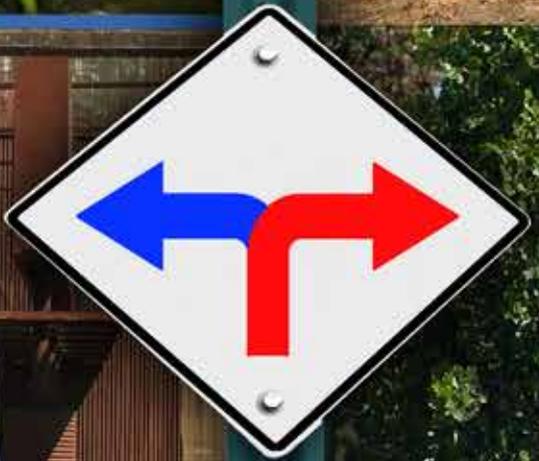


AT THE MOVIES



White Boy Rick: Undercover kid [30]

SUN



District showdown

Santa Maria and Lompoc candidates for city council prepare for first district elections [8]

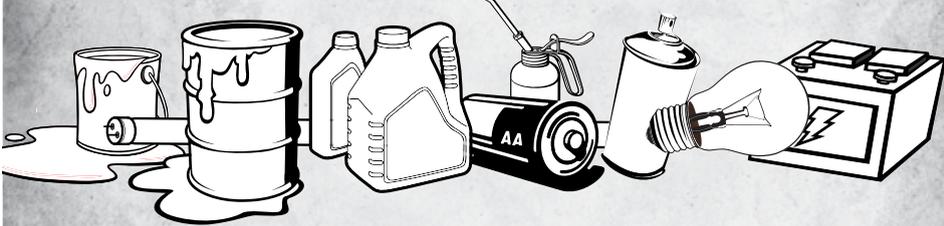
BY JOE PAYNE

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While national politicians fret over the race for Congress, local representatives and candidates are vying for coveted city seats. And in the case of Santa Maria and Lompoc, the race for city council is colored by a voting system new to both cities: district elections. For this week's cover story, I spoke with incumbents and candidates alike to hear their platforms and why they hope to win a district seat on their respective city councils [8].

Also this week, the Bureau of Land Management considered areas to frack and drill on the Central Coast [7], a legendary blues duo performs regularly at a historic location [23], a local painter explores identity with a romantic-realist style [26], a Santa Barbara author explores death and dying in a new book [28], and get a taste of some elevated tacos in Lompoc [34].



VOTING ZONES: District-based elections come to Lompoc and Santa Maria for the first time this year, with incumbents working to protect their seats from energized challengers.

Joe Payne,
managing editor

Cover photos by Spencer Cole / Cover illustration and design by Alex Zuniga

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OUR COMMITMENT.

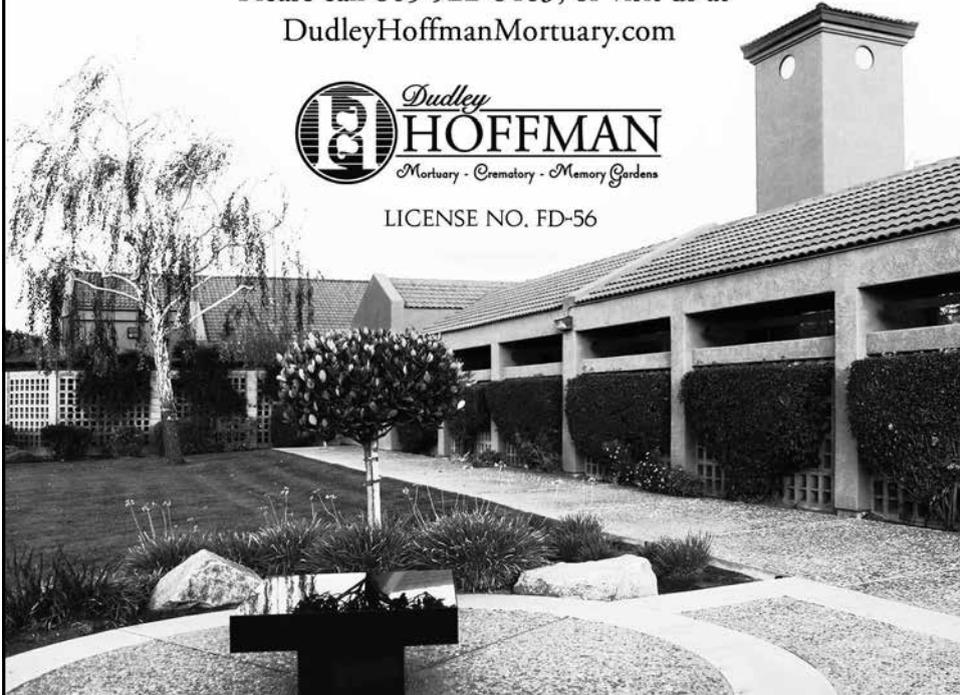
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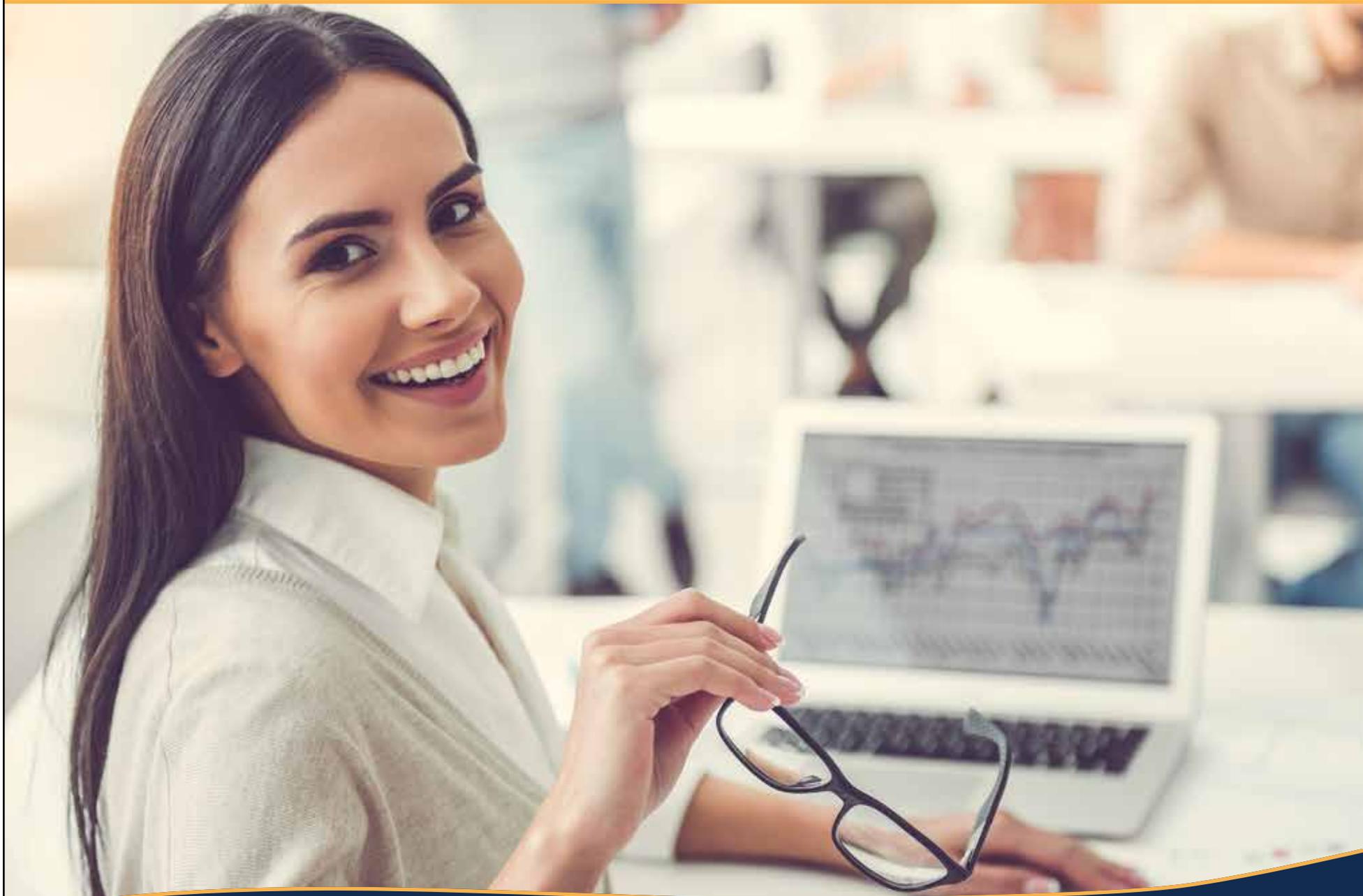
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Political Watch

• Sen. **Dianne Feinstein** (D-California) faced criticism in mid September after reports that she had received a letter in late July regarding an alleged attempt at sexual assault by Supreme Court nominee Judge **Brett Kavanaugh** against a then-unnamed accuser. Feinstein's critics among Democrats and liberals chastised her for not sharing the letter initially with the Senate Judiciary Committee and for sending it to the FBI only after reports of the letters existence began to make headlines, whereas Republicans and conservatives questioned the timing of the allegation and Feinstein's decision to forward it to the FBI. On Sept. 13, Feinstein issued a brief statement acknowledging the letter, but that "the individual strongly requested confidentiality," and she wanted to "honor that decision." After the accuser, California college professor **Christine Blasey Ford**, came forward and revealed her identity to *The Washington Post*, Feinstein issued another statement, saying, "It has always been Mrs. Ford's decision whether to come forward publicly. For any woman, sharing an experience involving sexual assault—particularly when it involves a politically connected man with influence, authority, and power—is extraordinarily difficult. ... I hope the attacks and shaming of her will stop and this will be treated with the seriousness it deserves." Feinstein joined Senate Judiciary Democrats in signing a letter to White House Counsel **Don McGahn** requesting the FBI reopen Kavanaugh's background investigation and a letter to Chairman **Chuck Grassley** (R-Iowa) to postpone the scheduled confirmation vote pending a Senate hearing on the matter. Grassley postponed the vote and scheduled an open hearing for Sept. 24.

• The office of Rep. **Salud Carbajal** (D-Santa Barbara) announced that he would host his second annual Citizenship Recognition Ceremonies in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria on Sept. 22. "For many immigrants, including myself, attaining U.S. citizenship is the realization of a dream held by all those who came to the United States in search of a better life for themselves and their families," Carbajal stated. "Our nation's greatness is strengthened in this shared rite of passage." The Santa Maria ceremony is at 5:30 p.m. at the Santa Maria Public Library's Lavagnino Plaza, 421 S. McClelland St.

• Gov. **Jerry Brown** signed a law authored by 35th District Assemblymember **Jordan Cunningham** (R-San Luis Obispo) into law on Sept. 17 that permits schools the authority to provide optional curriculum cautioning students on the use and distribution of sexually explicit material via social media and smartphones. The bill, AB 1868, provides the additional component to California school districts' plans for sexual health education. According to a release from Cunningham's office, the added curriculum "will be a critical fight against human trafficking, as traffickers increasingly target minors using social media." "The technological era has connected us in ways we couldn't have imagined, but it also comes with dangers," Cunningham stated. "Our kids need to be educated about the legal, social, physical, and emotional pitfalls that come with access to powerful technology." According to the release, Cunningham authored the bill after a situation in San Luis Obispo County where "a group of students were trading nude photographs in exchange for drugs." Gov. Brown also signed a law authored by 37th District Assemblymember **Monique Limón** (D-Santa Barbara) that day as well, AB 1860, which limits the out-of-pocket costs for oral anti-cancer medications to more than \$250 per month for patients. "The bill ensures patients do not have to choose between the cost of treatment and their quality of life," Limón posted to her official Twitter page.

• State Assemblymember **Monique Limón** (D-Santa Barbara) attended Gov. **Jerry Brown's** Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco the week of Sept. 12, participating as a panelist on the discussion: California Stories: Grounded Perspectives on Climate Policies and Action. "It's a privilege to be among international and national delegations, scientists, and business and academic leaders at the Global Climate Action Summit to find innovative and tangible ways to move our communities forward to achieve and maintain safe waterways, cleaner air, and a healthy environment for our future," Limón stated before the panel. ○

Founder of Flutes Across the World indicted on child sex charges

The founder and leader of a music program that contracted for years with Santa Ynez Valley's Circle V Ranch Camp was recently indicted and charged with several sexual crimes against children.

John Zeretzke, a former Ventura-based music teacher who founded Flutes Across the World, an educational program he led for years at Circle V Ranch Camp, was arrested Sept. 13 by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, according to a press release from the U.S. Attorney's Office.

The five-count indictment alleges that in November 2015 and continuing into May 2016, Zeretzke, 60, attempted to persuade a 15-year-old girl to have sex with him online, and allegedly sent the girl multiple sexually explicit photos of himself via Facebook.

In February 2017, Zeretzke, allegedly persuaded another minor to produce child pornography. Later that year, the indictment claims that Zeretzke traveled to the Philippines—where he often donated musical instruments to children through Flutes Across the World—with the intent to engage in sexual conduct with other minor victims between the ages of 12 and 16.

The indictment also alleges that Zeretzke twice received child pornography online in 2017.

Flutes Across the World, according to Chris Sariago, director of public relations at St. Vincent de Paul of Los Angeles, the organization that owns and runs Circle V Ranch Camp, provided music education to campers ages 7 to 13 during one-week sessions from 2011 to 2015.

Each camper learned to sand, shape, decorate and then play two recorder-style flutes, Sariago wrote in an email to the *Sun*. Campers kept one flute, and sent the other to a child in need, usually in a foreign country.

Zeretzke typically worked directly with the campers.

"Circle V staff have not received any official notifications or inquiries by any authorities at this time regarding Flutes Across the World activities at Circle V Ranch Camp," Circle V wrote in a statement released on Sept. 13. "There have been no complaints or concerns about [Flutes Across the World] and John Zeretzke from any campers, counselors, or parents to Circle V staff."

Still, Sariago said Zeretzke will not be allowed back to Circle V, and he said St. Vincent de Paul has no plans to contract with the program again "at this time."

Assistant United States Attorney Justin Rhoades, who is prosecuting Zeretzke's case, said that while none of Zeretzke's alleged crimes are related to his work or any children in Southern California, his travel to the Philippines in 2017 had multiple purposes.

"That trip was related to one of his flute missions," Rhoades said. "So to that extent there is overlap."

Although Rhoades wouldn't say how long authorities have been investigating Zeretzke, he did say the case began with a cyber tip to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which was then referred to the U.S. Postal Service. A search warrant was conducted in Zeretzke's house last September, Rhoades said, just weeks before the U.S. Postal Service and California Department of Justice launched an investigation to determine whether any of the flutes delivered to schools through the program

had been contaminated with semen.

It is unclear if that investigation was related to current charges against Zeretzke.

Zeretzke was arraigned on the indictment Sept. 13 in United States District Court in downtown Los Angeles, and Rhoades said he was released on Sept. 17 after family and friends paid his \$20,000 bail. Among other conditions, Zeretzke is on electronic monitoring, and Rhoades said his trial date is tentatively scheduled for Nov. 6.

—Kasey Bubnash

Lompoc Police Chief gives update on homeless triage center

Just a few days after opening an emergency shelter for displaced homeless in Lompoc, the city's police chief called on its citizens to do more.

On Sept. 14, Police Chief Pat Walsh issued a statement that said 55 people had checked into the triage center at River Park. The center provides services to homeless individuals who formerly lived in the Santa Ynez Riverbed on the city's eastern and northern edges.

Santa Barbara County's departments of Behavioral Wellness and Public Health, as well as Social Services, Animal Control, and the Public Defender's Office have been on hand to help the homeless transition into housing and social programs. Nonprofits the Good Samaritan Shelter, Planting the Seed, and Northern Santa Barbara County United Way's Home for Good are also staffing the emergency shelter.

Walsh praised the county and nonprofits for their efforts during the process. However, more can be done, he said, and called on the community to help house some of the homeless at the center.

"Housing is in short supply and many of these individuals are desperate for housing," Walsh added. "Many are older, some are veterans, and if given the chance they would be good tenants."

Walsh noted that a lot of people in the triage center had some form of financial assistance for rent, whether it was through Social Security or U.S. Department of Housing and Development (HUD) vouchers.

"I would ask that the community search their hearts and consider opening their homes," he said. "This is a hard choice, but if you find yourself in a position to do this, please consider. You may be the catalyst to helping someone find their footing."

The triage center is currently taking donations for certain essential items. All donations should be brought to the Good Samaritan Shelter (2025 Sweeney Road, Lompoc) with a label "for triage center."

Items highlighted by social workers were: small flashlights, batteries, feminine care products, gloves and stocking caps, new socks, and blankets.



CIRCLE V RANCH: John Zeretzke, founder of Flutes Across the World, leads Circle V Ranch campers through a flute crafting session in August 2014. Zeretzke was arrested on child pornography charges, among others, on Sept. 13.

The shelter is expected to be open through the month of September and potentially two months after that. It is unclear what services will be available for those that are unable to find housing by that time.

As for the cleanup of the riverbed itself, which Chief Walsh told the *Sun* consisted of "decades of debris," the work is expected to take a while.

Walsh said community members had offered to help with the effort, but that the department declined to accept due to the "many hazards" in the riverbed.

"The amount of trash and debris is just too great," he added.

—Spencer Cole

NEWS continued page 6

Weekend Weather

KSBY NEWS
Microclimate Weather Forecast
Dave Hovde
KSBY Chief Meteorologist

<p>Thursday</p>  <p>COASTAL > High 81 Low 53 INLAND > High 85 Low 52</p>	<p>Friday</p>  <p>COASTAL > High 75 Low 53 INLAND > High 81 Low 52</p>
<p>Saturday</p>  <p>COASTAL > High 75 Low 55 INLAND > High 80 Low 53</p>	<p>Sunday</p>  <p>COASTAL > High 75 Low 53 INLAND > High 81 Low 52</p>

Temps peak Thursday before better onshore winds pick up heading into the weekend, but we should see plenty of afternoon sun in the forecast.

NEWS from page 5

County urges cannabis operators to enter legal market

In a meeting designed to provide an update for cannabis operators, Santa Barbara County's pot czar gave a stern warning: Get up to date with your documents or face the consequences.

"Our goal is keeping people in compliance until they don't want to be in compliance anymore, and then we have enforcement," Deputy CEO Dennis Bozanich said on Sept. 17 in Santa Barbara. Bozanich is the lead public official in Santa Barbara County when it comes to cannabis. It's a job he's held since 2016, when California voters approved Proposition 64 and

FILE PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLOM



FINAL WARNING: Santa Barbara County staff stressed to cannabis operators at a meeting on Sept. 17 that failing to get their business into compliance would most likely result in law enforcement action against them.

legalized recreational marijuana.

At the county-run meeting held in Santa Barbara and broadcast in Santa Maria, Bozanich and staff stressed to cannabis business owners that if they do not start working to acquire county issued licenses, they may miss out on getting approved for the state iteration.

If that were to happen, then the grow site, processing facility, or whatever type of cannabis related business the person owned would be vulnerable to law enforcement action because they would technically be a black market operation.

Currently, only 40 percent of cannabis operators in Santa Barbara County with temporary state licenses have approached staff for an annual county land-use permit. It's a number that Bozanich called "disappointing," and he expressed frustration with the apparent lack of cooperation from a large chunk of the local cannabis community.

All temporary licenses issued by the state are set to expire on Dec. 31 of this year. The pathway set by the county for legalization involves cannabis operators acquiring a county issued land-use permit and business license. The marijuana business owner then takes those documents to the state for an annual license.

"This is a pathway to keep you in compliance so we don't have to do enforcement," Bozanich said.

Finding ways to encourage black- and gray-market cannabis operators into the legal pipeline has been a challenge for county staff over the past year. Many marijuana growers have foregone the legal process entirely in an attempt avoid what they see as overburdensome taxes, licenses, permits, and other regulatory measures.

Meanwhile, law enforcement in Santa Barbara County hasn't been aggressive as it waited for funding for the Sheriff Office's

Cannabis Compliance Team. On Sept. 6, the office, along with California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's Office, conducted several sweeping operations ranging from Tepusquet Canyon to Nipomo.

More than 1,400 marijuana plants were ultimately destroyed as part of the operation, and investigators found additional evidence for other illicit grow sites.

On Sept. 17, Bozanich said the enforcement action was partly driven to help cannabis businesses already in compliance. He told the *Sun* it was unfair for black market growers to reap the benefits of a tax- and regulatory-free system while their legal counterparts suffered losses for getting above board.

The county plans to broaden its action in the coming months toward shutting down illegal sites.

"There is more planned," Bozanich said. "We are firmly committed to doing this going forward."

—Spencer Cole

Catherine Farley named Hancock's newest police chief

At the beginning of this year, it was unclear whether the Allan Hancock College Police Department would continue to exist. Now, the department has a new permanent chief.

Catherine Farley, who currently serves as UC Santa Barbara's assistant police chief, was appointed to Hancock's highest ranking public safety position on Sept. 11 at a Hancock Community College District board meeting, where trustees voted unanimously to hire her.

Farley could not be reached for a comment, and Hancock spokesman Phil Hamer said he could not speak to Farley's background in public safety or qualifications.

The new chief will make \$131,922 a year, Hamer said, and she will take over the troubled department on Nov. 1.

Trustees voted to keep the police department and increase its funding at a meeting on Jan. 16, after a report conducted by a former interim campus police chief, Paul Grohowski, found the department to be inadequately staffed, trained, and funded. He also reported outdated equipment, technology, procedures, and facilities.

Grohowski recommended contracting with another larger law enforcement agency, preferably the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office, because of its jurisdiction over the entire county. The consolidation would have effectively dissolved the Hancock Police Department as it functions now.

But Grohowski suddenly resigned on July 31, after only seven months on the job, and was replaced by another interim chief, Ronald Schram, who was also tasked with assessing the department's proficiency. Schram's report illustrated a much less dire situation and included several cost effective solutions to many of the department's issues.

At the meeting on Jan. 16, Schram, who was replaced as interim chief by Chris Nartatez after his contract with Hancock ended in December 2017, blamed a lack of stable leadership for most of the department's issues. He said finding a permanent police chief should become the board's top priority. ○

—Kasey Bubnash







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Prolonged process

BLM, facing criticism, says any potential drilling, fracking projects on public lands await long road to approval

BY SPENCER COLE

A spat over oil drilling on public lands pitted local environmental groups and a collection of California lawmakers against a federal agency in early September.

Critics of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) say it gave too short of notice to the public about its 30-day comment period for potential projects involving hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, in eight counties across the state, including Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo.

"It's definitely a curtailed process, what we're seeing here," Los Padres ForestWatch Executive Director Jeff Kuyper said. He told the *Sun* his nonprofit had to ask the agency to hand over a higher resolution map, with richer detail, so people could even identify which lands had been targeted.

"There wasn't even a public hearing for this," Kuyper added.

The deadline for public input ended on Sept. 7. Some opponents to the BLM's move and the fossil fuel industry said the decision to open the areas to prospective oil and gas firms was a direct assault by Washington, D.C.

Areas eyed for development include Vandenberg Air Force Base, along with a 40-acre BLM parcel on the north side of Lake Cachuma near the Los Padres National Forest. Several other smaller pieces of land along

Highway 154, Tepusquet Canyon, and Purisima Hills were also identified.

"This decision is yet another example of the Trump administration attempting to sell off our public lands to enrich private corporations," Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara) told the *Sun*. In an email, Carbajal said he did not believe the public notice to comment on the BLM's plan was sufficient "given the magnitude of this proposal."

The congressman, like Kuyper with Los Padres ForestWatch, as well as the Center for Biological Diversity, all called on the BLM to extend the comment period before it closed. They were joined by state Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson (D-Santa Barbara) and Assemblymember Monique Limón (D-Santa Barbara).

However, the BLM refused to budge and ended the comment period at its scheduled time.

Serena Baker, a spokesperson for the federal agency's Bakersfield office, told the *Sun* the BLM's hands were essentially tied after the Department of Interior issued an executive order in 2017 demanding projects be fast-tracked through the environmental review and permitting process.

Order No. 3355, signed by Deputy Secretary David Bernhardt on Aug. 31 of that year, caps page numbers for environmental impact statements and limits the amount of time the BLM can spend on them. The directive also narrows any windows that would allow the agency to extend comment

periods, as it had in previous years.

"I think in the past we have been able to extend comment periods, but now in order to comply with Secretarial Order 3355, we're just not able to extend comment periods any longer," Baker said.

Federal officials say the goal is to streamline the permitting and review process for projects on public lands, not just for the average citizen, but for people doing business with the federal government because sometimes the analyses can take several years to conduct.

"It's a tighter timeframe now," she added.

Baker noted that many of the lands identified by the agency for oil and gas development have been open for decades.

"This does not open 1.6 million acres of new public land for hydraulic fracturing," she said, adding that even though the comment period had closed, the BLM would still need to complete its environmental review draft document by February of 2018. After that, it has to show those results to the public, take further comment, and then hypothetically find an interested oil or gas company, which would kick-start more review periods along with public meetings and additional time for comment.

And finding interest may be hard because most of the Central Coast is designated by the BLM to have "moderate potential" for oil and gas development and pales in comparison to neighboring counties like Kern.

"So there's still several layers where more analysis would be done kind of on a step-down basis," Baker explained. She said that whatever happened, "There will be more opportunities for people to feel like their input is heard."

This is not the first time environmental groups like Los Padres ForestWatch and The Center for Biological Diversity have sparred with the BLM. In 2014, the two nonprofits filed a lawsuit against the agency's Bakersfield office following the release of its approved resource management plan.

It is that action that forced the agency to take input on the environmental impacts of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, a process that involves injecting a chemical-water mixture at high speeds into bedrock to extract oil and natural gas. Environmentalists say the practice pollutes drinking water. Industry experts argue it's an effective way of harvesting material that energy firms could otherwise not access.

And even though the BLM made good on its part of the settlement by taking in comments about the controversial process, Los Padres ForestWatch Director Kuyper didn't rule out additional legal action against the agency, this time over the shortened comment period.

"If we get into a situation where they're saying, 'Hey, we're gonna do the smallest, most limited amount of public comment possible, and we're gonna approve this as quickly as possible, using the smallest number of pages possible,' that's just a recipe for a disaster, and they're basically begging for this to land back in court again," he said. "If they were willing to add an additional 30 to 50 days—which is all we were asking for in our request for a time extension—in the grand scheme of things, that's not going to negatively impact the overall timing of this process, which is going to take at least another year." ○

Staff Writer Spencer Cole can be reached at scole@santamariasun.com.

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Tally of two cities

Santa Maria and Lompoc candidates prepare for first district-based city council elections

BY JOE PAYNE

More than 50 senior citizens sat in rows listening intently as candidates presented their platforms, speaking in six-minute chunks with a wood-grain patterned wall and bingo board serving as a backdrop.

The Sept. 10 forum at the Casa Grande Mobile Estates clubhouse in Santa Maria was like many candidates forums of years past, ending with an ice cream social, conversation, and handshakes, but one aspect was wholly new when it was time for Santa Maria City Council candidates to speak.

"We have candidates from two different districts, District 3 and District 4," an event organizer told the crowd during the candidates' introduction. "I won't try to explain all the changes that have occurred with the districts."

The Nov. 6 election represents the first in Santa Maria's history with a district-based system for voting on City Council seats, leaving behind the at-large system that's been in place since the city was founded more than a century ago.

Santa Maria was divided into four districts after the city faced a potential lawsuit under the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) after the 2016 election. Citing the failure of Santa Barbara to successfully defend against a similar lawsuit, the Santa Maria City Council decided to move forward and split the city into four districts in 2017, though, according to a current council member, it wasn't their desire to do so.

"I was not in favor of districting the city. In fact, I don't think anyone on the council was in favor of districting the city," Councilmember Dr. Michael Moats told the *Sun* at the Sept. 10 forum. "The decision to do that was forced on us by a lawsuit that was brought on us by a disgruntled candidate who didn't perform to his expectations, and he thought that was due to racial profiling."

That candidate was Hector Sanchez, who lives in the northern part of Santa Maria. Districts 3 and 4 in the southern part of town are up for election in November, and both incumbents for this year's race, including Moats, are facing challengers who are running largely grassroots campaigns, something that district elections allow by design, Sanchez told the *Sun*.

"The city had outdated politics, it was clear, and the only way to change that is to have local representation," Sanchez said. "We have that at the congressional level, state Senate level, of course we should have that at the city level. And more and more cities are doing it."

Lompoc faced the same decision in 2017 and divided the city of 40,000-plus residents into districts for the 2018 election.

Each city is facing similar citywide issues: Lack of affordable housing, need for economic development, and the budget crunch due to the fallout from increasing rates from the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). While candidates all scramble to voice their vision on how to address those needs, the new district configuration sees challengers canvassing their portions of town, hoping to unseat incumbents and change "business as usual" on their respective city councils. ○

SANTA MARIA

PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLOM



PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLOM



COURTESY OF RAMOND ACOSTA



DISTRICT 3: Current Santa Maria City Councilmember Michael Moats (pictured, left) is facing two challengers for his District 3 seat: nonprofit administrator Gloria Soto (center) and retail manager Raymond Acosta (right).

Not-so-safe seat

Current Santa Maria City Councilmember Michael Moats was last elected to the City Council in 2016, so he technically has two years left in his term.

But Moats, who lives in District 3, the city's southwest portion, wouldn't be able to run for re-election until 2022 to coincide with the district's next cycle. He's running now to secure the seat and stay on the council through that time. Even if he loses, Moats told the *Sun*, he will still get to serve out the remainder of his term, so essentially he has a "safe seat."

"Well, either way I'm going to continue on the City Council," he said. "Of course, one always prefers to win."

Moats is running on a platform familiar to his supporters: fiscal responsibility in Santa Maria.

Moats pointed to the citywide issue of the "budget crisis" spurred by increases in pension costs and voiced his support for the city's proposed Measure U to increase the sales tax to 1 percent in Santa Maria, when asked what issue most affects his district.

"The city has a looming \$8 million budget deficit, and it has a structural and non-sustainable problem with CalPERS, which constantly tries to drain more money out of our city coffers for pensions for people who are already retired," he said. "If Measure U gets passed, a lot of these problems will go away. If Measure U doesn't pass, there's going to be significant belt-tightening in the city, and that will affect all four districts."

Other issues are affecting Santa Marians as well, Moats said, such as the lack of "non-subsidized affordable housing." He said the council should "encourage the developers to

give us some high-density apartments, mostly apartments."

Moats' seat isn't totally safe, though. He's facing two challengers in the District 3 race.

At the Sept. 10 forum event, after Moats spoke, it was 29-year-old nonprofit administrator and candidate Gloria Soto's turn at the podium.

Soto opened with her background growing up in Santa Maria as the child of immigrant farmworkers. They taught her "hard work and dedication," she said, but they also struggled with issues that many Santa Marians face, like housing and keeping up with the cost of living. She and her family also got support from several organizations in the city, she said, allowing her the "privilege" to run for City Council.

"I take that very, very seriously," she said. "This isn't about having fun. This isn't about seeing if I could get re-elected. This isn't about being part of a social elite club. This is about serving every single constituent and making sure that their voices and their concerns are heard."

In a later interview with the *Sun*, Soto said she hopes to bring diversity to Santa Maria's City Council, not because she's a young Latina woman, but because of her "lived experience." Her background informs her platform, she said, with a focus on affordable and inclusionary housing.

"My lived experience, it's the reality of a lot of Santa Marians," she said. "When we think about the future of our city, we have to do better."

Soto is an administrator for Planned Parenthood in Santa Maria, and she has also served on the boards of The Fund for Santa Barbara and the local chapter of the Future Leaders of America. She was involved in the Future Leaders and FFA while a student at Pioneer Valley High School.

Her platform includes the housing focus; an "active transportation plan" for the city, making it more walkable and bike-friendly; and more mixed-use development, especially downtown. She said she doesn't want to see the city "grow out, out, out."

Raymond Acosta has lived in Santa Maria since he was a kid and has worked as a retail service manager at FoodMaxx in town for nearly 30 years. He decided to run for City Council after talking to hundreds of Santa Marians at his job.

"I just think we need to kind of go in a different direction," he said. "I think a lot of the concerns that have been raised haven't been dealt with seriously enough."

Acosta said he supports many of the concerns at the front of other candidates' minds, like affordable housing and funding for public safety. But Acosta questioned where that funding should come from.

"It's the taxation that we're bringing to our residents," he said. "There's a lot of unnecessary things that we've been paying for that we shouldn't be paying for."

Local officials need to "take a stand" over the taxation, he said, adding that the city needs to be "more affordable." Acosta said he may support Measure U, but only because public safety is important for Santa Maria.

Acosta said that he doesn't want to see the city enter into unnecessary bond measures, he wants to see property taxes lowered, and moves like those could help locals who are struggling to make ends meet.

"You got a family, I got a family, we got a budget, and I know how to manage my budget and keep my people taken care of," he said. "The people that are running this stuff, they've got to do a better job of it." ○

PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLOM



PHOTO COURTESY OF RAFAEL GUTIERREZ



District 4 showdown

Santa Maria's Carriage District includes some of the city's most historic homes, including those of current and former government employees and representatives. Blue and red signs punctuate the neighborhood's streets—blue for current Councilmember Etta Waterfield and red for her challenger, Rafael Gutierrez.

Waterfield and Gutierrez are battling it out for a district that encompasses affluent Santa Maria neighborhoods, the downtown portion that includes the mall, and new development off the freeway. They've crafted disparate campaigns that focus on their respective visions for the city.

For Waterfield, who grew up in a law

DISTRICT 4 continued page 11

DISTRICT 4: Santa Maria City Councilmember Etta Waterfield (pictured, left) is running her re-election campaign on a platform of strong public safety. Her challenger for the District 4 seat is Rafael "Rafa" Gutierrez (right), an attorney running with a focus on downtown redevelopment and revitalization.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LOMPOC'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHIRLEY SHERMAN

DISTRICT 4 from page 10

enforcement family and founded the Santa Maria Police Council, public safety comes first.

"You just want to make sure that you've got a safe community," Waterfield told the Sun. "Every community has its dark side, not just Santa Maria, but every community, and you've got to clean that up as much as you can."

It's important that Measure U passes, Waterfield argued, so that the Santa Maria Police Department and other city agencies get needed funding. Without Measure U in its current iteration, the police department wouldn't have had resources necessary for Operation Matador, which arrested several members of MS-13 for a spate of homicides in Santa Maria across 2015 and 2016.

Waterfield also said Santa Maria needs more affordable housing but pointed to a cost of a project slated for Main and Depot streets as a concern. She said the project will include around 60 units, but will cost \$37 million to build.

"It costs \$37 million to build affordable housing," she said. "Now is that an oxymoron or what?"

She said the high cost was due to state mandates the city can't avoid. That was the same reason the city moved forward with an ordinance on accessory dwelling units earlier this year, which has the potential to adversely impact neighborhoods, she said.

"You have to know who you're voting for," she said. "We get yelled at, but we have to become creative in how we build ordinances to make sure that we're not breaking any laws, state or federal."

For Gutierrez, a local attorney, his focus is on the economic development of Santa Maria, specifically in the downtown area.

Gutierrez said he'd like to see downtown redevelop with a focus on mixed-use housing, being more friendly to pedestrians and cyclists, and becoming the "heart" of Santa Maria. A focus on the downtown will help the local business owners there while attracting companies to town that offer higher-wage jobs, he argued.

Projects like Enos Ranch have helped attract shoppers and revenue, Gutierrez said, but they also pull focus away from the downtown and all the locally owned businesses there.

"The rents over there are not affordable enough for the local business owner, so what are we doing?" he said. "The backbone of a city's economy is always going to be the small businesses, the locally owned businesses."

Santa Maria is in need of change, Gutierrez said, and has "potential." He said he'd like to see the police department focus on community policing, a four-year university come to town, and council members who hold regular office hours to speak with city residents.

"I'm not running because I want that on my resume, like some people. I'm not running because I have a lot of time on my hands," he said. "I'm a small-business owner, a professional, and I have to keep a balance. The reason I can run this time around is because I have the ability to have a flexible schedule and dedicate time between my practice and my duties as a City Council member." ○

Segmented small town

Lompoc's first district-based election also includes challengers to current Councilmembers Victor Vega and Dirk Starbuck, who represent District 2 and District 3, respectively.

For Robert Cuthbert, who is challenging Starbuck for District 3, the prospect of district elections was part of what spurred him to run for Lompoc City Council this year. He has run for the office before and sat on the city's Public Safety Commission for 10 years, but he said that district elections may give him a better chance to win a seat on the council.

"Creating districts throughout California means working-class people, minorities, and people who normally wouldn't have the money to spend for an entire city in the open citywide election [can run]," Cuthbert said. "I've got 75 percent less people I have to contact, I can have more quality interactions with the voters, and it's controllable."

Cuthbert is frustrated with the current City Council, which he said needs to focus more on economic development. He said that

PHOTO COURTESY OF LOMPOC'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT CUTHBERT



DISTRICT 3: Lompoc City Councilmember Dirk Starbuck (pictured, left) faces a challenger in his re-election bid for District 3, Robert Cuthbert (right), who has served on the Lompoc Public Safety Commission.

Councilmembers Vega, Starbuck, and Jim Mosby "seem to vote as a cohort," and questioned some of their decisions, but added that he knows Starbuck and "appreciate[s] him as a person."

Councilmembers Starbuck and Vega did not reply to the Sun's interview requests for this story.

"The city is going downhill and we need to move forward," Cuthbert said. "Really, look at that budget in the sense of what we are paying for and what is the value of it? And this is the same City Council that wanted to open a drag strip here in town, and that's a \$100 million or \$200 million project in the city of Lompoc."

Vega's challenger, Shirley Sherman, is running for City Council for the very first time. She became a U.S. citizen in March of this year, and "was pretty pumped about that," and decided Lompoc was her home for good.

"It just felt like I have a civic duty to make things better for people because our community needs a lot of help," Sherman said. "I don't have a political agenda in the sense that I've been in office before, but I think I'm as capable as anybody on this Earth."

Sherman, who was born in the U.K., grew up in Canada, and moved to the U.S. in 2003, said that Lompoc "has a lot of potential."

She has spent a good amount of time walking



DISTRICT 2: Current Lompoc City Councilmember Victor Vega (pictured, left) is running for re-election for District 2, but challenger Shirley Sherman (right) hopes to unseat him despite being a political newcomer.

District 2 in Lompoc campaigning, she said, and the district has some specific issues. The roads need work, she said, and there are a number of "absentee landlords."

"We're seeing broken windows, we're seeing dirt where there should be grass; kids shouldn't play on dirt, kids should play on grass," she said. "Things like that. We have issues with safety in our neighborhood. ... We have a lack of police that are able to do their duty effectively. We're six positions short right now, and that doesn't help the issues facing our community right now."

Running for office and listening to constituents has "been an eye-opener," Sherman said.

Sherman admitted she "has a lot to learn" about the City Council and Lompoc, but "got bit by the bug" to run after seeing issues that affect her and her neighbors. And after watching the current City Council, she said it's in need of "more voices."

"God bless Mayor Bob Lingl; he's tried to promote certain things and it's three people that rule this city and that gridlock needs to disappear," she said. "There needs to be a fresh face, a new opinion, common sense—that's what I am." ○

Match for the mayorship

The entirety of Lompoc does get to vote on one City Council seat this year, that of mayor.

After Mayor Bob Lingl announced that he wouldn't run for re-election earlier this year, current Councilmember Jim Mosby announced his bid for the office. Later, Councilmember Jenelle Osborne announced she would run as well. Both have council terms that run through 2020, so whoever loses will still continue on the council.

When asked by the Sun, Mosby responded directly to the criticism that he and Councilmembers Vega and Starbuck act as a "cohort." He said his experience as a business owner informs many decisions, which detractors don't fully comprehend.

"I understand what it is to pull a permit, ... have gone through the process and truly understand what it takes to open a door," Mosby said. "It's not just about talking about it. And that's the problem we have, we have a lot of people who just talk about it and have it on the tip of their tongue, but truly, truly don't understand the difficulty and complexity."

Osborne didn't plan to run for mayor, saying she wanted to make good on her promise of serving out her full term on the council, but she was compelled to run after being asked by several Lompoc residents.

She said she's running for mayor to continue bringing her unique voice and vision on the council to the city's leadership role.

"There seems to be no one on council who necessarily had long-term, vision-style leadership," she said. "It seemed the be a lot of management-style leadership, where they want to get into the details and micromanage and spend a lot of time on what the city manager and the staff are designed to do."

The budget discussions that continued four

months past deadline last year are one example Osborne pointed to of where Mosby's leadership style doesn't help the city. The council is "first and foremost a policy-making body," she said, and the staff has its role managing the resources the council grants.

Councilmember Mosby said he doesn't mind digging into the details, and that his perspective has helped the city save money amid a budget crisis spurred by increasing CalPERS rates.

He said that the City Council needs to be practical when it comes to developing the city. That's one bone of contention he's had with Mayor Lingl, he said.

"I think it's important when we're doing these processes and discussing them that we be truthful," Mosby said. "The current mayor, many times says he's supportive of new housing but he wants infill. Well, they've been talking about infill for 10 years. If it's not working, why are we still talking about it? Your solution can't be something that's not working."

The city should be "mindful" when weighing increases that affect residents' pocketbooks, like utility rates or adding new taxes, he said.

Mosby also argued that recent increases in wages to Lompoc's public safety sector will help retain police officers and firefighters, adding that "a lot of people don't realize how deep we've dug."

"I believe Lompoc needs to continue moving forward," he said. "Lompoc has made a lot of progress over the last several years, and I think it's important that the person in the front seat understands what's going on with Lompoc."

PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM MOSBY

PHOTO COURTESY OF JENELLE OSBORNE



MAYORAL RACE: Current Lompoc City Councilmembers Jim Mosby (pictured, left) and Jenelle Osborne (right) don't have districts up for election this year, but both are running for mayor in the November election.

But Osborne pointed to Mosby's and others' decision to allow the recreational cannabis industry in town, which she supported, and then decide not to tax it initially as an example of a frustrating back-and-forth that can happen on the current council.

Ethics, accountability, and responsibility are central to her philosophy as a council member, along with being clear about the council's role. It's what she will bring to council's top seat as mayor, she said, as well as a focus on community pride. There's been a lot of "negative self-talk" in Lompoc by city residents, and she wants to make it a place locals are proud of.

"I really feel like Lompoc keeps just hanging right down the precipice of greatness because of the fact that there's nobody really saying, 'Here's where we want Lompoc to go,'" she said. "And to do that we need to make investments in ourselves and really rally to the idea that we're a great community." ○

Managing Editor Joe Payne can be reached at jpayne@santamariasun.com.





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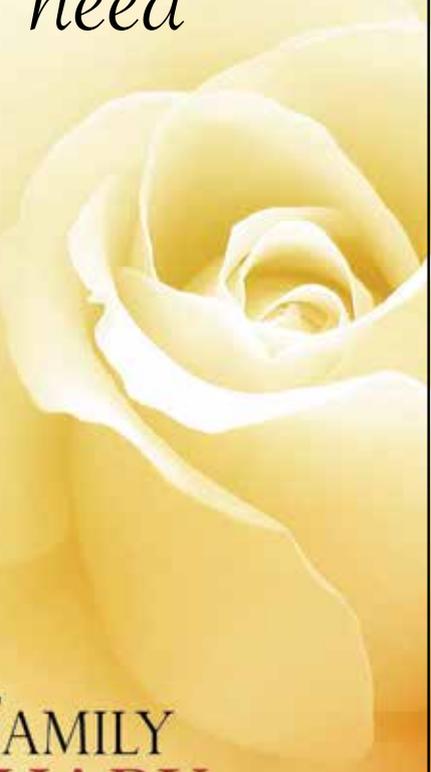
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Spotlight on: Flower Carriage

Susana Cardel, owner

BY SPENCER COLE

Susana Cardel never thought she'd own a flower shop. But after 10 years of being the sole owner of the Flower Carriage at 2255 S. Broadway, she said she looks back on her decision to purchase the store as a good one.

"It's a big deal," Cardel told the Sun. On Oct. 19, she will host a ribbon cutting with the Santa Maria Chamber of Commerce to celebrate her decade of ownership.

"We're very excited to be a part of this community," she said.

Which is fortunate for those seeking select arrangements of flowers, or help planning a wedding, because Cardel almost didn't even make it up to America at all.

Initially, after graduating high school, she went to work for a utility company owned by the Mexican government in Baja, where she was born.

A lot of family, especially on her mother's side, already worked for the feds in some way, she said, except for her father, who was American. But one day, an elderly woman came in who was on a fixed income. She had a small house, with no fridge, but somehow a bill numbering in the millions of pesos.

"How am I supposed to pay this," she stammered to Cardel through tears. "There was nothing I could do," Cardel told the Sun. "But that's when I really saw the corruption."

She then decided to leave her government job with its guaranteed benefits, and moved in with an aunt in Brawley. There, Cardel attended Imperial Valley College before taking a retail job near Calexico. And when the owners of the store told her about a management position in Santa Barbara, she jumped at the opportunity.

"All of my family was in Mexico," Cardel explained, "so they didn't really approve."

She told her mom she'd be back in a year.

Cardel bounced around the state from there, moving from the Bay Area and back before eventually ending up in Santa Maria, where she opened a wedding and special event planning company.

But the income was week-to-week at best, so in 2008, in a time when many across the country were scrambling to react to the financial crisis and ensuing recession, Cardel

took the plunge and bought her flower shop.

"The economy was completely down," she said, adding that most people during that period were trying to buy houses with low down payments instead. "But I thought, what if I buy a business and make money to buy the house that I want?"

The first few years were hard, according to Cardel, but eventually the company caught steam.

Cardel now owns a home in Orcutt and can't help but reflect on how far she's come.

"Ten years sounds like a lot of time, but it's also been lots of fun," she said.

Last year, the Flower Carriage had its 40th anniversary. The event reminded Cardel that her decade of stewardship is just continuing a tradition bigger than business.

"I'm proud to be owner of this place that's been here for so long and to be able to provide a quality service for people here that need it," she said. "It means something." ○

Staff Writer Spencer Cole wrote this week's Biz Spotlight. Information should be sent to the Sun via fax, mail, or email at spotlight@santamariasun.com.

PHOTOS BY SPENCER COLE



A DECADE DOWN: Susana Cardel celebrates in October her 10th year of owning the Flower Carriage at 2255 South Broadway.



FLOWER POWER: The Flower Carriage has 11 employees who balance time between flower arrangements, running the shop, and assisting with events its owner, Susana Cardel (pictured, right), coordinates.

Transitions-Mental Health brings suicide prevention program to Santa Maria

BY KASEY BUBNASH

“I’m not smart.”
“I’m not good enough.”
“I can’t.”

Those are the sentences written in boldly drawn thought bubbles stemming from a distressed stick figure’s mind. His brain inside is clouded and chaotic, his stomach is filled with butterflies, and his heart is heavy and black.

The drawing is one student’s idea of what anxiety looks like, and its key characteristics are repeated in similar drawings by students throughout San Luis Obispo County, students who participated in Transitions-Mental Health Association’s new suicide prevention training program.

Transitions-Mental Health, a nonprofit that provides mental health services to families across the Central Coast, launched the program last year in San Luis Obispo with a \$100,000 grant from the Gertrude and Leonard Fairbanks Foundation. The goal? To give kids and educators tools to better help students struggling with mental illness.

It was incredibly successful, according to Transitions Development Director Michael Kaplan, who said the nonprofit recently won another \$65,000 grant to continue the program.

And this time, it’s coming to the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District.

“I quickly realized there was a real need and enthusiasm for this program [in Santa Maria] so we made the decision to start providing it,” Kaplan said, adding that Transitions will start

the program at Santa Maria’s high schools in October.

Although Kaplan said he’s still waiting to hear back on a federal grant that would help fund the program’s expansion to Northern Santa Barbara County, local administrators wanted so badly to participate, “I was not going to tell them no.”

Through the program’s two adult training sessions, faculty, counselors, and administrators learn how to spot kids with unmet mental health needs and connect them with necessary resources. Both sessions meet student suicide prevention guidelines mandated by the state.

Teachers, Kaplan said, are often unintentionally placed on the front lines of the battle against childhood mental illness. Educators don’t need to become psychiatrists, he said, but they should know simple ways to identify and help struggling students.

“I think [the trainings] are important right now because the topic has come out of the shadows,” Kaplan said. “People are ready to talk about mental health and mental illness and not treat it like a secret. But there is a lot of misinformation out there.”

Roughly three-quarters of people with mental illnesses experience their first symptoms before age 24, according to the 2016 California Health Report. Half become mentally ill by age 14.

Santa Maria’s schools face similar challenges.

Each year, the Santa Barbara County Department of Behavioral Wellness serves more than 3,000 children who are severely emotionally

disturbed, according to the county’s 2017 Children’s Scorecard. Although the county entirely lacks youth psychiatric crisis beds and facilities, youth inpatient admissions through Behavioral Wellness rose from 45 in 2010 to 100 in 2015.

The death of Righetti High School student Kiya McBride, who killed herself in November 2017, is also still fresh in the minds of many community members.

With 23 school counselors, three crisis intervention consultants, four school community liaisons, seven school psychologists, and additional mental health resources provided by several organizations, the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District is working hard to keep its students healthy. But John Davis, assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, said it’s vital for teachers and students to know the warning signs of mental illness and suicide.

“In that sense these trainings could literally be a ‘lifesaver,’” Davis wrote in a statement to the *Sun*, “and certainly a worthwhile endeavor for our district.”

When it comes to training students, Amy Waddle likes to keep it real, relatable, and fun.

Waddle, a professional public speaker who partners with Transitions to train students, said she teaches kids how to identify struggling friends, how to reach out, and ways to be encouraging and get help.

It’s nothing new and it’s fairly simple subject matter, but Waddle said Transitions’ curriculum makes it easy for students to feel connected and supported.

In the exercise where students are asked to draw what anxiety feels like to them, Waddle said that most of the drawings turn out fairly similar. And as kids look around at the other drawings, they feel less alone.

“It’s sad but it’s also kind of beautiful,” Waddle said. “They don’t know it yet but they’re just like everybody else.” ○

Staff Writer Kasey Bubnash writes *School Scene* each week. Information can be sent to the *Sun* via mail, fax, or email at mail@santamariasun.com.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

PHOTO COURTESY OF REBECCA MAPLES



Mayley DiBernardi

On the volleyball court, Valley Christian Academy senior Mayley DiBernardi certainly knows how to dig deep.

As her team’s main passer and digger, she gets roughly 85 percent of hits and serves to the setter, according to head coach Rebecca Maples. It’s not an easy job, but Maples said the 17-year-old’s never-give-up attitude keeps the team running. That, and a mean serve that scores points consistently.

“She is the first to hit the ground to save a ball,” Maples said. “She never gives up and relentlessly encourages her teammates.”

On top of all her hard work on the court, DiBernardi coaches gymnastics at Pacific Flip, just another show of her commitment to help better the lives of other young athletes. ○

—Kasey Bubnash



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We welcome submissions. Please accompany them with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. All letters to the editor become the property of the Sun.

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Millennials must vote Democratic

BY MICHAEL SMITH

Platinum-selling millennial rapper Post Malone muses on his latest album, *Beerbongs and Bentleys*, “Politicians and their lies, tell me what’s the point in pickin’ sides.” Former San Francisco 49ers quarterback and Nike luminary Colin Kaepernick admitted in late 2016 that he had not even bothered to vote in the presidential election, despite spending a year protesting police violence against African-Americans by kneeling during the playing of the national anthem. The protests seem to have cost Kaepernick his NFL career.

I realize it is quite easy to lapse into apathy and not really care about the political future of the United States, but that’s what charlatans and con men such as Donald Trump are counting on. Americans have often flirted with demagogues—Huey Long, Joseph McCarthy, and George Wallace come to mind—but we never actually elected one president like we did in 2016. Because this appears to be a pivotal moment in American history, I urge millennials and anyone else who cares about our democracy to get out and vote for Democratic candidates across the country this November. Not long ago, I would have supported Republicans, but that time has passed as the party has descended into racism, paranoia and feverish conspiracy theories, not to mention the fact they are spending borrowed money like drunken sailors, in direct contradiction to what they have preached for decades.

I was quite proud to cast my vote in 1980—after voting Democratic in ’68, ’72, and ’76—for Republican Ronald Reagan, who promised to improve the lackluster economy and assert American strength in the world. Reagan’s policies led to economic expansion and the fall of the Soviet Union. I also voted for his successor, George H.W. Bush, who promised to extend Reagan’s championing of free market theories to include the rest of the world. Not surprisingly, America’s economy flourished and its position in the world was amplified.

Unfortunately, although an honorable man, George W. Bush’s policies at home and abroad sacrificed much of his predecessors’ successes. His wars in the Middle East have cost America nearly \$3 trillion and still counting. And, while not totally his fault, he also presided over the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression when the floor fell out of financial markets in 2008. Add to that Bush’s silly proposal to privatize Social Security—think of the wealth that would have been lost in the 2008 market crash—and I began to grow disenchanted with the Republicans. It didn’t help when Republican conspiracy theorists floated absurd ideas such as the Sandy Hook slaughter had been a hoax perpetrated by anti-gun advocates or the assertion by Trump that Barack Obama was not an American citizen.

In order to get my vote, Republicans need to return to their roots and once again stand for free markets—Trump’s tariff war is already beginning to hollow out the agricultural center of this nation, a global economy, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) was the right step toward furthering our trade goals in Asia while at the same time isolating China; common sense immigration laws—let’s allow for asylum seekers to enter the country to contribute to our economy; and fiscal responsibility—there’s absolutely no reason to bail out farmers with \$12 billion in aid when the problem can be solved by ceasing tariffs against our trading partners.

Moreover, Republicans have added more than \$1 trillion to the deficit because of

unnecessary tax cuts. A positive economy, which we have experienced at least since 2014, should be a catalyst to decrease the deficit. To their shame, Republicans have forgotten their core principles. It’s not surprising that deficit hawks such as Bob Corker in the Senate and Paul Ryan in the House are retiring in the wake of further deficits and a president who espouses policies antithetical to their long-standing beliefs that deficits are a drag on the economy.

For these reasons, I cannot support any Republican candidates this year. And, while I’m sure that Justin Fareed—Republican running for the House of Representatives—is a fine young man, he might think about a run for city council or board of supervisors before aspiring to hold a seat in Congress. Although I don’t agree with Democrats on every issue, I cannot abide a Republican Party that is driving this nation to division, bankruptcy, and a loss of worldwide respect. ○

Michael Smith is a resident of Santa Maria. Send your thoughts to letters@santamariasun.com.

LETTERS

Congressional leaders must support environmental program

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides critical funding for California’s open spaces, parks, rivers, and wildlife habitats. Unfortunately, this vital program is set to expire at the end of September. Without congressional reauthorization, up to \$900 million in annual spending for our environment and local communities will be lost. In a year of headlines dominated by the rollback of essential environmental policies, the LWCF is a program that demands fierce protection.

LWCF has enjoyed bipartisan support since its

WRITE NOW! We want to know what you think about everything. Send your 250-word letter to Sun Letters, 2450 Skyway Drive, Suite A, Santa Maria, CA 93455. You can also fax it (347-9889) or e-mail it (letters@santamariasun.com). All letters must include a name, address, and phone number for verification purposes; may be edited for space or clarity; and will be posted to santamariasun.com.

establishment in 1964. The idea is simple: LWCF uses revenues from the depletion of one natural resource—outer continental shelf oil and gas—to support the conservation of another precious resource, our land and water. However, funding for LWCF sunsets on Sept. 30 if Congress does not reauthorize the program.

At the National Heritage Institute (NHI), we are committed to restoring and preserving natural functions in major river basins to maintain their water-dependent ecosystems and the services they provide in sustaining and enriching human life.

Our mission is inextricably linked to LWCF, which for more than five decades has provided grants to create nature preserves, restore habitats, and build parks and recreational spaces for families to enjoy.

Let’s take a look at how LWCF has provided critical support in California through the lens of river stewardship:

The Tuolumne River Regional Park in Modesto is one recent project that received half a million dollars in 2015 to construct trailways, a pedestrian bridge, and fishing. Shortly before that, LWCF funds were also used for the acquisition of approximately 230 acres of open space and native habitat within the Santa Maria riverbed for the creation of a self-guided, interpretive trail system.

This is only a small taste of the benefits from LWCF, which has proven to be an unquestionable success. And while our divided politics make it difficult to agree on many issues, both sides of the aisle can surely see that LWCF

LETTERS continued page 13



Fear of access?

Journalists are in the business of asking questions. So when someone—especially those in a public office or agency—won't bother to answer, it ruffles our feathers.

It could be about something as simple as an elected official not bothering to return phone calls or emails, like Lompoc City Councilmembers **Dirk Starbuck** and **Victor Vega** did for this week's cover story (see page 8). While it's no skin off my beak if they want to be literally the *only candidates* for **Lompoc City Council** who didn't speak to the *Sun* for the story, you have to wonder why.

Well, maybe they're still upset about a cover story that ran last year by Staff Writer **Spencer Cole** ("Failure to communicate," Sept. 14) about the budget gridlock at the time. Starbuck, Vega, and Councilmember **Jim Mosby** didn't come out looking too good in that story, which included winks across the dias and calls to terminate the city manager.

But hey, that didn't stop Mosby from getting back for the current story, even after ignoring requests for comment on several stories since "Failure to communicate." He must *really* want to be mayor of **Lompoc**.

Politicians are under no obligation to speak with us, other than, you know, being accountable to their constituents, who we serve. But when a public agency stonewalls us, especially regarding public information, it's just downright wrong.

Allan Hancock College just lost its public information officer, **Andrew Masuda** (farewell, Andrew!), and the college's temp gave us the runaround for some very basic information on incoming police chief for the community college, **Catherine Farley** (see page 6). We finally got the chief's resume but not till way past our deadline.

Look, I get it—staff changes, somebody's out sick, meetings all morning, but Hancock's PR department doesn't have a fact sheet on a new

college hire to send out before deadline?

When the fill-in guy was initially asked he said he wasn't "comfortable" sharing the chief's qualifications. Seriously? We're asking for Farley's work history, not her Social Security number!

This reeks of the PR bureaucracy that I complained about months ago ("Policy and PR," April 19) regarding a story about Hancock's sexual harassment policy ("Level of tolerance," April 19) after allegations of abuse and retaliation. We got a similar runaround then to the point that the *Sun* filed a Public Records Act request and our editors eventually sat down with Hancock's PR team (Andrew was there) to air out the situation.

And Hancock has even asked us to refer to PR when interviewing their students! You don't own your students, Hancock, they're private citizens attending a public school and can talk to whoever they want. The problem of stonewalling public information officers (or PIOs for short) isn't unique to Hancock or the **Central Coast**, it's an issue that has stymied quality journalism across the country.

The Poytner Institute recently reported on studies sponsored by the **Society of Professional Journalists** that surveyed journalists across the U.S. who, guess what, have less access to government agencies because of, guess who, PIOs.

Doesn't anyone wonder why public institutions don't feel accountable to us, the public? Journalists will continue to hit walls pursuing stories, but we know how to dig under them. But what about those stuck behind the wall?

Well, we also protect the identities of whistleblowers, if they reach out to us. ☐



The Canary's beady eyes are narrowed. Blow the whistle to canary@santamariasun.com.

LETTERS from page 12

is worth preserving. Congress should once and for all support this profound investment in our natural resources, environment, and communities before time runs out.

Dr. Gerald Meral
director of California Water Program
National Heritage Institute

The Russians are coming!

It's happening again! The Russians are trying to "influence" the next election in our country. Strike that, "overturn" our election. No, hang on a minute, they're trying to "ruin" our election, except in the case of Democrats winning.

Then, to quote, paraphrase, or obfuscate President Obama (when they all thought Hillary would win) "... Ha ha ha ha, the Russians couldn't possibly affect our elections," which quickly turned into the Russians hacked the DNC, and Trump helped them, and he hired prostitutes to urinate on Russian hotel beds.

Well fear not, Facebook is on guard. They've already sniffed Russian intervention or influence. Strike all that "Russians trying to ruin our election." Ol' Zucks on the battlement! Challenging are you "friend or foe," "fish or fowl," "citizen or Russian." Local talk show host Andy Caldwell ran afoul with his Facebook page and was challenged to prove he was American. "Show us a copy of your driver's license and passport and pictures of identifying birthmarks," they demanded. Thank God he

had birthmarks. Pity the children who ran afoul of Planned Parenthood.

So, now you need to show ID to drive or fly or buy alcohol and now pot, and you can't post political (I'm thinking only conservatives) mentions, references, belches, or gas on Facebook unless you show ID. That'll show them.

In the meantime, the FBI has, after 13 years announced a break in the theft of Judy Garland's ruby slippers. Well done lads. Scotland Yard sends you their praise. Meanwhile, after a year and a half they still haven't found any collusion between the Russians and Trump right in the middle of Hillary's Russian collusion with the Steele dossier. I'm not sure what the equivalent to "tone deaf" is when you can't smell a red herring, but fish or foul the real problem is with all this ID business. Why are we not requiring that voters show ID? Do you Democrats trust that all Republican voters are citizens? They could be Russians. Really.

Jan Lipski
Vandenberg Village

FEMA money for barbed wire camps?

So, FEMA just transferred \$92-plus million out of its coffers, as a major hurricane approaches the central eastern coast, to build internment camps for people seeking asylum. Welcome to Amerika.

Libby Breen
Orcutt

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR ALZHEIMER'S FIRST SURVIVOR.



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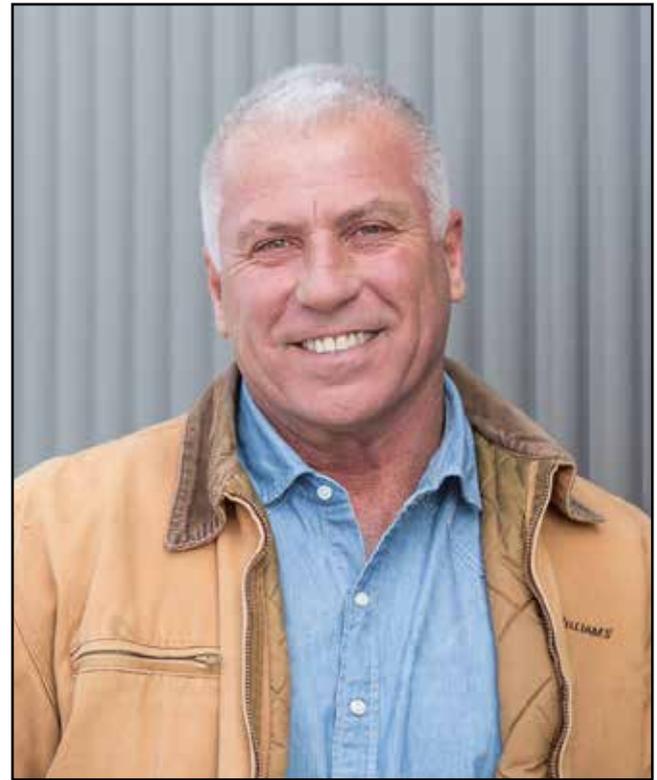
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35th State Assembly District Election Forum



Jordan Cunningham (R)



Bill Ostrander (D)

Monday, September 24, 2018

Doors at 6pm • Forum begins at 6:30pm

San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors Chambers
1055 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- The forum will be live streaming on the *New Times* Facebook page
- Audience questions may be submitted during the forum
- Email questions in advance to *New Times* editor Camillia Lanham at clanham@newtimeslo.com or submit them via Twitter to @NewTimesSLO

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HBA
Home Builders Association
OF THE CENTRAL COAST

CALLING ALL BIKES

The Vivid Cycle Club hosts Coffee and Go every Tuesday and Thursday morning at Vivid Financial Management, located at 340 E. Clark Ave., Orcutt. Bikers meet for coffee at 5:15 a.m. and depart at 5:30 a.m. Bike rides usually end by 7:15 a.m. A club membership costs \$60 and includes a Vivid Cycling Club kit and other perks. More info: vividfmcyclingclub.com.

HOT STUFF

SEPT. 20 - SEPT. 27
2018

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE VIVID CYCLE CLUB

SPECIAL EVENTS

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

FARM AND RANCH DINNER AT ALISAL HISTORIC ADOBE A farm-to-table feast, in partnership with Buttonwood Farm, where guests can take in valley views via hay wagon. The evening will commence with hors d'oeuvres and wine. **Sept. 29, 3:30-7:30 p.m.** \$150. 805-686-7619. eventbrite.com. Alisal Guest Ranch and Resort, 1054 Alisal Rd., Solvang.

WINE COUNTRY WEEKEND: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE In addition to tasting current wines, guests will be able to sample past vintages and future releases. Appetizers available on Sept. 29. Continuous shuttle service available. **Sept. 28-30, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.** \$65. 800-563-3183. santaynezwinecountry.com. Participating Wine Tasting Rooms, Santa Ynez Valley, Santa Ynez, Buellton, Los Olivos, Solvang.

LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

LVBHS PROGRAM: RICK MATHEWS MADRONE LANDSCAPING Madrone strives to create inspirational landscapes cultivating the natural beauty of the Central Coast. **Sept. 23, 2-4:30 p.m.** Free. 805-733-3189. lvbhs.org/. The Valley of the Flowers United Church of Christ, 3346 Constellation Rd., Lompoc.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

BOOGIE ON DOWN WITH RIPTIDE BIG BAND Santa Maria Recreation and Parks and the Santa Maria Valley Senior Club present this dance concert featuring Riptide Big Band and In Time Trio. Funded by the Community Foundation of SLO County. **Sept. 23, 1:30-4 p.m.** Free. 775-813-5186. RiptideBB.com. Elwin Mussell Senior Center, 510 Park Ave., Santa Maria.

FIFTH ANNUAL ST. MARY'S SURF'S UP FESTIVAL AND INTERNATIONAL FOOD FAIR Live entertainment includes Grupo Kominado, El Padrecito Performing Arts & Ballet Folklorico, Gustavo Uribe, St. Mary's School Choir, Chiwin the Clown, and more. Guests can enjoy food, drinks, games, face painting, a bounce house, and more. **Sept. 23, 10:30 a.m.-5 p.m.** Free admission. 805-922-5826. facebook.com/stmarysmevents/. St. Mary of the Assumption School, 414 E. Cypress St., Santa Maria.

FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HISTOPATHOLOGY AND CYTOPATHOLOGY For

doctors, cytopathologists, pathologists, students, and clinical research organizations to gather on a single platform and present their work. **Sept. 27, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.** \$470. histopathology-cytopathology.euroscicon.com/. Ethel Pope Auditorium, 901 S. Broadway, Santa Maria, 805-925-2567.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

AVILA APPLE FESTIVAL AND GALA DINNER Features live music by Brett Mitchell and Matthew Evans, wine tastings by members of the Avila Wine Trail, local beers and cider, a multi-course, apple-inspired menu prepared by Debbie Collins, and live and silent auctions. **Sept. 22, 5-9 p.m.** \$100-\$800. 805-627-1997. Avila Beach Community Center, 191 San Miguel St., Avila Beach, avilabeachcc.com.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

34TH ANNUAL CENTRAL COAST WRITERS CONFERENCE Designed to help aspiring writers reach their goals. Features panels consisting of best-selling authors, editors, agents, screenwriters, poets, and publishers. **Sept. 27, 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Sept. 28, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.** and **Sept. 29, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.** \$250. 805-546-3132. centralcoastwritersconference.com. Cuesta College Cultural and Performing Arts Center, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo.

THE RIGHT TO PEACE In celebration of International Peace Day. Speakers include activist Patricia Rodgers Gordon, Peace Academy members Dara Stepanek and Michael Mazzella, Beberly De Leon of Guatemala, and youth representatives Garrett and Skylar Ferguson. **Sept. 20, 5:30-7 p.m.** Free. 805-771-9565. facebook.com/peopleoffaithforjustice/. United Church of Christ (Congregational) of San Luis Obispo, 11245 Los Osos Valley Rd., San Luis Obispo.

SLO COMIX FAIR SLO Library's first comic book convention. Features comics, snacks, and activities. Special

The Sun and New Times now share their community listings for a complete Central Coast calendar running from northern Santa Barbara County through SLO County.

Submit events online by following the link on the calendar widget at santamariasun.com. Submissions require logging in with your Google, Facebook, or Twitter account. You can also email calendar@santamariasun.com. Deadline is one week before the issue date. Submissions are subject to editing and approval. Contact Calendar Editor Caleb Wiseblood directly at cwiseblood@newtimeslo.com.

guests include Irene Flores and the 501st Legion, who will "patrol" the event in costume. Costumes are encouraged. All ages are welcome. **Sept. 29, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.** Free. 805-781-5989. slolibrary.org. San Luis Obispo Library, 995 Palm St., San Luis Obispo.

UC MASTER GARDENERS' FALL FRUIT FESTIVAL

Features educational exhibits, food tastings, and presentations by gardening experts. Learn about common insect and animal pests, beekeeping, preserving fruits, potting succulents, and more. **Sept. 29, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.** Free. 805-781-5939. ucanr.edu/sites/mgslo/. Garden of the Seven Sisters Demonstration Garden, 2156 Sierra Way, San Luis Obispo.

NORTH SLO COUNTY

3RD ANNUAL SHOWDOWN CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT

Proceeds benefit the Atascadero High Greybots. Features breakfast, lunch, raffles, a costume contest, and a Jenga challenge. **Sept. 22-23, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.** Entry info online. visitatascadero.com/events. Sunken Gardens, 6505 El Camino Real, Atascadero.

FALL FAMILY FUN FEST Features family-friendly activities including crafts, a 32-foot inflatable obstacle course, seasonal treats, face painting, opportunities to meet firefighters and police officers, and more. **Sept. 22, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.** Free. 805-237-3988. prcity.com. Centennial Park, 600 Nickerson Dr., Paso Robles.

FOURTH ANNUAL HARVEST HOEDOWN

Presented by IGGPRA. Features a barbecue, live music by the Mother Corn Shuckers, wine tasting featuring member wineries, a baking contest, and more. **Sept. 29, 6-10 p.m.** Starts at \$35. 805-591-4204. iggpra.com/events. The Loading Chute, 6350 Webster Rd., Creston.

NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

BEATITUDES OF PEACE CELEBRATION In

celebration of International Peace Day. Join the Earth Care Ministry for a candlelight vigil and walk reciting the Beatitudes of Peace and singing songs. Includes an installation of a plaque "They Will Inherit the Earth." **Sept. 22, 6:30-7:30 p.m.** Free. 805-771-9565. firstchristianmorrobbay.org. First Christian Church of Morro Bay, 2050 Ironwood Ave., Morro Bay.

FUNDRAISERS

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

THE DUNES CENTER SEPTEMBER RUMMAGE SALE Features gently used clothing (for men, women, boys, girls, and infants), toys, sporting goods, kitchenware, crafts, art, and household items for sale. Proceeds support the Dunes Center. **Sept. 22, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.** Free. 805-343-2455. dunescenter.org/event/rummage-sale/. Far Western Tavern, 899 Guadalupe St., Guadalupe.

RAISE THE WOOF: BENEFITING SBC ANIMAL CARE FOUNDATION Guests can enjoy standup comedy, a 3-course dinner, beer, wine, soda, a silent auction and drawing, and more. Featuring live music by the Clark Street Flyers. **Sept. 22, 5 p.m.** \$75; \$125 per couple; \$420 for private table of 6. 805-298-2968. woofraise.com. Masonic Lodge, 700 E. Lakeview Blvd., Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

6TH ANNUAL CHARITY RUMMAGE SALE All proceeds benefit Friendship Bridge, a non-profit organization empowering Guatemalan women to find solutions to poverty through micro-loans. **Sept. 21, 12-3 p.m.** and **Sept. 22, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.** Friendship Bridge, 467 Ramona St., Grover Beach, 805-545-8949.

EMPTY BOWLS COMMUNITY LUNCHEON

Enjoy soup donated by local chefs and served in handmade bowls donated by area artists. Guests get to keep their bowls. **Sept. 26, 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.** \$25. 805-574-1638. St. Patrick's Church, 501 Fair Oaks Ave., Arroyo Grande, stpatag.org.

LIONESS CLUB OF CAYUCOS ANNUAL ENCHILADA SALE

Proceeds benefit numerous club projects, including Hardie Park Pool equipment, swimming lessons for all Cayucos School students, and scholarships for graduating high school seniors, the Mutt Mitt Program, and others. Mondays-Sundays, 8 a.m.-8 p.m. through Oct. 9 \$10 for 2 beef, chicken or cheese enchiladas; \$55 for a tray of

SUBMIT
YOUR
EVENTS

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12. 805-995-1432. cayucoslioness.org. St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 298 S. Thompson Ave., Nipomo.

SWINGIN' BY THE SEA A fundraising event to support the Chapman Estate property. Features plain air artists-in-action, artwork, unique Estate-only experiences for auction, docent tours, food and beverage samplings from local vendors, and live music. **Sept. 22**, 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. \$125 table seating; \$100 chair seating. 805-741-8899. brownpapertickets.com. Chapman Estate, 1243 Ocean Blvd., Shell Beach.

80'S FOR ANIMALS Features a costume contest, cruelty-free appetizers, drinks, music, a live and silent auction, and more. **Sept. 22**, 6-10 p.m. \$40. 805-543-3786. greenerpasturesanctuary.org/events.html. Odd Fellows Hall, 520 Dana St., San Luis Obispo.

WOMEN'S LEGACY FUND LUNCHEON More than 800 local women and men are expected to attend the Women's Legacy Fund luncheon. Reservations can be made online. **Sept. 27**, 12-1:45 p.m. \$50. 805-543-2323. cfsloco.org. Alex Madonna Expo Center, 100 Madonna Rd, San Luis Obispo.

24TH DENIM AND DIAMONDS The Templeton Education Foundation presents this event to raise funds for Templeton schools. **Sept. 22**, 5-10 p.m. \$80 per single ticket; \$1,000 per table. eventbrite.com. Hummingbird House, 4015 Almond Dr., Templeton, 805-226-8575.

25TH SILVER ANNIVERSARY GOLF TOURNAMENT Proceeds to benefit the SLO County Builders Exchange Scholarship Fund. Admission includes green fees, golf cart, range balls, a breakfast burrito, a barbecue lunch, beverages, and a goodie bag. **Sept. 21**, 7:15 a.m.-4 p.m. \$130 per person; limited to 144 players. 805-503-8902. slocbe.com. Morro Bay Golf Course, 201 State Park Rd., Morro Bay.



INTRODUCTORY BALLET 1 Tuesdays, 5 p.m. everybodycandance.webs.com. Everybody Can Dance, 628 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-937-6753.

INTRODUCTORY BALLET 2 Wednesdays, 6 p.m. and Fridays everybodycandance.webs.com. Everybody Can Dance, 628 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-937-6753.

INTRODUCTORY BALLET 3 Wednesdays, 6 p.m. everybodycandance.webs.com. Everybody Can Dance, 628 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-937-6753.

LATIN DANCE CLASS: SALSA, BACHATA, AND MORE Instructors and styles vary from week to week. Thursdays, 8-10 p.m. \$10. facebook.com/dancingamor. Everybody Can Dance, 628 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-937-6753.

SALSA DANCE CLASS No partner or experience needed. Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m. Free. 805-937-1574. CentralCoastSwingDance.com. Old Town Brew, 338 W. Tefft St, Nipomo.

TREASURES 1: ART CLASSES Covers drawing and painting. Student will learn the elements of design and create art each week. All materials supplied. **Sept. 26**, 3:30-5:30 p.m. 5 weeks for \$125. 805-361-0524. treasures1.com. Treasures 1, 210 W. Fesler St., Santa Maria.

UKULELE CLASS Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

WEST COAST SWING CLASS No partner or experience needed. Mondays, 7-9 p.m. Free. 805-937-1574. CentralCoastSwingDance.com. Old Town Brew, 338 W. Tefft St, Nipomo.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

OPEN STUDIO FOR HOMESCHOOLED CHILDREN Includes drawing, painting, sewing, weaving, mixed media, printmaking, and 3-dimensional building in a safe, non-competitive environment. Fridays, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. \$15 per hour.

ARTS continued page 17

PHOTO COURTESY OF JUDY LINDQUIST



TUNEFUL TRIO

The Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Department and the Santa Maria Valley Senior Club host Boogie on Down on Sept. 23 from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. at the Elwin Mussell Senior Center, located at 510 Park Ave., Santa Maria. This dance party features live music by the In Time Trio (pictured) and Riptide Big Band. Admission is free. More info: (775) 813-5186.

ARTS

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

AFTER SCHOOL ART CLASSES Learn the elements of design and how to paint and draw from life during this 5 week course. For ages 7 and up. Wednesdays, 3-5 p.m. through Oct. 19 \$125 for 5 weeks. 805-910-9548. Bobette Stanbridge, 210 W. Fesler St., Santa Maria, bobetteart.com.

BALLROOM, LATIN, AND SWING LESSONS Marie King and Kings of Swing offer dance lessons for all ages and skill levels. Couples and singles welcome. Wednesdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. \$36 for 4-week session. 805-928-7799. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

BEADING WORKSHOP Thursdays, noon oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

COUNTRY TWO STEP DANCE LESSONS From the basics to a variety of patterns. Dancers of all skill levels welcome. Thursdays, 6:15-7 p.m. \$8. 805-680-5695. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

EVERYBODY CAN DANCE Ballet workout classes for teens and adults. Tuesdays, 6 p.m.



Presented by the Communities of Cambria & San Simeon Celebrating 10 Years!

October 1-31st

Celebrating 10 years! Our community-wide event with hundreds of scarecrows displayed through Cambria & San Simeon.



October Fest - October 20th

There's nothing like beer and brats to make for a wonderful time. So when you're checking out the scarecrows in Cambria, consider these other possibilities for a fun weekend!

Enjoy OctoberFest, Saturday October 20th at Pinedorado Grounds, 1100 Main Street from 12pm-5pm, lots of fun for the entire family!

Cambria Scarecrow Festival, Inc.
PO Box 1223 • Cambria, CA 93428 • 805-395-2399
cambriascarecrows.com

Calling all Golfers & Business Sponsors!



5th Annual Golf Tournament & Fundraiser

Saturday, September 29, 2018



JOIN US TO SUPPORT OUR LOCAL KIDS!

Great Registration Cost! \$125/Player or \$500/Team - Tee Time 9:30 am
Golf, Cart, Snacks, Drinks, Food on Course, Prizes, Dinner & FUN!

Looking for Sponsors, Golfers & Donations

Register online www.GuadalupeKids.org
For more info or to register in person contact
Alicia Solis at 805-878-7390 or at ajsolispeace@gmail.com

GuadalupeKidsComeFirst

ART BAR AT VILLA SAN JULIETTE Enjoy painting your own pieces with the help of local artist Skye Pratt. Seating is limited. **Sept. 22**, 11:15 a.m.-1:30 p.m. \$40 for wine members; \$50 for non-members. 805-467-0014. letspartylo.com. Villa San Juliette Winery, 6385 Cross Canyons Rd, San Miguel.

BACKYARD STUDIO POP-UP Local artisans will be showing and selling their handcrafted wares. **Sept. 23**, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. 805.550.3846. Backyard Studio Pop-Up, 1120 Islay St., San Luis Obispo.

JULIA MORGAN BUILDING TOUR Member docents will guide you through our historic building and grounds. Tours may also be arranged by appointment. Mondays, 2-5 p.m. Free. 805-541-0594. themondayclubslo.org. The Monday Club, 1815 Monterey St, San Luis Obispo.

WILD AND SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL: NIGHT 2 The Central Coast State Parks Association (CCSPA) presents this film festival, which features award-winning environmental and adventure films, silent auctions, gift giveaways, and more. **Sept. 28**, 7-9:30 p.m. \$5-\$15; \$20 for family pack; \$40 for full fest. 805-548-0384. centralcoastparks.org/filmfest. King David's Masonic Lodge, 859 Marsh St., San Luis Obispo.

NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

LIBRARY BOOK SALE Features quality, relatively unused books and other media at low prices. **Sept. 29**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 805-772-6394. mbfol.org. Morro Bay Library, 625 Harbor St., Morro Bay.

RECEPTION: MBAA JURIED EXHIBIT 2018 Presented by the Morro Bay Art Association. Award-winning artist Debra Joy Groesser serves as judge for this exhibit, featuring paintings by artists throughout California. **Sept. 23**, 2-4 p.m. Free. 805-772-2504. artcentermorrobay.org. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

EXHIBITS

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

A COUNTRY AFFAIR Showcasing artists Cheryl Ambrecht and Sue Johnson, who exhibit their Central Coast landscape and ranching/farming paintings. **Sept. 30**, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Through Sept. 30, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. 805-688-7517. galleryyosolivos.com. Gallery Los Olivos, 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos.

NATURE IMAGINED This exhibit celebrates nature through art by Cheryl Medow, Ellen Jewett, and Hilary Brace. These artists used diverse materials and methods to create their works. Mondays, Wednesdays-Sundays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. \$5. 805-686-8315. wildlingmuseum.org. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang.

NATURE REGENERATED Photographers were encouraged to capture examples of nature's ability to regenerate and thrive. This exhibit showcases winning entries in the Adult and Junior categories.

SPECIAL ART EVENTS

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

10TH ANNIVERSARY PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION The theme of this year's competition is "Nature Regenerated." This year's guest judge will be Bill Dewey, whose extensively photographed the tri-counties through its many cycles of fire and regeneration. **Through Nov. 5** Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082, wildlingmuseum.org.

ARTIST TALK: ART AS ALCHEMICAL PORTAL TO NATURE Susan Rowland's talk uses depth psychology and alchemy to show what modern western life has repressed and explores the notion that imagination is the most important natural resource, one that connects us to non-human nature as an essential part of our being. **Sept. 23**, 3-4 p.m. \$5 members; \$10 general admission. 805-686-8315. wildlingmuseum.org. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

SOUTH COUNTY POETRY An open mic follows each month's featured poet. Fourth Sunday of every month, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free. 805-268-9216. CanDoJack.com. South County Poetry, St. Barnabas' Episcopal Church (annex), 301 Trinity Way off Traffic Way, Arroyo Grande.

WILD AND SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL: NIGHT 3 The Central Coast State Parks Association (CCSPA) presents this film festival, which features award-winning environmental and adventure films, silent auctions, gift giveaways, and more. **Sept. 29**, 7-9:30 p.m. \$5-\$15; \$20 for family pack; \$40 for full fest. 805-548-0384. centralcoastparks.org/filmfest. South Bay Community Center, 2180 Palisades Ave, Los Osos.

WILD AND SCENIC FILM FESTIVAL: NIGHT 1 The Central Coast State Parks Association (CCSPA) presents this film festival, which features award-winning environmental and adventure films, silent auctions, gift giveaways, and more. **Sept. 27**, 7-9:30 p.m. \$5-\$15; \$20 for family pack; \$40 for full fest. 805-548-0384. centralcoastparks.org/filmfest. Grover Beach Community Center, 1230 Trouville Ave., Grover Beach.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

100 THOUSAND POETS FOR CHANGE A group of SLO poets read poems to children to celebrate this worldwide event that's dedicated to peace, sustainability and positive social change. The reading takes place on the second floor of the library. **Sept. 29**, 10:30 a.m.-noon Free. 805-903-3595. languageofthesoul.org. San Luis Obispo Library, 995 Palm St., San Luis Obispo.

805-668-2125. LiLA Creative Community, 1147 East Grand Ave. Suite 101, Arroyo Grande, lila.community.

PLAY EXPLORE CREATE 2 Includes drawing, pastel, watercolor, tempera, collage, printmaking, sewing, and building. Tuesdays, Thursdays, 9-10:30 a.m. & 1:30-3 p.m. \$20 for one day; \$35 for two. 805-668-2125. lila.community. LiLA Creative Community, 1147 East Grand Ave. Suite 101, Arroyo Grande.

SOUND CIRCLE For those who have always wanted to play music, but believe they are "non-musical". All levels of experience are welcome. Featuring easy-to-use hand pan drums. Wednesdays, 6:30-7:45 p.m. through Dec. 5 \$75 (for 6 classes). 805-710-9808. luciamarschools.asapconnected.com/. Branch Mill Organic Farm & Retreat Center, 2815 Branch Mill Rd., Arroyo Grande.

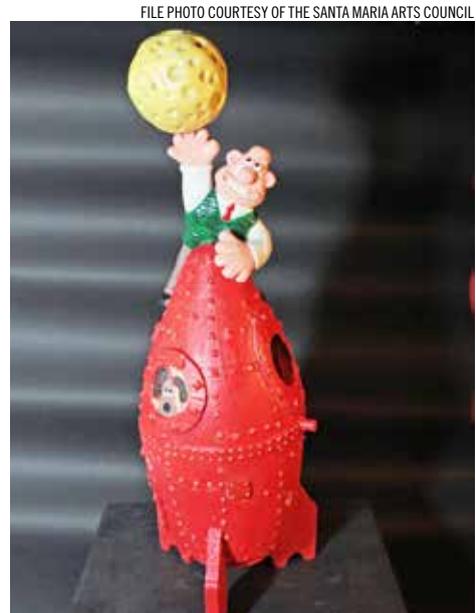
STITCHING OUR IDEAS TOGETHER This four-day workshop explores drawing, painting, collage, and sewing and repurposes and joins various materials together into one large piece or several smaller pieces. Light snacks, coffee, tea, and water will be provided. All materials are included. **Sept. 28**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and **Sept. 29**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. \$260. 805-

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE GREAT AMERICAN MELODRAMA



SCARY MARY

The Great American Melodrama presents Scary Poppins, a musical spoof of Mary Poppins, Sept. 20 through Oct. 11. Performances are Wednesday through Saturday from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Tickets range from \$21 to \$28. The Great American Melodrama is located at 1863 Front St., Oceano. More info: (805) 489-2499 or americanmelodrama.com.



BIRDHOUSE IS THE WORD

The Santa Maria Arts Council (SMAC) hosts a birdhouse raffle during the Orcutt Children's Arts Foundation (OCAF) Chalk Art Festival on Sept. 29 in Old Town Orcutt. All proceeds from the raffle go toward prizes for student artists who participate in the annual SMAC Student Art Show. Tickets are \$1 each. More info: smartscouncil.org.

ongoing Free. 805-686-8315. wildlingmuseum.org/photography-competition/. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang.

PAVLOV GALLERY: FEATURED ARTISTS

Showcasing new collections on a weekly basis. Featured artists include Chris Pavlov, Iris Pavlov, Robert Hildebrand, Doug Picotte, and more. ongoing, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. 805-686-1080. pavlovgallery.com. Pavlov Art Gallery, 1608 Copenhagen Dr., Ste C, Solvang.

SUMMER BLOOM A collection of plein air and studio paintings by pastel artists Deborah Breedon and Kris Buck. ongoing Gallery Los Olivos, 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

BEVERLY JOHNSON AT VALLEY ART GALLERY Johnson is the gallery's featured artist for the month of September. **Through Oct. 1** Free. Valley Art Gallery, 125 W. Clark Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-2278, valleygallery.org.

ARTS continued page 18

CAL POLY FOOTBALL

#15

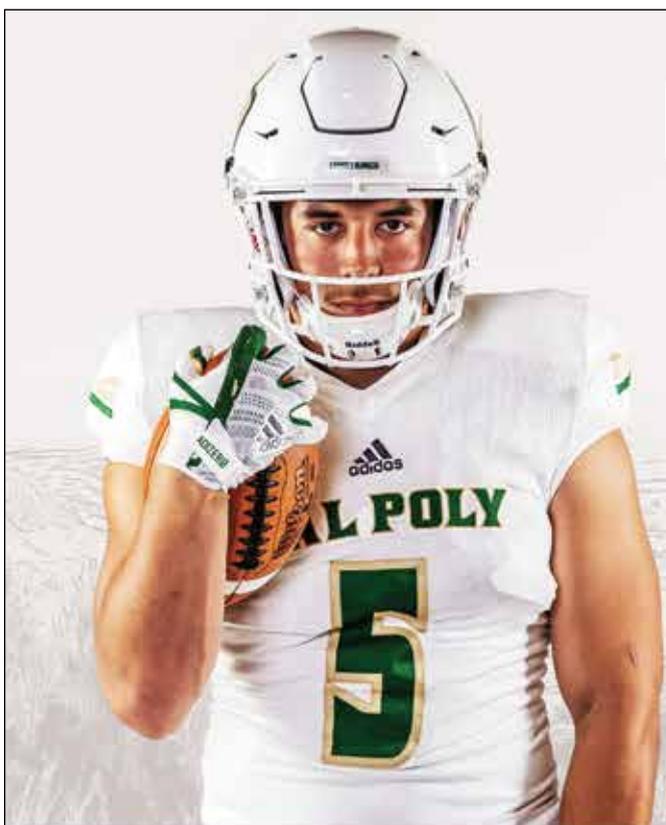
Griz

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MADONNA INN
SAN LUIS OBISPO

JAKE OWEN



FRANKIE BALLARD

CARLY PEARCE

TYLER RICH

BOOTSANDBREWS.COM



COLORS from page 17

COLOR AND MOTION: AN ARTISTS PERSPECTIVE

See the work of local artist Kathy Badrak on display at the Terry Dworaczyk office of Ameriprise Financial. This exhibit is one of a continuing series of shows to spotlight local art and artists. ongoing 805-938-9724. ampf.com. Ameriprise Financial, 2605 S Miller St., Suite 104, Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

ART BY SLOPE AT DANA ADOBE A collection that culminates art and history to educate the community. Fridays. through Sept. 30 805-929-5679. danaadobe.org. DANA Adobe Cultural Center, 671 S. Oakglen Ave., Nipomo.

FROM ARTISTS, FOR ARTISTS, BY ARTISTS

Featuring fine art oils and pastels from Corynn Wolf, acrylics from Ryan Adams, and works from various mediums by Marc Wolf ongoing Free. 805-773-6563. Puffers of Pismo, 781 Price St., Pismo Beach, puffersofpismo.com/.

SHE SANG ME A GOOD LUCK SONG A statewide traveling exhibit featuring the California Indian photographs of Dugan Aguilar. ongoing 415-525-1553. exhibitenvoy.org. DANA Adobe Cultural Center, 671 S. Oakglen Ave., Nipomo, 805-929-5679.

CALLS FOR ARTISTS

SAN LUIS OBISPO

CALL FOR ENTRIES: SLO PART-TIME PLAYERS 10-MINUTE PLAYS

Accepting submissions of 10-minute plays with 5 or fewer characters (1-3 preferred), few or no props, simple staging, and an emphasis on the text. Writers should have theater experience (please include brief description). Email submissions to celestegoyer@gmail.com. ongoing Free. Mission Plaza, 989 Chorro St, San Luis Obispo.

STAGE

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

SCARY POPPINS The Great American Melodrama presents this musical spoof of *Mary Poppins*. Wednesdays-Saturdays, 7-9:30 p.m. through Oct. 11 \$21-\$28. 805-489-2499. americanmelodrama.com. Great American Melodrama, 1863 Front St., Oceano.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

ART SLO REP presents its production of the Tony-winning comedy by Yasmina Reza, translated by Christopher Hampton, that focuses on the meaning of art and friendship. Wednesdays-Sundays, 7-9 p.m. and Saturdays, Sundays, 2-4 p.m. through Oct. 14 \$20-\$39. 805-786-2400. slorep.org. San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre, 888 Morro St., San Luis Obispo.

IMPROV COMEDY SHOW Fast-paced improv comedy shows performed by the ensemble of Central Coast Comedy Theater. All shows are based on audience suggestions making every show unique. Saturdays, 8-10 p.m. \$5. centralcoastcomedytheater.com. Kreuzberg Coffee Company, 685 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, 805-430-0260.

ON THE ROAD: MARATHON READING 60 readers will read the entire scroll version of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*. Also features music,

recollections, critique, burlesque, and refreshments. Contact Secret SLO to read out loud from your favorite section. Sept. 29, 9-midnight Free. 805-210-8687. secretslo.com. Sauer-Adams Adobe, 964 Chorro St., San Luis Obispo.

SLO QUEERDOS PRESENTS: FRESH SQUEEZED

An opportunity for drag queens and performance artists of all ages and styles to showcase their talents. Hosted by Juicy. 15 performance spots open. Early attendance recommended. Sept. 29, 2-5 p.m. \$5 suggested donation. 805-868-7133. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo, 7SistersBrewing.com.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

LECTURES & LEARNING

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

ALMA ROSA PRESENTS WINE TALK

WEDNESDAYS An informational series that host speakers that discuss different aspects of the local wine industry. Fourth Wednesday of every month, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Free. 805-688-9090. almarosawinery.com. Alma Rosa Tasting Room, 181 C Industrial Way, Buellton.

TED AND CONVERSATION

The Solvang Library screens an 18-minute talk from the TED Talks series. Afterwards, the audience explores the topic together over tea and coffee. Third Thursday of every month, 10-10:50 a.m. Free. 805-688-4214. Solvang Library, 1745 Mission Dr., Solvang.

LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

COMMUNITY FOOD CENTER The center is a food pantry offering nutritional classes. Wednesdays, 3-5 p.m. Free. 805-967-5741, Ext. 107. El Camino Community Center, W. Laurel Avenue and N. I Street, Lompoc.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

BI-LINGO Informal conversation to practice Spanish language skills for anyone with basic Spanish-speaking skills. Fourth Thursday of every month, 6-7 p.m. Free. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-925-0994.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

POINT SLO LIGHTHOUSE TOURS Docents lead guests on a one-hour tour of the historic site, the buildings, and up to the Lighthouse tower. Please arrive 15 minutes early. All proceeds go directly toward the site's restoration. Wednesdays, 12 & 1 p.m. and Saturdays, 12, 1 & 2 p.m. \$17-\$22. 805-540-5771. pointsanluislighthouse.org. Point San Luis Lighthouse, 1 Lighthouse Rd., Avila Beach.

CLUBS & MEETINGS

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

ANIME CLUB FOR TEENS A club for teens interested in anime and manga. Sept. 21, 4:30-5:30

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE continued page 20

PHOTO COURTESY OF EXPLORE LOMPOC



RELAX AND UNWIND

Hidden Canyon Ranch hosts one of its Yoga and Wine Tasting events on Sept. 22 from 10 a.m. to noon. This beginner/intermediate class, led by Sarah Allred of Hunny Fly Yoga, is followed by tasting of Roark Wine Company wines. Hidden Canyon Ranch is located at 5425 Campbell Road, Lompoc. More info: hiddencanyonranch.com.

Saturday, 10/13
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One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean. Approaching the boy, he asked, "What are you doing?"

The youth replied, "Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die."

"Son," the man said, "don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't possibly make a difference!"

After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then, smiling at the man, he said,

"I just made a difference for that one."

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Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St.,
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COFFEE AND CONVERSATION Tuesdays, 1 p.m.
oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares
Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

DCSMV MONTHLY MEETING Speaker sessions
open to the public. Meeting for registered
Democrats only. Third Thursday of every month,
5:30-8:30 p.m. Free. santamariademocrats.info.
IHOP, 202 Nicholson Ave, Santa Maria.

HI-WAY DRIVE-IN SWAP MEET Come to the
Hi-Way Drive-In for the Sunday Swap Meet. Sellers:
\$20; Produce sellers: \$25; Buyers: \$2 car load.
Sundays, 4:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 805-934-1582. Hi-
Way Drive-In, 3170 Santa Maria Way, Santa Maria.

RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT:
MAH JONGG Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. 805-
922-2993. Elwin Mussell Senior Center, 510 Park
Ave., Santa Maria.

**SANTA MARIA TOASTMASTERS WEEKLY
MEETING** Toastmasters International is a
worldwide nonprofit educational organization that
empowers individuals to become more effective
communicators and leaders. Tuesdays, 6:30-8 p.m.
805-264-6722. santamaria.toastmastersclubs.org/
Toyota of Santa Maria, 700 E Beteravia Rd., Santa
Maria.

**THE SANTA MARIA VALLEY GENEALOGICAL
SOCIETY** The Santa Maria Valley Genealogical
Society holds meetings open to the public. Third
Thursday of every month, 2-4 p.m. SMVGS.org.
Family History Center, 908 Sierra Madre, Santa
Maria.

**TRI CITY SOUND CHORUS OF SWEET
ADELINES INTERNATIONAL** Welcomes all
women who are interested in learning about
barbershop-style music singing and performing.
Thursdays, 6:45-9:30 p.m. 805-736-7572. Lutheran
Church of Our Savior, 4725 S. Bradley Road, Orcutt.

TRIVIA NIGHT Wednesdays, 7 p.m. Free.
naughtyoak.com. Naughty Oak Brewing Co., 165 S
Broadway St Ste 102, Orcutt, 805-287-9663.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

NIPOMO SENIOR CENTER The center is open
five days a week; closed on weekends and holidays.
Mondays-Fridays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 805-929-1615.
Nipomo Senior Center, 200 E. Dana St., Nipomo.

SUPPORT GROUPS

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

TRAUMA INFORMED PARENTING GROUP A
foster parent class presented by Calm. Tuesdays
805-965-2376. calm4kids.org. Church For Life,
3130 Skyway Dr., Suite 501, Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**GENERAL GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP (SOUTH
COUNTY)** Hospice SLO County is offering this
support group for those grieving the death of a
loved one. Held in the Church Care Center. Drop-ins
welcome. Tuesdays, 10-11:30 a.m. Free. 805-544-
2266. hospiceslo.org. New Life Pismo, 990 James
Way, Pismo Beach.

**SPOUSE AND PARTNER LOSS SUPPORT
GROUP (SOUTH COUNTY)** A Hospice SLO
support group for those grieving the loss of
a partner or spouse. This group provides the
opportunity to connect with individuals in a similar
situation. Held in Room 16. Drop-ins welcome.
Thursdays, 5-6:30 p.m. Free. 805-544-2266.
hospiceslo.org. New Life Pismo, 990 James Way,
Pismo Beach.

CREATE & LEARN

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

CARD MAKING Tuesdays, 9 a.m. oasisorcutt.
org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt,
805-937-9750.

FALL MAKERSPACE For participants to create,
build, explore, use their imagination, and more.
Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. and Wednesdays,
4-6 p.m. through Nov. 28 Free. 805-925-
0994. cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/
departments/library. Santa Maria Public Library,
421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

KNITTING AND CROCHETING Wednesdays,
9:30 a.m. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420
Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

SEWING CAFE CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS
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MIND & BODY

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

BASIC YOGA 101 WORKSHOP Build strength and increase flexibility during this series. Includes basic standing postures and sun salutations. Learn about yoga, meditation, and alignment Tuesdays, 7-8 p.m. through Sept. 25 \$49. 805-680-6542. yoga4mankind.org/event-workshops/. Yoga for Mankind, 130 N Broadway, Suite B, Orcutt.

CANDLELIGHT RESTORATIVE YOGA Release and open your body with breath, props, and meditation. Mondays, 7-8 p.m. yogaformankind.com. Yoga for Mankind, 130 N Broadway, Suite B, Orcutt.

GENTLE YOGA Tuesdays, Thursdays, 8:30 a.m. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

MEDITATION GROUP Features a 20 minute meditation followed by a brief discussion. Meetings take place in the sanctuary. All are welcome. Thursdays, 11 a.m.-noon Free. 805-937-3025. Unity Chapel of Light Church, 1165 Stubblefield Rd., Orcutt, unitysantamaria.net/.

REFLEXOLOGY AT OASIS Tuesdays, 9 a.m. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

TAI CHI AT OASIS Tuesdays, Thursdays, 9:45 a.m. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

BEGINNER'S CHI GONG AND YOGA For adults and youth ages 11 and up. Includes stand up exercises, breathing techniques, and more. Sundays, 9:45 a.m. Free. 805-534-1600. Morocco Method Headquarters, 800 Farroll Rd., Grover Beach, morroccomethod.com.

COMPLIMENTARY YOGA Free for resort guests and locals alike. Sundays, 8:30-9:30 a.m. through Oct. 28 Free. 805-773-5003. thedolphinbay.com. The Spa at Dolphin Bay, 2727 Shell Beach Rd., Pismo Beach.

KUNDALINI YOGA Gentle yoga classes with a focus on meditation and chanting in the Kundalini Yoga (as taught by Yogi Bhajan). All levels of experience welcome. Thursdays, 6:30-7:45 p.m. through Dec. 31 \$12 per class; \$40 for 4 classes. 626-864-4810. branchmillorganics.com/classes-offered/. Branch Mill Organic Farm & Retreat Center, 2815 Branch Mill Rd., Arroyo Grande.

MINDFUL MEETUP: FOR RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING Experience how the practices of mindfulness, self-compassion, and self-care are the essential life skills to transform your well-being. Subscribe online for updates. **Sept. 27**, 6-7 p.m. 805-270-5523. mindfulkindfullyouiversity.com/meetup/. Coffee Bean, 354 Five Cities Dr., Pismo Beach.

MINDFUL YOGA: GENTLE, RESTORATIVE, AND SLOW FLOW Wednesdays, Saturdays, 9-10:15 a.m. \$10 donation. White Heron Sangha Meditation Center, 6615 Bay Laurel Place, Avila Beach, whiteheronsangha.org.

QI GONG CLASSES Beginners welcome. For all ages over 12. Sundays. through Sept. 30 Free. 805-534-1600. Morocco Method Headquarters, 800 Farroll Rd., Grover Beach, morroccomethod.com.

QI GONG FOR LESS STRESS AND MORE ENERGY Use the gentle standing movements of qi gong to lower stress and increase flexibility. Mondays, 9-10 a.m. through Oct. 15 \$57 for series; \$10 per class. 805-440-4561. balancedlivingayurveda.com. Oceano Community Center, 1425 19th St., Oceano.

QI GONG: STANDING MOVEMENTS Use gentle standing movements to lower stress and increase flexibility. Wednesdays, 4-5 p.m. through Oct. 10 \$54 for the series; \$10 drop in fee. 805-440-4561. balancedlivingayurveda.com. Shell Beach Veterans Memorial Building, 230 Leeward Ave., Pismo Beach.

SENIOR BODY FITNESS Please bring your own weights and bands. Mondays, 11 a.m.-noon \$1 per class. 805-598-7108. Cortina Apartments, 241 Courtland St., Arroyo Grande.

SILVER SNEAKERS ZUMBA Appropriate for all ages and fitness levels. An easy-to-follow dance fitness class. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 9-10 a.m. Free for members; \$6 to drop-in. 805-441-7932. Oceano Community Center, 1425 19th St., Oceano, adulthood.luciamarschools.org.

WATER EXERCISE FOR ALL AGES These classes help relieve joint pain, enhance your breathing, and increase your range of motion. Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m. 805-481-

OUTDOORS

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

SLO COUNTY PUGS ON THE BEACH Socially friendly dogs and their humans are invited to run (leash free) in the surf sand at Olde Port Beach (Avila Dog Beach). Last Sunday of every month, 2-3 p.m. Free. aggbchamber.com. Olde Port Beach, 6520 Avila Beach Dr., Avila Beach.

SPORTS

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

NFL FLAG FOOTBALL Presented by Rise and Achieve. For boys and girls ages 5 to 17. First game takes place July 7. 10 games guaranteed. ongoing 805-868-3633. riseandachieve.com. Ernest Righetti High School, 941

KIDS & FAMILY

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

AFTERNOON STORY TIME Story time for kids ages 6 and up. Features stories, movies, and a craft. Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30 p.m. through Oct. 9 Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

BABYNAUTS STORY TIME This story time is for babies up to 12 months old and their caregivers. Fridays, 10-10:30 a.m. through Oct. 12 Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

BILINGUAL STORY TIME/ HORA DE CUENTOS This story time features stories, songs, and rhymes in both Spanish and English. Wednesdays, 5:30-6 p.m. through Oct. 10 Free. 805-925-0994.



HOMEWORK HELP For grades K through 6. Mondays-Thursdays, 4-7 p.m. through June 6 Free. 805-925-0994. cityofsantamaria.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

KTS ALL STAR GYMNASTICS: NINJA WARRIOR CLASSES Bring out your inner warrior with kids parkour classes in a safe setting. For ages 5 and up. Wednesdays, Fridays, 5:30 & 6:30 p.m. 805-349-7575. Santa Maria Town Center, 142 Town Center East, Santa Maria.

MOMMY AND ME CLASSES Brief gymnastics classes for ages 1 to 3 (as soon as they can start walking on their own). Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 9:30-10 & 10:15-10:45 a.m. \$35-\$55. KT's All Star Gymnastics, 237 Town Center E, Santa Maria, 805-349-7575.

NIGHT LIGHT THEATER A special showing of the movie *A Wrinkle in Time*. **Sept. 25**, 6-7:30 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE continued page 22

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BUTTERFLIES

Sept. 22-Oct. 14 *Alive!*
Noon-4:00 PM

Butterflies Alive! is made possible with generous support from the LLWW Foundation.

Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

PRESCHOOL STORY TIME Features stories, songs, finger plays, digital storytelling, and a book-on-DVD. For kids ages 3 to 5 and their families. Wednesdays, 10:30-11 a.m. through Oct. 10. Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

READALOUD The Buellton Library presents ReadAloud, a play-reading group for adults, teens and children 9 and up. Fridays, 4-5 p.m. Free. 805-688-3115. Buellton Library, 140 W. Highway 246, Buellton.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILWAY HISTORICAL MUSEUM The Santa Maria Valley Railway Historical Museum features a locomotive, boxcar, cabooses, railroad artifacts, and diorama. Second and fourth Saturday of every month. 12-4 p.m. ongoing 805-714-4927. Santa Maria Transit Center, Miller and Boone St., Santa Maria.

TEEN GAMING FRIDAYS An afternoon of gaming for middle and high school students. **Sept. 28**, 4-5:30 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. cityofsantamaria.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

DRAGONFLY CIRCLES (AGES 7-11) IN AG This enrichment program promotes social, emotional, and physical well-being. Learn how to respond to stressful emotions and situations in a healthy, balanced, and positive way. Register thru AG Recreation. Thursdays, 3:45-4:45 p.m. through Dec. 13 805-270-5523. mindfultofulyouuniversity.com/dragonfly-circles/. Women's Club of Arroyo Grande, 211 Vernon St., Arroyo Grande.

OCEANO DUNES VISITOR CENTER Enjoy exhibits of dune and lagoon plant and animal species. End your visit with a stroll behind the center to the fresh-water lagoon. Thursdays-Sundays, 12-4 p.m. Free. 805-474-2667. Oceano Dunes Visitor Center, 555 Pier Ave, Oceano.

PLAY EXPLORE CREATE 1 Enjoy various art activities including drawing, painting, building sculptures, and more. Designed for ages 3 to 4. All materials are included. Mondays, Wednesdays, 9-10:30 a.m. \$20 for one day; \$35 for two days a week. 805-668-2125. LiLA Creative Community, 1147 East Grand Ave. Suite 101, Arroyo Grande, lila.community.

YOUNIQUE FITNESS: FOR SPECIAL NEEDS A whole-brain approach to learning and fitness for special needs. Integrates music, movement, yoga, mindful awareness training, guided relaxation strategies, and expressive arts. Thursdays, 5-5:45 p.m. through Dec. 13 805-270-5523. mindfultofulyouuniversity.com. Women's Club of Arroyo Grande, 211 Vernon St., Arroyo Grande.

SPIRITUAL

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH SERVICES Join Hope Community Church for Sunday morning and Wednesday night services. Children care provided for infants and children under 4. Sundays, 10:30 a.m. and Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m. Free. 805-922-2043. hopesm.com. Hope Community Church, 3010 Skyway Dr. Suite F, Santa Maria.

INTUITIVE GUIDANCE Sessions may include but are not limited to mediumship, psychic awareness, light journey work, and aura cleansings. Thursdays, 12-2 p.m. \$20 for 15 minutes. 937-271-5646. CovenTree: Books and Gifts, 722 E Main St., Santa Maria.

MEDITATION CLASS: A STUDY OF TRADITION AND PRACTICE With AnnKathleen, who has been meditating since 1992 when she was introduced to Transcendental Meditation from teacher Sri John Karuna. Wednesdays, 6:30-7:45 p.m. \$10-\$15. 805-598-1509. divining.weebly.com. Art of Alchemy, E. Orange St, Santa Maria.

WISDOM READINGS AnnKathleen uses tarot and oracle cards to guide participants to solutions that bring peace, happiness, and positive thinking. Fridays-Sundays, 1-5 p.m. \$60-\$100. 805-598-1509. Art of Alchemy, E. Orange St, Santa Maria, divining.weebly.com.

WISDOM READINGS AT COVENTREE AnnKathleen, the Mistress of Alchemy, uses tarot and oracle cards to guide participants to solutions that bring peace, happiness, and positive thinking. Every other Friday, 1-5 p.m. \$60-\$100. 805-598-1509. divining.weebly.com. CovenTree: Books and Gifts, 722 E Main St., Santa Maria.

DRUM MEDICINE JOURNEY With Julie Jensen. Every third Monday, 6:30-8 p.m. \$30. 805-489-2432. Halcyon Store Post Office, 936 S. Halcyon Rd., Arroyo Grande.

HOUSE OF GOD CHURCH SERVICES Join Pastor Joseph and Amanda Anderson every Sunday for prayer, healing, and more. Sundays, 9:30-11 a.m. 805-888-7714. House of God Church, 946 Rockaway Ave., Grover Beach.

MEDIUMSHIP DEVELOPMENT Learn the basics of communicating with spirit in a safe environment with Mike Smith. Tuesdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m. \$15. 805-480-2432. Halcyon Store Post Office, 936 S. Halcyon Rd., Arroyo Grande.

REFUGE RECOVERY Refuge Recovery is a non-theistic, Buddhist-inspired approach to treating and recovering from addictions of all kinds.

Open to people of all backgrounds and respectful of all recovery paths. Wednesdays, 7-8 p.m. Free; donations welcome. The Haven (classroom), 621 E Grand Ave, Arroyo Grande, 805-202-3440.

SINGING BOWL MEDITATION Enjoy vibrational sounds of singing bowls with Pamala Taylor. Fourth Wednesday of every month, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Offerings accepted. 805-674-4277.

Halcyon Store Post Office, 936 S. Halcyon Rd., Arroyo Grande.

SUNDAY FOR SPIRIT PSYCHIC READINGS Features an assortment of psychic readers. Sundays, 1-5 p.m. Vaires. 805-489-2432. Halcyon Store Post Office, 936 S. Halcyon Rd., Arroyo Grande.

YOUTH SERVICES The City Church Central Coast holds youth services for junior high school students. Mondays, 6:30 p.m. Free. 805-929-8990. thecitycc.org. Faith Life Community Church, 726 W Tefft St, Nipomo.

FOOD & DRINK

FARMERS MARKETS

LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

LOMPOC FARMERS MARKET Features fresh fruit and vegetables, flowers, entertainment, and activities for the whole family. Fridays, 2-6 p.m. Lompoc Farmers Market, Ocean Avenue and I Street, Lompoc.

VANDENBERG VILLAGE FARMERS MARKET Locally grown produce and food stuffs are available year round. Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Vandenberg Village Farmers' Market, 120 Burton Mesa Blvd., Lompoc.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

ORCUTT FARMERS MARKET Presents local farmers and small businesses. Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Orcutt Farmers Market, Bradley Road, Orcutt.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

ARROYO GRANDE FARMERS MARKET Includes produce, artists and musicians. Saturdays, 12:2-2:25 p.m. Arroyo Grande Farmers Market, Olohan Alley, Arroyo Grande.

NIPOMO FARMERS MARKET Includes a large variety of locally grown produce. Open year round Sundays, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. nipomofarmersmarket.com/. Nipomo Farmers Market, Via Concha Road, Nipomo.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

FARMERS MARKET Farmers Market in SLO is the largest Farmers Market in California. Thursdays, 6:10-9 p.m. Downtown SLO, Higuera St., San Luis Obispo.

SLO FARMERS MARKET Hosts over 60 vendors. Saturdays, 8-10:45 a.m. World Market Parking Lot, 2650 Main St., San Luis Obispo.

EVENTS

SAN LUIS OBISPO

SECOND ANNUAL SIP' N SAUNTER Includes multiple Downtown venues. Visit site for a full and updated list of participating retailers and partners. **Sept. 28**, 5-8 p.m. \$40-\$50. 805-541-0286. downtownslo.com/. Downtown SLO, Higuera St., San Luis Obispo.

NORTH SLO COUNTY

MORRO BAY KAYAK WINE TOUR Dinner and wine served on the dunes on the outer bank of the bay. Enjoy Lone Madrone wines while watching the sunset. **Sept. 22**, 4-8 p.m. \$110. 805-238-0845. lonemadrone.orderport.net. Lone Madrone Winery, 5800 Adelaida Rd, Paso Robles. ☐

PHOTO BY JOE PAYNE

Live Music

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

2018 FIRESTONE SUMMER CONCERT SERIES Guests can enjoy food, wine, and live music. Big Tom's Backyard tri-tip sandwiches will be available for purchase. No outside alcohol allowed. Last Friday of every month, 6-9 p.m. through Sept. 28 Firestone Vineyard, 5017 Zaca Station Rd., Los Olivos, 805-688-3940, firestonewine.com.

ALASTAIR GREENE BAND LIVE Sept. 23, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

BEAR REDELL LIVE Sept. 30, 1-5 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

THE BRAMBLES LIVE Sept. 22, 1-4 p.m. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

THE BRYAN TITUS TRIO LIVE Sept. 21, 6-9 p.m. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

THE BRYAN TITUS TRIO LIVE Sept. 28, 8 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

FALCON HEAVY LIVE No outside food or drinks allowed. **Sept. 28, 6-9 p.m.** Free. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

HOLLYWOOD HILLBILLIES LIVE Sept. 21, 8 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

JACOB COLE AND THE ECHOES LIVE Sept. 22, 6-9 p.m. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

JR'S COMBO LIVE No outside food or drinks allowed. **Sept. 30, 4:30-7:30 p.m.** Free. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

THE JUST DAVE BAND LIVE Sept. 29, 8 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

LED ZECUTIVES LIVE No outside food or drinks allowed. **Sept. 29, 5-8 p.m.** Free. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

SALT MARTIANS LIVE Sept. 23, 1:15-4 p.m. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

STEVE AND THE REGULARS LIVE Sept. 23,

MUSIC LISTINGS continued page 24

Mountaintop blues

Famed blues duo Tom Ball and Kenny Sultan are right at home at Cold Spring Tavern

BY JOE PAYNE

A syncopated rhythm blends with the smell of barbecue and other kinds of smoke under the eaves of the oak trees. A wailing harmonic melody flies like a bird over the earthy guitar/bass combo and shuffling beat.

It's a familiar scene at the Cold Spring Tavern near the top of the San Marcos Pass, where blues duo Tom Ball and Kenny Sultan enjoy regular Sunday gigs with their band. The pair have been performing at the historic stagecoach stop for nearly 40 years, Ball said, around when they first started collaborating as young musicians in Santa Barbara. They've enjoyed a partnership as bluesmen ever since. "Neither one of us saw that coming," Ball laughed. "We just started playing music together and it clicked, and before we knew it it was a career."

The duo play at Cold Spring pretty much any Sunday they're not out of town from 1:15 to 4 p.m. with rotating bandmates. There's always a crowd there, whether they show up or not, Ball explained, but there's a solid core of longtime regulars who make it out often to hear them perform. Their next show is Sept. 30.

Ball and Sultan are celebrated blues artists, with credits from movies, television, and several albums over the years. Ball is known for his technically brilliant and soulful harp style, reminiscent of artists like Little Walter and Sonny Terry (Ball and Terry actually share the same birthday). Sultan is hailed far and wide for his fingerstyle guitar playing, which has allowed him to publish instructional books and even earn a signature Martin guitar.

Like Ball, Sultan said their partnership "clicked" early on, and it's always been easy for the two to work together. "Longer than any marriage," Sultan said. "Tom's a great guy, same guy every day, and steady as a rock."

The Cold Spring shows are some of the few local gigs they perform anymore, Sultan explained, because the location "has so much soul." They perform at bigger venues in Santa Barbara or SLO when touring blues artists want an opener, of course, but they usually perform in bigger cities across the U.S. or tour Europe when not in the area.

They play right out in front of the log cabin-style tavern that has sat there since the 1860s. They're the "house band" before the amplified music begins inside the bar. Visitors can sit on tree-trunk benches and picnic tables sipping beers while listening, or enjoy the famous tri-tip sandwiches

See 'em on the mountain

Tom Ball and Kenny Sultan perform live at the Cold Spring Tavern on most Sundays from 1:15 to 4 p.m. Their next performance is Sept. 30 at the tavern, located at 5995 Stagecoach Road, just off Highway 154 on the San Marcos Pass. More info: (805) 967-0066, coldspringtavern.com, or tomballkennysultan.com.



HOME AWAY FROM HOME: Santa Barbara-based blues duo Tom Ball (pictured, left) and Kenny Sultan (center) have performed at the Cold Spring Tavern for decades. They can be seen there most Sundays with bandmates Jody Eulitz and Tom Lee from 1:15 to 4 p.m.

and beer-battered onion rings available during the afternoon.

"It's kind of like home," Sultan said. "They like us up there, they don't want things to change. They want people to come up with their kids and have it the way it was."

Ball and Sultan perform standard blues repertoire with their signature style. Songs like "Key to the Highway" are beloved tunes, but others like "Fishin' Blues" illustrate Sultan's focus on the standards of fingerstyle guitar. Artists like Lightnin' Hopkins or Mississippi John Hurt exemplify that kind of sound, but Sultan also has the more intricate ragtime chops of Rev. Gary Davis or Stefan Grossman down pat.

Sultan's style is known so well that Martin Guitars released a signature model in his name, a sunburst 000-18, after a 1937 he already owned. For those unaware, a Martin signature is the guitarist's equivalent of a marble statue in the town square.

Sultan and Ball pull from the entire blues/folk tradition when penning their original songs. They call their overall style "goodtime blues," which

LOCAL NOTES continued page 24

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MUSIC

LOCAL NOTES from page 23

melds blues and ragtime together with tongue-in-cheek lyrics like in their song, "Perfect Woman," a crowd favorite at Cold Spring.

"Well I found the perfect woman boys, who could ask for more?/She's smart and pretty and young and witty and owns a liquor store," with a bridge that follows up with, "She cooks like Betty Crocker, drinks like old Dean Martin/She's got more dough than Ross Perot, she's built like Dolly Parton."

Ball is the singer of the duo, with a lovable baritone that gives a great contrast to his harmonica's soprano voice. He never missed a beat switching between singing and his harp

when I visited Cold Spring on Sept. 16.

The pair are often joined by one or two bandmates, longtime collaborators Jody Eulitz, a drummer, and bassist Tom Lee. Lee provides a bouncy bluegrass/jazz/blues feel with his upright bass, and believe it or not, Eulitz brings jazz brushes and a cardboard box to drum on. They were both there for my visit and are a stellar rhythm section, enjoying their own solo breaks during most songs.

Cold Spring really is a place unto itself that pairs perfectly with their music. Sultan said it used to have a reputation as a biker bar, but that's changed over the years. You'll still see the bikers, but you'll also meet families, vacationers, or local music lovers munching on some tri-tip and taking in the tunes.

Everybody's welcome, Ball said, to come enjoy the food and the "goodtime blues."

"It's great for people-watching here because you get students, you get Hell's Angels, you get Japanese tourists, you get winery people, you get old people, young people, dogs, babies—it's terrific for hanging out." Ball said. "We love playing here; come on down and have some fun." ○

Managing Editor Joe Payne has been to the mountaintop. Contact him at jpayne@santamariasun.com.



PHOTO BY JOE PAYNE

LOG CABIN IN THE WOODS: The Cold Spring Tavern is a historic stagecoach stop along the San Marcos Pass known for its live music, cold beers, and tri-tip sandwiches.

MUSIC LISTINGS from page 23

1-5 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

THE THIRD MAN LIVE No outside food or drinks allowed. **Sept. 29**, 1-4 p.m. Free. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

[2 and 3] THE YA YA FESTIVAL Enjoy live music from Dave Alvin & The Guilty Ones, Ruthie Foster, Michael On Fire, and Steve Poltz. This event also features arts and crafts, food and drink, and clothing and jewelry vendors. **Sept. 22**, 2-10 p.m. \$60. talesfromthetavern.com/tfft-concerts/. Solvang Festival Theater, 420 2nd St., Solvang, 805-928-7731.

LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

SIP MUSIC CLUB Pairing music and local wine with 4 seasonal releases each calendar year. Price includes 3 VIP access tickets to each SipMusic event, and 1 album and 1 bottle of premium wine every 3 months. ongoing \$40. Lompoc Wine Factory, 321 N. D St., Lompoc, 805-243-8398, lompocwinefactory.com.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

[3] AHC CONCERT BAND: POPS CONCERT The Allan Hancock College Concert Band presents its annual Fall Pops Concert. **Sept. 29**, 7:30-9:30 p.m. \$10; free for music students. 805-929-0552. First Baptist Church, 2970 Santa Maria Way, Santa Maria.

AMY BENTON LIVE Benton performs original country songs. **Sept. 28**, 4-6 p.m. Free. Presqu'ile Winery, 5391 Presqu'ile Dr., Santa Maria, 805-937-8110, presquilewine.com.

CONCERT FOR HOPE Proceeds benefit local patients at Mission Hope Cancer Center. Features live music by Anna Wilson and Monty Powell. **Sept. 29**, 5-9 p.m. \$45. 805-937-8110. Presqu'ile Winery, 5391 Presqu'ile Dr., Santa Maria, presquilewine.com.

CONNER CHERLAND LIVE **Sept. 21**, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Free. Presqu'ile Winery, 5391 Presqu'ile Dr., Santa Maria, 805-937-8110, presquilewine.com.

SANTA MARIA PHILHARMONIC PRESENTS AMORE: LYRICAL LOVE Includes works by Glinka, Tchaikovsky, and Schubert. Featuring guest soloist Amy Sze. **Sept. 29**, 7:30-9:30 p.m. \$15-\$45. 805-925-0412. santamariaphilharmonic.org/. Grace Baptist Church, 605 E. McCoy Ln., Santa Maria.

THE WAVEBREAKERS BAND: LIVE BOOMER POP Enjoy 1950s to 1980s covers. **Sept. 28**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free; tips appreciated. 805-361-2900.

moxiecafe.com/. Moxie Cafe, 1317 W. McCoy Ln., Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

BURNING JAMES AND THE FUNKY FLAMES All ages welcome. **Sept. 29**, 4-7 p.m. 805-540-5771. Point San Luis Lighthouse, 1 Lighthouse Rd., Avila Beach.

GENERATIN GAP PERFORMANCE Featuring Alisa Mounts, Gary Liwanag, Bob Barr, Jim Miller, and Doug Shelton. **Sept. 21**, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Free; tips welcome. 805-489-9099. branchstreetdeli.com/livemusic. Branch Street Deli, 203 E. Branch St., Arroyo Grande.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

BLACK TIGER SEX MACHINE LIVE **Sept. 26** The Fremont Theater, 1035 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo, 805-546-8600, fremontslo.com.

CABARET 805 AT 7SISTERS BREWING Enjoy lounge music, beer and non-alcoholic beverages, and more. Family-friendly. **Sept. 25**, 6:45-9 p.m. Free. 805-868-7133. 7SistersBrewing.com. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo.

CAL POLY FACULTY RECITAL Violinist Brynna Albanese is joined by faculty members Ken Hustad on bass and John Astaire on percussion. Also features guest guitarist Jack Cimo. **Sept. 29**, 7:30 p.m. \$5 at the door. 805-756-2406. music.calpoly.edu/calendar/. Cal Poly Davidson Music Center, Room 218, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.

CODEKO LIVE **Sept. 26**, 10 p.m. \$20. SLO Brew, 736 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo, 805-543-1843, slobrew.com.

THE DIRTY HEADS LIVE **Sept. 25** The Fremont Theater, 1035 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo, 805-546-8600, fremontslo.com.

AN EVENING WITH MADELINE PEYROUX **Sept. 22** The Fremont Theater, 1035 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo, 805-546-8600, fremontslo.com.

HOUNDMOUTH WITH FAMILY OF THE YEAR For adults ages 18 and over. **Sept. 25**, 6-11 p.m. slobrew.com/live. SLO Brew Rock, 855 Aerovista Pl., San Luis Obispo, 209-417-7748.

THE JASON HARNELL SOLO DRUM EXPERIENCE Enjoy a multi-media experience from renowned jazz drummer, educator, composer, and bandleader Jason Harnell. In the Cuesta College Music Building (Room 7160). **Sept. 28**, 7:30 p.m. \$10-\$15. 805-546-3198. Cuesta College Cultural

MUSIC LISTINGS continued page 25

SANTA BARBARA BOWL

MIGUEL
 THE ASCENSION TOUR
 WITH SPECIAL GUEST DVSN
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FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 AT 7PM
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LIFE TOUR
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SEPTEMBER 27 AT 7PM

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6TH AT 7PM

STING & SHAGGY
 THE 44/776 TOUR
OCTOBER 9TH AT 7PM

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 SEP 30
KEITH URBAN
 OCT 08
ARCTIC MONKEYS
 OCT 19
ROD STEWART
 OCT 21

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CHUMASH CASINO RESORT



PROLIFIC PAIR

The Chumash Casino Resort presents Air Supply on Sept. 28 at 8 p.m. This Australian soft rock duo will be performing some of their greatest hits as well as singles from Mumbo Jumbo, their latest studio album. Tickets range from \$35 to \$55. More info: (800) 248-6274 or chumashcasino.com.

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and Performing Arts Center, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo, cuesta.edu.

LAUREN ALAINA LIVE With Dylan Ortega. **Sept. 21** The Fremont Theater, 1035 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo, 805-546-8600, fremontslo.com.

LIVE AT SLO BREW: METALACHI A heavy metal mariachi band. **Sept. 30**, 7-11 p.m. slobrew.com/live. SLO Brew, 736 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo, 805-543-1843.

PINT NITE WITH DANNY G **Sept. 28**, 6-8 p.m. Free. 805-868-7133. 7SistersBrewing.com. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo.

SALTY SUITES LIVE **Sept. 29**, 6-8 p.m. Free. 805-868-7133. 7SistersBrewing.com. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo.

SLO WIND ORCHESTRA: MOVIES AND VIDEO GAMES A performance of selections from film and video game scores. Features flutist Miriam Grisso and soprano Alba Franco-Cancel. **Sept. 23**, 3-5 p.m. \$30; \$15 for students with ID; free for children. 805-464-9434. slowinds.org. Cuesta College Cultural and Performing Arts Center, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo.

SONGWRITERS AT PLAY: BOB DYLAN TRIBUTE Performers are Miss Leo, Archie Logsdon, Holly Ann Lewis, David Foster Evans & Debra Windson, Bruce Goldish, Loren Radis, Steve Kindel, Dan Grant, and Nick Rolan. **Sept. 20**, 6:30-9 p.m. \$10. 805-204-6821. songwritersatplay.com/calendar/. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo.

SONGWRITERS AT PLAY: GINA VILLALOBOS & AMEE CHAPMAN Influences include Lucinda Williams, Esther Phillips, and Jeff Tweedy. Special guests include Michael Venia of Carbon City Lights and Matt Yaki. **Sept. 27**, 6:30-9 p.m. Free. 805-204-6821. songwritersatplay.com/calendar/. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo.

TIM JACKSON LIVE **Sept. 22**, 6-8 p.m. Free. 805-868-7133. 7SistersBrewing.com. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo.

TRIBUTE TO BOB DYLAN Presented by Songwriters at Play. Performers include Miss Leo, Archie Logsdon, Holly Ann Lewis, David Foster Evans & Debra Windson, Bruce Goldish, Loren Radis, Steve Kindel, Nick Rolan, and Dan Grant.

Sept. 20, 6:30-9 p.m. \$10. 805-868-7133. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo, 7SistersBrewing.com.

TROUBLE IN THE WIND LIVE Labeled to perform folk, Americana, alternative, country, and surf rock. **Sept. 25**, 10 p.m.-1 a.m. Free. 760-315-5496. Frog and Peach Pub, 728 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo, frogandpeachpub.com.

DJ/DANCE

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

KRAZY COUNTRY HONKY-TONK THURSDAY Thursdays, 6 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

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HULA DANCING Thursdays, 6:30 p.m. 805-598-6772. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

LINE DANCING Mondays, 6:30-9 p.m. \$5. 805-310-1827. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

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DJ CAMOTE Thursdays, 5 p.m. Harry's Night Club And Beach Bar, 690 Cypress St., Pismo Beach, 805-773-1010, harryspismo.com.

DJ DRUMZ AT MONGO'S Fridays Free. 805-489-3639. mongosaloon.com. Mongo's Saloon, 359 W. Grand Ave., Grover Beach.

KARAOKE/OPEN MIC

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

KARAOKE AT SOLVANG BREW Thursdays Free. Solvang Brewing Company, 1547 Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-2337.

OPEN MIC NIGHT AT SOLVANG BREW Wednesdays Free. Solvang Brewing Company, 1547 Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-2337. ○

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Arts Briefs

Dunes Center hosts rummage sale

The Dunes Center in Guadalupe is planning a rummage sale on Sept. 22. The sale will feature used items such as clothing for adults and children of all ages, toys, home goods, art, tools, sporting supplies, and more (the deadline to donate items to the sale has passed).

Proceeds from the sale benefit activities and events at the Dunes Center, which include educational opportunities, field trips, student activities, and beach cleanups. The sale takes place from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Minetti Building, 895 Guadalupe St., Guadalupe. For more information, call (805) 343-2455.

Santa Maria Civic Theatre to hold auditions

The Santa Maria Civic Theatre is holding auditions for lead and supporting roles in an upcoming production of Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

The organization is currently casting for the following roles: Blanche DuBois, age 28 to 34, described as a "fragile, delicate beauty, desperate, and unbalanced"; Stella Kowalski, age 23 to 26, described as "stronger than she looks and gentle and kind"; Stanley Kowalski, age 28 to 35, described as "muscular, blue collar, and an abusive barbaric brute"; Harold Mitchell (Mitch), age 28 to 35, described as "tall, muscular, sensitive, and awkward around women"; Eunice Hubbell, age 35 to 45; Steve Hubbell, age 35 to 45; Pablo Gonzales, age 28 to 45; and two additional roles.

Auditions are Sept. 23 and Sept. 25 starting at 6 p.m. For more information, visit smct.org or call (805) 922-4442.

Artist and writer Susan Rowland to give talk at Wildling Museum

The Wildling Museum of Art and Nature will host a talk by artist Susan Rowland (Ph.D.) titled *Art as Alchemical Portal to Nature* on Sept. 23.

Rowland will discuss elements from her book, *The Ecocritical Psyche*, which examines the idea of art as a portal to nature. Rowlands will share her work in depth psychology and alchemy to demonstrate ideals that modern Western life has seemingly forgotten or rejected.

Rowland serves as co-chair of MA Engaged Humanities and the Creative Life at Pacifica Graduate Institute, and was previously a professor of English and Jungian Studies at the University of Greenwich, in the United Kingdom. She has authored several books, including 2001's *From Agatha Christie to Ruth Rendell and The Sleuth and the Goddess in Women's Detective Fiction*. She is currently writing a mystery novel. For more information on Rowland's work, visit susanarowland.com.

PHOTO COURTESY SUSAN ROWLAND



The talk will take place at the Wildling Museum, located at 1511 Mission Drive, Solvang, from 3 to 4 p.m. For more information, contact (805) 688-1082. ☪

Arts Briefs is compiled by Arts and Lifestyle Writer Rebecca Rose. Send information to rose@santamariasun.com.

Amused artist

In her stunning portraits and paintings, Zoë Nathan captures a hidden part of her subjects

BY REBECCA ROSE

Even upon a quick glance, Zoë Nathan's portraits cling to a viewer.

Beautifully understated, gracefully executed, and filled with nuanced introspection, the artist's work feels like an exuberant expression of the world she sees buried under the material world. In Nathan's skilled hands, humanity becomes more clear, less blurry in the shadows of our daily existence.

Nathan is a sculptor and painter who has exhibited in numerous galleries and museums in the Santa Ynez Valley and Santa Barbara for more than 15 years. Her work has hung in museums such as the Elverhoj Museum of History and Art and at the former C Gallery in Los Alamos. In 2013, she was featured in Mark Robert Halper's book *Between Seer and Seen: Celebrating the Artists of Santa Barbara County*. She is currently featured as part of the Elverhoj's Past, Present, and Future, a retrospective of the museum's 30-year history.

Her roots in art trace back to her early years, when she she was drawn to painting and drawing. Nathan was admitted to Simon's Rock College while still in her junior year of high school. After receiving her associate degree, Nathan then transferred to Sarah Lawrence College in upstate New York.

"I've always sketched or drawn," she said. "I did get into [art] a little bit at Santa Ynez High with Connie Rohde as a teacher. She was great."

She was first drawn to portraiture, especially the self-portraits of famed painter and activist Frida Kahlo. Kahlo's work explored deep issues of self-identity framed around gender, race, and class, among other topics. Her brightly colored palette was juxtaposed with jarring surrealist images that addressed the complexities of sexuality and politics, which made her one of the most iconic painters of the 20th century.

"It was such an interesting portal into the artist's mind," Nathan said. "She would use visual metaphors to convey her inner experience, her inner world, which involved some pain and also some love."

Among her biggest influences, Nathan lists Austrian painter Gustav Klimt and John Singer Sargent. Sargent was a master portrait painter, and Nathan's portraits, which linger with a viewer long after seeing them, exhibit the same kind of honesty and humanity.

"Klimt's use of color and pattern is so lovely," she said. "With Sargent, I think I'm striving to become more like him. He had such an eye for capturing things that were right in front of him."

Unlike Sargent, who worked with live models, Nathan typically uses photographs she takes herself. Then, she puts the picture into Photoshop where she makes collages out of them, creating the image she will eventually paint.

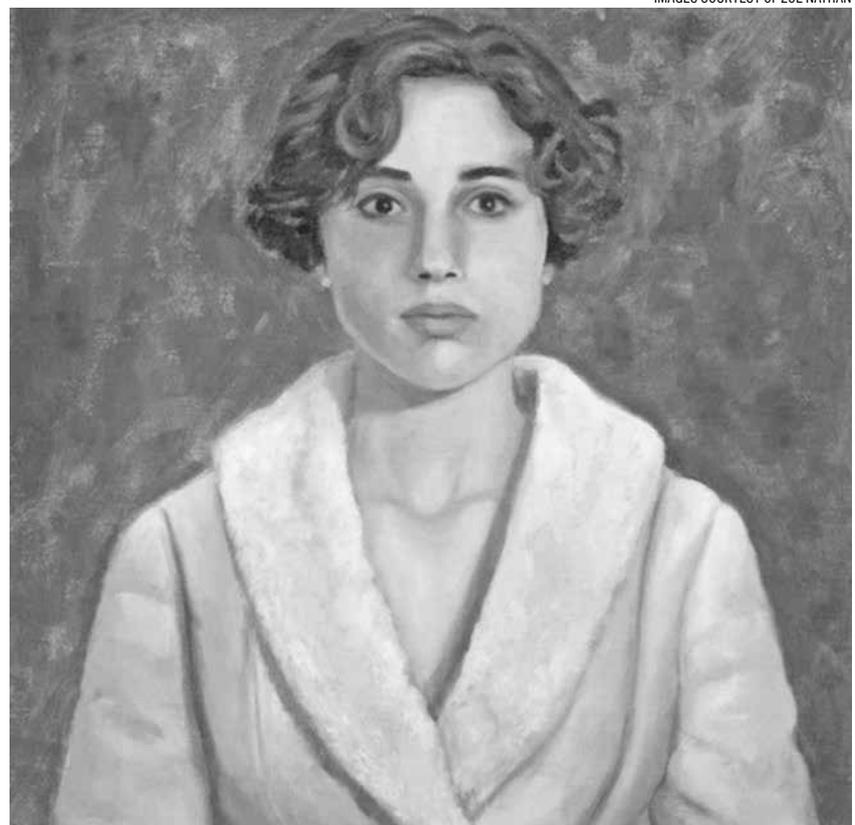
Nathan also finds inspiration in the work of her fellow artists, letting those who are in the infinite quest for muses become her muse.

"I did a series of portraits of other artists with their work," she said. "I started looking at their work and thinking, 'Would this work as a backdrop?'"

At times haunting and moody, Nathan's work is firmly rooted in realism, with small hints of surrealism in the mood she strikes with each piece. Her paintings have

The muse

Zoë Nathan is currently featured as part of the Elverhoj Museum of History and Art's 30-year retrospective, titled Past, Present, and Future. To see more of Nathan's work or to contact the artist, visit zoenathan.com.



POWER PLAYER: Artist Zoë Nathan has a knack for drawing out her subject's inner monologue, as she plays with ideas of identity. Nathan said she often draws from her education in psychology and anthropology when painting.

the playfulness of Klimt's colorful masterpieces and the stoic grace of Sargent's best works. She imparts something delicate yet powerful into her portraits, reaching beyond the subterfuge of human courtesies and drawing out deeper truths.

An art professor once categorized her style as "romantic realism," a moniker that seems more than accurate.

"It's not quite surreal; it's not quite hyperrealistic," she said of her style. "I think I am interested studying identities through my portraiture. I hark back to my studies in psychology, sociology, and anthropology, and I think that informs a lot of my pieces."

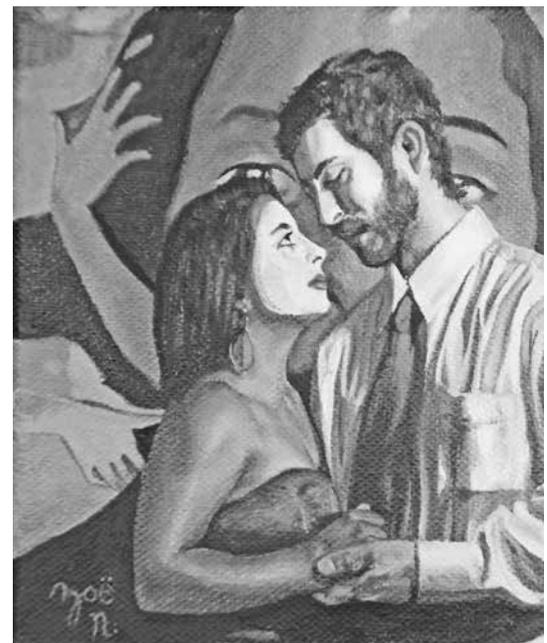
While she lives in Santa Barbara, Nathan has been in many exhibits at local galleries. She recently began working with some galleries in Los Angeles and is pursuing more opportunities for shows in that area. But Santa Ynez still holds a special meaning for her.

"I've just found a very lovely community of artists, gallery owners, and museum owners in the Santa Ynez Valley and Los Alamos," Nathan said. "I always love and appreciate all of the artists I've met in the area." ☪

Arts and Lifestyle Writer Rebecca Rose is always looking inward. Contact her at rrose@santamariasun.com.



TRICOLORLED TRIO: In images such as *Painted Into Being*, artist Zoë Nathan blurs the line between romanticism and realism, a style she is often associated with.



KEEP THE ROMANCE REAL: Painter and sculptor Zoë Nathan's work is best described as romantic realism, a style that pulls elements of romanticism from the 1800s and aspects of realistic painting.

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IMAGE COURTESY OF CHRISTINE BELL

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From the grave

Central Coast author delves into the insanity of grief

BY RYAH COOLEY

“We don't say *died* anymore, we say *passed*.” Just that one sentence shook Central Coast author Christine Bell's world a bit when her neighbor said it in the midst of a family tragedy. The Santa Barbara-based writer realized there just isn't space in our lives anymore for grief and mourning, which in turn inspired her novel, *Grievance*, a recent recipient of the International Thriller Writers Award. Bell's story focuses on Lily Declan, a young widow trying to move past her grief and find a place of healing for herself and her two young sons. But when an unusual sympathy letter arrives, the life Lily has rebuilt comes under attack. On her wedding anniversary, a gift from an anonymous sender is delivered to her door. Then, a bizarre home invasion shatters her sense of security, and a mysterious Facebook memorial appears. Someone is looking to claim Lily's love and loss as their own, but who?

Bell sat down with the *Sun* to discuss grief, inspiration, and writing by hand.

Sun: How would you describe *Grievance*?

Christine Bell: My elevator pitch is that it's about a young widow stalked by the shadow of her dead husband, but really, it's a dance about grief. It's about what we do to keep the dead alive and what we do to keep them buried.

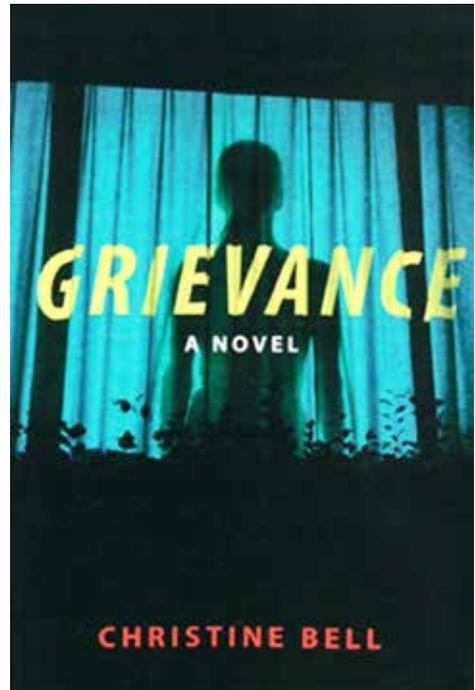
Sun: What inspired you to write *Grievance*?

CB: During a period of family grief, my neighbor corrected me several times during a conversation and said, “We don't say ‘died’ anymore, we say ‘passed.’ And we don't say ‘funeral’ anymore, we say ‘celebration of life.’” Part of me is horrified that we don't use real words anymore, but part of me is intrigued. Maybe we can pass over the bad parts.

Sun: How do you get yourself into such a dark place for writing a book like *Grievance* and then

Read on

Grievance by Christine Bell is available on Amazon for \$10.99 for paperback and \$3.99 for the Kindle version. For more information on Bell's work, visit christinesaintbell.com.



LOSS: Lily Declan looks for answers after the death of her husband leads to a series of strange events, including a mysterious gift, a home break-in, and a fake Facebook memorial, in Christine Bell's novel, *Grievance*.

get yourself back out of it?

CB: I'm not a method actor. This is not my first book. When I'm there, I'm there. And when I'm done, I don't have to constantly follow it up.

Sun: What do you want your readers to take away from your book about grief, sorrow, and mental illness?

CB: We've done away with so many of the rituals that grief almost has no place in our society. I guess writing the book was trying to find a place for it. It's almost as if grief were no longer a natural process. It's almost as if it were an illness.

Sun: How did you get into writing, and what is your process like?

CB: It's what I've always done. This is my fourth book. I come from a family where story was important, and books were always discussed and argued about. It was never not a part of my life. I always have a feeling of a story when I sit down to write. I write by hand. I've written entire books by hand before I've put them on the computer. I love not having a screen in front of me. When I have a screen in front of me, I correct as I go.

Sun: What are some of your current favorite books and authors?

CB: I just finished *The Song Is You* by Megan Abbott. And I'm in the middle of her book *Bury Me Deep*. I often read a fiction and nonfiction book at the same time. I also just finished *The Great Wound: Confessions of a Slaveholding Family* by Kenneth Collier. I'm in a book club, and I love that because it takes me to picks I would never pick on my own.

Sun: Why should readers pick up a copy of *Grievance*?

CB: It's a good story. It will keep them up at night. It will make them wish they smoked cigarettes and drank whiskey. It's different. When I read I want to be taken to a place I've never been to before. I hope this book does that. ○

Shhhh! New Times Arts Writer Ryah Cooley is reading at rcooley@newtimeslo.com.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTINE BELL



AWARD WINNING: Central Coast author Christine Bell's novel *Grievance* recently won the International Thriller Writers Award.

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Under pressure

Krider laughs in the face of a cardiac 'episode'

BY ROB KRIDER

Like most men, I'm not a huge fan of going to the doctor. I don't enjoy sitting in waiting rooms, I don't like being poked with needles, and I'm not a big fan of having a finger placed in my tush. To avoid all of the unwanted poking and prodding, I just don't go to the doctor. If some ailment comes up, I simply Google WebMD, I fix any deep cuts with duct tape, and I self-medicate with beer. Just think of all of the copays I have saved over the years.

So, after a decade of "taking care of myself," which means quite the opposite, it isn't a big surprise to anyone if I recently had an "episode" where I had to be rushed to the hospital in an ambulance. The rumor at the hospital, *if they can be believed*, is that I have high blood pressure. It is so high in fact that I got a bit dizzy and ultimately scared everybody at the office. When you scare people you work with, then the ambulance comes. Against all of my requests not to call an ambulance, I was suddenly in the back of one being trucked across town, lights and sirens activated, which I thought was all pretty unnecessary. I just needed a beer and a nap.

The doctors at the hospital did not agree with my assertion that a beer and a nap would fix my problems. They said I needed blood pressure medication, *if these guys can be believed*. I nodded my head in agreement in the emergency room, because I would nod to anything if I could get them to release me. Good news—they let me go from the emergency room after half of a day. Bad news—they released me to actually

be admitted into the hospital. More needles and a bunch more copays later, the doctor, *if he could be believed*, told me I had high blood pressure. I was starting to see a trend. Everyone around me thinks I have high blood pressure. What do these numbers really represent? Maybe I'm just exceptional and that is why my numbers are so high?

They said I needed a stress test. This confused me because I was of the opinion that I had high blood pressure because I have too much stress in my life. Apparently, they wanted to test that theory with more stress, *if these people can be believed*. They put something in my IV that felt like my heart had been kicked by a bull. I failed that test.

After that experience, I started nodding and agreeing more and more to do anything the doctors wanted as long as I could get released from the hospital. I had my wife, whom I love, sitting by my side, giving me dirty looks, making me feel bad for not taking my health seriously. She wanted me to go to the doctor regularly, and she wanted me to stop using WebMD and beer as health insurance. I nodded and agreed with her too since all I wanted was to get out of the hospital. I was tired of needles and bull kicks to the heart and gut.

They weren't going to let me go. My job was to stay in bed, eat Jell-O, take my medication, and get my blood pressure down. I did this for what seemed like forever. People from work kept coming by to see how I was doing. I just held up my Jell-O and said, "I'm relaxing

and eating Jell-O, obviously I am doing fine. Can you ask the doctor to let me go?" Nobody would.

Finally, after everyone got some copay (the ambulance, the emergency room, the main hospital, the labs, the test folks, the guy who brings the bulls into the hospital), I was finally released on my own recognizance. My probation: no salt. ○

Rob swears he is living healthier, he switched to light beer. To read more from Rob Krider, go to robkrider.com.



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Film Reviews

Editor's note: Santa Maria 10 (805-347-1164) films and show times were unavailable at press time.

ALPHA

What's it rated? **PG-13**
 What's it worth? **Rent it**
 Where's it showing? **Hi-Way Drive-In**
 Albert Hughes (*Menace II Society, From Hell, The Book of Eli*) helms this adventure story set 20,000 years ago in the last Ice Age, about a young man named Keda (Kodi Smit-McPhee), who, after a steppe bison hunting expedition with his clan goes awry, finds himself alone and struggling to survive. After he encounters a lone wolf, he begins to forge the bond that will develop canines into man's best friend. There's some beautiful cinematography, but there's also a lot of computer-generated graphics, mostly of the prehistoric wildlife, which sadly is pretty clunky and pulled me out of the story. (96 min.)

—Glen Starkey

THE HOUSE WITH A CLOCK IN ITS WALLS

What's it rated? **PG**
 Where's it showing? **Hi-Way Drive-In, Movies Lompoc, Parks Plaza**
NEW Horror-porn-meister director Eli Roth (*Cabin Fever, Hostel, The Green Inferno*) turns off the gore for this family-friendly fantasy based on John Bellair's novel about orphan Lewis Barnavelt (Owen Vaccaro), who's sent to live with his warlock uncle Jonathan Barnavelt (Jack Black). After learning the fundamentals of sorcery, and with the help of neighbor Mrs. Zimmerman (Cate Blanchette), the trio sets about locating and dismantling a clock built by evil warlock Isaac Izzard (Kyle MacLachlan), which has the power to destroy the world. To further confound matters, Izzard's wife, Selena (Renée Elise Goldsberry), wants to find the clock first. (104 min.)

—Glen Starkey

LIFE ITSELF

What's it rated? **PG**
 Where's it showing? **Parks Plaza**
NEW Writer-director Dan Fogelman (writer of *Cars* and *Crazy Stupid Love*) helms this drama about young New York couple Abby (Olivia Wilde) and Will (Isaac Oscar) as they move from college romance to the birth of their child. The multi-generational saga also stars Antonio Banderas, Annette Bening, and Mandy Patinkin. (118 min.)

—Glen Starkey

THE NUN

What's it rated? **R**
 What's it worth? **Stream it**
 Where's it showing? **Movies Lompoc**
 Corin Hardy (*The Hollow*) directs this horror thriller about a novice nun (Taissa Farmiga) and a priest (Demian Bichir) with a haunted past who are sent to Romania by the Vatican to investigate the suicide of a young nun, who may have been affected by a malevolent spirit.

FILM REVIEWS continued page 32

SCORING

FULL PRICE... It's worth the full price of an evening showing
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Hustle for life

Editor's Note: Glen and Anna Starkey were out this week, so you have to deal with a review from Executive Editor Camillia Lanham and New Times Staff Writer Karen Garcia instead!

Yann Demange (*71, 2014) directs this film based on the true story of teenager Richard Wershe Jr., who became an undercover informant for the FBI during the height of the crack epidemic in 1980s Detroit. When the feds threaten to throw his father in jail for illegally selling guns, Rick will do whatever he can for his family. (116 min.)

Camillia: Hollywood has a flair for dramatizing stories based on real life—leaving out important details, glossing over others, and adding in spurts of half-truths to help with plot points. *White Boy Rick* is no exception. It's entertaining with engaging actors, a sweet 1980s wardrobe, and down and dirty scenes of Detroit that include a roller rink! But it sort of always feels like something's missing, or as an audience member, I was always missing something. Matthew McConaughey (*Dallas*) plays Richard Wershe Sr., a get-rich-quick schemer selling guns to questionable individuals out of the trunk of his rusty brown car in urban Detroit. Wershe Sr. plays the greasy, hard, and mostly not around father to his drug-addicted daughter Dawn (Bel Powley, *The Diary of a Teenage Girl*) and his drug-dealer/FBI informant son Rick (Richie Merritt). They live in a run-down home in a once middle-class, now crack-addled, neighborhood across the street from Wershe Sr.'s parents, grumpy and sarcastic Grandpa Ray and Grandma Verne (Bruce Dern and Pier Laurie), who are my favorite characters in the whole movie. And while all of that is fairly accurate to the true story of urban legend and supposed drug kingpin "White Boy Rick," the rest of the details are muddled. Two agents and a Detroit narcotics police officer supposedly force Rick into drug dealing and becoming an FBI informant, after they tell him his father's guns can be traced to two murders. They put money in his hand and push him out the door of an unmarked car and onto the front stoop of a crack house. The scene is punctuated by the funny one-liners that punch up much of the dialogue throughout the movie, delivered with

a nonchalant flair that helps move the beginning of the film along with a little bit of fun: "Put your pants on. We're going for custard." **Karen:** The buildup of characters and storyline took up more than half of the film. But it was a predictably grimy rise and fall of a 14-year-old kid looking for the fastest way to make a dime to better his life. I was too engrossed in learning about Rick's broken home and his friendship with local African-American gangsters who took him in, as if he were another member of the family, to realize just how naïve Rick was. He had the tough guy façade, selling his father's illegal guns and getting wrapped up in selling crack cocaine. But in the end, all he really wanted was for his sister, Dawn, to return to their home, provide for his daughter, and get out of poverty. While Rick builds up a relationship with the gang, that relationship slowly diminishes after the FBI threatens Rick with throwing Wershe Sr. behind bars. While we see glimpses of corrupt law enforcement officials from the local police department to the FBI, the subject is only lightly touched on. It can be argued that while Rick was destined for his fast-paced life of crime, the FBI put him on the path to do it. What's also interesting is as we see Rick's involvement with the gang increase, gang leader Johnny "Lil' Man" Curry (Jonathan Majors) reminds him that if he's caught in a criminal activity, his sentence will

WHITE BOY RICK

What's it rated? **R**
 What's it worth, Camillia? **Matinee**
 What's it worth, Karen? **Matinee**
 Where's it showing? **Stadium 10 in Arroyo Grande**

be much shorter than a black man's sentence. **Camillia:** Ironically, though, the sentence Rick would eventually be forced to serve was much longer than any of the gangsters he was involved with. And this disproportionate, unfair punishment is one of the take-homes of the film, although we never really get the full gist of what exactly happens to push Rick into his life sentence for being caught with too much crack cocaine. The film rushes what could be some of the best parts, choosing to showcase too much glitz and glam of the gangster lifestyle and not enough on the corrupt law enforcement officers and political bigwigs (such as Detroit Mayor Coleman Young) who Rick is supposedly helping the FBI catch. What the film does a good job of showing are the family dynamics. Tension and tender moments between Wershe Sr., his son, and his daughter pepper the movie, where the actors get to show off their acting



AMBITION: Rick Wershe Sr. (Matthew McConaughey) and Jr. (Richie Merritt) helm *White Boy Rick*, the story of a teenager who becomes an FBI informant in exchange for keeping his father out of prison.

chops. Eventually, Rick stops being an FBI snitch and the family gets strapped for cash, so the father lets his teenager go back to the drug dealing that law enforcement officials taught him how to do. Easy money is the name of Wershe Sr.'s game, and his son is very good at it. Eventually, Rick obviously gets caught, and his glamorous world falls apart after he cuts another informant deal with the FBI. The film glosses over the events that happen next, racing to the finish. News footage of corrupt law enforcement officials on trial and newspaper headlines about "White Boy Rick," the drug kingpin, flash across the screen. I left the film feeling slightly unsatisfied, although I liked the movie and was thoroughly entertained by it. **Karen:** I agree, I was definitely left wanting more. I only got a taste of what Rick was going through, and I wanted more context of what was going on around him that ultimately landed him behind bars. It also seems like the writers were fixated on making the story a "father and son take on the world" bit. But it's hard to do that because Wershe Sr. clearly can't keep his family together, has an illegal side job, and pushes his son into the violent glam of drug dealing for cash that gives them the ability to do something more legitimate. I definitely enjoyed watching Rick purchase a gold necklace with a star pendant, which he comes to learn is the Star of David—and he's not Jewish. Crime and murder are genres that I enjoy watching, so in that sense, I liked *White Boy Rick*, but to learn about his life, I'll have to look up his documentary instead. ○

Executive Editor Camillia Lanham and New Times Staff Writer Karen Garcia wrote Sun Screen this week. Comment at gstarkey@newtimeslo.com.

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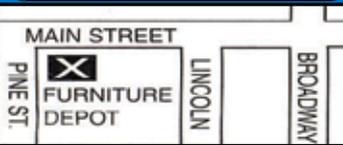
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FILM REVIEWS from page 30

Though there's some good acting, the story drags and there's an over-reliance on jump scares. (96 min.)

—Glen Starkey

THE PREDATOR

What's it rated? **R**
 What's it worth? **Stream it**
 Where's it showing? **Movies Lompoc, Parks Plaza**

Co-writer and director Shane Black (*Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, *Iron Man 3*, *The Nice Guys*) helms this new installment in the Predator franchise. This time around, autistic youngster Rory McKenna (Jacob Tremblay) triggers a device lost by an alien predator and inadvertently calls a new breed of predator—one made deadlier via genetic upgrades from other species it's hunted throughout the galaxy—to return to Earth to retrieve stolen technology. The only thing that stands between the predator and the end of humanity is a group of ex-soldiers, led by Rory's dad, Quinn (Boyd Holbrook), and surly biology teacher Casey Bracket (Olivia Munn), who joins the fight.

To answer the obvious question, no, this new installment is nowhere near as good as the 1987 original, though it tries for a similar formula—a ragtag group of irreverent and wisecracking soldiers, an attractive but tough woman who gets caught up in the violence, and a seriously badass and tech-equipped alien trophy hunter. To up the emotional ante, this film adds in a highly intelligent kid with a protective soldier father.

The setup is simple. Quinn is on an op in Mexico to take out drug cartel bad guys and rescue some hostages. Instead, a Predator craft crash-lands and Quinn is the only man to make it out alive. He takes a Predator helmet and forearm-mounted weapon as proof of his alien encounter, then mails it home, where it ends up in his son Rory's hands.

Quinn is picked up by the authorities led by Traeger (Sterling K. Brown), questioned, and then sent away with a group of psyche ward soldiers to keep him quiet. Meanwhile, science teacher Casey is brought to the same secret facility where Quinn was held, which also contains a captured Predator. A bigger and meaner Predator shows up, and things turn into a convoluted mess.

The film quickly devolves into incoherent nonsense, where the logic of time and geography is ignored in favor of keeping the action flowing. Sure, the clever quips come fast and furious, and there's plenty of action and violence, but taken as a whole, it's utter inanity.

I think I'd rather be eviscerated by a Predator than sit through another installment.

—Glen Starkey

A SIMPLE FAVOR

What's it rated? **R**
 What's it worth? **Full price**
 Where's it showing? **Movies Lompoc, Parks Plaza**

PICK Paul Feig (*Bridesmaids*, *The Heat*, *Spy*) directs Jessica Sharzer's (*Nerve*) screenplay based on Darcey Bell's crime-drama novel about mommy blogger Stephanie's (Anna Kendrick) best friend Emily's (Blake Lively) sudden disappearance.

With lots of delicious twists and turns, and strong performances by the two leads, the film delivers what female-centric mystery fans yearn for—an intelligent whodunit that will keep viewers guessing right up until the big reveal.

—Glen Starkey

WHITE BOY RICK

What's it rated? **R**
 What's it worth? **Matinee**
 Where's it showing? **Stadium 10 in Arroyo Grande**
 See Sun Screen.

THE WIFE

What's it rated? **R**
 What's it worth? **Full price**
 Where's it showing? **Parks Plaza**

PICK Björn Runge (*Daybreak*, *Mouth to Mouth*, *Happy End*) directs Jane Anderson's (*How to Make an American Quilt*) screenplay based on Meg Wolitzer's novel about Joan Castleman (Glenn Close), wife of famed author Joe Castleman (Jonathan Pryce), who's awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. During their trip to Stockholm to claim his prize, she begins to ruminate on her life choices.

The film's secret weapon is Close, whose riveting performance is worth the price of admission. It's also a wonderful meditation on the power of talent, and who is allowed to wield it. This lays bare the pain of domestic drama. ○

—Glen Starkey

Sun movie reviews are compiled by New Times Senior Staff Writer Glen Starkey. Contact him at gstarkey@newtimeslo.com.

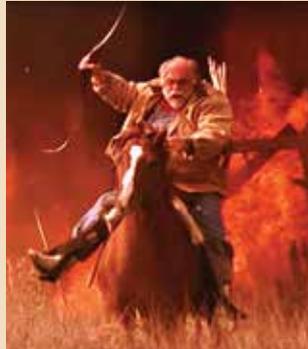
HARD TARGET

When? **1993**
 What's it rated? **R**
 Where's it available? **DVD, Amazon, iTunes**

There's no reason to try to sit here and sell you on Jean-Claude Van Damme's (JCVD) *Hard Target*. If you don't like JCVD, action movies, stilted dialogue, and crazy rich sportsmen that hunt homeless people in their spare time, maybe you should skip it.

But you'd miss a lot, like JCVD's Jehri-curl mullet that holds enough grease to keep a torch burning for days. His character wasn't really given much thought (his name is *Chance Boudreaux*), and I'm pretty sure the script is the product of a four-hour quaalude binge. The film crew seemed to be fine with all of this because the only reason you are watching is to see JCVD kill like five

PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES



TARGET ACQUIRED: John Woo's *Hard Target* kicks so much senseless ass that you'll be checking to make sure yours wasn't roundhoused off after watching it.

dudes while standing up on a speeding motorcycle, even though no one is driving it, and it doesn't make any sense. What's in a name anyway?

John Woo directed the movie, but I don't really feel the need to tell you that because there are more doves flying across the screen than there is coherent dialogue, and every single villain at some point wears a black leather jacket. This may be an exaggeration. It may not be. But *Hard Target* doesn't care. And neither should you.

This was Woo's first foray into the American film market. He was already an established star for his martial arts films in Hong Kong and this was a chance for him to work with high-powered American talent. Woo originally asked for Kurt Russell to be the lead, so, of course, Universal gave him a 5-foot-10 Belgian whose specialty is high kicks and the splits. Not that this is a bad thing.

Oh yeah, the creepy guy that raised JCVD in the woods outside the Big Easy? Wilford Brimley, the dude asking you to check your blood sugar in between showcase showdowns on the *Price is Right*. He's in it too. Except here, Woo and his fellow filmmakers expect us to believe that he's a native cajun living in the backwoods and we are, for whatever reason, not supposed to laugh at his outlandish outfits or anything he says in a thick (and very fake) accent.

The first time I saw *Hard Target* I told my friend, "There is no way it could be dumber than *Face/Off*" (another Woo film). I was wrong. John Woo continues to surpass himself, time and time again.

For example, in one of the movie's more memorable scenes, JCVD catches a snake trying to bite him in the throat with his bare hands. He ties the serpent into a sailor knot and pins it to a tree as a booby trap for bad guys following him. If

Guilty PLEASURES

this sounds stupid to you, then you have not been paying attention and maybe you should stop what you are doing and watch *Hard Target* right now.

I think Brimley as Uncle Douvee is really my favorite character. He drinks homemade alcohol so strong it kills grass on contact (but he still offers to share with everyone). He can also fire a bow and arrow accurately up to hundreds of yards away. At one point, he blows up his own illegal moonshine still to kill a bunch of bad guys, and then rides away epically from the explosion on horseback. It's a scene I still have trouble describing. Uncle Douvee is like a hillbilly cajun Liam Neeson, except you can't understand anything he says and you're pretty sure he just called your mother something awful in French.

The villains in the film are pretty run of the mill. (Well, except for the hunting-homeless-people-out-of-sheer-boredom thing. That kind of feels unique.) Arnold Vosloo (who plays the mummy in the 1999 remake with Brendan Fraser) is the right-hand man to Lance Henriksen's character, the rich guy who likes to hunt the homeless. Both of them give serviceable performances, given the material they have to work with.

Hard Target is a derivative, confusing, mess of a movie. But for some reason, it works. It's one of the funniest films I've ever sat through. And even though I'm pretty sure that wasn't Woo's or the studio's intention, it gets two spinning roundhouse kicks of approval from this corner. (97 minutes) ○

—Spencer Cole

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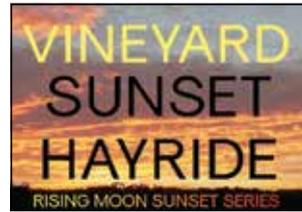
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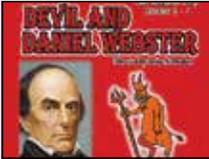
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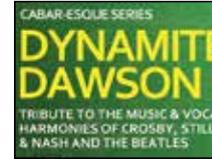
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Valle in the Valley

Lompoc's Valle Eatery & Bar serves impressive creations from local chef Conrad Gonzales

BY REBECCA ROSE

When I walked into Conrad Gonzales' Valle Eatery and Bar in Lompoc's Hilton Garden Inn, I felt a huge wave of relief come over me.

It was like the feeling of walking into your house after being on a transcontinental flight that's been delayed for five hours and then fighting through rush hour traffic to get home. It just feels so damn good to be in the place.

Valle Eatery is typical of the type of local flavor Hilton is lately known for incorporating in their Garden Inns. Eschewing chain restaurants or cookie-cutter standard hotel food, Hilton looked within the Santa Ynez Valley to find an up-and-coming chef whose food has a built-in fan base.

If you're a fan of local tri-tip contests, you're no stranger to Gonzales' award-winning tri-tip tacos. He's won several local competitions, including back-to-back awards at Presqu'ile Winery's annual tri-tip cook-off. The secret, I believe after eating so much of his food, is in the way he pampers and finesses each and every ingredient, taking nothing for granted.

From making his own masa and using a traditional hand-ground technique for his tortillas, to slow-roasting fresh vegetables for his tacos, to hand making the salsa verde that accompanies many dishes, Gonzales has built a reputation at Valle Fresh in Los Alamos as one of the most talked about eateries on the Central Coast.

And he's carried on that reputation for attention to detail in Lompoc. Valle Eatery and Bar is a stunning success of vision—a distinct upscale ambiance paired with impeccable originality, one that keeps with the vibe of a growing foodie community that expects more of the same of what they love and the occasional curveball.

The decor is clean and modern, a sophisticated chicness I could call home. I love the open flow of the bar and the hotel lounge/eating area. It feels perfectly right to order some tapas plates and sip on martinis in one of the sprawling sitting areas. This is a welcome touch of old-school living, when hotels were social scenes for people to meet and mingle with visiting dignitaries and celebrities.

You might feel a bit like one of the women

from *Sex and the City*, as cliché as that might sound. It's lush and perfect for sipping on the bar's healthy selection of colorful and creative drinks. I would definitely grab some girlfriends and spend a Thursday night talking about makeup and fashion here. Drinks such as the Blackberry Elixir incorporate fresh, locally sourced ingredients and look pretty enough to take selfies with (which I did, naturally). On The Beach, made with Ciroc vodka, cranberry and orange juice, hibiscus syrup, and mint play up tropical themes with a classic urban vibe.

Valle Eatery currently offers a full breakfast, lunch, and dinner menu. Breakfast is pretty standard fare, with the exception of the addition of Nutella pancakes. Lunch is where things start to get intriguing. Soups and salads include two perfect seasonal soups, a pink lentil soup with fresh vegetables and a roasted corn chowder. I had the chowder and it was expertly made, the balance of roasted red peppers to the sweet corn was offset with a subtle amount of heat.

The shareable plates, also known as tapas in some regions, are a great idea for lunch or drinks with bigger parties. Valle Eatery offers a vibrant selection of dishes that allow customers to experiment and get to know more about the chef. Blistered padrons with teardrop tomatoes and manchego cheese speak to Gonzales' roots in the valley; the dish is a nod to the vast agricultural fields just outside Lompoc's city limits. Again, Gonzales is a master of balance; almost every dish incorporates a smart portion of something crunchy, salty, sweet, spicy, and creamy. It almost seems to come easy to him, these effortlessly flavorful dishes.

One of the best things I ate the day I visited was a plate of modest-looking hush puppies, served with a chipotle aioli and pickled chiles. The addition of the creamy spicy sauce was well paired with the sweet corn-flavored hush puppies. I like the way Gonzales fuses the world of traditional Southern comfort food using the idea of corn as an ingredient firmly rooted in Mexican cuisine. There's a poetic harmony in the dish that reflects so much on his thinking as a chef.

Of course, it wouldn't be a Valle restaurant without the signature tacos. They are on the menu and include vegetable, wonton, halibut, pork belly, and of course, his famous tri-tip tacos. Having eaten quite a lot of them in my days here, I opted for the veggie tacos, a good choice. Made with broccolini, mushrooms, goat cheese, and shredded cabbage, the dish is remarkable for how much Valle manages to do with a few ingredients. The braised pork belly tacos are another must-try, served with goat cheese, salsa verde, shredded cabbage, Valle manages to execute a dish with a commonly

Down in the Valle

Lompoc's Hilton Garden Inn is the home of Conrad Gonzales' latest restaurant, Valle Eatery and Bar. The venue is located at 1201 N. H St., Lompoc. More info: (805) 735-1880.



BELLY OF THE BEAST: Chef Conrad Gonzales, owner of the famed Valle Fresh in Los Alamos, is known for his award-winning tacos, served on handmade corn tortillas. At his new restaurant in Lompoc, Gonzales delivers three kinds, five different varieties, including braised pork belly with goat cheese and salsa verde.



QUIET, DOGS! Valle Eatery and Bar in Lompoc, which opened in 2017 in the Hilton Garden Inn, has an eclectic menu featuring items such as hush puppies, served with chipotle aioli and pickled Fresno chiles.



BOTTOMS UP: In addition to a full breakfast, lunch, and dinner menu, Valle Eatery and Bar also has an outdoor wood-fired pizza oven and a range of classic and custom-created bar items, including the blackberry elixir, made with fresh berries.

used product that feels fresh and original.

Dinner offers a lot of the same options for starters as well as a full selection of brick oven wood-fired pizzas, which are made right on the outside patio. The dinner menu seems geared toward hotel guests looking for familiar and stable selections of beef and pork, which is fine. I would recommend the salmon broil, made with yuzu, soy, ginger, and fried rice for something a little more outside the box. Desserts include a house-made churro and a selection of seasonal gelato flavors, which are a

good cap on the meals.

Just remember, if you do ask me to tag along to Valle Eatery to channel your inner *Sex and the City* self, I'm always the Carrie. Always. I'm a writer and have a hundred pairs of shoes. It's non-negotiable. ☺

Arts and Lifestyle Writer Rebecca Rose is berry berry happy. Contact her at rrose@santamariasun.com.

EATS continued page 36

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EATS

EATS from page 34

Rebeccamendations:

What's new, what's fun, and what to try

• Thursdays at **Bodega in Los Alamos** (pictured below) is locals and industry day. If you live in the area or you work in the beverage/hospitality industry, stop by the new bed and breakfast and wine bar to enjoy discounts from noon to 9 p.m. Bodega is located at 273 Bell St.

• If you're looking for some unique bar menu options, try **Root 246's** cocktails. Try the Refined Gentleman (pictured right), made with rosemary, lime juice, and muddled blueberries, or the Herb Garden gimlet, with cucumber-infused vodka, muddled basil, and lime. Cocktails range between \$9 and \$13 at **420 Alisal Road, Solvang**.

• I recently attended a fun soiree at a friend's



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROOT 246

house with food from **Thai Hut** in Santa Maria and it was a huge hit, especially the yellow curry and the chicken pad thai. The yellow curry is still one of the best in the Central Coast, courtesy of the restaurant owners who prepare every dish from scratch from their own recipes. Pick some up for your next party at **120 E. Foster Road, Santa Maria**.

• One of the most popular dishes at **Scratch Kitchen** in Lompoc has got to be their pan-roasted shrimp and scallops. I love that it's loaded with fresh vegetables, including spinach, mushrooms, and red bell peppers with a beurre blanc sauce. Don't skip the zucchini-quinoa latkes. Chef **Augusto Caudillo** prepares it daily at **610 North H St**.

• Steak and eggs is a classic dish, and if you want to try it out for yourself, one of the best places in town that serves it up is **Orcutt Burgers**. A rib eye steak, two eggs, and hashbrowns served with a side of toast and jelly is only \$12.99 at **1099 E. Clark Ave., Santa Maria**. ○



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\$2295 2426 Del Sur - 3 + 2, Classics 2stry w/mstr ste u/s and bdms d/s, all appls, hrdwd flrs, ldry rm inc w/d, 2car grg, low maint yd, grdnr, up to 2 sm dogs neg w/dep.

\$1995 4726 Hartnell Road - 3 + 2, South Point Estates 1stry hm in gated community, L/R, F/P, Kitchen nook area w/access to lg yd, 2car grg, w/d hkups, grdnr inc. 1 pet neg w/dep.

\$1950 264 Highland Drive - 4 + 2, Orcutt 1stry hm w/all new carpet, vinyl flrs and paint thru-out, kitchen w/nook, F/R, F/P, 2car grg, lg yd/grdnr, no pet.

\$1850 2038 Trinity Drive - 3 + 2, Single stry hm near West Gate Ranch w/lgr mstr ste, Kitchen w/Island & eat-in dining area, ldry rm/hkups, 2car grg, yd/grdnr, no pets.



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