

SUN



AT THE MOVIES



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BY SUN STAFF



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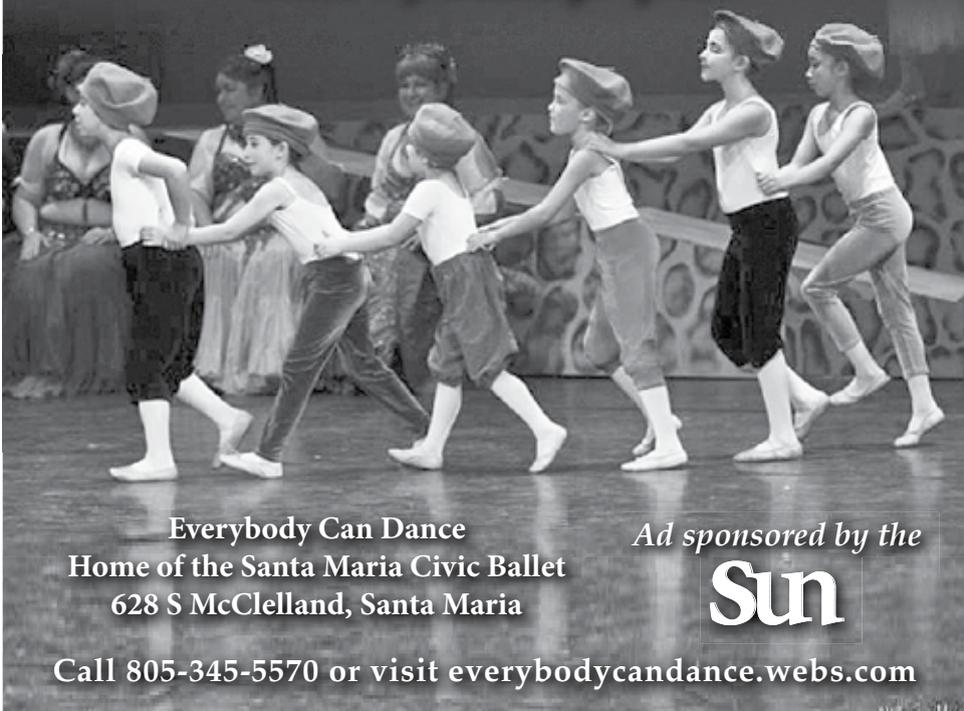
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JANUARY 10 - JANUARY 17, 2019 VOL. 19 NO. 45

In a region as rich with philanthropy and selfless giving as Northern Santa Barbara County is, it's hard to narrow down just which organizations to write about and who to highlight in our annual Volunteers Issue—but we have to. In this week's issue, you can read about how CALM (Child Abuse Listening Meditation) helps make the holiday season a little bit bright for families and children in need [9], one woman's mission to help pets in the county get the medical help they need [12], and how you can help with the county's biennial Point in Time Count of local homeless [15].

Readers should also check out U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal's visit to the U.S./Mexico border in New Mexico [5], the a cappella phenomenon that's singing their way into Lompoc [26], an installation artist who got her start in the Santa Ynez Valley [29], the paintings lighting up Gallery Los Olivos [30], and the food and drink that reigned supreme in 2018 [34].

Camillia Lanham,
executive editor



GIFT OF THANKS: Therapists at CALM help local children overcome traumatic experiences with a variety of methods, including play and coloring therapy. Children craft "thank you" card for their Adopt a Family donors during some of their therapy sessions.

Cover photo courtesy of Shannon Elliott > Cover design by Alex Zuniga

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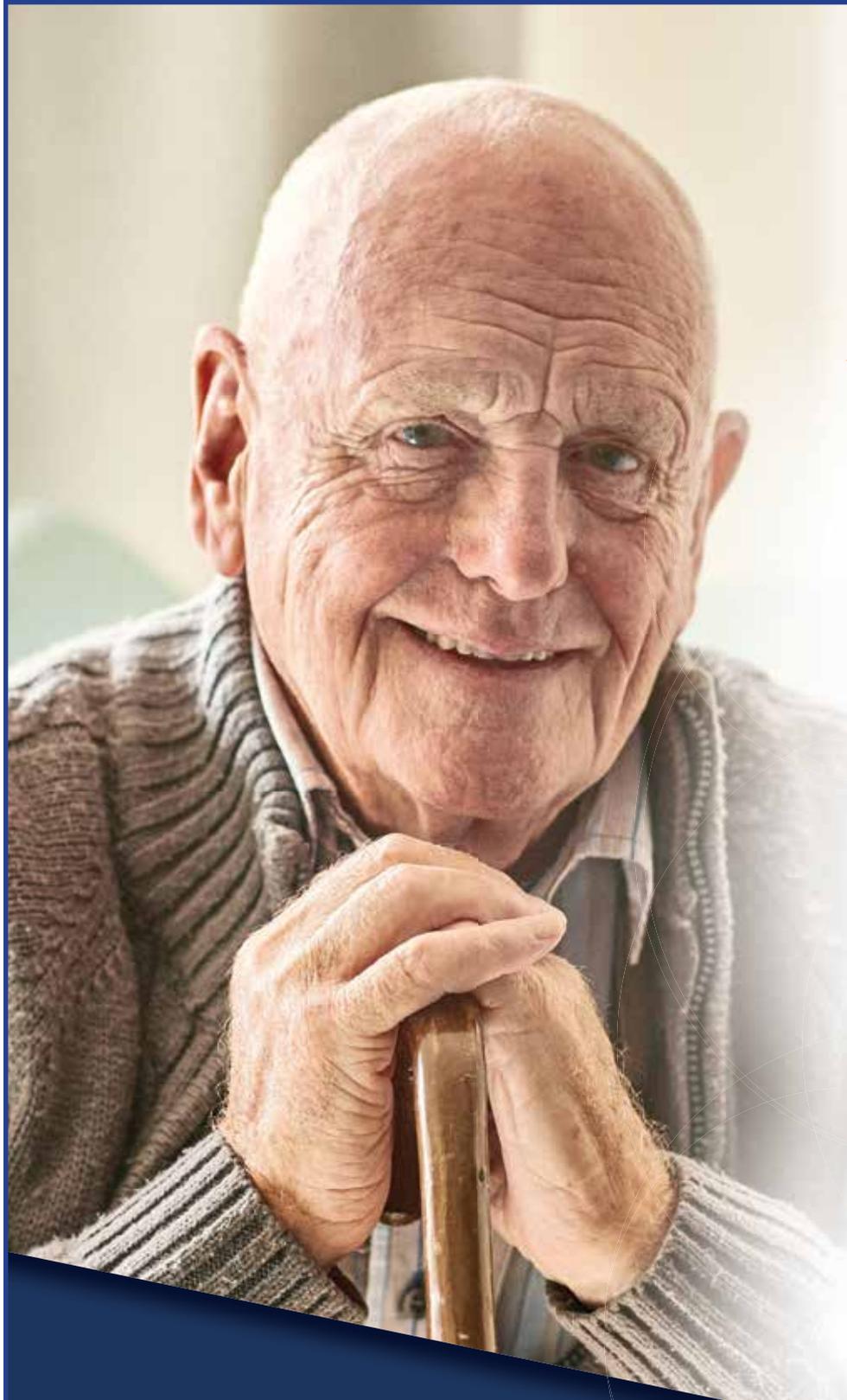
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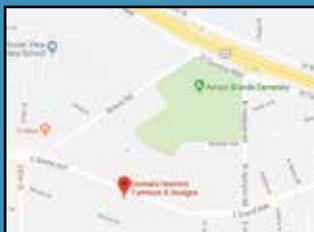
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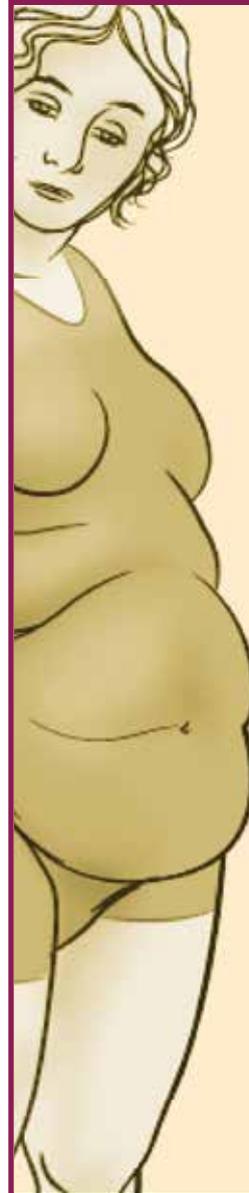
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Political Watch

- State Sen. **Hannah-Beth Jackson** (D-Santa Barbara) authored four bills focusing on wildfire prevention and protection efforts that went into effect starting Jan. 1. Senate Bill 1260 is aimed at enabling forest management practices that could reduce the risk of wildfires, such as prescribed burns. SB 821 gives counties the option of automatically enrolling every resident in a targeted emergency notification program. Residents retain the ability to opt out of those alerts as well. In an effort to help homeowners in Montecito and other areas impacted by wildfires and subsequent flooding or mudslides, SB 917 clarifies that an insurance policy covers loss or damages resulting from debris flows if the acts were attributable to a condition already covered by the policy, such as wildfires. Local governments can expand their Property Assessed Clean Energy programs thanks to SB 465, which seeks to help homeowners in high fire hazard areas pay for fire safety improvements to their homes.

- In December, **President Donald Trump** signed the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, which changes the way federal law views hemp and cannabis with low concentrations of THC. Hemp was removed from the Controlled Substances Act, making it a legal substance. Following the bill's signing, **Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Scott Gottlieb** released a statement clarifying the agency's position on the matter. "Congress explicitly preserved the agency's current authority to regulate products containing cannabis or cannabis-derived compounds," Gottlieb wrote. "This allows the FDA to continue enforcing the law to protect patients and the public while also providing potential regulatory pathways for products containing cannabis or cannabis-derived compounds." The agency is concerned about the number of products not approved by the FDA that claim to contain CBD and claim to have therapeutic benefits. Gottlieb said the agency would be holding public meetings in the future to get input on "lawful pathways" that cannabis products can be marketed and how to regulate those products.

- California **State Treasurer Fiona Ma** kicks off a listening tour on Jan. 17 to learn more about regional housing issues and challenges in the state. The treasurer will be stopping in Los Angeles and San Diego on Jan. 17, Sacramento and San Francisco on Jan. 18, and Fresno on Jan. 25. You must register for the events to attend. Contact jagee@treasurer.ca.gov for more information.

- In **Gov. Gavin Newsom's** first act as California's governor, he announced a series of executive actions intended to lower prescription drug and health care costs in the state. Newsom signed an executive order to create the largest single purchaser for prescription drugs and enable private employers to join the state in negotiating drug prices. The Department of Health Care Services will now negotiate all pricing and purchasing of prescription drugs under Medi-Cal. The executive order directs state agencies to purchase prescription drugs together, as opposed to negotiating with drug companies one by one. Newsom also signed an executive order to establish a California Surgeon General.

- A number of bills authored by state **Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham** (R-San Luis Obispo) went into effect on Jan. 1, including Assembly Bill 1735, which gives victims of labor trafficking and adult victims of pimping and pandering the option to get 10-year protective orders from the courts. AB 1868 authorizes school districts to include information about the dangers of sending sexually explicit messages and images over social media in existing sexual education curriculum. Craft distillers can now donate drinks to nonprofits events and assist and manage drinks at permitted events thanks to AB 1986, and AB 2986 strengthens the safety of ride-sharing apps by ensuring passengers can accurately ID their driver before entering a vehicle. ○

Carbajal calls out Trump for 'manufactured' immigration crisis on eve of televised address

As the nation waited to hear a Jan. 8 televised address from President Donald Trump on the issue of immigration, Central Coast Congressman Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara) pushed back against the administration's rhetoric, accusing the president of creating a crisis in order to make good on his campaign promise to build a wall along the U.S.'s southern border.

"The president's actions have done everything to create a self-imposed crisis, in essence a fake crisis," Carbajal told the *Sun*. "He's doing everything he can to fabricate this."

Carbajal's comments came after he and a group of other Democratic lawmakers returned from touring immigration detention facilities in New Mexico. The delegation's visit came in the wake of revelations that two children detained while seeking asylum in the U.S. died while in U.S. Customs and Border Patrol custody. Carbajal characterized the operations he saw at the facilities as "haphazard," stating that the facilities' infrastructure was inadequate and lacked food, showers, water, and until very recently, appropriate medical services.

"Once, the U.S. was known as having a gold standard when it came to how we treated immigrants, but now we've lost that moral high ground," said Carbajal, who immigrated to the U.S. as a child with his parents.

Trump spent the last several weeks attempting to make its case that there is a crisis of illegal immigration on the southern border, and sell the public on his campaign promise to erect a wall along the border. The wall has become a major sticking point for Trump and his administration in connection with the ongoing federal government shutdown. In a Jan. 4 letter to lawmakers, Trump characterized the border as "a very dangerous place."

"Walls work," Trump wrote. "That's why rich, powerful, and successful people build them around their homes. All Americans deserve the same protection."

But Carbajal noted that unauthorized border crossings have declined by 80 percent since 2000, and said that border patrol agents he spoke with on his recent visit weren't calling for a wall.

"They told me what they needed was more boots on the ground and technology, not a wall," Carbajal said.

Carbajal characterized the president's repeated claims of a crisis at the border as evidence of Trump's lack of knowledge about the issue and willingness to mislead the American people in order to drum up support for his border wall.

"All of this is to try and sell his political campaign promise of the wall," he said. "He fabricated this crisis to sell the American people on the ineffective waste of taxpayer dollars that is his wall."

—Chris McGuinness

Fire leads to evacuation at main jail, northern branch to open late summer

The outbreak of an electrical fire at the Santa Barbara County Jail on Jan. 4 led to the immediate evacuation and temporary relocation of several inmates.

The Santa Barbara County Fire Department responded to the jail at about 5:40 p.m., after a caller reported seeing smoke and small



WALL WARS: U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara) (fifth from left) challenged President Trump's calls for a wall along the southern border after a recent visit with other lawmakers to U.S. Customs and Border Patrol facilities in New Mexico.

flames coming from an electrical outlet in the northwest section of the jail.

Kelly Hoover, public information officer for the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office, said that 18 inmates in one housing unit were evacuated and temporarily moved to other portions of the jail while fire personnel doused the flames and assessed the area. There were no reported injuries, and Hoover said inmates returned to their usual cells when the area was cleaned up three hours later.

The fire was limited to one electrical outlet, Hoover said, and damage was minimal.

At the same time, construction on the new Northern Branch Jail is coming along, and the facility will likely be completed by August, according to Thomas Jenkins, a retired sheriff's commander who is spearheading the Northern Branch Jail project.

The roofing and outside of the 133,000-square-foot facility is mostly finished. Jenkins said the majority of work currently being done is on the interior, where walls, ceilings, and cabinetry are currently being installed.

When finished, the new jail will provide Santa Barbara County with 375 additional beds, 32 of which will be dedicated to inmates with mental and physical health issues. There will be exercise yards attached to each housing unit, Jenkins said, along with visitation and professional conferencing stations.

Although construction is currently on track to meet its August deadline, Jenkins said the jail was supposed to open last year, but faced numerous setbacks, including early rains in 2016, competition for necessary building materials, and difficulty retaining construction workers after the wildfires and mudslides in 2017, which resulted in an explosion of available rebuilding work.

When opened, Jenkins said the Northern Branch Jail will relieve some of the strains on the main jail, which has been critiqued as being dirty, dilapidated, and overcrowded.

"We've been overcrowded since the 1980s," Jenkins said, adding that the new jail should help diminish that long-standing issue.

—Kasey Bubnash

Some local divisions of federal programs dodge shutdown

The nation is nearly three weeks into a partial government shutdown, and while many local federal employees are out of work, some federally funded programs have found ways to keep their offices staffed.

As negotiations between the Trump administration and Democratic Party leaders over funding for a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico continue, hundreds of thousands of federal employees throughout the country will go without pay.

U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara) said that of the nearly 800,000 federal workers who are furloughed or laid off, about 30,000 are Californians.

"They are worried about how to put food on the table for their families," Carbajal said.

It's unclear how long the shutdown will last,

NEWS continued page 6

Weekend Weather

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Dave Hovde
KSBY Chief Meteorologist

<p>Thursday</p> <p>COASTAL > High 63 Low 40 INLAND > High 65 Low 47</p>	<p>Friday</p> <p>COASTAL > High 61 Low 42 INLAND > High 64 Low 47</p>
<p>Saturday</p> <p>COASTAL > High 59 Low 43 INLAND > High 62 Low 49</p>	<p>Sunday</p> <p>COASTAL > High 57 Low 42 INLAND > High 60 Low 49</p>

An active weather pattern will bring a series of storms Friday into early next week. Winds and large waves are also likely.

Sending a signal

Locals register concerns about fracking public lands

BY PETER JOHNSON

Vandenberg Air Force Base. Tepusquet Canyon. Morro Rock. The Santa Lucia Mountains. Irish Hills Natural Reserve. What ties this short list of Central Coast places together?

They all have public lands that are within the control of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and are included in the BLM's 2014 Central California resource management plan, which means they're technically open for new oil and gas leases.

These local areas—and more than 1 million more acres across eight counties—became the focus of heightened public concern in August, when the BLM started work on a court-ordered environmental report to study the effects of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, on these properties.

The actual scope of the BLM's review had been somewhat hazy to the public until nonprofit Los Padres ForestWatch asked the agency to share its raw mapping data to show a more precise picture of the proposal. That picture included property near schools, state parks, city open spaces, national monuments, and historic and cultural landmarks, like Morro Rock.

"It's really allowing the public to understand more clearly what exactly BLM is proposing," said Jeff Kuyper, executive director of Los Padres ForestWatch. "We're finding that really outlandish parcels are being opened for drilling and mining."

In response, 8,399 letters and emails poured into the BLM's Bakersfield office during a

public comment period between August and September, despite complaints from U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara) and others that the 30-day time frame was too short.

"The 24th Congressional District has an abundance of ecologically sensitive areas and significant agricultural resources interwoven with vital water aquifers and numerous active fault lines," Carbajal wrote in his comment to the BLM. "The need to understand and properly comment ... requires more analysis from local governments and residents than provided for in 30 days. Hydraulic fracturing is a controversial practice and one that I and many of my constituents oppose in SLO, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties."

The BLM declined Carbajal's request, pointing to Executive Order 3355 issued by the Department of Interior in August 2017 that directs the agency to streamline projects through the environmental review process within one year.

Yet hundreds of northern Santa Barbara and SLO counties' residents commented on the review, with a majority expressing concern or direct opposition to fracking on public lands, according to a summary report published in December by the BLM.

"I urge you to abandon this misguided proposal," North SLO County resident Holly Sletteland wrote in her comment. "Additional oil development will only accelerate the disastrous effects of climate change. ... Our public lands should be used to benefit the public—not private energy companies that are interested in short-term profits."

Jim Turner, a resident of Lompoc, said any study of fracking must include analyses of its visual, biological, geological, and groundwater impacts.

"The earthquake swarms that now plague Oklahoma should be a very ominous warning about fracking, no matter what kind of an [environmental report] is prepared," Turner

wrote in his email to the BLM. "It had better be bulletproof in earthquake-prone California."

Out of the commenters who listed their addresses in the *Sun's* coverage area, SLO city residents made up the highest percentage of submissions, followed by residents of Lompoc, Solvang, Los Osos, Santa Ynez, and Arroyo Grande.

The BLM also received feedback from the cities of SLO and Lompoc, and the counties of Santa Barbara and Ventura (but not SLO County). SLO city registered objections to the inclusion of parcels near the Irish Hills Natural Reserve and Reservoir Canyon Natural Reserve—open spaces held "strictly for conservation and passive recreation purposes," according to SLO Natural Resource Manager Bob Hill's letter to the BLM.

Hill also cited a 2010 memorandum of understanding between the two agencies that stated the BLM would withdraw its Irish Hills property "from mineral entry."

"The city respectfully requests that these parcels be removed from further evaluation," Hill concluded.

The city of Lompoc shared its concerns about property being included in the BLM's review, including parcels the city owns, the Allan Hancock College campus, and the federal prison in Lompoc. The city also raised concerns about the water, seismic, and biological effects of fracking.

In addition, the BLM received comments from outgoing Gov. Jerry Brown, four state legislators including Sen. Bill Monning (D-Carmel), seven Native American tribes and organizations, the Army, the EPA, and four oil and gas industry associations, among others.



SPEAKING UP: A crowd protests the oil and gas industry in SLO County. A recent U.S. Bureau of Land Management report shows that thousands of residents and organizations registered opposition to fracking public lands this past fall.

The agency is expected to release a draft environmental impact statement in February. Federal officials will hold two meetings on the Central Coast to gather in-person public feedback, according to the BLM's report. BLM officials were not available for comment due to the partial government shutdown.

While the BLM has not issued a new oil and gas lease on public lands in California for several years, many are concerned about a pivot under President Donald Trump.

"The troubling aspect of it is this analysis is now being done under an administration that's shown time and again outright support for opening more public lands for oil drilling and shirking the public's ability to provide input during the process," Los Padres ForestWatch's Kuyper said. "It remains to be seen whether the BLM's analysis will be adequate." ○

Peter Johnson is the assistant editor at the Sun's sister paper to the north, New Times. He can be reached at pjohanson@newtimeslo.com.

FILE PHOTO BY DYLAN HONEA-BAUMANN



STILL REGULATED: The Los Padres has gone largely unscathed throughout the government shutdown, according to ForestWatch officials. Pictured: Jeff Kuyper, who leads Los Padres ForestWatch, in Los Padres National Forest.

funds to run normally through early February, Ruiz said local WIC clinics will remain staffed until then and continue to offer services and benefits as usual.

"This also means that authorized vendors, which include many grocery stores, must continue to accept WIC checks," Ruiz said, adding that any participants who struggle to use their checks should report the problem to a local WIC office.

Some local U.S. National Forest Service employees are still working, too, but under different circumstances. The *Sun* contacted the Forest Service for comment, but was unable to reach anyone.

Bryant Baker, conservation director with Los Padres ForestWatch, an organization that works to protect Los Padres National Forest and other public lands, said that while most Forest Service employees are furloughed, some who specialize in law enforcement and fire protection services are still working.

Those few employees, who respond to emergency situations, are typically exempt from government shutdowns, Baker said, and for good reason. Los Padres is still under a fire restriction that prohibits firearm target practice in many areas, and Baker said those regulation need to be enforced.

Still, he said Forest Service staff is limited, most ranger stations and other facilities are closed, and Los Padres is a large forest, making it difficult for so few employees to ensure that rules are being followed.

"So any time you have a reduction in staff

who are doing those things in the Forest Service," Baker said, "there is a potential for problems."

Several volunteer projects within the forest have been canceled or delayed because of the shutdown, and some campgrounds are closed, as are most facilities. But Baker said Los Padres isn't as heavily visited as many of the state's other federally managed public lands, so it hasn't yet had some of the serious trash and bathroom issues faced by others like Joshua Tree, which announced on Jan. 8 it would officially close due to damages caused during the shutdown.

But Baker said it's the federal employees who aren't working who are truly feeling the effects of this shutdown.

"They're not receiving pay," Baker said. —Kasey Bubnash

County Board of Supervisors gets a new member and a new chair

Gregg Hart's last day on the Santa Barbara City Council was the day before his first on the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors. Hart ran unopposed to take over 2nd District Supervisor Janet Wolf's seat in 2019.

As the only fresh face on the board, Hart joined his new colleagues on Jan. 8, when 1st District Supervisor and 2018 board Chair Das Williams passed his gavel over to the recently re-elected 5th District Supervisor Steve Lavagnino.

"We're typically a pretty fractious bunch," Williams said. "Conflict, right? That is the nature of democracy. We resolve our conflict openly, sometimes embarrassingly openly,

rather than behind closed doors. ... So in a community famous for fighting with each other, we did something very different last year. We fought for each other."

Referring to the Thomas Fire at the end of 2017 and the debris flow in Montecito at the beginning of 2018, Williams said the county was able to pull its resources and people together to get through a crisis. Ideology aside, 2018 was a testament to the power of the institution that governs Santa Barbara County, Williams said.

"It is maybe with a little relief that I pass this gavel onto you," Williams said. "I wish you a quieter year ... but one where we can still make progress, make progress on being the people and institution that we can be."

Lavagnino touted the accomplishments that will come in 2019, including completion of the Northern branch of the Santa Barbara County Jail and the widening of Highway 101. The county, he said, is working on a multi-year budget outlook that aims to predict and help the county prepare for the next recession.

The biggest change Lavagnino plans to make to the board's agenda management is including a veteran of the month resolution at the last meeting of every month in 2019. Each district will get the opportunity to honor a veteran in their district, with the 1st District kicking things off at the Jan. 29 meeting.

"There are looming issues that still threaten us and keep me up at night. Pension fund instability, a maintenance backlog, and changing climate make us face a future of tough decisions," Lavagnino said. "Working together across all ideologies, we will find solutions." ○

—Camillia Lanham

NEWS from page 5

but until then, agencies like the California Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program and the Department of Social Services will continue staffing offices and offering much-needed services. WIC, a nutrition education program, provides low-income families with checks for healthy groceries, nutrition and breastfeeding education, and referrals to health care and community support services.

Nearly 15,500 Santa Barbara County residents use local WIC services, according to Jackie Ruiz, public information officer for the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department, and there are WIC clinics in Santa Maria, Santa Barbara, Lompoc, Carpinteria, Goleta, Solvang, Cuyama, and Guadalupe.

Because the state WIC division has sufficient

Spotlight on: OASIS Center

Doug Dougherty, CEO

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

The OASIS Center's campaign to raise \$4 million toward its proposed new location recently reached the halfway point after three years of fundraising.

The campaign launched in 2016 after the senior center acquired the 5-acre property where it plans to build a brand new 15,000-square-foot facility, which would include classrooms, a library, and a kitchen.

"It's only now that we're in the final stages of the permitting process where we can really fundraise aggressively for the project, which we are," OASIS CEO Doug Dougherty told the Sun. "And to be halfway there already says a lot about this community and the value they place in what OASIS provides."

OASIS, originally an acronym for Orcutt Area Seniors in Service, was founded in 1984 and hosts various arts, exercise, and other types of enrichment programs intended for seniors and their families. The center's current facility, located in Old Town Orcutt, also serves as a meeting place for several local community groups and youth sports leagues.

"So many wonderful things have happened there over the last 34 years," Dougherty said. "There is nostalgia, no doubt. It will be hard saying goodbye, but the new facility will allow better and safer programming."

The new location would accommodate ample parking and more space for more classes and the center's growing number of visitors, Dougherty said.

"We've grown in membership over the past few years," he said. "All indications are that we're just seeing the beginning of the baby boomer impact as they retire and begin to draw on social services."

The proposed facility, which Dougherty hopes will open by 2020, is set to include a small park area as well, which would encircle the main facility. The park will feature walking trail, a bicycle trail, and various exercise stations and benches.

Physical activities are already a big part of OASIS's programming, Dougherty explained, and the new home would help expand options.

"The fitness classes we already offer will be able to utilize those features on nice days to go outside for yoga and aerobics," he said.

As a nonprofit, OASIS is funded through private donations, community grants, and income from special events. Events include the OASIS Spring Gala Dinner and Auction and the center's annual Orcutt Poker Championship.

But to raise the funds necessary for the expensive project, additional approaches have been taken as well, Dougherty explained.

"Most of the fundraising for the project is being done face-to-face by our campaign team,"



HALFWAY THERE: The proposed new OASIS Center, a 15,000-square-foot facility encircled by a small park area, would include classrooms, a library, and a kitchen. The nonprofit recently reached the halfway point in its \$4 million fundraiser for the new facility.

he said. "There are many local families and businesses that are stepping up with financial and professional donations."

Painting contractor Alex Ferrel, for example, offered to donate his time and resources to paint the entire facility, Dougherty said.

"I'm in a unique position where I get to witness these unbelievable acts of generosity," he added. "We've been collecting some wonderful partners along the way, and it's so encouraging to see the community rally to our project."

Call (805) 937-9750 or visit oasisorcutt.org to learn more about donating, volunteering, or other information. The OASIS Center is currently located at 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

Highlights:

- The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau holds Santa

Maria Valley Restaurant Week, in conjunction with California Restaurant Month, Jan. 16 through 27. Each participating restaurant, winery, and brewery will offer a special menu for \$20.19 throughout the week. Visit santamariavalley.com/restaurantweek for the complete list of participating businesses and more information.

- The Alzheimer's Association offers its four-week Savvy Caregiver Program on Jan. 24 and 31 and Feb. 7 and 14, from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Family Service Agency, located at 101 S. B St., Lompoc. The class focuses on providing instructional material for Alzheimer's and dementia caregivers. Call (805) 636-6432 or visit alz.org/cacentral for more information. ○

Calendar Editor Caleb Wiseblood wrote this week's Biz Spotlight. Information should be sent to the Sun via fax, mail, or email at spotlight@santamariasun.com.

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Residents impacted by disasters could get student loan relief

BY KASEY BUBNASH

College students who were impacted by Santa Barbara County's recent natural disasters could have their monthly federal student loan payments temporarily suspended or reduced. Some already have.

Any current or former college student who borrowed a federal student loan and is currently involved in the repayment process could be eligible for a forbearance if impacted by 2017's wildfires or subsequent mudslides. Those who lost homes, saw major property damage, and those who lost wages during or after the natural disasters could be eligible, according to Michael Miller, UC Santa Barbara's assistant vice chancellor for enrollment services.

"Last year I worked with a handful of former UC Santa Barbara students who were so impacted, and the Department of Education was more than willing to award a short-term forbearance," Miller wrote in an email to the Sun, adding that the financial relief usually lasts for about three to four months.

If a forbearance is granted, a borrower's monthly loan payments are temporarily suspended or reduced, according to the U.S. Department of Education. Principal payments are postponed but interest continues to accrue. Unpaid interest that accrues during the forbearance period will be added to the

principal balance of the loan, increasing the total amount owed.

That's the one major catch that Miller said borrowers applying should take into consideration.

Otherwise, the process is simple. Miller said the online application process takes about 15 minutes, and applicants are notified of the final decision within five to seven business days via email. Navigating student loan repayment can often be challenging, but Miller said "this process is user friendly and efficient based on my experience."

Although the financial relief is only temporary, Miller said a forbearance can be helpful for those struggling to pay off student loans during any economically difficult situation, especially through disasters.

Barbara Andersen, chief strategy officer for the Santa Barbara Foundation, oversees the foundation's Community Disaster Relief Fund and has more than a decade of emergency management experience.

Andersen said numerous Santa Barbara County residents were impacted by recent natural disasters, and in a variety of ways that, in many cases, led to financial instability.

The Thomas Fire and mudslides resulted in several deaths—23 lives were lost—and some of those who died were the breadwinners in their households. Even with reimbursements from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and insurance payments, Andersen

said that many of those surviving individuals will not be able to return to the way of life they lived before the disasters.

Many others were displaced, Andersen said, with their primary residences being destroyed by the fires or debris flows. Rebuilding and reconstruction could take months, if not years, and relocating and rebuilding both create additional and usually unplanned expenses. Other business owners and employees were unable to go to work for extended periods of time because of the ash, fire, and mud damage to many businesses, road closures, and evacuation orders.

Many employees went without wages for weeks, their wages were decreased substantially, or their jobs were eliminated altogether after a business closure.

Andersen also serves on the county's Community Long Term Recovery Group, a network of organizations committed to providing coordinated recovery efforts to residents impacted by the fires and mudslides. She said the group is still continuing to process funding requests for disaster survivors.

Many applicants are still unemployed, were able to return to work but are earning a lower wage, were displaced and cannot afford the deposit for a new rental unit, or are underinsured and do not have enough resources to rebuild.

"Thousands of individuals experienced the economic impact of these disasters," Andersen said, "and when it comes to also having to pay back student loans, any ability to defer payments is tremendously helpful for these individuals." For general financial assistance, visit [211santabarbaracounty.org/long-term-](http://211santabarbaracounty.org/long-term-recovery/)

recovery/, and to apply for help with student loans, visit myfedloan.org.

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 ANTHONY COOPER



Trenton Mitchell

Allan Hancock College sophomore Trenton Mitchell has been a force for his school's flourishing basketball program this season.

Towering over the competition at 6 feet 6 inches, Mitchell has proven himself as both a consistent rebounder and scorer, averaging about eight rebounds and seven points a game, according to Anthony Cooper, Hancock's sports information specialist. That high-level skill recently landed Mitchell on the school's all-tournament team, after an astonishing performance during the Hancock College Holiday Classic Tournament in December 2018.

There, the forward averaged eight points and 11 rebounds, and in one game against San Jose City College, racked up a total of 19 rebounds.

Cooper said that's the kind of work that has helped the team make gains this season. Mitchell's team is now 13-2, and is ranked No. 10 in the state.

—Kasey Bubnash

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'Thank you for Christmas'



PHOTO COURTESY OF CALM

CALM volunteer Shannon Elliott helped ensure local families in need weren't forgotten during the holidays

BY JOE PAYNE

Last year's holiday season was extra busy for Shannon Elliott.

As a volunteer for CALM (Child Abuse Listening Mediation), a nonprofit that serves local families with therapy regardless of financial means, Elliott was tasked with helping organize gift giving for not just her own family, but more than 100 families in Santa Maria and Lompoc through the organization's Adopt a Family program. The program allows locals to donate gifts to a specific family served by CALM, Elliott explained, based on wish lists that parents and kids fill out during therapy sessions.

"The families will turn in a wish list to the therapist, and the therapist will give it to me, and I will try and find a donor in the community that can assist them," she said. "It's basically finding donors to match with families that are receiving CALM's services and need a little extra assistance during the holidays."

CALM Development Manager Sandra Fuhring, who's tasked with organizing fundraising and volunteers for the nonprofit, said she has led the project in the past, but "it just became such a big job" as the organization has expanded its reach in North Santa Barbara County.

Thankfully, Fuhring said, Elliott joined the organization's North County Advisory Committee five years ago after she moved to town and started looking for volunteer opportunities. Now, the Adopt a Family program is Elliott's baby.

"It's a huge undertaking," Fuhring said. "It's been great to have her because I don't have to worry about it at all, and she's just on top of everything."

A Santa Barbara-based nonprofit, CALM opened its Santa Maria location in 2010 and another in Lompoc last year to help address childhood trauma in the area. That expansion means more families than ever in North County qualify for Adopt a Family.

Keeping all those wish lists, families, and donors straight is a challenge, but Elliott's prior work experience at a state agency in Utah helped her instill strong time management and organization skills, she said. Her skill set notwithstanding, Elliott also faces the added difficulty of privacy laws surrounding therapy, so she never actually meets the families being adopted.



SANTA'S HELPERS: During CALM's Adopt a Family gift drive last year, Santa Maria Fire Department teams sponsored gifts for three local families that receive therapy services from the nonprofit. Pictured: CALM Development Manager Sandra Fuhring (center) with firefighters on Dec. 3, 2018.

"It's hard to keep track of families you've never met, both the donors and the recipients," she said. "You're just kind of organizing all of that and sometimes going on blind faith that this is all going to come together."

Elliott mostly reached out to donors via email, she said. Often, whole offices, sports teams, families, or groups of friends will all pitch in to buy gifts for a family.

Donors are asked to get at least one gift for each person on the list. The adopted families are asked to provide a few options for each

member, so donors can choose.

"We have a lot of donors that will provide everything on the wish list and some that will provide kind of a toy and then a need, so we get a whole range of the wishes fulfilled," she said.

Many of CALM's client families are low income, Elliott explained, and while kids may ask for video games or toys, parents often have more pressing needs in mind. Some wish lists include basic necessities like dish soap, laundry detergent, or diapers.

"We've had families that didn't have beds, so we've had people who will donate brand new mattresses and bed frames," she said. "We've heard stories where all the kids were sleeping on the floor."

Many of the children who receive therapy from CALM have endured some form of traumatic abuse, and CALM's staff members employ a variety of therapeutic methods to aid in recovery and build resilience.

One such method is color therapy, where kids color, draw, or paint to express feelings and ideas. After they receive their gifts, the kids create "thank you" cards as part of their sessions.

Fuhring said that volunteers like Elliott have helped spread awareness of CALM in North County, but that they also allow CALM staff to remain focused on care first by raising money and organizing programs like Adopt a Family. And in Santa Maria and Lompoc, CALM staff have plenty of work to do, she explained,

"In Santa Barbara County every year there's an average of around 5,000 reported cases of child abuse, and 4,000 of those come from North County," she said. "So the majority are

up here, and we have a lot more families living in poverty and there's more stressors for the families here. The services are necessary, so I think it's great that our volunteers are trying to get the community involved in that, to care about that, and want to support kids here."

Across her time coordinating Adopt a Family, Elliott has seen groups of staff from the Santa Maria City Attorney's Office and the Santa Maria Fire Department all pitch in to adopt several local families. She's also seen wealthy families purchase a brand new PlayStation, a single mom adopt a family of four, and someone "paying it forward" after receiving help during holidays past.

It's all a reminder of just how giving people in the area are, she said. All she has to do is reach out and ask.

"It tugs at my heartstrings a lot and makes me realize I'm really lucky for the community support we live in," she said. "And it also makes me think, if there were situations in my life that I needed a service like CALM, just to put myself in their shoes." ○

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

Join the effort

Those interested in volunteering for CALM or anyone in need of CALM's services may contact the Santa Maria location at (805) 614-9160 or 210 E. Enos Drive, suite A, Santa Maria; or the Lompoc location at (805) 741-7460 or 110 S. C St., Lompoc. For more info, visit: calm4kids.org.



IMAGES COURTESY OF SHANNON ELLIOTT

HEALING GIFTS: Therapists at CALM help local children overcome traumatic experiences like abuse with a variety of therapy methods, including play and coloring therapy. The "thank you" cards that children make for their Adopt a Family donors are created during therapy sessions.

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Second chances

Santa Barbara County Animal Care Foundation founder Linda Greco is focused on helping pets in need

BY REBECCA ROSE

Take one look around boutique pet shop and spa That's Fetch and it's clear owner Linda Greco has an unapologetic love for animals. But the shop isn't just a business venture for her.

Behind the walls decked out with sparkled faux-diamond dog collars and cat toys shaped like breakfast foods lies a deeper sense of purpose for Greco. It's her way of balancing the work she does with the Santa Barbara County Animal Care Foundation, a locally based animal welfare organization she helped launch 17 years ago.

"It can be very heavy seeing all of the despair for animals," Greco said. "Some of the cases you see can be difficult. So opening this store was me doing something daily to see people coming in who cherish their animals."

The Animal Care Foundation's story began in 2002, when Greco and two friends formed the charity to work alongside county animal shelters. The first project they identified was fundraising to help build a new Santa Barbara County animal shelter in Santa Maria.

"It had been on the books for ages, and each year it was getting further and further behind because costs were going up," Greco said. "We were able to, within that first year, secure just under \$1 million to then go to the county and say, 'Here's the money you need, can we go through with

this project?"

With the foundation's financial assistance, the doors of the shelter opened in 2005. After that, the organization began to look at what the most pressing needs in the county were for shelter animals. Those needs were largely medical, and North County was a high priority area, Greco said, with much of the need focused in Santa Maria.

That's where the Animal Care Foundation comes in. According to the organization's website, its mission is "to promote animal welfare and to better the quality of life for animals in Santa Barbara County through education, outreach, collaboration, and promotion of the humane ethic and responsible treatment of all animals." The organization raises

money to pay for services for animals that might otherwise be euthanized due to medical issues.

Greco said the organization focuses specifically on raising funds to treat animals in shelters that need specialized medical care beyond what the county could typically pay for. Greco said that raising money has been challenging for the group, which holds fundraisers and applies for grants. Volunteers are



ANIMAL CARE continued page 16

A NEW LIFE: Peggy, a dog who was helped by Santa Barbara County Animal Care Foundation, was found with a severe injury and taken in by an animal control officer. Her leg required amputation, and thanks to the financial aid from the Santa Barbara County Animal Care Foundation, Peggy was able to get the medical treatment she required and was later adopted from the Santa Maria Animal Shelter.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SANTA BARBARA ANIMAL CARE FOUNDATION

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FACE-TO-FACE: During the Point in Time Count, teams of volunteers and experts canvass assigned routes throughout Santa Barbara County and document how many individuals and families are experiencing homelessness. The information is used to plan local homeless assistance systems and to raise public awareness, and volunteers for this year's count are still needed.

Making it count

United Way in need of volunteers for 2019 countywide tally of homeless population

BY KASEY BUBNASH

When Dorothy Mogavero first signed on to help out with Santa Barbara County's Point in Time Count several years ago, she was nervous.

Despite being a seasoned volunteer who spends much of her free time helping fight homelessness and poverty, the Point in Time Count, she said, felt like uncharted territory. During the event, which is conducted every two years and mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, volunteers fan out and attempt to count every unsheltered homeless person in the entire county in less than four hours.

Volunteers introduce themselves to the homeless individuals and families they meet, hand out and collect surveys for the county, and take note of where the homeless are sleeping, how long they've gone without shelter, and other information that is subsequently included in a county report on homelessness.

It takes hundreds of volunteers and months of planning. It forces volunteers out of their comfort zones and under the bridges, behind the strip malls, and into all the places where some people are forced to spend their nights. And in order to be successful, it requires a lot of face-to-face interaction.

That's what Mogavero worried about most: how to approach homeless individuals she'd never met before, and how to go about asking for personal information about their lives.

Fortunately, Mogavero said volunteers go through an hour-long training that teaches them just that. During the training sessions, volunteers learn about how to approach homeless individuals, how to remain nonconfrontational, and how to explain the count and why it's important.

Once Mogavero completed her training and

got out in the field, she said it was exciting to meet so many people and hear their stories. She was shocked to learn that many of the people without homes have tried repeatedly to find housing, that it's often not the result of bad choices or laziness as stereotypes might suggest, and that many of the homeless individuals in the county are former foster children who aged out of the system at 18 and had nowhere to go.

She realized how important the count is, and she's done it nearly every year since.

"We're here to make sure they count in our community," Mogavero said.

Mogavero is just one of nearly 153 volunteers who have already signed up to help with this year's Point in Time Count, according to Emily Allen, director of homeless and veterans impact initiatives for United Way of Northern Santa Barbara County, an organization that works to

connect those experiencing homelessness with necessary support resources. United Way also helps coordinate the Point in Time Count.

While Allen said she's grateful to each of the volunteers who have already offered up their time, the whole canvassing process usually takes about 400 volunteers to be successful. They still have quite a ways to go, and not a lot of time to gather a larger team.

This year's count is scheduled for Jan. 24, and

volunteers will head out at 5 a.m. and should wrap up by about 8:30 a.m. Volunteers will be split up into teams of about four, assigned a geographical section of the county, and led through the area by a person who has experienced homelessness. Those guides, Allen said, act as liaisons between the surveyors and the homeless population.

It's a rewarding experience, Allen said, and the information gathered during the count is used by numerous organizations and the county while applying for federal and state funding, and allows lawmakers to create legislation that will better meet the needs of homeless people in the area.

"Our county depends on it," she said. ○

Staff Writer Kasey Bubnash can be reached at kbubnash@santamariasun.com.

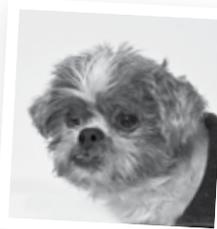


Get involved

This year's Point in Time Count is scheduled for Jan. 24 from 5 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. If you'd like to help, visit commongroundsbcc.org, or call (805) 451-5604 with any questions.

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The Sun in Northern Santa Barbara County is looking for its next staff writer, but we're not looking for just any article-pushing, source-wrangling, story-chasing someone.

Are you sick of editing or regurgitating press releases day after day? Or maybe it's those damn list things—you know the ones: "Top 10 hottest places to eat your lunch on a rainy day." Or maybe it's just not being able to put the time and reporting into a story that deserves it: the weeks and repeated phone calls that give a story what it needs to ripen into the hard-charging, data-filled narrative it's dying to be; the time that turns a "meh" story into one that blows a hole in the status quo.

Can you see the big picture of what a story means to a community? Is that what drives you? Do you know what it takes to—yes, we know, it's cliché—make a difference in the lives of the people you cover? Does that sort of thing matter to you?

If so, then you're exactly who we're looking for: a staff writer who isn't afraid to take on the tedious, the tenuous, or the talented. That certain someone who can wrestle a story to the ground and fill it with the things that matter to the communities we cover at the *Sun* and *New Times*. Oil, agricultural, water, and environmental advocacy aren't the only things that drive this place—although those are pretty juicy beats. There's more, and we want to hire someone who can drive his or herself to unearth those stories and tell them in a meaningful way.

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ANIMAL CARE from page 12

currently working to raise \$72,000 for the projected 2019 budget.

The money, for medical services and diagnostic testing, goes directly to the needs of the animals, Greco explained, and not to the county shelter or a general fund. The foundation also works with local veterinarians and clinics to get reduced costs for certain procedures.

"People don't realize the number of animals that come in to the shelter that are in need of medical attention," Greco said. "It can be that they get hurt or neglected and they come in with those issues. There's a whole group within these county shelters that are needing medical assistance."

It can be difficult to estimate just how many animals the group can help because the dollar amount may vary from case to case, Greco said, adding that services covered could range from a simple X-ray to an orthopedic surgery.

The group also helps with behavioral interventions, paying for trainers to work with animals and make them better candidates for adoption. Other programs under the foundation's umbrella include Camp HOPE, a camp for children ages 9 through 12 that introduces youth to basic pet responsibly and allows them to explore career and volunteer

opportunities related to animal services. The organization also puts on annual events such as the Zombie Glow Run, a charity 5K that benefits the county shelter.

Doing all of that work is a network of volunteers, including seven board members who each donate their time. Volunteers are what allow the organization to keep overhead costs down and devote more money to the animals themselves, Greco said.

"We are all volunteer," she said. "We work from our homes ... we don't have paid staff. We don't have a facility to maintain ... our overhead is so minimal."

Greco said the Animal Care Foundation always needs volunteers for events. The organization is seeking volunteers to help with grant writing and marketing as well, she explained, to help bring in corporate sponsorships and promote the organization in the community and beyond.

As for her personal involvement and passion for the cause, Greco said what drives her is

—Linda Greco

the desire to make a difference in the lives of animals in her community, even though she knows it often takes time and patience.

"If you love animals, come on board with us," she said. "We would love to utilize you in some way. ... You can make a difference." ○

Arts and Lifestyle Writer Rebecca Rose can be reached at rrose@santamariasun.com.



' ... Opening this store was me doing something daily to see people coming in who cherish their animals.'

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COME VISIT THE SANTA MARIA VALLEY YMCA

Your involvement here, whether it is as a volunteer, a new member, a program participant, a donor, a parent or in any other capacity, will change your life. There is something so profoundly fundamental and necessary about involving yourself with a place where people care about others; it cannot help but alter your perceptions in a positive way. The more you delve in, the deeper the personal reward.

The Y is for everyone. Our programs, services and initiatives: enable kids to realize their potential, prepare teens for college, offer ways for families to have fun together, empower people to be healthier

in spirit, mind and body, prepare people for employment, welcome and embrace newcomers and help foster a nationwide service ethic. And that's just the beginning. On a national level we focus on the three key areas:

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:

Nurturing the potential of every child and teen.

HEALTHY LIVING:

Improving the nation's health and well-being.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:

Giving back and providing support to our neighbors.

Beyond this wide scope, this particular YMCA has an amazing relationship-building capacity. The staff and board work together to build collaborations in our community that serve those who need us the most. And we have fun doing it!

Whether you are drawn to the Y to enhance your health, engage your littles in a program or simply want to make an impact in your community, know you belong. Once you're here, you'll feel the difference. Guaranteed!



Santa Maria Valley YMCA

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Ella Joy Delia, Age 3

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Thank you!

to our 2018-19 class of Community Ambassadors.

We enjoy having such great community leaders involved in our program!

Thank you to our volunteers for building a more resilient Santa Maria!

Event Volunteers

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Alfonso Curti
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Amy Curti
Kim Davis
Carolyn Diaz
Shannon Elliott
Kelsey Ferguson
Nadia Frakes
Mike Gibson
Christie Nemetz
Rob Plastino
Susan Rasmussen
Roberto Rodriguez
Jay Turner



If you are interested in becoming an AHC Community Ambassador, please contact Natalie Rucobo at the Foundation office at 805.925.2004



Online Poll

What should local governments do to assuage addiction among seniors?

- 45% Provide senior-specific programs.
- 36% Up funding for addiction support.
- 18% Not sure.
- 0% Host more social events.

11 Votes

Vote online at www.santamariasun.com.



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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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Where will some Measure U funds go?

BY GALE MCNEELEY

Who would have thought that our Measure U tax dollars would allow the Santa Maria City Council to give tax rebates to the auto dealers waiting to create an Enos Ranch auto mall? We are talking about a tax revenue loss of close to \$4 million.

Here is what the city has to say about the loss of revenue due to tax rebates to the auto dealers:

"If fees are unavailable to fund the infrastructure improvements, either the improvements are not completed or are completed with funding that is acquired through grants or accessing the city's general fund."

Would you have voted for Measure U if you knew your money would go to tax rebates for auto dealerships?

History shows us that whenever the city grants rebates to one group, another group must pick up the bill. In this case, decreasing fees and taxes for auto dealers means we will pay the bill from the city's general fund.

What could that \$4 million be used for? Soccer fields. Arts programming for our youth. Downtown development. Projects that would benefit us all.

Measure U is projected to bring in \$18 million in new taxes each year. It was sold to us as an answer to our public safety needs. Now that it is a reality, the city can designate it all for public safety if they

choose. This will free up dollars from the general fund to pay for infrastructure improvements needed for the Enos Ranch auto mall.

City leaders convinced us to vote for a 1 percent sales tax that will not end. Now they have given auto dealerships that will move to Enos Ranch a sweetheart deal that will lower their sales tax for the next 10 years!

This was all done without input from the citizens. There were no hearings. The idea was discussed at a council meeting in June, tabled until after the election, and then passed without real discussion or citizen input at a recent City Council meeting.

Only outgoing City Councilmember Jack Boysen questioned the move.

"We just asked the public to grant us a huge sales tax increase," he said. "Is this going to be one of those things where it's looked on as, 'Well, we have Measure U, so we can give this money back?'"

That's exactly how it looks because that's what the city is doing. This is a "giveback" to the auto dealers who put money into the elections for members of City Council.

A longstanding community leader stated that the City Council does not bargain well with developers and that city leaders fold easily in negotiations on new developments. The mayor and council waive fee after fee just to get something built. It's the taxpayers who wind up paying the bill.

Stuff happens

Clean water for drinking and ag use is surely a good thing. Three oil companies want to vastly increase drilling between Santa Maria and Los Alamos. If they have their way, hundreds of new wells would be drilled right through the groundwater basin that provides water for tens of thousands of people. If our water is contaminated, what the heck. Most of their shareholders live out of state anyway.

Now let's consider something the oil companies don't like to talk about—breaches of well casings. These wells would go down directly through the aquifer, our drinking water, to reach the oil below. They tell us that there are layers of clay that act as impermeable barriers protecting our water. And barriers, static and dynamic, are put in place to prevent blowouts and the potential release of oil. However, operator error, mechanical failure, and equipment malfunction occurs.

A blowout could happen anywhere along the route of the well casing, including where it passes through our drinking water. A recent independent study of more than 3,000 wells put the well failure rate at more than 7 percent. Aera Energy proposes to use an extreme extraction technique employing high-pressure steam at temperatures of more than 500 degrees. This could result in even higher rates of casing failure.

Beyond this problem, Aera Energy assumes there would be one spill per year for every 130 of its wells in this area between Santa Maria and Los Alamos. This alone would amount to spills each year of more than one-half million gallons. In addition to oil spills, more millions of gallons of other toxic and cancer-causing liquids from oil drilling operations always accidentally or unintentionally make their way into the ground and percolate down.

Over the long life of a well, whether active, idle, or abandoned, it is very likely to experience a breach. The profit would all go to the

shareholders while we would take the risk of losing our drinking water.

Seth Steiner
Los Alamos

Trump exposed waste at national parks

During the recent government shutdown, the shortest on record, our national parks have become pigsties. Without government

employees picking up after visitors' refuse, the parks look like downtown LA or San Francisco.

Solution: Hand out trash bags so people can cart out what they bring in. In fact, weigh each visitor and their tote bags and if they bring back more gross weight (I don't mean that in a bad way) than they went in with by policing up refuse like our roadside "Adopt-A-Highway" guys do, they get a refund on their admission price. Bonus: We could reduce government employees whose job is to pick up after lazy, dare

LETTERS continued page 19





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Public servants



Come on U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal, how could you possibly think that anything President Donald Trump says is “manufactured”? The guy is the most intelligent. The most honest. The bestest guy, who knows all of the most up-to-date correctest facts—especially when it comes to immigration. He might actually be the very first president in all of American history who knows the most about everything.

His precious border wall might be the answer to every problem facing the U.S. right now. Don't want to pay for SNAP benefits? Shut down the government and blame it on the Democrats, who won't give you billions of dollars to build a wall. Got crime? Build a wall. Got economic worries? Build a wall. Got problems with poor people being able to look at your property? Build a wall. All the richest people are doing it, Trump told Congress in what could actually be the smartest letter ever

We don't need another political ideologue to rant and rave at a fellow elected idiot who happens to fall on the other side of things. We need a solution.

written. So if America wants to look rich, it should do it too.

In a political stunt to check on this manufactured immigration crisis, the Central Coast's very own Congressional representative took a little trip down to New Mexico with some fellow Democrats to tour detention facilities. The facilities are “haphazard,” Carbajal said, and lacked food, showers, water, and until recently, medical services. Not surprising, considering the deaths that have occurred in U.S. Customs and Border Patrol custody.

“The president's actions have done everything to create a self-imposed crisis, in essence a fake crisis,” Carbajal said.

Throwing a bunch of people into detention facilities that weren't designed for the crowds, without planning for it, without allocating funding, infrastructure, and the correct personnel for the job is indeed self-imposed for the Trumpster. And this whole budget mess, which has led us into week three of a partial government shutdown, is also self-imposed. Not only are children dying in the custody of our federal government as the country's ideological fringes argue over the merits of *the most obnoxious phrase* in the English language—“Build a wall!”—we are also failing to pay 800,000 of our public servants because that argument has waylaid

the federal government's progress into 2019.

And, Mr. Carbajal, all you can say is that Trump fabricated all of it in an attempt to get America to pay for a wall it never needed in the first place. Well, dude, how are you going to fix this mess? We don't need another political ideologue to rant and rave at a fellow elected idiot who happens to fall on the other side of things. We need a solution.

Even the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors understands that. There were pats on the back all around for jobs well done at the Jan. 8 swearing in of 2nd District Supervisor Gregg Hart and the gavel hand-off to the board's new chair, 5th District Supervisor Steve Lavagnino. Supervisors commended the county for coming together to address the crazy series of disasters that befell South County—the Thomas Fire and the Montecito debris flows—in 2017-18 (conveniently leaving out the *LA Times* exposé on decades of county negligence regarding debris catchment basins in the Montecito area, but I digress ...).

Carbajal should take note of what his old board colleague said at the meeting, because it was only two years ago that he served the public on a less ostentatious, more accountable level.

“County government differs from our federal government. ... D.C. has ground to a halt and it seems like leadership from both political parties are more interested in castigating the other side than solving the problems,” Lavagnino said on Jan. 8. “I'm very thankful and proud to serve with colleagues who don't always agree on things but strive to do the people's business.”

The Canary likes public servants who actually serve the public. Send comments to canary@santamariasun.com.

LETTERS from page 18

we call them, Americans.

I know, you're slapping your forehead with your palm saying, “Why didn't I think of that?” That's why I'm here, to think of stuff like that.

Better yet why don't we give tax credits to those Adopt-A-Highway guys for their favorite charity since they're saving tax dollars on Caltrans guys not needed.

I'm on a roll here, but space insists I stop. Wait for next time when I tell you how we can get our straws back!

Jan Lipski
Vandenberg Village

The removal of Oceano Beach

Two million visitors a year drive on Oceano Beach for a day trip or on their way to Sand City, 1,000 unmarked campsites for \$10 a night, and the Sand Highway, the off-roading playground on the dunes.

Driving back, they carry on their tires tons of sand. Most of it is deposited on Pier Avenue and the vicinity. The sand on Pier Avenue is almost totally found just on its south side. It is brought there by cars leaving the beach and dropping it from their tires.

State Parks and SLO County regularly sweep and remove the sand at least two days a week. I inquired with parks and county and learned that the grand total of sand removed from Oceano Beach averages 34.7 tons of sand per week, mostly via Pier Avenue. Our county spends \$600 a month to have the sand removed. The sand is contaminated and cannot be put back on the beach. We are paying to have our own beach thrown into the Santa Maria Landfill or Cold Canyon.

Oceano is losing its beach! Our community is at tremendous risk from sea level rise and stormy high tide conditions. Driving on Oceano Beach should be banned.

Lucia Casalnuovo
Oceano

ICE is not the enemy

A few months ago there was a large demonstration against ICE (Immigration Customs and Enforcement) beginning in SLO and ending at the new ICE facility in Santa Maria, which only processes convicted criminal illegal aliens for deportation upon their release from the Lompoc Federal Prison, state prisons like the SLO Men's Colony, and county jails. This ICE facility does not plan nor conduct immigration sweeps like raids on places reported to be employing illegal aliens. Therefore, those participating in the demonstration didn't know what they were demonstrating against, only the evil and wicked ICE. The Oxnard facility is the closest one that conducts sweeps. They are two different departments.

As we, the opposition, walked among protesters asking questions, we determined that they wanted convicted criminal illegal aliens to be able to stay here. One demonstrator told me many of these deported undocumented workers, regardless of their criminal backgrounds, have families here and American-born children who needed a father as well as a breadwinner. Another told me and the counterdemonstrators that the welfare payments their American-born children were entitled to receive wasn't enough to adequately raise a child here.

All this reminds me of the Cesar Chavez birthday demonstration in Santa Maria and elsewhere in favor of another unworkable amnesty policy about 10 years ago. This demonstration was conducted by students of two big overcrowded high schools in Santa Maria, as Santa Maria High School was under a lockdown to prevent students from leaving their classrooms. Most of these students, if not all, didn't know what they were marching for, nor did they know that Chavez was strongly opposed to illegal immigration, because it lowered the wages of farmworkers in our Central Valley. He only agreed to support the 1986 amnesty after it was promised to be the last and final amnesty. Don't politicians lie? Gov. Jerry Brown once said that they all lie. They have to get elected.

Illegal immigration is the most lopsided political issue of modern time, with all legitimate polls showing from 87 to 91 percent of Americans opposed to it. Why can't Americans get our Congress to do something about it? The answer is that the cheap labor lobbies are too strong, especially some of our farm organizations, and the Catholic Church, which likes illegal immigration for another reason. Richard Nixon once said that in order to learn the truth you need to follow the money, and that applies in this case, because today congressional votes on lobby interests can be bought and sold like a commodity.

Making e-verify mandatory to prevent illegal workers from working here is the only answer, not a wall along the entire U.S.-Mexico border. For farmworkers, there is the H-2A visa program to bring our needed farm labor here legally.

Richard Dydell
Santa Maria

HOT STUFF

JAN. 10 – JAN. 17
2019

LIASSO OF TRUTH

The inaugural Women's March of Santa Maria Valley starts at 10 a.m. on Jan. 19 at Buena Vista Park, located at 800 S. Pine St., Santa Maria. Join the march as it progresses toward the Action Alley Resource Fair at Minami Park, located at 600 W. Enos Drive, Santa Maria. Admission is free. More info: (805) 316-1356 or facebook.com/womensmarchsmv.



FILE PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLOM

SPECIAL EVENTS

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

WORLD FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP 98 A

live boxing event. Must be 21 or older to attend. **Jan. 11**, 6 p.m. \$35-\$95. Chumash Casino Resort, 3400 E. Highway 246, Santa Ynez, 800-248-6274, chumashcasino.com/entertainment.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

POETRY NIGHT AT CORE WINERY Monthly poetry group with two featured poets and open readings. Check CORE Winery Facebook page for details or schedule changes. Second Saturday of every month, 7:30 p.m. Free. 805-937-1600. corewine.com. CORE Winery, 105 W Clark Ave., Orcutt.

WOMEN'S MARCH OF SANTA MARIA VALLEY

Be a part of the Women's March of Santa Maria Valley's inaugural march. Meet at Buena Vista Park to march to the Action Alley Resource Fair at Minami Park. **Jan. 19**, 10 a.m. Free. 805-316-1356. facebook.com/womensmarchsmv/. Buena Vista Park, 800 S. Pine St., Santa Maria.

ARTS

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

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.

BASIC WATERCOLOR No experience required. Tuesdays, 1-3 p.m. \$8. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

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.

CREATIVE ART TUESDAYS Meet other artists and support and critique others' works. Tuesdays, 1-4 p.m. \$1. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-

937-9750.

EVERYBODY CAN DANCE Ballet workout classes for teens and adults. Tuesdays, 6 p.m. everybodycandance.webs.com. Everybody Can Dance, 628 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-937-6753.

INDIVIDUAL PAINTERS No instructor. Fridays, 9 a.m.-noon \$1. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

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.

MUSIC LESSONS Offering private and classroom lessons. ongoing 805-925-0464. Coelho Academy of Music, 325 E. Betteravia Road, Santa Maria.

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.

SWING, BALLROOM, AND LATIN DANCE CLASSES Hosted by the Kings of Swing. All skill levels welcome (adults). Couples and singles welcome. Pre-registration recommended. Thursdays, 7-8 p.m. \$45. 805-928-7799. Adkins Dance Center, 1110 E. Clark Ave., Santa Maria.

TEEN SPA LAB Teens can come to the library to make soap, bath bombs, bath salts, and lip balm. **Jan. 11**, 4-5:30 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland 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.

WINTER MAKERSPACE Events take place in the learning center. Call for full schedule and more info. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. and Wednesdays, 4-6 p.m. through Feb. 27 805-925-0994. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

ACRYLIC POURING INTERMEDIATE WORKSHOP Artist Shelley Kenny host this class, where every piece will look completely different from the next. **Jan. 16**, 6-8 p.m. \$40. 805-550-9963. theartgalanipomo.com/classes-and-events/. Gala De Arte Plaza, 136 N Thompson Ave. B, Nipomo.

ART AND WINE: CACTUS FLOWER ACRYLIC PAINTING CLASS Create a colorful cactus and flower canvas with artist Wendy Thrasher. All materials and a glass of wine are provided. **Jan. 10**, 6-8 p.m. and **Jan. 17**, 6-8 p.m. \$40; \$65 for 2; \$30 each for 3 or more. 805-550-9963. theartgalanipomo.com/classes-and-events/. Gala De Arte Plaza, 136 N Thompson Ave. B, Nipomo.

ART AND WINE: STARFISH NAIL AND STRING ART CLASS Bring beach shells them to this starfish nail and string mixed media class. Artist Wendy Thrasher guides guests through techniques that are easily replicated. All materials and a glass of wine are include. **Jan. 12**, 6-8 p.m. and **Jan. 19**, 6-8 p.m. \$40; \$65 for 2; \$30 each for 3 or more. 805-550-9963. theartgalanipomo.com/classes-and-events/. Gala De Arte Plaza, 136 N Thompson Ave. B, Nipomo.

ART AND WINE: WINTER ICE ACRYLIC PAINTING CLASS An evening of wine and painting. Artist Wendy Thrasher guides guests through techniques that are easily replicated. All materials and a glass of wine are provided. **Jan. 11**, 6-8 p.m. and **Jan. 18**, 6-8 p.m. \$40;

\$65 for 2; \$30 each for 3 or more. 805-550-9963. theartgalanipomo.com/classes-and-events/. Gala De Arte Plaza, 136 N Thompson Ave. B, Nipomo.

FELTED CROSS-BODY WALLETS WITH REPURPOSED WOOL Most supplies included, including pre-cut repurposed wool and decorative felted patch. Create a unique, light wallet with a long cross-body strap. Wood upcycled from thrift store menswear. **Jan. 19**, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. \$75. 805-709-1160. Weissberg Barn, 1080 Hetrick Ave., Arroyo Grande.

NEEDLE FELTING WORKSHOP Learn how to create beads for a necklace or a small animal out of felted wool. Registration required. For ages 15 and up. **Jan. 12**, 2-3 p.m. Free. 805-473-7164. slolibrary.org. Arroyo Grande Library, 800 W. Branch, Arroyo Grande.

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. \$20 per hour. 805-668-2125. LiIA 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. 805-668-2125. lila.community. LiIA Creative Community, 1147 East Grand Ave. Suite 101, Arroyo Grande.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

CABARET SINGING AND PERFORMANCE CLASS Learn the art of singing in a Cabaret style and setting. Find your key and style with a skilled accompanist. You may start anytime during the semester. Wednesdays, 6:30-9:30 p.m. \$185 for 12 week class or \$20 per night as a drop-in student. 805-772-2812. cuesta.edu/communityprograms. Cuesta College Community Programs, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo.

DATE NIGHT POTTERY Guests can enjoy sharing wine, throwing pots on the wheel, and more. Fridays, Saturdays, 6-8 p.m. \$30 per person. 805-896-6197. Anam Cre Pottery Studio, 1243 Monterey St, San Luis Obispo, anamcre.com.

FILM AND TV ACTING CLASSES Film and TV acting classes for all ages and skill levels. Offers optional showcases for major Hollywood talent agents and casting directors. Sundays, 10:30 a.m.-9 p.m. \$165-\$175. 310-910-1228. actorsedge.com. Mission Cinemas, 1025 Monterey St., SLO.

New Times and the Sun now share their community listings for a complete Central Coast calendar running from SLO County through northern Santa Barbara County. Submit events online by logging in with your Google, Facebook, or Twitter account at newtimeslo.com. You may also email calendar@newtimeslo.com. Deadline is one week before the issue date on Thursdays. Submissions are subject to editing and approval. Contact Calendar Editor Caleb Wiseblood directly at cwiseblood@newtimeslo.com.

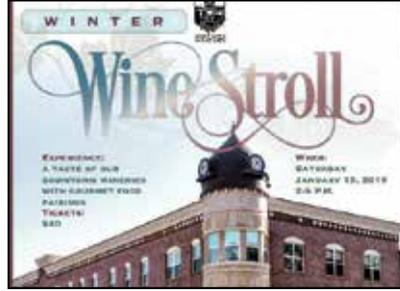
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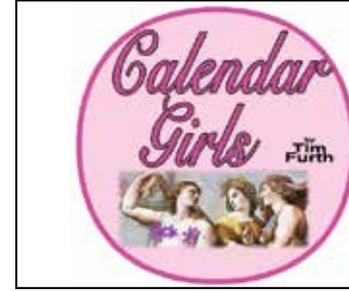
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Central Coast Aquarium Winter Break Camp
DAYS VARY:
JANUARY 2-11
Central Coast Aquarium



Winter Wine Stroll
SATURDAY,
JANUARY 19
Downtown
Paso Robles



Calendar Girls
SELECT DAYS IN
JAN-FEB
By the Sea
Productions



Point SLO Lighthouse Tours
EVERY WED & SAT
Point San Luis
Lighthouse



SLO Blues Baseball
2019 SEASON PASSES
Sinsheimer
Stadium



Tours for Paddlers
SELECT DATES THROUGH
FEBRUARY
Point San Luis
Lighthouse



Café Musique in Concert
SUNDAY, JANUARY 20
Café
Musique



Beer Yoga
SUNDAY, JANUARY 20
Naughty Oak Brewing Co.



Planet Lucha
SUNDAY, JANUARY 20
Santa Maria Hotel Radisson



Victoria Vox in Concert
TUESDAY, JANUARY 22
Morro Bay
Wine Seller



Weaving Workshop
SATURDAY, JANUARY 26
Zaca Mesa
Winery



**SLO Blues Society:
Tommy Castro**
SATURDAY, JANUARY 26
SLO Veteran's Hall



Barre & Brunch
SUNDAY, JANUARY 27
Tooth & Nail
Winery



Bach Cello Suites
SUNDAY, JANUARY 27
Cass
Winery



Avila Beach Spaghetti Dinner
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1
Avila Beach
Community Center



**Hard Day's Night:
A Tribute to the Beatles**
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2
Rava Wines + Events



Bill & Ian's Excellent Abu Dhabi Adventure:
Fundraising Party for Special Olympics
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 9
The Barn at Greengate Ranch

MY805TIX BOX OFFICE IS NOW OPEN

We're happy to announce **Boo Boo Records** is the official **Box Office** for My805Tix events!
Boo Boo's is located at 978 Monterey Street in SLO.
Call them at 805-541-0657.



**Orchestra Novo Co-Creation
Project III with Robert Thies**
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 10
CPAC at Cuesta College



**Tribute to Aretha Franklin &
Smokey Robinson**
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12
Morro Bay Wine Seller



Chicago duo Small Potatoes
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19
Morro Bay Wine Seller



**SLO Blues Society:
Albert Castiglia**
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 23
SLO Veteran's Hall



**Return of the Jette: A Benefit
Concert for Orchestra Novo**
SATURDAY, MARCH 2
Congregation Beth David



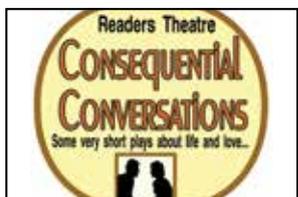
UK Guitarist Clive Carroll
FRIDAY, MARCH 7
Morro Bay
Wine Seller



Vocal Arts on Broadway
FRIDAY, MARCH 8
Monarch Club
at Trilogy



**Rick Springfield:
Stripped Down**
SATURDAY, MARCH 16
Rava Wines + Events



Consequential Conversations
MARCH 22-24
By the Sea
Productions



Royal Family KIDS Fundraiser
SATURDAY, MARCH 23
Fountain Pavilion at the
Santa Maria Fairpark



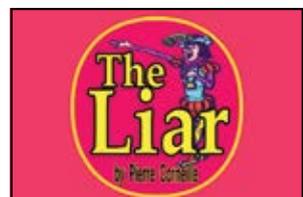
**Watercolor & Wine
Workshop**
SUNDAY, MARCH 24
Zaca Mesa Winery



**Brynn Albanese
performs with StringFire**
SUNDAY, MARCH 31
Old Santa Rosa Chapel



**DIY Succulent
Wreath Workshop**
SATURDAY, APRIL 27
Zaca Mesa Winery



The Liar
FRIDAY, JULY 5-28
By the Sea
Productions

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EXHIBITS

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

COMMUNITY DAY AT THE WILDLING Wildling offers free admission during Community Day. Enjoy drop-in art activities, current exhibits, and more. Third Wednesday of every month Free. 805-688-1082. wildlingmuseum.org. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang.

FOLDED ART: ORIGAMI ANIMALS Featuring origami animals by artist Robert Salazar in the Oak Gallery (second floor). **Through March 20** Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082. wildlingmuseum.org.

GLO ARTIST SHOW Through Feb. 1 Gallery Los Olivos, 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos, 805-688-7517, gallerylosolivos.com.

NATURE ABSTRACTED This exhibit is on display in the Barbara Goodall Education Center (third floor). In collaboration with the Santa Barbara based Abstract Art Collective. Features 29 works by 18 artists. **Through Feb. 4** \$5. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082, wildlingmuseum.org.

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. 805-688-8315. 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. ongoing Free. 805-688-8315. 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. 805-688-1080. pavlovgallery.com. Pavlov Art Gallery, 1608 Copenhagen Dr., Ste C, Solvang.

RAY STRONG: FEATURED ARTIST Sponsored by the Robert and Mercedes Eichholz Foundation. In the Main Gallery (first floor). **Through March 20** Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082, wildlingmuseum.org.

THE SANTA YNEZ VALLEY ARTS ASSOCIATION:

SECOND SATURDAY ARTISANS Applications to be a featured artist will be accepted throughout the series. Second Saturday of every month, 12-5 p.m. Free. 805-688-7338. santaynezvalleyarts.org. Santa Ynez Valley Grange Hall, 2374 Alamo Pintado, Los Olivos.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

FEATURED ARTIST: IRINA MALKMUS This exhibit is one of a continuing series of shows to spotlight local art and artists. ongoing 805-938-9724. irinamalkmus.com.

com. Miller St., Suite 104, Santa Maria.

SANTA BARBARA PRINTMAKERS JURIED

EXHIBITION ongoing smartscouncil.org. Betteravia Gallery, 511 E. Lakeside Parkway, Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

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/.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

CENTRAL COAST PRINTMAKERS: BANNER A

A collaborative exhibition featuring contemporary prints made by members of the Central Coast Printmakers Group, a membership group of SLOMA. **Through Jan. 27** Free. 805-543-8562. sloma.org. San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

CLAY X 3 Featuring ceramic artists Ariane Leiter, Maria Teresa Rode and Catherine Schmid-Maybach. Their work reflects the deep roots of ceramic sculpture in modern and contemporary California art. **Through Jan. 20** Free. 805-543-8562. sloma.org. San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

CYNTHIA MEYER: LOCAL COLOR

Enjoy landscape, light, and architecture captured on a sunny day in SLO. ongoing, 6-9 p.m. Free. 805-210-8687. secretslo.com. Sauer-Adams Adobe, 964 Chorro St., San Luis Obispo.

INTERESTING TIMES

Featuring the political and whimsical art of Mark Bryan. **Through Jan. 23** 805-710-2929. Frame Works, 339 Marsh St, San Luis Obispo, sloart.com.

LIGHT FROM A DARK ROOM: PHOTOGRAPHY

BY MARTA PELUSO Contains black-and-white silver gelatin photographs made using film as well as digital color photography. This exhibition reflects the evolution of Marta Peluso's art over time and includes new as well as older images that have been revisited. **Through Jan. 27** Free. 805-543-8562. sloma.org. San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

PILGRIM'S PROCESS: THE POETRY OF MICHAEL HANNON

The exhibit celebrates over five decades of works in print. Includes chapbooks, books, broadsides, poetry-infused sculpture, mail art, and altered objects. Mondays-Fridays, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. **through March 29** Free. 805-756-2305. lib.calpoly.edu/events/pilgrimsprocess. Cal Poly Special Collections and Archives, Robert E. Kennedy Library, 1 Grand Ave., Building 35, Room 409, San Luis Obispo.

VICTORIA FU

The video art and photography of Victoria Fu examines artistic conventions and the dispersal of technical images in the contemporary era. **Jan. 17**, 5-7 p.m. and Tuesdays-Saturdays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. **through Feb. 8** Free. 805-756-1571. Cal Poly University Art Gallery, Cal Poly Art & Design, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 93407-0321, San Luis Obispo, artgallery.calpoly.edu.

WILD SILKS: THREE PERSPECTIVES

Featured artists: Jeanne Miller, Dana Kimberly Hixson, and Martha Sparta. This exhibit showcases the work of three silk



STRING THEORY

Gala De Arte in Nipomo hosts Art and Wine: Starfish Nail and String Art on Jan. 12 and 18, from 6 to 8 p.m. both evenings. Artist Wendy Thrasher will guide participants through easily replicated techniques. Tickets are \$40, \$65 for two, and \$30 each for a group of three or more. Admission includes all materials and a glass of wine. More info: (805) 550-9963 or theartgalanipomo.com.

artists who paint together, sharing their talents and insights with one another. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sundays, 12-4 p.m. and Mondays-Fridays, 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. through Jan. 29 Free. 805-747-4200. Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

STAGE

LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

STAGED READING: PROOF BY DAVID AUBURN

Lompoc Civic Theatre will be performing this staged reading. The play centers on Catherine, who may have the key to her famous mathematician father's legacy, the first step to her own future success. **Jan. 11** Free. 805-735-2281. facebook.com/lompoccivictheatre/. Stone Pine Hall, 210 South H St., Lompoc.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

RUMORS Orcutt Community Theater presents its production of this Neil Simon farce. Recommended for ages over 12 due to adult language. **Jan. 11**, 7-9 p.m., **Jan. 12**, 7-9 p.m., **Jan. 13**, 1:30-3:30 p.m., **Jan. 18**, 7-9 p.m., **Jan. 19**, 7-9 p.m. and **Jan. 20**, 1:30-3:30 p.m. \$15. 805-973-7264. santamariacommunitytheater.com. KDA Studios, 3558 Skyway Dr., Santa Maria.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

The San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre's Academy of Creative Theatre presents a young performers' version of Jane Austen's classic novel. Wednesdays-Saturdays, 7-8:30 p.m. and Saturdays, Sundays, 2-3:30 p.m. **through Jan. 20** \$17-\$25. 805-786-2440. slorep.org/shows/pride-and-prejudice/. San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre, 888 Morro St., San Luis Obispo.

AN EVENING OF CLASSIC LILY TOMLIN

Jan. 18 Performing Arts Center, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 756-4849, pacso.org.

SLOLIO: A GATHERING OF TRUE STORIES

Monthly storytelling event open to anyone who has a true story to share based on the month's theme and that can be told without notes. Theme for January is "Banded Together". **Jan. 16**, 7-9 p.m. Free. 805-995-2867. slolio.org. Linnaea's Cafe, 1110 Garden St., San Luis Obispo.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

LECTURES & LEARNING

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

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. Second Thursday of every month, 6-7 p.m. Free. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-925-0994.

HEART OF THE VALLEY: LOCAL HISTORY

SERIES Guest speaker Jay Hardy hosts a presentation about the Hancock College of Aeronautics during the WWII era. **Jan. 19**, 10:15-11:15 a.m. 805-925-0994. cityofsantamaria.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

ELEPHANT SEALS

Learn about the seals local to the Piedras Blancas Elephant Seal Rookery, who make a yearly pilgrimage to San Simeon. Presented by the Piedras Blancas Friends of the Elephant Seal. **Jan. 19**, 2-3 p.m. Free. 805-473-7161. slolibrary.org. Arroyo Grande Library, 800 W. Branch, Arroyo Grande.

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.

TOURS FOR PADDLERS

A special tour for visitors who come by ocean. Paddlers will need to clean sand from their feet and dry themselves before the tour so not to damage the antique flooring. Saturdays, 10-10:45 a.m. \$6.49. 805-540-5771. Point San Luis Lighthouse, 1 Lighthouse Rd., Avila Beach.

CLUBS & MEETINGS

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

BOARD OF LIBRARY TEENS (BOLT) Teens can help plan upcoming library events and make changes to the teen zone. **Jan. 19**, 4-5 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

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.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE continued page 23

FILE PHOTO COURTESY OF ORCUTT COMMUNITY THEATER



RUMOR HAS IT

Orcutt Community Theater presents Neil Simon's *Rumors* from Jan. 11 through 20 at Klein Dance Arts, located at 3546 Skyway Drive, Santa Maria. The cast includes Alan Sutterfield as Officer Welch and Emily Alvarado as Officer Pudney (pictured). Tickets are \$15. More info: (805) 973-7264 or facebook.com/orcuttcommunitytheater.

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.

TEENS ANIME CLUB Club for teens that are interested in anime and manga **Jan. 18**, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., 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

BISHOP PEAK CHAPTER OF THE EMBROIDERER'S GUILD OF AMERICA Welcoming those who work with all forms of needlework. Bring a sack lunch. Third Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free. Grover Beach Community Center, 1230 Trouville Ave., Grover Beach, (805) 773-4832.

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.

OCEANO BEACH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MONTHLY MEETING Join to help create a change for Oceano. Core focuses are improving livability, accessibility, and beauty of the community while preserving Oceano's cultural diversity, character, and coastal environment. **Jan. 10**, 6-7:30 p.m. Free. 805-801-6148. oceano beach.org. Oceano Community Center, 1425 19th St., Oceano.

SUPPORT GROUPS

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

HELP4HD SUPPORT GROUPS Help4HD Support Groups is the Help 4 Huntington's disease support group. Second Monday of every month, 12-1:30 p.m. Free. 354-0708. help4hd-international.org. Bethel Lutheran Church, 624 E. Camino Colegio, Santa Maria.

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.

NAMI FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP Hosted by NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness). A confidential and safe group of families helping families who have a loved one living with mental health challenges. Third Saturday of every month, 10-11:30 a.m. Free. 805-544-2086. Safe Haven, 203 Bridge St, Arroyo Grande.

SCLERODERMA SUPPORT GROUP MEETING A support group for those who have Scleroderma or those who love someone with Scleroderma. **Nov. 17**, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Free. 805-878-6261. St. John's Lutheran Church, 959 Valley Rd., Arroyo Grande.

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.

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

CHUMASH CASINO RESORT

ALWAYS AMAZING. NEVER ROUTINE.



WFC 98 LIVE BOXING

FRIDAY

JAN 11

6 PM

THUR, FRI, SAT

JAN 17, 18, 19

8 PM



THERESA CAPUTO LIVE! THE EXPERIENCE



TROMBONE SHORTY & ORLEANS AVENUE

FRIDAY

JAN 25

8 PM

FRIDAY

FEB 1

8 PM



LOS TUCANES DE TIJUANA

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SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

SEWING CAFE CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS
Sewing Cafe offers various classes and workshop. Call for full schedule. ongoing Sewing Cafe, 541 Five Cities Dr., Pismo Beach, 805-295-6585.

MIND & BODY

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

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.

SEVEN CHAKRA CLASS Learn about the 7 Chakra energy system that has been identified within the context of cultural spirituality around the world. Find out how this part of your spirit can be healed and aligned to create balance, energy, focus and stamina. Wednesdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. through Feb. 6 \$126. 805-598-1509. divining.weebly.com. Divine Inspiration, 947 E Orange St, Santa Maria.

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

WISDOM READINGS AnnKathleen is available every day by appointment for Wisdom Readings with Tarot and Oracle cards. Gift certificates available. ongoing \$95-\$160. 805-598-1509. divining.weebly.com. Divine Inspiration, 947 E Orange St, Santa Maria.

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. Morrocco Method Headquarters, 800 Farroll Rd., Grover Beach, morroccomethod.com.

MAY I BE HAPPY: SERIES ON SELF-COMPASSION Befriend yourself to experience greater peace, emotional stability, joy, and well-being. Pre-registration required. Thursdays, 5-6 p.m. through May 30 805-270-5523. mindfulkindfullyouiversity.com/self-compassion. Women's Club of Arroyo Grande, 211 Vernon St., Arroyo Grande.

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

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, adulted.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. 805-481-6399. 5 Cities Swim School, 425 Traffic Way, Arroyo Grande, 5citysswimschool.com.

OUTDOORS

SAN LUIS OBISPO

LAGUNA LAKE HIKE WITH ECOSLO The distance is 2 miles round trip. Guests are recommended to bring water, a snack, and sturdy hiking shoes. Participants meet at the dog park area. Jan. 12, 8:30-10 a.m. Free. 805-544-1777. ecoslo.org. Laguna Lake Park, 504 Madonna Rd., San Luis Obispo.

RISE OF A RAILROAD TOWN WALKING TOUR Learn about the boilermakers, brakemen, prophets, poets, and promoters who made SLO a steam town. Jan. 19, 2-4 p.m. \$20. 805-210-8687. secretslo.com/tours/. San Luis Obispo Railroad Museum, 1940 Santa Barbara Ave, San Luis Obispo.

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 E.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

CAL POLY MEN'S BASKETBALL VS. CSUN Jan. 12, 7 p.m. Mott Athletics Center, 1 Grand Ave, San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

CAL POLY WOMEN'S BASKETBALL VS. UCSB Jan. 12, 2 p.m. Mott Athletics Center, 1 Grand Ave, San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

CAL POLY WRESTLING VS. CSU BAKERSFIELD Jan. 11, 7 p.m. Mott Athletics Center, 1 Grand Ave, San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

CAL POLY WRESTLING VS. NORTHERN COLORADO Jan. 18, 7 p.m. Mott Athletics Center, 1 Grand Ave, San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

SLO PING PONG Features many tables. Games are informal and all ability levels are welcome. Tuesdays, Thursdays, 7-10 p.m. and Sundays, 4-7 p.m. through Dec. 31 Free for new players. 805-540-0470. Ludwick Community Center, 864 Santa Rosa, San Luis Obispo.

NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

MORRO BAY MARTIAL ARTS Offering adult and youth classes in kickboxing, boxing, judo, jiu-jitsu, MMA, tai chi, qi gong, and self defense. Programs are customized to fit your needs, goals, age, and abilities. Mondays-Sundays, 7 a.m.-8 p.m. through April 25 Call for details. 805-701-7397. Morro Bay Martial Arts, 850 Shasta, Morro Bay.

KIDS & FAMILY

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

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.

LEGO CLUB Come to the library for Lego activities or compete in the staff challenge. Jan. 10, 4-5 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

MARINE LIFE TOUCH TANKS The Central Coast Aquarium returns to the library. Jan. 14, 4-5 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., 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.

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.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

MINDFUL KINDFUL PEACEFUL (AGES 6-11): ARROYO GRANDE A social-emotional learning program that provides foundation for greater mental strength, resilience, happiness, and well-being through exploration of our inner world of thoughts, emotions, attitudes, and behaviors. Pre-registration required. Thursdays, 3:45-4:45 p.m. through May 30 805-270-5523. mindfulkindfullyouiversity.com/register-dragonfly-92. 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. ongoing, 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. 805-668-2125. LiLA Creative Community, 1147 East Grand Ave. Suite 101, Arroyo Grande, lila.community.

WINTER BREAK CAMP Marine science activities include aquarium tours, animal feedings, squid dissection, marine mammal lessons, plankton lessons, and more. Through Jan. 11, 9 a.m. \$40-\$60. 805-595-7280. Central Coast Aquarium, 50 San Juan St., Avila Beach, centralcoastaquarium.org.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

FREE WOMEN'S EXERCISE CLASS Open to all women regardless of denomination. Class includes stretching, aerobics, and floor exercises while listening to uplifting, spiritual music. Free childcare offered on site. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 9-10 a.m. Free. 805-922-1919. cornerstonesm.org. Cornerstone Church, 1026 E Sierra Madre Ave., Santa Maria.

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. ChurnTree: Books and Gifts, 722 E Main St., Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

CHANNELING With Mike Smith. Receive channeled messages from spirit guides and love ones. Second Saturday of every month, 6:30-7:30 p.m. \$35. 805-489-2432. Halcyon Store Post Office, 936 S. Halcyon Rd., Arroyo Grande.

DRUM CIRCLE With Julie Jensen. You may bring your own drum if you wish. Those without drums are welcome. Additional instruments will be available for use. Third Wednesday of every month, 6:30-8 p.m. Donations accepted. 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.

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 helps 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.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

ASK SABRINA 30 years of Tarot reading experience. Open Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday in SLO County and Thursday and Sunday in South SLO County. ongoing 805-441-4707. asksabrina.com. Private Location, TBA, San Luis Obispo.

REFUGE RECOVERY SLO 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. Sundays, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Free; donations welcome. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Hall, 2201 Lawton Ave., San Luis Obispo.

NORTH SLO COUNTY

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. Saturdays, 7:30-8:45 p.m. Free; donations welcome. SLO County Drug and Alcohol Atascadero, 3500 El Camino Real, Atascadero, 800-838-1381.

NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

FREE GUIDED MEDITATION GROUP Fridays, 10:30 a.m.-noon Free. 805-439-2757. meditationintro.com. Morro Bay Library, 625 Harbor St., Morro Bay.

GUIDED MEDITATION CLASS Come learn to meditate in a relaxed setting. Pay attention to each second and increase your awareness of the inner world. Frequent prompts facilitate the focus. Fridays, 10:30 a.m.-noon Free. 805-439-2757. meditationintro.com. Morro Bay Library, 625 Harbor St., Morro Bay.

VOLUNTEERS

SAN LUIS OBISPO

ADOPT A GRANDPARENT Connect with older adults that need a little extra help. Tasks include baking,



MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

CORE Winery's ongoing Second Saturday Poetry night welcomes featured poets Cal Poly professor Sarah Grieve (pictured) and former Santa Barbara poet laureate Gudrun Bortman on Jan. 12 at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free. The winery is located at 105 W. Clark Ave., Orcutt. More info: (805) 937-1600 or corewine.com.

driving, errands, friendly visits, pet walking, reading, games, and more. RSVP required. Please contact to set up an orientation. Fridays, 10-11 a.m. and Mondays, 10-11 a.m. through Jan. 28 Free. 805-547-7025 x 2214. Wilshire Community Services, 285 South St. Suite J, San Luis Obispo, wilshirecommunityservices.org.

CARDS FOR SENIORS Looking for volunteers who would enjoy creating handmade cards for isolated older adults. All materials and tools provided. Fridays, 10-11:30 a.m. through Jan. 25 Free. 805-547-7025 x2214. Wilshire Community Services, 285 South St. Suite J, San Luis Obispo, wilshirecommunityservices.org.

FELINE NETWORK OF THE CENTRAL COAST Seeking volunteers to provide foster homes for foster kittens or cats with special needs. The Feline Network pays for food, litter, and any medications needed. Volunteers also needed to help with humanely trapping and transporting feral cats for spay/neuter. ongoing 805-549-9228. feline.network.org. San Luis Obispo, Citywide, SLO.

HOSPICE SLO COUNTY THRESHOLD SINGERS SEEK NEW VOICES Sing for individuals experiencing life-limiting or end-of-life conditions. Third Sunday of every month, 2-4 p.m. Free. 805-544-2266. hospiceslo.org/services/hospice-slo-county-threshold-singers. Hospice SLO County, 1304 Pacific St., San Luis Obispo.

HOSPICE SLO COUNTY VOLUNTEER TRAINING Pre-registration required. In-Home Volunteers assist individuals with a life-limiting illness and their families by providing caregiver respite, practical assistance, emotional support, companionship, and comfort. Thursdays, 1-6 p.m. Free. 805-544-2266. hospiceslo.org/workshops. Hospice SLO County, 1304 Pacific St., San Luis Obispo.

MEALS ON WHEELS Meals on Wheels, San Luis Obispo, needs non time drivers. Must have own car to deliver prepared meals. Mondays-Fridays, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. 805-235-8870. San Luis Obispo, Citywide, SLO.

SLO REP SEEKING VOLUNTEER BARTENDERS Must be 21 or over. All volunteers receive complimentary tickets. Email volunteer@slorep.org for more info. ongoing slorep.org. San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre, 888 Morro St., San Luis Obispo, 805-786-2440.

NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

ART CENTER MORRO BAY Seeking volunteers to be docents and/or organize art programs. Mondays-Sundays, 12-4 p.m. Free. 805-772-2504. artcentermorrobay.org. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

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

GROWING GROUNDS FARM STAND Produce, flowers, and other plants from the nursery are available for purchase. Second Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. 805-934-2182. Growing Grounds Farm, 820 W. Foster Rd., Santa Maria, t-mha.org.

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, 12-2:25 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.

SLO GUILD TUESDAY FARMERS' MARKET Tuesdays, 2-5 p.m. through Dec. 31 Free. 805-762-4688. facebook.com/TuesdayFarmersMarketSLOGuildHall/. SLO Guild Hall, 2880 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

NORTH SLO COUNTY

ATASCADERO FARMERS MARKET Visit site for info on featured music artists and chefs. Wednesdays, 3-6 p.m. Free. visitatascadero.com. Sunken Gardens, 6505 El Camino Real, Atascadero.

CAMBRIA FARMERS MARKET Fridays, 2:30-5:30 p.m. Free. 805-395-6659. cambriafarmersmarket.com. Cambria Veterans Memorial Hall, 1000 Main Street, Cambria.

PASO ROBLES FARMERS MARKET Tuesdays, 3-6 p.m. northcountyfarmersmarkets.com. Paso Robles Farmers Market, Spring and 11th St., Paso Robles.

TEMPLETON FARMERS MARKET Saturdays, 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. northcountyfarmersmarkets.com. Templeton Park, 550 Crocker St., Templeton.

NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

BAYWOOD FARMERS MARKET Mondays, 2-4:30 p.m. northcountyfarmersmarkets.com. Baywood Farmers Market, Santa Maria and 2nd St., Los Osos.

MAIN STREET MARKET Saturdays, 2:30-6 p.m. Free. 805-772-4467. Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, 695 Harbor St., Morro Bay, morrobaychamber.org.

EVENTS

SAN LUIS OBISPO

THE BLACK GLASS CHALLENGE AT CROMA VERA Test your blind tasting skills. Winners get their names listed on the front board and posted to social media. Fridays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. \$12. 805-946-1685. cromavera.com/events/. Croma Vera Wines, 3592 Broad St., Ste. 106, San Luis Obispo.

EXPLORE AROMAS IN WINE: SESSION III A sommelier will guide guests through the wines. Enjoy exploring aromas from the Le Nez Du Vin wine aroma kit. Sessions can be taken in any order. Jan. 10, 6-7 p.m. \$35. 805-946-1685. cromavera.com. Croma Vera Wines, 3592 Broad St., Ste. 106, San Luis Obispo.

FRIDAY NIGHT PINT NIGHT Buy logo glass for \$8 and bring it in every Friday for \$2 off refills. Wine offered at happy hour pricing. Fridays, 4-10 p.m. Free. 805-868-7133. 7sistersbrewing.com/events-page. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo.

GEEKS WHO DRINK PUB QUIZ 8 rounds of audio, visual, and live hosted trivia with prizes. Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Free. 805-868-7133. 7SistersBrewing.com. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo.

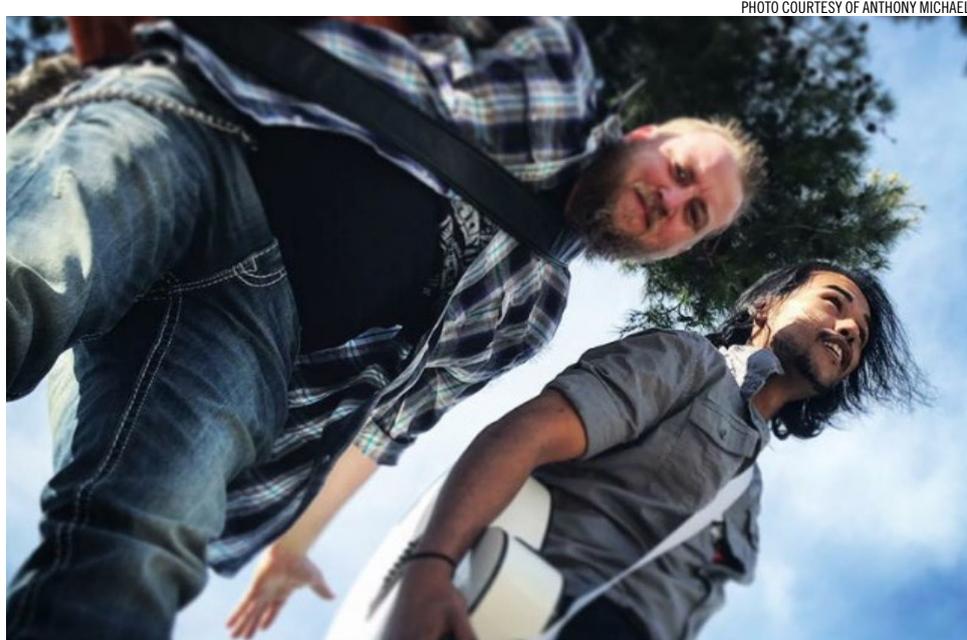


PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTHONY MICHAEL

SANTA MARIA'S GOT TALENT

Lezlie's Showcase of Talent takes place Jan. 13 at 4 p.m. at Moxie Cafe in Santa Maria. This casual setting talent show includes local performers and creative artists of all ages. Musical acts include duo Bender and Jack (pictured). First place wins \$500. Tickets range from \$15 to \$22.50. More info: (805) 268-5403 or lezlieshowcaseoftalent.com.

TASTE OF SLO: WALKING FOOD TOUR Visit five different destinations in downtown SLO per tour. All food and drinks are included. Mondays, Saturdays, 1-4 p.m. through Sept. 5 \$85. 320-420-9853. tasteofslowalkingfoodtour.com. Downtown SLO, Higuera St., San Luis Obispo.

TGIF @ TMC Proceeds benefit the Monday Clubhouse Conservancy Fine Arts Awards Program. Enjoy music, food, drinks, and more. Jan. 18, 5:30-8:30 p.m. \$25 in advance; \$30 at the door. 805-541-0594. themondayclubso.org. The Monday Club, 1815 Monterey St, San Luis Obispo.

TGIF AT TMC Enjoy drinks, food, music, and more. Ticket price includes one beer or glass of wine. Proceeds

benefit The Monday Clubhouse Conservancy Fine Arts Awards. Jan. 11, 5:30-8:30 p.m. \$25 online; \$30 at the door. 805-541-0594. themondayclubso.org. The Monday Club, 1815 Monterey St, San Luis Obispo.

TRIVIA Hosted by Brain Stew Trivia. German food from Beda's Biergarten available 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m. Bang The Drum Brewery, 950 Orcutt Road, San Luis Obispo, 242-8372, bangthedrumbrewery.com/.

WINE TASTING AT CROMA VERA Wines also available by the glass and bottle. Club members enjoy special pricing and exclusive benefits. Mondays, Fridays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. \$14. 805-946-1685. cromavera.com/tastingroom/. Croma Vera Wines, 3592 Broad St., Ste. 106, San Luis Obispo. ☉



Let Your Imagination Soar at the Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum

Give the Gift of a Membership! Call NOW for more information!



705 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, CA 93454 805 928-8414 smvdiscoverymuseum.org Tues-Sat 10-5, Sun 12-4

4TH ANNUAL
TAMALE FESTIVAL
JANUARY 19, 2019, 11AM - 5PM

FAMOUS DANCING HORSES & TRIP ROPER
BEST TAMALE CONTEST - PEOPLE'S CHOICE!
TAMALE EATING CONTEST
Sponsored by Que Pasa Mexican Grill
CHIHUAHUA COSTUME CONTEST & FASHION SHOW
Sponsored by Woods Humane Society
BOUNCE HOUSES
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TONS OF VENDORS

LIVE MUSIC:
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• MARIACHI MEXICANISIMO BAND
• RICKY MONTIJO
• THE DORK BAND
• LOS GATOS LOCOS BAND

FREE TO ATTEND
FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!
SUNKEN GARDENS, ATASCADERO

www.VisitAtascadero.com/TamaleFest



PHOTO COURTESY OF BACKTRACK VOCALS

Live Music

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

CONNER CHERLAND LIVE Jan. 11, 5-7 p.m. Complimentary. Rideau Winery, 1562 Alamo Pintado Rd., Solvang, 805-688-0717, rideauvineyard.com.

DUSTY JUGZ LIVE Jan. 11, 8 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

HIGH VOLTAGE LIVE An AC/DC tribute band. Jan. 12, 8 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

JIM RANKIN LIVE Food and drinks available for purchase. Not outside food or drinks allowed. Jan. 12, 1-4 p.m. Free admission. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

THE LOS ANGELES REED QUINTET LIVE Presented by the 39th annual Santa Ynez Valley Concert Series. Jan. 12, 7 p.m. \$10-\$20. smitv.org. St. Mark's in the Valley Episcopal Church, 2901 Nojoqui Ave., Los Olivos.

NATE LATTI LIVE Presented by Tito's Bloody Bar and Fig Mountain Brew. Jan. 13, noon Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

PARADISE ROAD LIVE This group performs a blend of Americana and '70s rock. Influences include The Band, Fleetwood Mac, Amy Mann, and Carole King. Food and drinks available for purchase. Not outside food or drinks allowed. Jan. 12, 5-8 p.m. Free admission. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

SYDNEY KOVACS LIVE Kovacs is a classically trained singer with a passion for jazz. Food and drinks available for purchase. Not outside food or drinks allowed. Jan. 11, 6-9 p.m. Free admission. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

TERESA RUSSELL AND COCIBILLI LIVE This group performs blues and rock. Food and drinks available for purchase. Not outside food or drinks allowed. Jan. 13, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Free admission. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

TOM BALL AND KENNY SULTAN LIVE Enjoy a blend of guitar and harmonica blues, and rags, and good time music. Food and drinks available for purchase. No outside food or drinks allowed. Sundays, 1:15-4 p.m. Free. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

LOMPOC/VANDEMBERG

BACKTRACK VOCALS LIVE Doors open at 6:45 p.m. Presented by the Lompoc Concert Association. Jan. 12, 7:30 p.m. lompoconcert.org. First United Methodist Church, 925 North F St., Lompoc.

SIP MUSIC CLUB Pairing music and local wine

MUSIC LISTINGS continued page 27

A-ca-mazing

Lompoc Concert Association welcomes New York-based a cappella ensemble Backtrack Vocals

BY JOE PAYNE

Ludwig van Beethoven might have had an inkling that his "Symphony No. 5 in C minor" would go down in history, but he probably didn't foresee the piece realized by an a cappella choir complete with techno beatboxing.

That's exactly the kind of approach to a classic that helped skyrocket the New York City-based a cappella group Backtrack Vocals to prominence across the internet on platforms like YouTube after the band formed in 2012. Members have come and gone since, but the current lineup has been touring nationally since 2015, including an upcoming show for the Lompoc Concert Association on Jan. 12.

Before then, the idea that a five-piece a cappella group could make a living touring the U.S. was a nonstarter, explained Backtrack soprano Mallory Moser.

"We hit the YouTube scene right when it was getting really big, so I think that springboarded us to be able to perform live because we got a lot of inquiries from our YouTube channel," Moser said. "People were like, 'Oh, you're so great, where do you guys perform?' And we thought, 'We don't really perform, but maybe we should give it a shot.'"

Backtrack's rise was part of a larger movement of a cappella show choirs rising out of the obscurity of high school and collegiate competition and into the mainstream.

In 2012, the year the group formed, the film *Pitch Perfect* came out, hilariously lampooning the college-kid obsession with a cappella show choirs that aim to emulate pop music with only vocals. The year before, the group Pentatonix won third place in NBC's *The Sing-Off*, popularizing the style that includes tight harmonies, baselines, and beatboxing.

"It was honestly just kind of the right place at the right time because it wasn't meant to be what it became," said Johnny Buffalo, Backtrack's beatboxer. "I think that it was really the popularity of these shows and movies that really made a market for it."

The Backtrack Vocals YouTube channel has more than 111,000 followers currently, a healthy enough subscriber base to allow the group access to a space in New York City that provides equipment and crew for video productions.

The editing of the videos, however, is done entirely by members of the group. A cappella YouTube videos have become a genre in and of themselves, with single members inhabiting boxes on the screen (think *The Brady Bunch* opening, but with singing). But video editing,



VOCAL TEAM: The Lompoc Concert Association hosts New York City-based a cappella group Backtrack Vocals on Jan. 12 for a performance of oldies prepared by the ensemble of young vocalists.

beatboxing, and hitting perfect harmonies aren't the only skills that Backtrack members have, explained the group's alto, Melissa Jordano, who has a background in acting and theater.

"One of my favorite things with the music videos is playing around with acting," Jordano said. "A few of us have backgrounds in acting, so it's just a fun way to explore that other side of our creative brains."

The group's members have strived to bring the level of quality in their video productions to their live performances as well. Anything they post online the group should be ready to reproduce live, soprano Moser explained, and they always work to engage audiences.

"Our shows are constantly changing and alive and moving, and we're always adding new material," Moser said. "And we've found that audiences really like when you don't sing straight for an hour and an hour and a half. We make sure we talk between each song and have some sort of bit or lead-in to the next song."

To stay at the top of their game, Backtrack's members rehearse all the time, they said. They've come a long way from busking in New York's subway stations to touring the U.S., but the work ethic has always been there as members have come and gone.

Anyone who follows the group on Instagram can see for themselves. They've posted videos of the group driving to gigs in rented vans, rehearsing as they cruise down highways.

"Yeah, sometimes we feel like the *Partridge Family*," said Mike Hinkle, Backtrack's tenor. "We do rehearse everywhere: We rehearse in hotels, in the car ... we take our business entirely mobile, on the road."

For members like Buffalo, who studied classical guitar before getting

Hear for yourself

The Lompoc Concert Association presents acapella group Backtrack Vocals with a program of oldies on Jan. 12 at 7:30 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church, 925 North F St., Lompoc. More info: lompoconcert.org.

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interested in beatboxing, the mobility of the band is a big plus.

“As an instrumentalist turned beatboxer, it’s the best,” he said. “Setup and teardown, it’s just nonexistent.”

Backtrack has a number of different programs prepared for differing audiences. For the Lompoc show, the group was asked to perform their oldies program.

That includes classics from the 1960s, ’70s, and ’80s, explained alto Jordano, but they also call further back. Their performance of Beethoven’s iconic symphony will make the



IMAGE COURTESY OF BACKTRACK VOCALS YOUTUBE CHANNEL

ONLINE FOLLOWING: Backtrack Vocals rose to popularity on YouTube as media like the film *Pitch Perfect* and the television series *Glee!* brought a cappella performance to higher prominence in the public eye.

show, she said, but the piece is also a medley of some of the composer’s best known works.

“I think our Beethoven medley is very special since it is taking something that’s instrumental, transforming it into voices, and we kind of take some creative liberties with the arrangement,” Jordano said. “So yeah, we like to switch it up during a performance. ... It’s going to be a really fun mix of songs that people hopefully know and love, and it’s a great show for all ages.” ○

Managing Editor Joe Payne is a-ca-stounded at a vocal-only performance of Beethoven. Contact him at jpayne@santamariasun.com.

MUSIC LISTINGS from page 26

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

ABOUT TIME LIVE Part of Moxie Cafe’s ongoing, complimentary live music series. Food and drinks available for purchase. **Jan. 18**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free admission. Moxie Cafe, 1317 W. McCoy Ln., Santa Maria, 805-361-2900, moxiecafe.com.

BENDER AND JACK LIVE **Jan. 11**, 10 p.m. Blast 825 Brewery, 241 S Broadway St., Ste. 101, Orcutt, 805-934-3777, rooneysirishpub.net.

BILL WOODS LIVE Part of Moxie Cafe’s ongoing, complimentary live music series. Food and drinks available for purchase. **Jan. 19**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free admission. Moxie Cafe, 1317 W. McCoy Ln., Santa Maria, 805-361-2900, moxiecafe.com.

BOB CLARK LIVE Part of Moxie Cafe’s ongoing, complimentary live music series. Food and drinks available for purchase. **Jan. 17**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free admission. Moxie Cafe, 1317 W. McCoy Ln., Santa Maria, 805-361-2900, moxiecafe.com.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SANTA YNEZ VALLEY CONCERT SERIES



FROM LA TO LO

The 39th annual Santa Ynez Valley Concert Series presents the Los Angeles Reed Quintet on Jan. 12 at 7 p.m. at St. Mark’s-in-the-Valley Episcopal Church, located at 2901 Nojoqui Ave., Los Olivos. The quintet features Claire Brazeau (pictured), the principal oboist of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. Tickets range from \$10 to \$20. More info: smitv.org.

CHRIS BELAND LIVE Influences include Paul Simon and Bob Dylan. **Jan. 12**, 7-10 p.m. Complimentary. Blast 825 Brewery, 241 S Broadway St., Ste. 101, Orcutt, 805-934-3777, rooneysirishpub.net.

DIFFERENT STRINGS LIVE Food will be available for purchase from Lidors. **Jan. 11**, 5:30-10 p.m. Free admission. Naughty Oak Brewing Co., 165 S Broadway St Ste 102, Orcutt, 805-287-9663, naughtyoak.com.

DIFFERENT STRINGS LIVE Rock band led by Keith Cox. **Jan. 12**, 10 p.m. Complimentary. Blast 825 Brewery, 241 S Broadway St., Ste. 101, Orcutt, 805-934-3777, rooneysirishpub.net.

JIMIL-ANNE LIVE Part of Moxie Cafe’s ongoing, complimentary live music series. Food and drinks available for purchase. **Jan. 12**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free admission. Moxie Cafe, 1317 W. McCoy Ln., Santa Maria, 805-361-2900, moxiecafe.com.

JOE DADDY LIVE Enjoy covers of various hits from the ‘90s. Food will be available for purchase from Barbecue in the Stix. **Jan. 18**, 5:30-9 p.m. Free admission. Naughty Oak Brewing Co., 165 S Broadway St Ste 102, Orcutt, 805-287-9663, naughtyoak.com.

THE KEITH COX TRIO LIVE **Jan. 12**, 10 p.m. Blast 825 Brewery, 241 S Broadway St., Ste. 101, Orcutt, 805-934-3777, rooneysirishpub.net.

THE LAST GANG LIVE An LA-based punk rock group. With guests Unbinding and Crucial Measures. **Jan. 17**, 8 p.m. Free admission. O’Sullivan’s Pub, 633 E. Main St., Santa Maria, 805-925-0658, osullivanpub.net.

LEZLIE’S SHOWCASE OF TALENT: DINNER SHOW The Central Coast’s premier venue for the performing arts in a casual setting. Genres include folk, bluegrass, country, pop, and rock. **Jan. 13**, 4 p.m. \$15-\$25. 805-268-5403. lezliesshowcaseoftalent.com. Moxie Cafe, 1317 W. McCoy Ln., Santa Maria.

MARIACHI LOS CAMPEROS: FREE CONCERT UCSB Arts & Lectures and The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center present this free family show as part of the Viva el Arte SB concert series. Mariachi Los Camperos is one of the most renowned mariachi ensembles in the world. **Jan. 12**, 4-5 & 7-8 p.m. Free. 805-343-2455. Guadalupe City Hall, 918 Obispo St., Guadalupe.

MARK MCMILLEN LIVE Food and drinks available for purchase. **Jan. 11**, 6-9 p.m. Free admission. Vino et Amicis, 156 S. Broadway, Orcutt, 805-631-0496, vinoetamicis.com.

MEDICINE HAT LIVE Part of Moxie Cafe’s ongoing, complimentary live music series. Food and drinks available for purchase. **Jan. 10**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free admission. Moxie Cafe, 1317 W. McCoy Ln., Santa Maria, 805-361-2900, moxiecafe.com.

NATALY LOLA LIVE Soloist. **Jan. 11**, 7-10 p.m. Blast 825 Brewery, 241 S Broadway St., Ste. 101, Orcutt, 805-934-3777, rooneysirishpub.net.

NATALY LOLA LIVE **Jan. 12**, 6-9 p.m. Complimentary. Vino et Amicis, 156 S. Broadway, Orcutt, 805-631-0496, vinoetamicis.com.

RON MILLER LIVE Food and drinks available for purchase. **Jan. 19**, 6-9 p.m. Free admission. Vino et Amicis, 156 S. Broadway, Orcutt, 805-631-0496, vinoetamicis.com.

THE WAVEBREAKERS BAND LIVE Covering popular music of the 1950s to 1980s. Tips appreciated. Part of Moxie Cafe’s ongoing, complimentary live music series. Food and drinks available for purchase. **Jan. 11**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free admission. 805-361-2900. moxiecafe.com. Moxie Cafe, 1317 W. McCoy Ln., Santa Maria.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CONNER CHERLAND



TAKE ME TO CHERLAND

Rideau Winery presents Conner Cherland on Jan. 11 from 5 to 7 p.m. Cherland performs a blend of Americana, indie, folk, and soul. Admission is free. The winery is located at 1562 Alamo Pintado Road, Solvang. More info: (805) 688-0717 or rideauvineyard.com.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

101 NORTH LIVE **Jan. 12**, 8 p.m. Complimentary admission. Mr. Rick’s, 404 Front St., Avila Beach, 805-595-7425, mrricks.com/events/.

JIM CONROY LIVE Jim Conroy, with Bruce Beck, presents his album *Magical Door*, which will be played in its entirety. **Jan. 10**, 6:30-9:30 p.m. Puffers of Pismo, 781 Price St., Pismo Beach, 805-773-6563, puffersofpismo.com/.

MATT CROSS LIVE **Jan. 13**, 1-5 p.m. Complimentary admission. Mr. Rick’s, 404 Front St., Avila Beach, 805-595-7425, mrricks.com/events/.

OPEN BLUES JAM Wednesdays Mongo’s Saloon, 359 W. Grand Ave., Grover Beach, 805-489-3639.

RUMOURS: THE ULTIMATE FLEETWOOD MAC TRIBUTE SHOW This tribute show attempts to recreate Fleetwood Mac’s legendary persona from 1975 to 1987. With period accurate equipment and costumes, this tribute’s characterizations and musical performance takes audience members back in time. **Jan. 19**, 7:30-9:30 p.m. \$45-\$55. 805-489-9444. clarkcenter.org/event/rumours-the-ultimate-fleetwood-mac-tribute-show/. Clark Center for the Performing Arts, 487 Fair Oaks Ave., Arroyo Grande.

SONGWRITERS AT PLAY: CHARLIE MCNEAL A California native and country artist, Charlie was heavily influenced by the Bakersfield music scene. **Jan. 16**, 6-8:30 p.m. Free; tips accepted; all ages are welcome. 805-226-8881. songwritersatplay.com. Branch Street Deli, 203 E. Branch St., Arroyo Grande.

TOZZI LIVE **Jan. 11** Complimentary admission. Mr. Rick’s, 404 Front St., Avila Beach, 805-595-7425, mrricks.com/events/.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

AMALIA FLEMING LIVE Amalia is a 16-year-old alternative pop singer/songwriter from Morro Bay. **Jan. 19**, 6-8 p.m. Free. 805-868-7133. 7SistersBrewing.com. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo.

BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY LIVE Tickets available at Boo Boo Records. **Jan. 11**, 8 p.m. \$35. The Fremont Theater, 1035 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo, 805-546-8600, fremontslo.com.

CREED BRATTON LIVE Tickets available at Boo Boo Records. **Jan. 10**, 8 p.m. \$17-\$67. The Fremont Theater, 1035 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo, 805-546-8600, fremontslo.com.

PAUL THORN LIVE **Jan. 17**, 6 p.m. The Fremont Theater, 1035 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo, 805-546-8600, fremontslo.com.

PINT NITE WITH BURNING, BAD, AND COOL This trio performs soul, gospel, and blues. **Jan. 11** Free. 805-868-7133. 7SistersBrewing.com. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo.

PINT NITE WITH NOAH DAVID Enjoy \$2 off 7Sisters pints in logo glasses while Noah performs drums, beatbox, bass, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, and vocals. **Jan. 18**, 6-8 p.m. Free. 805-868-7133. 7SistersBrewing.com. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo.

RANDY ROGERS BAND LIVE **Jan. 17**, 6 p.m. Alex Madonna Expo Center, 100 Madonna Rd, San Luis Obispo.

Arts Briefs

NatureTrack announces selections for film festival

The NatureTrack Film Festival (NTFF), scheduled for March 22 through 24 in Los Olivos, recently announced its official entry selections.

Films selected to be shown at the festival include *The Human Element* from director Matthew Testa and National Geographic photographer James Balog; *Forbidden Zone: Wildlife on the Battlefield* features the story of a Hungarian battlefield used for the military since the 1800s; *The Malaysian Snake Guardian* by director Manuel Coronado Acevedo; *No Man's Land: Expedition Antarctica* from Matthias Mayr of Germany; and *Arctic 3: The Last Chapter*, as well as *Natural Flow*, a film by Santa Ynez Valley soccer player Boston Fitzpatrick. Several student-made films will also be featured in the festival including *Our Last Trash* from UCSB student film director Joanne Yue who examines trash and zero-waste lifestyles.

Awards for Best Student Film, Best in Category, Best Depiction of Children Connecting to Nature, Audience Favorite, and overall Best in Festival will be presented. The festival starts on March 22 with a reception at St. Mark's In-the-Valley Church; films will be screened at St. Marks as well as the Santa Ynez Valley Grange and the Gates Foss Community Center at Los Olivos School.

For more information or to purchase tickets, visit naturetrackfilmfestival.org.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BOSTON FITZPATRICK



SMCT presents *Streetcar Named Desire*

The Santa Maria Civic Theatre announced its next production, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, running from Jan. 25 through Feb. 10.

The play, which won the 1948 Pulitzer Prize for drama, is part of the theater's 60th season. Set in New Orleans after WWII, the play follows Blanche DuBois, a delicate and neurotic woman who moves in with her younger sister, Stella, and Stella's brutal husband, Stanley Kowalski. The Civic Theatre's Sally Buchanan directs the new production.

The theater advises that the material is not appropriate for persons 14 and under. Show times are 7 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and 1:30 p.m. on Sundays. Tickets are available at smct.org. The theater is located at 1660 N. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

Elverhoj Museum hosts poetry reading

The Elverhoj Museum of History and Art presents A Nordic Light Duet, a reading of Danish poetry by local poets, scheduled for Jan. 12 at the museum.

The event coincides with the Elverhoj's current exhibit, artist Hanne Stovring's Nordic Light Shines. The presentation will include selections of poetry in English and then in Danish. Featured readers include local poets Steve Braff, Rebecca Rose, and Teresa McNeil MacClean. Musician Bent Myggen will perform selected works throughout the presentation.

The performance begins at 4 p.m. and features light refreshments. The museum is located at 1624 Elverhoy Way, Solvang. For more information, call (805) 686-1211. ○

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

Modern love

Artist Rosemary Pierce broke all the rules in her rise to success

BY REBECCA ROSE

The first time artist Rosemary Pierce met with a gallery owner to discuss her work, she left in tears.

Pierce had just taken a huge leap of faith. She'd walked away from a lucrative career in real estate to focus on being an artist. It was a gamble that seemed to immediately backfire.

"She looked at the work and said, 'I've seen things like this before,'" Pierce said. "She was very rude to me. She treated me like I was nothing."

The aspiring artist went back to her car and burst into tears. But then, while sitting there, a sudden feeling came over her.

"I thought, 'Who is she to tell me what I can do?'" she said. "I started thinking about it and thought, 'She's in this little gallery. What does she know? Why would I let her decide what to do?'"

The heartbreaking moment turned into a motivator for Pierce, who went home and immediately began researching how to sell her own art. Nearly a dozen years later, Pierce is a highly sought-after installation artist with pieces all over the world.

Pierce maintained a studio in Santa Ynez for years and now lives in San Diego. But her work hangs in many private homes and businesses throughout the Santa Ynez Valley, where she still works with many clients who seek her out for custom creations.

As though willed into existence by her own sheer force of determination, Pierce's career is largely a product of her own creation. The artist is entirely self-taught; the only art class she's ever had was in college to fulfill an elective.

She was a premed student and a psychology major in college, primed for a life where art was on the sidelines, hovering around her.

"I always was creative, even as a child," she said. "I would invent and create things. I knew I was creative, but I didn't know I was an artist. But I always carried art in my life."

As she approached 40, Pierce experienced what she described as a "soul call," a moment where she questioned what she really wanted to do in her life. She described what happened next as a leap of faith, deciding to start a new career by focusing on her art.

With no formal training or classes, Pierce set about trying to teach herself as much as she could about art and the business.

"I decided to be an artist and learn what that was," she said. "It was really about expressing who I am more so than learning a technique. It was about exposing the essence of my soul."

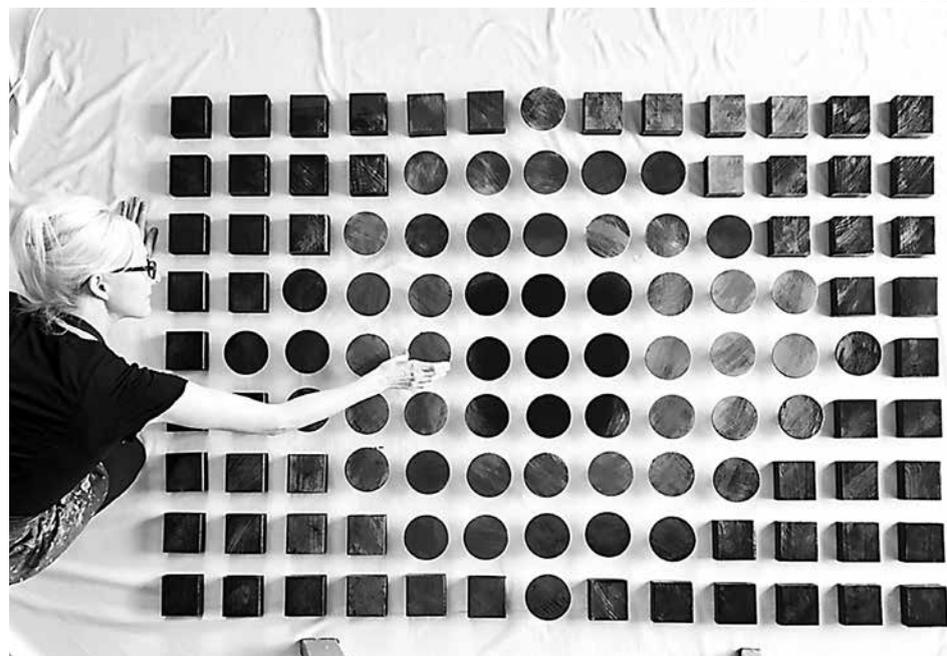
Pierce began experimenting with sculpture, heading to the hardware store and finding unusual pieces to work with. She picked old frames out of junk piles and painted over them; she bought piles of the same item at discount stores and challenged herself to build something unique.

"I dreamed these big visions in my head," she said. "They were these very big things I could see so clearly."

From there, she had the aforementioned disastrous encounter with a



A WAVE OF SUCCESS: A heartbreaking rejection from a gallery owner prompted artist Rosemary Pierce to sell her artwork on her own, using websites such as Etsy. Today, she commands thousands of dollars for custom designed pieces.



MODERN GAL: Rosemary Pierce describes her art as approachable abstract designs, focused on three-dimensional elements utilizing bright, saturated colors.

curator. Pierce said the model for becoming a successful artist was for many years pigeonholed into few options: Either an artist is represented by a gallery and sold through a store or they pick up shows and find buyers that way. Armed with a background in business, Pierce decided to try something different.

She turned to Etsy. At the time, Etsy was a young website that was beginning to grow a huge following of arts and crafts fans. Pierce's unorthodox gamble paid off.

"I let people, actual buyers, tell me whether they like my work or not rather than a gallery," she said. "I sold things right away."

Custom orders soon came rolling in, and Pierce began to grow her art business. In 2017, she was named one of HGTV's "Favorite Creative Geniuses," a spotlight on the network's favorite designers and creators.

Her business today is filled with orders from cities such as Los Angeles and San Francisco. She said she prefers making custom work for clients rather than selling pieces because it allows her more freedom to design the perfect piece for their space.

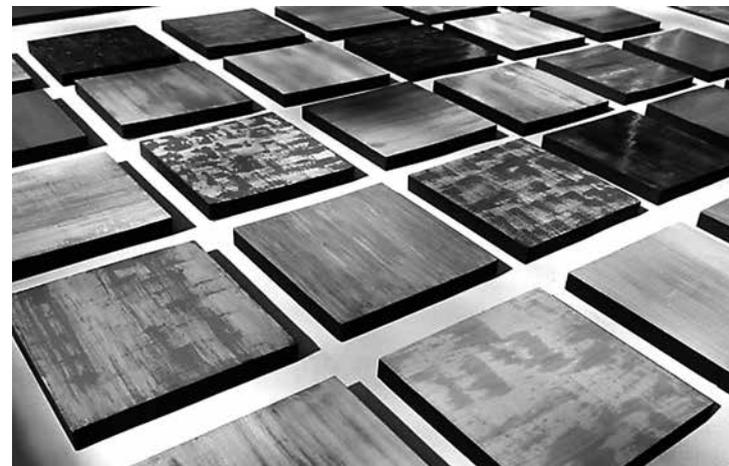
"Each project is going to be unique to what the space is," Pierce said. "Who is going to see it? Who is going to experience it? How do I make that fit in? That's what works for me."

If asked, Pierce describes her work as three-dimensional textural sculpture, imbued with her own sense of shape and color. Her work is especially known for its inventive and playful use of color, often incorporating bright complementary primary colors or hues of one or more colors to create repeating or similar designs reflected throughout an installation.

Pierce said she often gets notes from other artists on how she comes up with her ideas or color usage, but she finds it hard to explain in artistic terms.

"I don't know," she said. "It just comes out of me. One of the greatest things is it is so easy to break the rules when you don't know what they are." ○

Arts and Lifestyle Writer Rebecca Rose is loved modernly. Contact her at rrose@santamariasun.com.



WHAT A SQUARE: Modern artist Rosemary Pierce is a self-taught artist who never went to art school or had any professional training. She designs and creates custom installations for private residences and corporations all over the country.



We invite schools, clubs and social groups to tour our facility.
Artist and presenters are welcome to schedule exhibits.



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IMAGES COURTESY OF MINNIE ANDERSON

Light bright

Gallery Los Olivos artists share work that shines

BY REBECCA ROSE

For their first big show of the year, the artists of Gallery Los Olivos present their interpretation of one of their most important tools: light.

In every possible way, light reigns as a vital part of how an artist constructs their vision, be it as a physical lighting source that carries a viewer's eye through a piece or as a deconstructed element, examined not just as a function of electricity or sunlight, but as a motif or symbol. For the latest show at Gallery Los Olivos, more than a dozen artists look to tell their own story about light, how it inspires them, and how they see its effect on their work.

Julie Fish's piece, *Mystery Abounds*, is a series of two paintings that tell a unique story, transporting the viewer to a fantasy realm marked by bold dots of light and color. Fish's style is a blend of pointillism and impressionism, one that uses color to create directionality in each piece. She uses light to create the dramatic arc of her story, pulling the reader to mysterious figures, seemingly haunted and drawn into the brightest parts of her canvases.

Near June Mountain, by impressionist oil painter Renee Kelleher, is one of the most well-executed examples on display, especially in terms of the precise detailing on the highlight of her work. Expertly painted tree branches in the foreground wind carefully into the twisted rocks and crevices of the mountain in the background, as the painting breaks off into three distinct layers of color and light. Kelleher opted to capture the scene in bright midday sun, demonstrating the stark contrasts between light and shadow throughout the work.

Another standout oil painting is *Mistie's Bouquet*, by artist Cheryl Ambrecht. Ambrecht's still life of flowers is unassuming enough at first to catch one off guard. A closer study of the light in her painting tells a deeper story about the movement and gradient between light and shadow. On the light side, blossoms expand into the light, filling their side of the canvas

Into the light

Light, the latest show at Gallery Los Olivos, runs through Jan. 31. The gallery is located at 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos. For more information, contact (805) 688-7517.



BALANCE: Gallery Los Olivos' latest exhibit offers viewers a chance to see perspectives from a variety of its artists, including Minnie Anderson. Anderson took an abstract approach to the topic, while others presented still life, landscapes, sculptures, and more.

with bright colors and the hints of possibilities. On the other, flowers dip into the shadows, as darker colors dominate the palette. It's a simple act of storytelling, and Ambrecht does a lot with a minimalist subject.

But it's not all still lifes and landscapes at the new show. Minnie Anderson presents one of the boldest images in the show, a piece titled *Balanced*. Anderson centers the work around a faint, lightly sketched out grid in white, then plays with the idea of a top right light source flooding into the canvas. The whitest parts in the upper corner become dusty and almost chalklike, while a sharp turn to the opposite corner provides a stark rebuttal.

Anderson's brush work is impeccable; she knows when to be aggressive and when to pull back, allowing transparencies into the full-color story of her work.

The show runs through Jan. 31 and is well worth the time to experience. Light is so often taken for granted as a way for artists to shape their entire visual journey, and the artists in this exhibit provide a bright open window into that world. ○

Arts and Lifestyle Writer Rebecca Rose is light on her feet. Contact her at rrose@santamariasun.com.



GOLDEN POND: Oil painter B.J. Stapen's entry into the latest show at Gallery Los Olivos, called Light, features the artist's impressionist interpretation of a pond. The show runs through Jan. 31.

The weight is over

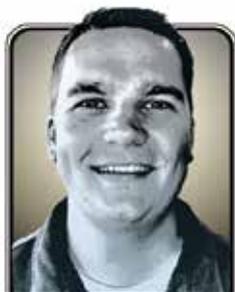
Krider needs to lose some pounds, new year or not

BY ROB KRIDER

It is a brand-new year and that means pretty much one thing and one thing only to me: I need a new *Dilbert* desk calendar. Other than that, the concept that it is a "new year" doesn't really make a difference in my life. I know other people become very excited about New Year's Eve. I get it, the Earth went one full revolution all the way around the sun. Yay! Let's get drunk. But the idea that this is a new opportunity to change my life, get organized, lose weight, yada, yada, yada, doesn't work for me. My garage was a mess and I was fat on Dec. 31, and my garage is still a mess and I'm still fat on Jan. 1. Long story short, I'm fat with a messy garage regardless of the calendar. There is no reason to drag the Earth and the sun into my fat, messy lifestyle.

The number 2019 doesn't mean anything to me, other than the unfortunate coincidence that the Chinese animal for this year is the pig (which matches quite well with my fat, messy existence). The number that really bothers me isn't 2019, it is 214. You see, I tipped the scales on Jan. 1, 2019, at a hefty 214 pounds. Don't get excited ladies—I'm by no means taller than 6 feet, so 214 pounds is certainly not a good thing on me. I'm a short guy, and 214 pounds creates a body shape that is more in line with a tuna can wearing cargo shorts and flip-flops. All the moms I know are currently lining up outside theaters to see Jason Momoa with his shirt off in *Aquaman* (who is 234 pounds and 6 feet 4 inches tall) while I am lining up outside of a Ben and Jerry's at 214 pounds and 5 feet 8 inches short. Nobody wants to see me with my shirt off. I have what is referred to as "dad bod." For the record, dad bod is not a compliment.

I don't have an issue with dad bod. I'm a dad and I have a body, it seems to work for me. The issue I have is with the number 214. You see,



Rob Krider
Man Overboard

at 210 pounds I can bend over and put on my shoes. At 214, I can't. At 210 pounds my T-shirts cover my belly. At 214 they don't. At 210 pounds I can live with myself. At 214 pounds I have to make a lifestyle change. I don't really want to be a part of the big New

Year's exercise craze that everyone becomes associated with for about one whole week in January each year. However, my 214-pound body is telling me, "Dude, it is time for an intervention. You need to get out of the Ben and Jerry's line and get to a gym. Pronto!"

The problem with diet and exercise is it sucks. The food sucks, the gym sucks. The whole process is sucky. On the other hand, Ben and Jerry's ice cream and binging shows on Netflix is pretty great. What is a boy to do?

I finally found the answer to all of my problems; I actually grasped the inspiration I needed to finally make a change. I simply saw myself on television, and it wasn't pretty. I didn't even recognize myself. I certainly didn't look anything like Aquaman, instead I looked more like Tuna Can Man. I had filmed an episode for a show called *Horsepower Wars*, where my job was to drive cars really fast and say witty things like, "This car is really fast." When I finally saw the episode on a big-screen, high-definition television, I knew right then I would never eat again. I looked like the illegitimate love child of Drew Carey and Tom Arnold, if you fed that love child nothing but doughnuts and milkshakes for for 40 years.

Well, screw you Ben and Jerry's, I'm actually going to the gym. ○

Rob is currently on a treadmill walking at 2 miles per hour. At his current heart rate, he will burn 1 pound of fat by next New Year's. To read more from Rob Krider or contact him, visit robkrider.com.

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Film Reviews

AQUAMAN

What's it rated? **PG-13**
 What's it worth? **Full price**
 Where's it showing? **Hi-Way Drive-In, Movies Lompoc, Parks Plaza**
PICK James Wan (*Saw, Insidious, The Conjuring*) directs this latest entry in the DC Extended Universe, *Aquaman*. The story centers on land dweller Arthur Curry (Jason Momoa), aka Aquaman, the rightful heir to the throne of the underwater kingdom, Atlantis. After his Atlantean half-brother, King Orm (Patrick Wilson), declares war on the surface, Arthur must claim his birthright in order to stop genocide.

There's a lot to geek out about. I'd hate to spend too much time gushing about the special effects and design over the performances and story, but boy oh boy does this movie look freakin' cool! My only real complaint is the scenes on land occasionally pale in comparison to everything happening underwater, and that's purely due to the visuals. (143 min.)
 —Caleb Wiseblood

BUMBLEBEE

What's it rated? **PG-13**
 What's it worth? **Matinee**
 Where's it showing? **Hi-Way Drive-In, Movies Lompoc**
PICK Director Travis Knight (*Kubo and the Two Strings*) helms this Transformers prequel that follows *Bumblebee* on the run from Decepticons in 1987. After a deadly brawl, the damaged Autobot becomes dormant in a junkyard in a Californian beach town, disguised as a VW Beetle. He's soon discovered by Charlie (Hailee Steinfeld), an 18-year-old outsider determined to fix him up and help defend against further attacks. Meanwhile, two Decepticon assassins are already on their way to earth to destroy the planet and Bumblebee once and for all. (114 min.)
 —Caleb Wiseblood

A DOG'S WAY HOME

What's it rated? **PG**
 Where's it showing? **Parks Plaza**
NEW Charles Martin Smith (*Air Bud, Dolphin Tale*) directs this family adventure about Bella (voiced by Bryce Dallas Howard), a dog who travels 400 miles to find her owner. (96 min.)
 —Glen Starkey

ESCAPE ROOM

What's it rated? **PG-13**
 What's it worth? **Rent it**
 Where's it showing? **Movies Lompoc**
 Director Adam Robitel (*Insidious: The Last Key, The Taking of Deborah Logan*) helms this thriller about six strangers who find themselves in circumstances beyond their control after entering a mysterious escape room.
 There's enough suspense to thrill fans of the genre, but for

FILM REVIEWS continued page 33

SCORING

FULL PRICE... It's worth the full price of an evening showing
MATINEE..... Save a few bucks, catch an afternoon showing
RENT IT..... It's worth a rental
STREAM IT..... Wait 'til Netflix has it
NOTHING..... Don't waste your time

Abuse of power

Writer-director Adam McKay (*The Big Short, Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy, Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby, Step Brothers*) helms this biopic dramedy about Washington, D.C., bureaucratic insider Dick Cheney (Christian Bale), who became George W. Bush's (Sam Rockwell) vice president, using his power to reshape the U.S. and its foreign policy. (132 min.)

Glen: On Jan. 6, Christian Bale secured the Golden Globe for Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture, Musical or Comedy, heightening his chance to win a Best Actor Oscar. Bale deserves it. He disappears into performance as Dick Cheney. He nails Cheney's habit for talking out of the side of a subtle snarl, his lumbering and slouchy gait, and his measured speech patterns. It certainly helps that his makeup is transformative, but Bale deserves most of the credit for inhabiting Cheney's skin. You probably heard that Bale credited Satan for inspiring his performance, but in fact Bale's portrayal does a lot to humanize Cheney, who appears to love and respect his wife, Lynne (Amy Adams)—in a *Lady Macbeth* sort of way—and support his daughters, Liz (Lily Rabe) and Mary (Alison Pill), even when the latter comes out as gay. The film covers Cheney's life from his drunken and loutish youth through his Machiavellian turn as the puppeteer behind George W. Bush's presidency. What seems clear in McKay's interpretation of Cheney is that he was power hungry and believed the ends justify the means. Unnecessary war, "legalized" torture, bolstering corporations and the super rich—those are Cheney's enduring legacies.

Anna: Bale's transformation is pretty astonishing. In fact, when I first saw the trailer for this, I didn't recognize Cheney as him until his name popped up. I was flabbergasted. Bale is known for his ability to transform physically for a role, and with a fantastic makeup team he continues to move the bar upwards as Cheney. I'm probably not alone in the reality that most of what I know about Cheney is from his time as VP, but this film delves into the making of the man, his shortcomings, his character, and his ultimate rise to and transformation of the job of vice president. While previously thought of—as Lynne describes—a "nothing job," the role of

VP felt like a step down from his previous positions in government and as CEO of Halliburton until he realized he could take advantage of Bush's inexperience and take over key roles, along with the team he built including Donald Rumsfeld (Steve Carrell), Paul Wolfowitz (Eddie Marsan), and attorney John Yoo (Paul Yoo). Lynne is a force to be reckoned with in her own right, and Adams turns out a fantastic performance as the obstinate and focused politician's wife. Even though the film explores the deeply disturbing and often ugly "accomplishments" that Cheney made and his heavy-handed grasp at power, it manages to be funny and witty. It certainly reminded me of all the reasons I really don't like that guy, but it also presented a flawed human character who at times is as relatable in one moment as he is evil in the next.

Glen: I have to hand it to McKay. He makes some bold and brilliant choices in this depiction. At one point the narrator (Jesse Plemons) is talking about Cheney's ability to make even the craziest ideas seem measured and reasonable thanks to his delivery, and then Cheney starts uttering the most ridiculous and absurd idea

that breaks the reality of the scene. In another moment, the narrator talks about all the ways Cheney's vice presidency distorted U.S. foreign policy and then we're in a scene in a restaurant where the architects of the Iraq War are being told the various items on the menu, such as "extraordinary rendition." At another point we see Dick and Lynne in bed and they begin conversing in Shakespearean English, driving home the *Macbeth* idea. In the film's final moments, Cheney breaks the fourth wall, speaking directly to the audience. These are offbeat but spot-on choices that make the film come alive. It's worth mentioning that Rockwell as the bumbling George W. Bush is terrific. He really comes off as a buffoon who was unfit for office and ripe for manipulation. Cheney definitely ruins some reputations during his reign, most notably Condoleezza Rice (LisaGay Hamilton) and Colin Powell (Tyler Perry), who Cheney drafted into his Iraq War marketing. What a terrible moment in U.S. history, but what an entertaining look at those dark days. This is a terrific film.



PUPPETMASTER: Christian Bale stars as Vice President Dick Cheney, who wielded unprecedented power in a position usually seen as powerless, with guidance from his wife, Lynne (Amy Adams).

Anna: After Jimmy Carter is elected and Cheney loses his position as chief of staff, a false credit runs midway through the movie claiming Dick and Lynne retired and now raise show golden retrievers on their expansive lakefront property. It's an alternate reality to what actually happened and a pretty funny moment in the film. The narrator and his relationship to the story is a mystery at first, but it's a nice twist in the last stretch of the film, and Plemons gives a good voice to carry the storyline backward and forward through time. It's interesting as well as incredibly maddening to see the vast amount of manipulation and lies, cover-ups, and coercion that ran rampant in that administration and what a linchpin Cheney was in the whole operation. After the 2016 election and hearing, "But what about the emails?" over and over again regarding Hillary Clinton, then reading at the end of this film that the Bush administration "lost" 22 million emails, goes to show that people tend to only pay attention to the things that bolster their particular opinions or political leanings. Using an obscure interpretation of the Constitution's statement of presidential power, Cheney put his muscle behind the idea that if the president does it, it isn't illegal. It's a weird, twisty idea that the power hungry politicians still cling to today (Looking at you, Trump!). I thought Bale wholeheartedly deserved the Golden Globe for his performance, and I won't be surprised if he wins the Oscar as well. He's a studied and meticulous Cheney, and the cast around him does nothing but bolster the performance. This one was a win for me. ○

Sun Screen is written by *New Times* Senior Staff Writer Glen Starkey and his wife, Anna. Comment at gstarkey@newtimeslo.com.

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FILM REVIEWS from page 32

many the film won't warrant a trip to the theaters. (109 min.)
—Caleb Wiseblood

MARY POPPINS RETURNS

What's it rated? **PG**
What's it worth? **Full price**
Where's it showing? **Parks Plaza**
Rob Marshall (*Chicago*, *Memoirs of a Geisha*, *Pirates of the Caribbean: One Stranger Tides*, *Into the Woods*) directs this sequel to the 1964 classic. This time around, Mary Poppins (Emily Blunt) returns to the Banks family children who are now adults. Michael Banks (Ben Whishaw) lives with his three children—Anabel (Pixie Davies), John (Nathanael Saleh), and Georgie (Joel Dawson)—and their housekeeper, Ellen (Julie Walters), in the same house on Cherry Tree Lane. With encouragement by Michael's sister, Jane (Emily Mortimer), and the help of lamplighter, Jack (Lin-Manuel Miranda), Mary helps the new set of Banks children find the joy in life.

This sequel—54 years after the original!—is just as wonderful and magical as the first one. Rob Marshall and company have truly done the original justice. The story, the music, the acting, the cinematography, the special effects, and the direction are all superb!

—Glen Starkey

THE MULE

What's it rated? **R**
What's it worth? **Matinee**
Where's it showing? **Parks Plaza**
Clint Eastwood (*Unforgiven*, *Million Dollar Baby*, *Gran Torino*) directs this crime thriller screenplay by Sam Dolnick, based on *The New York Times Magazine* article, "The Sinaloa Cartel's 90-Year-Old Drug Mule," by Nick Schenk. Eastwood takes on the role of Earl Stone, a horticulturist and World War II vet who's caught in Michigan running \$3 million worth of Mexican cartel cocaine.

Overall, this is an ambling film that occasionally delivers moments of emotional resonance. Eastwood is 88 years old, and the former hunky lead is comfortable in his skin, gifted behind and in front of the camera, and still capable of crafting an entertaining story. (117 min.)

—Glen Starkey

SECOND ACT

What's it rated? **PG-13**
What's it worth? **Stream it**
Where's it showing? **Parks Plaza**
Peter Segal (*Tommy Boy*, *Anger Management*, *50 First Dates*, *Get Smart*) directs Jennifer Lopez as big-box store worker Maya, who keeps getting passed over for promotion. With the help of a computer-smart kid, she reinvents herself online and parlays her new identity into a posh new job on Madison Avenue.

J-Lo is as magnetic as ever, but the cliché story and middling humor isn't worthy of her talents. Even its attempt at delivering a heartfelt message of gender equality seems cloying and inauthentic. (103 min.)

—Glen Starkey

SPIDER-MAN: INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE

What's it rated? **PG**
What's it worth? **Full price**
Where's it showing? **Movies Lompoc**
Bob Persichetti, Peter Ramsey, and Rodney Rothman co-direct this animated action adventure co-written by Phil Lord and co-produced by Christopher Miller (*The Lego Movie*, *21 Jump Street*). Miles Morales (voiced by Shameik Moore) becomes the Spider-Man of his version of reality, then crosses into a parallel universe where he teams with other realities' Spider-Men and a Spider-Woman to stop an evil that threatens all realities.

Spider-Man: Into The Spider-Verse does for Marvel what *Teen Titans Go! To The Movies* takes these characters places that live action couldn't possibly allow. Despite the comparison to a quite sillier film, *Spider-Verse* is surprisingly just as earnest as it is humorous. No matter how many one-liners, knee-slappers, and instances of breaking the fourth wall there are, the stakes feel real. (117 min.)

—Caleb Wiseblood

VICE

What's it rated? **R**
What's it worth? **Full price**
Where's it showing? **Parks Plaza**
See Sun Screen. ○

—Glen Starkey

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



HELLRAISER: JUDGMENT

When? **2018**
What's it rated? **Unrated**
Where's it available? **DVD, Netflix**

Horror movie fans know better than most how depressing it can be to watch a once great movie franchise slowly circle the drain.

Whether it's *Friday the 13th*, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *Scream*, or any other popular scary flick series, the diminishing returns of quality and scariness with each new sequel is so common in this genre that it's taken as inevitable.

In no other horror movie series is this more apparent than the Hellraiser franchise. The original movie, 1987's *Hellraiser*, is a near perfect horror movie: a bloody, disturbing, hellish masterpiece that introduced viewers to the iconic and terrifying Pinhead. Sadly, none of the franchise's subsequent sequels were ever able to live up to original. It seemed with each successive sequel the plots got sillier, the acting got worse, and Pinhead and his fellow demonic, leather-clad Cenobites became less frightening.

Hellraiser: Judgment is the 10th entry in the franchise, released in 2018. The film follows three police detectives who, while on the trail of a brutal serial killer, come into contact with Pinhead and the otherworldly forces of hell, all of whom are tied into the killings.

The film has a lot of flaws, the biggest being the plot itself. Much of the movie is spent with detectives as they argue and investigate an uninteresting and generic serial killer case. The scenes of Pinhead, the Cenobites, and a new batch of twisted deformed denizens of Hell called the Stygian Inquisition, are few and far between. The film was made on an incredibly small budget (only \$350,000), and it clearly shows in this aspect.

However, horror fans shouldn't write this film off completely. The few scenes we do get with Pinhead, Inquisitors, and the hellish and surreal nether-realm they inhabit are genuinely disturbing, gruesome, and horrifying. The set design of these sequences pulls from other horror movies like 2000's *The Cell* and 1995's *Seven*, and even contain nods to the original movie, including an appearance by "The Chatterer" one of the Cenobites who appeared alongside Pinhead in the original film. These sequences recall the flavor of the first movie, and leave one wishing that there were more of them in *Judgment*.

Taken along with horror movie Easter eggs like the cameo by *Nightmare on Elm Street* actress Heather Langenkamp, it's clear that writer and director Gary J.

Tunncliffe cares about the Hellraiser franchise but was hampered by a lack of budget and other production difficulties. *Hellraiser: Judgment* is worth a watch because parts of it show promise, possibility, and a direction to revive one of the best horror franchises out there, if only the studio that currently owns the rights to the property, Dimension Films, would be willing put some real money behind it. Will we see an 11th film, and will it build on the bright spots of *Judgment*? We can dream, can't we? (81 minutes) ○

—Chris McGuinness

PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB



TO HELL AND BACK: 2018's *Hellraiser: Judgment* is mostly disappointing, but parts of it show glimmers of hope for the horror franchise's future.

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The Rebeccamendies

Announcing the Rebeccamendies, the best of food and drink from 2018

BY REBECCA ROSE

I'm a sucker for awards shows (I wear an actual fancy dress to watch the Academy Awards from my house, and I treat the Emmys like a religious holiday). With the Golden Globes wrapping up and the Oscars right around the corner, what better time to announce the first ever Rebeccamendies, my picks for the very best of the best of the Central Coast food scene.

The template for the document I open to write these columns starts with the phrase, "I ate amazing food." Nothing was truer in 2018, a year when I learned more about food and our local food economy than I thought imaginable. Also, apparently I ate a lot of food. So much food.

My personal trainer thanks you for supporting this column and keeping him in a job. With that vast array of knowledge behind me, here are my picks for 2018's Rebeccamendies:

Best Main Course: Cultura Mole with Pork Cheeks and Safflower Tortilla

Bear and Star Restaurant, Los Olivos

In September, I was invited by chef John Cox to participate in an unusual Chef's Table Dinner that paired him with chef Michelle Estigoy and co-owner Sarah Kabat-Marcy of Cultura in Carmel. Estigoy worked with Cox to design an unforgettable six-course tasting dinner, and Kabat-Marcy treated guests to an intricate mezcál tasting. The best thing I ate that night was Estigoy's famous mole, served with pork cheeks on a safflower tortilla. The mole is one of the most complex and vibrant sauces I've ever tasted, paired with succulent pork cheeks that practically melted on my fork.

Best Appetizer: Truffle Roasted Cauliflower

First and Oak, Solvang

It is practically impossible to choose a favorite dish at First and Oak in Solvang, which saw the arrival of new Executive Chef JJ Guerrero in 2018, but if you had to press me, I'd point to this elegant dish, which combines nearly every possible texture into one perfectly composed bite. (Technically First and Oak doesn't do "appetizers," they do meal progressions,

but I'm calling this one for the category.) Cauliflower had a bit of a moment last year, with chefs and amateur home cooks re-inventing the reliable vegetable for some intriguing main dishes. But the combined crunch of toasted quinoa with the creaminess of whipped cauliflower was a really remarkable effort by one of the area's best restaurants.

Best Wine: 2016 El Jabali Chardonnay

Alma Rosa Winery, Buellton

Imagine how stunned I was to snag an invite to a vineyard tour and private luncheon with Alma Rosa Winery's Richard Sanford. Sanford shared his knowledge about organic vineyards and sustainability along with a bottle of the vineyard's 2016 El Jabali Chardonnay. With less than 250 cases produced, the 2016 chardonnay is a rare treat for a vineyard that leans towards pinot noir. The wine is aged in 50 percent wood

and 50 percent stainless steel with notes of Anjou pear, lemongrass, and kiwi and balanced with an acidity that made it the perfect sip of wine this year.

Best Vegetarian Dish: Gnocchi

Bell's, Los Alamos

When Bell's French bistro replaced longtime favorite Bell Street Farms, there was a moment of trepidation among locals and faraway fans of the eatery. But one bite of their food proved they fit right in. The Central Coast is great when it comes to thinking about vegetarian options; many places offer meat replacements or full vegan dishes. This dish stood out for its immaculate and hearty flavor, a silky soft bite of expertly prepared gnocchi and a sauce that was luscious, creamy, and packed with cheese. It never felt pretentious or audacious, just a simple bowl of gnocchi to eat at your leisure. Perfection.

EATS continued page 36



NOTHING TO WINE ABOUT: Alma Rosa Winery's 2016 El Jabali Chardonnay is delicate and well balanced between fruitiness and acidity. Grown and produced in Buellton, it stands out as one of the best local wines sampled this year.



DON'T BE CHEEKY: Pork cheeks and mole presented by Cultura Executive Chef Michelle Estigoy was a stunning dish served at the Bear and Star in Los Olivos. The dinner was part of a mezcál pairing co-hosted by Cultura co-owner Sarah Kabat-Marcy.

RIBS

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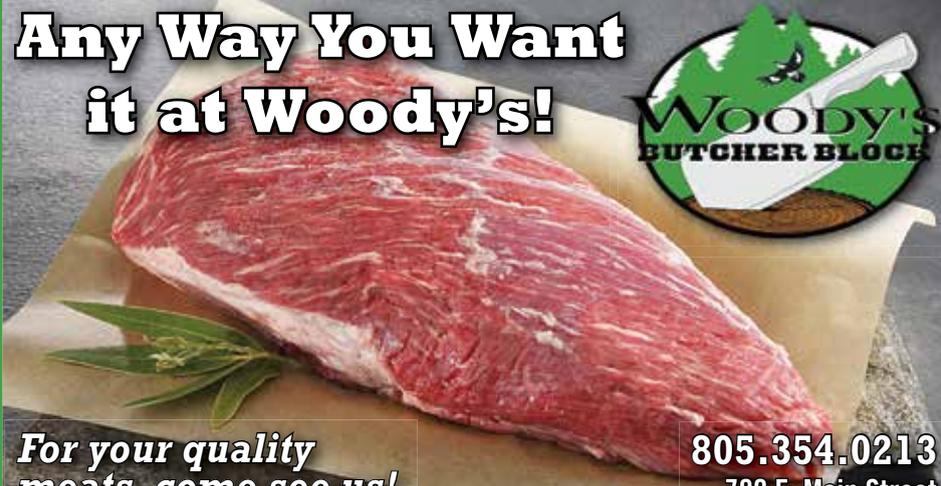
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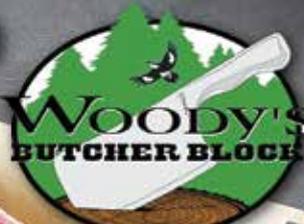
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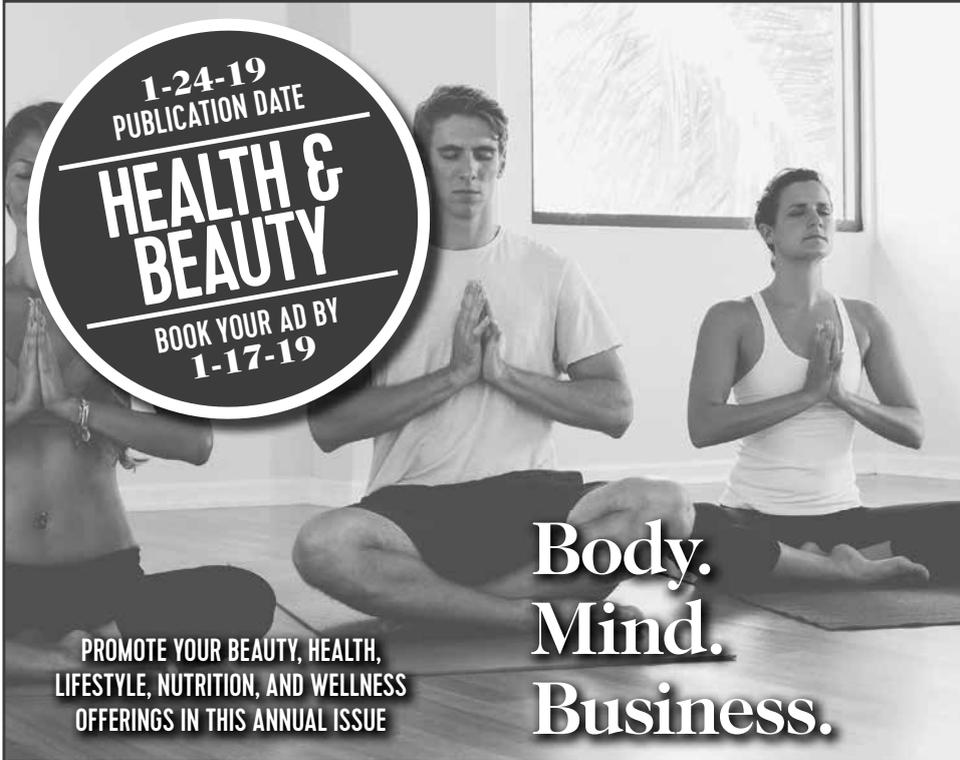
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EATS from page 34

Best Mixed Drink: Harvest Margarita

Mad and Vin at The Landsby, Solvang
Honestly, this was like picking a favorite child. I thought I would fall apart emotionally and then set myself adrift at sea rather than name my favorite glass of booze this year. But with head bartender Mason Frakes no longer stirring up trouble in a glass at the former Rooney's in Orcutt, suddenly my choices got a little narrower. As usual, I was wild about everything coming out of Alberto Battaglini's imagination at SY Kitchen, as well as Bottlest's (RIP) kitschy retro drink menu. But my pick has to be the Harvest Margarita at Mad and Vin. This was a weird and wonderful drink made with a cinnamon apple shrub (a concoction of macerated fruit and vinegar) with tequila, lime, and agave.

Best Dessert: Baklava

The Mediterranean Cafe, Santa Maria
This wasn't even a contest. The baklava at Reda Kchik's Mediterranean Cafe is not just one of the best desserts served in town, it's one of the best bites of food I've had in my life. It's a crispy bed of phyllo dough carefully arranged in a tower of sweet syrup, buttressed by a subtle hint of toasted nuts. It truly deserves all the awards, but this one is obviously the most important.

Well, that's it for the inaugural Rebeccamendies. I'm packing up my ball gown and getting out my stretchy pants to enjoy another year of devouring the best offerings from local chefs and eateries. If they're lucky, they might make the list this time in 2020. ○

Arts and Lifestyle Writer Rebecca Rose wins all the awards. Contact her at rrose@santamariasun.com.

Rebeccamendations:

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

• It's that time of year again. California is rolling out **Restaurant Week**, and locally there are a lot of ways to seize on great deals at local venues. Restaurants are offering specials priced at \$20.19, some of which include wine pairings and other special menu items. **Santa Maria Valley's Restaurant Week** runs from Jan. 16 through 27 and includes **Anthony's** in Guadalupe, **The Century Room** at the Santa Maria Inn, **Pizzeria Bello Forno** in Orcutt, and many more. The **Santa Ynez Valley Restaurant Week** runs from Jan. 27 through Feb. 10 and features **The Gathering Table**, **Cecco Ristorante**, **Hill Haven Provisions**, **Industrial Eats**, **Hummingbird Restaurant**, and others. For more information on participating venues or to see the menu items, visit visitsyv.com/restaurant-week/ or santamariavalley.com/restaurantweek.

• Speaking of special food events, Los Alamos is hosting a tie-in event to Restaurant Week. **The Los Alamos Mushroom Festival** runs from Jan. 25 through 27 and features mushroom-themed dishes, discussions, and a chance to forage for local mushrooms (pictured above). On Jan. 25, **PICO** will feature a three-course



PHOTO BY REBECCA ROSE

mushroom meal with wine pairings for \$90 at 7 p.m. On Jan. 26, starting at 2 p.m., **Bedford Winery** will host a discussion panel with **Bob Cummings** along with a cooking class and wine and mushroom tasting for \$50 per person; \$40 for wine club members. For reservations, contact Bedford Winery at (805) 344-2107 or **PICO** at (805) 344-1122.

• Steak. Eggs. Hash browns. **Santa Maria Burgers** still does classics for breakfast like the beloved meaty dish (pictured below). Not for the faint of heart (or my vegan/vegetarian allies), but it really hits the spot before a long day. Or after! Try it at **1785 S. Broadway, Santa Maria**.

• Newly opened **Anthony's** in Guadalupe offers a Kids Eat Free Night every Tuesday. Bring the little ones for the free chicken fingers and fries, stay for the great selection of draft beers and Anthony's amazing hot wings and mac and cheese. The place is located at **859 Guadalupe St., Guadalupe**.

• One more food event for you to bookmark. On Jan. 18, **Plenty on Bell** in Los Alamos is hosting a Mexican pop-up dinner. The event features chef **Adrian Guzman** sharing many of his authentic family recipes, including caldo de res, elotes, flan, mole con pollo, and so many more. Get more info at plentyonbell.com. The venue is located at **508 Bell St., Los Alamos**. ○



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\$2295 918 Louisa Terrace – 4 + 3, Classics 1stry home w/vaulted ceilings, open kit, F/P, ldry rm hkups, mstr ste w/ grdn tub, 2car grg, low maint yd, grdnr, no pets.

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\$2095 1722 Bilbao Drive – 3 + 2.5, La Ventana 2stry condo in gated comm near hospital/101 frwy, vaulted ceilings, dbl loft, kit granite ctrs, F/R, F/P, 2car grg, patio, pool/dub privs inc, no pets.

\$1995 2206 Cottage Lane – 3 + 2.5, Autumn Glen 3stry home w/lg bonus 3rd flr bonus rm, open kit, F/P, w/d hkups, sm yd/grdnr, 2 cars max), No Pets, 18mos lse.

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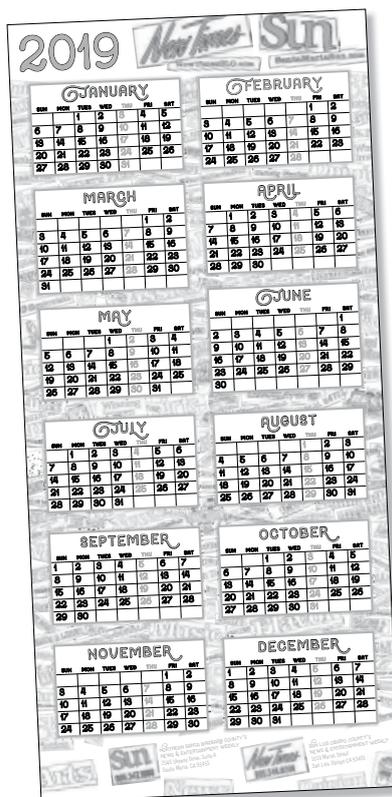
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