Your Community

Your News

ESTERO BAY NEWS

Local News, Arts & Entertainment, Schools, Business, Environment

Vol #8 - Issue #21 | Cambria • Cayucos • Los Osos • Morro Bay | October 22, - November 11, 2026

El Niño: Watching the Ocean for Clues to Our Winter



For now the upcoming impacts of El Niño are unknown, but, much like a rainbow, nature is full of surprises. Photo by John Lindsey

By John Lindsey

Record-breaking warm Pacific waters suggest a potentially wet and stormy winter ahead for the Central Coast, but history reminds us that even the strongest El Niño events come with no guarantees.

El Niño isn't a promise; it's a possibility.

It's only October, but a very strong El Niño has already developed across the equatorial Pacific, and some scientists believe it could be the strongest on record!

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Climate Prediction Center, there's now an 83% chance that the current El Niño could surpass the strongest events recorded since 1950, based on the Relative Oceanic Niño Index (RONI) for October through December.

This year's developing El Niño bears some striking similarities to the powerful 1997-98 event, which produced more than 200% of average seasonal rainfall across portions of the Central Coast.

But will history repeat itself?

Whether it's El Niño, La Niña, neutral conditions, or what some jokingly call "El Nada," meteorologists have long monitored seawater temperatures across the equatorial Pacific for clues about the coming winter.

For those of us living along California's Central Coast, these ocean temperatures provide valuable insights into the likelihood of winter storms, rainfall, and potentially damaging coastal conditions.

The term El Niño dates back centuries to Peruvian fishermen, who noticed unusually warm ocean waters arriving around Christmas. They called it Corriente del Niño, or "current of the Christ Child."

Today, scientists recognize that this warming is part of a much larger interaction between the ocean and atmosphere known as the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO).

Under normal conditions, steady easterly trade winds push warm surface water westward across the tropical Pacific toward Indonesia and Australia. This allows colder nutrient-rich water to rise toward the surface along the South American coastline, supporting some of the world's most productive marine ecosystems.

During El Niño, those trade winds weaken and sometimes reverse, allowing unusually warm water to spread eastward across the Pacific. Warming suppresses the normal upwelling of cold, nutrient-rich water, disrupting marine ecosystems, shifting fish populations, and altering atmospheric circulation patterns around the globe.

Scientists closely monitor a vast region of the tropical Pacific called Niño 3.4, located along the equator between approximately 170°W and 120°W longitude.

Traditionally, an El Niño is considered strong when the three-month average sea surface temperature anomaly in this region reaches at least 1.5°C above normal. The most power-

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Funds Needed for Emergency-Power at Community Center



The South Bay Community Center is the emergency operations center for Los Osos

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

With the potential of a powerful el Nino season, community emergency centers are preparing for storm readiness. The South Bay Community Center, 2180 Palisades Ave, in Los Osos is designated as the area's evacuation center and primary Shelter Welfare site by the County, but there is no provision for back-up power. The Center and the Los Osos Community Services District are working on installing a backup energy system to build a reliable emergency power hub at the location, and funds are needed.

"As for the SBCC board, we recognize the need for an emergency relocation center in Los Osos," Gary Katayama, SBCC board president told Estro Bay News. "After the flood incident in January 2023, there was no place to serve as an emergency center that had power. We don't want to repeat this!"

The SBCC was not available during the Vista de Oro incident in January 2023 because of a community-wide power outage. That incident occurred when an atmospheric river pounded the area with rain causing a levee on a storm retention pond to failed and sent a torrent of sludge downhill into some 20 homes on Vista Court, a cul-de-sac in the Vista De Oro subdivision. It filled the homes with up to three feet of debris, displaced families, pushed cars out of garages, and carried yard items as far as a half mile away.

The Los Osos Emergency Operations Plan (LOEOP) was developed based on that experience and the need to have an organized structure to address future emergencies. The SBCC is the logical place, but "the major concern with using the center in this capacity is the lack of backup electric generation," said a LOCSD staff report from August of 2025.

Richard Margetson of People Helping People, Ron Munds, former director of the LOCSD, and the Emergency Services committee of the LOCSD, began the process of making the SBCC a fully powered operation emergency center a year ago. Viva Energy has designed and contracted for the construction of a solar/battery backup power solution.

The Emergency Operations Center will be run by SLO county Office of Emergency Services in coordination with Cal Fire and the LOCSD, details are being worked out by the Emergency Services Advisory Committee. This will allow the center to be fully utilized in case of emergency, in coordination with the

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Our Stories — By the Sea Productions Celebrates 10th Anniversary

By Judy Salamacha



By the Sea Productions is celebrating their 10th Anniversary.

Time flies when you're staging live community theater once a month all year long! And suddenly Morro Bay's By the Seas Productions is celebrating its 10th anniversary. Notably former Mayor Janice Peters has been the "captain" that launched the company and mastered the helm over the years. She is also the first to admit she's ready to retire behind the scenes, but she is still having fun.

She proudly stated, "As By the Sea Productions has developed over the past ten years, our audience loyalty has grown. We've produced 72 shows and currently our shows regularly sell out the house. We perform for both residents and more and more Morro Bay visitors. I know several visitors who even plan their vacations based on what production is on our annual playlist. Gratefully, our sponsorship has grown, but, of course, we always welcome more."

With only two shows left in 2026, you might want to secure your tickets before they sell out! From through November 1, the company will celebrate a spooky Halloween with "Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors." Janice said, "Director Nicolette Tempesta has chosen to produce it David Bowie-style."

The celebration continues December 4-6 with another "magical" variety show created by Director Rick Bruce of Cambria titled "Magic of Theater." Janice recommends, "definitely a family show."

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Mourning Police Officer Richard Hannibal



By Neil Farrell

Fellow police officers and community members have been expressing their deepest condolences with the recent death of retired Ofc. Richard Hannibal.

"It is with heavy hearts," reads a Sept. 24 post on the MBPD Facebook Page, "that we share the passing of former Reserve Police Officer Richard Hannibal, who served our department and community faithfully from 2004 to 2012."

Originally from Monterey Park, Calif., Ofc. Hannibal served

Officer Richard Hannibal Continued on page 22

LOCSD Board Names Appointment to Empty Seat



By Neil Farrell

An empty seat on the Los Osos Community Services District Board has been filled, with confirmation still to come by the Board of Supervisors.

LOCSD General Manager, Greg Kwolek said on Oct. 1 the board unanimously selected Tom Maier to fill the Area 2 seat being vacated by current Board Chairman Matthew Fourcroy, who chose not to run for re-election.

Since no one else applied to run for the seat, the Board sought out residents in Area 2 to apply for appointment to the

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County Finds First 2026 Measles Case

By Neil Farrell



Photo shows the rash caused by measles on the back of a young child. Photo courtesy Mayo Clinic

The new County Health Director is dealing with her first measles case, after someone tested positive for the virus-caused illness.

SLO County Director of Public Health, Suzanne Jed, MSN, RN, who was just hired Aug. 2, announced the measles case on Oct. 8.

"The County of San Luis Obispo Department of Public Health yesterday confirmed the first case of measles in San Luis Obispo County in 2026," reads a news release, "through laboratory testing. Public Health is working with the individual and their healthcare providers to identify and notify people who may have been exposed."

Measles is a highly contagious, serious respiratory disease caused by the Rubeola Virus." Anyone who isn't vaccinated against measles — which is normally done as a child — stands a 90% chance of contracting the virus if exposed.

Jed said there are two potential places they've identified as locations where people might have been exposed to this first patient:

• Family Industrial Medical Center: Oct. 5 between 8:30–10:30 a.m. and Oct. 6 from 12:30–3 p.m.; and,

• Arroyo Grande Community Hospital (Emergency Room) Oct. 7 from 6:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

"If you were at any of these locations during the dates and times listed," the release said, "you may have been exposed to measles and could develop symptoms 7 to 21-days after exposure.

People who know they've been vaccinated against measles shouldn't be too concerned, however, "People who are not vaccinated or are unsure if they have received the measles vaccine are at higher risk and should watch closely for symptoms and call the Department of Public Health at 805-781-5500.

"People who were exposed, are older than 6 months, and have records showing only one dose or no doses of the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine can get an MMR vaccine to lower their risk of developing measles."

After 21-days without symptoms, you are likely in the clear but should still look out for symptoms, which include:

• High fever, which can spike above 104°F to 105°F;

• Cough and runny nose;

• Red, watery eyes;

• Koplik spots — tiny white spots that may appear inside the mouth; and,

• Blotchy red or brown rash that usually starts on the face and spreads downward to the rest of the body a few days after initial symptoms begin.

Most people who contract measles recover but the disease can cause serious ill effects, particularly in young children under-5, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems. Symptoms include:

• Pneumonia and severe lung infections;

• Encephalitis or swelling of the brain;

• Ear infections and severe dehydration; and,

• Pregnancy risks, including pre-term birth or miscarriage.



Electron microscopic photo of the Rubeola virus that causes measles. Photo courtesy CDC

Measles cases happen every year to varying degrees and there have been thousands this year.

According to the Centers for Disease Control: "As of Oct. 8, 4,080 confirmed measles cases were reported in the U.S. in 2026. Among these, 4,062 measles cases were reported by 47 jurisdictions: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York City, New York State, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. A total of 18 measles cases were reported among international visitors to the U.S."

In 2025, there were 2,289 confirmed measles cases, according to the CDC.

In California, the Department of Public Health on Sept. 18 issued a warning about potential exposure from a train passenger.

"An unvaccinated passenger who traveled across the United States on Amtrak," reads a CDPH notice, "including through California, traveled by trains and thruway buses with transfers in at least six California counties (Alameda, Butte, Kern, Los Angeles, Sacramento and San Joaquin). CDPH is working with federal partners and local health officials to notify people who may have been exposed. With this news, and with measles spreading in other parts of the United States and the world, CDPH urges Californians to ensure they are fully vaccinated against measles."

Avoiding exposure is hard to do, as the virus travels through the air and sticks around for a long time. "Measles is spread through the air when an infected person breathes, coughs or sneezes," SLO County Public Health said. "The virus can remain in the air for up to 1 hour after an infected person has left an area."

So far, it's been a single, isolated case that they've discovered. "At this time, no additional cases have been identified. Staff from Public Health are investigating the case and exposure sites to identify contacts. The individual is recovering at home and is receiving medical care."

"Measles is extremely contagious, but it is also preventable with vaccination," said Interim County Health Officer Dr. Rick Rosen. "We encourage community members to be aware of these potential exposures and make sure they are up to date on measles vaccinations, which provide strong protection against infection.

"Anyone who may have been exposed should watch for symptoms and contact their healthcare provider if symptoms develop, letting them know about the possible measles exposure. Our Public Health team is actively investigating the case and contacting people who may have been exposed."

"Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself, your family and people in our community who may be especially vulnerable to serious illness," Dr. Rosen said.

For more information about measles and vaccination, see the California Department of Public Health's measles information page at: www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/measles.

D.A. Offering 'Clean Slate' on Criminal Records

Got an old stain on your record? The District Attorney's Office is giving everyone a chance to potentially erase it.

D.A. Dan Dow's Office announced an upcoming "SLO Clean Slate Clinic."

"The free legal clinic," reads a press release, "helps eligible county residents pursue criminal record expungement, felony reduction, and arrest record sealing under California Law."

The D.A. has held these clinics before but there's a change coming. The clinic "is moving to a rolling quarterly enrollment model. Eligible residents will now have four opportunities each year to enroll."

Several agencies are working together on this. "The clinic is a joint effort of the San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office, SLO County Probation Department, San Luis Obispo Defenders, Restorative Partners, People's Justice Project, California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc. (CRLA), and San Luis Obispo College of Law."

Not everyone is eligible for a clean slate. "Record relief is not automatic," the release said, "and it is not a shortcut. California Law allows these remedies only for people who have completed probation or served their sentence and met the conditions the court imposed."

Not all crimes get a second chance either. "Certain offenses, including specified sex offenses against children, are not eligible for expungement under Penal Code Section 1203.4."

There's of course a review process. "Each petition is screened first by the SLO County Probation Department and then reviewed by the District Attorney's Office, which may oppose any petition it believes should not be granted. A judge makes the final decision."

And like the Internet, it never really goes completely away. "Record relief also does not erase accountability," the release said. "An expunged conviction can still be charged and proved as a prior conviction if the person commits a new crime, and expungement does not restore the right to own or possess a firearm.

"Orders to pay restitution to victims remain in effect and are



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always eligible to be converted to a civil-judgment for recording as a lien."

How does the new system work? "Under the new model, community members may enroll at any time before each quarter's enrollment cutoff. Three of the four quarterly clinics will process petitions by appointment, without a public clinic event.

"The Spring 2027 Clean Slate Clinic will include a public clinic event at the SLO County Law Library on Friday, March 26, 2027."

The Clean Slate Clinic Quarterly System is:

• Winter 2026 — Enrollment cutoff: Nov. 30 by appointment only. No public event.

• Spring 2027 — Enrollment cutoff: To Be Determined. Public clinic event: Friday, March 26, 2027, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., SLO County Law Library, 1050 Monterey St., #125, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408. Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments are strongly preferred.

• Summer 2027 — Enrollment cutoff: May 31, 2027, by appointment only. No public event.

• Fall 2027 — Enrollment cutoff: Aug. 31, 2027, by appointment only. No public event.

The clinics are designed to remove life obstacles that arise because someone has a record. "The purpose of the Clean Slate Clinic," the release said, "is to remove a barrier to employment and housing for people who have paid their debt to society and remained law-abiding.

"A criminal record, no matter how old or how minor, can stand in the way of a job, an apartment, or an education, because most employers, property managers, and universities use background checks to screen applicants. Steady work and stable housing are among the strongest protections against a return to crime."

The first clinic was held in March 2023 and some 550 people have been served and 1,856 petitions have been field with the courts.

"Of the 1,746 petitions decided to date, the court has granted 1,740 and denied six. The remaining 110 petitions are pending."

The news release credits their screening work for the high percentage of granted expungement petitions.

"That high grant rate reflects careful screening before petitions reach the court, not a rubber stamp."

Deputy District Attorneys do the screening of applications and have thus far approved 1,480 (out of 1,500 total) and rejected 220.

There are various reasons people get denied. "Common reasons for objecting included new criminal conduct after the conviction, probation violations, too little time living crime-free, a person still on probation or facing new charges, or a serious offense that harmed a victim.

Some petitions were withdrawn by the petitioner and never went to the court. With some, the court heard the D.A.'s objection and using its discretion, denied the petitions.

SLO County D.A. Dan Dow said, "Protecting victims and keeping our community safe have always been at the heart of my work as District Attorney, and the Clean Slate Clinic serves both. Every petition is carefully reviewed by Probation and by my office before it goes to the court."

He added that people who get their slate wiped clean, "can finally get a steady job and a stable home, they are far less likely to return to the criminal and victim justice system, and that means fewer future victims. Moving to a quarterly schedule means people who qualify no longer have to wait months for that fresh start."

If you are interested in clearing a criminal record at no cost, contact the SLO Clean Slate Clinic before the applicable quarterly enrollment cutoff at (805) 902-CRLA or online at: reentry@crla.org.

Enrollment for the winter, summer, and fall clinics is by appointment only. Walk-ins are welcome at the March 26, public clinic event, but appointments are strongly preferred.

3CE Expands Key Rebate Programs

By Neil Farrell

The local community energy company is expanding its assistance programs to better help customers get electrified.

Central Coast Community Energy (3CE) announced improvements to three programs designed to help customers buy electric vehicles, build charging infrastructure and install electrical upgrades to homes and businesses. There's also a program to help agriculture operations get electrified as well.

The 3CE Policy Board, made up of elected officials from 3CEs service areas, in September voted to expand its investment programs to help optimize energy use and electrify transportation, buildings and ag operations.

"These resources," 3CE said in a news release, "help families and businesses make the switch to electric vehicles and equipment while supporting cities and counties working toward California's climate goals and a cleaner, more resilient future.

"Customers can explore available programs, review eligibility, and apply at: 3cenergy.org/rebates-incentive."

Chris Cook, Director of Energy Programs at 3CE said, "Our programs help people take practical next steps, whether that means buying an electric car, installing a charger, updating farm equipment, or planning a large fleet of vehicles. Making the switch to electric can lower pollution, but customers need options that work for their budget and their daily lives."



Map shows the service area of 3CE, a non-profit electric company that is expanding its rebates and incentives programs to help customers better get electrified. Map courtesy 3CE.

The company's three main programs are: "Electrify Your Ride," "Electrify Your Home;" and, "Agricultural Electrification Program."

The ride program offers rebates for qualifying new and used all-electric vehicles. The program is income-based and could also be applied to plug-in hybrid vehicles, the company said.

"The program," 3CE said, "includes rebates for qualifying Level 2 home chargers, bidirectional chargers, and related electrical work and installation. Customers may also be able to combine 3CE incentives with other programs, including California's MyFirstEV Program."

The home program helps homeowners and renters replace gas-burning appliances with "efficient electrical options. Rebates are available for qualifying heat-pump heating and air-conditioning systems, heat-pump water heaters, induction cooktops and ranges, and portable heat-pump space conditioners for renters. Higher rebates are available for income-qualified customers and qualifying multifamily affordable housing projects."

The ag program "offers rebates for qualifying used and leased all-electric equipment, in addition to new equipment.

"Eligible customers can use rebates to help replace fossil-fueled farm equipment, including tools, vehicles, irrigation pumps, and other equipment, with electric alternatives."

The company also has a couple of new programs that help customers with electrifying transportation projects for businesses, public agencies and multi-family property owners.

A new EV Launchpad Technical Assistance Program "provides support for eligible customers planning fleet electrification or EV charging projects at no extra cost to eligible customers."

The Launchpad assistance could be used for fleet-transition and charging-infrastructure plans; charger siting and design; engineering support; and help identifying potential funding sources.

"The program builds on 3CE's existing EV and charging support by helping customers move from an early idea to an implementable project plan," 3CE said.

They also have an Electric Bus Program to help transportation agencies, school districts and farmworker transportation providers buy or lease all-electric buses." The program also gives "enhanced incentives" for qualifying projects in "priority communities."

These programs are of course dependent on eligibility and available money. To check out

Rebate Program Continued on page 4



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Saving Sea Stars — Research Supports Eventual Return



Sunflower Star Laboratory Executive Director Reuven Bank Passes a Bagged Sunflower Star to Lab Manager Andrew Kim as part of the 2026 Outplanting Fieldwork. Photo copyright Sage Ono.

By Christine Heinrichs

Like a sunflower sea star, with its 24 arms reaching across three feet or more, ocean organizations are working together to save this beautiful invertebrate. Not only for its beauty, its vibrant colors ranging from purple to orange and yellow, but because it's an aggressive predator keeping ocean ecology in balance.

Sunflower sea stars were wiped out in local waters, and along the entire West Coast, by sea star wasting disease, which gradually infected and killed sea stars between 2013 and 2017. Sunflower stars are keystone predators in kelp forest ecosystems. They not only eat urchins, but the urchins are so scared of them that they hide in the ocean floor rocks to avoid them.

Without sunshine sea stars to eat and scare sea urchins, the urchins consumed the kelp. The urchins ate nearly all the kelp in Northern California and affected kelp forests along the entire West Coast. What was left is called urchin barrens, a desert sea floor covered with urchins.

It doesn't work out for the urchins, either, which eventually starve when all the kelp is gone. The urchins don't die, though. They remain in a dormant sort of hibernation, able to absorb enough nutrients from sea water to survive as long as 50 years. They are ready to eat any stray bit of kelp that tries to grow.

In some places, divers have organized to go down to the urchin barrens and smash the dormant urchins. That works, but it's labor intensive for the divers, and not the answer to the problem along the entire West Coast. The kelp forest ecosystem needs the sunflower sea stars.

To The Rescue

The Monterey National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council formed the Kelp Working Group in 2024. It developed the Iconic Kelp Action Plan to address the problem. Other organizations were working on it, too. One collaboration is doing research to bring the sunflower sea stars back.

Conservation nonprofit Sunflower Star Laboratory (SSL) is leading the partnership with Reef Check Foundation, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Moss Landing Marine Laboratories, The California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California State University - Monterey Bay (CSUMB), Phil Sammet's Underwater Company, and marine operations staff at Hopkins Marine Station. Together, they have raised sunflower sea stars in their Moss Landing lab and are experimenting with introducing them to the intertidal and subtidal zones where they can eat those zombie urchins and bring balance, and the kelp forests, back.

Otters are urchin predators, too, but they aren't interested in the starving urchins. Those urchins are too skinny to offer any food. Sunflower sea stars eat any urchin, skinny or well nourished. They can eat three or four urchins a day, inserting their tiny tube feet hydraulically into the urchin.

One experiment SSL did was to put 16 sunflower stars into enclosed pods in an urchin barren in Monterey Bay for a month. The SSL team gave half of them starving urchins and half of them well-fed urchins. The sea stars gobbled up more of the starving urchins than the well-nourished ones, but they all gained weight, increasing their weight by 50 percent in a month.

"These results highlight the powerful potential of reintroduced sunflower stars to convert barren environments back into kelp forests through predation," SSL said in a press release.

While the sunflower sea stars were in their cages munching on urchins, SSL divers monitored how the urchins around them responded. The smell of the sea stars terrified the urchins, which retreated from a "fear halo" of several meters around the cages. Just being there sent the urchins scurrying to hide in rock crevasses, where they have to survive on other floating bits, instead of eating kelp.

Next, SSL set the sea stars free. Not a full release, but temporarily, to observe what would happen. Divers watched over them, "chaperoning" them on their two-hour uncaged "walkabouts."

"By ground-truthing our lab and caged-trial feeding results, with free-ranging sunflower stars during our 'walkabouts', we can design more effective reintroduction plans, based on real consumptive data for these young stars,' explains Ashley Kidd, SSL's Conservation Program lead. "The walkabouts are incredibly valuable as we capture behaviors using ethograms as the stars explore the ocean floor for the first time, and we see first-hand their effect on nearby species."

SSL had permits from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and approvals from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary to conduct the experiments.

Not Yet Ready for Full Release

Two of the 16 sea stars showed signs of sea star wasting disease, and were removed from the ocean before the month, to be treated for the disease. Sea star wasting disease is caused by bacteria, which was detected in one of the sea stars. That's the first time the disease was documented to be transmitted naturally. This kind of knowledge can help inform marine management and policy and conserve this species and the kelp forest ecosystem.



An Urchin is Engulfed By a Sunflower Star During Sunflower Star Laboratory's 2026 Outplanting Fieldwork. Photo copyright Sage Ono.

"Together, the multiple components of this experiment demonstrate the transformational power of sunflower stars to recover California's beleaguered kelp forests," said Reuven Bank, Sunflower Star Laboratory's executive director. "This groundbreaking research from Sunflower Star Laboratory and our collaborators illustrates the power of cooperative conservation in action and lays the foundation for the future transition to permanent outplanting in our state."

Chumash Heritage NMS Advisory Council

The Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council is looking for six people with knowledge of Indigenous cultures, environments, histories and lived experiences in the region to form the Indigenous Cultures Activities Panel.

Applicants should have experience working with Indigenous governments; understand the traditional values and cultural heritage of Chumash Peoples; have the ability to maintain sustained, meaningful participation by attending both in-person and virtual meetings for period of at least two-years; display strong communication and collaborative capabilities; and have lived experience of the interconnectedness between Chumash cultures, animals, plants, ocean, language, and all that make up the environment. Support from Chumash governments, Elders, or Leaders is encouraged.

Call Sachiko Lamen at 805-203-6004 or email chumash.heritage@noaa.gov for more information if you want to apply. Include information about yourself and any supporting documents including letters of support, curriculum vitae, and resume. Deadline to apply is November 29, 2026. Go to sanctuaries.noaa.gov/chumash-heritage/management/co-stewardship.html.

Paso Cat Woman Gets Diversion

A Paso Robles woman accused of cruelty to animals and found living in an apartment with 30 dead house cats, has — much to the chagrin of the District Attorney's Office — been granted a mental health diversion in the case.

On Oct. 12, the D.A.'s Office said in a news release, "the Court granted Laurie Lee Bryant (63) 2-years of mental health diversion on seven felony counts of animal cruelty."

The case blew up in August 2024 when officers with the County Department of Animal Services served a warrant at Bryant's home in the Presidio Apartment complex on Olive Street in Paso Robles.

The charges stemmed from her activities amassing cats from December 2023 until the raid in August 2024. DAS officers found some 30 dead cats plus numerous others still alive but in various stages of neglect when they raided her home. The living cats were treated at Animal Services. The D.A. did not say how many had to be euthanized by the County.

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Rebate Program From page 3

the program details and to apply for these assistance programs, see the website at: 3cenergy.org/rebates-incentives.

3CE is a non-profit community choice aggregate energy company serving the electrical needs of some 1.1 million customers from Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, SLO and Santa Barbara Counties including the three communities of the Estero Bay Area.

3CE acts as an electricity service go-between, buying the energy from various sources and transmitting it through Pacific Gas & Electric's distribution wires to the individual customers' meters. The 3CE bill appears as a separate item on the regular PG&E bill customers receive.

Under State Law, all electric customers were brought into 3CE's services via a vote of their governing elected bodies — County Supervisors and City Councils. Individual customers can "opt out" of 3CE's services but must actively do so via the company's website (see: 3cenergy.org).

The goal with the community choice program is to support and increase demand for no-emission or "green" electrical generation sources, but 3CE and the other such companies in California are not bound to only buy electricity from the so-called renewable energy producers (mostly wind and solar).

The idea is to support the green energy industry and further the fight against climate change, returning value to customers via incentives and rebate programs such as those announced here rather than through lower energy bills.

Also the makeup of these companies includes oversight by a board of directors, consisting of elected officials appointed to serve by their agency boards, holding public meetings and adhering to Brown Act (open meetings) requirements.

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Bryant petitioned the court for the mental health considerations instead of potentially being sent to prison and the judge reportedly had little choice but to grant the diversion, with conditions. The prosecutor objected but to no avail.

"Under current California Law," the news release said, "a defendant charged with an eligible offense who presents a qualifying diagnosis is presumed to qualify [for mental health diversion], and the judge may deny diversion for safety reasons only if the defendant is likely to commit one of a small group of the most serious violent crimes."

Allowing 30 cats to die of starvation and neglect apparently isn't a violent crime.

"The harm alleged here," the D.A. said, "does not fit that narrow definition, so the law left little legal basis to deny the request.

"Our prosecutor asked the Court to deny diversion anyway, arguing that the suffering and death of so many animals should not be resolved without accountability."

The judge in granting diversion did put in some conditions, which if she violates could mean the charges would get re-filed. Somewhat surprisingly, a prohibition on owning cats wasn't among them.

"The Court granted diversion with conditions," the D.A. said, "including a 4-cat limit, compliance checks by Animal Services, a firearms prohibition and regular court review. The charges remain allegations, and Ms. Bryant is presumed innocent. If she does not comply, our office will ask the Court to resume prosecution."

It's apparent that the D.A. isn't happy with the outcome of the case.

"The cats in this case," D.A. Dan Dow said, "suffered and died in conditions no living creature should endure, and they had no voice to ask for help.

"Our prosecutor objected because that kind of suffering deserves accountability.

"Under current law, though, judges have little room to weigh the harm to victims when a defendant presents a qualifying diagnosis. Mental health treatment matters, but our criminal and victim justice system must put victims at the center, including animals who depend entirely on the people responsible for their care."

He vowed to keep an eye on the case. "We will closely monitor Ms. Bryant's compliance," D.A. Dow said, "and will ask the Court to resume prosecution if she fails to meet her obligations."

In the charging document from 2024, the allegations are described in graphic detail. Bryant is alleged to have "unlawfully torture, torment, deprive of necessary sustenance, drink, or shelter, or cruelly kill an animal, or cause an animal to be so, tortured, tormented, deprived of necessary sustenance, drink, shelter, or to be mutilated, or cruelly killed; and who, having the charge or custody of an animal, either as owner or otherwise, subject an animal to needless suffering, or inflict unnecessary cruelty upon the animal, or in any manner abuse an animal, or fail to provide the animal with proper food, drink, or shelter, or protection from the weather."

The case was investigated by SLO County Animal Services and prosecuted by Dep. D.A. Hunter Starr.

Hit-and Run DUI Driver Gets Prison

By Neil Farrell

The driver in a fatal hit-and-run accident that killed an elderly bicyclist has been sentenced to State Prison, the District Attorney's Office said.

Venessa Rose Noblitt, 45 of San Luis Obispo pled guilty on Sept. 15 to vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated, driving with a blood alcohol concentration of .08 percent or more causing injury, and hit and run stemming from the July 2024 death of 86-year-old cyclist, Saul Goldberg, and injuring his riding companion, Martin Suits.



Venessa Rose Noblitt, 45 of San Luis Obispo has been sentenced to nearly 10 years in State Prison in the fatal hit-and-run crash that killed an elderly cyclist. Submitted photo

Judge Rita Federman sentenced Noblitt on Oct. 13 to 9-years and 8-months in State Prison.

Noblitt admitted that her BAC was .15 percent or higher, that she inflicted great bodily injury on each victim, and admitted the aggravating factor that the victim was particularly vulnerable. Her conviction for DUI causing great bodily injury counts as a strike under California's Three Strikes Law. Her sentence was the maximum allowed by law, the D.A. said.

The case is a cyclist's worst nightmare. "Around noon on July 23, 2024," the D.A. said, "Noblitt was driving southbound on South Higuera Street in San Luis Obispo when she drifted into the bike lane and struck Mr. Goldberg from the side as he and Mr. Suits rode together in the southbound bike lane. Both men went down. South Higuera Street has a Class B bike lane, meaning it is simply stripes painted on the roadway designating the bike lane and not physically separated from traffic.

"Mr. Suits suffered a concussion and other injuries, and Mr. Goldberg died from his injuries several days later. Noblitt left the scene and was arrested after she struck a parked car in a nearby mobile home park. Her blood alcohol concentration was determined to be .31 percent, nearly four times the legal limit."

"Goldberg," the news release said, "was a devoted husband, father, and grandfather."

Carol Goldberg read a victim's impact statement at the sentencing: "I was married to Saul for 64 years. At the time of this tragedy, Saul and I were looking forward to celebrating our 65th wedding anniversary on December 5th in Australia. Every day now, I wake up to a reality I never chose: a life without my best friend and the love of my life.

"Through a reckless and selfish act, Vanessa Noblitt took the life not only of my husband, but also of a caring and generous father and grandfather. I live each day carrying a loss that can never be repaired, and I will miss everything about Saul for the rest of my life."

District Attorney Dan Dow said, "Saul Goldberg should have finished his bike ride that day and gone home to the family who loved him. Instead, a choice to drive with a blood alcohol level nearly four times the legal limit took him from his wife of 64 years, his children, and his grandchildren, and left his friend injured on the side of the road.

"Our hearts are with Mrs. Goldberg, the Goldberg family, and Mr. Suits. I am grateful for the courage they showed in standing up for Saul throughout this case. No sentence can repair a loss like this, but our criminal and victim justice system has held this defendant accountable with an appropriate prison sentence. To everyone in our community: the decision to drive impaired is always avoidable. Please plan ahead for a sober ride."

Judge Federman also ordered Noblitt to pay restitution in an amount yet to be determined. A restitution status hearing is set for Jan. 12, 2027.

The case was investigated by the San Luis Obispo Police Department and prosecuted by Dep. D.A. Delaney Henretty. Victim support services were provided by Victim Advocate, Tristan Milledge, and Witness Coordinator, Eloiza Basinger.

Sex Predator Caught in Sting Convicted

A Paso Robles man has been convicted of trying to lure a minor into having sex, and possession of illegal drugs, after being caught in a sting operation by the Sheriff's Department.



Genaro SantanaAvalos, 42 of Paso Robles was convicted of trying to lure a teenage girl for sex in a Sheriff's Department sting operation. Submitted photo

According to a news release from the District Attorney's Office, on Oct. 13 a jury found Genaro SantanaAvalos, 42 of Paso Robles guilty of felony contact with a minor with intent to commit a sexual offense; felony arranging a meeting with a minor for lewd purposes and going to the meeting place; misdemeanor possession of methamphetamine, and possession of drug paraphernalia.

All four offenses occurred on Dec. 12, 2024 as a result of an online Sheriff's undercover operation. The jury got the case in the afternoon of Oct. 13 after a 7-day trial and returned its verdicts at 4 p.m. on the 14th. Sentencing is scheduled for Nov. 19.

The case started in December 2024 when the County Sheriff's Office Detective Bureau "took part in a multi-agency operation targeting adults who use the Internet to seek out minors for sex.

"On Dec. 12, 2024, a Sheriff's detective had electronic communication with the defendant on a dating and 'hook up' website. That evening, SantanaAvalos used the name 'Alex' and provided his phone number.

Sex Predator Continued on page 6

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The Diablo Canyon Decommissioning Engagement Panel, in cooperation with Pacific Gas and Electric Company, invite you to a meeting to discuss the status of the 12,000 acres of land surrounding Diablo Canyon Power Plant.

The meeting includes presentations from the California Coastal Commission and State Coastal Conservancy on future ownership, management and public access of the Diablo Lands. Attendees will have the chance to make public comments.

Date: Nov. 5, 2026 An Open House begins at 5pm followed by the public meeting from 6-8pm at Avila Beach Community Center.

To see the agenda, submit questions or comments in advance, or register to attend online visit **www.diablocanyonpanel.org**.

DIABLO CANYON
Decommissioning Engagement Panel

PG&E

Sex Predator From page 5

SantanaAvalos, who was 40-years old at the time, "asked the Sheriff's decoy to hook up and proposed getting a hotel room," the news release said. "After he sent two sexually explicit photographs of himself, the decoy told him she was not 18 and then told him she was 15-years old."

That apparently didn't faze him. "SantanaAvalos replied, 'If ur gonna cost me trouble maybe I shouldn't go,' but continued the conversation. He asked when the decoy's mother would return home from work, said the meeting was 'only going to be for a little while,' offered to drop her back at home by 5 a.m., and told her he would head out to meet her."

The decoy reportedly said she lived near a San Luis Obispo park and would meet him there. He drove from Paso Robles telling the decoy he would meet her at the park and be in a blue car, texting his progress as he drove south on Hwy 101. What awaited him wasn't what he thought.

"At approximately 9:47 p.m.," the news release said, "SantanaAvalos drove a blue car into the arranged meeting location's parking lot, where detectives stopped and arrested him. Detectives found a condom, methamphetamine, and a methamphetamine pipe on his person."

He tried to lie his way out of it. "In an interview with detectives, SantanaAvalos first denied talking with a 15-year old, then claimed someone else had used his phone, and then claimed he had been dropping off a friend at the park; detectives had watched him drive into the lot alone."

His phone gave him away. "A forensic examination of his phone," the release said, "confirmed the messages with the decoy, saved directions from Paso Robles to the San Luis Obispo park, and the photographs he sent. Laboratory testing confirmed the substance was methamphetamine."

He still faces an aggravating circumstances trial, which he has since waived his right to a jury, and Judge Michael S. Frye will hear those allegations. He is currently out on bail and will remain so until sentencing.

SantanaAvalos faces a maximum sentence of 5-years and 6-months in State Prison and will have to register as a convicted sex offender for the rest of his life.

D.A. Dan Dow commented, "Every child deserves to grow up safe from adults who would exploit them, and that includes online predators. This defendant was told he was talking with a 15-year-old girl. He hesitated, and then he drove to meet her anyway."

He pointed out that this time it was a detective on the line and no child was harmed. However, "real children in our community are targeted this way every day, and too often the harm is done before anyone knows. This verdict is about protecting them."

The case is a cautionary tale for sexual predators. "Anyone who goes online looking to sexually exploit a child in San Luis Obispo County," the D.A. said, "should understand that our office will hold them accountable.

"To parents and caregivers: talk with your children about who they communicate with online, and if you suspect a child is being exploited, report it right away. Children who come forward will be believed, supported, and protected."

The case was investigated by the SLO County Sheriff's Office Detective Bureau, with Det. Kara Dickel as the lead investigator, assisted by Det. Justin Francis and Det. James Silverstein and Deputies Gower Slane and Kyle Reinhardt.

The case was prosecuted by Dep. D.A. Sarah Merson of the Sexual Assault Unit.

"Children who have been contacted or exploited online are never to blame," the release said, "and help is available. Parents, caregivers, and young people who suspect a child is being sexually exploited online can report it to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's CyberTipline at: CyberTipline.org or phone: 1-800-THE-LOST (1-800-843-5678). You are also encouraged to contact your local law enforcement agency or call 9-1-1 when it's an emergency.

Child victims and their families can receive free, confidential support, including help through the court process, from the D.A.'s Victim Witness Assistance Center at (805) 781-5821.

County to Study In-Lieu Water Program

By Neil Farrell

San Luis Obispo County is studying to determine if an in-lieu fee program could be established to satisfy water conservation requirements and replace a retrofit program in order to build new construction in Los Osos.

Officially called the "Los Osos Title 19 Water Conservation Program Nexus Study" the County is in the early stages of studying a potential in-lieu program wherein potential development projects could simply pay a fee to satisfy water saving requirements instead of finding a certain number of homes or businesses to retrofit with water-saving devices like low-flow toilets and showerheads.

"A nexus study," reads a report from Los Osos Community Services District General Manager, Greg Kwolek, "evaluates whether there is a reasonable relationship between a proposed fee and the public benefit provided by the project or projects funded by that fee."

While there are several potential projects that could be funded by such a fee, Kwolek said the County staff has thus far zeroed in on the "proposed Water Resiliency Intertie Project as the project to be evaluated for its potential to provide groundwater sustainability benefits equivalent to or greater than those achieved through the existing Title 19 plumbing retrofit requirements."

The intertie project, which the LOCSD is already well into planning, would snake a water line down South Bay Boulevard to Chorro Valley where it would tie-in with the Chorro Valley Pipeline, the large water line that delivers the State Water Project's fully treated drinking water to Morro Bay.

The initial intent is to be able to bring some 200-acre feet a year of drinking water to Los Osos to supplement the water supply and help conserve groundwater, which is currently the only source of water for the entire community.

"The County stated in a meeting," Kwolek said, "that two other projects may be evaluated as well, namely, the Sunnyside Recycled Water Connection Project and the Upper Aquifer Treatment Project, but that the Water Resiliency Intertie Project would be the main focus."

The LOCSD has been working with the other water purveyors in town — S&T Mutual and Golden State Water — on a comment letter to the County on how the main sellers of water feel about an in-lieu program.

The letter reads in part, "Golden State Water Company, Los Osos Community Services District and S&T Mutual Water Company [collectively, the "Purveyors"] agree that the Intertie Project offers potentially significant benefits to the Los Osos Groundwater Basin. Accordingly, although the Purveyors continue to have questions and concerns regarding the proposed In-Lieu Fee Program, they support the County's decision to focus the Nexus Study on evaluating the potential benefits of the Intertie Project and its relationship to the objectives of the County's Title 19 requirements."

Such in-lieu fee programs are commonly used for other public needs, in particular public parks and parking.

The monies collected through such programs can only be used for the stated purposes they were collected to address.

NOTE: Estero Bay News sent an email inquiry to the County Planner who sent the letter to the LOCSD asking for basic information on the timeline, current status and approval process this study will have to take. We were told the department needs a week to answer media questions, and so EBN will follow up on this issue when we hear back from the County.

— Neil Farrell

More Delays on Hwy 1



A Google Maps image of the Torre Canyon Bridge on Hwy 1 between Pfeiffer State Park and Loma Vista. Caltrans is setting up traffic controls through the area to cleanup debris in the wake of the Timber Fire. Google Maps image.

By Neil Farrell

Caltrans is beginning some cleanup work along Hwy 1 in Monterey County after the Timber Fire tore through the Los Padres National Forest in August, setting up a third set of traffic controls on the heavily traveled scenic highway.

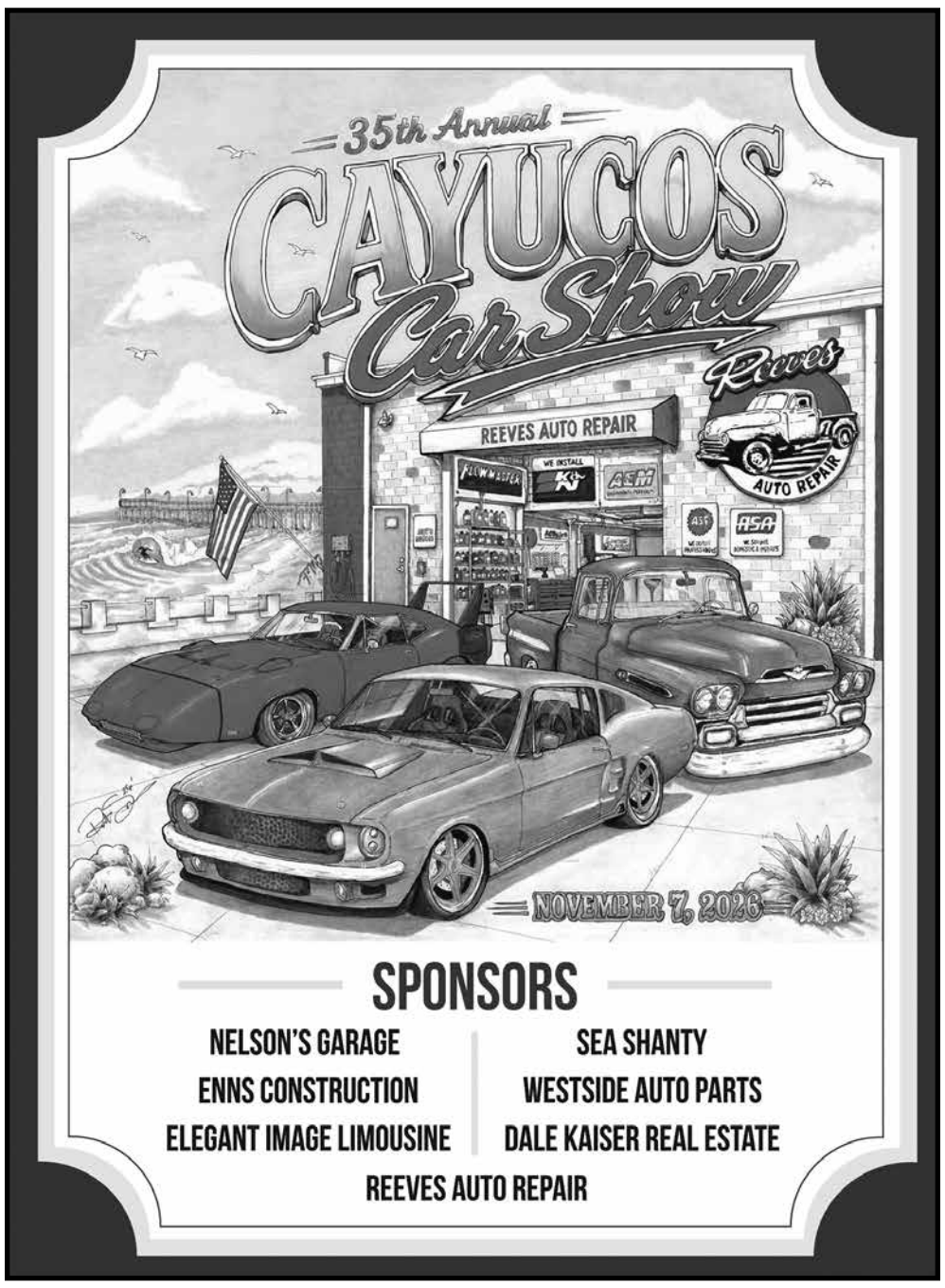
Starting Oct. 13, Caltrans said in a news release, "travelers will encounter daytime 1-way traffic control on Highway 1 near Torre Canyon Bridge.

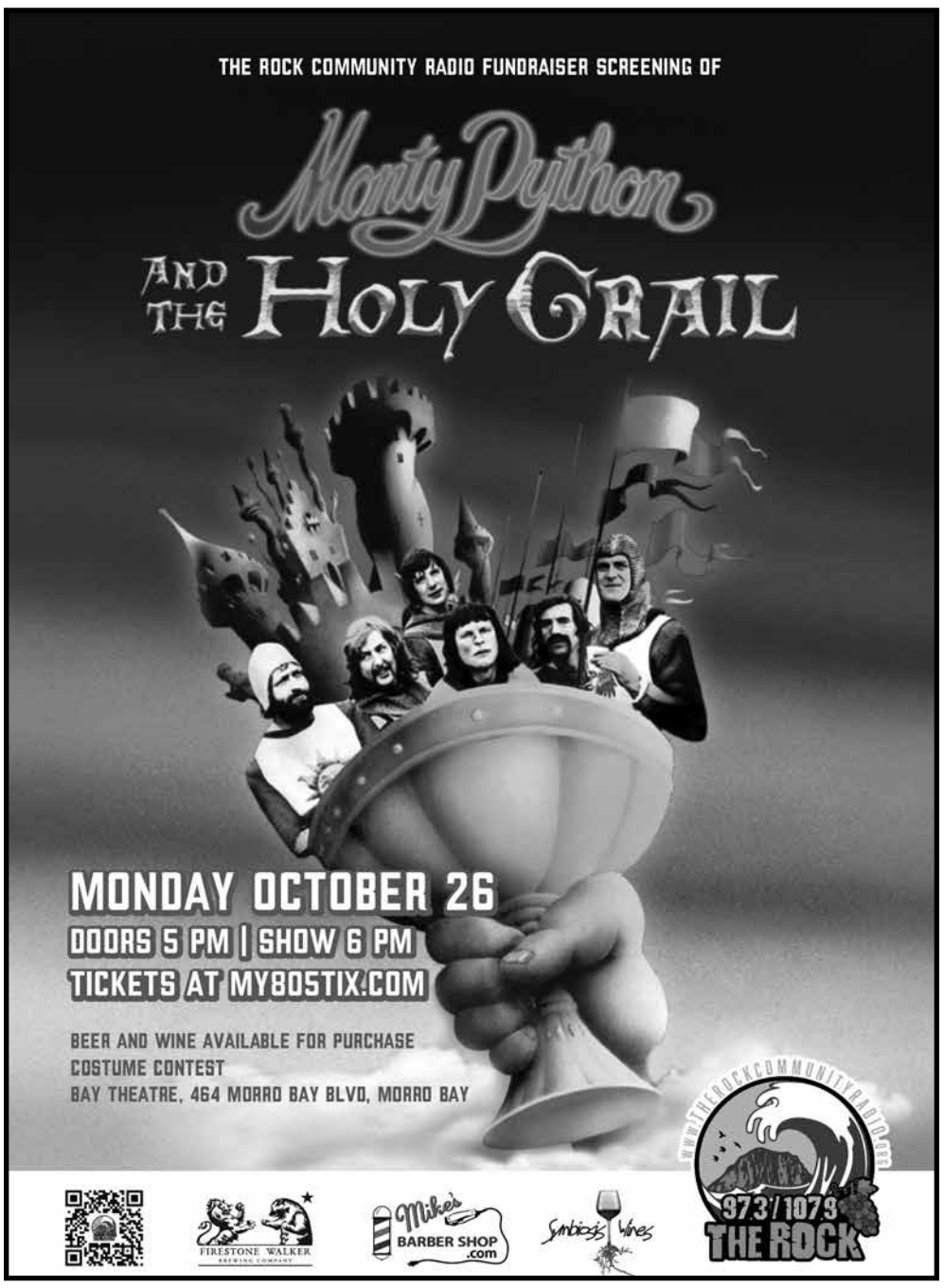
"Crews will remove rocks and brush from slopes above the highway as part of post-fire slope stabilization efforts."

The traffic controls will be operating Mondays-Saturdays, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The cleanup work is expected to last for about 5 weeks.

Torre Canyon Bridge is located on a hairpin turn a few miles north of Julia Pfeiffer Burns State Park and south of Loma Vista.

This latest traffic control site increases the current number of work zones on Hwy 1 to three, after the roadway was closed for





about 2 years as crews repaired the Regents Slide, a 450-foot tall, massive landslide that occurred in February 2024 and cost over $32 million to repair.

The roadway was completely open to through traffic for just a few weeks after the Regents Slide work was completed earlier this year, before rains again caused Caltrans to close parts of the highway to clear debris that cascaded downslope to the road surface.

The troublesome highway, among the most famous and scenic stretches of road in the entire nation has almost annually sustained extensive damage from landslides cutting off Big Sur and other popular State parks, beach camping and recreational areas.

Hwy 1 is also a major tourism attraction for San Luis Obispo County, in particular the tourist destinations of the North Coast — Cambria, San Simeon, Cayucos and Morro Bay. When open, it's estimated some 2 million people a year travel Hwy 1 but when the highway gets closed, the local economies can take a big hit.

Caltrans said message and directional signs are set up to alert travelers in advance of the areas under traffic control. You may experience delays of up to 20 minutes.

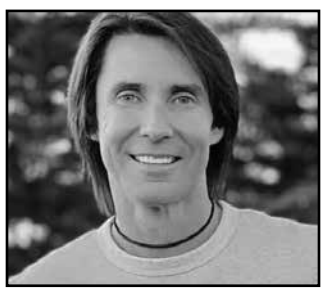
Road information and updates can also be found on Caltrans Dist. 5 social media platforms: on X at: @CaltransD5; Facebook at: Caltrans Central Coast (District 5); and Instagram at: Caltrans_D5.

Offshore Wind Forum Nov. 7

By Neil Farrell

A local activist group fighting against floating offshore wind energy is holding an educational forum intended to expose the hot air about the offshore wind energy industry.

REACT Alliance is hosting "It's All Just Smoke and Mirrors: An Event Exposing the Offshore Wind Hype," from 2-5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 7, at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden located off Hwy 1 in El Chorro Regional Park (across from Cuesta College).



Michael Erin Woody will be one of the featured speakers at an upcoming forum discussing floating offshore wind. Submitted photo

A suggested donation of $20 is requested. Purchase tickets online at: www.my805tix.com/e/smoke-mirrors.

The forum will feature several speakers on various aspects of the proposal to install massive floating wind turbines off the coast of San Simeon (about 60 miles north of Morro Bay) and off Humboldt Bay in Northern California.

The controversial project has been in the works for about a decade now with the Federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) conducting lease sales several years ago and awarding three, massive 80,000-plus acre lease sites to three companies. Each had proposed initially to install 1 gigawatt of turbines (3 GW total), but more recently the talk had been about installing 2 GW each (6 GW total) using 20-megawatt turbines.

But with the Trump Administration's turn away from wind and solar projects — and the idea of green energy in general — on federal lands and waters two of the three companies recently abandoned their offshore projects here in favor of natural gas and coal projects on land. One leaseholder remains but the project is apparently in limbo.

The forum is being held "to inform the public about the potential impacts of floating offshore wind energy development on the environment, commercial and recreational fishing, the local economy, and coastal communities," said REACT Alliance, which was formed by local citizens to fight against the project here.

"The program aims to provide community members with an opportunity to learn more about the issues surrounding offshore wind development and its potential consequences for the region's natural resources, fishing interests, economic vitality, and coastal way of life."

Presenters include — Michael Erin Woody on community and indigenous issues; Ken Bates and Sheri Hafer on environmental and fisheries Impacts; and Edward Ring on economic costs and realities.

"The forum is intended for all audiences, including residents, community members, fishing industry participants, and others interested in the future of California's coastline and offshore wind energy development."

All are encouraged to attend and learn more about the issues surrounding floating offshore wind energy development and its potential implications for California's Central Coast.

REACT Alliance is a grassroots, non-profit organization based in San Luis Obispo. Its mission is "to protect California's Pacific Ocean and its coastal communities from the destructive impacts of offshore wind energy development.

"We seek to educate the public, advocate for informed-decision making, mobilize the community, collaborate with governing officials, and pursue legal action when necessary."

For more information about REACT Alliance, see the website at: www.REACTalliance.org.

Caltrans to Work on Hwy 1 in SLO

Motorists on Hwy 1 between Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo will have to navigate through a construction zone, as Caltrans repairs the shoulder on a segment of the heavily traveled roadway.



A Caltrans worker stands next to a large crack in the shoulder of Hwy 1 that is now in the process of being fixed. Submitted photo

Caltrans announced that on Oct. 16 it would begin a repair job on the southbound side of Hwy 1, south of the California Men's Colony (on the SLO side).

The repairs include emergency work to reconstruct the shoulder, stabilize the embankment, upgrade guardrails, and replace failed concrete slabs.

Photos released by Caltrans show a large crack in the pavement along the shoulder of the road.

Also, the concrete overpass there has long had a segment of concrete slab cracking and sinking, with Caltrans making numerous patches to smooth out what can be a significant dip for cars traveling at highway speeds.

"A temporary barrier will be in place for approximately six weeks," Caltrans said, "once this initial phase is complete, work will continue with intermittent daily lane closures. The shoulder repair work is expected to be completed by the end of December, weather permitting."

Travelers should expect up to a 10-minute delay. There will be message signs erected to warn drivers of the upcoming construction zone. The speed limit will be reduced to 45 mph during the job and enforced by the Highway Patrol.

The contractor for the $2.9 million project is Cal Portland Construction of Santa Maria.

Road information and updates can be found on Caltrans Dist. 5 social media platforms: on X at: @CaltransD5, Facebook at: Caltrans Central Coast (District 5), and Instagram at: Caltrans_D5.

Poly Offers Teacher Credential Students $33,000 Stipend



Former Cal Poly Student Teacher Madeine LaChapelle works with students during her educational training. Cal Poly photo by Joe Johnston

A new teaching credential program serving prospective student-teachers and schools in the Santa Maria area has been launched through a partnership with Cal Poly. Applications are now open for the Pathways to Teaching Residency Program through Nov. 1.

The Cal Poly/Northern Santa Barbara Residency program, funded through a $3.2 million California Commission on Teacher Credentialing grant, allows candidates to complete a multiple subject (elementary education) teaching credential and supplemental authorization in a year-long student teaching placement in the Santa Maria Bonita, Orcutt Union or Guadalupe Union school districts.

"This grant funding will help meet the teaching needs of local schools and provide opportunities for those seeking a career transition," said Megan Guise, director of Cal Poly's School of Education. "This will make an impact in the lives of students and working professionals on the Central Coast."

Classes will be held at night in Santa Maria while students complete a year of student teaching and commit to teaching for at least four years in a participating district. The program requires a bachelor's degree prior to enrollment.

Enrolled students receive a stipend of $33,000 to cover tuition and living expenses. Other benefits of the program include part-time employment during student teaching.

The model follows the workforce preparation example of medical school, also called a residency, in which trainees serve on site with physician mentors. Pathways to Teaching Residency Program candidates will be placed in a K-6 classroom, serving alongside a mentor teacher. A Cal Poly supervisor also will provide guidance.

"As a resident teacher, you are in a K-12 classroom from the start of the year until the end of the year with a mentor teacher," said Briana Ronan, a Cal Poly education professor and program lead. "This program is different than most other types of teacher preparation programs. Typically, credential students must com-

Poly Offers Teacher Continued on page 8

Police Blotter



• **Oct. 11:** Police responded at 10:56 p.m. to a hooch-infused disturbance, as it was apparently a legendary night at Legend's Tavern.
• **Oct. 11:** Police were called at 4:23 p.m. to deal with some urban camper setting up camp at the recently refurbished Coleman Park in violation of the City's anti-sleeping-were-they-can't-collect-a-tax law.
• **Oct. 11:** At 3:49 p.m. police stopped a suspicious vehicle at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated all they could get the driver on was an expired registration.
• **Oct. 11:** Police contacted a reprobationer at 3:32 p.m. and arrested the felonious gaggle head for violating the terms of their probation.
• **Oct. 11:** Police stopped a suspicious subject at 1:09 p.m. who had allegedly been playing ring around the nosey. The Mamaluke got a 1-way ticket to Palookaville.
• **Oct. 11:** Police responded at 9:12 a.m. to Bayshore Bluffs Park where some poor chap said he'd been robbed of something worth more than $400.
• **Oct. 10:** Police responded to a car crash at 10:22 p.m. though logs gave no more juicy details.
• **Oct. 10:** At 9:34 p.m. police responded lights and sirens to The Siren, located at the corner of Harbor and Main, where some ululating Nodcock was causing a disturbance.
• **Oct. 10:** Police contacted two model citizens with bench warrants, the first at 8:41 a.m. and the other dingus at 8:48 a.m.
• **Oct. 9:** Police responded at 10:04 a.m. to a local business that reported a petty theft, and no doubt a task force was formed to hunt down the fiend.
• **Oct. 8: A**t 9:57 a.m. police responded to a reported misdemeanor vandalism committed by some no doubt hooligan graffidiot.
• **Oct. 7:** At 5:24 p.m. police took a missing person report and thanks to the highly informative media logs we not only don't know where they are, we don't know who they are either.
• **Oct. 7:** Police responded at 3:20 p.m. to the public boat launch ramp at the south end of The Embarcadero. According to logs they cited presumably a fisherman for suspicion of drunk driving both a truck and a boat, as apparently somebody caught both fish and a buzz.
• **Oct. 7:** At 2:27 p.m. police at the high school on Atascadero Road took a battery report for simple assault, as apparently some butthead bully went after someone.
• **Oct. 7:** Police responded at 5:52 a.m. to roust some poor swagman caught sleeping in the bushes at the Community Center.
• **Oct. 6:** At 4:21 p.m. police took another missing person report.
• **Oct. 6:** At 12:17 p.m. police responded to another car crash at an unnamed location with undisclosed possible injuries.
• **Oct. 6:** At 2:25 a.m. police contacted yet another dastardly villain with a bench warrant.
• **Oct. 5:** Police responded at 6:48 p.m. to a domestic dustup at Morro Rock. Logs indicated some louse was nicked for abuse of his spouse and naturally, being ripped in public.
• **Oct. 5:** At 2:42 p.m. police responded to a suspicious subject call at City Park, the new hooligan hangout in town. Logs indicated they caught some stultified Schmoe allegedly in possession of illegal drugs. He or she also has more than two prior convictions for the same skullduggery and had that extra felony added to their bag of woes.
• **Oct. 3:** Police responded to a disturbance at unhappy hour (5:08 p.m.) at an undisclosed location in town. Logs indicated some bent fellow was raising a hoo-ha-ha and apparently needed an attitude adjustment.
• **Oct. 3:** At 3:50 p.m. some unnamed person gave some unidentified police officer some undisclosed information about some unknown but no doubt serious something.
• **Oct. 3:** Police contacted a suspicious subject at 3:21 p.m. at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated the model citizen was nicked for misdemeanor possession of drugs and paraphernalia, and having two or more (most likely more), previous convictions for the same nincompoopery, which oddly enough is a felony.
• **Oct. 3:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 12:03 p.m. and unleashed a hellhound, citing the scofflaw for no proof of registration, expired registration, no proof of insurance, no insurance, and a burned-out brake light. The poor squit will now serve life at the DMV.
• **Oct. 3:** Police stopped another suspicious vehicle at 10:23 a.m. and that master criminal also didn't have a valid registration and got cited, as the State does have a $30 billion deficit to cover.
• **Oct. 2:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at the suspect time of 11:30 p.m. at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated they busted the buster for allegedly driving battered and of course expired registration, as he no doubt got drunk and forgot to submit to the annual DMV bloodletting.
• **Oct. 2:** Police contacted a suspicious bonehead at 12:55 p.m. in City Park who of course had a bench warrant. They nabbed another forgetful Dodger at 3:30 p.m. also in City Park and issued both disappearance tickets to catch again next month.
• **Oct. 1:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 10:35 p.m. at Burger King on Quintana Road and arrested the toasted whopper for allegedly driving pickled, a case where he or she didn't have it their way at all.
• **Oct. 1:** Police responded at 2:17 p.m. to a local business where some petty thief committed petty theft.
• **Oct. 1:** Police responded at 10:48 a.m. to serve a bench warrant at La Serena Inn on Morro Avenue.
• **Oct. 1:** Police responded at 3:46 a.m. to an undisclosed location in town after someone realized his or her car had been stolen either by a stranger or maybe borrowed by a relative without permission, but a felony either way. Logs also listed two other felonies — burglary and vandalism over $400 — in the case, so somebody's in real trouble now.
• **Sept. 30:** Someone found something somewhere sometime before 10:56 a.m. and somehow decided to give it to police.
• **Sept. 29:** Police stopped a suspicious vehicle at 10:21 p.m. at an undisclosed location. Logs indicated the driver, an apparent disciple of Bacchus was cited for suspicion of driving sloppy, on a suspended license and while on probation for a previous DUI, a case of going full speed with half a brain.
• **Sept. 29:** Police responded to a disturbance at 8:06 p.m. at a watering hole in the 2900 block of North Main, as some naughty boy got deep in his cups at the Nauti Anchor. The annoying flesh monkey was cited for trespassing and refusing to leave, a bench warrant and naturally, resisting arrest. He no doubt spent the night in the hoosegow.
• **Sept. 29:** Police responded at 3:14 p.m. and took a report of some scamboogah scamming a citizen out of over $400 cash, a felony.
• **Sept. 29:** Police responded at 1 p.m. to a schnockered idjit causing a kerfuffle at Lila Keiser Park.
• **Sept. 29:** Police responded at 7:41 p.m. to a car crash at an undisclosed location. No word on the extent of the carnage.
• **Sept. 28:** Police responded at 5:25 p.m. to an undisclosed location where someone had passed away.
• **Sept. 28:** At 3:51 p.m. police responded to another car crash and again gave little to no information on the extent of the damage, though one might assume the cars will never be the same.
• **Sept. 28:** Police responded at 1:51 p.m. to, according to logs, Bank of America, which closed its branch here nearly a decade ago but still has a row of ATMs at the Sinclair Gas Station, for a reported identity theft.
• **Sept. 28:** At 12:10 a.m. police took a report of felony destruction of property or vandalism, as the graffidiots have apparently gotten busy once again.

Poly Offers Teacher From page 7

plete coursework before they can go into the classroom. In this model, you're in the classroom nearly full time from the beginning through the full school year."

Cal Poly faculty in education will serve as program instructors. Online classes will begin in January 2027 for students who must take prerequisite courses (those who have completed those requirements may have those courses waived). Credential coursework will be held in-person in Santa Maria two nights per week in the fall semester starting in August 2027 and the spring semester commencing January 2028.

With teacher shortages in Northern Santa Barbara County schools, specifically for areas of bilingual education in STEM and other specialized areas of instruction, the program will help fill educational gaps while setting up program students for future work.

"This program opens up a pathway that makes it affordable to earn a teaching credential, while simultaneously securing employment for the four years that follow the program," said Jess Jensen, a Cal Poly education professor and a program coordinator. "It's truly a game changer. Teacher recruitment is always an issue, and on top of that, several of our partner districts are moving to departmentalized upper elementary classes."

Departmentalized upper-elementary classes are classes — usually in grades four through six — in which students switch teachers for different subjects rather than staying with one teacher all day.

For example, one teacher might teach math and science, while another teaches English language arts and social studies. It's meant to give teachers deeper subject focus and help students begin adapting to the class transitions they'll experience in middle school.

"This grant awarded for the partnership program builds an opportunity for pre-service teachers to specialize in a content area, which will ultimately help these districts recruit and train for those hard-to-fill, specialized teaching positions," Jensen said.

Applicants may apply to the program soe.calpoly.edu/content/multiple-subject-program-admission. For more information about the program at https://bit.ly/4B5N6X7.

Cat Noir CC

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

I'm sure Boris has a good story to go with this, but it seems like he might be up to something.

The ever increasing in size blimp has a new trick up his paw that he thinks works, and I don't have the heart to tell him it doesn't.

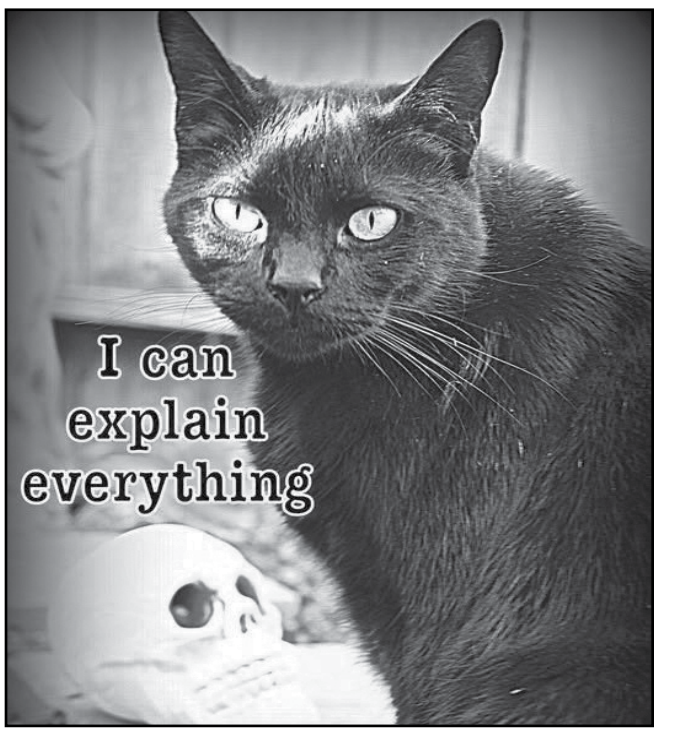
When Virgil walks away from his canned food, Boris is waiting on the sidelines. I am usually lurking somewhere to prevent the oaf's blatant thievery.

This morning I walked into the kitchen, and Boris was frantically trying to gorge on as much gloppy goodness as he could before I could reach him. This is the norm. Anymew, when I stepped into the room, he tried to tuck his back half under his front half while turning sideways all while he chomped away.

I'm not sure if he was trying to become invisible or wanted me to think he was pulling away from the bowl. Either way, it's proof that he knows he shouldn't do it and simply doesn't care. Historically, cats are liars. Boris is the best at hiding the truth and pouring on cute. When I asked him to leave so Virgil could eat without a stalled street sweeper glaring at him, B put his head on the ground and then fell over. Cutest thing ever even if the floor shook under his girth. He knows full-well the belly is the get out of jail free card.

I have no doubt that Boris has a good story to explain the skeletal remains in the yard, but the truth will be very far down the road when he finally finishes embellishing, err explaining.

Follow CatNoirCC on Instagram and Facebook for daily fun.



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Estero Bay New Briefs

By Theresa-Maria Wilson

Prescribed Burn Operations Planned at State Parks

California State Parks, with assistance from Cal Fire and other partner agencies, will carry out a series of prescribed burns in several parks in San Luis Obispo County starting late this month. The burns may occur in Morro Bay and Montaña de Oro state parks and may continue through June 2027. All burning is dependent on available fire resources, weather, and air quality conditions. If weather or vegetation conditions are not conducive for burning and smoke dispersal, the planned burns will be rescheduled.

• Some park roads, facilities, and trails near the burn area may be closed. For the most updated information on park closures, please visit the individual park unit's webpage.

• Although prescribed burns produce significantly less smoke than a wildfire, people traveling near the fire burn areas may see smoke from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on the day of the burns.

• In the unlikely event you smell smoke, San Luis Obispo County urges you to take precautions and use common sense to reduce any harmful health effects by limiting outdoor activities. These precautions are especially important for children, the elderly and people with respiratory and heart conditions.

• The public is advised to use extreme caution while driving near prescribed fire operations due to fire personnel and equipment in the area.

These burns are part of State Park's prescribed fire program for vegetation management, hazardous fuel load reduction, wildlife habitat improvement, and other ecological benefits. This work will include grassland and coastal scrub burns, as well as broadcast and pile burns in forested and urban/wildland interfaces to address diseased, dead, and downed trees. These treatments will enhance the health of the ecosystems by removing diseased materials, restoring essential nutrients to the soil, and reducing the chance of a catastrophic wildfire.

State Parks plans and coordinates the prescribed burns with the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District to minimize the smoke impacts on surrounding communities.

The League's Civil Discourse at School Boards Forum

School board meetings are where many community conversations get heated. Join the Civil Discourse Committee and the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education for an in-person forum on how school boards work, what makes an effective board member, how the public can take part, and how boards can respond well to public comment.

The forum takes place Monday, October 26 from 6:30 – 8 p.m. at the SLO County Office of Education Board Room, 3350 Education Drive, San Luis Obispo. It is free, but registration is recommended at lwvslo.org.

El Niño Could Impact Sealife and Coastal Land Inhabitants

The expected "super" El Niño weather season ahead could affect a variety of species that inhabit the ocean and coastal land, according to Cal Poly's director of the Center for Coastal Marine Sciences.

Ben Ruttenberg described this year's anticipated El Niño as perhaps the strongest the West Coast will have experienced in many decades. In addition to the likelihood of significantly more rain, Ruttenberg explained that the effects will weaken trade winds and upwelling, bringing warmer ocean water that will raise sea levels by up to six inches to a foot. The ocean conditions will increase competition for food as nutrient sources decline, including plankton and kelp that thrive in cold, nutrient-rich upwelling areas.



Ben Ruttenberg, director of Cal Poly's Center for Coastal Marine Sciences. Photo by Joe Johnston

"Those nutrients fuel the entire food web," Ruttenberg said in a news release. "Phytoplankton and zooplankton eaten by small fish will be less available, meaning less food for whales, sea lions, seals, seabirds, and the whole host of organisms that forage on them."

The last significant marine-impacting climate pattern, the North Pacific Ocean heatwave known as "the Blob" combined with a strong El Niño between 2014 and 2016 and had substantial impacts on a range of species. Among other effects, it contributed to the deaths of an estimated 4 million common murre seabirds in Alaska that suffered from mass starvation from ocean disruptions, and in part led to the loss of kelp forests throughout Northern California.

El Niño is caused by the weakening or reversal of east-to-west trade winds across the tropical Pacific Ocean, causing relatively warm offshore conditions in the eastern Pacific Ocean regions from South America as far north as California and the Pacific Northwest.

However, because of coastal winds, there will likely still be some upwelling near the shore, bringing slightly cooler waters and more nutrients closer to land. As a result, key ocean prey species, like baitfish and krill, may therefore be found closer to the coast than normal.

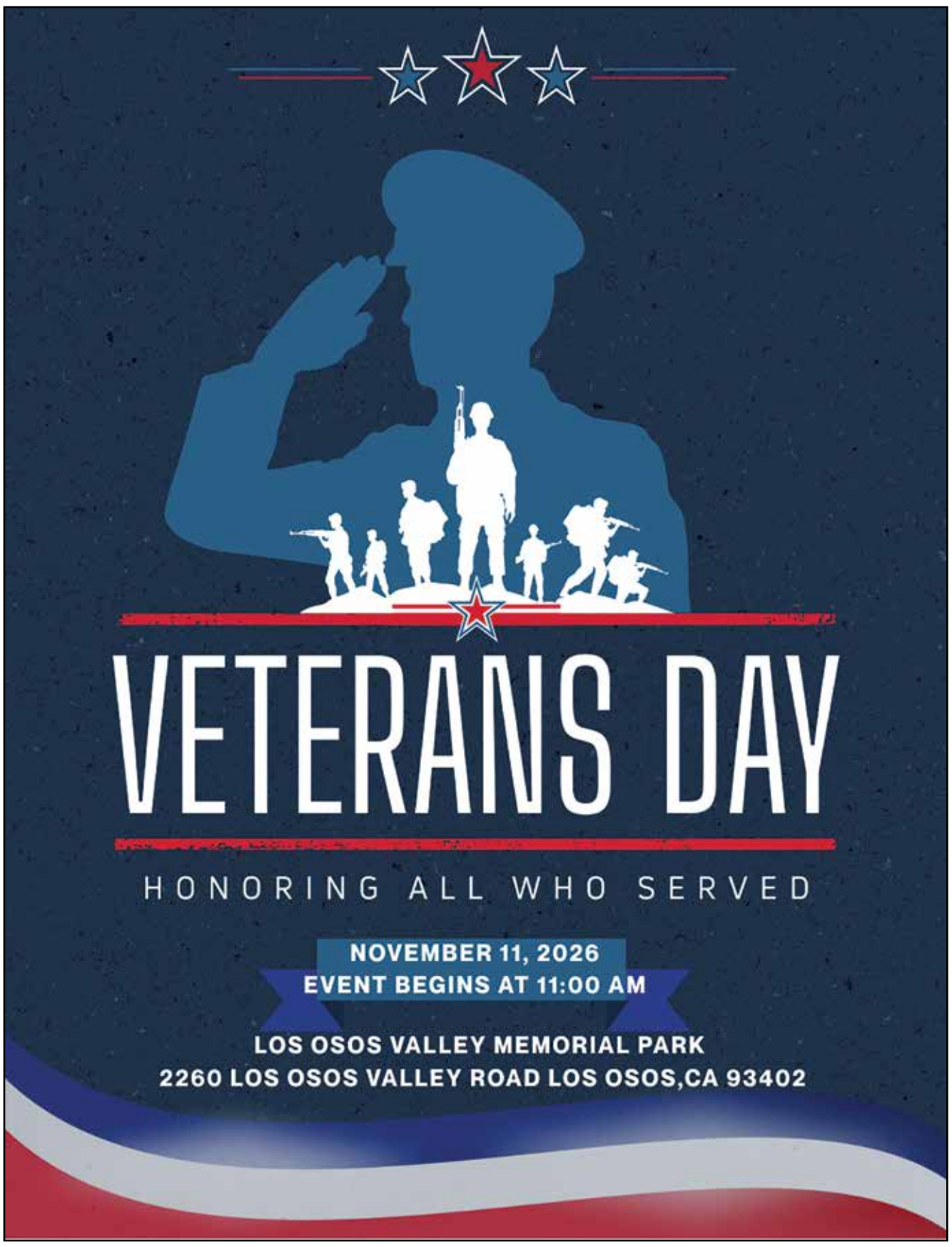
"If you like whale watching, there will likely be many more whales closer to shore this year," Ruttenberg said. "It's good for whale watching, but bad for the marine mammals because it puts them in closer proximity to activities involving people, including vessels and fishing gear."

California Gov. Gavin Newsom already has declared a state of emergency as the storm season develops. Based on NOAA forecasts, Ruttenberg said December, January and February are likely to see the strongest impacts from El Niño, but the climate-caused conditions may last well into spring.

For safety preparedness, Ruttenberg recommends that residents clean rain gutters, ensure adequate drainage and trim overhanging branches that could damage property.

"While the severity of the conditions can vary, extreme rain events and the potential for flooding are more likely this

News Briefs Continued on page 11



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STATE ASSEMBLYMEMBER

DAWN ADDIS



"As your Assemblymember, I'm working hard to secure a fair share of funding and resources for Cambria, Cayucos, Los Osos, Morro Bay, and San Simeon. ***I hope to earn your vote and continue serving our special communities."*** —Dawn

DAWN'S LEADERSHIP has been recognized with the following awards:

Community Power Protector Award
California Environmental Voters

Courage Award
California Faculty Association

Disability Rights Award
Disability Voices United

Equality Champion Award
Equality California

Health Consumer Champion Award
Health Access California

Ocean Champion Award
Monterey Bay Aquarium

Reproductive Healthcare Champion Award
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California

Transparency Award
The Utility Reform Network (TURN)



DAWN ADDIS is a former Morro Bay Councilmember and co-founder of Women's March SLO who has represented the Central Coast in the State Assembly since 2022. Prior to her election, Dawn taught in the San Luis Coastal Unified School District for over 20 years.



Community

47th Annual Oktoberfest Returns to Baywood





A beloved community tradition returns this fall as the 47th Annual Oktoberfest brings a full day of food, music, family activities, classic cars and community spirit to Downtown Baywood Park.

The celebration takes place Sunday, October 25, on 2nd Street in Downtown Baywood Park, offering something for visitors of all ages. The annual event will feature a Classic Car Show, Biergarten, community Fun Run, Kids Zone, vendor booths, food and refreshments, live entertainment and more.

"We are excited to celebrate 47 years of Oktoberfest and bring our community together for a day of fun, fellowship and tradition," said Annie Wahler, Oktoberfest co-chair. "Whether you're coming for the cars, the food, the entertainment or the family activities, there's something for everyone to enjoy."

Classic Cars, Food and Family Fun

Car enthusiasts will have plenty to see at the popular Classic Car Show, featuring an impressive collection of classic, vintage and custom vehicles. Awards recognizing participating vehicles will be presented during the afternoon.

For adults, the Biergarten will provide a festive gathering place featuring refreshments, entertainment and the traditional Oktoberfest atmosphere.

The day gets an early start with the community Fun Run, at 9 a.m. by the Pier, presented by the Morro Bay High School Athletic Booster Club. The event encourages participants of all ages to get active while supporting local students and joining in the day's festivities.

Families can also head to the Kids Zone open from 12 to 4pm, where children can enjoy games, activities and attractions throughout the celebration.

Local businesses, artisans and community organizations will fill Downtown Baywood Park, giving visitors an opportunity to browse an assortment of products, crafts, food and services while supporting local entrepreneurs and community organizations.

New Community Stage Debuts

Organizers are introducing several new features for the 47th annual celebration, including the Community Stage, located at the pier end of 2nd Street.

The Community Stage will showcase local talent and community entertainment throughout the day, featuring local performers, organizations and presenters. The stage will give community groups an opportunity to share what they do and showcase the unique talents, traditions and activities that make the community special.

New Oktobertaste Challenge

Another new attraction this year is the Oktobertaste Challenge, giving five lucky participants the opportunity to take part in a blind beer-flight tasting featuring samples from all eight participating breweries.

Participants will taste the beers without knowing which brewery each sample represents before sharing their opinions about their favorites.

Organizers emphasize that the Oktobertaste Challenge is not a competition. Instead, it is designed as a lighthearted opportunity for participants to compare personal tastes and preferences while sampling offerings from the participating breweries.

Start the Day with a Biergarten Morning Party

The festivities will kick off with a Biergarten Morning Party from 9 to 10:30 a.m., featuring music by Funk Junket.

The first 100 guests will receive a free half-dozen mini donuts donated by Sugar Lips. "Grab your crew, come hungry and start your morning with us!"

Main Stage Entertainment

Live music and entertainment will continue throughout the day on the Main Stage, with a full schedule of performances and activities:

- Biergarten Morning Party with Funk Junket — 9 to 10:30 a.m.
- Oktobertaste — 11 to 11:45 a.m.
- B & The Hive — Noon to 2 p.m.
- Costume Contest and Car Show Awards — 2 to 3 p.m.
- Santa Cruz Family Band — 3:30 to 5 p.m.

With activities taking place throughout the day, organizers are encouraging residents and visitors to make Oktoberfest a full-day community outing.

From classic cars and live music to food, family activities, local vendors and community organizations, the 47th Annual Oktoberfest offers another opportunity for residents and visitors to come together and celebrate one of Baywood Park's longest-running traditions.

News Briefs From page 10

year," Ruttenberg said. "And like in any emergency, it will be good to have batteries, clean drinking water, and food on hand in case there's a massive event, and you have to leave your house, or you're stuck for a few days without power."

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.

Events and Activities

By Theresa-Marie Wilson

Halloween Kidical Mass Bike to Oktoberfest is Sunday Oct. 25 at 11 a.m. Meet at 2nd and Santa Maria beside Merrimaker. Grab your costume, your family, friends and your bike, and roll on down to Baywood for a fun, family-friendly ride during Oktoberfest. We'll gather in the space between Merrimaker and Baywood Market, which will be closed to vehicles, and take a gentle ride around Pasadena Point before joining the festivities along 2nd Street - including live music, food, a car show and kids zone that opens at Noon.

Bike SLO County will lead the ride and provid secure bike parking! Leave your car at home and enjoy the day carefree on 2 wheels

For complete details, check out lobpchamber.org/event/47th-annual-oktoberfest.

• • •

Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors is a Bram-new comedy you can really sink your teeth into. Filled with clever wordplay and anything-goes pop culture references, it's a 90-minute, action packed, laugh-out-loud reimagining of the gothic classic, perfect for audiences of all blood types. A delightful mix of Monty Python humor with the rock & roll sexiness of Rocky Horror!

Written by Gordon Greenberg & Steve Rosen, this comedic romp is directed by Nicolette Tempesta. The ensemble cast features the talents of Frank Maciel as Dracula, along with Redzuan Abdul Rahim, Lucy Nosbisch, Brennan Stewart, Nicki Butler, Melissa Jensen, Timothy Linzey, and Roxane Brodnick. Their antics are guaranteed to increase your pulse and cause bloodcurdling screams — of laughter.

Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors runs through November 1, at 545 Shasta Ave. in Morro Bay. Performances are Friday and Saturday evenings at 7 p.m., and Sundays at 3 p.m. Reservations are recommended at bytheseaproductions.org or 805-776-3287.

• • •



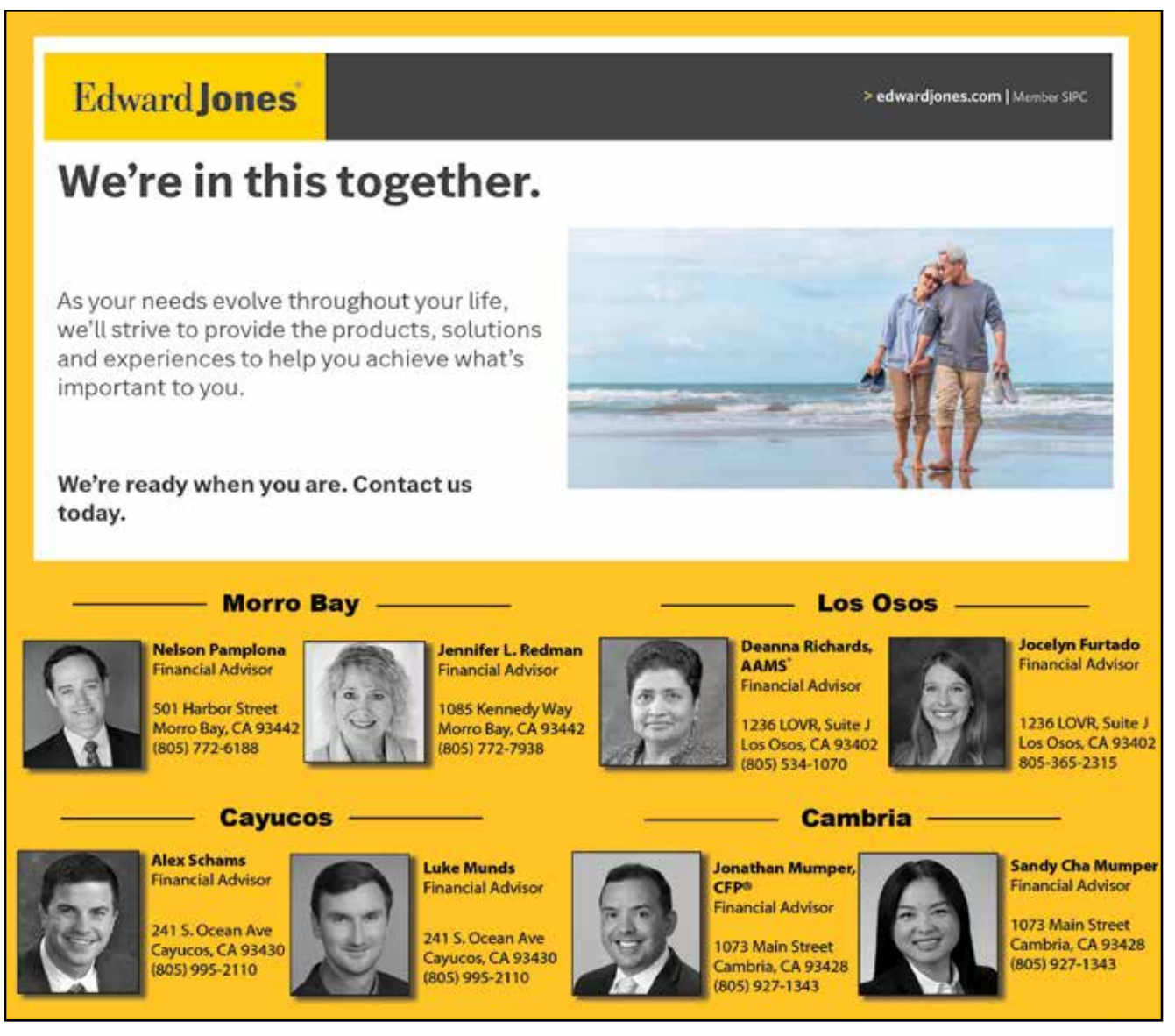
Join artist and musician María Belén Luzuriaga Abad for a unique altar-making event where participants explore the rich history of altar creation and its significance in various cultures on Oct. 31 from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Los Osos Library. This workshop will delve into the traditional practices of honoring the deceased, focusing on Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead). Discover how this vibrant Mexican tradition celebrates the souls of treasured individuals who have passed on.

Things to bring:

- A Photo of a loved one who has died (human or animal)
- One of their favorite snacks/things
- Extra decorations

There will be a limited supply of boxes available for attendees to build their own altar. Bring your own shoe box or use one of the shoe boxes provided! Registration required. Registration is required for this event. Registration closes on October 31, at 8 a.m.

Events Continued on page 12







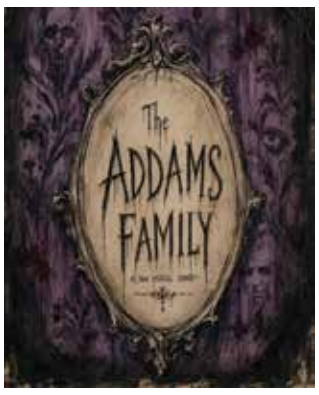
Community

Takin' Care of Business From page 11

•••

Morro Bay Art Association presents The Annual Winter Faire & Juried Craft Show, featuring some of the finest artworks on the Central Coast. They are exhibiting artists' exceptional paintings, photography and fine crafts, spanning a variety of artistic mediums from traditional to contemporary. Crafts include fiber, wood, glass, sculpture, pottery, jewelry and more. It takes place November 5 - January 4, 2027, from 12-4 p.m. daily. There is an artist reception on Sunday, November 8, 2 – 4 p.m. at Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

•••



The Addams Family, a new musical comedy, by the Cambria Center for the Arts takes Friday, Oct. 23, to Sunsay, Nov. 1, at 1350 Main Street, Cambria

Step inside the shadowy Addams mansion, where darkness is delightful, strange is normal, and the ancestors never truly rest. When Wednesday Addams falls in love with a sweet young man from a respectable family, she invites him and his unsuspecting parents to dinner. But as a violent storm closes in, buried secrets rise from the grave and one fateful evening threatens to tear both families apart.

Filled with chilling surprises, wicked humor, memorable music, and delightfully macabre characters, The Addams Family is a frightfully entertaining celebration of love, family, and everything that goes bump in the night.

Showtimes, dates, and tickets are at my805tix.com

•••

Camp Fire Central Coast invites folks to the 29th Annual Hollyberry Benefit, their signature fundraising event supporting youth across San Luis Obispo and Northern Santa Barbara Counties. Lighting the Way for Every Child's Spark takes place Saturday, November 7 from 4:30 – 8 p.m. at the Pismo Beach Veterans Hall,

780 Bello Street, Pismo Beach

Hollyberry is an evening filled with good food, great friends, and fun — including a silent auction, live auction, dessert auction, opportunity drawing, and Fund-a-Need.

Most importantly, your support helps Camp Fire Central Coast provide summer camps, after-school programs, camp scholarships, leadership opportunities, outdoor education, and meaningful experiences that help young people build confidence, discover their strengths, and thrive. Tickets are $100 for two dinners and can be purchased by calling 805-801-7858.

More event information at campfirecentralcoast.org.

•••

Just in time for Halloween, join a group of passengers on an eerie voyage to an unknown destination as the Central Coast Reader's Theatre presents "Outward Bound" on Saturday, October 24 at 3 p.m. at St. Benedict's Episcopal Church, Los Osos. The production is conceived and directed by long-time local theatre veteran Jonniepat Mobley.Cast members include Terri Fisher, Linda Bomstad, Mary Walker, Pat Snodgrass, Dru Riker, Caro Hall, John Horsley, Alan Kiste and Laurelle Barnett. The performance is followed by a Halloween-themed reception where you can meet-and-greet the actors and enjoy light refreshments.

Suggested donation for the performance is $10. For further information, visit the St. Benedict's website at www.stbenslososos.org or call 805-528-0654.

•••



Volumes of Pleasure invites the community to honor their loved ones who have passed in thir Dis de Los Muertos community ofrenda located in their storefront window.

Día de Los Muertos is traditionally celebrated on Nov. 1 and 2. This is an annual Mexican tradition that was started at the bookstore five years ago, honoring ancestors and celebrating their memory. If you would like to include a photograph of a loved one in our ofrenda, drop it off at 1016 Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos by Thursday, Oct. 29. Label the back with your name and phone number.

•••



Free charcoal and charcoal pencil demo with Gerimi Burleigh on Oct. 25 from 1 – 3 p.m. at Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St. Geremi will bring to life the dynamic nature of the head and hands. Through his understanding of force, line, tension, tone and structure he will show us how to approach drawing these human features.

Gerimi is writer, artist, and graphic designer. He works mostly in the toy industry as a product/packaging designer, but after dark, he sweats and bleeds comic books. He graduated from UCLA with a BFA in drawing and painting, then went on to study for fifteen years under master draftsman Karl Gnass at the Animation Guild in Burbank. The craft of drawing the human figure has been essential to his professional and personal creative endeavors. In 2005 he co-created the animated series "Alien Racers," for MGA Entertainment, and co-wrote a 90-minute special for Cartoon Network. Since then, he has written and illustrated three graphic novels, and is currently developing his fourth book.

•••

The Atascadero Printery Foundation invites Central Coast residents to enjoy an evening of Dracula and dancing on Friday, October 30, and is also accepting performer applications for Press Play! Community Talent Weekend, planned for November 13-14.

The Dracula Experience takes place at the historic Printery, 6351 Olmeda Avenue in Atascadero. VIP doors open at 5:30 p.m., general admission doors open at 6 p.m., the program begins at 7 p.m., and the movie starts at 7:30 p.m. General admission is $15; VIP admission is $30.Tickets and event details are at https://www.atascaderoprintery.org/events-1.

Press Play! Community Talent Weekend welcomes applications from performers of all ages, including singers, dancers, musicians, comedians, magicians, spoken-word performers, storytellers and people with other talents. The working event dates are Friday, November 13, and Saturday, November 14, and are subject to change. Selected winners will be invited to perform at the Printery Gala on Sunday, November 15.

Applicants should provide a short, 30-90 second performance sample. A simple phone recording is welcome; video is preferred when seeing the act matters, and audio is acceptable for singers and musicians. Performers under 18 need a parent or legal guardian to review the application and give permission. Applications are reviewed for selection and do not guarantee a performance slot.

To apply, visit https://www.atascaderoprintery.org/events-1 and follow the Press Play! performer signup link. The public application does not require a Google account.

•••

Downtown SLO will hold Halloween Festivities at the Downtown SLO Farmers' Market on Thursday, October 29 from 6 – 8 p.m. Families are invited to follow the trail and collect candy as they trick-or-treat at downtown businesses and farmers' market vendors. Trick-or-treaters are encouraged to start at Mission Plaza

Events Continued on page 14

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Photo By Bill Bouton

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MorroBayBirdFestival.org
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DELIVERING ... Achievement



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- Leader in Me School – *Monarch Grove Elementary*
- State & National School to Watch – *Los Osos Middle School*
- AP Honor Roll Silver Recognition from College Board – *Morro Bay High School*

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- First dual language immersion school on the coast – *Baywood Elementary*
- Free, district-wide year-round elementary youth sports program
- Free Summer Experience program to meet the summer needs of students and families
- Enhanced counseling across the district, including elementary and bilingual counselors at all middle and high schools

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- Built a new community pool benefiting residents of Morro Bay and Estero Bay
- $490 million investment through school facility bonds to renovate all schools, including significant upgrades at Morro Bay High School, Los Osos Middle School and Del Mar, Baywood and Monarch Grove Elementary Schools
- Secured 30% pay increases for our teachers over 4 successful contract cycles

Trusted by Education Leaders

"As a school administrator in Morro Bay for 15 years, I have worked closely with Marilyn Rodger. **She puts the best interests and academic success of all students at the center of every decision she makes.** Marilyn consistently empowered me to be an effective school leader."

Janet Gould
former principal of Del Mar Elementary and 30-year resident of Morro Bay

ENDORSED BY

Dr. Jim Brescia, SLO County Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Joe Koski, SLO County Superintendent-Elect

Scott Schalde, Former principal of Morro Bay High School

Ellen Sheffer, Outgoing Trustee SLCUSD

SEIU Local 620, representing our school's bus drivers, food services, custodial, maintenance and grounds, and more classified employees

El Moro Democratic Club

"Marilyn has helped guide San Luis Coastal's continued emphasis on **academic achievement**, **equity**, **inclusion**, and a **Culture of Care** grounded in the belief that **"All Means All."**

- **Dr. Jim Brescia**, *SLO County Superintendent of Schools*

Paid for by Marilyn Rodger for School Board 2026 (FPPC ID #1496448)

Community

Events From page 12

and follow the map through downtown. Families are encouraged to bring their own treat bags and print maps at home or use the digital version. The map will be published online at DowntownSLO.com/Halloween as the date approaches.

• • •



The Latino Outreach Council will host its annual Día de los Muertos celebration on Saturday, Oct. 31, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Mission Plaza in downtown San Luis Obispo. The event is free and open to the public.

The day opens at 11 a.m. at the community altar, where guests are invited to add a photo or memento of a loved one to a shared ofrenda. The afternoon also features altars to view, folklórico and Latin dance, live mariachi, a costume contest for kids and adults, face painting, a children's art project, exhibitors, and food and craft vendors.

Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a tradition rooted in Mexico in which families honor loved ones who have died. They build altars, called ofrendas, and fill them with photographs, marigolds, candles, and favorite foods. It is a day of remembrance and celebration, and it is separate from Halloween. The Mission Plaza gathering takes place the day before the traditional observance on Nov. 1 and 2. Proceeds support the Council's youth scholarships and its year-round community programs. Catrina and Catrín attire encouraged; costume contest at 1 p.m.

• • •



The San Luis Obispo Symphony continues its 2026-2027 season with Keys of Grandeur, an evening of passion, color, and virtuosity presented in partnership with the Paderewski Festival on Saturday, November 7, 2026, at 7:30 p.m. at the Performing Arts Center San Luis Obispo. The program opens with the lively Mazurka from Stanisław Moniuszko's Halka, before rising star Hyunjin Roh takes the stage for Beethoven's regal Piano Concerto No. 5, the "Emperor." After intermission, the orchestra turns to the haunting beauty of Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6, the "Pathétique." Tickets range from $12 to $92 and are available at pacslo.org

• • •

The Cal Poly Jazz Ensembles will present "The Art of Jazz" concert at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 23, in the Performing Arts Center. The program will explore the diverse styles that have shaped jazz performance, from swing and hard bop to Latin American and Caribbean traditions, soul and funk. Highlights from the University Jazz Band's set will include Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie's "Anthropology," Thad Jones' arrangement of Jerome Richardson's "Groove Merchant" and Mario Bauzá's "Mambo Inn."

The Jazz Lab Band will make its debut on the concert. The group is a "little big band," with six to eight horns and a rhythm section. Its set will feature timeless pieces including John Coltrane's "Lazy Bird," Mongo Santamaría's "Afro Blue" and Josef Zawinul's "Birdland." Tickets are $17 and $22 general, $12 students and Jazz Federation members. Get them at Pacslo.org.

• • •



Kaitrin Cunningham, Jennifer Freye, Amy Goymerac and Lorenzo Johnson Jr. will present a recital at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 29, in Room 218 of the Davidson Music Center. The nearly 20 works on the program will include Gioachino Rossini's famous "Cat Duet," Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's "Sull'aria" from "The Marriage of Figaro," Moses Hogan's "Give Me Jesus," and Frederick Loewe's "I Could Have Danced All Night" from "My Fair Lady." Paul Woodring will play piano. Tickets at the door ($10 general, $5 students), a parking permit is required.

• • •

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.

Obituaries

Wanida 'Noi' Miner
1961 – 2026



Wanida "Noi" Miner was a hardworking, strong-willed woman whose heart belonged to her family and her community. After moving from Thailand with her husband, Ron Miner, she built a lasting legacy by opening a restaurant in 1994 that served the Central Coast for over 30 years. To Noi, it was more than a restaurant; it was her passion, her happiness, and a way to bring joy to the people she loved.

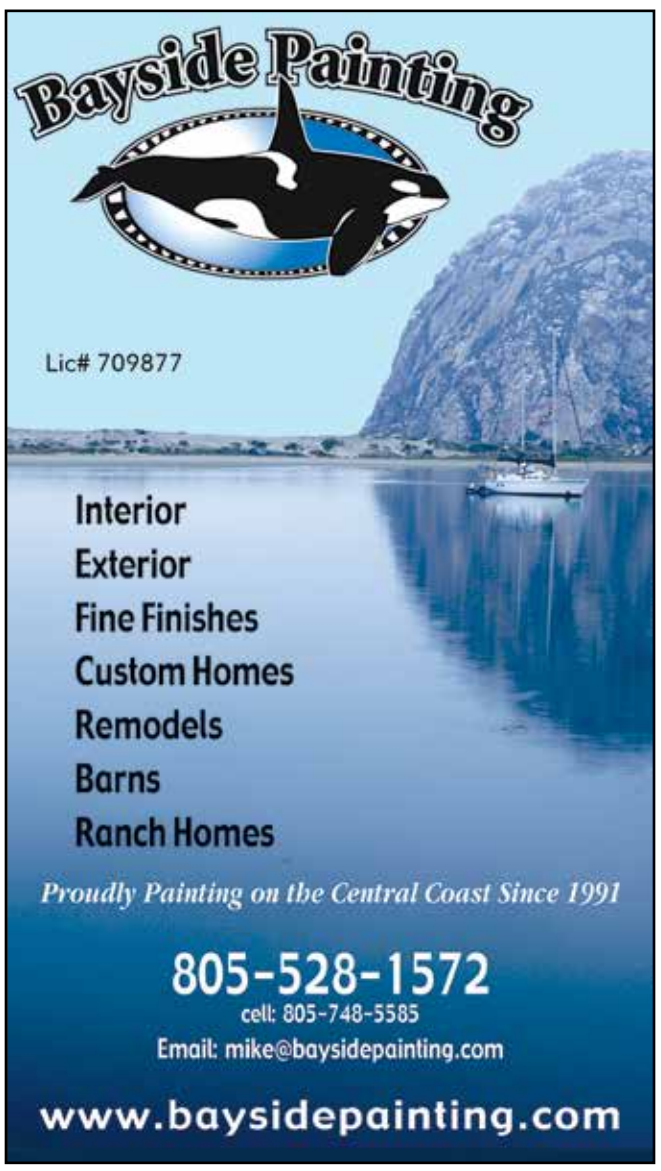
Known for her hard-headed spirit, unwavering work ethic, and enormous heart, Noi dedicated her life to making others happy. She cherished her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and she found joy in traveling, shopping, cooking and experiencing new things. Her impact on the Central Coast is one that few could ever replicate, and her footprint will remain for generations to come.

She is survived by her husband Ron Miner; her sister Doi Klinpratoom; her children, Sienna Miner and Justin Miner; her grandchildren, Jaycee, Jaston, Maddox, and Camila Miner; and her great-grandchildren, Coast and Kovelyn; and numerous nieces and nephews, along with the countless lives she touched throughout her years.

My Grandmother lived a full life; she built something extraordinary and gave so much of herself to the people around her. Though her presence will be deeply missed, the love she shared, the community she helped build, and the legacy she leaves behind will never be forgotten. Her story will live on in every life she touched, and every memory made within the place she worked so hard to create.

A celebration of life is set for December 5 in Baywood Park at Nois Little Thai Temple located at 1288 2nd st.

This all day event is open to the public and will start at 10:30 a.m. and will be a potluck event.





The 6th Annual Rotary Club Ducky Derby was a tremendous, record-breaking success.
We want to give a big **THANK YOU** to all who participated especially our beloved sponsors.

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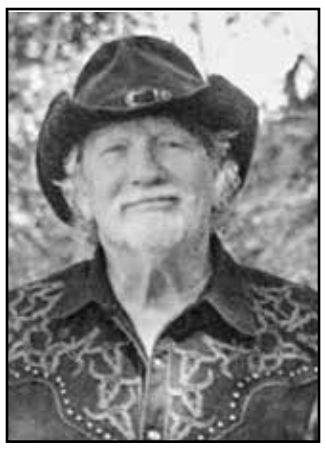
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Obituaries

Paul Charles "Spanky" Anderson



Paul Charles Anderson, known as Spanky to most, and GrandPaul to his granddaughters, passed away during the morning sunrise on August 5, 2026. He was 73 years old.

Spanky was known for his sunset paintings, which were mostly showcased at the Gallery at Marina Square in Morro Bay, or inside his daughter's houses. He graduated from the University of West Georgia with a BA in Art, where he was awarded two Permanent Collection awards from Peter Augustini, a world-renowned sculptor from New York, and internationally known painter Donald Cooper.

Upon graduation, Spanky began his career as a graphic designer and colorist with a major carpet and textile manufacturer, but painting and music were always his calling. In the mid-seventies, Spanky accepted a designer colorist position in Southern California where he continued to paint and pursue his love of the local land and seascape. He also continued to play in bands, such as The Southern Fried Band, with some of his lifelong friends who played with him until this past fall of 2025.

Most recently, Spanky lived in the Morro Bay area where he says, "My peripheral vision of the Central Coast virtually dictates the color palette and brushstrokes onto my canvas." It was not uncommon to see him at the bay or on the beach trying to capture a sunset with his phone that he could later paint. Sometimes, he would stop by to visit his granddaughters, but he had to leave to go catch the sunset if it looked like it was going to be a colorful one. You could also find him on the weekends playing guitar with his band, The SpankyPaul Band, at some of the local wineries and restaurants. His last gig was October 11, 2025 at Mersea's Port San Luis in Avila Beach on the pier, singing "Midnight Rider" by The Allman Brothers Band and "Amie" by Pure Prairie League, among others.

When not painting and playing guitar, he loved spending time with his granddaughters going on nature walks, making Target and Dollar Tree runs, or getting talked into getting frozen yogurt. In his last months, they got to spend more time together since GrandPaul moved in, and we will cherish those memories forever.

Spanky was preceded in death by his parents, Mary Ruth Wells Anderson and James Robert Anderson Sr., as well as his son, Chad Anderson. He is survived by his sisters, Mary Cody and Missy Anderson; his brother James Robert (Sparky) Anderson Jr.; his daughter Sharon Anderson; his daughter Susan Patterson and son-in-law Scott Patterson; and his two granddaughters, Georgia and Clara Patterson.

We will always remember Spanky as a kind, positive soul who loved everyone, and wasn't afraid to show it. Someone said that people leave this life the way they lived it. He spent his last days still positive and charmed everyone around him. He left this world peaceful and comfortable, probably dreaming of the next painting he will paint, or the next gig he is going to have.

His ashes will be scattered in the Pacific Ocean off of Morro Bay, where he can keep catching the Central Coast sunsets. A Celebration of Life will be held at Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero Ste 10, Morro Bay, CA 93442 for one last art exhibit to showcase his talents as a painter. Please join us to celebrate on November 14 from 3-5 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Spanky's memory to Cuesta College's Music Department.

Vernetta Holly Freer



Our beloved matriarch, Vernetta Holly Freer, lived an extraordinary life beyond anything we could have ever imagined.

She passed away peacefully on Thursday October 8, at the remarkable age of 105, in Morro Bay with her daughter Lynn Meissen and son Cal Meissen at her side.

How incredibly blessed we have been to have her with us for so many wonderful years. She was a cherished sister, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and great-great-grandmother, leaving behind generations of love, laughter, and beautiful memories.

She was always the life of the party, filling every room with her unforgettable stories, humor, and larger-than-life personality. Year after year, we gathered around the table to celebrate another year of her incredible life, listening to stories we may have heard a hundred times but never grew tired of hearing.

What a gift it was to have so many years, so many celebrations, and so many memories with the woman who helped shape our family.

Five generations of love, a lifetime of memories, and a legacy that will live on forever.

Travis William Wittmeyer 1972 - 2026



Waves will crash more quietly. Local surfer, Travis William Wittmeyer fought a good fight against cancer, leaving quietly on Sunday, October 4, his wife, Ayu, at his side.

Born in Provo, Utah, March 7, 1972, Travis lived in Bali.

Travis was a musician and then a developer in Hawaii and later Bali, where he built the fifth largest development company.

Surviving Travis: wife, Ayu; children: Blue, Grace, Rosalia, Tiara, Sol, Butterfly, Crystal; his sister, Tyra, his parents, Bill and Cyndi Wittmeyer.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to: French Hospital Medical Center, Angel of Hope Fund, 1922 Johnson Ave, SLO, CA 93401 to "Hearst Cancer Resources Center"

Takin' Care of BUSINESS

By Theresa-Marie Wilson



KCBX's Second Annual Central Coast Sessions Benefit Concert

KCBX Central Coast Public Radio will bring together local musicians and community members for the second annual Central Coast Sessions: A Benefit for KCBX Public Radio on Saturday, November 7, from noon to 10 p.m. at The Rock in San Luis Obispo. The all-day benefit will celebrate local music and community while raising funds to help sustain KCBX's current operations and programming. One hundred percent of ticket sales will directly benefit KCBX.

In 2025, the inaugural Central Coast Sessions event was created in response to the elimination of federal funding for public

Takin' Care of Business Continued on page 16





Takin' Care of Business From page 15

media, which went into effect last October. Since then, KCBX has continued to operate as a 100% community-funded public radio station, and the Central Coast Sessions event is returning for its second year.

The 2026 lineup features 10 local bands performing throughout the day, including Carbon City Lights, Damon Castillo Band, Dubwise Collective, Cate Armstrong Band, Electric Lavender Train, The Funk Junket, Sol Arc, Partita, Bigfoot County, and The New Analog. A full schedule of set times is available on the ticketing page at My805Tix.

In addition to live performances, attendees can participate in a raffle featuring dozens of goods and services donated by local business partners. KCBX-branded merchandise and vintage Live Oak Music Festival apparel will also be available for purchase. An exclusive Rod & Hammer spirits tasting will be offered as an add-on for attendees age 21 and over, and The Rock's restaurant and bar will sell food and beverages throughout the day.

There will also be opportunities to commemorate the late Hank Hadley, former operations manager at KCBX, and Frank Lanzone, who served as the station's president and general manager since 1980. Hank and Frank will be remembered for their lasting impact and dedication to KCBX and celebrated for their lifelong commitment to public radio as they are honored throughout the day.

"Central Coast Sessions is a celebration of community through music and the resilience of KCBX. After 51 years on the Central Coast, KCBX is here to stay, thanks to your support," said Katelyn Schiavone, director of community engagement and events at KCBX. "We hope you will join us alongside hundreds of fellow listeners, supporters, and music lovers of the Central Coast to make a difference in your community by supporting public radio while having fun with your friends and neighbors."

General admission tickets are $25 and are available through My805Tix. Attendees are invited to spend the full day enjoying music and community at The Rock's campus, or they can drop in and out throughout the event.

Neuroscience Symposium

Adventist Health will hold the 4th Annual Central Coast Neuroscience Symposium, The Clot Thickens: Advances in Stroke Care, for healthcare providers in San Luis Obispo County and surrounding areas on Oct. 30 from 8:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. at Embassy Suites by Hilton, 333 Madonna Road, San Luis Obispo.

Registration is required. Interested parties can learn more or register at AdventistHealthCentralCoast.org/Symposium. Led by distinguished experts, this interactive conference will deliver evidence-based updates to enhance the healthcare provider's knowledge of stroke — from triage to surgery, endovascular therapy, bedside care, and more.

Guest speakers include local experts Mikayel Grigoryan, MD; Ben Hendricks, MD; Jason Turner, MD; and Michelle Jcosn, DNP, MSN/Ed, CNRN; along with renowned experts Maxim Mokin, MD, University of South Florida; Kasra Sarhadi, MD, John Muir Health Walnut Creek; and Ethan Winkler, MD, PhD, from the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences.

Participants will increase their knowledge of the assessment, management, and care of stroke patients and learn how to apply these concepts to their clinical practice. Approximately 7-10 exhibitors from various backgrounds will be present at the exhibitor booths to enhance the learning content and experience. Continuing Education Credits are available.

Wiggle Waggle and Half off Pet Adoptions



Woods Humane Society is near the end of special adoption event featuring half-off all pet adoption fees, sponsored by Subaru of San Luis Obispo, from Friday, through Sunday, October 25. The adoption promotion comes as an early kick-off to Woods' annual Wiggle Waggle Fall Festival held at Woods in San Luis Obispo on October 24, from 12-3 p.m. It is free to attend.

"Wiggle Waggle Fall Festival is the ultimate pet celebration on the Central Coast," said Woods Humane Society CEO Emily L'Heureux in a press release. She adds that the organization expects more than 900 people and more than 200 dogs to attend. "We can't think of a better way to spread the joy of Wiggle Waggle than to help remove barriers to adoption so that more dogs and cats can find loving homes in time to join in the fun."

Regular adoption fees, which range from $65 for senior cats to $200 for puppies under 5 - months of age, will be cut in half during the adoption event, which will also run during the festival itself.

Wiggle Waggle Fall Festival features an afternoon of canine carnival fun for families and their leashed dogs, including doggie costume contests, a stuffed animal pull, a dog agility course, a new lure course, and photos with Santa Paws. More than 30 local vendors make up the Pet Fair area, including A Dogs Life Collar Scarves, California Canine, Celeste and the Dogs, Cerro Alto Veterinary Specialty & Emergency Hospital, Costco, Hollywood Mobile Grooming, Howell'n Good Doggie Dentals, Mutts For The Bay, Oggie's Treasure Chest, Paso Market Walk, Pet Communicating, Sassy Cap & Co., Savannah Reifers Pet Caricatures, SLODOG, SLOdoggies, Subtly Unique, Thousand Hills Pet Resort/Gentle Touch Pet Training, and Vineyard Kennels. Delicious local food will be available from Old San Luis BBQ Taco Truck, Yabba Dabba Dogs, Woodstock's Pizza, and Paradise Shaved Ice food trucks.

Non-Profits and Digital Landscapes



Spokes Symposium 2026, 2 to 5 p.m., November 6. brings together nonprofit leaders from across San Luis Obispo County for an afternoon of learning, conversation, and connection.

"Let us be clear: this is not another presentation about how to incorporate AI into your organization's workflow," reads a press release. "Instead, it's an opportunity to come together around something increasingly important: how we protect our organizations, teams and clients in a rapidly changing digital landscape."

The event will explore questions like:

- What is AI, and who has access to our inputs?
- How does the data brokerage economy work?
- What should we consider before we implement AI practices?
- What AI safeguards and legal protections exist in California?

This year's Symposium will center on AI and Digital Safety for Nonprofit Organizations, with technologist and consultant Clara Fulks sharing the AI literacy skills nonprofit leaders need to help protect their organizations, teams, and communities from digital harm.

The program will include interactive small-group activities and conclude with a networking hour featuring passed hors d'oeuvres and drinks.

The Symposium is designed for SLO County nonprofit leaders, ideally CEOs/Executive Directors and Board Presidents. Attendance is limited to two people per organization.

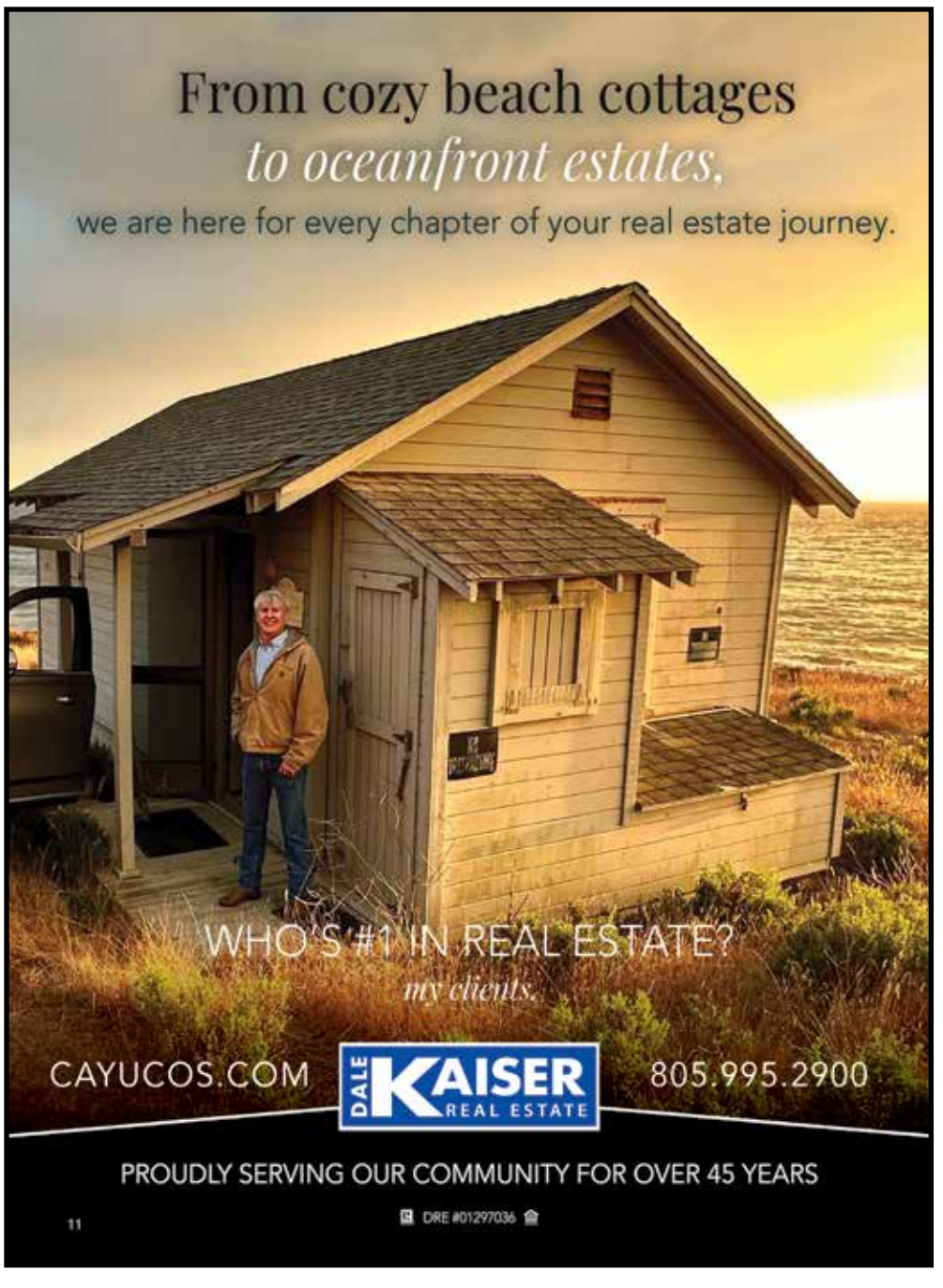
Learn more: https://www.spokesfornonprofits.org/spokes-nonprofit-symposium-2026/Tickets are $45 - $75.

Free Health Services Oct. 25 in Templeton

Adventist Health and community partners will provide free health services and resources to community members on Sunday, October 25, during the Second Annual Free Health Clinic in Templeton.

"Access to routine dental, vision and preventive health services can be challenging for individuals and families experiencing financial or other barriers to care," a press release reads. "The Free Health Clinic brings multiple services together in one location, helping connect community members with care, resources, and support close to home. The event reflects Adventist Health's mission of living God's love by inspiring health, wholeness, and hope through practical service to the community."

At last year's clinic, more than 70 Adventist Health team members helped serve over 1,000 community members. This year, healthcare professionals, volunteers, and community partners will again come together to expand access to essential services and provide practical support to local individuals and





families.

Services and resources are expected to include Adult and pediatric dental services, including root canals, fillings, cleanings, and extractions; vision exams and free prescription glasses; Breast cancer screenings; WIC sign-ups; haircuts; fresh produce; Activities for kids – Bounce houses, pizza, games, and more!

All services will be provided at no cost. at Templeton Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church 930 Templeton Hills Road Templeton.

Free Coats for Kids Up to 6th Grade

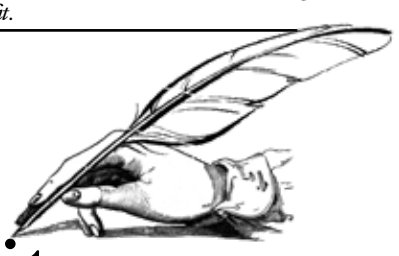
Young Readers Collective is collaborating with Oceano/Five Cities Elks Lodge #2504 for their Operation Warm: More Than a Coat event on Saturday, October 24, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at the Grover Beach Community Library, 240 N. 9th St.

While children through 6th grade receive a warm coat, Young Readers Collective will be there giving away Free books for children and their families "because every child deserves the opportunity to discover the magic of reading.

"We're grateful to partner with organizations that care about our local families and work together to make a difference in our community," Young Readers Collective said in a news release.

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.

Letters To The Editor



Vote for Gomez

My name is Jennifer Chassman Browne, and I am a local educator and disability advocate. I am writing this letter in support of electing Marisa Gomez as school board trustee for area 2. I met Marisa when she came to my door as she was beginning to canvass for her campaign. I was struck by her openness to hear me, her commitment to our schools and students, and her desire to do right by all who are impacted by our education system.

Marisa brings a unique and critical set of skills to this role and is an educator at heart. Her experiences range from work related to assessing challenges in education and making recommendations for how to meet those challenges, to work on second-language learning for bilingual students. She is committed to serving all students and their families and to ensuring that teachers are supported in being successful.

Marisa understands that the world in which our students are growing up is changing and that school culture needs to change along with it. Because of this reality, she supports creating programs and approaches that provide strong technology literacy for all students and school policies that address the changing AI and technology use landscape.

Her efforts will be aimed at making sure that students have the variety of programs, academic and co-curricular, that support their growth and learning.

Lastly, Marisa deeply recognizes the importance of being visible and available to those who she will serve. I know that she will always have a listening ear and be present for the families whose children attend our local schools.

Jennifer Chassman Browne
Los Osos

Vote Winholtz

Having retired from 25 years as a secondary teacher at Los Osos Middle and Morro Bay High it sounds misleading to me that candidate for School Board Ms. Betty Winholtz claims to be an "educator," yet she has no record of public K-12 employment.

Colby C. Crotzer
Morro Bay

Democratic Club Endorces Rodger for Trustee

The El Moro Democratic Club has endorsed Marilyn Rodger, and we believe she is the best candidate for San Luis Coastal Unified School District (SLCUSD) District 1 Trustee. The El Moro Club covers Los Osos, Morro Bay and the North Coast of SLO County.

Marilyn has a proven record as an "advocate for all children" as the District 1 incumbent. San Luis Coastal is the highest performing district in SLO County with several schools being recognized for achievement.

Some of the accomplishments that have been achieved during the time Marilyn has served include working with the Education Foundation to build innovation labs at all elementary schools, enhanced counseling across the district, including bilingual counseling at elementary, middle, and high schools.

Marilyn has the experience and compassion that is needed to continue the work of the SLCUSD.

Vote Marilyn Rodger by November 3rd.

Lori Caudill and Vita Miller
Co-Chairs of the El Moro Democratic Club

Winholtz for School Board

While school boards have influence on educating our students by how they budget money, it's the teachers who directly influence student success. Kudos to the teachers and their support staff for the recent attention bestowed on the San Luis Coastal Unified School District.

As the incumbent for Trustee Area 1, Ms. Rodger is a retired retail manager and has served six four-year terms on the school board. She lives in Los Osos but the area she represents in predominantly Morro Bay. Her decisions while on the board have been complimented for being student oriented in her votes on the school board, but this does not match recent decisions. In particular, I am thinking about the choice to replace grass with artificial turf. It's documented that the latter increases ankle, knee, and burn injuries. Artificial turf can reach 100 degrees and must be watered. Was this a student-centered decision or a financial decision.

To close the $5 million budget gap, the school board voted to cut elementary school librarians, middle school counselors, and money for athletic travel and musical instruments. Was this a student-centered alternative, cutting direct services to students?

As a retired teacher of 27 years, I prefer to give my support to a new voice, someone who I feel is more qualified. Someone who is experienced at asking financial and policy questions and who as a 30+ year tutor, has only been student oriented. Please vote for Betty Winholtz.

Betsy Gaudette-Cross
Morro Bay

Vote Early

By now all eligible California voters should have received their mail-in ballot for the November 3 general election. If you have not received your ballot, go to www.slovote.gov to check your status and register to vote. There you can also find your polling place and the locations of the many vote-by-mail drop boxes throughout the county.

The League of Women Voters urges voters to vote early. Anticipating high voter turnout and recognizing that there may be delays with the mail, we urge everyone to mail or drop off their ballot at least one week before the election or by October 26.

Once again, we remind voters that elections in California are secure. Do not be misled by false claims of voter fraud. Multiple court decisions and research conducted by institutions across the political spectrum have debunked claims that election fraud is rampant. Voter fraud is rare and voting by non-citizens is practically non-existent. Voting by mail is secure. Claims of voter fraud are themselves fraudulent.

Your vote is your voice, your power. It may be the only power you have to influence the political decisions that affect your daily life. Use it. Register, be informed, and cast your ballot with confidence that your vote will be counted.

League of Women Voters of San Luis Obispo County

Marisa Gomez for Board of Trustees

I am a parent of five SLCUSD kids, and I'm voting for Marisa Gomez for Board of Trustees this fall. While some people just run for office, Marisa has been training for it, and she is ready to cross the finish line while the others will still be stretching.

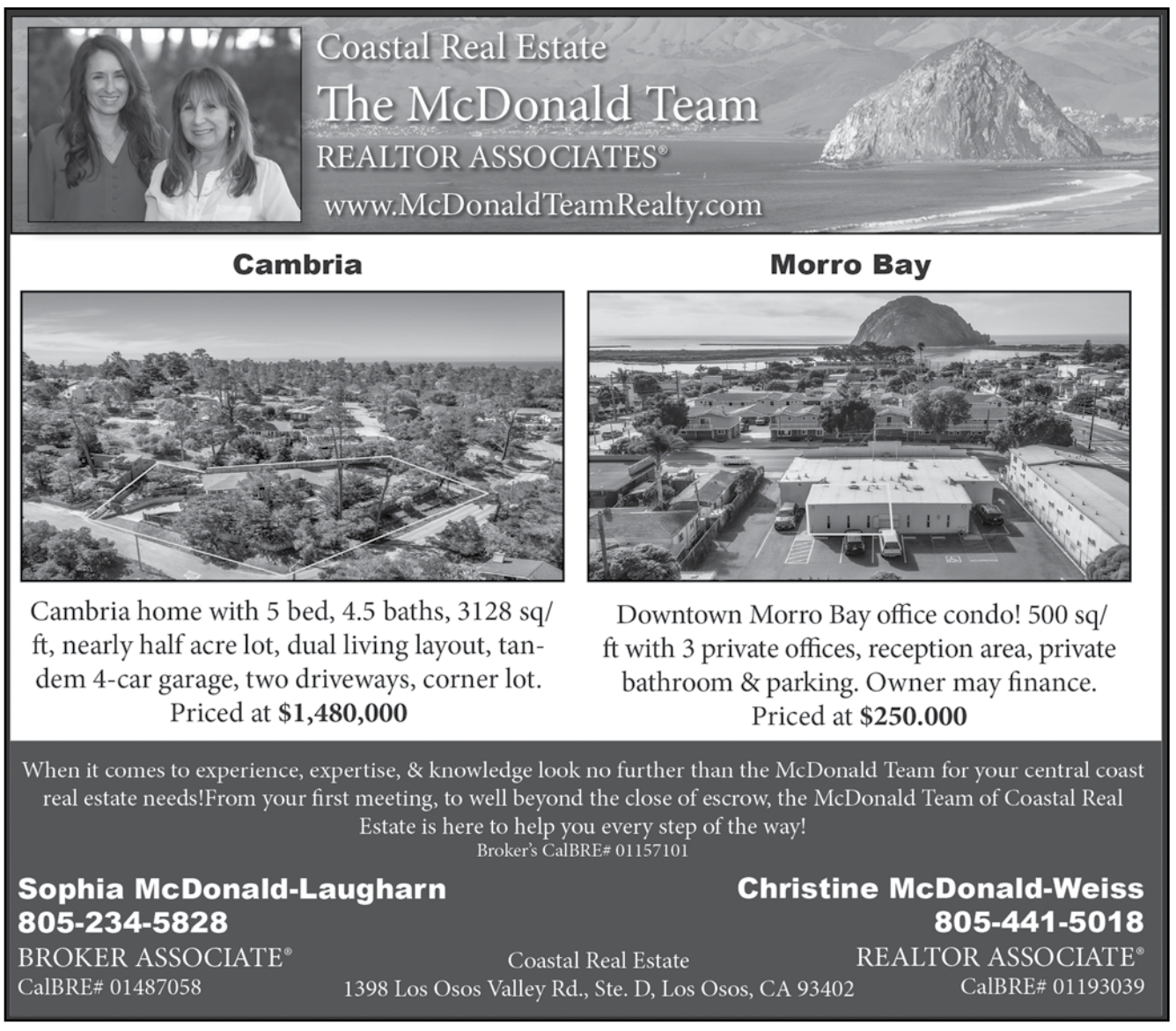
I have witnessed Marisa's leadership in action. Over the past six years, she has orchestrated parent meetings and information sessions at both Baywood and Los Osos middle school to ensure that students in the coast's dual immersion program would have every chance of success. She wants the district to succeed on a whole, and the people inside to thrive. She has my vote!

Tyler Penney
Los Osos

Supporting Marisa Gomez for SLCUSD School Board

As the parent of two children who spent 13 years in San Luis Coastal Unified School District (SLCUSD) schools, the brother of a sibling with a disability, and an Emeritus Professor and former Director of Graduate and Teacher Preparation in Special Education Programs at Cal Poly, I am writing to support the candidacy of Marisa Gomez for SLCUSD School Board in the upcoming November 4, 2026, election.

Letters Continued on page 18





Letters From page 17

While there are multiple reasons why Marisa will help lead SLCUSD in the right direction, what really struck me about her is the importance she places on listening and giving voice to all stakeholders in the educational process, including those whose voices may be quieter or not yet heard. My own educational research confirms that solutions to educational challenges can often be found in such listening and giving voice to those nearest to the challenges.

As a concerned parent and citizen with a background in educational writing, Marisa has demonstrated this ability to listen carefully and give voice to the parents, teachers, and administrators she connected with in working collaboratively to establish the Baywood Elementary Dual Language Immersion Program approved by the SLCUSD in 2019, years before she was prompted to run for school board.

As an eloquent speaker and educational writer in English and Spanish, Marisa is the person we need to collaborate with standing board members in leading our district forward.

Michael (Mike) Ruef, Ph. D., Los Osos

Betty for School Board

Betty Winholtz has put kids first for decades and as a school board trustee she will always advocate for safety and the best education for the kids and this special community they live in.

Let's not forget, Betty was instrumental in preventing a 600 MW lithium battery storage system/fire bomb from being built on Morro Bay's waterfront and preserving historic Morro Elementary from being torn down. She knows how to protect our kids and get things done!! Vote for Betty, we are!

Rocky and Judy Setting, Morro Bay

Glavan for School Board

As a longtime Los Osos resident, mother of two, and former PTA president at Monarch Grove Elementary, I have seen firsthand who truly shows up for our schools. Michael Glavan is one of those people.

Michael isn't someone who became involved because he decided to run for office. He has consistently volunteered his time, supported our schools, and been a familiar presence on campus. I have watched him engage with parents, teachers, staff, and students, listen to their concerns, and step forward when something needs to be done.

That matters to me. School board members make decisions that directly affect our children, teachers, and families. We need representatives who understand our schools not only from board meetings and reports, but from actually being part of the school community.

Michael brings that perspective as a parent, volunteer, veteran, and community leader. Just as importantly, he listens, asks thoughtful questions, and is willing to advocate for what our students and schools need.

I have seen Michael's commitment firsthand, and I am proud to support Michael Glavan for SLCUSD Board of Trustees, Area 2.

Anna Watterworth, Los Osos

Letters 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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OUT & ABOUT

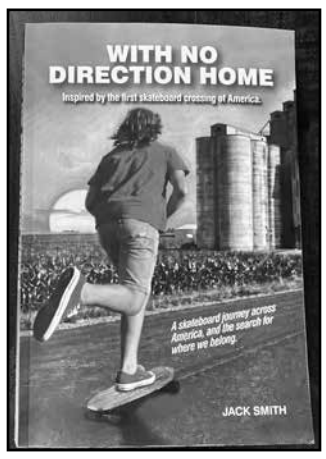
WITH THE BOOKSHELF WRITERS

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, Catherline "Kiki" Kornreich, Judy Salamacha and Susan Vasquez

'With No Direction Home' by Morro Bay's Jack Smith

By Judy Salamacha



Hallelujah! Someone besides me believes "With No Direction Home," a new narrative nonfiction by Jack Smith, is an exceptional book for all readers pre-teen and older. However, please don't assume what the book is about by its cover or because you met Jack before he retired and closed the Morro Bay Skateboard Museum on the Embarcadero. Yes, skateboarding is involved as the "vehicle" by which Jack's characters "push" to discover that destiny happens when you least expect it.

Teens will enjoy many superbly crafted adventures during that tenuous coming-of-age time. Middle-aged and seniors will relish Jack's nostalgic images of America in 1976. Guys will enjoy the guy-talk and gals will appreciate the insightful, yet crisp, conversations. Everyone will recognize the human-quest to solve life's mysteries of belonging and the commonality of questions about what's next. For me it is the best book I've read since I read EBN's Debbie Noble Black's award-winning "Sara and the Ghost Clothes Series."

However, I needed to verify a male perspective to confirm my over-the-top kudos applied to all. Jack mentioned he'd already been on 920KVEC "The Dave Congalton Show," so I listened to the Blog interview posted on 9/11/2026. Morro Bay's Michael Erin Woody was Dave's guest host. He was enthused and infused with the same emotions I had. Michael introduced Jack as an American legend and icon: legendary because one of Jack's skateboards is featured in the Smithsonian; an icon because Jack and two Morro Bay High School buddies -- fisherman Jeff French and contractor Mike Filben, were literally the first to skateboard across America.

Michael offered high praise for the novel and questioned how the boys' families felt about them venturing across the USA on skateboards in 1976? When the boys explained they wanted to do something significant to mark their transition into adulthood during their summer after graduation Jeff's and Mike's fathers understood and encouraged them. Jack's father wasn't sure, but after a week he too recognized such a trip's potential benefits.

Believe Jack...or me...or Michael Woody, when I paraphrase Jack's pitch about what "With No Direction Home" is really about: "Middle America is the setting. Skateboarding is the driving force that moves the story from coast to coast. This is a coming-of-age story that showcases the kindness of most folks as three teens encounter challenges during a journey that no one had ever tried before. The first day they realized it would be harder than anything they had ever tried, but they pushed through one lesson after another that would change their lives forever and create an everlasting love for small-town USA."

Jack Smith is a skateboard industry legend who launched his sports marketing career soon after this adventure. Future celebrations of life seemed to demand he "push" across America more than once. He's completed four trips by skateboard and a couple by car. In 2003 he made the trip after his son passed away and in 2013, he skateboarded with another son to raise funds for the Alzheimer's Association, the disease that took his father from him too early.

Noteworthy is his first and his latest trip – one on skateboard and the other by car to celebrate both America's Bicentennial year and this year's USA250. He and wife Cathy had a film crew for a month, who trained Cathy to film the rest of the boys' original route completed by skateboard. Jack explained "With No Direction Home" began as a movie script. It was the format Jack was comfortable writing since he had co-written the script for the 1993 movie "New Providence" with Director Thor Moreno. Impatient and not finding the right Hollywood connection, he decided to write the story in book-form and integrated multiple true experiences and remembered dialogue from the original tour and highlights from throughout his career.

Jack credits Cathy, a retired teacher, for guiding him during their two-year investment of time writing the book. He recalled his biggest struggle was how to end the book. Driving home from a business trip he decided to turn off all sounds in the car and focus on what he needed to do to change the ending. The idea came to him, so he pulled off the road to call Cathy. Jack said, "We both cried!" Finally, they knew it was the right ending.

Jack's descriptions are vivid. Most readers will visualize their journey while others will relive a coast-to-coast Americana in that simpler time during 1976 when there were phone booths to call home instead of cell phones; travelers could trust sleeping under the stars or hitchhiking rides with strangers; and folks got very excited when three teens passed by their town doing something that had never been done before. They also discovered celebrating their American heritage on Independence Day would always be important to them.

The following quotes and curiosities are taken directly from the book. They are not spoilers, but hopefully teasers to what you will discover: "Is it human nature to want what you don't have?" "Would attending 17 schools until Jack's parents moved to Morro Bay leave him restless for life or make him want to settle somewhere?" "Would the little girl ever play on a swing set again?" Some American holidays traditions must be celebrated. "...like a rolling stone..."You'll find it when you find it." And "Maybe America is full of good people wanting to be a part of something?"

Currently the book is only in paperback and available at Lulu.com, Amazon.com and Volumes of Pleasure Book Shoppe in Los Osos.

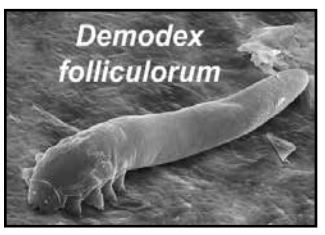


Natural History Nuggets

The Sandman or the sand ... mite?

Mr. Sandman, bring me a dream...
Make him the cutest that I've ever seen...
Song by The Chordettes, 1954

By Dean Thompson



Demodex folliculorum. Photo by Palopoli et al.; licensee BioMed Central. 2014, CC

We've all woken up with a little crustiness in our eyes, and the origins of that crustiness are part of what inspired the first story of The Sandman. Let's be clear, we're not talking about the story of the skeletal creature from the old horror film with a young Hillary Duff, or the character from the Netflix fantasy series. Instead, it's the original story first published in 1818 by German writer E.T.A. Hoffman, called "Der Sandmann."

It's a tale about a mythical creature who throws sand in the eyes of little children who won't go to sleep, causing their eyes to fall out of their sockets. The Sandman then collects the eyeballs in a sack and carries them to his home on the dark side of the moon, where he feeds them to his children. Apparently, after hearing this bedtime tale, children learned that, unlike other fairy tales, this villain can't be beheaded, trapped, or tricked, there's no defeating him, there is no happily ever after, except giving in and falling asleep. So, be quiet, kiddies, and Go To Sleep!

Yes, it's a horrifying tale to tell kids, but is it better than the reality of where some of that crustiness actually comes from? Some of that "sand" or crustiness is from a mix of oils, mucus, and skin cells, but included in that grit can be the remains of a real-life creature known as Demodex folliculorum.

As many of us know, the human body is an ecosystem for trillions of tiny organisms living on and in it. Microbes like bacteria, viruses, fungi, mites, and other organisms make their home on our skin, not to mention the millions more living in our guts. There are two main species of Demodex mites we provide habitat for, Demodex brevis, which live comfortably in the micro-forest of follicles and hairs on our face, and Demodex folliculorum, which prefers smaller hair follicles, especially your eyelashes. Demodex is derived from Greek "demos," meaning "fat," and "dex," meaning "woodworm," so basically fat woodworm.

They may look slightly wormish, but they are not worms. They're arachnids, cousins of spiders and ticks, but very tiny, so

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small it would take 4 or 5 of them to cover a pinhead. They have a slightly transparent, elongated body consisting of two segments covered with scales. The first segment has eight legs, each with 2 to 3 tined claws and spurs to assist in mobility. Their mouth is a round oral opening with a clawed palpus (feeler) attached, and a sharp oral needle. The second segment contains its rudimentary gut, where it digests its favorite foods like dead skin cells and sebum (oils) it noms upon in the cozy, warm confines of your hair follicles.

It was once believed that the mites had no anus and would accumulate waste in their bodies until they exploded when they died, thus causing skin conditions. Scientists have later found that this is not true and that they do indeed have tiny buttholes they use to excrete their waste upon your face, or your eyelids, as the case may be.

Their other contribution to your morning grime would be their shed exoskeletons as they molt from their six-legged larval form into their six-legged nymph form, and then finally into their eight-legged adult form. As adults, they emerge from their follicular homes for nocturnal rendezvous with other mites for copulation and egg laying while you peacefully sleep. Then, after about two weeks, they will eventually pass away to become part of the morning grit that is rubbed away from the corner of your eye.

If you find yourself slightly creeped out by these revelations, fear not, the mites are not dangerous and rarely cause problems and could very well have simple but important beneficial roles. For example, the ones on our face may well help keep our pores unplugged. Plus, you've been a host to this family line of mites since you first obtained them from your mother as you nursed. They're like a family legacy passed down matriarchally for generations, keeping us company and thriving in our own little bodily microhabitat.

Mr. Skinmite, bring us a dream...

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

Cambria Skate Park Groundbreaking



Photo by Connie Pendleton

After six years of community fundraising efforts by Skate Cambria and administrative work by the Cambria Community Council and Community Services District, a groundbreaking ceremony was held on Monday, September 28. The approximate $1,344,000 skatepark is being built on Main Street across from the Veteran's Memorial Hall. The expected completion date is in spring of 2027, weather permitting.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY of MORRO BAY

War brings a harbor to Morro Bay



Thirty-four cities and towns along the entire Pacific coast were preparing for war with Japan in 1941. All branches of the military expanded or built new operations and Morro Bay was on the list to build.

The county Board of Supervisors had already voted July 2, 1941, to cooperate with the United States government on harbor improvements. There were local fuel oil resources to defend, and enemy invasions must be prevented.

The Navy condemned 108 parcels in Morro Bay to build the base, and construction began in September 1941 on housing, office space, and docks. The plan was to build out the infrastructure needed for the Navy Section Base at Morro Bay in cooperation with the Coast Guard that would provide beach patrols.

Changing the harbor to house a "mosquito" fleet was necessary, which meant making space for patrol craft and submarine chasers. Congress had already appropriated $976,000 to begin the project. The plan included dredging the bay which began in August 1941, reclaiming land, extending the breakwater to 1,000 feet, widening the harbor entrance to 350 feet and dredging it to a 16-foot depth. There was to be a new turning basin 500 feet square. The plan was for fueling and repair facilities for ships as large as a destroyer.

An 1,800-foot-long trestle bridge was built from the shore at approximately Beach Street to the sandspit using local eucalyptus tree wood. The bridge was used by the Coast Guard from 1942 to 1945 to allow beach patrols to cross to the sandspit. Thousands of soldiers and marines—and their jeeps—crossed the bridge for training exercises on the dunes.

In May 1943 the Navy stopped work before construction was complete primarily because it had decided to operate the patrol boats out of Port San Luis, reducing the need for the harbor at Morro Bay. The Navy's funds allocated for the project had been expended and it did not want to continue pending approval of appropriations by Congress through the Rivers and Harbors bill (Telegram-Tribune, May 11, 1943). This left the dredging unfinished and one of the two jetties missing some of its backfill.

The county Board of Supervisors then announced the work would be done at the county's expense. But before that could happen, revised assessments of the war needs led the Rivers and Harbors Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives to approve additional funding for the continuation of the Morro Bay project.

The construction of the harbor was resumed and completed in early 1944. By then the war plans had changed and the new harbor was designated as one of eight locations nationwide for an Amphibious Training Base. Morro Bay's contribution to the war effort was finally determined. Equally important, Morro Bay had the harbor it had always needed and its future was changed completely.

Photo source: Barbara Stickle. Have a good photo or story to share? Please contact the Historical Society at admin[at]historicalmorrobay.org.





El Niño From page 1

ful events, including those in 1982-83, 1997-98, and 2015-16, exceeded 2.0°C and are classified as very strong.

These events provide some fascinating, and sometimes sobering, lessons about California's winter weather.

During the 1982-83 El Niño, Cal Poly recorded an extraordinary 47.4 inches of rainfall. The 1997-98 event produced 44.0 inches, more than twice the average precipitation for the July 1 through June 30 rainfall season.

However, the very strong 2015-16 El Niño delivered only 19.5 inches at Cal Poly, falling far short of the extraordinary rainfall many had anticipated.

Historically, strong to very strong El Niño events have increased the likelihood of wetter-than-average winters across California, particularly in Southern California. However, the relationship is far from perfect along the Central Coast.

So how can unusually warm seawater thousands of miles away influence our weather?

The answer lies primarily in the atmosphere's response to the warmer tropical Pacific.

As ocean temperatures rise, evaporation and atmospheric moisture increase, fueling greater thunderstorm activity across portions of the equatorial Pacific. These thunderstorms release enormous amounts of latent heat into the atmosphere, altering large-scale pressure patterns and atmospheric circulation.

These changes can influence the position and strength of the jet streams, particularly the southern branch of the jet stream, often referred to as the subtropical jet.

During strong El Niño winters, this jet stream can become more active and shift the storm track farther south, increasing the likelihood that powerful Pacific storms and atmospheric rivers will reach California.

However, as longtime Central Coast residents know, El Niño doesn't always follow the script.

I was serving in the United States Navy in the Middle East during the extraordinary 1982-83 El Niño, which produced powerful storms and enormous ocean swells approaching our coastline from the southwest.

Normally, the largest winter swells along the Central Coast originate in the Gulf of Alaska and approach our shoreline from the northwest.

Our coastline's geography provides a natural degree of protection from these northwesterly swells. San Luis Bay, home to the Harford, Cal Poly, and Avila Beach piers, lies within a partial wave-shadow zone created by Point San Luis and the surrounding coastline.

Similar protection helps shelter the Cayucos and San Simeon piers from certain northwest swell directions.

These naturally protected locations played an important role in where the piers were constructed and have helped them withstand decades of powerful winter storms.

But during strong El Niño events, Pacific storm systems can follow a more southerly track, generating large, long-period west-to-southwesterly swells that enter areas normally sheltered from northwest wave energy.

That's precisely what happened on March 1, 1983.

An extraordinarily powerful storm generated tremendous waves that destroyed the approximately 2,700-foot-long wooden Unocal Pier at Port San Luis. The pier was subsequently rebuilt using steel and concrete, becoming what we know today as the Cal Poly Pier.

The event demonstrated how a shift in storm tracks and wave direction can dramatically increase the vulnerability of coastal infrastructure.

Fast-forward to the fall of 1997.

I remember a growing sense of anticipation as one of the strongest El Niño events on record developed in the tropical Pacific, even as warm, dry conditions persisted across much of California.

Bright red pelagic red crabs, unusual visitors from warmer southern waters, washed ashore along our beaches. These remarkable creatures, resembling a cross between a small lobster and a crab, were another indication of the changing ocean conditions.

At KSBY-TV, meteorologist Sharon Graves organized an El Niño storm preparedness workshop, bringing together firefighters, law enforcement, emergency planners, and other officials to discuss the possibility of serious winter flooding.

Yet despite all the concern, the early-season rains were relatively modest.

By late January, some people began wondering whether the much-publicized El Niño had been overhyped.

Then February arrived, and everything changed.

A relentless series of powerful Pacific storms battered the Central Coast.

Winds at Diablo Canyon Power Plant gusted to nearly 80 mph. Ocean swells reached heights of approximately 20 feet, and rain fell almost daily. By the end of February, Cal Poly had recorded an astonishing 15 inches of rainfall for the month.

Rivers surged, roads disappeared beneath floodwaters, and widespread flooding disrupted communities throughout the region.

Tragically, the storms also claimed lives.

On February 24, 1998, California Highway Patrol officers Rick Stovall and Britt Irvine were responding to reports of trouble along Highway 166 when their patrol car plunged into the swollen Cuyama River after floodwaters had washed away a section of the roadway.

Both officers lost their lives. Another motorist, Michael Tye, also died after his Chevrolet pickup entered the river.

Their deaths remain a heartbreaking reminder of the tremendous power of floodwaters and the dangers faced by emergency responders during extreme weather events.

Nearly two decades later, the 2015-16 El Niño provided a very different lesson.

Despite being one of the strongest El Niño events ever observed, it failed to deliver the exceptionally wet winter that many had expected along the Central Coast.

These contrasting events illustrate an essential point: El Niño increases the probability of certain weather patterns, but it cannot guarantee how much rain will fall, when storms will arrive, or how severe they will become.

So, what does all this mean for the Central Coast this winter?

Interestingly, we may already be seeing some of the effects of this developing El Niño, not in rainfall, but in unusually elevated coastal water levels.

Recently, observed tides around Morro Bay have frequently been running approximately one foot or more above predicted astronomical tide levels.

Several factors may be contributing to this remarkable situation.

One contributor is a coastally trapped Kelvin wave associated with the very strong El Niño developing in the tropical Pacific.

These waves originate from changes in winds and ocean circulation along the equatorial Pacific. They travel eastward toward the Americas and then propagate poleward along the coastline, temporarily elevating coastal sea levels.

Exceptionally warm seawater along the Central Coast is another contributing factor. As seawater warms, it expands, increasing the volume of the water column and contributing to higher sea levels.

Superimposed on these shorter-term oceanographic processes is the long-term rise in sea level associated with global warming.

Together, these influences can produce coastal water levels considerably higher than astronomical tide predictions would otherwise suggest.

Here's where it gets concerning.

If these unusually elevated ocean conditions persist into the upcoming king tides around Thanksgiving, Christmas, and again in late January, we could experience some exceptionally high-water levels along the Central Coast.

Consider this hypothetical scenario.

If a predicted high tide approaches 7 feet at Port San Luis and observed water levels remain approximately 1.3 feet above predicted values, the actual still-water level could reach approximately 8.3 feet relative to mean lower low water (MLLW).

At that elevation, portions of the Baywood Park Pier could become submerged, while nearby low-lying coastal areas may experience flooding.

Now imagine those same elevated water levels coinciding with a powerful Pacific winter storm.

Lower atmospheric pressure, storm-driven water-level increases, heavy rainfall runoff, and large, long-period ocean swells could significantly worsen coastal flooding.

Under an unfavorable combination of conditions, still-water elevations could potentially approach or exceed 9 feet. Wave setup and runup could drive water even higher against the shoreline, seawalls, piers, and other coastal structures.

Such a scenario could create serious flooding and damage in vulnerable coastal communities.

To be clear, these are hypothetical scenarios, not forecasts. Ocean conditions can change considerably between now and the winter king tides, and the elevated water levels we're observing today may not persist.

Nevertheless, they illustrate how a powerful El Niño, exceptionally warm ocean waters, long-term sea-level rise, and energetic Pacific storms can combine to amplify coastal flooding hazards.

And that may be one of the most important lessons from the great El Niño winters of the past.

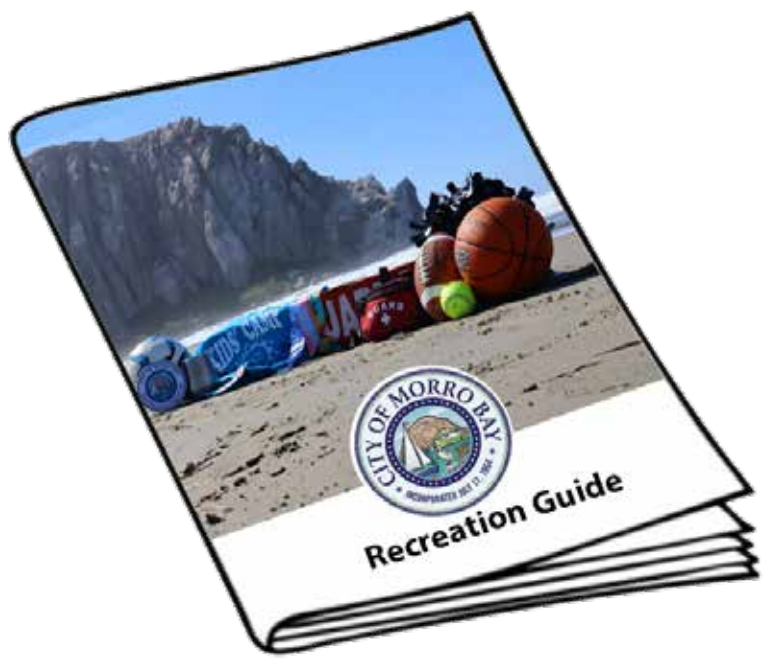
It's not just about how much rain falls. It's also about the timing of the storms, the direction and energy of the ocean swells, the height of the tides, and how these different forces interact.

As for this winter, the odds appear to favor wetter-than-normal conditions across portions of California, including the Central Coast.

But as the winter of 2015-16 so clearly demonstrate, there are no guarantees.

The Pacific Ocean is sending some extraordinary signals

Morro Bay Launches Its First Recreation Guide



The City of Morro Bay Recreation Services will launch The Current, a recreation guide, arriving Thursday, November 5, in the Estero Bay News.

A current is the steady movement of water through a larger body of water, connecting places and carrying things along the way. Much like the ocean currents that define our coastal community, the guide is designed to keep Morro Bay connected to all the fun, activities, and opportunities happening around town.

"The Current will be your go-to source for information on upcoming community events, recreational classes, youth and adult sports, seasonal programs, and all the exciting activities offered by Morro Bay Recreation Services," said Recreation Supervisor Angelica Jespen. "Whether you're looking to try a new class, get involved in a community event, find activities for the family, or discover your next adventure, The Current will help you stay informed and connected.

"We wanted to create a central resource where our community can discover everything Morro Bay Recreation Services has to offer. From classes and sports to special events and family activities, The Current will help residents stay connected, explore new opportunities, and find more ways to get involved in their community."

The Current is a quarterly publication with new editions planned for February, May, August, and November, giving residents a regular source of information about programs, activities, and events throughout the year.

Want to learn more about Morro Bay Recreation Services programs and activities? Contact Recreation Services at (805) 772-6278 or email recinfo@morrobayca.gov.

Catch the wave and stay current with Morro Bay Recreation Services!



this autumn. Whether those signals translate into a winter of record-breaking rainfall, powerful storms, coastal flooding, or something far less dramatic remains to be seen.

For now, we'll continue watching the ocean, monitoring the atmosphere, and remembering that even the strongest El Niño doesn't write the winter forecast in advance. The ocean provides the clues. The atmosphere determines how the story unfolds.

Funds Needed From page 1



An image shows the planned area for the solar panels on the roof of the South Bay Community Center that will provide backup power during el Nino storms. Photo provided by Viva Energy

LOCSD and Cal Fire.

The project cost is $55,650 and includes 30 x SEG Solar 440 Watt Panels, one 13.5 KWh Telsa Powerwall 3, a battery and solar energy system; and two Tesla Powerwall 3 (Expansion Pack). The LOCSD has committed $35,000 towards the project in already-budgeted funds, along with $2,500 from PG&E and $2,000 from a prior fundraiser. SBCC is hoping to raise $15,000.

"We are working with SLO County Community Emergency Response Team to coordinate emergency supplies; the center has a full commercial kitchen with food storage and refrigeration," Katayama said. "With a super El Nino event on the horizon, we in Los Osos need this more than ever. Help us help you."

Support will also come from Viva and the Los Osos Community Advisory Council. The estimated completion time is in late November.

Folks can help by donating at southbaycommunitycenter.com/donate. Additionally, Ralph's shoppers can also support the center for free by designating the SBCC as the recipient of your community donation. There is no cost, instructions are at the same link.

The SBCC is a non-profit, public benefit entity. A volunteer Board of Directors oversees the operation of the center. The funds to operate it come entirely from rentals, fundraisers, and private donations. Beyond serving as an emergency center, the solar power would allow the Center to sustain its local programming in times of power outages throughout the year such as the Meals that Connect senior nutrition program, the Los Osos Cares community dinners, and the local food bank.

Ultimately, the SBCC will serve as the emergency center in the event of an earthquake, hazardous materials, multi-casualty, wildfire, radiological accident from Diablo Canyon and flooding.

Flooding is a concern for Los Osos said an August 2025 report to the County by Ron Munds, then director of the LOCSD. "Flooding and road inundation to both the north and east of the District will occasionally close South Bay Blvd. near Turri Road. Very rarely, Los Osos Valley Road will flood in the area of Foothill Blvd near the San Luis Obispo District limits. Access to the District is severely comprised when either one of these routes is compromised. When both occur at simultaneously access is critically compromised."

As far as shelter is concerned the reports states, "A limited number of displaced or homeless citizens can be anticipated after a heavy damage storm/flood. Most displaced persons will probably be self-sufficient in nature (e.g., tenting in front yard, temporarily living with relatives or neighbors, etc.) An estimated 20% of the displaced/homeless will require sheltering as provided by the American Red Cross or other relief agencies. Long term 'tent' or 'mobile home' sites for the displaced and homeless are not a normal consideration in these types of events. Activation of these resources will be coordinated by the County EOC."

The Center can house 25 people for up to three days.

Most local emergencies are handled by the appropriate first responder agencies. Occasionally, a local emergency may involve more than one agency to mitigate the event. When a major emergency occurs the County EOC will be activated as multiple jurisdictions and agencies will typically be involved.

Volunteer organizations also play an important role.

"The procuring, stockpiling and distribution of essential supplies for the general public and emergency workers (food, water, fuel, shelters, etc.) may be necessary after a major event," the report says. "It is anticipated that large numbers of the public within the area will offer volunteer assistance and donations of food, clothing, shelters, etc."

Volunteer organizations involved with the Center include Los Osos Care, Rotary, Kiwanis, People Helping People and the Center itself.

10th Anniversary From page 1

Recently the nonprofit company booked its 10th Anniversary celebration at the Bay Theater in Morro Bay. The board selected the 1937 movie "Stage Door" starring Kathrine Hepburn, Ginger Rogers and Lucille Ball — all very early in their own yet-to-be wildly successful careers. Their characters were trying to make it on Broadway, and our Morro Bay audience witnessed their drama and joys seeking success living together in a typical New York City boarding house for aspiring actresses.

It reminded me of something Janice said about the people she has worked with over the years, "Live theater becomes a real family. We do it because we love it and must learn to trust our fellow players and crew members. We attract all ages, genders and personalities and with each new show it seems we are all preparing for where life (on and off stage) will take us. We have a plan but never really know what might happen next."

Janice would ultimately find her fame and coveted performance career in Morro Bay rather than Hollywood, where she lived for years. "I was a ham and come from a family of hams! My Dad was in shows, my Mom sang in church and my brother builds sets." She chose UCLA for college so she could be nearby the epicenter of her dream career. She planned to become a Hollywood starlet. She worked in film production for years and got a few camera walk-ons, but just as she'd get a break something would happen. For example, she was to star in a show at the Pasadena Dinner Theater. The pictures were already hanging on the wall when the club burned down before opening night. Another time she had scored the part in another production and mid-campaign it was canceled.

When she grew tired of LA, luckily her back-up career that paid the bills was work as a legal assistant. She was on her way to San Jose to spend Thanksgiving with family. A friend had mentioned Morro Bay, so as it was pouring rain, she decided to pull off at the San Jacinto exit, park and enjoy the ocean view. Suddenly the sun came out and magically sparkled around Morro Rock. She looked at her dog companion. "Mimi, we're home," she said. "I had already applied for jobs in San Luis Obispo and was hired by Andre Morris & Buttery."

After eight years serving first on the Morro Bay City Council and then as Mayor, she retired in 2010 and began to follow her acting dream again. "I auditioned for a part at Pewter Plow in Cambria and ended up working at the theater and served on the board of directors." She scored acting parts at Pewter Plow and several other theaters around the county. But when Pewter Plow lost its lease in Cambria, Janice knew her mission was to establish continual live theater in Morro Bay.

"I knew there was an audience," she said. As Mayor, she tested the concept by developing the "Fund Raiser Folies." The goal was to develop stronger staff relations with the community while the vehicle was a variety show, including local talent and willing department heads performing a hidden talent. The goal was to establish a City of Morro Bay grant program for nonprofits to produce community and visitor-serving events like the former Morro Bay Harbor Festival.

Janice said, "I convinced all our directors to perform some chosen style of performance. Nancy Castle directed. Some said it wouldn't work, but all had a good time performing a song or dance routine and the community enjoyed it for five years."

When faced with finding a home for live theater in Morro Bay, Janice shared, "Over the years it seems we continue to be blessed by 'theater gods' watching over us. Suddenly impossible challenges just seem to work out fine."

Pastor Sid Symington, now retired from St. Peter's By-the-Sea Episcopal Church, happened to love live theater. Both leadership groups got together and developed what is still a 10-year cooperative partnership, including renaming the theater group, By the Sea Productions. Janice explained, "We have had access to their church hall as our current permanent playhouse," Janice smiled. "It has been a mutually beneficial arrangement." Current Pastor Olver Linn continues to honor the agreement.

As with any business there are challenges. The group is looking for a few more board members and stage crew members to help determine the 2027 season and then produce and promote what will be on stage throughout the year.

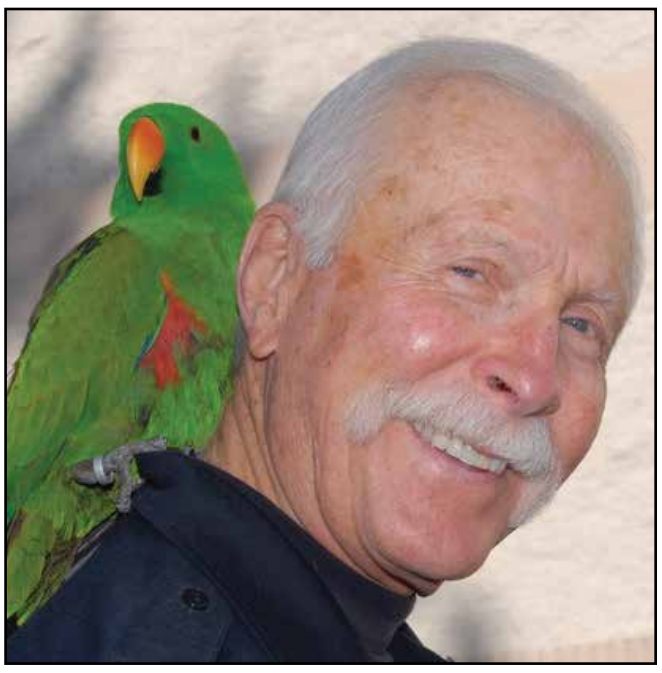
What was Janice's all-time favorite production? "In 2019, we produced 'Suite Surrender.' It takes place in a Florida hotel. Two divas duel when booked into the hotel's same room without another room to separate them. So much fun! And best of all the set included all kinds of pink flamingos." And if you know Janice Peters at all you know pink flamingos are part of her DNA or at least her decorating go-to!

Ever want to act on stage or become a producing member of a theater company? Janice has direct contact with the 'theater gods' and will share them if you become a member of their family. Call her at or check out www.bytheseaproductions.org.





Officer Richard Hannibal From page 1



Beloved retired Morro Bay Police Officer Richard Hannibal recently died. Photo courtesy Susie Christian

a full law enforcement career in Southern California before joining MBPD as a reserve.

He is being remembered for his professionalism in his police work and empathy towards all he came in contact with.

"Beyond his service in uniform," MBPD's post reads, "Richard was a cornerstone of the community, earning the title of Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year in 2012.

"His dedication left a lasting imprint on our town, as we still hear wonderful stories about his kindness and service to this day.

"We extend our deepest condolences, thoughts, and prayers to Richard's family and loved ones during this time."

Among the numerous comments on the post several were made by former colleagues at MBPD.

"Truly one of the best cops I have ever served with," wrote former MBPD Cmdr. Bryan Millard, "and the one who taught me the most about humanity. He was the essence of community policing and a mentor in my early days of leadership. Working with him on a shift was a privilege, and he made us all better by his very presence. He will be greatly missed and never forgotten. Rest in peace brother. We have the watch."

"During my short tender with MBPD," wrote Curtis Mooneyhan, "Hannibal was the most empathetic person I've ever met. Truly a great cop who taught me a lot about the job, but more importantly about how to treat others. Rest in peace my friend."

"Oh man," wrote Doug Collins, "this brings me great sadness. Hannibal taught me so much as a rookie cop. Not only how to be safe but how and when to police with empathy and compassion. His example of calm and steady leadership on the streets always stuck with me. You will be greatly missed my friend. Prayers and love to your family and friends.

"The LORD bless you and keep you; The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace."

Among the posts from community members was this, "RIP sir, you were such a great officer and an amazing mentor to so many of us as kids growing up. This man was a stellar example of policing and a legend to so many. You will be missed."

And, "So many of us remember Hannibal actually caring about us and aiming to keep us out of trouble in a real way."

In a 2010 article under the banner "Behind the Badge" written by Ofc. Hannibal, published in the SLO Coast Journal and entitled, "Women in Law Enforcement," he wrote: "The years of service 'hash marks' on my uniform sleeve indicate that I have been around long enough to see many changes in law enforcement. One of these changes is the evolution of women in law enforcement.

"The Morro Bay Police Department has fine examples of this evolution in the form of Sergeant Su Gomes, Officer Leslie Daily and Officer Stephanie Pipan. I have total trust in them to watch my back, and if the day comes, to save my life."

The article recalls his start in policing in the 1970s. "When I began as a 'kid cop,' you had to be 5-foot 8-inches tall, have all of your teeth, have 20/20 vision uncorrected, and 'No Gurls Aloud!'

"Law enforcement was predominantly a boy's club except in peripheral positions. Back then, the few female officers we had were called 'Matrons' and relegated to working juvenile, vice and female custody assignments. They were certainly not allowed onto the mean streets of Los Angeles County. They were further demeaned by the badge that read 'Policeman.'"

He continued, "Even as late as 1980, there were only 178 women on the Los Angeles Police Department; less than 2 percent of the total personnel and few of these were in administrative or supervisory positions. The doubts about women in law enforcement persisted through the years until it was clearly shown that female police officers have proven their valor in the field.

"And back then, the macho vets of the black-and-whites asked if something should ever hit the fan, whether the women cops would be there for them; or, in the absence of men, whether they'd be able to hold their own.

"Through the years female police officers have proven themselves with valor. Today, there is a saying among police officers of all genders and races, 'We all bleed blue.'"

He wrote about his return to police work in Morro Bay. "Because of my age, I was a little hesitant to get back into police patrol work. But, I watched Corporal Su Gomes (now sergeant) go about her duties coming up against some pretty tough characters.

"I watched as she, and later Officer Daily, used their femininity to calm potentially violent situations. I watched their feminine instincts come into play in incidents that ended with peaceful resolution simply because they were there. It was then that I decided I could use my age in much the same way, and it worked!"

He wrote fondly of his MBPD colleagues. "There is a wonderful collage of personnel in the Morro Bay Police Department. There are young and old, male and female and folks of all faiths, political views and personalities.

"Regardless of any outward differences, we are all dedicated to a common sacred trust. We are all dedicated to protecting the citizens, visitors, and property of Morro Bay; and we all bleed blue."

LOCSD Board From page 1

Board and two men stepped up to serve.

Maier was one applicant and the other was Brandon Leibowitz-Glavan.

Kwolek said Supervisors will be asked to approve his appointment at one of their November meetings and Maier would be sworn in Dec. 4, the day after the Board's only scheduled meeting in December. Normally the second meeting in December is canceled for the Christmas-New Year's Holiday.



Tom Maier, shown here helping during a community project at the South Bay Community Park in Los Osos, has been selected for a seat on the Los Osos Community Services District Board. Photo courtesy of Celebrate Los Osos.

"The public won't see him behind the dais," Kwolek said, "until Jan. 7, 2027." Maier will serve a 4-year term.

In his Board application, Maier listed a number of reasons he wanted to serve on the Board.

"As a long-time Los Osos resident," he said, "I have seen firsthand both the strengths of our community and the importance of thoughtful, responsible local leadership.

"As a father and grandfather of Los Osos residents, I have a deep personal commitment to this community and believe we are at an important point in our future."

He believes the LOCSD will be making some important decisions for the community's future wellbeing.

"Over the next several years," he said, "the CSD will make consequential decisions involving parks and recreation, water sustainability, and fire and emergency medical services. I would welcome the opportunity to bring my experience and judgment to those decisions, guided by a commitment to the public interest."

He holds a doctorate degree in microbiology and worked for decades in public health and environmental health. He was also instrumental in helping pass a property tax measure in June that will allow the LOCSD to purchase the old Sunnyside School property and turn it into a public park.

"The development of Sunnyside Park," Maier said, "is both an important opportunity and a significant responsibility. As a core member of the Measure B Committee, I worked to help make possible the acquisition and future development of this much-needed park and community asset, one intended to serve Los Osos residents now and for generations to come.

"If appointed, I would support careful, transparent, and fiscally responsible implementation of the project within the dedicated funding approved by voters. Water sustainability is another defining issue for Los Osos."

His background working in the public sector and especially in the health field will be useful for figuring out the issues with the fire department's funding.

"I believe the Board," he said, "must make practical, evidence-based decisions that protect the Los Osos community and its natural resources for future generations.

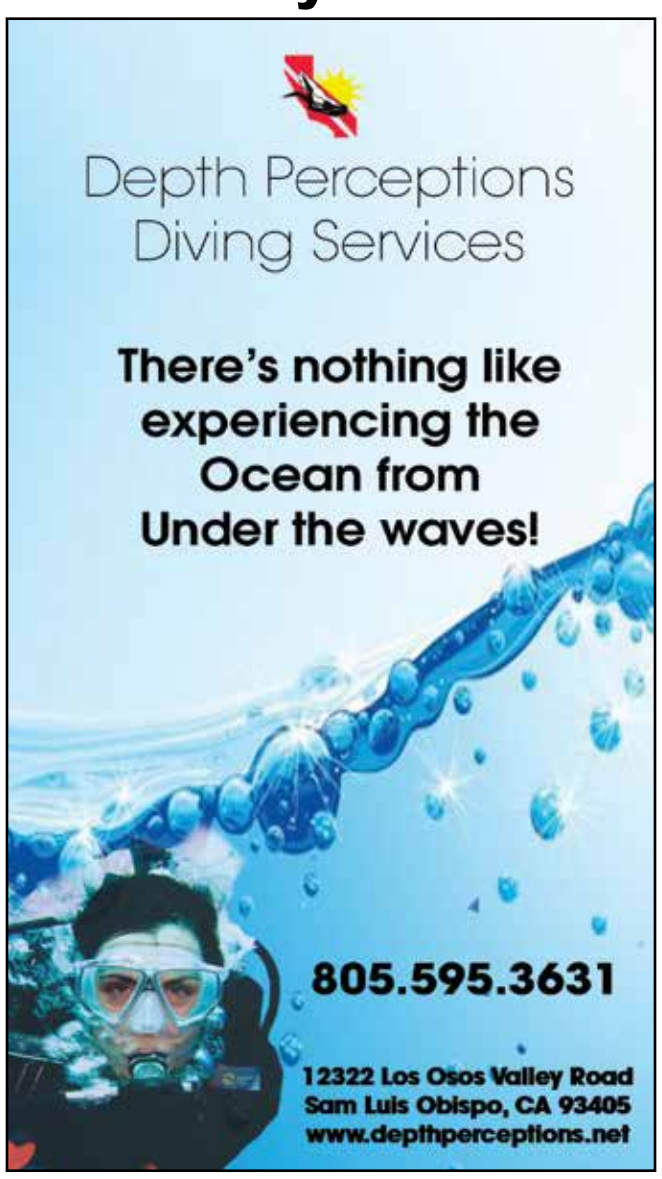
"Reliable fire protection and emergency medical services are fundamental public-safety responsibilities. My career in County public health included senior management and administrative responsibility for community health programs, public-health emergency response, and medical services."

Maier will join two other Board members who sought re-election and were unopposed — Chuck Cesena and Christine Womack. The other two board members are Tom Cross, and Richard Hubbard.

In Print & On Line



esterobaynews.com





Rare Bear at The Rock



Photo submitted

Morro Bay is visited by thousands of people every year, including celebrities, politicians and everyday folks, but nothing creates quite the stir of a recent visitor.

For the second time in recent memory a black bear was found wandering around Morro Rock on the morning of Wednesday, Oct. 7, triggering a quick response from State Fish & Wildlife officials and police.

The bear, believed to be a juvenile, was light brown in coloring was hiking along the trail behind the old outfall canal when first spotted.

F&W personnel were able to herd the beast onto the beach and then towards the power plant property, where we're told it clamored over the fence and disappeared into the 117-acre property, which is no longer in use as a power plant.

A fire department official said the hope was that it would simply head down into the forest along Morro Creek and go back into the wild where it would be safe.

The bear was not captured for relocation as a previous bear sighted at Morro Rock was.

On Nov. 8, 2013 a young black bear was spotted wandering around the rocks at the base of Morro Rock. The fire department and police evacuated the entire rock parking lot as a precaution.

Game wardens stalked the bear and tranquilized it. It was then transported into the mountains above Santa Margarita and released back into the wild.

On its Facebook page, the Harbor Department advised residents to be on the lookout for the bear because they didn't capture and relocate it, so it might wander back to the shore again.

South Bay Fire Open House

Photos by Dean Sullivan

The South Bay Fire Department in Los Osos held an open house last Saturday welcoming the community to participate in fire extinguisher demos and flash pan safety, hands-only CPR and basic first-aid training, meet-and-greet with local firefighters and junior firefighter helmets, stickers, and giveaways.









Chamber Giving Back to the Community!

The Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce recently presented $3,930 to the Morro Bay High School Softball Team Booster Organization, one of the many beneficiary organizations of this year's Avocado Margarita Street Festival!

"A big thank-you to everyone who helped make the festival a success. Your support helps us give back to the local organizations that make Morro Bay such a special place to live, work, and play," Chamber officials said in a press release. "Here's to supporting our local students, athletes, and community. Go Pirates!"



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