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# Sun



AT THE MOVIES

Lovebirds is breezy fun [20]



It's voting time [8]



# Building momentum

The push for housing keeps development moving during the COVID-19 shutdown [10]

BY PETER JOHNSON

**NEWS** Airport cuts down oaks, angers residents [5]

**ARTS** An exhibition of masks [18]

**EATS** Indulge in some oysters [21]

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JUNE 11 - JUNE 18, 2020 VOL. 21 NO. 15

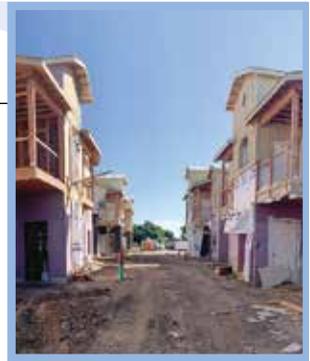
The pandemic shut down most industries for a couple of months, but the building industry was considered essential. Projects that were under construction are still being built, but what does the future hold? According to builders and developers, housing projects will likely continue to push forward due to California's need. However, financing issues are starting to prevent new commercial and public development proposals from taking shape. *New Times'* Assistant Editor Peter Johnson from the *Sun's* sister paper talks to the industry for this week's cover story [10].

This week, you can also read about a parcel near Pioneer Park that's creating controversy [5], Santa Maria's recent ordinance that some say targets homeless individuals [6], the Elverhoj's art show featuring face masks [18], and where you can find locally farmed oysters and treat yourself [21].

*Camillia Lanham  
editor*

Cover photo courtesy of Peoples' Self-Help Housing > Cover design by Alex Zuniga

**ESSENTIAL:** Peoples' Self-Help Housing's farmworker project in Guadalupe was among the current developments allowed to move forward.



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Linda Rodriguez, Sonographer,  
Radiologic Technologist,  
Santa Ynez Valley Cottage Hospital



## Political Watch

• **U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal** (D-Santa Barbara) released a statement on June 4 criticizing an executive order **President Donald Trump** issued that instructed federal agencies to waive environmental reviews for certain development projects during the economic downturn the country is facing. In a statement his office released, Carbajal questioned the intent of this order, which Trump said he issued to expedite projects that could spur the economy amid the COVID-19 pandemic. "Waiving requirements for public input and environmental impact assessments does nothing to save our cities, counties, and states from bankruptcy," Carbajal said in the statement. "This order is clearly aimed at giving corporate interests the green light to trample on our public health and environment under the guise of expediting economic recovery."

• **Gov. Gavin Newsom** issued an executive order on June 3 that further outlines how the general election this November will operate amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Among other actions, the order requires counties to set drop boxes where voters can deposit their ballots between Oct. 6 and Nov. 3. The order also allows counties to consolidate voting locations, while maintaining at least one voting location for every 10,000 registered voters. This order follows up on a previous one the governor issued in May that requires county election officials to send vote-by-mail ballots to all registered voters for the general election. "We are committed to protecting the hard-fought right for Californians to make their voices heard this November, even in the face of a pandemic," Newsom said in a statement. "As the demonstrations across the country remind us, civic participation is critical to our democracy. If we are to address the racial inequities that exist in our institutions, policies, and representation, we must ensure that all eligible Californians have an opportunity to safely cast their ballot."

• On June 1, **U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal** (D-Santa Barbara) responded to **President Donald Trump's** intention to use The Insurrection Act of 1807 to deploy armed forces throughout the country to suppress the protests taking place over the death of George Floyd. "We are at a critical moment in our history, and America needs compassionate leadership," Carbajal said in a statement. "Now is the time for a national conversation about racism, inequality, and reform in policing. Instead, the president labeled protesters as 'thugs' and threatened to invoke violence against fellow Americans." Carbajal, who is a veteran, noted that Trump never served in the armed forces and further stated that using the U.S. military to threaten and silence protesters goes against American values.

• In a Facebook post on June 3, **Assemblymember Monique Limón** (D-Santa Barbara) said she recently stood with the California Legislative Black Caucus as its members spoke at the state Capitol about the need to pass legislation that would begin to address the decades of discrimination that the black community and other minorities in the state have experienced. "Our community, state, and nation are hurting and seek healing from experiences that have gone unaddressed for many decades," Limón said in the post. "I want our black and African American community to know that I see you and I hear you. As a [California] state representative, I will continue to look at ways we can change our systems and institutions to better address systemic barriers in our community faced by those historically underserved." ○



### DEVELOPING OPEN SPACE:

A developer has recently put up fencing in Orcutt Hills Open Space around the area where homes will be built.

## Rice Ranch developer starts work in Orcutt open space

Years-long plans began taking shape in the west portion of Orcutt Hills Open Space, which will eventually reduce the number of hiking trails available in the area.

In May, the developer behind the Rice Ranch master-planned community graded strips of land where chain fences are now in place, marking where the development of the first phase of the community's Valley View neighborhood will be built.

The timing caught members of Santa Maria Valley Open Space—the nonprofit that maintains the open space—off guard. Dan Ardoin, who serves on the nonprofit's board and as its director of trail maintenance, said the group wasn't notified before this work began.

"We knew it was coming, but there was no notice," Ardoin said. "A dozer showed up one day and started running over brush."

Santa Barbara County officials first approved plans for the Rice Ranch development in 2003, with some changes subsequently approved since then, county planner Shannon Reese said in an email to the *Sun*. The development includes seven different neighborhoods, some of which are complete, under construction, or haven't started yet.

Reese said that while the developer has placed fencing along work areas, the county hadn't approved an application for the developer to begin grading the site as of May 26.

When the county approved the Rice Ranch development, it did so with the requirement that portions of the land be set aside for open space, a park, and hiking trails, 4th District Supervisor-elect Bob Nelson said.

"Without the development, those trails wouldn't be there," Nelson said. "That was a concession as part of the approval of the plan."

This is in line with the Orcutt Community Plan, which states that the unincorporated community should have 40 miles of designated trails open to the public. The plan also identifies where these trails and parks could be located. But when these amenities open up is mostly dependent on the pace of development, during which public space is supposed to be set aside.

Currently there are only 8 miles of designated trails in Orcutt, Ardoin said. One of the main trails in the open space is the Valley View Trail,

which encircles the Valley View neighborhood site. The development isn't supposed to affect the open space's designated trails, but it will remove about 20 miles worth of makeshift "social trails" that people have created on their own through the area, he said.

Nelson—who also serves as chief of staff to the district's current supervisor, Peter Adam—said that the developer has agreed to develop the Valley View neighborhood in phases, meaning the entire area won't be graded all at one time, which could prolong the life of some of these social trails.

Nonetheless, Nelson acknowledged there's a level of dissatisfaction within the hiking community about the limited amount of local trails available. He said acquiring more open space for trails will be a priority of his when he takes over as supervisor next year.

Luis Escobar—one of the founding members of Santa Maria Valley Open Space, although his involvement with trail advocacy is now limited—said a lack of open space is what led to the nonprofit's formation in 2011. Back then, with hardly any designated trails available, many people hiked throughout the Orcutt Hills Open Space area anyway, which was private property at the time.

To solve trespassing issues and find a dedicated space for people to hike and bike, Escobar and others formed the nonprofit and met with county officials and private landowners. This led to the creation of the open space, which is a county park that the nonprofit maintains. But as development continues and more people move to the area, the limited amount of open space available will grow even smaller in scale, he said.

"The problem is they are developing homes and inviting more people to live in the valley, but there's not enough open space," Escobar said. "The issues with trespassing are going to grow as homes are built and occupied."

—Zac Ezzone

## Santa Maria's proposed budget will keep library, pool closed for months to come

The Santa Maria City Council will vote to approve the city's proposed 2020-22

biennial budget on June 19, which seeks to address COVID-19 related deficits. So far, the city has lost \$3.8 million because of the pandemic, and it could be facing more than \$10 million in revenue losses over the next two years, according to City Manager Jason Stilwell.

The city is taking a couple of different approaches to mitigate such losses, one of which is digging into city reserves. The city will use remaining money—\$7.3 million—in a smaller reserve fund as well as dip into a larger fund that's never been used.

"Technically the council would be borrowing from the reserves because they have a policy to pay it back in three years," Stilwell told the *Sun*. "We're fortunate to have the reserve, and it's the right time to use it."

Stilwell explained that there's only so many budget cuts the city can make on such short notice, since many programs and projects are

NEWS continued page 4

## Weekend Weather

**KSBY NEWS**

Microclimate Weather Forecast  
**Dave Hovde**  
KSBY Chief Meteorologist



### Thursday



**COASTAL** > High 79 Low 55  
**INLAND** > High 89 Low 56

### Friday



**COASTAL** > High 71 Low 53  
**INLAND** > High 78 Low 52

### Saturday



**COASTAL** > High 72 Low 51  
**INLAND** > High 80 Low 49

### Sunday



**COASTAL** > High 75 Low 51  
**INLAND** > High 83 Low 50

A dip in temp Friday and Saturday when a trough rolls over California. Temps start to slowly climb after that as high pressure returns.

NEWS from page 3

already contracted out. That being said, there are a couple of places where the city will extend closures to save money: the Paul Nelson Aquatic Center and the Santa Maria Public Library.

"It's not something that we're looking to drag out for years and years," Recreation Services Manager Dennis Smitherman said of the pool closure, which is slated to last until January 2021. "It's only to get us through this finite amount of time."

Smitherman emphasized that the city is working hard with its community partners, such as the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District, Allan Hancock College, and the Santa Maria Valley YMCA, "to make sure we still have some aquatics programming this summer."

The Santa Maria Public Library, according to the proposed budget, would remain closed to the public until Oct. 1 to help offset the deficit. Currently, the library isn't allowed to open anyway, according to restrictions set by both the state and the county public health officer.

But Library Director Mary Housel said that may change sooner than initially expected.

"At the time that the budget was drafted, we were still in Stage 1," she said, referring to the state's reopening guidelines. "It was thought, 'Well, we're already closed.' But I think we will get to Stage 3 before [Oct. 1]."

This means that, if the budget passes, the library may be forced to stay closed for budgetary reasons, even once it is legally allowed to open under Stage 3 of the reopening guidelines.

Stilwell explained that "the budget strategy was to focus on when we can reopen legally through the health officer and the state, but also when we would have the funding available to reopen."

Another obstacle the library faces is operating its branches in Guadalupe, Los Alamos, Orcutt, and Cuyama. These locations are mostly funded by a contract with the county, so, on paper, these branches shouldn't be largely affected by the main location's continued closure. But Housel said this may not be the case in practice.

"The main library is kind of the mothership that guides the operations of the branches, so without the support here it makes it really tough for us to do anything at the branches," she said. "Guadalupe, Los Alamos, and Cuyama only have one staff person on duty at a time—it's stuff like that which makes us have to think twice about if we have the capacity under that Stage 3 [to reopen the branches]."

Stilwell said he is hopeful that the county contract can continue to support operations at the branches, perhaps even while Santa Maria's library remains closed. However, he also recognized the challenges of operating the branches without the main location open.

"There's no cut in their county funding," he

said. "But it is an integrated system, that's how we find the efficiency to be able to run the branches. If the county's contracting with us to pay for them, we're going to do what we can to fulfill the contract."

—Malea Martin

## Lompoc locks into pension debt payment plan following sales tax increase

With additional expected revenue coming in as a result of voters approving a sales tax increase earlier this year, Lompoc City Council is entering into a payment plan to aggressively pay off its pension debt.

Over the past few years, the city has suffered from significant financial difficulty, much of which city officials attribute to its growing California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) obligation. This led to cuts to various city departments, and eventually the council voted to put a sales tax measure on the ballot to bring in additional revenue.

When voters passed the measure, city officials predicted that this rate increase would bring in an additional \$4.9 million annually while it's in place over the next 15 years. The ballot measure said the funding would be used to "maintain and improve public services," as well as to pay off the city's pension debt. But that was before the COVID-19 pandemic led to mass businesses closures.

During its meeting on June 3, the council voted to fill three police officer positions and a few park positions that have been held vacant in recent years due to budget issues. The council also voted to enter into a CalPERS payment plan that the city will be locked into for the next 15 years, which is estimated to save the city millions of dollars in interest.

Mayor Jenelle Osborne and Councilmember Gilda Cordova voted against this motion. Instead, they said they'd prefer the city pass an internal policy that outlines an aggressive repayment plan that the city wouldn't be locked into in the event that the ongoing pandemic affects the city's finances worse than anticipated.

Cordova said she doesn't share city staff's optimistic projection of the city ending the next fiscal year with a \$2 million surplus after closing out this year with a deficit and losing revenue due to COVID-19.

"Sustainability to me would be adopting a plan where we're paying down our debt while we're also improving the economic structure of this community, and I'm not seeing both sides of it here," Cordova said. "I'm just very concerned."

Councilmembers Jim Mosby, Dirk Starbuck, and Victor Vega disagreed and voted down a

motion from Cordova trying to move an internal policy process forward. Mosby said the council needed to enter into a locked payment plan so that future councils can't redirect the funding to other areas.

"If you put this in, and you got the recommendation from the professional staff that is a way to do it and an ability to do it, and you end up saving this kind of money, it can go a long way," Mosby said.

—Zac Ezzone

## Head Start preschools will begin to reopen starting in July

Some local children who attend preschool through Head Start, the children's services program at Community Action Commission of Santa Barbara County (CAC), will be able to return to the classroom starting on July 6.

CAC's nearly 900 preschool children had to stop attending in-person class on March 13, when health orders forced the center's various countywide preschools to close their doors.

But starting next month, the nonprofit will be able to reopen all 24 of its locations for students enrolled in its full-day program, CAC's Child Services Director Lorraine Neenan said. By mid-August, the center hopes to have both full-day and part-day programs back to normal.

Neenan emphasized that Head Start's services didn't stop with the March 13 closure. In the interim, teachers and advocates continued working to provide educational materials for kids and support for parents.

"We touch base on a weekly basis with the parents, just to check in and see how their family is doing," Head Start teacher Romanda Andrade said.

She and other teachers also created individualized learning packets for students that parents could come pick up or even get delivered to their homes.

Neenan explained that Head Start and CAC's other child service programs are more than just a preschool—it's a federally funded program for low-income families that goes beyond serving the kids.

In addition to providing their high-ranked preschool programs, CAC also employs advocates who check in with families on a weekly basis to provide referrals for everything from food services to domestic violence intervention. These services never stopped with the pandemic.

Starting July 6, each classroom will have half as many students per teacher, and all people entering the centers will first get their temperature screened with a no-touch infrared thermometer.

If all goes smoothly, Neenan said that part-time programs—which normally stop during

the summer anyway—will open on schedule in mid-August.

Andrade said that whether kids are physically in the classroom or not, Head Start will always be there to support families so their children can keep learning.

"We know that if a child has to worry about their actual home's basic needs, they're not going to be present for learning," she said. "We try to work with families and the communities to provide the support and education they need so they can get their basic needs met."

—Malea Martin

## Santa Barbara LAFCO begins search for new executive officer

Following the passing of its former executive officer, Paul Hood, in May, the Santa Barbara Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) has begun the process of looking for a new department head.

Prior to his death, Hood led the commission—which is a state-created entity made up of officials from local cities, special districts, and the county—for seven years. Before that, Hood served in the same position for San Luis Obispo County. LAFCOs are charged with ensuring that cities and special districts grow in an orderly manner that doesn't lead to urban sprawl.

The commission's role in limiting cities and other local jurisdictions from annexing land can lead to some contentious situations, which Hood always handled with aplomb, said commissioner and 5th District Supervisor Steve Lavagnino during the commission's May 14 meeting.

"This job can sometimes be very controversial, and he was just such a cool head that never got riled," Lavagnino said during the meeting. "He was just such a calm personality, and he will be greatly missed."

Commissioner and 3rd District Supervisor Joan Hartmann spoke to Hood's ability to work with and advise local districts, such as the Los Olivos Community Services District.

"There were many, many intense community meetings, and he must have been to all of them," Hartmann said. "He came early, he stayed late, he answered questions. He just always went above and beyond."

At the following LAFCO meeting, June 4, the commission laid out the steps it would take to recruit a new executive officer.

The commission created an ad hoc committee to conduct an informal search for the next month. After that, if the commission can't find a new officer, it will look to hire an outside firm to conduct the search. LAFCO also appointed its legal counsel, William Dillon, to serve as interim executive officer while the search takes place. ○

—Zac Ezzone

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# Last stand

*Residents looking for answers after oak trees removed near Pioneer Park*

BY ZAC EZZONE

Over the last 20 years, Walt Pavlakovich and his wife, Ginny, have routinely walked on well-worn paths that cut through the lot adjacent to Pioneer Park where they enjoy admiring the diverse ecosystem.

"There's sand dune environment with old growth chaparral, a big meadow with native wildflowers, all in this tiny little area right next to Pioneer Park," Pavlakovich said. "The biodiversity was just stunning and remarkable."

The area is also home to the last natural stand of California coastal oak trees in the city of Santa Maria, according to a plaque at the park dedicated to former City Councilmember James May.

This stand recently lost a few trees. On a walk through the lot in late April, Pavlakovich said he saw an oak tree that had been cut down. A few weeks later, more trees came down and other plants were uprooted.

Pavlakovich began making phone calls to city and county officials to try to figure out what was behind this clearing, but he had little initial success. Eventually he learned the land was owned by the Santa Maria Public Airport District and was included in the district's master plan, which has been in place since 2008.

Despite knowing who owns the land, Pavlakovich said he still found it difficult to learn why it was being cleared. He met other residents who shared his concern and were equally confused about the work taking place. Pavlakovich said they heard rumors—including plans to grow strawberries, the clearing out of homeless encampments, and the removal of trees to provide firewood to the Santa Maria Elks Lodge.

Some of these rumors are partially true, but they're missing context. Santa Maria Airport General Manager Chris Hastert told the *Sun* that this parcel is not an extension of Pioneer Park and is not open to the public. In an email Pavlakovich forwarded to the *Sun*, Hastert said the district plans to post additional signage around the property clarifying that it's not open to the public. And on June 5, workers began putting up new fencing around the property.

Regarding the Elks Lodge involvement, Hastert said the district invited the group to cut down some trees and remove the timber for firewood. But, he said, this work would have been completed anyway and the district plans to hire a professional contractor to subsequently finish clearing the site.

As for the clearing itself, Hastert said it's part of the district's overall effort to proactively take care of its parcels.

"This is one piece of a larger effort to ... better maintain all vacant parcels that the Santa Maria Airport District owns for safety, security, and potential liability," Hastert said in an email to the *Sun*. "This has nothing to do with development or any change in use of the parcels."

Hastert said maintaining airport property has been a point of focus for the district over the last few years as homeless encampments have popped up on some airport land. Although this isn't the situation on the lot next to Pioneer Park, the parcel is part of the district's broader efforts to clear and maintain the property it owns.

The effort began at the lot next to Pioneer Park in July 2019 when the district terminated its lease with tenants who'd used the land as a grazing

area for animals for nearly 14 years.

"As we continue to develop other sites around the area, we have discovered that being 100 percent in control of and managing our own land allows us more flexibility, different management practices, and easier access, which aids the already slow development process," the district's termination notice to the previous tenant states.

The district's master plan outlines steps toward developing this parcel, along with others the district owns south of the airport and north of Union Valley Parkway. This lot specifically is slated to become commercial office space.

Santa Maria Community Development Director Chuen Ng said the airport hasn't submitted a development application for this parcel, but it's the district's land, so it has the right to conduct clearing efforts. He said, hypothetically, the district could clear the entire lot before submitting a development application.

Unlike Santa Barbara County, the city doesn't have an ordinance in place regulating the removal of oak trees, Ng said. However, the city did certify an environmental impact report in 2007 that examined how the district's master plan would affect the area's environment.

The broader impacts that clearing this land could have on the environment are what's most concerning to Pavlakovich and the roughly 10 other residents the *Sun* spoke with about this parcel. Pavlakovich said he's seen a variety of wildlife on the land, including great horned owls, coyotes, bobcats, and lizards.

Concern for the birds and other animals that

**'We can't reverse what has happened, but we can preserve what's still there.'**

—Walt Pavlakovich

live there led to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) getting involved in the situation. CDFW Patrol Lt. Jamie Dostal said the department received a call from a resident about a large number of oak trees that had been cut down, and although removing oak trees isn't within the department's jurisdiction, destroying bird nests is a misdemeanor violation that the department enforces.

Dostal said a warden with the department walked the site and couldn't find any nests but assumes that with the number of trees that were cut down, some nests were probably disturbed. Another member of the department reviewed the environmental impact report for the airport's master plan and found that tree removal is only supposed to take place from September through February to protect nesting birds. When the remnants of trees that have been cut down are removed, he said the department may revisit the site to check for evidence of destroyed nests.

In the meantime, Pavlakovich said he and another resident have plans to meet with an attorney to discuss their options in trying to prevent the rest of the lot from being cleared.

"We can't reverse what has happened, but we can preserve what's still there," Pavlakovich said. ○

Reach Staff Writer Zac Ezzone at [zezzone@santamariasun.com](mailto:zezzone@santamariasun.com).



**Sunset Photo Shoot**  
FRIDAY, JUNE 26  
Point San Luis Lighthouse



**Summer Sipping 2020**  
JUNE 27-  
JUNE 28  
Foxen Canyon Wine Trail



**Tiny Porch Summer Concert Series: Ley Line with Abby and the Myth**  
SUNDAY, JUNE 14  
King Gillette Ranch



**Wednesdays Around the World Dinner: Spain**  
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17  
CASS Winery



**Krav Maga Level 2 Weekend**  
SAT & SUN JUNE 20 & 21  
Sleeping Tiger Fitness



**Fourth of July Drive-Through BBQ**  
SATURDAY, JULY 4  
Atascadero Printery



**Avila Beach 4th of July Doggie Parade**  
SATURDAY, JULY 4  
Avila Beach Promenade



**Season 3 Song Contest Final Round**  
TUESDAY, JULY 7  
Painted Sky



**The Mother Corn Shuckers**  
SATURDAY, JULY 11  
Point San Luis Lighthouse



**Bang Muay Thai Curriculum Review**  
SATURDAY, JULY 11  
Sleeping Tiger Fitness



**Stevie Nicks Illusion - A Tribute to Stevie Nicks and Fleetwood Mac**  
SATURDAY, JULY 11  
Rava Wines + Events



**Tiny Porch Summer Concert Series: AJ Lee & Blue Summit with Miner**  
SUNDAY, JULY 12  
King Gillette Ranch



**Wednesdays Around the World Dinner: Germany**  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 8  
CASS Winery



**2020 Estate Beef Dinner Series: Short Ribs**  
FRIDAY, JULY 17  
CASS Winery



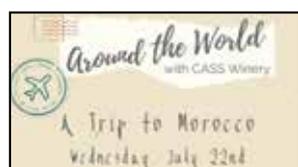
**Yoga at the Lighthouse**  
SATURDAY, JULY 18  
Point San Luis Lighthouse



**36th Annual Central Coast Renaissance Festival**  
SAT & SUN, JULY 18-19  
Laguna Lake Park



**Barrel Room Concert: Unfinished Business**  
SUNDAY, JULY 19  
CASS Winery



**Wednesdays Around the World Dinner: Morocco**  
WEDNESDAY, JULY 22  
CASS Winery



**B and the Hive**  
SATURDAY, JULY 25  
Point San Luis Lighthouse



**Tiny Porch Summer Concert Series: Sunny War with Laura Jean**  
SUNDAY, AUGUST 2  
King Gillette Ranch

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to solicit input regarding

## 2019 Annual Report of Hydrogeologic Conditions, Water Requirements, Supplies and Disposition—Santa Maria Valley Management Area

Prepared by Luhdorff and Scalmanini Consulting Engineers, April 2020, according to the terms of the June 30, 2005, Stipulation in the Santa Maria Valley Water Conservation District v. City of Santa Maria, et al.

**Thursday, June 11, 2020  
10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.**

via Zoom meeting that can be accessed at  
[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_8wtiRL21RZWKesv6V9Pwbq](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8wtiRL21RZWKesv6V9Pwbq)

For more information contact the Twitchell Management Authority at (805) 925-0951 extension 7211. For those that are unable to attend, written comments should be addressed to the attention of the Twitchell Management Authority, 2065 East Main Street, Santa Maria CA 93454, as soon as possible.

The 2019 Annual Report of Hydrogeologic Conditions, Water Requirements, Supplies and Disposition is available at <http://bit.ly/TMAdocs>

**TWITCHELL**  
Management Authority

## Criminalized conduct

*Santa Maria established new rules for parks, plazas, and facilities that some say target homeless people*

BY MALEA MARTIN

There are few places where people experiencing homelessness can simply be without fear of being asked to leave, such as public libraries, community centers, homeless shelters, and parks.

The pandemic changed that. Libraries, including Santa Maria's, closed and may continue to stay that way for months. Homeless shelters' resources are stretched thin.

Now, parks in Santa Maria will see new limitations, too—but not because of COVID-19. On June 2, Santa Maria City Council passed an ordinance that establishes rules of conduct for city parks, plazas, and facilities. Breaking the rules can result in anything from a warning or exclusion notice to a misdemeanor citation.

While the language of the ordinance doesn't explicitly target individuals experiencing homelessness, some Santa Maria residents have said that the ordinance is problematically aimed at this community. Others think the rules are nothing new.

Recreation and Parks Director Alex Posada said that similar versions of the rules already exist for the city's libraries and public transportation.

The new rules intend to "[point] out violations of personal conduct that don't quite reach the level of breaking the law, but are either offensive or somehow deemed inappropriate in a community setting," Posada said during the May 19 Santa Maria City Council meeting when the ordinance was originally introduced.

For Santa Maria resident Gale McNeeley, this is precisely why he opposes the new ordinance. During the public hearing section of the May 19 meeting, McNeeley said that he already takes issue with rules from previous ordinances. Expanding those rules to parks, he said, only makes it worse.

"What has happened at our library is the benches were removed so no one could lie down, chairs were removed so no one could sit there," he said. "Everything is uncomfortable for everyone because they're trying to move the homeless people along."

McNeeley spoke out against a rule in the new ordinance that bars "unreasonable odors from the person's body or personal property."

"I think the city could be sued on an odor rule," he said at the meeting. "What is an unpleasant odor? What rises to the level of an unpleasant odor? Change this ordinance so it does not criminalize the homeless."

Posada told the *Sun* that enforcement of the rules is, generally, "complaint driven." For this reason, he said he does not expect the odor rule to result in frequent needs for enforcement.

"We're not going to go out and do a sniff test or anything like that," he said. "It would be something more along the lines where that individual is somehow interacting with other public users of the park and they find something offensive and call in."

Other rules in the ordinance include "unreasonable use of restrooms, including

laundry/bathing," as well as no "disorderly conduct, inappropriate behavior, vulgar language and/or gestures, inappropriate displays of affection, abuse of park, plaza, or facility grounds, equipment, or staff." There are 16 total rules in the ordinance.

As far as enforcement, Posada said, "The [park] rangers are responsible for the library and the transit center and our public spaces. They are usually the first ones that get sent out to contact individuals."

He also said the new ordinance affects not just outdoor parks and plazas, but also city operated community centers.

After the initial reading at the council's May 19 meeting, the City Council passed the ordinance at its June 2 meeting. Councilmembers Gloria Soto and Mike Cordero voted against it, and Councilmembers Etta Watterfield and Michael Moats and Mayor Alice Patino voted in favor.

The *Sun* asked all four council members for comment on the ordinance, but none of them responded before press time.

At the June 2 meeting, Cordero appeared to be in favor of the ordinance, stating, "I would be concerned if we didn't [pass it]."

However, he and Soto both expressed hesitation over the fact that the city's Recreation and Parks Commission didn't see the ordinance before the City Council.

The commission is what Posada called an "advisory body." It's composed of five members, each nominated by a different council member and appointed by the mayor.

"Their role is to give perspective to the department on issues and items that we bring to them," Posada said, though it's not required that the commission see an ordinance before the City Council.

Parks Commissioner Laura Henderson said she believes "it's a logical starting point that the discussion happens at the commission level first. ... It's not required that all ordinances start there, but it is precedent that they do."

Henderson said that if the ordinance had gone through the commission first, there would have

**'... if a community member is using the park and they are not breaking any other rules, do we really need an odor ban to keep them from these public spaces?'**

—Santa Maria Parks Commissioner Laura Henderson

been more opportunities for the public to weigh in. Given the obstacles COVID-19 presents for public participation in city government, "the more opportunities we have for the public to participate, the better," she said.

Henderson said she wrote a letter to the mayor and City Council requesting that the item come back to the commission for a discussion before council voted on it. She said that Soto and Cordero, the two council members who ultimately voted against the ordinance, were the only ones who responded to her. She also noted that Posada apologized for the item not coming to the commission first, saying it was an "oversight."

"My own personal opinion on this wasn't what I really discussed with council members," Henderson said of her letter. "But at the end of the day, if a community member is using the park and they are not breaking any other rules, do we really need an odor ban to keep them from these public spaces? ... It conveys a message of 'unwelcome.'"

Community member McNeeley echoed this sentiment in a conversation with the *Sun*. "Santa Maria's leadership has tried to criminalize homelessness in as many ways that they can," he said. ○

Reach Staff Writer Malea Martin at [mmartin@santamariasun.com](mailto:mmartin@santamariasun.com).

## What's Your Take?

We know you've got an opinion. Everybody's got one!

This week's online poll 6/11–6/18

**What do you think of the oak trees that have been cut down near Pioneer Park?**

- It's airport property. They can do what they want.
- It's terrible. There are hardly any oak trees left in Santa Maria.
- Who cares about a few oak trees? They grow throughout the county.
- The city should have an ordinance in place to prevent this sort of thing from happening.

Enter your choice online at: [SantaMariaSun.com](http://SantaMariaSun.com)

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## You're up!

It's been a tough year so far, but our annual Best Of issue is here and looking for your cheers—not jeers! We're asking you, the community, to take the gig and give us your judgements. Specifically, we need you to help us celebrate the things in this world that are still rockin'! Riff on the eateries, drinkeries, businesses, and people that make Northern Santa Barbara County so special.

So now isn't the time to be shy. It's time for your guitar solo. Step up and fill out this ballot. Then talk to your family, friends, and neighbors, so you're not the only one at the concert. We all dance to our own beats, so they need to fill out ballots of their own! You can even go online to vote at santamariasun.com. Just remember, you need to complete at least 25 categories to make the cut.

Return this ballot to the Sun office or go online by 5 p.m. on June 29. Then stay tuned to read all about the winners that rocked the hardest on Aug. 20.

Tell everyone!

## DINE AND DEVOUR

- 1 Best Santa Maria Restaurant
- 2 Best Nipomo Restaurant
- 3 Best Orcutt Restaurant
- 4 Best Lompoc Restaurant
- 5 Best Guadalupe Restaurant
- 6 Best Los Alamos Restaurant
- 7 Best Los Olivos Restaurant
- 8 Best Buellton Restaurant
- 9 Best Solvang Restaurant
- 10 Best Santa Ynez Restaurant
- 11 Best Restaurant. Period.
- 12 Best Food Truck
- 13 Best Breakfast

14 Best Bakery

15 Best Seafood

16 Best Burger Joint

17 Best Pizza

18 Best Steak

19 Best Tri-Tip

20 Best Salsa

21 Best Taco

22 Best Burrito

23 Best Deli

24 Best Ice Cream/Frozen Yogurt

25 Best Vegetarian Restaurant

26 Best Cheap Eats

27 Best Restaurant to Impress

28 Best Kid-Friendly Restaurant

29 Best Farm/Produce Stand

30 Best Grocery Store

31 Best Hispanic Market

32 Best Chinese Food

33 Best Japanese Food

34 Best Italian Food

35 Best Authentic Mexican Food

36 Best Outdoor Dining

37 Best Breakfast Burrito

38 Best Weekend Brunch

39 Best Sushi

40 Best Poke

41 Best Mediterranean Food

42 Best Juice Place

43 Best Dessert

BEST OF BALLOT continued on next page



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BEST OF BALLOT from previous page

44 Best Thai Food

45 Best Carniceria

46 Best Panaderia

47 Best Barbecue

48 Best Salad

49 Best Place to Go On A First Date

50 Best Caterer

**LIQUID CONNECTIONS**

51 Best Red Wine

52 Best White Wine

53 Best Winery for Sparkling

54 Best Brewery

55 Best Tasting Room

56 Best Tasting Transportation

57 Best Margarita

58 Best Fancy Cocktail

59 Best Dive Bar

60 Best Liquor Store

61 Best Happy Hour

62 Best Coffee Shop

63 Best Michelada

64 Best Local IPA

65 Best Sports Bar

66 Best Dog Friendly Winery

**ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT**

67 Best Live Music Venue

68 Best Local Band or Musician

69 Best Shop for Musicians

70 Best Photographer

71 Best Artist

72 Best Art Gallery

73 Best Community Event

74 Best Theater Group

75 Best Museum

76 Best Radio Station

77 Best Media Personality

78 Best Movie Theater

79 Best Place for Karaoke

80 Best Place to Dance

81 Best DJ

82 Best Public Art

83 Best Festival

84 Best Tattoo Artist

85 Best Day Trip

86 Best Place for A Big Bash

87 Best Place to Have a Kids Party

88 Best Place to shop for a Quinceañera

89 Best Car Show

**BURNING CASH**

90 Best New Business of 2019

91 Best Clothing Store

92 Best Eyewear Store

93 Best Place to Buy Kids Clothes

94 Best Thrift Store

95 Best Antique Store

96 Best Bookstore

97 Best Place to Geek Out

98 Best Medical Marijuana Dispensary

99 Best Smoke Shop

100 Best Financial Planner/Accountant

101 Best Local Bank or Credit Union

102 Best Lawyer/Attorney

103 Best Auto Maintenance/Repair

104 Best Car Audio/Security

105 Best Place to Buy Tires

106 Best Car Wash/Detail

107 Best Used Car Dealer

108 Best New Car Dealer

109 Best Veterinarian

110 Best Place to Pamper Your Pet

111 Best Moving Company

112 Best Jewelry Store

113 Best Place for Gifts

114 Best Flower Shop

115 Best Hardware Store

116 Best Home and Garden Store

117 Best Real Estate Company (Specific City)

118 Best Customer Service

119 Best Electrician

120 Best Landscaper

121 Best Contractor

122 Best Plumber

123 Best Furniture/Decor Store

124 Best Carpet/Flooring Company

125 Best Consignment Store

126 Best Pet Sitter or Boarding

127 Best Cleaning Service

128 Best Pest Control Service

129 Best Tree Trimming Service

130 Best Mortgage Company

131 Best Child Care

132 Best Window Cleaning Service

133 Best Place to Fill Up Your Car

**FEELIN' GOOD**

134 Best Health Club/Gym

135 Best Martial Arts Gym

136 Best Health Food/Vitamin Store

137 Best Place for Skin Care

138 Best Place to Get A Massage

139 Best Yoga Studio

140 Best Hike or Bike Trail

141 Best Barbershop

142 Best Hair Salon

143 Best Nail Salon

144 Best Tanning Salon

145 Best Dentist

146 Best Orthodontist

147 Best Doctor

148 Best Chiropractor

149 Best OB-GYN

150 Best Pediatrician

151 Best Alternative Healer

152 Best Counselor/Therapist

153 Best Senior Living Community

154 Best Place to Put Up Visiting Family

155 Best Golf Course

156 Best Bike Shop

**GETTING HITCHED**

157 Best Wedding Venue

158 Best Wedding Caterer

159 Best Wedding Planner

160 Best Place for Wedding Flowers

161 Best Wedding Band

162 Best Tuxedo Rental

163 Best Place to Buy a Wedding Dress

164 Best Place to Buy a Wedding Ring

165 Best Limo or Party Bus Service

166 Best Place for a Rehearsal Dinner

167 Best Place for Wedding Reception

168 Best Winery Wedding Venue

169 Best Eco-Friendly Business

170 Best Community Center/Nonprofit

171 Best Man or Woman Behind the Badge (Specific City)

172 Best News Source

173 Best Social Media Presence

174 Best Kids After-School Program

175 Best Place to Volunteer

176 Best Take-It-To-The-Man Local Activist

177 Best Place to Volunteer

178 Best Place to Volunteer

179 Best Place to Volunteer

180 Best Place to Volunteer

Drop your ballot by our office or mail it to:

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2540 Skyway Dr., Santa Maria, CA 93455

Name \_\_\_\_\_

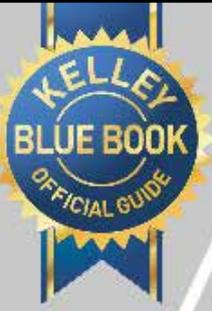
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Ballots must be in our office by Monday, June 29, at 5 p.m., to be eligible for inclusion in the poll results.

**THE RULES:** One ballot per person. No more than two ballots may be submitted per envelope or in person at one time. No photocopies can be accepted. To prevent ballot-box stuffing (also known as cheating), all ballots must have at least 25 categories completed and must include the name and address of the voter, for verification purposes only. All information is kept in complete confidence. Ballots must be in our office by Monday, June 29, at 5 p.m. Winners will be announced in our Aug. 20 special publication. All entries become the property of Sun.



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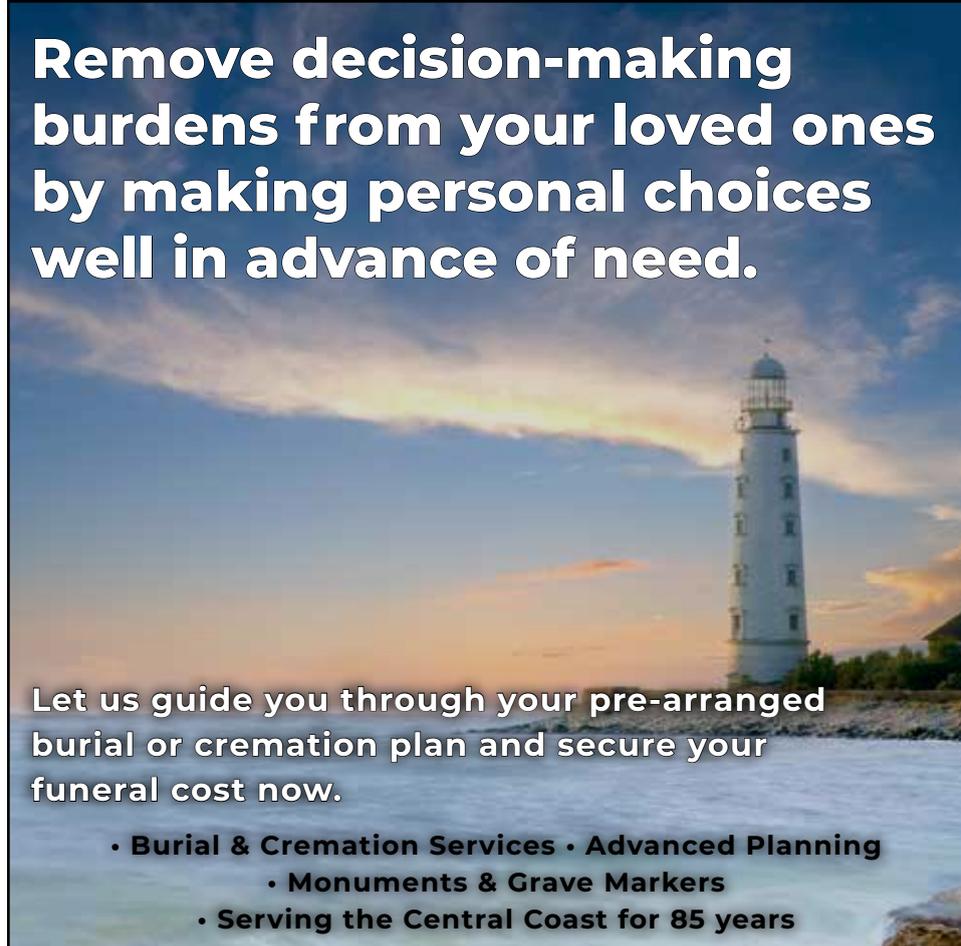
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# Uninterrupted

*As most of the economy stalls, construction and development on the Central Coast carry on*

BY PETER JOHNSON



**NOT STOPPING:** Forty units of affordable senior housing are coming to Santa Maria this summer, as construction crews at Sierra Madre Cottages were undeterred by COVID-19.

When COVID-19 struck, Coastal Community Builders had just sent out a newsletter to thousands of prospective homebuyers.

After years of planning, the Pismo Beach-based development company had finally broken ground on San Luis Ranch, a 580-home community on the former Dalidio Ranch in San Luis Obispo. A March project newsletter gave an optimistic progress report to its 3,000-member waitlist.

“We reached out to everybody and gave them a little bit of a better idea about what products would be there, keeping them engaged,” said Gary Grossman, president of Coastal Community Builders. “Right after that, COVID hit.”

Like in every industry, COVID-19’s onset and the stay-at-home orders brought anxiety and uncertainty to the construction and building trades. Designers and developers, construction workers, bankers, brokers, investors, and government officials all wondered how the pandemic would impact their projects and bottom lines.

Grossman, who has five active housing projects on the Central Coast, from Templeton to Orcutt, told the *Sun* that he and his peers “took a big gulp” in March as the economy appeared to start unraveling. The idea of halting their active construction projects for months on end seemed untenable.

“We were just sort of like, ‘OK, how are you going to handle this?’” he said.

More broadly, industry stakeholders worried about how a sudden recession could derail years of progress toward creating a fertile building environment in California—especially for building housing amid a statewide shortage.

“There’s a great opportunity right now. We’ve got a governor who wants housing in California,” said John Fowler, CEO of Peoples’ Self-Help Housing, which has affordable housing projects under construction in Santa Maria and Guadalupe. “We don’t want to slow

up because of a pandemic, because things are lining up, both politically and financially. It’s a good time to produce housing at all levels.”

At least in the short term, the gears of construction didn’t grind to a halt. They barely even slowed down. Under Gov. Gavin Newsom’s March 19 shelter-at-home order, construction was deemed an essential service and allowed to continue. While many counties chose to regulate and restrict some construction activities in local shelter orders, SLO and Santa Barbara counties opted for a relatively hands-off approach.

Local builders and government officials said projects on the Central Coast moved forward despite the pandemic—boosted by the political will to produce housing and help stabilize a crippled economy.

“Everybody’s pretty bullish, pretty enthusiastic,” Grossman said. “I think you’ll see that most of the projects kept going. All of our projects did. We kept moving on.”

## Staying at work, safely

Grossman wasn’t exactly surprised that the COVID-19 orders, which impacted so many sectors of the economy, exempted construction activities.

“If you think about how much [construction] there is between commercial, apartments, residential, ... if it was all halted, that’s some \$30 trillion in bank loans,” Grossman said. “It would’ve been hard on the banks, hard on all of the industries. And we employ a lot of people.”

From the company executives to the construction workers, industry members said that they were glad to continue working. Construction crews adopted new safety measures to protect against the virus, including social distancing and sanitizing.

Those measures have largely proven effective in staving off COVID-19 infections at work sites, according to Tony Skinner, an executive officer at the Tri-Counties Building &

Construction Trade Council, which represents 33 craft unions in SLO, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties. Even so, some workers opted to stay home and not put themselves or vulnerable family members at risk.

“There’s a couple of people who [contracted COVID-19], but for the amount of people [out] there, that’s not bad,” Skinner said. “The national building trades came out when this first hit and put out safety standards for jobs, and it seemed to work.”

Skinner said that the local building trades have been “very fortunate” to not see a slowdown in work during the pandemic. He said construction in the region “is as strong as it’s been.”

“It could’ve hit us a lot harder than it did,” Skinner said. “There’s been very, very little ripple effect. A couple of jobs were delayed, but they’re still on the books.”

That forward momentum is not just evident in the for-profit building sector. Fowler, of Peoples’ Self-Help Housing, said his affordable housing nonprofit has “been building all through the pandemic.”

“Our subcontractors really wanted to work, and we really wanted them to work,” he said. “We’re right on schedule.”

Fowler said that both a 40-unit affordable senior housing complex in Santa Maria (called the Sierra Madre Cottages) and a 38-unit farmworker housing project in Guadalupe (Guadalupe Court) are on track for grand openings in July and August, respectively.

In addition to approaching the finish line on those projects, Peoples’ Self-Help Housing has also continued with its “self-help home building” program during COVID-19. In April, 10 low-income families in San Miguel finished construction on their own houses, which effectively reduced their final cost.

“The families continued to build, finished their homes, and moved in during the pandemic,” Fowler said.

The nonprofit also acquired new property since March and continues to provide its other

housing services remotely.

“Everything from acquisition to construction, design, approval, and moving people in—all facets of housing are moving forward,” Fowler said. “For us, it’s been full-steam ahead.”

## Strong fundamentals

As SLO Community Development Director Michael Codron closed up shop at City Hall in March due to COVID-19 precautions, he and others in city leadership remained focused on how to keep the momentum of a historic year going.

The 2019-20 fiscal year was a record-breaker in SLO in terms of development and building activity, and city officials wanted to continue to accommodate that surge remotely if it continued.

“We had to sort of reinvent how we do business,” Codron said. “We actually already had plans in place to accept online applications, but that wasn’t going to happen until the end of 2020. Under the circumstances, we were able to expedite that.”

While other city revenue streams took huge hits during the COVID-19 shutdown, planning and building fees remained relatively steady; the city continued to issue building permits and accept new planning applications online at a surprising pace. Despite the many impacts of the pandemic, the department wound up exceeding its 2019-20 revenue projections by about 20 percent—a testament to the building atmosphere in town.

“I do think it’s a good sign,” Codron said. “As investors and financiers are looking for a safe place to put their money, I think when you see large construction projects continue to move forward and even new applications come in, it’s a good sign that the fundamentals of the economy are still strong and that we have the potential to continue to accomplish a lot of our goals as it relates to building out the city and our current focus on more housing.”

A quick glance at an online map of active construction projects in SLO shows that strength. Housing and mixed-use developments speckle the map. Fowler noted that the push for housing, both locally and across the state, is acting as a strong tailwind for these projects.

"We're so underproduced at this point. We've fallen way behind on all of our housing," Fowler said. "There's a pent-up demand if we can produce it."

Private developers also spoke to promising signs of stability in the economy. Even amid extreme economic uncertainty, Grossman of Coastal Community Builders said banks continue to lend and homes continue to sell—albeit under revised circumstances and expectations.

"We all wanted to know that the lending institutions would be working as they should," Grossman said. "And I'm happy to say, I've been impressed. Everybody's going to be a little more conservative and a little more careful because we're in territory we haven't seen before, but our lending partners have been very with the spirit of what everybody's been hoping for."

Pat Arnold, CEO of Covelop in SLO and president of the Downtown SLO association, also praised the work of the banks, particularly the regional banks, during the crisis.

"They've been amazing to work with," Arnold said. "They get it; we're mid-project, we can't stop. There's no way to stop without it failing."

## Confidence, concerns, and the future

While COVID-19 hasn't stopped most active construction projects from moving forward, it has impacted new plans for development. And its long-term effects remain to be seen.

Arnold said that investor confidence is low for newer projects in their early planning stages. He recently applied for a U.S. Small Business Administration loan to avoid furloughing employees on his design and development team.

"Our development side got extremely quiet due to investor confidence," he said. "Short-term access to capital and investors is just down right now."

Fowler with Peoples' Self-Help Housing noted that a decline in investor confidence could impact the viability of future affordable housing projects on the Central Coast.

"Where I think we're going to have some issues is investors. There's a bit of a hiccup in the financing world," Fowler said. "Banks are the ones that invest in affordable housing. They put the equity in for us."

That uncertainty bleeds over from the private world to the public realm at cities, school districts, and counties. As tax revenues slump across the board, fewer dollars will be available to pay for public construction projects—from



**ESSENTIAL HOUSING:** While most of the Central Coast economy was disrupted by the pandemic, affordable housing developments like Peoples' Self-Help Housing's farmworker project in Guadalupe were allowed to move forward.

simple road maintenance, to new classrooms, to Fowler's specialty: affordable housing. That's an ongoing concern for government leaders, development professionals, and construction unions, whose members are often hired to work on those projects.

"[Public] funding is always something that we're looking for," said Skinner, of the Tri-Counties Building & Construction Council. "Who knows what's going to happen with the cities and counties once budget time comes?"

Projected tax revenue shortfalls are partially why U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara) and regional officials are advocating that Congress earmark more federal economic relief funds for local infrastructure projects. In Santa Barbara County, officials claim \$700 million worth of road and highway projects are shovel-

ready and could happen quickly if they were fully funded. Local representatives want to see the second federal stimulus bill include an allocation for these types of county-level projects.

"The idea is that would be an infusion of funds to get the economy going again. We estimate that \$700 million would stimulate 9,000 jobs," said Marjie Kirn, executive director of the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments.

As COVID-19 continues to reshape society, building industry members said it will also inevitably reshape the future of development. Given the pandemic's impact on retail, restaurants, and office spaces, investors and developers may find commercial projects less attractive to in the future.

"It will look different," Arnold with Covelop

said. "We'll have more home offices than we ever thought we'd have."

One building sector that industry members don't see slowing down is housing. The clamor for more housing in California will keep all sectors of the building industry busy for a long time, they said.

"There's an undeniable housing shortage in California, and that shortage isn't going away," Grossman said. "We've been operating on a shortage of housing for a long time. I think that as lending institutions and our markets are looking at it, they're saying one way or another, we're going to come right back to the same thing." ○

Contact New Times Assistant Editor Peter Johnson at [pjohnson@newtimeslo.com](mailto:pjohnson@newtimeslo.com).

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# CALIFORNIA CONNECTIONS ACADEMY

**VIRTUALLY THE SAME:** While COVID-19 forced traditional schools to make some massive adjustments, online schools like California Connections Academy were able to continue business as usual.

## A virtual reality

For California Connections Academy, online classrooms are already the normal reality

BY MALEA MARTIN

For schools across the nation, COVID-19 radically changed the learning landscape.

With little warning, students started doing class from home, teachers created new online-friendly syllabi overnight, and high school sports canceled their seasons. But for California Connections Academy (CCA), not much changed at all.

The academy is a network of tuition-free, K-12, online public schools serving more than 30 counties across the state. Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Ventura counties were added to that list just last year.

With a total student enrollment of around 7,700—nearly 70 of whom are enrolled in local counties—the academy's day-to-day operations already satisfy social-distancing guidelines. Students complete their coursework online with the guidance of credentialed instructors. They may never meet their instructors in person, but CCA middle school math teacher Siegfried Elizondo said he still feels close to his students—and the pandemic hasn't changed that.

"When I first started, I said, 'How am I going to get to know my kids? How am I going to teach them like a traditional classroom?'" said Elizondo, who taught in a traditional school setting prior to CCA. "Over time, you realize that you're really helping to facilitate their learning. They don't always need to be in class every day. They're engaging in material on their own, with their learning coach."

Academy Executive Director Richard Savage said the biggest change the school has seen since the start of the pandemic is an enrollment increase. After the school reopened enrollment for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year in February, enrollment grew by 500 students. Now, the academy is enrolling for the 2020-21 school year.

"What we're starting to see now is our enrollment numbers for next school year are trending slightly higher than normal," Savage said. "What we've heard is, if the traditional [schools are] still trying to figure out what they want to do in the fall, we're expecting to see an influx."

Savage said that the academy also provides opportunities for the districts it partners with, called "authorizing districts." These are the existing, traditional school districts that allow CCA to operate as part of the public school system. In the case of Santa Barbara County, the academy's authorizing district is Cuyama Joint Unified School District.

"Because that district is authorized in Santa Barbara County, the contiguous county

law allows us to serve Santa Barbara County and then any county that touches that," Savage explained, enabling the academy to enroll students up and down the Central Coast.

Cuyama Joint Unified School District, Savage said, is a great partner because "it's a like-minded school board that understands the power and importance of school choice and is willing to offer another option for students." Plus, Savage said, the academy is able to offer "courses for their students," which offsets their average daily attendance.

Savage explained that in the typical school setting, schools are limited by how many students they can fit in a classroom. If a classroom seats 30 students, and a teacher is employed to teach five sections, then paying that teacher for a full day of work will result in 150 students taught. But since CCA can "fit" far more students in a virtual classroom, they can offer a wider variety of classes.

Online school is the right choice for some students, Savage explained.

"We have students that need a flexible schedule," he said. "We have children that are in and out of the hospital, we have parents that need to travel quite a bit and need a flexible schedule. There's also the kids that don't typically fit into the general or traditional setting. A child may have a social anxiety disorder, or doesn't like fluorescent lights, or sitting in a classroom six hours a day."

### Highlights

- Common Ground, a collaborative effort to end homelessness in Santa Barbara County, is asking the community to donate specific items for people experiencing homelessness right now. They need: soap, hand sanitizer, bleach, Clorox wipes, spray bottles, gloves, masks, and new socks. To arrange a donation, contact Gene Michaels at gene@liveunitedsb.org

- Skyview Los Alamos in Santa Ynez reopened starting May 28 for overnight stays. The hotel implemented cleaning, sanitization, and social-distancing measures guided by the Centers for Disease Control, local and state authorities, and the California Hotel & Lodging Association. The hotel's restaurant, Norman, is open for takeout, and the pool reopened with limitations. The hotel is also now offering its "Good Neighbor" package through the summer, which includes a local bottle of wine, a dining credit to Los Alamos bakery Bob's Well Bread, and more. ○

Staff Writer Malea Martin wrote this week's Spotlight. Send story tips to spotlight@santamariasun.com.

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## Online Poll

### What do you think about Aera Energy canceling its project in Cat Canyon?

- 35% I'm all for renewable energy, but we still need oil and gas.
- 29% It's a loss of a lot of potential jobs that are needed in North County.
- 29% It's a victory for the environment!
- 7% The county should never approve another oil and gas project.

17 Votes

Vote online at [www.santamariasun.com](http://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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## When the badge gets tarnished

*What we saw happen in Minneapolis on Memorial Day affects all in law enforcement*

BY BILL BROWN

**A**s new sheriff's deputies or custody deputies begin their careers with the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office, they must solemnly swear to support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California. During the swear-in ceremony, we incorporate a badge pinning that is usually done by a loved one. I always give a speech about the badge that each of us wears or carries as a law enforcement officer. Many of my executive, command, and support staff have heard that speech dozens, if not hundreds, of times, but I believe it is a message that bears repeating.

I advise the newly minted deputies that the badge is the most important accoutrement they'll have as a peace officer. The symbolism of the badge, whether it's a star shape or an oval, is always the same. It represents an ancient warrior's shield—a shield of protection. The symbolism is twofold, representing the protection we provide to the community, and the protection that the community provides to us, such as enhanced penalties for those who would do us harm. The seven-pointed star shape of our badge is an ancient symbol that some say represents good over evil. Each of the seven points on the star corresponds to the letters in the word "sheriff" and stands for a value we should strive for in our daily work: service, honor, ethics, respect, integrity, fairness, and fidelity or faithfulness. The finish of the badge is gold, representing something precious.

Most importantly, I tell these new cops that the badges they are receiving are new, shiny, and untarnished. I always admonish them that the badge must be carried and worn with honor. It is a symbol of the public's faith in us, faith that we will carry out our great responsibilities honorably. I also tell them that the badge will not be theirs forever. There will come a time when they are going to have to pass that badge over to someone else who will take their place. When they do, it is imperative that

the badge remains shiny, for if they do anything to tarnish it—either while on or off-duty—they don't just tarnish their own badge, but also the badges of all of us in the Sheriff's Office, and of every member of the law enforcement profession.

Sadly, what we saw happen in Minneapolis on Memorial Day tarnished all of our badges. I don't usually weigh in with an opinion in the immediate aftermath of a use of force by members of the Sheriff's Office or another law enforcement agency because, inevitably, all the facts and circumstances of the event are not known at first. Any use of force, no matter how justified it may be, is ugly to watch. Threats, perspective, and vantage points may not be apparent on first glance, and information is often discovered or developed during a subsequent investigation that can be mitigating or justifies the type and amount of force that was used. In the case that is the focus of our current national conversation, however, there is *no* justification for an officer kneeling on a non-resistive person's neck for more than 8 1/2 minutes.

Witnessing Mr. George Floyd's inhumane, painful, and unnecessary death was horrifying and gut-wrenching for me. I also immediately realized that even though this reprehensible act occurred 2,000 miles away from us, it would inflict damage on the relationships between many California law enforcement agencies and communities of color.

I recognize the anger that our African American brothers and sisters across the nation feel as a result of this terrible and unjustified killing of a man arrested for a low-level crime. It's OK to be angry. I myself am disgusted, deeply saddened, and angry about what I saw. Frankly, I'd be concerned about anyone who isn't angry about what happened.

The large numbers of peaceful protests across our nation are welcomed. Freedom of speech, the right to petition government for redress of grievances, and freedom of assembly are all guaranteed under the federal and state constitutions that we in law

enforcement are sworn to support and defend. I don't agree with some of the inflammatory rhetoric I've heard at some of those protests. I don't condone some of the visuals I've seen, like signs bearing profane slogans against the police, or a severed and bloody pig's head being carried by a protester. I think those types of actions hurt the protesters' cause, and I wish I heard more community leaders and organizers speak out to condemn them. But no matter how much I may disagree with certain aspects of the protests, I will always support and defend the rights of people to express themselves in those and other ways.

What is not OK is the widespread lawlessness that is being blamed on the aforementioned anger. Acts of arson, vandalism, looting, and beatings of store owners. Shootings, fire bombing, and aggravated assaults against peace officers. Those activities can *never* be justified or excused; they endanger our communities, they undermine our fragile economy already heavily damaged by the COVID-19 pandemic, and they shatter the hopes and lives of small-business owners. The people who commit these crimes attack our American way of life, and they profoundly dishonor the memory of George Floyd.

As a nation and as a people we must not conflate these two groups of individuals. We must recognize the distinct difference between peaceful protesters and those so-called "protesters" who loot, deface, and burn neighborhoods across America. It is equally important that we recognize the difference between the vast majority of good cops—who are brave and decent people willing to put themselves in harm's way to protect others no matter their race, creed, or color—and the very, very small percentage of bad police officers who abuse their authority and engage in brutal or otherwise unlawful behavior.

It is also important for everyone to understand how infrequent fatal confrontations between the police and members of the public actually are. Consider this. While deaths at the hands of the police are uncommon, deaths of unarmed people are rare. According to the FBI and *The Washington Post*, 1,004 people were killed by law enforcement officers in the United States last year. The overwhelming majority of those deaths were justifiable homicides committed by officers defending their lives or the lives of other people. Of those 1,004 killed, 41 (4 percent) were unarmed. Of those 41, 19 were white and nine were black. (The remaining 13 were either Hispanic or "other," including Asians and Native Americans.)

Please don't get me wrong. Just because cases like the unjustified killing of George Floyd are rare doesn't mean we shouldn't be concerned about them or shouldn't work to prevent them. Quite the contrary; we must do everything we reasonably can do to stop anyone from dying so senselessly and unnecessarily in the future. Steps that can be taken toward that goal include enhanced law enforcement training in a variety of areas, especially in an officer's duty to intervene if another officer is using excessive and/or unnecessary force. Police and members of all communities should seek to better understand and know each other. Certain communities need to achieve positive changes in both police and community culture, as well as improvements in police-community relations. Such changes need to be driven by both law enforcement officers and members of the community.

At this point in our nation's history there should also be a universal call for justice. Justice for what happened to George Floyd, and for anyone else who has been the victim of unlawful police misconduct. But also justice for the federal officer who was slain in Oakland and his family, for the five cops in Las Vegas and St. Louis who were shot while trying to restore order, for the hundreds of cops across our nation who have been injured as a result of recent civil disturbances. And justice for the countless shopkeepers and small business owners whose life savings and dreams have now been burned, stolen, or destroyed. They, too, deserve justice.

COMMENTARY continued page 14



COMMENTARY from page 13

The way Mr. Floyd was treated is the antithesis of good police work. I would never stand for that as your sheriff, but more importantly, none of the members of the Santa Barbara Sheriff's Office would ever stand for it either. To move past this tragic moment in our history we must come together with our community partners, especially those in our minority communities. We must communicate with each other, learn from one another, and build or mend bridges of trust between each other.

Our badges were tarnished by what happened in Minneapolis, but we will continue to work in ways that will restore their luster. We'll do so by continuing to practice good community policing, partnering with those we serve to identify and solve problems relating to crime, fear of crime, neighborhood decay, and quality-of-life issues. We'll build on old relationships and develop new ones. We'll continue to seek alternatives to incarceration for those who suffer from substance abuse and mental illness, and we'll continue to give inmates in our jail the tools they need to be successful when they are released. We'll listen more, talk less, and hold each other accountable. Above all, we'll strive to treat people fairly, courteously, and professionally.

We'll do all that because as peace officers we are a part of, not apart from, our community. It is an honor to serve and protect *all* the people of Santa Barbara County. We stand with you, and we are here for you during this painful and difficult time. ○

Bill Brown is the sheriff of Santa Barbara County. Send comments to the editor at [clanham@santamariasun.com](mailto:clanham@santamariasun.com), or write a letter for publication to [letters@santamariasun.com](mailto:letters@santamariasun.com).

LETTER

New name means chance for a new mission

The mission statement of CalGEM (California Geologic Energy Management Division) reads as follows, "CalGEM prioritizes protecting public health, safety, and the environment in its oversight of the oil, natural gas, and geothermal industries, while working to help California achieve its climate change and clean energy goals."

Failure to thoroughly deliver on its mission is not acceptable. Robust rules and regulations alone are not sufficient. They are a beginning, a foundation.

CalGEM's past life, as DOGGR (Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources), was regrettable. It was marked by financial conflicts of supervisors and staff; lax and even shoddy science and engineering oversight; and feckless enforcement. Arguably, there was malfeasance, misfeasance, and nonfeasance.

DOGGR consistently acted as an enabler of the oil industry. And it did this at the expense of residents, of taxpayers, and of the environment.

This now is CalGEM's opportunity to do much better. The year is 2020, not 1920. CalGEM must protect our most valuable resource: water. It must act to limit climate change. We ought to either allow or encourage the transition to clean and safe energy. This is for our health and for our livelihoods.

CalGEM can no longer be an agency that primarily serves an aging industry that is focused on short-term profit at the expense of our present and future, of the public health and safety, and of the environment.

CalGEM must fulfill its stated mission. It has our full attention.

Seth Steiner  
Los Alamos

Stench of bias

Hey all you cool kids and kiddos out there. You better watch out. The city of Santa Maria is out to get you. If you smell funny (Is that reefer?), are making out in public (Get a room!), or using vulgar language (I do declare!) in a public park—you could hear from the city's park rangers.

It sounds like the city rounded up a bunch of grandmas to write an ordinance that's basically designed to target unruly teenagers and homeless individuals who destroy the sanctity of how a certain subset of the city's population wants to spend their day in a public space that's supposed to be open to the public at large.

No one should have to be exposed to the members of the public they don't want to be exposed to while lounging outside in a public space!

City Recreation and Parks Director Alex Posada spoke to the Santa Maria City Council about the ordinance on May 19, saying the rules govern "violations of personal conduct that don't quite reach the level of breaking the law, but are either offensive or somehow deemed inappropriate in a community setting."

Well, looky here, you conservative-leaning town you, it sure sounds like there are a bunch of snowflakes advocating against what they deem to be "offensive" conduct. Apparently, it's the community's civil right not to have to deal with *everyone in the community's* reality in a public space? I guess public space only means "public" for some people? Because it's now illegal to prick the tender tendrils of some people's olfactory sensitivities.

But don't worry, it's not like park rangers are going

to run around sniffing people, Posada said. Umm, question! How do you define an offensive smell? Some folks don't care for perfume. Well, now they can call it in and the rangers will come running!

Another question! What constitutes "abuse of park, plaza, or facility grounds"?

Funny, we couldn't ask any follow-up questions of City Council members after they voted to pass the ordinance, because *none of them* responded to us. Hey, Santa Maria elected officials, what's up with you not talking to the press?

Guess what, everyone? When elected officials don't call the press back, journalists have to make do with the people who do call back. If you want your side of the story in the article, then return those phone calls! You pansies.



I'm talking to Councilmembers Mike Cordero, Etta Waterfield, and Michael Moats. Councilmember Gloria Soto

might be the only one who returns our requests for comment regularly—in case you were wondering why she's *almost always* quoted in our stories.

Just to add to this impromptu media-literacy lesson: For those of you who don't understand what an opinion column is—*this is an opinion column*. It's full of the writer's opinions. Articles contain facts and conversations with individuals. The opinions contained in articles are those of the people who were interviewed for the article, *not the writer*.

If this isn't clear to you, might I suggest taking a break from your Facebook page and lifting your head above the clouds of your biased world to peer into the bleakness of reality. Maybe you could learn a thing or two. ○

The canary is sick of opinions based on imagined reality. Send comments to [canary@santamariasun.com](mailto:canary@santamariasun.com).

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# HOT STUFF

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## TOAST TO THE CENTRAL COAST

The Santa Maria Biz Masters, part of Toastmasters International, hosts its next Toastmasters meeting through Zoom on Tuesday, June 16, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. The weekly meeting takes place every Tuesday evening at the same time and is free to join. The club is dedicated to helping members improve their leadership and communication skills. The meeting ID to join is 317 198 472 (password: 630). Email [santamariabizmasters@gmail.com](mailto:santamariabizmasters@gmail.com) for more info.  
—Caleb Wiseblood

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SANTA MARIA BIZ MASTERS' FACEBOOK PAGE

## ARTS

### SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

**20/20: A RETROSPECTIVE** This spring, the Wildling Museum of Art and Nature will mark its 20th anniversary with a special exhibition celebrating the Museum's 20-year history in the Santa Ynez Valley. View the exhibit online. Mondays, Wednesdays-Sundays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. through Sept. 7 805-688-1082. [wildlingmuseum.org/news/2020-retrospective](http://wildlingmuseum.org/news/2020-retrospective). Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang.

**THE ART OF FACE MASKS: VIRTUAL EXHIBIT** This group show reunites several artists from the museum's 2019 exhibit, The Art of Dress, including Georganne Alex, Carole Coduti, Gwen Samuels, and others. ongoing Free. [artoffacemasks.com](http://artoffacemasks.com). Elverhoj Museum of History and Art, 1624 Elverhoj Way, Solvang, 805-686-1211.

**ISABELLA KELLY-RAMIREZ: INSTAGRAM LIVE Q-AND-A** Kelly-Ramirez will explain the symbolism behind the charms, talk about her full line of face masks and answer viewer questions. **June 17, 4 p.m.** Elverhoj Museum of History and Art, 1624 Elverhoj Way, Solvang, 805-686-1211, [elverhoj.org](http://elverhoj.org).

**A MIGHTY OAK: PERMANENT EXHIBIT ONLINE** Depicts the habitat around a Valley oak—one of the largest and old trees found in our area. View the artwork online. ongoing Free. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082, [wildlingmuseum.org](http://wildlingmuseum.org).

**NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION** The theme of this competition's latest recurrence is Critters of the Tri-County Region, as applicants are encouraged to submit photos of all forms of wildlife—land and sea mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects—so long as they are found within the counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, or Ventura. Through July 6 Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082, [wildlingmuseum.org](http://wildlingmuseum.org).

**REMEMBERING BUD BOTTOMS: A LEGACY OF ART AND ACTIVISM** This online exhibit features sea life sculpture works by the Santa Barbara artist locally-renowned for his iconic Dolphin Family sculpture installed at the base of Stearns Wharf. Through Sept. 22 Free. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082, [wildlingmuseum.org](http://wildlingmuseum.org).

**SB COUNTY AND BEYOND** Photographic landscapes by George Rose. View online. ongoing Free. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082, [wildlingmuseum.org](http://wildlingmuseum.org).

**SOLVANG SCHOOL: INSPIRED BY NATURE** View the exhibit online. Features photography by 29 Solvang School Yearbook and Media students. The students, grades 7 – 8, were inspired by philosopher Henry David Thoreau's quote: "All good things are wild and free." ongoing Free. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082, [wildlingmuseum.org](http://wildlingmuseum.org).

**STARRY NIGHTS: VISIONS OF THE NIGHT SKY (VIRTUAL TOUR)** Celebrates the awe-inspiring beauty and mystery of the night across a range of media, including painting and photography, as well as poetry curated by Dan Gerber. View the exhibit online. Mondays, Wednesdays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. through June 15 Free. 805-688-1082. [wildlingmuseum.org](http://wildlingmuseum.org). Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang.

### SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**CALL FOR ARTISTS (GRADES 4-12): NEW CHILDREN'S BOOK** This art contest will give students an opportunity create illustrations for a bilingual children's book that will depict local landmarks. Students are to create their illustration on a paper template entry form. All illustrations shall be created using colored pencils only. Through Sept. 25 Abel Maldonado Community Youth Center, 600 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**PCPA: ACTORS TALKBACK** Streams live on PCPA's Instagram every Thursday and spotlights a different thespian guest each week. Hosted by Erik Stein. Thursdays, 3:30 p.m. Free. [pcpa.org](http://pcpa.org). PCPA: The Pacific Conservatory Theatre, 800 S. College, Santa Maria, 805-922-8313.

**PCPA READS AT HOME** A literacy project that uses our students' learning to serve children and parents who are learning at home. Co-hosted by Allan Hancock College and the Santa Maria-Bonita School District to bring a love of stories and language to people right in their homes. ongoing PCPA: The Pacific Conservatory Theatre, 800 S.

College, Santa Maria, 805-922-8313, [pcpa.org](http://pcpa.org).

**SMPL VALLEY READS BOOK CLUB** The Valley Reads Book club meets every month on the fourth Tuesday (now over the phone). Interested community members should email [jgayan@cityofsantamaria.org](mailto:jgayan@cityofsantamaria.org) to join. ongoing 805-925-0994. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**TECH TALKS: LIVE ON INSTAGRAM** Every Tuesday sit down with one of our technical staff and learn about the ins and outs of their craft. Get the exclusive with our host Erik Stein. Tuesdays, 3:30 p.m. PCPA: The Pacific Conservatory Theatre, 800 S. College, Santa Maria, 805-922-8313, [pcpa.org](http://pcpa.org).

**WINE AND DESIGN VIRTUAL CLASSES** Check Wine and Design's Orcutt website for the complete list of virtual classes online, for various ages. ongoing Varies. [wineanddesign.com/orcutt](http://wineanddesign.com/orcutt). Wine and Design, 3420 Orcutt Road, suite 105, Orcutt.

**WORKSHOPS VIA ZOOM** Sara Curran Ice, PCPA's Technical Theatre Program Coordinator/Designer, is conducting Workshops via Zoom for local high school drama students. Check site or call for more info. ongoing PCPA: The Pacific Conservatory Theatre, 800 S. College, Santa Maria, 805-922-8313, [pcpa.org](http://pcpa.org).

### SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**TEACHER AND STUDENT GRANTS** Since the program's start in 2004, the Clark Center has provided more than \$150,000 in scholarships and grants to students and teachers. Grant applications are due June 30. Through June 30 Clark Center for the Performing Arts, 487 Fair Oaks Ave., Arroyo Grande, 805-489-9444, [clarkcenter.org](http://clarkcenter.org).

### SAN LUIS OBISPO

**CALL FOR ARTISTS: A DIGITAL ART SALON** The San Luis Obispo Museum of Art (SLOMA) will be hosting a Digital Art Salon from Sept. 4 through Nov. 1 in partnership with the Digital Art Group. This juried

exhibition will feature the diverse artwork being created by contemporary California digital artists. Through July 3 805-543-8562. [artist.callforentry.org](http://artist.callforentry.org). San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

**CALL FOR ARTISTS: WHILE WE SHELTERED** Seeking more artists to participate in the show "While We Sheltered". Requirement is that the artwork must have been created curing the shelter-in-place orders (since March). Limited to 1 piece per artist and must be no larger than 16" x 20". Through July 31 Free. 805-747-4200. [artcentralartsupply.com/while-we-sheltered.php](http://artcentralartsupply.com/while-we-sheltered.php). Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

**CALL FOR ENTRIES: DIGITAL SHORTS FILM FESTIVAL** The San Luis Obispo Museum of Art (SLOMA) will be hosting the first Digital Shorts Film Festival on Sept. 26 in partnership with the Digital Art Group. This one-night-only event will feature digital shorts by artists from across California. Through July 3 805-543-8562. [sloma.org/call\\_for\\_artists/digital-shorts/](http://sloma.org/call_for_artists/digital-shorts/). San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

**THE INTERMISSION SHOW** This brisk 8- to 10-minute show is set up like a socially distanced talk show with SLO Rep's Managing Artistic Director Kevin Harris at the helm, clad in a tacky suit and tie with a faux alcoholic drink nearby. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 3 p.m. San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre, 888 Morro St., San Luis Obispo, 805-786-2440, [slorept.org/](http://slorept.org/).

**SLOMA: WEEKLY ART PROJECTS** Kids can enjoy new activities from home (posted online every Monday). Mondays sloma.org. San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo, 543-8562.

**VIRTUAL ART GALLERY** Every Friday, we publish our Virtual Art Gallery to our blog and newsletter. Featuring artworks from customers and the community. Fridays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. 805-747-4200. [artcentralslo.wordpress.com/category/gallery-exhibits/virtual-gallery/](http://artcentralslo.wordpress.com/category/gallery-exhibits/virtual-gallery/). Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

### NORTH SLO COUNTY

**FREE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ART CLASSES (ONLINE)** Check the foundation's site for various classes offered, for ages 5 to 18. Through Oct. 31 Paso Robles Youth Arts Foundation, 3201 Spring St., Paso Robles, 805-238-5825, [pryaf.org](http://pryaf.org).

**FUSED GLASS PLATE OR BOWL** Learn the basics of fusing and slumping glass in this 2-hour beginner class. Make an 8" x8" plate or bowl. Use pre-cut glass pieces, or learn how to cut glass shapes to create your own unique design. All materials included. Limited to 6 participants. Masks required. **June 20, 10 a.m.-noon** \$95. 805-464-2633. [glassheadstudio.com](http://glassheadstudio.com). Glasshead



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](http://newtimeslo.com). You may also email [calendar@newtimeslo.com](mailto: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](mailto:cwiseblood@newtimeslo.com).

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# CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

## LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

**GOOD MORNING LOMPOC** The show is hosted by Lompoc locals Michelle and Jeremy Ball, who aim to keep the community connected while staying home at the same time. Episodes are also available to watch on YouTube after they're streamed live. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 8:30 a.m. Online: Facebook.

## SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**BIZ MASTERS TOASTMASTERS TUESDAYS: ZOOM** Learn more about Toastmasters, prepare for 'Your Competitive Future', and improve your communication and leadership skills. Zoom Meeting ID: 317 198 472 (Password: 630). Tuesdays, 6:30-8 p.m. through Dec. 15 Free. 805-570-0620. Santa Maria Airport, 3249 Terminal Dr., Santa Maria.

**HUMAN BEING SUPPORT AND INSPIRATION ONLINE GROUP** An online group to listen and get support from others from the comfort of your own home. Tuesdays, 6:30-8 p.m. \$40 monthly subscription. 805-598-1509. [divining.weebly.com](http://divining.weebly.com). Divine Inspiration, 947 E Orange St., Santa Maria.

**YOGA FOR MANKIND: ZOOM CLASSES** Offering a variety of virtual yoga and pilates classes over the summer. Check site for class schedule. ongoing Starts at \$10. [yoga4mankind.org](http://yoga4mankind.org). Yoga for Mankind, 130 N Broadway, suite B, Orcutt.

## SAN LUIS OBISPO

**HELP AND HOPE WEBINAR: EARLY STAGE DEMENTIA AND CARE PARTNERS** An educational program for people in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease or other dementia and their primary care-partners. Six 1-hour webinars over 2 weeks covering issues that couples and families face as they travel the Alzheimer's journey together. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. through June 26 Free. 805-547-3830. [alz.org/cacentralcoast](http://alz.org/cacentralcoast). Downtown SLO, Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo.

**MEDITATION, BREATHWORK, AND GRATITUDE PRACTICE: LIVE ON ZOOM** This class will support you and help you stay vital during these uncertain times. Practices include breathing techniques to calm the nervous system, guided meditation for balanced relaxation, mantra practice to calm the mind, and tips to help you cultivate and maintain a home practice. Wednesdays, 12-12:45 p.m. through Sept. 16 \$10 for SLO Botanical Garden members/\$15 for non-members. 805-540-1762. [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com). San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd., San Luis Obispo.

**METABOLIC CONDITIONING** We use primarily our own body weight in this interval training class to run through exercises and drills to raise the heart rate, condition our muscles, and stay flexible. This advanced class also incorporates hand weights and sand bags, if you have them. Mondays-Thursdays, 8:15-9:15 a.m. \$72. 415-516-5214. [ae.slcsud.org](http://ae.slcsud.org). Online, 1500 Lizzie Street, San Luis Obispo.

**THE MONDAY CLUB YOGA ON ZOOM** A 60-minute Restorative Flow Yoga Class on ZOOM. Zoom meeting info will be included in your registration confirmation email. All proceeds benefit The Monday Clubhouse Conservancy, devoted to the preservation of this historical clubhouse. Mondays, 4-5:15 p.m. through June 29 \$15. [themondayclubso.org/events](http://themondayclubso.org/events). The Monday Club, San Luis Obispo, 805-541-0594.

**STRENGTH FOR 55+** We begin the session in the Static Back position, then progress onto movements, using primarily our body weight. We perform a variety of exercises to maintain function, balance, and mobility. Strength will be enhanced with and without the use of hand weights. Mondays-Thursdays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. through June 11 \$72. 415-516-5214. [ae.slcsud.org](http://ae.slcsud.org). Online, 1500 Lizzie Street, San Luis Obispo.

## NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**THE WOLVES OF YELLOWSTONE: ZOOM CONFERENCE** A Morro Cost Audubon Society community program. Dave Clendenen will talk about wolf ecology and their reintroduction to Yellowstone National Park and the northern Rocky Mountains. Meeting ID: 891 2439 3556. Password: 224505 **June 15**, 7 p.m. Morro Coast Audubon Office, Morro Bay, 805-772-1991.

# FOOD & DRINK

## SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

**KALYRA: PURCHASES AND PICK-UPS** Offering varietals from all over the world. Tuesdays-Sundays, 12-5 p.m. 805-693-8864. [kalyrawinery.com](http://kalyrawinery.com). Kalyra Winery, 343 N. Refugio Rd., Santa Ynez.

**STANDING SUN: PURCHASES AND DELIVERIES** Visit site for Cellar Club details and more info. Mondays-Thursdays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. 805-691-9413. [standingsunwines.com](http://standingsunwines.com). Standing Sun Wines, 92 2nd St., Unit D, Buellton, 805-691-9413.

## LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

**FLYING GOAT CELLARS: APPOINTMENT AND PICK-UPS** This winery specializes in Pinot Noir and sparkling wine. Call or check site for pick-up and appointment info. Mondays, Thursdays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. 805-736-9032. [flyinggoatcellars.com](http://flyinggoatcellars.com). Flying Goat Cellars, 1520 Chestnut Court, Lompoc.

## SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**PRESQU'ILE WINERY: RESERVATIONS ONLY** Call or go online to make a reservation (reservations open to the public starting June 6). ongoing Presqu'ile Winery, 5391 Presqu'ile Dr., Santa Maria, 805-937-8110, [presquilewine.com](http://presquilewine.com).

**VINO ET AMICIS: NEW HOURS AND FOOD TRUCK CONJUNCTIONS** Working in conjunction with local food trucks and Pizzeria Bello Forno; charcuterie plates will be available to meet County expectations (meals to be served with wine and beer). Saturdays, Sundays, noon and Tuesdays-Fridays, 2-8 p.m. Vino et Amicis, 156 S. Broadway, Orcutt, 805-631-0496, [vinoetamicis.com](http://vinoetamicis.com).

## SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**ARROYO GRANDE FARMERS MARKET** Saturdays, 12-2:25 p.m. Arroyo Grande Farmers Market, Olohan Alley.

## NORTH SLO COUNTY

**VIRTUAL WINE TASTING PACKAGES AT CASS WINERY** Wine by the glass and bottles are also available for purchase. Check site for specific virtual tasting packages. ongoing Free. 805-239-1730. [casswines.com/](http://casswines.com/). Cass Winery And Vineyard, Paso Robles.

**WEDNESDAYS AROUND THE WORLD DINNER: SPAIN** This culinary experience will take you on a journey to discover the best dishes from around the globe. Limited to 10 guests. **June 17**, 6-9 p.m. \$120. 805-239-1730. [my805six.com](http://my805six.com). Cass Winery And Vineyard, 7350 Linne Rd., Paso Robles.

# MUSIC

## SAN LUIS OBISPO

**LIVE OAK MUSIC FESTIVAL: ON THE RADIO** A three-day romp through the Live Oak Music Festival archives. Also features some current releases from artists who have performed at Live Oak and those who it hopes to have as part of its 2021 festival. Tune into KCBX or stream online. **June 19-21** [liveoakfest.org](http://liveoakfest.org). San Luis Obispo.

**TRUTH ABOUT SEAFOOD: SLO HOUSE PARTY** Presented by BGA Studios Live and Big Big SLO. **June 12**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free; donations accepted. [bigbigso.com/houseparty](http://bigbigso.com/houseparty). SLO House Party, Online, San Luis Obispo.

## NORTH SLO COUNTY

**WINE DOWN WEDNESDAYS: VIRTUAL MUSIC SERIES** Follow the venue's Facebook page for a virtual series of music, wine tasting, and education. Wednesdays, 5-6 p.m. Free. [facebook.com/vinaroblesamphitheatre/](http://facebook.com/vinaroblesamphitheatre/). Vina Robles Amphitheatre, 3800 Mill Rd., Paso Robles, 805-286-3680.

## NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**VIRTUAL HAPPY HOUR: LIVE MUSIC BY RACHEL SANTA CRUZ** Live music streamed every Wednesday from the Schooners Deck. Tune into our virtual happy hour to hear some great music and watch the sunset. Wednesdays, 6-8 p.m. Schooners, 171 North Ocean Ave, Cayucos, 805-995-3883, [schoonerscayucos.com](http://schoonerscayucos.com).

PHOTO COURTESY OF ART CENTER MORRO BAY



## DOLPHIN TALE

*The Wildling Museum of Art and Nature presents Remembering Bud Bottoms: A Legacy of Art and Activism through Tuesday, Sept. 22. This virtual exhibition showcases a variety of Bottoms' sea-life sculptures and is currently online for viewers to enjoy for free. Call (805) 688-1082 or visit [wildlingmuseum.org](http://wildlingmuseum.org) to find out more. The museum is located at 1511 Mission Drive, unit B, Solvang.*

—C.W.

## ARTS from page 15

Studio, 8793 Plata Lane, Suite H, Atascadero.  
**STUDIOS ON THE PARK: ONLINE CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS** Check site for a variety of virtual classes and workshops online. ongoing [studiosonthepark.org](http://studiosonthepark.org). Studios on the Park, 1130 Pine St., Paso Robles, 805-238-9800.

## NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**CALL FOR ARTISTS: THRU THE LENS III** Opening date for submissions to this juried photography exhibit is April 1, 2020. Chuck Jennings serves as judge. Please see prospectus on the exhibit schedule online. Through June 15 Varies. 805-772-2504. [artcentermorrobay.org](http://artcentermorrobay.org). Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

**GALLERY AT MARINA SQUARE PRESENTS FEATURED ARTIST ARDELLA SWANBERG** Enjoy art from Ardella "Jo" Swanberg. Jo paints and creates in all mediums. Her inspirations are the many places she has lived and visited around the world. Through June 29, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. 805-772-1068. [galleryatmarinasquare.com](http://galleryatmarinasquare.com). Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

**GALLERY AT MARINA SQUARE PRESENTS FEATURED ARTIST SHERIL VIAU** Enjoy art from watercolorist Sheril Viau. A lifelong resident of the Central Coast, Sheril's vibrant detailed and uplifting watercolors are inspired by nature and her many travels. Through June 29, 1-5 p.m. Free. 805-772-1068. [galleryatmarinasquare.com](http://galleryatmarinasquare.com). Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

**THE REBOOT: STORYTELLING REIMAGINED ON ZOOM** Now live on Zoom. A curated mix of invited storytellers and open mic for novice storytellers. Spoken word, improv, character sketches and interactive games. Third Friday of every month, 7-8 p.m. Free. 805-772-9225. [facebook.com/topdogcoffeefbar/](http://facebook.com/topdogcoffeefbar/). Top Dog Coffee Bar, 857 Main St., Morro Bay.

**ROOTED AND RISING: A BOOK DISCUSSION** Rooted and Rising draws together stories from people of a wide range of different faith perspectives about how they keep themselves encouraged and hopeful in a time of climate crisis. This is a Zoom meeting (call for meeting ID). **June 11**, 2 p.m. and **June 18**, 2 p.m. Free. [sbensos.org](http://sbensos.org). St. Benedict's Church, 2220 Snowy Egret Ln., Los Osos, 805-528-0654.

**SAFETY IN THE SHADE: ART BY SARA J. FRANTZ** San Luis Obispo-based multimedia artist Sara J. Frantz is the gallery's next featured artist. Frantz is an Associate Professor at Cal Poly, where she teaches studio art courses. Through July 1 Left Field Gallery, 1036 Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos, 805-305-9292, [leftfieldgallery.com](http://leftfieldgallery.com).



**HOT STUFF**  
JUNE 11 - JUNE 18  
2020

## THE LIMIT DOES NOT EXIST

Art Center Morro Bay presents *Beyond Boundaries*, a new multimedia exhibition set to open on Thursday, June 25, and run through Sunday, Aug. 2. The theme of this group show is described as unrestrained, as participating artists and artisans showcase their raw viewpoints through various media. Admission to the show is free. Call (805) 772-2504 or visit [artcentermorrobay.org](http://artcentermorrobay.org) for more info. The gallery is located at 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

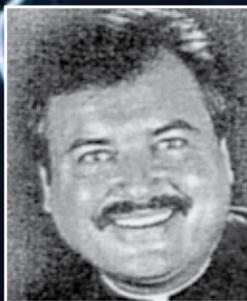
—C.W.

# ABUSED BY CLERGY IN CALIFORNIA?

DO YOU KNOW THESE MEN?



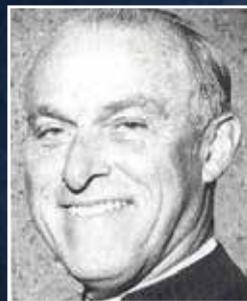
Nicolas  
Aguilar-Rivera



Michael  
Baker



Leland  
Boyer



Benjamin  
Hawkes



Christopher W.  
Kearney



Larry  
Lovell



Denis  
Lyons



Donald J.  
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Titian Jim  
Miani



Joseph D.  
Pina



Carlos Rene  
Rodriguez



Donald Patrick  
Roemer



George Neville  
Rucker



John Anthony  
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Fidencio  
Flores Silva  
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Michael M.  
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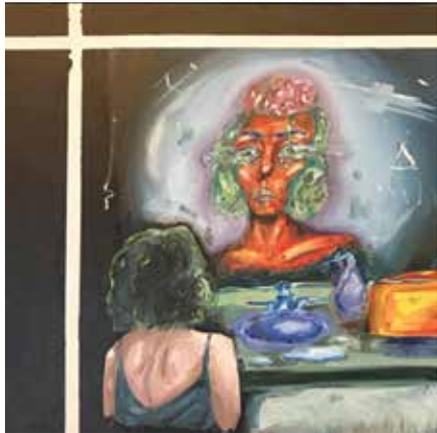
Contact us confidentially.  
**1-800-ITS-TIME**

[AndersonAdvocates.com](http://AndersonAdvocates.com)

## Arts Briefs

### Righetti High School combines annual Student Art Show and Film Festival online

IMAGE COURTESY OF GINGER GRIZZANTI



In light of Ernest Righetti High School's cancellations of both its annual Student Art Show and Film Festival earlier this year, teachers and students in the school's visual arts department teamed up to create a new website, [righettivisualarts.org](http://righettivisualarts.org), in order to showcase student artwork online.

The site includes works of various media, including drawing, painting, ceramics, photography, and film, created by freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior students throughout the 2019-20 school year. In addition to works created by students before the school's closure in March, the online exhibition also features art created as direct responses to the coronavirus pandemic, in a category titled Art During COVID-19.

"The world is full of art, it is our job to harness it for self-expression," Ginger Grizzanti, a freshman art student at Righetti, said in a press release.

Grizzanti's page on the website features 14 of her artworks, along with an artist statement. Her medium of choice is watercolor, she explained in the statement, and most of her paintings are inspired by dreams and the subconscious. Grizzanti is one of several featured student artists, and organizers of the exhibit include Righetti teachers Melissa Johnson (art), Jacob Gustafson (film and journalism), Elesa Carlson (art and drama), and Kizen Sugano (music and photography).

"Righetti High School has, for decades, showcased the talent of the students in the fine arts classes by holding an art exhibition," Johnson said in the release. "In order to adjust to the current circumstances, the visual arts department is curating an online stay-at-home option.

"Often in times of difficulty and challenge, we are pushed out of our comfort zone," she added. "But this can be an opportunity for growth and discovery."

### Great American Melodrama announces summer updates

While the Great American Melodrama in Oceano remains closed, the theater hopes to reopen in early July, according to a recent update on its website, although no specific date has been announced.

The Melodrama's original summer season was set to include *Butch Cassidy and the Sunburnt Kid* and *The Penis of Pismo Pig and Other Tall Tales*, which have both been canceled. Instead, the company will premiere a brand new, original production, described only as an evening of comedy, song, and dance.

While the new show remains partly a mystery for now, the Melodrama also announced changes to its operations, including seating capacity, once it's ready to reopen. A new seating layout will ensure 6 feet of distance between each party, which will cut the theater's capacity in half.

Changes will also be made to the snack bar, as the bar line will be arranged to allow for safe distancing, and plexiglass will separate customers from the bar staff. The menu is "still being tweaked," according to the update, and certain items will be available for pre-order. For sanitation purposes, coffee and condiments will no longer be self-serve.

To find out more about the Melodrama and its tentative summer season, visit [americanmelodrama.com](http://americanmelodrama.com).

Arts Briefs is compiled by Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood. Send information to [cwiseblood@santamariasun.com](mailto:cwiseblood@santamariasun.com).

## Behind the masks

Facelift your spirits with *The Art of Face Masks*, Elverhoj Museum's latest group exhibition

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

It all started with a casual Instagram post from Jody Williams, assistant director of the Elverhoj Museum of History and Art in Solvang.

"As face masks become our new fashion accessory, we can't help but think about our past show, *The Art of Dress*, and how those talented artists would've explored this new daily garment," the caption read on the museum's April 24 post.

One comment from Georganne Alex, one of the original artists featured in Elverhoj Museum's *The Art of Dress* exhibit in 2019, read: "Actually, many of the artists are making masks. Shall we have them send you some photos?"

A chain of responses followed, and *The Art of Face Masks*, Elverhoj Museum's timely virtual exhibition, was born. While the museum remains temporarily closed, the new group show is available to view for free online, at [theartoffacemasks.com](http://theartoffacemasks.com).

"Once I heard these artists were actively exploring the face mask, I jumped on it as a great way to keep connected and relevant during this time," Williams told the *Sun*. "It all came together very smoothly and quickly. It was about three weeks total turnaround time between the initial Insta post and launching the exhibit."

The show includes a variety of face masks and face mask-themed art from Alex as well as 13 other returning artists from *The Art of Dress*: Carole Coduti, Jess Conti, Colleen M. Kelly, Isabella Kelly-Ramirez, RT Livingston, Margaret Matson, Syd McCutcheon, Susan Owens, Tara Patrick, Linda Pearl, Gwen Samuels, Laura Wilkinson, and Sara Woodburn.

"I think that one of the reasons that it came together so easily is that many of the artists were already working on functional face masks that they had been donating to family, friends, etc.," said Williams, who became the curator of the exhibit.

Williams also hosts behind-the-scenes programming to accompany the artwork, including a series of Q-and-A interviews with the show's featured artists. Each episode is streamed live on Instagram, giving viewers the chance to comment with their own questions as well.

While the exhibition itself celebrates ways to



**FIGHT OR FLIGHT:** Featured artist Laura Wilkinson based her piece, *Flight Interrupted*, off of a dusty imprint on her window left by a dove that had crashed into it before flying away. "It struck me as a metaphor for where we might be headed," she said in her artist statement. "We should be able to see the glints, reflections, and evidence of what lies ahead."

use face masks as tools of self-expression and fashionability, the show doesn't discredit their necessity, Williams explained.

"I don't know anyone who enjoys wearing them; we do it because it's the right thing to do,"

Williams said. "Beyond being a safety device, it is also a symbol to show others we care about them and want to keep us all healthy.

"Now grabbing your face mask is like grabbing your sunglasses before walking out the door—although you can

still go to the grocery store even if you forget your sunglasses," she added, "but not if you forget your face mask."

The face mask itself has also become a symbol for the COVID-19 pandemic as a whole, Williams explained, an emblem that future



**SAY IT WITH CLAY:** For *The Art of Face Masks*, featured artist Tara Patrick created *Breathers*, a collection of masked clay figures, which she said represents both the physical nature of breathing itself and the ways we filter our own emotions.



**ORIGINS:** The idea to curate an exhibit dedicated to face masks came about in the comment section of one of Elverhoj Museum's Instagram posts, which featured Assistant Director Jody Williams and her husband both wearing fashionable but functional masks.

generations will forever link to this time period, placing this exhibition at "the intersection of art and history."

"I for one am looking forward to being decades beyond this and being able to reflect back on a pivotal time in the world's history," Williams said. "I think historians will look back on how technology—internet, media, social media—made this pandemic different from those of the past and how it also set the stage for social unrest due to racial inequality happening across the country."

Esther Jacobsen Bates, executive director of Elverhoj, also acknowledged the historical significance of our present climate, describing the face mask as not only a symbol for the coronavirus crisis, but more broadly, "a tangible reminder of the uncertainty and unknown."

"Artists often find inspiration in times of adversity and, through their creative responses, provide an emotional and sensory record of the times and events," Bates told the *Sun*.

While *The Art of Face Masks* exhibition remains virtual for now, Bates said she often discusses the possibilities of when Elverhoj should reopen—usually on a weekly basis, during meetings with fellow Santa Barbara County museum directors.

"Reopening plans are very much part of the conversation. Museums provide safe spaces for reflection and restoration during the current upheaval of daily life," Bates said. "Elverhoj, like most area museums, will likely begin by opening to members only and for limited hours." ○

Send unfiltered comments to Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood at [cwiseblood@santamariasun.com](mailto:cwiseblood@santamariasun.com).

IMAGES COURTESY OF GALLERY LOS OLIVOS

# Send in the crayons

Original artwork from Gallery Los Olivos graces the pages of a free online coloring book

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

For still life painter Patti Robbins, using coloring books as an adult is more about meditation than nostalgia—although that's definitely a big plus too.

"It is great for the soul. I highly recommend it as a peaceful pastime," Robbins told the *Sun*. "As a child, coloring was my introduction to the world of art."

Robbins, like several members of Gallery Los Olivos, is one of the participating artists in the local gallery's collaborative coloring book, which debuted online (at gallerylosolivos.com/coloringbook) on May 15. Guests of the site can view and print out pages of the coloring book for free, to color in the comfort of their own homes.

The images in the book are simple outlines—based off of original works by each artist involved—appropriate for all ages. The subject matter ranges from local landmarks to plants and animals. Robbins based her two pages off of a couple of her sunflower paintings.

"Sunflowers are my favorite flowers to paint," Robbins said. "They continue to mesmerize me as they change constantly from day to day as they sit in my studio."

Robbins described the coloring book project as a rewarding experience—and probably just as beneficial to its participants as to its featured artists, who may feel equally dormant while homebound.

"I am usually quite productive, but I have not been the last 10 weeks," said Robbins, who shared that she hasn't completed many new paintings over the course of quarantine.

One reason Robbins has had trouble finding inspiration lately is a lack of "treasure hunting" opportunities, she explained, a process rather integral to her work.

"Not being able to hunt in secondhand stores for interesting objects has curtailed my painting

experience," Robbins said. "Setting up the still life with pottery and fabrics becomes the treasure hunt that ignites my creativity."

Contrarily, multimedia artist Martha Inman Lorch has felt more free to pursue new watercolor painting and jewelry making projects during quarantine, while she sympathizes with those struggling with physical or mental health during the COVID-19 crisis.

"I have enjoyed the creative time for myself, but I do worry about others who have felt the impact of the pandemic in more negative ways," Lorch told the *Sun*.

A board member of Gallery Los Olivos, Lorch is the artist who first pitched the coloring book project. She got the idea in early May, after reading an article in *The New York Times* about individuals

using coloring books to relieve stress and anxiety during the pandemic.

"I thought this was such a clever idea that was a helpful service to their readers," Lorch said. "It occurred to me that our gallery could do something similar that might help our community of art lovers."

Lorch then designed a coloring book mock-up, which she emailed to other Gallery Los Olivos artists. The preview was met with enthusiasm from many recipients, she said, and they were invited to submit their own coloring pages to include in the book.

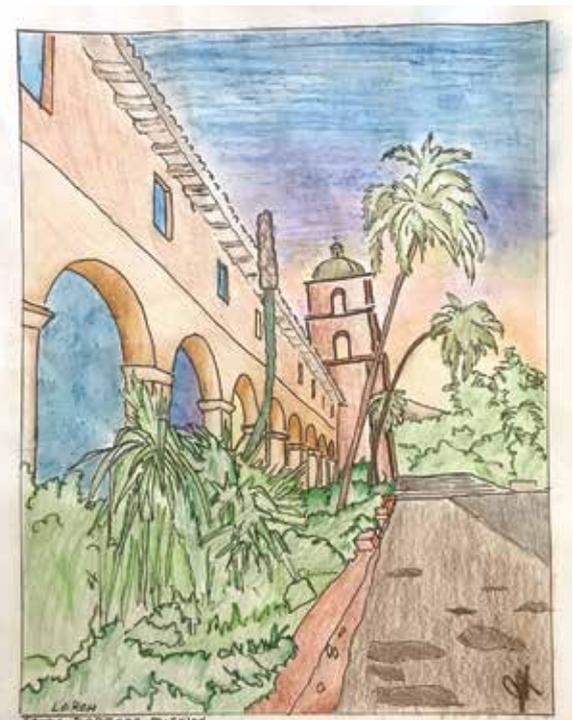
The project has also been met with a warm response from its users, Lorch added, with many participants emailing the gallery their finished colored products.

"The public reception of the coloring book has been very encouraging," Lorch said. "We're delighted that in this unusual situation, we've been able to use our skills to do some good." ○

Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood wants to know your favorite Crayola color. Send comments to [cwiseblood@santamariasun.com](mailto:cwiseblood@santamariasun.com).



**FLOWER POWER:** The subject matter of Gallery Los Olivos' new online coloring book ranges from local landmarks to plants and animals. Participating artist Patti Robbins based this page (pictured, left) off of her sunflower painting, *Purple Influence* (pictured, right).



**MISSION ACCOMPLISHED:** Users are encouraged to email their finished products to the gallery. Emily, a 16-year-old from Oregon, emailed in her colored version of artist Martha Inman Lorch's page, based off of one of her paintings of Old Mission Santa Barbara.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF 3 ARTS ENTERTAINMENT

### Birds on a wire

**M**ichael Showalter (*Hello, My Name is Doris*; *The Big Sick*) directs this crime comedy about Leilani (Issa Rae) and Jibrán (Kumail Nanjiani), a couple whose relationship has seemed to run its course. On the way to a party, they run a red light and hit a bicyclist (Nicholas X. Parson), who bounces off their windshield, leaps up and rides off. Then a man claiming to be a cop (Paul Sparks) commandeers their car and chases after the bicyclist, running him over before running off and leaving the couple with a dead body. Panicked by two pedestrians who happen upon the scene, Leilani and Jibrán run, sure that they'll be accused of the murder. On the lam, they hatch a cockamamie plan to find the killer and exonerate themselves. (86 min)

**Glen:** This is a plot we've all seen before: the hapless couple caught up in a dangerous crime that somehow blunder through to save themselves. Not exactly a novel idea. Luckily, our two leads are terrific together, and both exhibit expert comic timing in this breezy lark of a film. It's pretty standard-issue fare, but Rae and Nanjiani are so watchable and funny that the razor-thin plot and broadly painted supporting characters are forgivable. It opens with the couple's meet-cute first encounter and then skips ahead four years to their bickering present where they argue hilariously about anything and everything. Right before they hit the bicyclist, they agree to break up, but now they seem to be stuck with each

other until they can sort out this mess. Jibrán happened to pick up the bicyclist's phone before he and Leilani ran from the scene, so they at least have one clue to track down. What follows is a fast-paced romp as they work to unlock the phone, end up in the bicyclist's frat-boy-filled apartment, then at a weird *Eyes Wide Shut*-style sex party, then finally kidnapped by a couple at the sex party—all over the course of the same night. The conclusion is ultimately predictable, but the film is a welcome distraction.

**Anna:** The two co-stars really do bounce off of one another. It's quick and funny, which counterbalances its predictability pretty nicely. Sure, we've all seen the plot before, but it definitely is fun watching these two execute it. I fell for Nanjiani's comedic style hook, line, and sinker in *The Big Sick*, and he doesn't disappoint here. I'm less familiar with Rae's work, but if this slapstick silliness is any indication, I'm ready for more. Luckily the two play well together, and not only do you end up cheering for them to clear their names but also kiss and make up. If they can get through

#### THE LOVEBIRDS

What's it rated? **R**  
 What's it worth, Anna? **Matinee**  
 What's it worth, Glen? **Matinee**  
 Where's it showing? **Netflix**

this night of insanity, they can get through anything, right? This flick doesn't take itself too seriously, and the audience is invited in on the fun for their wild ride. Between the bickering and scheming is some pretty solid comedy, and I would totally watch this again anytime I

needed to escape into silliness for a while. **Glen:** I wonder if I would have liked this as much had I seen it in a theater. After nearly three months of quarantine and a whole lot of TV and straight-to-DVD movies, my expectations may have been lowered, but I laughed out loud throughout the

film. It's also a charming love story. At one point, Leilani is revealing to her friend that she and Jibrán broke up, and her friend can't believe it. Even though Leilani and Jibrán think their relationship is broken due to their bickering, from the outside looking in, their friends can see how deeply they love one another. These characters are both likable and funny, and if you're a fan of screwball romantic comedies, this delivers. If I paid for a matinee, I'd be perfectly satisfied, and seeing as how it came as part of our Netflix package, it's a deal!

**Anna:** Totally. That's the great thing about these streaming services—you don't have to nickel and dime every show or movie—it's all part of the package! Is this film mostly fluff? Sure. Is it also a ton of fun? You bet. I've always been a fan of this type of rom-com; it's a much-needed break, especially with everything that is going on in the world. A little escapism into this couple's wild and wacky night was a dose of happiness that I very much needed. Hopefully these two work together again. Their chemistry and comedy played well together. This is also a great-date night flick, so throw some



**BREAKING UP IS HARD TO DO:** Leilani (Issa Rae) and Jibrán (Kumail Nanjiani) think their relationship is over, but then they get wrapped up in a murder, forcing them to work together to stay out of jail and safe from the real killer, in the new Netflix original crime comedy *The Lovebirds*.

popcorn on the stove and cuddle up on the couch and enjoy *The Lovebirds* with your lovebird. It's a fun one. ○

*New Times Senior Staff Writer Glen Starkey and freelancer Anna Starkey write Sun Screen. Glen compiles streaming listings. Comment at gstarkey@newtimeslo.com.*

### TV Reviews

#### SPACE FORCE

What's it rated? **TV-MA**  
 When? **2020**

Where's it showing? **Netflix**

Greg Daniels teams up with the Steve Carell to bring us the off-the-wall comedy these dark times badly need. Gen. Mark R.

PHOTO COURTESY OF 3 ARTS ENTERTAINMENT



**TOP DOG:** Steve Carrell stars as Gen. Mark R. Naird, the first commander of the new sixth branch of the U.S. military, *Space Force*, in Netflix's new comedy appropriately called *Space Force*—a sort of running joke about American idiocy.

Naird (Carrell) has been working for this his whole life, and he's finally going to run a branch of the armed forces. Unfortunately, he's assigned to the president's new "great idea," and is put in charge of the fledgling program *Space Force*. Naird uproots his wife, Maggie (Lisa Kudrow), and daughter, Erin (Diana Silvers), to the middle-of-nowhere Colorado. They aren't thrilled.

With a team of awesome co-stars like Kudrow and John Malkovich as chief scientist Dr. Adrian Mallory, what feels like a silly excuse to watch TV for a while actually draws you in. While Naird is über rigid, we soon see the cracks underneath his tough exterior. The guy is going through something rough, and you can't help but want him to have a win. If you don't mind letting yourself indulge in an oddball comedy that doesn't really make sense (because it doesn't need to), give this Netflix series a go. (10 30-min. episodes)

—Anna

#### ZEROZEROZERO

What's it rated? **TV-MA**  
 When? **2019**

Where's it showing? **Amazon Prime**

The Italian grading system for flour goes 2, 1, 0, 00—depending on how refined it is—and 000 is slang for pure

cocaine, which an Italian mafia family has ordered from some Mexican narcos who are shipping it through an American freight company. The series essentially follows the coke through its travels as it moves from one set of hands to another. Meanwhile, we get to know more about the three parties involved in the transaction.

Don Minu La Piana (Adriano Chiaramida) is head of the 'Ndrangheta, a crime syndicate that his grandson, Stefano (Giuseppe De Domenico), hopes to gain control over. Enrique (Victor Hugo Martin) and Jacinto Leyra (Flavio) are the narcos, who with the help of corrupt soldiers stay one step ahead of the law. Edward Lynwood (Gabriel Byrne) is the shipping magnate whose business is kept afloat by the lucrative drug trade.

Slickly produced, the non-chronological series zips back and forth in time and space, moving from one story to another, as all these competing forces work to stay on top of a very dangerous game. This is definitely an overlooked gem from last year. (In English, Spanish, and Italian; eight 60 min. episodes) ○

—Glen

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

PHOTO COURTESY OF BARTLEBYFILM



**DESPERATE MEASURES:** In a bid to keep their family business afloat, Emma Lynwood (Andrea Risenborough) and her brother, Chris (Dane DeHaan), use their international freight company to transport a large shipment of cocaine from Mexico and into Italy, in the Amazon Prime TV series *ZeroZeroZero*.

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**RAW AND SWEET:** We snagged Pacific Gold oysters from Morro Bay Oyster Co. through a deal offered by Ancient Peaks Winery and served them raw with microgreens and Vietnamese-style mignonette.

opening to slide the knife between the top and bottom shells. Wiggling the super dull rounded knife I gave her, she moves it up and down until she's in! We both cheer, and I pass her a steak knife so she can slice the abductor muscle that holds the meat to the shell.

That's one. Eleven more to go.

As she struggles with the tough job, I slide over to craft something to serve on top of the raw delicacy. Traditionally, if you're going to eat the little buggers straight out of the shell in their own briny brew, it's a lemon wedge, cocktail sauce (I prefer Tapatio), or a shallot mignonette.

A mignonette is basically vinegar, a little bit of sugar, and shallots. But I'm feeling spicier than that. We have fresh cilantro, too. So I grab some fish sauce from the cupboard, rice vinegar, brown sugar, Uncle Chen's chili garlic sauce, shallots, limes, and a splash of the Ancient Peaks sauv blanc to make my weird version of a mignonette-meets-nuoc-cham, a Vietnamese dipping sauce that's a blend of sweet, savory, and tangy.

Just for kicks, I grab some sesame oil, too. I'm not a real follow-the-recipe kind of person, unless it comes to baking. Vinegar is the base, and I just throw in proportions of this and that and taste as I go until it's that perfect blend of sour, sweet, salt, and spice.

By the time I finish, five oysters are shucked and waiting. Seven more to go. So I jump in to help and manage to pry one open. She cracks two more, and we end up with eight to plate. Topping them with some fresh microgreens, we pour ourselves a glass of the sauvignon blanc and decide we'll barbecue the rest until those little shells crack open.

We each slurp down a raw one on its own. They're salty and sweet, nothing fishy about it. And they're definitely not what I would call small. Satisfying and fresh, a quick sip of wine finishes off the first taste test. Next up, a spoonful of the mignonette with a dollop of shallots and cilantro for good measure. Nailed it.

Now it's time for steak salad with roasted carrots, pickled beets, spicy garlic cashews, and the remainder of the mignonette as a dressing. Yep. We nailed that too!

The last time I enjoyed fresh oysters from my back patio, a different friend and I grabbed them from a farmers' market. Olde Port Fish & Seafood Company parks their trailer full of seafood nabbed fresh from the sea at a number of farmers' markets in SLO County. Only one of the company's storefronts is currently open due to the pandemic, and you can find it in Grover Beach.

Olde Port's oysters come from Grassy Bar Oyster Co., also farmed in Morro Bay. They were a little bit larger than the Pacific Golds, but just as salty and not as sweet. We barbecued those because that particular friend doesn't care for the texture of a raw oyster.

Barbecuing oysters is pretty easy. You place them over the heat with the round side down, so the meat can cook in its own juices and not dry out. As soon as the shells crack open, you know they're ready.

I fashioned a similar mignonette for those bad boys—minus the fish sauce and chili, but plus soy sauce. We also decided butter and garlic would be tasty. Because who doesn't like butter and garlic? I browned some butter before crisping up freshly chopped garlic and adding some smoked paprika.

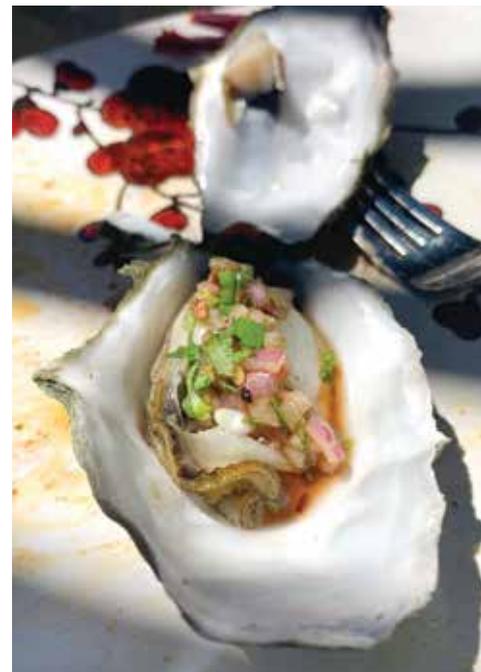
We sat down to our meal of barbecued oysters and a farmers' market salad with roasted golden beets and carrots, fresh Central Coast Creamery chevre, and walnuts accompanied by an IPA while taking in the midday sun. They're slightly chewier than the raw ones and not as slurpy, but the smoke from the barbecue gives them a savory edge, which was perfect with the smoked paprika garlic butter.

Yes, of course, it was good. And super satisfying. ○

*Editor Camillia Lanham recommends you get your oyster on. Send foodie tips to [clanham@santamariasun.com](mailto:clanham@santamariasun.com).*



**SHELL ON:** Old Porte Seafood Company sells oysters from Grassy Bar Oyster Co. out of Morro Bay, which we barbecued for lunch on a recent Saturday.



**BRINY:** Shallot mignonette is a classic accompaniment for raw oysters, but we bent the rules a little and served a spicy version with barbecued Grassy Bar oysters.



**BUTTERY:** There's almost nothing better than butter and garlic—add a little paprika and crisp up that garlic until just before it burns, and you get a smoky-crispy condiment for barbecued oysters.

## Ocean grown

*Sweet, salty, and delicious, Morro Bay oysters are a special weekend treat*

BY CAMILLIA LANHAM

**C**lacking together like stones, oysters clatter against the sink.

My friend asked for a shucking knife, and I produced a butter knife. She looked at me and laughed.

"I know what I'm getting you," she says.

I shrug with a chuckle. What can I say?

Sometimes, you just have to make do with what you have. It's either going to work or it's not. Plus, if we can't eat them raw, we can always chuck them on the barbecue, which is warming up for the giant

### Shuck on

Find locally farmed oysters from Morro Bay Oyster Co. and Grassy Bar Oyster Co. by visiting their respective websites: [morrobayoysters.com](http://morrobayoysters.com) and [grassybaroyster.com](http://grassybaroyster.com). You can visit Olde Port Fish and Seafood Company at [oldeportfish.com](http://oldeportfish.com) and 1160 W. Grand Ave. in Grover Beach. Get Hooked Seafood out of Santa Barbara delivers subscription seafood boxes, which sometimes include Morro Bay oysters, to a location in Solvang. Visit [gethookedseafood.com](http://gethookedseafood.com) to learn more about how to order.

steak she brought from a Sonoma area farm. Either way, they're still going to be tasty.

I purchased this particular dozen through Ancient Peaks Winery alongside a bottle of their sauvignon blanc. Apparently, these are the "small" ones from Morro Bay Oyster Co., which grows Pacific Gold oysters in the bay. They were plucked fresh before being bagged the day we picked them up from the Santa Margarita-based winery.

There's something special about cracking into an oyster on a warm summer day, while you sit outdoors and sip on a glass of chilled wine. It's the good life, and it's even better because these oysters come from Morro Bay and are farmed by locals who work at family-owned companies. And it's not something you have to go to a restaurant for. They're easy to prepare and a nice appetizer to get you ready for the fancy meal that will surely follow.

My friend prods the back of the oyster for a small

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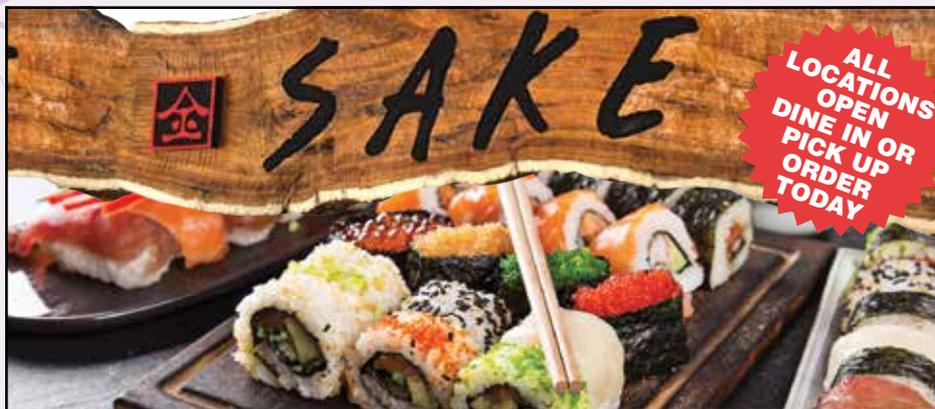
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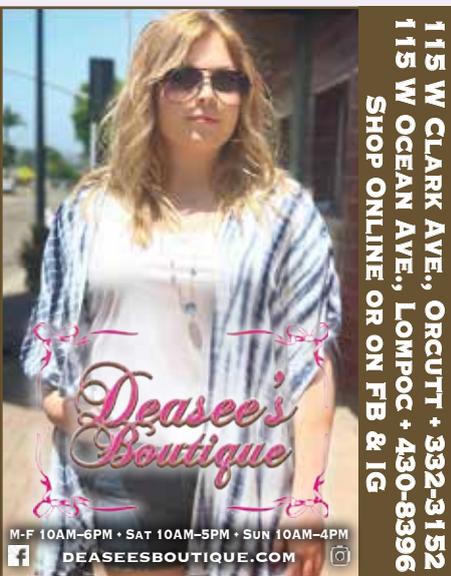
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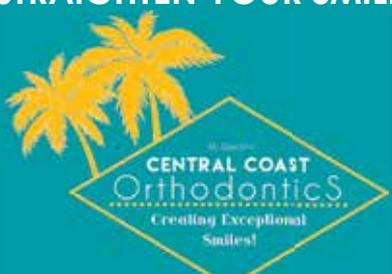

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