlers and preschoolers. Paws to Read – Wednesday, September 23, 3 – 4 p.m. Come and read your favorite book to Lucy and Pauli! School age.

Build It Challenge – Friday, September 11, 3 – 4 p.m. Build creations with Keva Planks, GeoMags, stacked cups and more! Will yours be the tallest, widest, most colorful, or something else entirely? Build it, tear it down, build it again! For ages 5+ Baby Music Program – Saturday, September 12, 1:30 – 2 p.m. Danielle from Lyrics and Melodies Studio will lead a fun-filled family music time at the library! Baby, toddler and pre-school. Beginning Coding – Friday, September 18, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. Hands on coding fun for kids. Come tinker with Cubetto robots, a Let's Go Code set and a Robot Mouse. For ages 3+. Teen Advisory Board – Saturday, September 19, 3 – 4 p.m. Calling all teens. Looking for volunteer or community service hours? Help Librarian Emily run the Teen Advisory Board! Participation can be listed on job, scholarship and college applications. Help plan teen events, create content for social media, create contest ideas, recommend books, movies and more. Tell me what rad stuff you want to see happen! There will be snacks. Teens 13-18.

...



Kick off the Cambria Film Festival's 10th Anniversary celebration on September 19, at a One-Day Mini Film Festival! This special event will give you a taste of everything that makes our festival unforgettable, featuring three curated blocks of standout films from past festivals. Purchase an All-Access Pass for the full experience, including two daytime film blocks, a light reception featuring delicious food and wine, followed by a special feature film presentation. This Mini-Fest will showcase the creativity, heart, and exceptional storytelling that have become the hallmark of the festival, leaving you excited for the 10th Cambria Film Festival, February 3–7, 2027. Tickets are at https://cff10event.eventive.org/welcome.

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Events Continued on page 10

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September 10, 2026 - September 23, 2026 • The Estero Bay News • Your Community, Your News 9

Community

Events From page 9



Don't miss the Central Coast Shakespear Festival's "Macbeth" weekends Sept 26 through October 11 at 6 p.m. at the Filipponi Ranch in SLO. Tickets are on sale now at centralcoast-shakespeare.org. This special fall event is a great way to enter the spooky season. Macbeth, a tale of prophecy, murder and madness. Power comes at a price, and blood will have blood. It's been 20 years (!) since the Festival produced Shakespeare's darkest tragedy, where ambition and prophecy collide with devastating consequences. After a trio of witches foretell that he will be King, Macbeth begins his fatal descent in pursuit of the crown, leaving a trail of bodies in his wake.

Join Central Coast Dance Community on Wednesday, September 16, at the Morro Bay Community Center for "Who Done It?"—our exciting mystery-themed potluck and dance! Bring your favorite dish to share for the potluck at 12 p.m. and then get ready to loosen up with an East Coast Swing lesson from Linda Drake at 12:30. She will teach steps that can also be applied to other types of dancing. The cost is \$10

The Morro Bay Faction band is back by popular demand. Featuring Sunny Wright on vocals, Tom Bethke on guitar, Gary Drysdale on bass, and Mike Raynor on drums, they will keep the music playing until 3 p.m.

The Central Coast Dance Community is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing live music opportunities in Morro Bay, and we encourage both dancers and non-dancers to attend. We meet every third Wednesday, usually at the Morro Bay Community Center for a potluck at 12 p.m., a lesson at 12:30and dancing from 1:30-3. The 5:30 p.m. – 8 p.m. Saturday evening dances usually meet on the last Saturday of the month at the Morro Bay Veterans Hall. For more information, go to morrobaydances.com/upcoming-events.

The residents of Los Osos and folks all over SLO County are invited to participate in and plan for the 2nd Annual Los Osos Community Wide Yard Sale, happening October 3 and 4. Initiated last year by Jessica Gilder, third generation Los Osos resident and owner of Metamorphosis Death Care, the event was quite successful, with about 25 participating sellers, and shoppers visiting from as far south as Santa Maria. Everyone showed gratitude and were excited for it to continue! It was decided to keep the fall date on the first weekend of October to promote second-hand holiday shopping, as well as to avoid competition with the neighboring city-wide sales in Atascadero, Morro Bay, and Grover Beach, who hold theirs in the springtime.

This year, Jessica is increasing advertisement and is continuing the public Facebook Event page, where sellers can post their address and also have it included in the full list of participants, grouped by neighborhood, so that visitors can easily find all sale locations and plan their route!

All info can be found on Facebook on the "Annual Los Osos Community Wide Sale!" page under events, or by visiting facebook.com/events/1387859683201328/. You can message Jessica to sign up as a seller by text at (805)904-5414.

Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay, is hosting a "How To" for all things matting, framing and hanging on Sept. 13 from 1-3 p.m. They will provide instructions, tools and all the details to elevate your artwork to look even more professional. You are welcome to bring one art piece that you'd like to work on, your choice of mat board, and/or frame. We will have wire, D-rings, tools and a mat cutter available for use. For more information, go to artcentermorrobay.org.

The Morro Bay National Estuary Program installed a new interactive exhibit at its Nature Center that invites visitors to explore eelgrass habitat and learn about the important role it plays in the Morro Bay estuary. The program is in both English and Spanish and features interactive components designed to engage visitors of all ages.

Eelgrass is a flowering marine plant that forms dense underwater meadows in shallow waters. These meadows provide food and shelter for fish, birds, and other wildlife while also helping to improve water quality, stabilize sediment, and store carbon.

In Morro Bay, eelgrass is a critical part of a healthy and resilient estuary. The new exhibit gives visitors an opportunity to explore these underwater habitats up close and learn more about the connections between eelgrass, wildlife, and the overall health of Morro Bay. The exhibit is dedicated to the memory of



Kendra Chan, a wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Ventura office who passed away in a boat fire accident in 2019. Chan had a deep love for the ocean and dedicated her career to conservation and connecting people with science. The new eelgrass exhibit is now open to the public at the Morro Bay National Estuary Program's Nature Center, located on the second floor at 601 Embarcadero, Morro Bay. The Nature Center is free to visit and open daily from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Funding for the Nature Center exhibit was provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Morro Bay National Estuary Program.

The 20th Annual Los Osos International Festival takes place on Sunday, September 20, at Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church located at 2050 Palisades Avenue in Los Osos. The celebration will begin with a bilingual Mass at 10 a.m., followed by a Parade of Flags and the festival's opening prayer. Festival activities will begin at approximately 11 a.m. and run until 3 p.m. The annual festival celebrates the many cultures represented within the parish community through a shared day of worship, fellowship, and cultural appreciation. There will be games and crafts for kids a visit from the fire department and laws enforcement with special vehicles, food for sale, a DJ. Live bands and dance groups. There are also a silent auction and raffle. Raffle tickets are available now at the church or from parishioners. Proceeds benefit the church's non-profit activities and programs. For more info, call 805-235-8803. There will be no 9 a.m. or 11:30 a.m. Masses that day.



A new fall tradition is coming to Templeton this September. For the first time, family-owned 46 Ranch will open its gates for the 46 Ranch Pumpkin Patch, inviting families to experience fall on a working regenerative farm. Open Fridays through Sundays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., September 18 through November 1. Set among the rolling hills of the Central Coast, the inaugural 46 Ranch Pumpkin Patch brings fall to life with ranch-grown pumpkins, farm animals, fun activities, festive treats and live music on select days. Guests can explore activities throughout the property, including educational hayride tours, train rides, an interactive petting zoo, an immersive Witch's Walk and a fun jump pad. Addi-





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Community

tional activities include apple and pumpkin cannons, gem mining, rubber ducky races, animal feeding and seasonal photo ops. Admission is \$10 for children (ages 3–12) and \$15 for adults, with children 2 and under free. Tickets will be available for purchase at the admissions gate upon arrival. Admission includes access to most activities. Additional experiences, including apple and pumpkin cannons, gem mining and animal feeding, will be available for purchase. No admission is required for guests visiting only to purchase pumpkins. The Pumpkin Patch will be open Fridays through Sundays from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 11995 Santa Rosa Creek Road in Templeton.

The Rotary Club of Los Osos presents its annual Family Fun Fair in honor of Grandparents Day on Sunday September 13 from 12-4 p.m. at the South Bay Community Center & Park in Los Osos. Admission is free for this celebration of the generations with activities and entertainment for all ages. There are lots of games for kids to win tickets they can exchange for face painting, prizes or even a hot dog meal. Activities also include a Monster Petting Zoo, the Symphony Petting Zoo, an Insect Petting Zoo, Central Coast Aquarium Petting Zoo, Reptile Petting Zoo, Youth Soccer Shoot Out and much more. Meals will be available for purchase. There is a raffle for prizes including a Central Coast Staycation Package, tickets to John Batiste at the Hollywood Bowl, Bose QuietComfort Noise Cancelling Earbuds 2nd Gen and many more bonus drawings. Raffle tickets start at \$2/ea. Rock-n-Roll by Groove Street for all to enjoy from 2-4 p.m.



Join the Morro Coast Audubon Society for a zoom program Yosemite Wildlife - Stories in Front of, and Behind, the Lens on Monday, Sept 21 from 7p.m.- 8 p.m. featuring Rob Hirsch. All MCAS Community Programs are free and open to the public. All ages are welcome. No signup/registration required to attend. Yosemite is primarily known for its world class scenery and, as a result, the park’s wildlife is unfortunately often overlooked. Join Robb Hirsch for a presentation highlighting the diversity of Yosemite’s incredible wildlife and how he creates images that tell their stories. He’ll share natural history anecdotes, ethical wildlife photography tips and the experiences behind capturing images over the past 30 years. Robb is the photographer of the recently published Yosemite Wildlife written by conservationist extraordinaire, Beth Pratt, and he’s the author/photographer of The Nature of Yosemite- A Visual Journey, both published by the

Yosemite Conservancy. Biologist by training, naturalist by heart, and photographer by passion, Robb Hirsch has an intimate relationship with the natural world. Photography was originally a means to document the wildlife and habitats he was working with before becoming the focus. His primary professional goal is using nature photography for education, outreach, and conservation, in addition to creating images to hang on walls for pure enjoyment. Robb’s photography has been featured in calendars, magazines, gallery showings, and international competitions, and he leads customized small-group, private photography workshops in Yosemite and the surrounding Sierra Nevada. Robb is the author/photographer of The Nature of Yosemite: A Visual Journey (Yosemite Conservancy, 2019) and the photographer of Yosemite Wildlife (Yosemite Conservancy, 2025). More information about Robb and his work at RobbHirschPhoto.com. If you have questions, email Wendy McKeown, community programs coordinator commprograms@morrocoastaudubon.org. For Zoom Information, see MCAS Events Calendar at calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0/embed?src=morrocoastaudubon@gmail.com.

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.

By the Sea Screening ‘Stage Door’



Katherine Hepburn (standing) and Ginger Rogers star in Stage Door, a 1937 film being screened Sept. 14 as a 10th birthday celebration for By the Sea Productions. By the Sea Productions will celebrate its 10th Anniversary with a special screening of a Hollywood classic film at the historic Bay Theater in Downtown Morro Bay. By the Sea, Morro Bay’s homegrown live theater troupe, will show the 1937 classic film “Stage Door” starring a bevvoy of

Hollywood starlets — Katharine Hepburn, Ginger Rogers, Adolphe Menjou, Gail Patrick, Constance Collier, Andrea Leeds, and Lucille Ball. Tickets are \$25 a person or \$45 a couple and available at the door or online at: bytheseaproductions.org. Doors open at 4:30 p.m. with wine and cocktail snacks provided by The Savory Palette. The film plays at 5:30. Based on a play by Edna Ferber and George S. Kaufman, “Stage Door” offers a look back at theater of the ‘30s. Billed as an American tragicomedy, “Stage Door” was directed by Gregory La Cava. The film tells the story of several would-be actresses who live together in a boarding house in New York City. It was produced and distributed by RKO Pictures. “Stage Door” was nominated for four Academy Awards in 1938, including a Best Supporting Actress nod for Andrea Leach, but didn’t win any Oscars.

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" Komreich, Judy Salamacha and Susan Vasquez

RV Camping in Your Own Backyard
Jalama Beach Camping



Jalama Beach camping is well worth the drive. What makes local campers drive two hours south to Jalama Beach when we have beautiful beaches right here in Estero Bay? Is it the miles of pristine beach? The surf? The remoteness —miles from civilization? The postcard-perfect views toward the Channel Islands? Campsites right on the beach? Or the world famous Jalama Burger? Maybe it’s all of that. Maybe it’s the camaraderie among fellow campers who follow the call to this isolated oasis on the windswept coast between Vandenberg and Point

Out and About From page 12

CAYUCOS

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Stuart McDowell

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Community

Out and About From page 11



Typical beachside campsites at Jalama Beach. These are #55 and #56.

Conception — where Northern California currents meet warmer Southern California countercurrents.

Jalama isn't for everyone. Compared to manicured, fully accoutered parks, it's more natural and wild, exposed to Mother Nature's frequent winds yet also a place where you'll feel closer to the hills, ocean, and sky than perhaps anywhere else on the Central Coast. Your efforts getting to Jalama will be well-rewarded. You'll have to slow your pace on the scenic, winding, and pot-holed Jalama Road that takes you to this jewel, this small campground nestled between untamed hills and the ocean. By the time you get to camp, you'll already be as calm as a cat on gopher-watch as you slowly cruise to a stop at the entry kiosk, ready to find your site and settle in.

Jalama offers various accommodations: Ocean-view cabins (no pets), group campsites, and RV/tent sites, some with hookups (elect. only), and some pull-throughs. There's a dump station, a water fill-up station and numerous water spigots. Sites are level — gravel, sand, or concrete slabs. Each has a fire ring/grill and table. Want an ocean view site? Try 10-16, 53-64, 80-87, 96, 97, 105-117 or stunning Abalone Point Group site. Note: nighttime winds can damage awnings and pop-ups, and scatter belongings. Calmest months are September-November.

The flush-toilet bathrooms are clean and well-maintained. Coin-op showers cost four quarters for three minutes. I love the three new bathroom buildings; the clever futuristic architecture is straight out of the Jetsons.

What to Do ... What to Do ...Take a nap. Read a book. Listen to the surf roll onto the sand. Walk with the kids on the beach

looking for beautiful rocks. Play your ukulele. Enjoy the celestial star show each night, or maybe a rocket launch from Vandenberg like we experienced!

Unplug: There's no cell service — but there are three pay phones (remember those?). Or drive 8.8 or 13.6 miles back up Jalama Road to dirt turnouts where you'll get 2-4 bars. Wi-Fi in camp is free but spotty and not guaranteed. It's okay for texts/emails until it boots you off! Be patient. You're on a mini vacation!

Have Fun. Surf. Fish. Play basketball, horseshoes, or corn hole (rent bags or bring your own). Step back in time just by entering the quaint, well-stocked little Jalama Beach Store & Grill and feel like a little kid again. Buy an ice cream or a toy or a burger and fries, or delicious BLT. They're open year-round, and have groceries, wine, beer, fishing supplies, firewood, clothes, toys, camping items, and such.

Bring the Kids: There's bike riding. Boogie boarding. Sandcastle building. Kite-flying. A fun beach-themed playground and grassy playfield. Twilight skies reveal multiple satellites to count. A gallery of painted rocks in front of the store beckons kids to leave their own creations.

Bring the Dog: No dog fee and the beach is open to leashed dogs. Hallelujah! Please help maintain these policies, respect the leash rule and clean up after your dog.

Noise: The ocean waves keep up a steady thrum. Seagulls and crows are the resident noisemakers (and food thieves). Amtrak scuttles by occasionally but is nearly silent. If SpaceX blasts off, you'll have the best seat in the house!

Surfing and Fishing: For a Jalama surf report, husband Garth says the surf breaks called Tarantulas and Cracks (a ¼ mile beach-walk south of camp) are reef breaks, best on south swells but still good on a north swell. You can also surf the less-reliable beach break right in front of the campground or at the mouth of Jalama Creek. For surf fishing, there are anglers up and down the beach catching surfperch (and seaweed) in abundance.

Nightly fees range \$35-\$55. Cabins \$200-\$250. It's popular, plan ahead. Reserve at Santa Barbara County Parks where a 6-month rolling reservation window applies: www.sbparks.org.

Jalama Beach is a tucked-away treasure, just waiting for you to visit again or for the first time. Go chill by yourself, or with friends and family. Give yourself at least three nights if you can. Fall is best. Go now. Please. And tell me how you liked it! Happy camping.

For extended articles on local campgrounds, visit www.debbienobleblack.com/rv-camping-in-your-own-backyard.

Takin' Care of BUSINESS

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Live Oak Music Festival Canceled

KCBX Public Radio has cancelled the 2027 Live Oak Music Festival. The decision comes as the station responds to the loss of federal funding and the rising cost to produce the event.

The family-friendly, three-day music and arts festival began as a one-day concert at Biddle Park in Arroyo Grande in 1989. It later moved to Live Oak Camp in Santa Barbara before relocating to El Chorro Regional Park in San Luis Obispo in 2019.

"The decision follows the loss of federal funding for all public media organizations," said KCBX General Manager Chris McBride in a news release. "Because Congress voted to defund the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), the private nonprofit organization that distributed federal funding to KCBX and other public radio stations, the station must raise an additional \$420,000 to annually maintain current operations and programming."

Additionally, producing the Live Oak Music Festival has become increasingly difficult for a small public radio station to produce. Staffing demands, operational, and liability commitments are no longer feasible. Festival attendance has also steadily declined, while the costs of talent, supplies, services, and insurance have continued to rise.

KCBX is exploring whether the festival could return in a reimagined form in 2028.

"We are deeply grateful for the care, passion and commitment the Live Oak volunteers and community have brought to this festival, year after year," said McBride. "We look forward to the reimagination of this wonderful event that brings us together around music and community."

As the station enters a new era without federal funding, its priority is to preserve its public radio service and build a finan-

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Tickets are \$25 or 2 for \$45 at bytheseaproductions.org or at door.
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Community

cially sustainable future.

“The evolution of the Live Oak Music Festival over the past 38 years was possible because of the community support it has received from festival volunteers and KCBX staff,” McBride said. “Now, KCBX depends fully on that same level of community backing as it navigates a new era of fundraising without federal funding. We are grateful for your care and belief in KCBX, your local, 100% community-supported public radio station.”

Get Freebies for Flashing your Library Card



County of San Luis Obispo Public Libraries members can present their library card at more than 30 businesses in Atascadero and Cambria for discounts and freebies during National Library Card Signup Month in September.

Businesses include Bramble Pie Company, Malibu Brew Coffee, Cutruzzola Vineyard, Plantae & Fungi, and more. Participating businesses will display a window decal during September featuring the library’s mascot, Quincy the Quail. Visit SLOLibrary.org’s Events tab to find the full list of partners.

Library members can also enter a prize drawing by collecting stamps from businesses on a special bookmark. The bookmarks are available at the Atascadero and the Cambria libraries as well as at participating businesses.

“This initiative connects community members in new ways and sparks curiosity,” said Tina Baugh, regional manager for County of San Luis Obispo Public Libraries. “It’s a way to explore our communities together.”

Historically, Library Card Signup Month has been an annual American Library Association (ALA) initiative during the month of September “for libraries to remind parents, caregivers, and students that signing up for a library card is the first step on the path to academic achievement and lifelong learning.”

There are more perks to having a library card (besides books): Members can borrow County and State parks passes, museum passes, board games, musical instruments, sewing machines, and more.

Open Applications for Tuition-Free Youth Music Programs



The local music non-profit Infinite Music has opened applications for its Rising Stars and Rising Stars Piano youth music mentorship programs, providing eligible San Luis Obispo and Northern Santa Barbara County students in grades 2–12 with the opportunity to receive tuition-free music instruction from professional local music educators.

Applications are accepted through October 1 at midnight PST, with award recipients to be announced in November. Instruction begins in January 2027.

The programs are designed to remove financial barriers to music education, while connecting young musicians with dedicated professional teachers who provide not only individualized

instruction, but encouragement, mentorship, and the confidence to grow as musicians.

Rising Stars provides tuition-free individual private and/or small group instrumental and vocal instruction to deserving students in grades 6-12. Selected students receive 10 weeks of instruction with a local professional music educator. Applicants are considered based on academic achievement, their application narrative and demonstrated interest in music, as well as family financial need. The program culminates in a public student showcase in late April.

Rising Stars Piano introduces students in grades 2-5 to piano, or violin, through 20 weeks of weekly, one-on-one instruction. Designed for beginning musicians, the program helps students develop musical skills while building patience, discipline, confidence, and the courage to challenge themselves and perform.

“We were thrilled to receive more than 150 applications for our Rising Stars and Rising Stars Piano programs last year, and we anticipate an even greater need this year,” said Sarah Mason, founder and director of Infinite Music. “Thanks to the generous support of local foundations, grants and community donors, we are hopeful that we can provide music mentorship to as many deserving students as possible.”

Since 2013, Morro Bay-based Infinite Music has provided more than 4,000 local students with opportunities to experience music through individual and small group instruction, instruments, workshops with professional musicians, school-based music enrichment, live performances, and student performance opportunities. The organization also supports more than 70 local music educators who teach through its programs.

For students and families interested in applying, applications for Rising Stars and Rising Stars Piano are available online at www.infinitemusic.org.

Takin’ Care of Business Continued on page 14

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Cancer, I Got Your Number

Jenny, from the 1982 hit Tommy Tutone song “867-5309,” won’t answer, but the phone number can help people fighting cancer.

Cancer Support Community – CA Central Coast (CSC-CCC) is joining a national effort to transform one of music’s most unforgettable phone numbers into an equally unforgettable resource for people impacted by cancer.

Effective immediately, anyone impacted by cancer can call CSC-867-5309 (272-867-5309) to connect with the Cancer Support Helpline and receive free, confidential support, trusted information and personalized guidance from specially trained professionals.

Inspired by the phone number made famous by the 1981 hit song “867-5309/Jenny,” Cancer Support Community and Gilda’s Club have given the number a new purpose: making it easier to remember where to turn when cancer enters your life.

“When you hear the words ‘you have cancer,’ or when someone you love is diagnosed, there are so many questions, emotions and unknowns that follow,” said Candice Galli, executive director of CSC-CCC. “No one should have to figure all of that out alone. I love that a number so many of us already know by heart can now connect someone to real support, understanding and encouragement when they need it most. Whether someone needs answers, resources or simply a person who understands, CSC-867-5309 gives them a place to start.”

The Cancer Support Helpline is available at no cost to people living with cancer, survivors, caregivers, family members and anyone impacted by a cancer diagnosis. Callers are connected with trained professionals who can provide emotional support, help navigate resources and services, answer questions and identify practical next steps based on each person’s individual needs.

For people on California’s Central Coast, CSC-CCC also provides a local community of support throughout the cancer experience. The organization offers more than 28 free services each month, including professionally facilitated support groups, short-term individual counseling, cancer education and workshops, programs for children, teens and families, movement and healthy lifestyle programs, and opportunities for connection. In-person and virtual options are available, along with Spanish-language services and support.

“Sometimes the hardest part is simply knowing where to begin,” Galli added. “Our hope is that people remember this number and share it. You may not need it today, but someday you, a friend, a coworker or someone you love might. When that day comes, we want people to know they are seen, they are supported and they do not have to face cancer alone.”

All calls to CSC-867-5309 (272-867-5309) are confidential and available at no cost.

To learn more about local programs and services through Cancer Support Community – CA Central Coast, visit CSCSLO.org. For more information about the CSC-867-5309 campaign, visit CSC8675309.com.

Could Your Pet be a Calendar Model?



A 25 lb. Jaxx sitting on a 35 lb. Leo.Photo by Dean Sullivan

Woods Humane Society is holding its 4th annual Pets of the Year Calendar Contest. The contest is open to public and entry forms are accepted through midnight on September 20.

Entry into the contest is free. Participants can nominate their pet by creating a page, uploading their pet photo, and asking friends and family to vote by donating to their contest page throughout the month.

The top ten fundraisers will be featured in a beautiful, pet-themed 2027 print calendar. Winners also receive four printed calendars and are featured in a 2027 social media post, email and website post. All contestants who raise a minimum of \$25 will win a calendar and will have their pet photo included on the calendar’s collage page.

Woods will unveil the 2027 calendar and winners at the Woods Humane Society Wiggle Waggle Fall Festival on October 24, where the calendars will be available for sale.

“The Pets of the Year calendar contest highlights our community’s enthusiasm and adoration for its furry family-members, and we can’t wait to see this year’s nominations,” says Woods CEO Emily L’Heureux. “This fun, community contest is also a unique way to help homeless pets at Woods. By donating to vote on contestants’ pages, supporters can make a real difference for dogs and cats in need. Every dollar donated goes toward helping homeless pets find food, shelter, medical care, and loving families.”

To read more about the contest rules, prizes, and guidelines, visit www.WoodsHumane.org/Contest.

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 Dose of Good Dogma



Informally Yours

By Lisa Ellman

In the 30 years that I’ve been in business as a dog (human) trainer, I don’t think I’ve ever really “trained” any of my dogs.

Let me elaborate. When you have a child, do you train them or raise them? Why do we say raising a child, instead of training a child? Isn’t it really, fundamentally, the same thing? The point I want to make is that whether we live with children or dogs, every minute of every day is spent trying to get the most desirable, socially acceptable behavior, out of these beings. Just as we sometimes set up nonverbal rules, boundaries and goals for human children, the same can be done with your dog.

I like to think of dog training in two ways: formal and informal. Think of “formal” training as sending your child (or dog) to school. There’s a specific time to go and specific lessons taught. There is homework, time set aside to review and practice.

“Informal” training, on the other hand, is teaching the child (or dog) everyday behaviors that are acceptable, or not, just by living. You live with your dog 24 hours a day. Every minute you’re with your dog is a “training” opportunity. When I say that I’ve never really trained my dogs, I’m referring to formal training.

A lot of the behaviors I elicit from my dogs come from them knowing what is appropriate, or not, through trial and error. For example, “sit” is a natural dog behavior, and they’ll do it easily for a treat, often without having to say the word. Verbal cues are meaningful, but not always necessary. The dog has “conditioned” itself, informal training. It has learned that if I do A, then B happens.

When I get home from work, my dog is excited to see me and jumps on me. If I walk past without engaging in that behavior, I’m teaching it that jumping elicits zero response from me, but not jumping gets a nice calm greeting. I’ve said nothing to the dog about the jumping. It’s like if your child throws a tantrum and you ignore it, they soon figure out that if they want your attention, they need to do something different. Any engagement of the “bad” behavior only reinforces it, informal training.

All this training (or raising) whether formal or informal requires that a strong bond of trust and leadership has been established. Just as your child, or dog, learns to trust that you will be a fair and benevolent parent, they should come to recognize that you will lead or guide them in the right direction of understand-

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Food Vendor - La Katrina

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Community

ing expected life behaviors. Things like being polite; not jumping on people or you when putting the food bowl down, not bolting out the door, etc.

We raise children to respect boundaries, your dog should learn the same; no playing on the bed, no jumping on the table to get food, etc.

So when, and how, does “formal” training happen? Verbal cues like “stay”, “place” or “leave it” require formal training. They’re not natural dog behaviors. They need to be practiced and have time set aside for structured repetitions a few times a day. If you have 5 minutes, a few times a day, instead of going to social media, use that time to work on some formal training.

The thing about training, whether formal or informal, is that it creates and reinforces trust and respect, enhancing connection between you and your dog. It’s a positive feedback loop that lasts a lifetime.

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

Woodcarver Show, Sept. 19-20

The Central Coast Woodcarvers will host its 46th Annual Woodcarving Show on Saturday-Sunday, Sept. 19-20 in Cambria.

Admission is a \$2 donation at the door. Expert wood carvers from all across California will be on hand displaying their creations that include Christmas figures, bark houses, wood burned scenes, carved spoons, bowls, birds, caricatures and more. They will also have wood carving and burning equipment for sale for anyone who might want to take up the art form.

Doors open at 10 a.m. both days and Saturday features a 1 p.m. open whittling contest. There will be raffles held all day and lots of gifts for sale by the carvers. Doors close at 5 p.m.

Sunday features a 1 p.m. Best of Show competition followed at 3:30 p.m. with more raffle winners and carving awards announced. Doors close at 4 p.m.

The show will be in the Cambria Vets Hall, located at 1000 Main St.

New Year for Morro Bay 4-H

The Morro Bay 4-H Club is getting ready to start its new program year and kids interested in joining can find out more at their upcoming club meeting.

Four-H is for boys and girls ages 5-19 and is one of the largest youth organizations in the U.S.

The Morro Bay chapter’s first meeting is set for 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 6 at the Moro Grange Hall, 1340 Atascadero Rd (on Hwy 41 east of Morro Bay).

They will have information about Morro Bay 4-H and the projects that are being offered this year. The current list of projects offered are: leadership, poultry, beef, swine, sheep, hiking, cooking, gardening, arts & crafts, and sewing.

For more information contact Community Club Leader Tammy Haas at (805) 459-7988 or via email at: morrobay4club@yahoo.com. information is also available at the county website, see: ucanr.edu/sites/slo4-h.

Petite Practice Book Signing



Dr. Christiane Schroeter signed copies of her new book, “Petite Practice: Small, Steady Steps to a Life of Momentum and Real Change,” at Salty Pages in Cambria on Saturday, Sept. 5 during Pinedorado weekend.

Salty Pages opened on Main Street in March, and owner Julie Saunders said at the time that she hoped to connect with the authors and poets living along our part of the coast. Schroeter, who has lived on the Central Coast for 20 years, finally decided, after five months, to walk into the shop in August, the day before her new book was released. Three weeks later, Saunders offered her the store for a signing.

“Petite Practice” is Schroeter’s fifth book. A behavioral economist and professor at Cal Poly, she has spent two decades researching why people who know exactly what to do still don’t do it. Her answer is that the “step is almost always smaller than we think, and we postpone it anyway.”

The book is available on Amazon in hardcover, paperback, and Kindle, and signed copies will be on the shelf at Salty Pages, 2024 Main St., Cambria. Photo submitted

Letters To The Editor



Manipulation, Hype, and Floating Offshore Wind

Sad to say, we are living in a time of incessant manipulation, subterfuge and downright hype at the hands of our politicians and their favorite corporate donors and glad-hand buddies. Here, in the land of “energy opportunity” the Central Coast of California, we have been the recipients and guinea pigs of political and corporate hype and it’s time that someone pointed the obvious

out and just said “No.”

As many of you know, three of the companies holding offshore wind leases for future floating offshore wind development in California have backed out of their leases and taken a partial repayment of their lease monies and have promised to invest in other more immediate energy ventures. They have all voluntarily and logically opted to back away from a lease that obviously held little opportunity for future investment return and have collectively realized their folly and divested from a highly speculative industry based on technologies that have not yet been developed and proven (floating offshore turbines and sub stations in 4k depth water).

Each and every one has been partially reimbursed for an unrealized project and have taken considerable losses in the process, and even one that has not yet taken the money and run. Equinor/Atlas Wind has stated, “We have no plans to pursue further (new) offshore wind projects in the US”. Still, our local pro-offshore wind California politicians, Salud Carbajal, John Laird and Alex Padilla have gotten their shorts all wadded up over this “disappointing” turn of events. In an effort to garner public outrage and make a “green hero” of themselves they have publicly and vociferously railed against this lease fund return and have attempted to manipulate the public by claiming that the Trump administration was taking billions of taxpayer money to buy off the leasees and to pressure them into capitulating. Nothing could be farther from the truth! The reality is this, offshore wind in the US is proving to be expensive, too speculative and fraught with all kinds of potential issues that no amount of public agency capitulation and state bias (yes, i am talking about the CEC and the CCC) will mitigate.

Additionally, even though offshore wind is finding fewer and fewer supporters in the upper echelon of our state political system, Padilla and his cronies, California Attorney General Rob Bonta and CEC Chair David Hochschild, have initiated a costly lawsuit (120 million) claiming the feds don’t have the legal right to refund the lease money. They do, they have, and chances are the other two leasees in California will go by the wayside soon. A bad investment made on incomplete and faulty information and a dependence on subsidies is just that a bad investment! Floating offshore wind has no future in this state.

Let’s see clear to start letting our politicians know that we will not be manipulated by a misrepresentation of a situation and use of inflammatory politics to garner attention and support. It’s high time we let our state know that continued support for an industry dying a slow and excruciatingly painful death that will not provide the energy our state needs in the near future is unacceptable. It’s time to tell our local politicians and the CEC to stop advocating for and issuing grants for ports to support a non-existent industry, as is the case with Port San Luis.

As engaged and informed citizens we can stop being manipulated by disingenuous politicians, exploitive labor leaders, clueless “environmental” NGOs, and greedy corporations and call them on their hype and hubris. Floating offshore wind will not work in California and it’s time they got a freaking clue!

Contact the REACT Alliance (www.reactalliance.org) for more information on this incredibly important issue. The future of our coastal communities, its pristine environment and beauty, and our thriving coastal economies are relying on your participation to stop offshore wind off our coast. To get even more crucial information, join us on November 7 at the SLO Botanical Gardens at 2 p.m. for our forum “It’s All Just Smoke and Mirrors, exposing the offshore wind hype”

You have a voice. You have a choice!

Mandy Davis
REACT Alliance

City Park Needs a Gazebo

I’m highly in favor of installing a gazebo at the Morro Bay city park. Gazebos serve as functional, aesthetic, and social anchor by their design, and benefit as a community gathering hub that provide an aesthetic and architectural anchor. Their classic geometry breaks up open lawns, add visual character, charm, and a sense of historic or deliberate landscape design to a park’s design.

I would add that any music event should be strictly acoustic, non-amplified. Morro Bay is popular as a welcoming, peaceful community, often accentuated by its rolling evening fog. Let’s promote that charm.

Pete Schroeder
Morro Bay

Letters Continued on page 17

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Community

Pollinator Population — Unsung Heroes

Story and Photos
by John Lindsey

Pollinators are the unsung heroes behind thriving ecosystems and abundant food. Pollination is not just a fascinating natural process; it is a lifeline that sustains life on Earth. Without these vital creatures, people and most land-based ecosystems would struggle to survive. In fact, more than 80% of flowering plants depend on animal pollinators to continue their life cycles.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) highlights this by stating, “Three-fourths of the world’s flowering plants and about one-third of the world’s food crops depend on animal pollinators to reproduce.” This shows how important pollination is for our food supply.

Pollinators not only help plants produce food, but they also fight soil erosion and capture and store carbon. In other words, bees and other pollinators are far more than honey-makers or flower visitors. Their tireless efforts underpin healthy ecosystems everywhere.

Pollinator conservation matters now more than ever because these small but essential creatures support both healthy ecosystems and our food supply. Their decline is alarming: in the United States, beekeepers lost nearly half of their managed honeybee colonies between April 2022 and April 2023. Butterflies are also at risk. The monarch butterfly is now endangered, and five butterfly species have disappeared from the U.S. since 1950. Around the world, species such as the Xerces blue, Morant’s blue, and Sloane’s Urania are gone forever. Fortunately, simple actions can help pollinators recover and thrive:

- Reduce or reconsider pesticide use.



Members of Rotary, left to right. John Swift, Rick Robinett, Marisa Gomez, Cheryl Vonderahe, Don Maruska and David Preston at Saint Benedict’s Church along Los Osos Valley Road.

- Grow gardens with native plants that attract pollinators.
- If you find bee colonies in unwanted places, reach out to local beekeepers so they can safely relocate them instead of destroying them.
- Help nonprofit groups and conservation projects by donating, volunteering, or sharing information.

Locally, two groups have come together to increase the number of native plants that pollinators like. Led by Don Maruska who is a member of the Rotary Club of San Luis Obispo de Tolosa and Rotary District 5240 Environmental Chair, has worked to increase pollinator numbers by engaging Rotary Clubs and their community partners along the Central Coast. Through a partnership with Monarch Joint Venture, they are tapping pollinator plants and technical support.

Recently, Maruska led a project with the Rotary Club of Los



Work being done by the Rotary Club of Los Osos and Los Osos Valley Garden Club at Saint Benedict’s Church on Los Osos Valley Road.

Osos and Los Osos Valley Garden Club at Saint Benedict’s Church on Los Osos Valley Road. The team cleared weeds, laid down cardboard to prevent new weeds, and added over three inches of mulch. In the future, they will plant pollinator-friendly plants to help local pollinators thrive.

To attract bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds, advisors suggest planting drought-tolerant native plants such as California buckwheat (the state’s top bee plant), black sage, California lilac (Ceanothus), and California poppy. Planting flowers that bloom at different times gives pollinators food all year.

By transforming our yards and neighborhoods, we can give pollinators, and the ecosystems and food systems that depend



A bee pollinates a lavender plant. on them, a better chance to flourish.

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SLO Symphony Pops By The Sea in Avila Beach

Photos by Dean Sullivan

The San Luis Obispo Symphony hosted its annual Pops by the Sea: Symphony Remix on Saturday at the Avila Beach Golf Resort. The Symphony played well known hits by The Beach Boys, Michael Jackson, Led Zeppelin, The Killers, Billy the Kid and more alongside Brass Mash, a local-favorite group of horn players.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY of MORRO BAY

Civilian Conservation Corps and Park Rustic



Most Americans who have visited parks and public spaces from the 1930s have seen those amazing buildings and campsites made of irregularly shaped rock — their common style is called “Park Rustic.” You see them locally in the Morro Bay State Park with their stone walls and pedestals that had to be pieced together by hand.

The hands that made them often belonged to the young, unemployed men who volunteered for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the New Deal from its founding in 1933 to its termination during WWII in June 1942. At its founding President Roosevelt defined it as a source of employment for low-skilled manual labor that would not compete with established unions or crafts. CCC men were paid \$30 per month (about \$770 today) and were required to send \$25 to their families.

The Morro Bay State Park was built on about 1,500 acres acquired in part from the bankrupt owners of the Cabrillo Estates project, including their 9-hole golf course. From the very beginning of that project planners sought to get “Civil Works Administration” funds to hire men to “construct picnic and camp grounds, build trails, improve roads and plant shrubs.” (Daily Telegram, 9 Dec 1933).

By April 1934 this hope was realized with the allocation of 200 members of the CCC to the project, with the expecta-

tion they would complete the campground project in about a year (Daily Telegram, 30 April 1934). In the end, the CCC was active on the Morro Bay site from 1934 to 1939, building, remodeling, and extending the park. It was significantly renovated in 2004, but elements of the original work remain after almost 90 years. Along the older roads in the park (like going up to the parking lot on Black Hill) you can still see stone drainage ditches along the road that survive surprisingly intact after all this time.

It is not often mentioned, but the CCC had a connection with the military from its inception. Active duty at first and later reserve officers were recruited to run camps. In 1937, the U.S. Fourth Army held war games in the county with 24 officers and 234 enlisted men using the “old CCC camp” as a base to prepare for the 100 other officers who would “act as umpires for the largest maneuvers held in the state since the World War [WWI]” (Daily Telegram, 17 July 1937). The country was well into preparing for the war that was already in motion in Europe and the East.

The CCC finally ended when the young men it relied on became soldiers for WWII. Morro Bay State Park is a living presence through the amazing work of those “unskilled” men. Their contribution to history was recognized in 2014 when the State Park was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

Letters From page 15

Employers Should Make AI Savings Pay

San Luis Obispo County already treats work itself as a training stool. Its on-the-job training program helps bridge skill gaps through work-based learning while reimbursing employers for part of the training cost.

AI should strengthen that model.

Stanford’s August 12 payroll update found employment among U.S. workers ages 22-25 in highly AI-exposed occupations about 19% below where it would be if it had kept pace with similarly aged workers in less-exposed occupations. The adjustment appears mainly through reduced hiring.

North Coast employers can turn AI time savings into a skill-transfer budget. Have experienced workers review junior employees’ AI-assisted work, explain exceptions, expose them to difficult customer cases, and debrief decisions that require context. Then track whether beginners reach independent competence faster. The strongest productivity gain is a workforce that learns more quickly as routine preparation shrinks.

*Gleb Tsipursky, PhD
Columbus, Ohio*

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.

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Pinedorado Days in Cambria

Photos by Connie Pendleton

The 76th annual Pinedorado Days celebration took place over Labor Day weekend in Cambria. The weekend included a parade, live music, dancing kiddie rides, food and drinks.



Coastal Pines Medical Group celebrates Stars and Stripes.



Red Moose Cookie Company in West Village wins Business of the Year.



Covell Ranch Clydesdales wow onlookers.



Let's hear it for the beloved Monarch Butterfly.



What happens to most of us in a traffic jam.



Parade and viewers at Cambria Dr. and Main St., Cambria looking north into West Village.

Del Clegg Named Cambria's New Honoray Mayor

The race for Cambria's honorary Mayor concluded at the Mayor's Ball on Saturday, Sept 5 at the Barn at Fog's End in Cambria. Four candidates were competing for the title and the winner, Del Clegg, was announced during the Pinedorado Days weekend festivities. In this election, every vote costs \$1 and the voting was happening as often as possible during the evening and during final stump speeches.... What a heart stopping night! There was live music from the 16-piece Vineyard Jazz Big Band, featuring great swing era sounds of the mid -20th century. A dance floor was available and many couples enjoyed "cutting

the rug" into the wee hours of the night! Guests were encouraged to wear formal attire inspired by the 1920's -1940's, and hand-some couples were dressed to the "nines"! The candidates were running on the platform of non profit organizations that benefited financially from the "votes" they received... every candidate earned money for their designated 501 group and will be awarding a check next week in recognition photos. The candidates: Jim Bahringer- American Legion Post 432; Dianne "Lady Tie Di" Brooke- Cambria PTA; Del Clegg, Rotary Club of Cambria; and Barrett Stuart- Cambria Tennis Club. The special and amazing event was attended by 89 happy residents and family!



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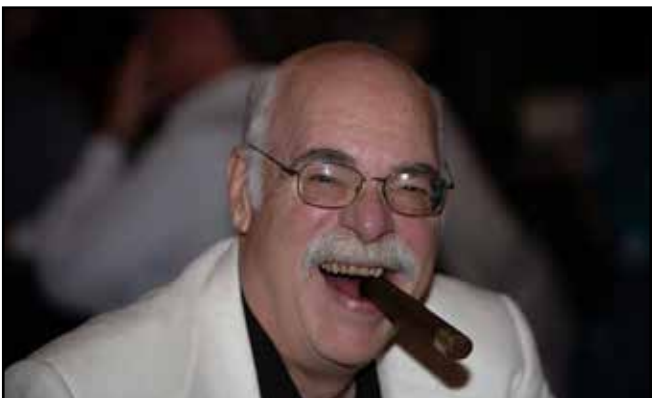
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News

2026 Baywood Park's Annual Lighted Boat Parade

The town is still glowing from last Sunday's 2026 Baywood Lighted Boat Parade, marking the biggest year yet for the pure, quirky, and joyful display of homegrown Los Osos goodness.

Nearly a hundred lighted and decorated watercraft took to the bay for the fifth annual community float. The water was alive with creativity, featuring everything from glowing dragons and pirate ships to a floating field of poppies, light-up humans, sailboats, and a giant rubber ducky. The warm evening brought out plenty of local sea-faring pups and stoked kids swimming in the shallows, surrounded by fun, creative people embracing the spirit of the event.

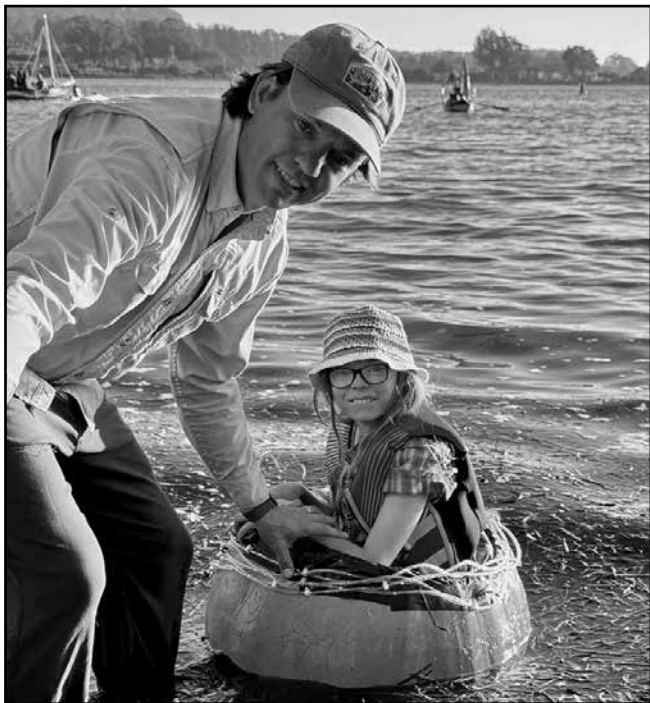
“The whole neighborhood came out to the blue Baywood Pier and the shoreline to watch and enjoy the very finest of our community utilizing this beautiful natural backdrop,” said Paul Irving, one of the organizers. “The Cimo Brothers filled the air with the perfect live soundtrack for the magical night, while Bear City Social kept the crowd happily fed.

“A major highlight of the evening was the presentation of the highly coveted sea glass trophies, crafted once again by local glass artist Ted Emrick of Emrick Studios. Big congratulations and heartfelt thank-yous go to the recipients of this year’s Local Luminary Awards, honoring organizations with a profound impact on the town: the Los Osos Library and Celebrate Los Osos, both recognized for decades of outstanding service to the community.”

Out on the water, the competition for the best float was fierce. The Most Creative Boat Award went to Bob Rice for his crazy, out-of-this-world UFO boat. The People's Choice Award was awarded to Don Charttrand and Ted Emrick, who navigated an impressive Steelhead Trout boat in support of Creek Lands Conservation.

Special honorable mentions went to the delightful Dolly Parton Tribute boat and the inventive kids who successfully sailed a massive, actual carved-out pumpkin.

“Thank you to everyone who came out to share in the kindness, creativity, and connection on the bay,” Irving said. “We can’t wait to see what you all build for next year.”



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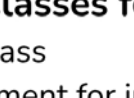
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News

Rate Hike From page 1

increase to \$250/2 month/14 units and \$14.57 for each additional unit of water.

By year five, the basic rate rises to \$304/2 months, and additional units would charge out at \$16.87 each.

“The proposed rate increase,” Holder’s report said, “is the minimum required to support operations, meet debt service obligations, stabilize financial reserves, and fund an update to the CSA-10A Master Water Plan.”

The report spelled out what the increased revenues would cover:

- Increased Water Treatment costs (\$20,000);
- Consumer Price Index (inflation) increases for outside vendors and contractors (\$40,000);
- Increases in water system labor rates, including operations, engineering, and management (\$50,000); and,
- Annual Parent Fund loan payment (\$50,000).

Holder explained, “The following annual increases of 5% are intended to maintain adequate revenue as operating costs continue to rise.

“In years two and three, the additional revenues will allow the system to begin rebuilding operating reserves and fund the development of a Master Water Plan Update.”

Things were projected to catch up in the final year of the rate hike. “By year five,” Holder said, “revenues are projected to increase by approximately \$420,000 as compared to current levels. While this rate increase addresses projected operations and debt service requirements, the financial reserve targets will not be achieved within the 5-year period.

“Operating reserves may build gradually once revenue requirements are satisfied. A smaller ‘rainy day’ fund will limit the amount of revenue available for reinvestment and may extend the timeline needed to complete infrastructure repairs or require additional loans.”

But the County’s justifications fell short with the ratepayers and none of the Cayucos residents who attended the Supervisor’s meeting was in the least bit supportive of the County’s numbers.

Rachel Wilson, who sits on the Cayucos Citizens Advisory Council (CCAC), the advisory body that the County first brought the rate proposal to for comments and inputs, questioned the County’s numbers including even the number of eligible parcels

that were included for the protest vote.

Wilson said there are 782 water hookups in CSA-10A and yet the County included an additional 98 undeveloped parcels. She argued that the water system has only added 11 new meters over the past 9 years and when she asked if these added parcels had water meters, she was told the County could not divulge that information.

The County also would not give her the number of “will serve” letters that had been issued but not hooked up yet; nor would they give the number of new construction permits on file.

She said many of the extra lots are on the hillside where the County has been dealing with numerous so-called “paper lots” that are on a map but unable to be built on due to steep slopes and danger of landslides, among other reasons. The County has been taxing the property owners and seizing those that default on the property taxes, buying them up for pennies on the dollar. The idea is to eventually buy them all up and retire them into open space.

She added that there are just 310 residents actually living in CSA-10A and most are retired and unable to absorb higher water rates.

Susan Dunn, who lives in South Cayucos, said she’s worked for Federal, State and Local government agencies and “The numbers are why we’re here.” She pointed to the “Chaney Project,” a project that would replace and upsize a water pipe running underneath Hwy 1 from the east to west sides of the highway that bisects South Cayucos.

That project, she said, increased from \$225,000 to now over \$563,000 an increase of more than 170%.

“Where is all this money going?” she asked.

She added that when she walked the neighborhood talking to residents about the water rate hike, 98% of them were opposed to it.

Other speakers talked about a previous rate hike of 35% from 2018 that included a list of infrastructure projects they said the County never completed and is now asking for another increase to tackle the same projects.

Susie Anderson asked Supervisors to order an independent forensic audit of CSA-10A’s books and to go back and come up with rates that meet the “spirit and letter of the law,” (Prop. 218).

“A 35-percent increase proposal is a classic rate hike abuse that Prop. 218 was enacted to prevent,” she said.

Other speakers mentioned Cayucos’ two privately held mutual water companies and asked why they can deliver the same water service for far less than the County?

Others urged the Supervisors to look into what it would take to privatize the county’s water system?

“We cannot continue to spend money the way we are,” said Maryann Carnegie.

Another speaker who also lives in the zone commented that the 2018 rate hike was in part supposed to pay for storage tank upgrades and then the County borrowed \$4 million to pay for that project, part of an estimated \$5 million overall in debts under CSA-10A that the County is paying off through the water bills.

The storage upgrade was one of the main infrastructure improvements that the County promised to complete with the last rate hike.

Another man, who said he owns a home in Cayucos but has a main residence with acreage in Templeton, said his Templeton water bills run \$42 a month, asking why Templeton can provide water so cheaply, and called the County’s Cayucos water bills “ridiculous.”

In the end, with the protest vote settled, Supervisors didn’t have much to say. Sup. Gibson moved the County acknowledge the results of the Prop. 218 vote and deny the rate increase.

He said he would be meeting with the staff to work on what to do next.

Dist. 3 Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg tried to add a direction to Gibson’s motion, to have the County look into what it would take and cost to turn CSA-10A over to a private entity, potentially through a contract for operations and maintenance.

Gibson didn’t want to change his motion and said that could be part of the upcoming discussions with staff on what to do now.

After the meeting the CCAC issued a press release signed by Wilson adding some fuel to the fire that the protest vote lit.

“To attempt another Proposition 218 with some slightly changed figures,” the release said, “ignores the very real problems and will be just a waste of money and time. We urge the County to figure out where the \$5 million went and explore privatization ASAP.”

It’s likely the County will have to take a deep dive into the projections made to arrive at the rate increases it proposed and residents can probably expect them to come back some time in the future with another proposal. But it will have to be more palatable to the ratepayers, lest they reject it again.

A second, successful Prop. 218 protest vote would enter the unprecedented realm of possibilities.

For assuming their estimates on revenue needs vs. expenses are solid, the County’s water system will still be swimming in the red and potentially sinking deeper every year.



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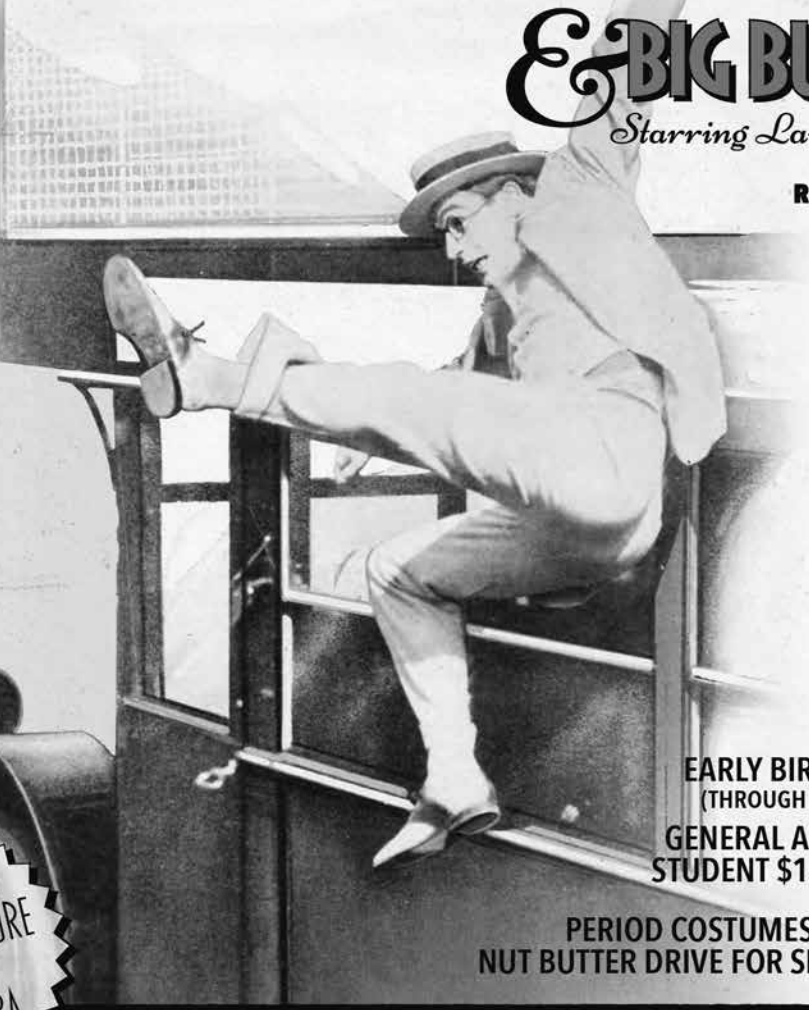


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News

Avocado Fest From page 1

after the pandemic. Now in 2026 both the Chamber and the City of Morro Bay believe community events can serve as economic drivers to bring visitors to local businesses and showcase what makes Morro Bay unique.”

After a review of the 2022 event, it was determined to limit the 2026 event to a single day and return to its original waterfront location. Clark said, “The board realized it was an ambitious effort to expand the event’s footprint even though it offered new opportunities for the attendees and vendors. Frankly, moving away from the Embarcadero actually reduced some of the direct economic benefits traditionally experienced by our waterfront businesses. And most importantly, we learned just how closely this festival’s identity is tied to Morro Bay’s waterfront.”

Clark shared another decision the group feels will be attractive to residents and visitors. Supported by a grant from Visit Morro Bay, the application will downsize the festival’s attendance to a limit of 6,000 although it once attracted over 10,000. The goal is quality over quantity in 2026 – offering the best possible experience for all.

Jacobs added, “As a business owner, I’ve seen firsthand how important events are to our community. They bring people into town, create energy throughout the waterfront and give our businesses an opportunity to connect with new customers.”

Returning to manage the festival is Kyle Flaherty, kyle@justuseventconsulting.com. She produced the Avocado Margarita Festivals 2015 through 2019. “One thing we gained during the pandemic was an appreciation for what was lost. Prior to COVID, we spent a lot of time learning to manage traffic, crowds, and all of the things a large event brings to a small town. Once a re-emergence of tourism and staycations returned to Morro Bay, the Chamber was asked by many of the businesses and community members to bring AvoFest back. We have even more local partnerships, which has made it feel very grassroots based again.”



Photos by Kyle Flaherty

Flaherty provided some highlights. “There are lots of kids’ activities. Ten and under are free so we hope this will become a family event. We have face painters, hair tinsel, drum lessons, magic shows, a musical petting zoo and a special Avo-Art projects for children.

“For adults we’ve created a specialty Avocado Margarita that includes an entire avocado in every Margarita. Most of our avocados are from Morro Creek Ranch and the majority of our vendors are local to Morro Bay or SLO County.”

She explained the music is continuous from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and there’s room to dance or sit and enjoy the sounds of B and the Hive, Resination, Hot Fire, Samba Loca, and the closing group is an area favorite, The Molly Ringwald Project.

Jacobs and Clark wanted to make sure the sponsors were



thanked: Visit Morro Bay and The City of Morro Bay with support from numerous groups that will benefit financially from the festival. They include the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, MBHS Softball Team, MBHS Art Club, MB Lions Club, MB Rotary, and the MB Active Adults.

Jacobs concluded, “AvoFest has such a long history in Morro Bay. Together September 12 we have an opportunity to bring it back in a fresh way while still honoring community traditions people still remember.”

Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door and can be purchased at <https://avomargfest.ticketsauce.com/>.

Comes Up Short Too From page 1

Directors are: Board President Bob Enns — Div. 5; and, Board V.P. John Curtis — Div. 1.

Two men signed up to run for the Div. 4 seat that was vacated Aug. 20 when long-time Board member Shirley Lyon stepped down.

Qualified candidates are: Charles Bergson and Jim Billings. Both will appear on the November ballot and whoever gets the most votes wins. Filling the other two spots is a bit different than other offices.

According to a report from District G.M David Athey, “Pursuant to Elections Code §10515, the vacant seats representing Divisions 2 and 3 must be filled by appointment by the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors (BOS) before Nov. 30, 2026. The appointment will be effective Nov. 3, 2026, and the candidates will serve the remaining terms of the divisions.”

The Board assumes an advisory position in this process. County Supervisors, “may consider recommendations for candidates made by the CSD Board of Directors (BOD),” Athey said. “If the CSD BOD desires to make recommendations to the BOS, the CSD BOD may provide direction to staff regarding the scope and manner of outreach and coordination desired with County officials.

“Such direction may include whether staff should post the vacancies, establish an application process and timeline, collect expressions of interest from eligible residents, and return with qualified applicants for the Board’s consideration at the September CSD BOD meeting and prior to forwarding any recommendations to the County.”

Athey told Estero Bay News that the Board voted to form an ad hoc committee — with Enns and Curtis — to go out into the community and see if they can recruit people to apply for the

open seats.

Those people would be interviewed at the Board’s September meeting and the Board will vote on recommendations to the Supervisors to fill them for the remainder of the terms.

One seat is a 2-year term and the other a 4-year term, he said.

Los Osos CSD

Los Osos appears a bit more settled, though another appointed board member is needed.

LOCSD General Manager, Greg Kwolek said Chuck Cesena who represents Area 1 and Christine Womack from Area 4 signed up to run and were both unopposed so they will win re-election without a fight.

The third seat, currently held by Board President Matthew Fourcroy in Area 2, will have to be filled. Fourcroy did not seek re-election and no one else sought the seat.

That means for the second election in a row, the board will have to appoint someone to fill an empty seat.

Kwolek told EBN “We’re bringing an item about the vacancy to the Board on Thursday night (Sept. 3). Assuming we get approval, we’ll open up the application on Friday.”

The applicants will have to come out of the Area 2 boundaries, which span the southern side of Los Osos Valley Road from the Redfield Woods (Highland Drive) neighborhood to Bayview Heights and all the way to the Sea Oaks Mobile Home Park.

Normal qualifications would apply — at least 18-years old and a registered voter living within the Area 2 boundaries.

Morro Bay Will Vote

And it seems EBN’s story from our last issue about the non-election in Morro Bay was a bit premature in concluding there would be no election again this year.

In a somewhat surprising move, the City Council at an Aug. 19 Special Meeting unanimously voted (5-0) to go ahead with hav-

ing the election appear on the November General Election ballot.

The decision was made to allow potential write-in candidates to stand up for election.

The three qualified candidates — Mayor Carla Wixom, Councilwoman Zara Landrum and Council newcomer Mike Gerson — will appear on the printed ballots and the sample ballot booklets after all.

However, next to Mayor Wixom’s name will be a blank line for a potential write-in candidate. Landrum’s and Gerson’s names will also have write-in lines below them.

It marks another first in Morro Bay’s election history.

“In circumstances where the number of nominees does not exceed the number of offices to be elected,” City Clerk Dana Swanson told EBN, “State Law requires the City’s Election Official to submit a certification of those facts to the governing body who may choose to either: 1) appoint to the office the persons nominated, thereby canceling the election, or 2) hold the election.”

The Council’s vote to go ahead and hold an election means the \$30,000 that was budgeted by the City for election costs will have to be spent. Canceling the election and simply appointing the three would have saved that money.

But if anyone wants to give a go at a write-in candidacy, they will still have to go through a nomination process.

“Between Sept. 7 to Oct. 20,” Swanson explained, “a registered voter interested in being a write-in candidate must submit to the City Clerk’s Office a ‘Statement of Write-in Candidacy’ that includes the candidate’s name, residential address, declaration stating that he or she is a write-in candidate, title of the office for which they are running and the date of the election.”

That Statement starts the official nomination process. “They are then issued a nomination paper and must collect at least 20 valid signatures of Morro Bay voters,” Swanson said, “just as those who file during the regular nomination period.”

But any serious write-in candidate will probably have to campaign twice as hard to get noticed, since their name will not be printed on the ballots.

“Their name does not appear on the ballot,” Swanson said, “or voters information guide; however, any write-in votes received would be counted.”

There was one other person who had inquired about running before the regular nomination deadline lapsed, but that person did not proceed with a nomination.

The 2026 Election marks the second straight election where the minimum number of candidates for open seats made it to the ballot.

In 2024, Mayor Wixom and now-Councilmen Jeff Eckles and Bill Luffee, were the only people who qualified for the ballot and the then-council members decided not to hold an election and they were given the seats without a fight.

It was Mayor Wixom’s first re-election and the first elections for Councilmen Luffee and Eckles.

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Fire Station Rebuild From page 1

the Harbor Street location as headquarters.

The Bonita Street Station consists of an apparatus bay, which was rebuilt some time ago, and a small house for crew quarters. But the crew quarters fell into disrepair through mainly disuse and now needs to be replaced. Reopening the second fire station is part of the fire departments’ long term planning to better serve the north end of town.

The plan is to split the normal 4-man crew that’s supposed to be on duty at all times into two, 2-man crews with one staying at and responding from Bonita Street.

The City Council in June 2025 authorized the redevelopment of the Bonita Station voting to demolish the old, 1-story crew quarters and build a new, 2-story structure that would also include a satellite office for the police department to use.

The new building would have an operational area on the ground floor and the crew quarters on the second story.

The Council chose that option instead of remodeling the old building or replacing it with a 1-story structure.

From the start there’s been one neighbor who was concerned with the plans.

“During the design process, the Fire Chief and Community Development Director both met with the neighbor to understand and consider her concerns regarding impacts to her private views,” reads a report from Community Development Director Airlin Singewald. “While the City’s planning regulations do not protect private views, to be a good neighbor, the Fire Department incorporated her feedback into the design by setting the building another 10-feet back from the property line [a 25-foot setback compared to the existing 10-foot building setback]. The minimum setback requirement is 20 feet.”

The project went before the Planning Commission last April and the Commission approved of the plans including changes made to address the neighbor’s concerns about the views from her home.

The new plans also included changes to the parking configurations, moving some of the required parking spaces to a side yard setback.

But, “The neighbor also asked for all three required parking spaces to be located in the front setback, rather than including



A rebuilt Bonita Street Station would replace the 1-story crew quarters with a 2-story crew quarters including room for a police department satellite office. Submitted photo



The Bonita Street Fire Station [Sta. 2] as it is now has an apparatus bay and a crew quarters. Submitted photo

two tandem spaces in the eastern side yard and one in the front setback.

“However, this would require a further parking modification and would eliminate a public curbside parking space, in conflict with the Zoning Code.”

So an appeal was filed April 15 and in June the City Council heard the appeal and denied it.

Grounds for the appeal included: failing to consider a lower impact alternative; erroneously finding that no less-detrimental alternative existed; improper reliance on self-imposed constraints, meaning the plans rely on a discretionary decision made by the City Council and not by any real constraints; there was inadequate consideration of the cost differences, i.e. \$1.5 million vs. \$2.5 million; failure to ensure neighborhood compatibility; and, incomplete consideration of relevant information, namely the City didn’t properly take into account findings from a study done for

the fire department.

In the end the appeal demanded the City Council uphold the appeal and deny the 2-story design; direct staff to once again evaluate the 1-story design; and to change the setbacks so the single story option could work. The planning staff recommended the City do none of these.

The Council’s denial reaffirmed the Coastal Development Permit and Conditional Use Permit issued for the project. Community Development Director Singewald said no further appeals have been made and no lawsuit was filed to challenge the project. The site is outside the Coastal Commission’s appeal jurisdiction, so that State agency cannot be involved.

The appeal hearing saw several residents stand up in both support and opposition to the project.

Former Councilwoman, Betty Winholtz asked why we need a 2-story station and “suggested a 2-person station was sufficient,” according to the minutes form the meeting.

Judy Setting reportedly wanted to limit neighborhood impacts and urged a single-story be built with the option to add a second story when needed.

Michelle Leicester-Cadaret said the structure was too big and unnecessary for a city that is not growing.

On the other hand, Courtney Shepler said she appreciated that the proposed plan was responsive to neighbor feedback and the footprint less intrusive than what zoning would allow for single family home. She added that a fire station in North Morro Bay would improve the ISO rating, which measures how well a community and its fire department are prepared to handle fires, and lower insurance rates.

The project can now have detailed schematics drafted for the project that will have to be reviewed and approved by the City Building Department. Once those plans are approved, the City will be able to go out for bids for the project but the City will have to figure out how to pay for it as well.

The City has been seeking Congressional help with the costs from Rep. Salud Carbajal but financing has not yet been identified. The CDP/CUP has a 2-year time limit with options for extending it if needed.

Though the Bonita Street Station has always been a part of the fire department’s facilities, it hasn’t been in active use for decades. The apparatus bay was damaged and rebuilt but the crew quarters were deemed uninhabitable many years ago.

At one time, the City planned to build a new fire station on a vacant nearly 1-acre parcel that was deeded over by the developers of The Cloisters Subdivision, at the corner of Coral and San Jacinto.

That was intended to become the department’s main firehouse, but the City never built there. Instead, following damage from the 2003 San Simeon Earthquake (in December 2003), the main fire station on Harbor Street was condemned and eventually burned down in a training exercise and a new modern station-house was built.

The Cloisters parcel was put up for sale by the City and eventually sold after about a decade of being listed. That money was supposed to be used to help pay off the debt on the new, Harbor Street Firehouse.

A 5-unit subdivision is currently being built there after a couple of years seeking approval. The City Council also recently voted to have those five homes eventually be included in the Cloisters Home Owners Association (HOA).

The Bonita Street Station would be the department’s second firehouse and should greatly reduce response times for the north end of town, once it gets rebuilt.

Endless Summer From page 6

was rebuilt to match the historic look of the original warehouse of Cayucos’ founder, Capt. James Cass in the 1870s. The warehouse was the hub of Capt. Cass’ export and import shipping business that serviced steamships plying the California Coast.

Capt. Cass also built the Cayucos Pier where goods were loaded and offloaded. The pier was also almost entirely rebuilt

by the County after falling into disrepair with dozens of support pilings gone missing.

The Victorian mansion, Cass House, the one-time home of Capt. Cass and family stands across Ocean Avenue from Cayucos Landing and the Pier. It was also completely rebuilt in the 1990s after falling into disrepair and is now a plush bed & breakfast inn.

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