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# Sun

AT THE MOVIES



*Queen's Gambit:  
Genius* [23]



*The community  
pulls together to help  
veterans impacted by  
COVID-19* [8]

BY MALEA MARTIN

# 'Adapt, improvise, and overcome'

**NEWS** Students protest high school district changes [4]

**ARTS** Exhibit benefits NatureTrack [20]

**EATS** Alfie's Fish and Chips in Lompoc [24]



12-10-20  
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NOVEMBER 19 - NOVEMBER 26, 2020 VOL. 21 NO. 38

Veterans experience a higher rate of homelessness, joblessness, and mental health issues than the general population, and the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated that hardship. Regulations and public safety measures have reduced Santa Barbara County veterans' access to the services they need, but groups like Band of Brothers, nonprofits like Goodwill Industries, and the county are pulling together to continue holding events like Stand Down, even in a limited capacity. Staff Writer Malea Martin has the story [8].

This week, you can also read about the Oak Group's online exhibit benefitting the NatureTrack Foundation [20]; a local bookstore celebrating 50 years [22]; and Alfie's Fish and Chips in Lompoc [24].

Camillia Lanham  
editor



**ADDRESSING STRUGGLES:** Santa Barbara County comes together to help veterans during COVID-19.

Cover file photo > Cover design by Alex Zuniga

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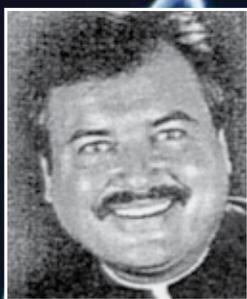
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## Political Watch

• **Oregon Gov. Kate Brown** and **Washington Gov. Jay Inslee** joined **California Gov. Gavin Newsom** in issuing travel advisories on Nov. 13, urging people who visit or return home from these states to self-quarantine to mitigate the spread of the virus. The advisories also urge against nonessential out-of-state travel and encourage residents to stay local for the holidays. “California just surpassed a sobering threshold—1 million COVID-19 cases—with no signs of the virus slowing down,” Newsom said in a statement. “Increased cases are adding pressure on our hospital systems and threatening the lives of seniors, essential workers, and vulnerable Californians. Travel increases the risk of spreading COVID-19, and we must all collectively increase our efforts at this time to keep the virus at bay and save lives,” the joint statement reads. The advisories suggest a 14-day self quarantine after out-of-state travel and recommends that people limit their interactions to their immediate household. Essential travel is defined as “travel for work and study, critical infrastructure support, economic services and supply chains, health, immediate medical care, and safety and security,” according to Newsom’s office. “If you do not need to travel, you shouldn’t,” Oregon’s Gov. Brown said in the statement. “This will be hard, especially with Thanksgiving around the corner. But the best way to keep your family safe is to stay close to home.” Gov. Inslee added that Washington’s cases have doubled over the last two weeks. “This puts our state in as dangerous a position today as we were in March,” Inslee said. “Limiting and reducing travel is one way to reduce the further spread of the disease. I am happy to partner with California and Oregon in this effort to help protect lives up and down the West Coast.”

• After a tight race that could not be called on Election Day, **Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham** (R-Santa Luis Obispo) released a statement thanking his district for reelecting him shortly after challenger **Dawn Addis** announced her concession. “I am honored that the voters have elected me to a third term to represent them in the state Assembly—in the highest turnout election in history,” Cunningham said in the statement. “I will continue to work hard for them, to solve problems, and to be an independent voice for the Central Coast and the people of California.” The statement said that as of the Nov. 9 count, Cunningham held 55.1 percent of the votes, while Addis had 44.9 percent, with a total of 221,624 votes counted throughout the 35th Assembly District.

• On Nov. 12, **U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal** (D-Santa Barbara) introduced the Fly Safe and Healthy Act of 2020. “This legislation would help prevent the spread of COVID-19 among air travelers by creating a pilot program to require temperature checks at TSA screenings,” a statement from Carbajal’s office said. A companion bill was introduced in the Senate in September. “My own experience with COVID-19 underscores how easily this virus can spread, even when we take precautions,” Carbajal, who caught COVID-19 and has since recovered, said in the statement. “As our economy reopens, and as more Americans return to air travel, it is crucial to our public health that we work to make flying as safe as possible for the general public. Temperature checks at airports are one way we can help curb the spread of COVID-19 at a time when cases are on the rise, and the pilot program puts travelers first by including built-in protections for consumers.”



**DEMANDING CHANGE:** Student protesters gather outside the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District office to protest new changes to their distance learning schedules.

## High school students protest distance learning changes

Late in the afternoon on Nov. 16, high school students holding protest signs begin to gather on the street corner of Skyway and Fairway in Santa Maria. Every few minutes, a car honks in support as the protesters chant “No education without representation,” and “Si se puede.”

Yellow buses pull into the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District’s parking lot behind the protest.

With weeks left in the semester following record-low progress report grades, the district announced that students will now be required to attend Zoom sessions every day of the week, so as to “comply with requirements from the California Department of Education to have ‘daily live interaction,’” a Nov. 11 email to parents stated.

The changes would “effectively double the amount of direct interaction they have with each of their teachers,” the Nov. 11 email stated.

Eliot Báez, one of the student organizers, told the *Sun* that the state mandate has been in place since September.

“One of our biggest concerns is that the district is not informing us of these changes until now, in November, less than a month before the end of the semester” Báez said. “What is particularly infuriating to many of us is that we were given less than a week’s notice before this change was implemented in our district.”

Ellen Barger, the Santa Barbara County Education Office’s assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, said the district became aware of its noncompliance during a recent routine meeting when the county reiterated various distance learning requirements from the state’s current education code.

“One of those [elements] is the requirement for daily live interaction,” Barger said. “After sharing

that, I was contacted by the district. They said, ‘Here’s how we are doing our distance learning, and it sounds like we need to make a shift.’”

Barger said she then confirmed that the district was out of compliance and would need to increase the amount of virtual face-to-face time between students and teachers.

Daily live interaction is defined as instruction with a certificated staff member and peers, Barger explained. It must be synchronous—meaning students receive the instruction at the same time—and include live audio or video communication.

Up until the district announced the recent changes, Báez only saw his teachers and peers on Zoom twice a week. The shift to having Zoom sessions every day of the week would make an already difficult learning environment worse, Báez said.

“It’s challenging,” he said. “However, a lot of us would argue that it would be even more challenging to see our teachers more times per week, because that would entail being online for an even longer amount of time.”

Báez and his fellow organizers believe the district should have consulted with students before the decision was made and that “the district took much too long to respond” to mandates that have been in place since the beginning of the school year.

Barger said that the new education code has a lot of moving parts—the required number of instructional minutes, synchronous versus asynchronous learning, how much time kids need to be on Zoom—and that this has “caused a lot of difficulty for our districts.”

“This legislation happens, and then they have to make adjustments to put it into place, to implement it,” Barger said. “They are constantly reviewing their programs.”

She added that the district’s recent changes were

self-made and that the county’s education office is not a regulatory body.

About halfway through the Nov. 16 protest, district Superintendent Antonio Garcia came outside to talk with the students. Garcia said the district values the input of students and recognized the “challenges that this learning environment has placed on students.”

Báez asked whether he and other students could “trust that you as a district will amplify our voice to the county and the state.”

“We do that on a regular basis,” Garcia responded.

Jenny Angel, another student organizer, said she believed that the district’s current level of communication with students isn’t sufficient.

“We would like transparency in the work that you do,” Angel said. “Your intentions are there, but maybe your actions don’t really reflect your intentions as best as they could be representing them.”

Garcia said he would take the students’ concerns into consideration.

“The decisions we have made as a school district have not been made without thoughtful consideration and information from different sources, including state and county guidance; student, parent, and staff input; and internal data, including student attendance and achievement,” a written statement from the district said.

Angel said the conversation with the superintendent was productive but that there’s still work to be done.

“I think it’s definitely important that we were able to get their attention,” Angel said. “I think that the first step is definitely to be heard, and now moving forward it’s part of our jobs as students to hold them accountable, and their jobs to hold themselves accountable.”

—Malea Martin

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Monday – Friday

NEWS from page 4

## Solvang voters recall City Council member, and he's OK with it

Solvang's citizen-led effort to recall City Councilmember Chris Djernaes on the Nov. 3 ballot passed with approximately 86 percent of voters supporting his removal.

Djernaes told the *Sun* that he's accomplished what he set out to do when he was elected in 2018 and will continue to support his community regardless of the recall.

The recall prevents Djernaes from completing his four-year term on the council. But, he said, in just two years he's been able to work with the council to ensure transparency and remove decision-makers who were influenced by what he called "the old guard"—a tight-knit group of individuals with a long history and friendships in the community.

He voted in favor of reducing city staff from 40 people to 20 and redirecting funds from the Solvang Conference & Visitors Bureau and Solvang Chamber of Commerce to direct marketing and advertising efforts for businesses on Alisal Road and Copenhagen Drive. Djernaes said he supported and pushed for the Solvang Fall Fest and JuleFest, additional activities, and revenue-generating events for the city.

In doing so, Djernaes said he's been able to support a more economically vibrant vision—his vision—for the future of Solvang.

"I was the one trying to change the economy of Solvang to move away from these micro-businesses because they're selling all this kitsch stuff that is reminiscent of the '90s and 2000s that people aren't necessarily interested in. The demographic that comes to Solvang has completely shifted," he said.

Djernaes said he argued for change at the city level, the downtown area, and the business owners and that's why the citizens effort began to remove him from the council.

"There's a battle for the soul of Solvang going on right now," Djernaes said. "Are we going to continue to be the quasi-Danish capital of America or are we going to move in a brand new direction and leave behind the Danish traditions? Because if we don't fight to restore the cultural identity of the Danish brand, Solvang won't survive another generation."

He argues that Solvang needs to create an overall memorable experience for visitors of all demographics to keep the tourist-driven community going.

The citizen-led recall effort was organized by resident Lammy Johnstone, who said Djernaes wasn't respectful to Solvang residents and disregarded voters' wishes.

Djernaes told the *Sun* those were a couple of many ridiculous and untruthful accusations that Johnstone

and many others made about him. It was all just part of their plan to remove him from office, he said.

For now, Djernaes said he's going to focus on caring for an ill family member, but he won't discontinue his support for the community. He advises the city and the community to work together to build a lasting vision for Solvang, create a sustainable revenue-generating plan that includes new businesses, and open a stronger line of communication with one another.

"You would see me at the council meetings demanding more community engagement, more discussions about the big issues the community is facing," he said. "It's OK to have arguments but at the end of the day we need to learn to agree to disagree, shake hands, and work together tomorrow."

—Karen Garcia

## Santa Barbara County embarks on new challenge to reduce homelessness

Santa Barbara County wants to house 75 homeless veterans by the end of January after successfully housing more than 50 young people over the last few months.

If successful, the 100-Day Challenge to Reduce Homelessness Among Veterans would get about half of the county's current homeless veteran population off the streets. Led by the Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County Continuum of Care, the challenge is part of Gov. Gavin Newsom's 100-Day Challenge Initiative to address homelessness across California.

Lucille Boss, housing programs specialist with the county, told the *Sun* that her team will build off the successes and lessons from the previous challenge to reduce youth homelessness. The team surpassed its first challenge goal by housing 52 youth.

"We thought the timing would be interesting and motivating, especially around Veterans Day and knowing that we weren't doing the traditional Veterans Day Stand Down, so we thought it would be a nice way to kind of pick up that momentum," Boss said.

The annual Stand Down event, during which county veterans gather and receive supportive resources, was canceled this year due to the pandemic and replaced with a drive-through event. The Stand Down Homeless Veterans Assistance Project is now one of more than a dozen stakeholders involved with the 100-Day Challenge, which also includes the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Housing Authority of the County of Santa Barbara, and local veterans.

In the past, the county has struggled to find landlords that will accept Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers, "and we also weren't getting veterans referred quickly enough," Boss said.

"We recognized we needed the VA and HUD [Housing and Urban Development] to really step up and increase their staffing and availability to

make sure that veterans were getting referred to the program, so that we could get them into housing using their available vouchers," Boss said.

To address the issue, Boss said, U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara) testified before the VA on behalf of the county.

"Now we have a really strong partnership with the VA," Boss said. "I think he really went above and beyond in that way."

Thanks to Carbajal, the VA now participates in meetings multiple times a month with the county to discuss veterans in need on a case-by-case basis and figure out the best solutions for each individual.

As a veteran and member of the Congressional Veterans Caucus, Carbajal said, "I laud Santa Barbara County for taking on that [100-Day] Challenge."

"Hopefully they're able to maximize the general resources through CDBG [community development block grant] housing, veteran vouchers, all the funding that the federal government has provided to partner with local governments," Carbajal said. "This is one of those things where it's a state, local, and federal collaboration that really makes it all work."

The challenge will run until the end of January, Boss said.

—Malea Martin

## Stadium 805 gets green light to host six concerts in 2021

If COVID-19 allows it, Central Coast residents will very likely be able to attend concerts at the Santa Maria Raceway at some point next year.

At a meeting on Nov. 10, the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a temporary commercial outdoor entertainment license application submitted by the Santa Maria Raceway, aka Stadium 805, allowing the venue to host six one-day concerts with up to 3,500 attendees throughout 2021.

The decision came after more than two hours of public comment, largely in favor of Stadium 805 and the unique, family-friendly entertainment opportunities it offers local residents.

"We're extremely happy," Stadium 805 owner Nick Duggan told the *Sun*, "and really happy for the community as a whole because it really is their venue."

The Santa Maria Raceway has been at the center of a debate over excessive noise and traffic for more than a year now. Although the facility has been hosting stock car races for more than 40 years, Duggan purchased it in 2018 with hopes of continuing the races and supplementing the track's income with other events, such as concerts, beer and wine festivals, and fundraisers.

Raceways struggle to survive on their own, Duggan said, and over the last several years, stand-alone tracks throughout California have had to close down. The most successful tracks, Duggan said, are those on fairgrounds, where concerts,

games, rides, and other forms of entertainment are also available. So when Duggan purchased the raceway, he dubbed it Stadium 805 and remodeled it, and in the spring of 2019, it became a venue for more than just races.

"We've had to go with that model to keep racing there," Duggan said. "Racing is very important to us. It's important to the community."

But the resulting traffic congestion, noise, and trash led to complaints from residents of a neighboring housing development, Costa Pacifica Estates. At a South County Advisory Council meeting in November 2019, several Costa Pacifica residents voiced concerns about excessive concert noise running late into the night even on weekdays, and traffic congestion and safety issues at intersections on Hutton Road and Vista Del Rio, the only road leading into the Costa Pacifica development.

At the Board of Supervisors meeting on Nov. 10, Costa Pacifica resident Terry Reible countered the comments of many other community members who suggested that Costa Pacifica residents hoped to shut the Santa Maria Speedway down for good and compared them to people who move in next to an airport and then complain about the noise from planes.

"We all want to see the racetrack stay open," Reible said at the meeting. "And they're 100 percent correct—we knew the racetrack was there when we moved in. We had to sign a disclaimer that there were, I believe, 10 races per year. Those races aren't a problem. We don't have a problem with the racetrack."

It's the other events, which started up after many neighboring residents had already purchased their homes and moved in, that Reible said are the problem. They didn't agree to live near those events, she said, and the lack of parking at Stadium 805 and traffic congestion issues have created a situation that could prove dangerous in a number of situations, say if first responders needed to get into the Costa Pacifica development.

"Several, several issues need to be addressed before they allow a racetrack to turn into a concert venue," she said.

Supervisors attempted to find a compromise between the needs of Stadium 805 and its neighbors through several unique conditions outlined in the temporary license. In its application, Stadium 805 submitted a detailed plan for traffic mitigation during concerts, which will include hiring California Highway Patrol officers to direct traffic during each event. Concerts aren't allowed Monday through Thursday, and are only allowed between noon and 10 p.m. Residents of the Costa Pacifica development must be notified 30 days prior to concerts, and before any such events are allowed at Stadium 805, its owners will have to submit a sound monitoring plan to the county for review and implementation. ○

—Kasey Bubnash

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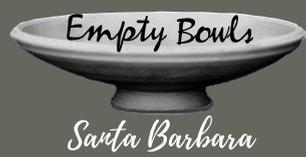
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# Valuing vets

*In the middle of the pandemic, community leaders find creative ways to rally around those who served our country*

BY MALEA MARTIN

For many, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about previously unexperienced struggles: Some people lost their jobs, used food banks, or applied for rent relief for the first time in their lives.

But for those who are already familiar with these challenges, such as the veteran community, the pandemic only exacerbated the hardship. It's well documented that veterans already experience higher rates of homelessness, joblessness, and mental health issues.

"Then take that and realize how devastating it would be to be living in a pandemic world when you're either homeless or you're on the fringes," Santa Barbara County 5th District Supervisor Steve Lavagnino told the *Sun*.

Lavagnino is the prime mover behind the annual Veterans Stand Down event, which was canceled this year due to the public health crisis. The event connects homeless or near-homeless veterans with the community services they need.

The cancellation of events like Stand Down, Lavagnino said, "can be devastating for these people, especially people that have served our country. It really dials back a lot of the good work that we've done throughout the years."

Furthermore, a recent study on people tested for the virus at the Department of Veterans Affairs national health care system shows that "older age, male sex, and comorbidities are associated with increased risk for death among U.S. veterans" who catch COVID-19.

With veterans being more at risk than ever, and in the wake of annual support events being canceled, Stand Down partnered with Santa Barbara County, the Santa Barbara Workforce Development Board, and Goodwill Industries of Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties for a Veterans Day drive-through event on Nov. 11. The free event

allowed veterans to come grab a gift bag full of items and information on community resources.

The *Sun* spoke with Lavagnino as he helped out at the event in Santa Maria, one of four locations.

"I'm really excited about already planning next year's Stand Down, trying to make it bigger and better, but today we're just trying to do a thank-you here to our veterans," he said. "We're seeing a really good turnout with people that are driving through and doing it in a COVID-safe atmosphere."

The gift bags included "toiletries, the Foodbank is providing fruits and vegetables, we're handing out gift cards to different fast food restaurants around town, and most importantly we're giving them a contact sheet with information for housing, mental health, and social services, so that in a moment of crisis they know who to call and where to go," Lavagnino added.

In addition to some of the disproportionate financial and health challenges veterans might face during the pandemic, Lavagnino said that social isolation is also taking a toll.

"We have a lot of guys that show up at Stand Down that are 70-plus, and they're just becoming more and more isolated because of the pandemic," Lavagnino said. "That's not good for people's mental health. I'm seeing some of these folks coming through here in their cars, and they're just so happy that someone's paying attention to them and interacting with them and thanking them for their service."

Osvaldo Sotelo, workforce programs manager at Goodwill Industries, manned a booth at the drive-through event. He said it was a great success, and told the *Sun* about some of the veterans services that Goodwill Industries offers.

"We have a veteran employment assistance program where we help veterans and veteran spouses who were honorably discharged from the services



**HANDING OUT HOPE:** Goodwill Industries employees run a booth at a drive-through Veterans Day event. Goodwill's veteran employment assistance program helps connect veterans with paid work experience, a service needed now more than ever.

obtain a job, and we offer a paid work experience," Sotelo said. "Talking to veterans and specifically those who need jobs, they were really amazed by such a program. Specifically, now that COVID hit, there were a lot of people who lost their jobs."

At the beginning of the pandemic, when the program had to close its physical doors, Sotelo said it was a challenge to connect with veterans virtually, as many didn't have a computer or internet access. But now, Goodwill has adapted to doing safe, CDC-compliant, one-on-one meetings to help veterans who can't be reached online.

"We try to meet them where they're at," Sotelo said.

Steve Baird is a veteran and member of Band of Brothers, a group of veterans dedicated to supporting mental health in the veteran community. As Baird helped hand out resources at the drive-through event, he told the *Sun* about how similar events have impacted him.

"I have not missed one," Baird said. "I

used to be a recipient. I was a homeless veteran, so for me to go through all of this and then come out here and be a provider today, that's what it's all about."

And while veterans may be facing increased challenges during the pandemic, Baird holds a positive outlook on how his community has prevailed.

"There's a lot of us who have been in situations that require this type of attention. One of the things that we really employ in the military is: adapt, improvise, and overcome. So that's just getting put into play here," he said.

Like any organization that revolves around social gathering, Band of Brothers had to adapt to the realities of the pandemic. But Baird said they're making it work.

"The biggest shift that we've seen is that our whole Band of Brothers program is based upon recreational sports activities, so our leagues have obviously stopped or shut down, like bowling and softball and billiards," Baird said. "So we've adjusted now, and

we're going to be doing some new sports like skydiving and ocean fishing."

Baird also commended Santa Barbara County for spearheading a new 100 Day Challenge to Reduce Homelessness Among Veterans. The Santa Maria/Santa Barbara County Continuum of Care and local stakeholders like Baird are also involved with the initiative.

"We're housing 75 homeless vets in the next hundred days," he said. "That has brought just a cross-collaboration of everyone that is involved with these things, bringing everybody together. ... We're full speed ahead in this community when it comes to what's going on with the veterans."

And "veteran or not," Baird said, everyone needs to lean on others to get through these tumultuous times.

"Everyone should be reaching out to somebody that they haven't talked to in a while," Baird said. "You never know how much that'll mean to someone." ○

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

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This year, DVS converted its Second Stage facility to **permanent project-based Section 8 housing** for 15 domestic violence survivors and their families. Additionally, the **Domestic Violence Housing First** program offers temporary financial assistance, case management, career development, and financial literacy training, which prepares families to re-enter the housing market successfully.



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- Planning for the future



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH & EDUCATION

DVS provides **education and outreach activities** throughout the county. Together with a team of volunteers, DVS participates in community events, conducts the State of California 40-Hour Domestic Violence Training, and provides interactive teen education in schools and community organizations.



## EMERGENCY SHELTER

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## ABOUT DVS

Domestic Violence Solutions for Santa Barbara County's mission is to provide **safety, shelter and support** for individuals and families affected by domestic violence and collaborate with community partners to raise awareness regarding the cause, prevalence and impact. DVS is Santa Barbara County's only full-service provider of **24-hour emergency shelter and services** for survivors of domestic violence.



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To learn more, contact **Jenni-Elise Ramirez, Development Officer**: [JenniEliseR@DVsolutions.org](mailto:JenniEliseR@DVsolutions.org) • 805.963.4458 x1109

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**THOMAS ANDREW DRUMMOND**, 69, of Santa Maria passed away 11/5/2020, arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

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PHOTO COURTESY OF DIGNITY HEALTH



**A HELPING HAND:** RN Kelly Maguire graduated from Cuesta College's nursing program in May and was almost immediately hired at French Hospital Medical Center in SLO, where she provides support essential to beating COVID-19.

## Against the odds

*Cuesta College nursing students graduate and provide essential health care services amid the pandemic*

**BY KASEY BUBNASH**

Kelly Maguire was just a few months away from completing Cuesta College's registered nursing (RN) program when COVID-19 first started making its way around the Central Coast.

As cases trickled into San Luis Obispo County in March, Cuesta closed its campus and canceled in-person classes. In an effort to limit person-to-person contact and reserve personal protective equipment, local hospitals also stopped allowing students into their facilities for the clinical rotations that are required for graduation.

But unlike nursing programs across the nation that were derailed by the pandemic, Cuesta found a way to continue classes through online instruction and clinical simulations, and by May, Maguire was able to graduate. That, she said, could only be described as a bittersweet moment.

"No one expects to graduate nursing school in the middle of a pandemic," Maguire said.

Maguire is one of about 20 recent Cuesta College nursing grads hired at Dignity Health hospitals in SLO and Santa Barbara counties amid the COVID-19 pandemic, an experience that Maguire said has been at once completely overwhelming and incredibly rewarding. Dignity Health has a long-standing partnership with nursing programs on the Central Coast and hires recent grads annually, but this year's group faced unparalleled and unexpected obstacles, both in actually graduating and upon entering the workforce.

When schools closed across the Central Coast in the spring, Cuesta transitioned to online instruction. So Maguire and her classmates worked through various scenarios and case studies over Zoom, discussing what kind of treatment they'd offer to patients with theoretical symptoms or diagnoses. By early April, Cuesta's nursing students were able to return to local hospitals for the hands-on clinical experience that Maguire said is vital to truly learning what it takes to be a nurse.

Shortly after her graduation in May, Maguire was hired as an RN at French Hospital Medical Center in San Luis Obispo, where she's worked with a few COVID-19 patients. She felt nervous about it at first, but then she thought back to all her training—the hours spent studying, the days working side by side with other health care workers during clinical rotations—and she felt lucky to be able to offer some kind of assistance at a time when so many feel like there's no hope.

"During the pandemic, sometimes a lot of people feel helpless," Maguire said. "But we had just learned everything and gotten all of this training, and we were able to apply it."

Sara San Juan, a spokesperson for Dignity Health Central Coast, said Maguire was one of six recent Cuesta grads hired at French Hospital in SLO. Arroyo Grande Community Hospital also hired six grads, and Marian Regional Medical Center in Santa Maria hired eight. This year's nursing grads, San Juan said, have been important in the fight against COVID-19.

Their help is even more important now that cases of COVID-19 are surging on the Central Coast and throughout the nation.

"While some of them do not work directly with COVID-19 patients, they are vital in supporting health care in our communities during the pandemic," San Juan wrote via email. "Their presence allows us to manage staffing levels in each department to best care for our patients."

### Highlights

- The Santa Maria Public Library recently announced that it will resume passport processing services starting Nov. 17 at the Main Library, located at 421 South McClelland St. The services will be by appointment only on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to noon, Wednesdays from 1 to 3 p.m., and Thursdays from 3 to 5 p.m. Those interested in making an appointment can call the library at (805) 925-0994, Ext. 8566. Application forms, information on documentation required, fees, and other information can be found at [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov). More information about the library's passport services can be found at [cityofsantamaria.org/passport](http://cityofsantamaria.org/passport).

- Santa Barbara County announced that the Parks Department received a private stocking permit for up to 16,000 pounds of triploid rainbow trout in Cachuma Lake for 2020-21. "The first 4,000-pound delivery arrived late October, with the second delivery arriving just in time for Veterans Day," according to the county. ○

Staff Writer Kasey Bubnash wrote this week's Spotlight. Send tidbits to [spotlight@santamariasun.com](mailto:spotlight@santamariasun.com).

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## Online Poll

### How are you feeling post-election?

- 45% Post-election?! It's not over until every last vote is counted.
- 33% You win some, you lose some—that's democracy for you.
- 22% Great! My candidate won!
- 0% I don't accept the results of the election.

9 Votes

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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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# Political fresh air

## The election ushered in a new era for Lompoc's leadership

**BY RON FINK**

By all accounts, the recent election had the highest level of participation in anyone's memory—a stunning 85 percent countywide! Maybe this is the only positive outcome of the COVID-19 virus pandemic. I think that our county handled this well by allowing four in-person days of voting and counting vote-by-mail ballots as they arrived to provide an accurate count quickly on election night.

In Lompoc, this election provided a breath of political fresh air. It appears that Mayor Jenelle Osborne and newcomer Jeremy Ball (4th District) have achieved victories in this year's election. Councilwoman Gilda Cordova ran unopposed but garnered an impressive vote of confidence.

The now repudiated three-vote bloc consisting of Jim Mosby, Dirk Starbuck, and Victor Vega has been broken by these victories. What was supposed to be an endorsement of Mosby's political agenda turned out to be an embarrassing loss, as his challenger is leading with an overwhelming 60 percent margin of the votes cast.

I think I heard a big sigh of relief from the professional staff at City Hall when the results were announced. No longer will they be plagued by regular and lengthy diatribes from now lame duck Mosby who professed to know everything about city government. As he exits the building for the last time as an elected official, staff will now have considerably more time to focus on their tasks.

With Mosby's exit he takes with him his appointee to the Utilities Commission, John Linn. With Mosby's blessing and vote, Linn created havoc—specifically in the wastewater division—by convincing his three enablers to grant waivers to wastewater pretreatment program standards. The Environmental Protection Agency later found

fault with and reversed this decision saying that management of this system was a technical, not political, process.

This is but one of the many problems created by the Mosby-led coalition of the three amigos.

As for the winner of the 4th District race, Ball, he should take his mandate seriously. In the next four years he will need to put in the hard work necessary to create a record of achievement that includes proposals that match his campaign promises. We will see if he can help move the needle toward an improved economy.

Although Councilwoman Cordova was unopposed, she still spent the time reaching out to voters in the 1st District as if she had an opponent.

## I think I heard a big sigh of relief from the professional staff at City Hall when the results were announced.

It paid off, as they voted to support her—and even though only one vote would have elected her, so far she has more than 3,500 votes in a district with a little more than 4,500 registered voters.

In the last three years, she has established herself as an advocate for accountability without “bashing the staff”; this is a tightrope that she walks with confidence as she employs her successful business background to make reasonable, fact-based, and well-thought-out decisions.

Mayor Osborne is leading with about 55 percent of the votes cast, thus handing her challenger, Councilman Vega, a defeat he wasn't prepared for. She has been hampered by a three-person voting bloc for the last two years. Now that she has a different group of council members, maybe she can advance her agenda to improve the city.

If she continues to work as she did in the last

two years and has the support of the council majority, the city could begin to recover from the destructive decisions of the past several years. It will take some serious work to undo the mistakes of the three-member “wrecking crew” who are no longer in power, but voters seem to have placed confidence in the abilities of the new majority to improve things.

The upcoming budget discussions next spring will test Osborne's ability to capitalize on the strengths of her fellow council members as they create their list of priorities and provide guidance to the staff for how discretionary tax money should be spent.

There is a lot to be done; the violent crime rate is soaring, and the city's infrastructure needs a serious overhaul. The emergency radio communication system needs a major upgrade; the police department needs more room; fire station 1 needs a major seismic renovation; fire station 2 needs to be relocated; an effective

emergency operations center is long overdue; interior streets need some major repairs; Ryon Park needs a complete rebuild; and the more than 50-year-old City Hall needs a remodel.

This is the tip of the iceberg, and these projects won't be cheap; the new council needs to ensure those projects

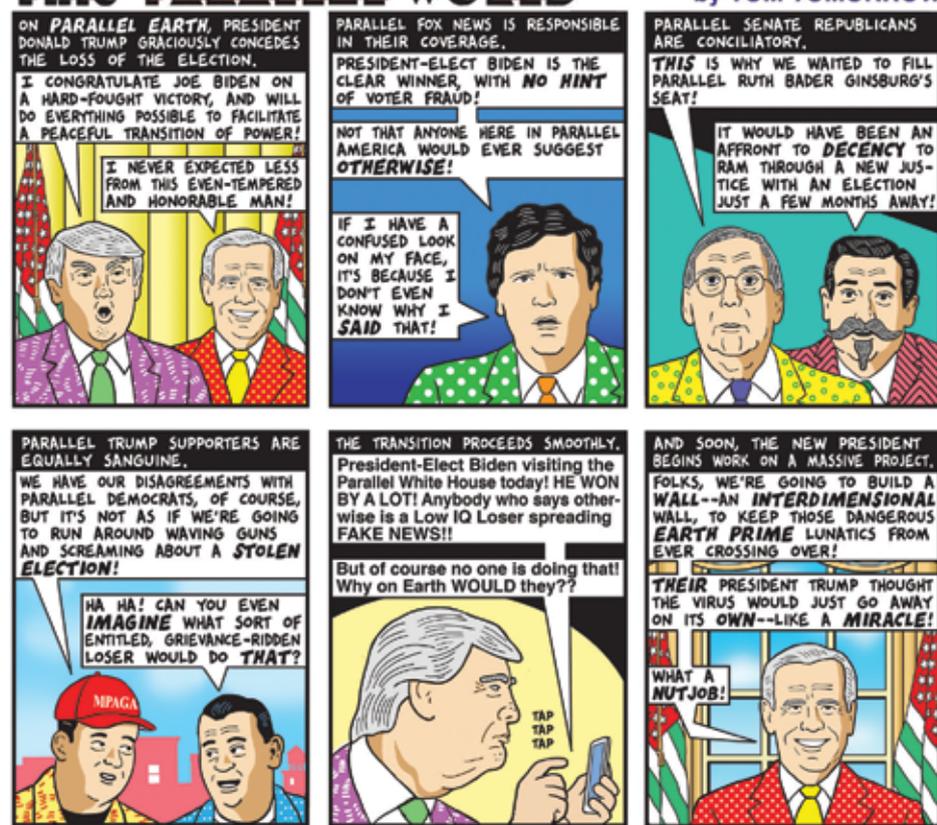
are included in long-range planning and then work with the city manager to identify funding mechanisms.

Perhaps now the council will return to fact-based decision-making rather than relying on unfounded claims from unknown sources and faulty analysis of outdated information, which has been the cornerstone in the three amigos' reign for the last several years.

Based on many years of watching the politics of Lompoc, I would say that the light at the end of the tunnel as a result of this election is an opening to a new era in our city rather than the speeding train of the past that hit us head-on with destructive decision-making. ○

Ron Fink writes to the Sun from Lompoc. Send your thoughts, comments, and opinionated letters to [letters@santamariasun.com](mailto:letters@santamariasun.com).

## THIS PARALLEL WORLD



## LETTERS

### A tale of a town

A developer wants to build as many as 11 homes on a 1 1/2 acre lot in Los Alamos with access from a quiet road that is less accustomed to vehicular traffic than to walkers and joggers, dog walkers, children on bikes, and parents with infants in strollers.

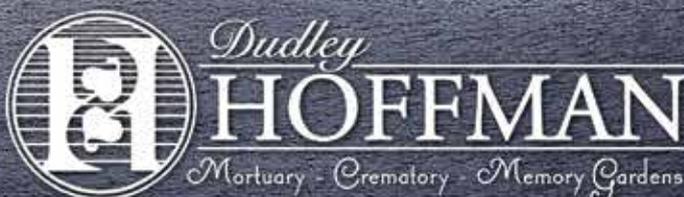
The county Planning Department is in the process of granting the developer's request for access from this road even while two other possibilities would be less problematic. If allowed, the community's enjoyment of this section of road would be significantly influenced by a considerable increase in vehicular traffic, and this impact would be unmitigable.

The Planning Department has not taken sufficient account of the one-lane bottleneck at the end of this road that, with greatly expanded vehicular traffic, is more likely to result in accident and injury. Further, [the transportation planning] supervisor woefully underestimated the increase in road traffic arising from an additional 11 homes and from the draw resulting from widening the road.

The Planning Department has zigged and zagged on its commitment to hearing concerns of the town's residents in a forum that could make a decision that would have weight in the deliberations of the county's planning commissioners. And, mystifyingly, the Planning Department sees no need for a traffic study that would require it to justify its contested estimates.

LETTERS continued page 12

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LETTERS from page 11

Many townsfolk have spoken up in favor of a change of access road to one of the other two possibilities, and there is concern about the planned density of the development. The first issue could be resolved if the developer was willing to compromise and request a design exception. We look forward to being able to speak up in a forum that would allow residents a say in the outcome of a project that could have major consequences for our wonderful little town.

Seth Steiner  
Los Alamos

Why the Santa Barbara County Vintners' wine BID imploded

After two years, untold tens of thousands of dollars spent, scores of meetings with wineries, several press releases, a business improvement district (BID) website, four proposals, and a rejection by the Board of Supervisors staff, the Santa Barbara County Vintners Association board at the end of October announced they were dropping the wine BID. How did the Vintners board get it so wrong?

The answer seems simple—a lack of transparency and a failure to be inclusive.

The Vintners board persuaded the Santa Maria, Santa Ynez, and Santa Barbara tourism BIDs and others to fund a “feasibility study” for the wine BID. The first sign of trouble, which the Vintners board ignored, was the Lompoc Tourism BID’s refusal to contribute.

The second mistake was that the Vintners board then selected Civitas to be its consultant for the wine BID. Civitas promotes the sale of its wine BID services and was hardly an independent judge of feasibility, plus there was no wine BID in California for guidance. They had a product to sell, and salespersons are not the most reliable source for an impartial and independent judgment.

The third and most important mistake was that there was no feasibility study. In response to my request for a copy of the feasibility study, the Vintners’ executive director emailed me:

“The Santa Barbara Vintners does not have access to the information used to determine the feasibility of the project. That information is confidential, and Civitas will not share that information with anyone except for the county.”

Would a public feasibility study have made a difference? You bet.

The purpose of a feasibility study is to expose any problems or issues with a project before you spend a lot of time, money, and effort. A valid feasibility study by an independent organization would have conducted interviews with the major stakeholders wineries, consumers, and elected officials. These interviews would have found that more Santa Barbara wineries opposed than supported the wine BID, that some consumers who would be taxed for the Vintners’ marketing budget would complain, that elected city officials like the Lompoc City Council would not opt in to the wine BID if approved by the Board of Supervisors, and most importantly, that the wine BID had three major legal infirmities—using the consumer sales assessments to pay for wholesale sales marketing, not requiring a vote for what was a sales tax, and failing to conform to the California Constitution.

The Vintners board’s failure to obtain and publish an independent feasibility study meant it was flying blind and it was not aware that the wine BID had serious issues. Once opposition surfaced, the Vintners board members made another fatal decision: They did not reach out and include the critics but instead referred to them as a “minority,” “splinter group,” “out of touch,” and “ignorant.” Unfortunately, the result was predictable—a seriously flawed project imploded. The light of transparency and inclusion can be harsh and unpleasant, but it would have avoided this public fiasco.

Stephen Pepe  
Lompoc

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# Yo-yo time

Here we are. Back in the purple zone. And it's not just Santa Barbara County either. It's basically most of the state's populated areas. COVID-19 is here and spreading fast, *again*.

New lockdowns seem imminent.

It looks like distance learning won't become a thing of the past anytime soon, mask wearing isn't going away, and limits are here to stay. Well. Until we have a vaccine—maybe.

So what are we going to do about education?

The Santa Maria Joint Union High School District certainly isn't giving me high hopes. After learning that the district's high schools were giving out *four times* as many failing grades this September as they were the same time last year, we are now learning that the district's distance learning practices weren't even up to state code!

What the cluck?

Yeah, I swear like a chicken.

In October, the district released a "Distance Learning Response Plan"—code for, we're trying to cover our asses by instructing teachers to accept late work and allow students to retake tests.

Teachers such as Righetti High School English teacher Kim Karamitsos felt like it was a needed step in the right direction.

"Some of the kids have gotten far behind already, and it just kept piling on, so some of them had just sort of given up," she said.

Turns out that actual teaching—live, interactive, face-to-face, virtual—was only happening twice a week. No wonder students are failing. They have zero structure.

One student told the Sun that she had only one 80-minute instructional period for each class every week. Most high school students take classes daily. The student said she was in charge of structuring three days of her week, when she had no class and a ton of schoolwork.

Sounds like college. Only college students are supposed to be adults. But even 30 percent of college students in the U.S. drop out their first year. More than 43 percent of students enrolled in two-year community colleges drop out before getting a degree.

And the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District thought it would be a great way to teach at a time when education went remote. Why?

The district apparently just figured out that it wasn't following state education code that went into place months ago mandating daily interactions with students. How?

And the Santa Barbara County Office of Education, which is the goose that spilled the beans, isn't a regulatory body, so who's in charge of making sure school districts are doing what they're supposed to do so our kids don't fail?

Who's making sure students are getting what they actually need to get the public education that's promised to them? Teachers who care, like Karamitsos, and parents can only do so much.

They need tools to augment that passion. Students need structure and support from our public school districts. And somebody needs to hold school districts accountable for their lackluster performance.

Looks like the only group trying to do that right now are actual high school students, who protested the late changes on Nov. 16 in front of the district office, wondering why the district response was so inefficient and badly timed. ○

The canary needs answers, as usual. Send comments to [canary@santamariasun.com](mailto:canary@santamariasun.com).



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This week's online poll 11/19-11/26

Should the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District be blamed for making sudden changes to its students' distance learning schedules?

- No, they were out of compliance, and they fixed it—it was an honest mistake.
- These are state mandates, not local ones—the district can't change that.
- Yes, the district should have communicated the change to students and parents sooner before implementing it.
- More students are failing than ever: a sudden change to their learning environment is the last thing they need.

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# HOT STUFF

NOV. 19 – NOV. 26  
2020

## SOLO ROUND

The Jewish Community Center (JCC) of San Luis Obispo hosts a drive-in concert with local multi-genre violinist Brynn Albanese (pictured here with Cafe Musique, center left) on Sunday, Nov. 29, at 2 p.m. Attendees can listen to the concert from inside or directly outside their vehicles. Masks and social distancing will be required. Suggested donation per car is \$20. Call (805) 426-5465 or visit [jccslo.com](http://jccslo.com) for more info. The JCC is located at 875 Laureate Lane, SLO.

—Caleb Wiseblood

FILE COURTESY PHOTO BY BRITTANY APP

## ARTS

### SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

**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 Elverhoy Way, Solvang, 805-686-1211.

**THE BOOK LOFT: 50TH ANNIVERSARY** Celebrate the Book Loft's 50th anniversary with a kickoff presentation on Friday with owner Kathy Mullins. character meet and greets, special discounts, a special historical display, local live music, and more. COVID-19 protocols and social distancing will be advised. **Nov. 20-22** 805-688-6010. The Book Loft, 1680 Mission Dr., Solvang.

**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).

**PORTRAITS OF SANTA BARBARA BIRDS: EMIL MORHARDT** Morhardt exhibits 28 acrylic paintings of shore and inland birds of Santa Barbara. Features 12 species of birds in portrait detail to highlight their characteristics and behavior. The paintings range from small size to larger format for impact and drama. Mondays, Thursdays-Sundays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. through Nov. 30 805-688-7517. <http://GalleryLosOlivos.com>. Gallery Los Olivos, 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos.

**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).

### LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

**JOELLEN CHRONES AND TONI ZYBELL: LVAA FEATURED ARTISTS** A collection of items, including fused glass hanging pieces, bowls, trays, and plates, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, felted hats, purses, and wood burned and painted items. Saturdays, Sundays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. through Nov. 29 Free. 805-737-1129.

[lompcart.org](http://lompcart.org). Lompoc Valley Art Association, 119 E. Cypress, Lompoc.

### SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**MUSIC LESSONS AT COELHO** Call or go online for the Academy's current offerings. The Academy offers private lessons by the hour or half hour for all age groups and ability. ongoing 805-925-0464. [coelhomusic.com](http://coelhomusic.com). Coelho Academy of Music, 325 E. Betteravia Rd., 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, 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, Santa Maria, 805-922-8313, [pcpa.org](http://pcpa.org).

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

**VALLEY ART GALLERY OF SANTA MARIA: FALL ART SHOW** Parking is free. Admission is free. There is plenty of space to view art and stay six feet apart. Great for family outings and dates. Through Dec. 7 Free. 805-922-0663. Santa Maria Airport, 3249 Terminal Dr., Santa Maria.

**WINE AND DESIGN VIRTUAL CLASSES** Check Wine and Design's Orcutt website for the complete list of virtual classes online, for various ages. Also offering kids camps for summer. 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

**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).**

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

### SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**DANA'S ALL ABOUT TREES: A MULTIARTIST EXHIBITION** DANA Adobe and Cultural Center showcasing the best in local and regional art. Artwork is available for purchase. Through Dec. 4, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. \$5, free for DANA members and children under 12 years of age. 805-929-5679. [danaadobe.org](http://danaadobe.org). DANA Adobe Cultural Center, 671 S. Oakglen Ave., Nipomo.

**MIXED MEDIA WORKSHOP FOR AGES 5-6, FOR AGES 7-12, AND FOR ADULTS** Each week we will combine two or more mediums in several pieces. We will work with watercolor, acrylic, ink, pastels, charcoal, as well as various printmaking techniques in the course of a month. Maximum of 5 guests. Pre-registration and masks required. Mondays, Wednesdays, 1:30-3 p.m. \$25. 805-668-2125. [lila.community](http://lila.community). Lila Creative Community, 1147 East Grand Ave. suite 101, Arroyo Grande.

**PAINT 'N SIP AT POINT SLO** A one-time afternoon of wine and painting at the Point San Luis Lighthouse with celebrated artist Andrea Olivier. **Nov. 21**, 2-4:30 p.m. [my805six.com](http://my805six.com). Point San Luis Lighthouse, 1 Lighthouse Rd., Avila Beach.

### SAN LUIS OBISPO

**CALL FOR ARTISTS: ART CENTRAL'S VIRTUAL GALLERY** Central Coast artists to submit artwork to Virtual Gallery Exhibit every Friday. Free to join, all you have to do is email image(s) of artwork created since COVID-19 with name, title, medium, and a positive message. Fridays, 5-11 p.m. through Dec. 18 Varies. 805-747-4200. [artcentral.slo.wordpress.com/blog/](http://artcentral.slo.wordpress.com/blog/). Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

**CALL FOR ENTRIES: GROUNDED (EXHIBITION AT SLOMA)** Artists of all media are eligible for this digital

exhibition. Deadline for submissions is Nov. 29. Exhibit runs January 8 through Feb. 28, 2021, with a digital reception on Jan. 1, 2021, with awards and cash prizes. Assistant Curator Courtney Davis will make selections from submitted entries. Through Nov. 29 805-543-8562. [slo.ma.org/call\\_for\\_artists/grounded/](http://slo.ma.org/call_for_artists/grounded/). San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

**FUN DIY HOLIDAY PLUSHIE KITS** Make your own Holiday Plushies. Comes with all materials needed and instructions. Mondays-Sundays. through Dec. 18 [slo.makerspace.com/making-home](http://slo.makerspace.com/making-home). SLOMakerSpace, 81 Higuera, suite 160, San Luis Obispo, 805-225-4783.

**I'LL TAKE YOU THERE: ART EXHIBIT** Art Central will host well-known painter Rosanne Seitz with her latest watercolor works. Over 15 works created from her solo travels on out of the way roads to places showing the grandeur, and quiet beauty of California scenery, that revitalizes mind and body. Mondays-Fridays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. through Nov. 24 Free. 805-747-4200. [artcentralartsupply.com/](http://artcentralartsupply.com/). Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

**MOSAICS FOR BEGINNERS** Learn mosaic basics at home with a how-to video and kit of supplies. This class is great for beginners. Choice of snowman, wonky holiday tree, heart, or wine bottle. Register, purchase kit, then instructor will provide video link and kit pickup times. Mondays-Sundays. through Nov. 30. 805-286-5993. [creativemetime.com](http://creativemetime.com). Cuesta College, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo.

**NIPOMO ARTISTS SOCIALLY DISTANCED OPEN STUDIO** Artists of Nipomo are opening their homes for a socially distanced open studio. Features paintings, jewelry, ceramics, sculptures, and mixed media creations will be on display. Addresses and map can be found on web page. **Nov. 28**, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. 805-633-0796. [nipomoartists.com/pages/open-studio](http://nipomoartists.com/pages/open-studio). Online, See website.

**SEA GLASS WIRE WRAP JEWELRY** Learn how to wire wrap sea glass to create beautiful earrings and a necklace with step-by-step video instruction. Register, select kit, and instructor will provide video link and kit options. Mondays-Sundays. through Nov. 29. 805-286-5993. [creativemetime.com](http://creativemetime.com). Cuesta College, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo.

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

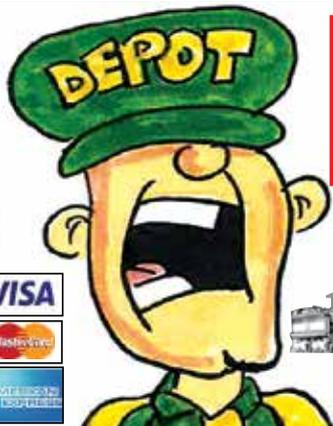
**SLOMOTION AND R.A.C.E. MATTERS SLO: DOUBLE FEATURETTE** SLOMotion and R.A.C.E. Matters SLO will be co-hosting a limited in person screening and virtual screening of *Restrictions Apply* and *The Last Black Man in San Francisco*. A coming together of local organizations to speak about issues. **Nov. 21**, 6-8:30 p.m. Virtual: \$10-\$20; In person: \$18 per person. [slo.motionfilm.com/events/last-](http://slo.motionfilm.com/events/last-)

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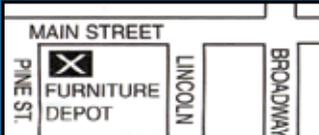
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**STANDEMIC (VIRTUAL COMEDY COMPETITION)** 32 of the nation's top touring comedians competing in a March-Madness style tournament to decide the top comedian. Each show is about 25 minutes; watch all 11 or just as many as you want. **Nov. 20-22** \$30. clarkcenter.org/event/standemic-virtual-comedy-competition/. Online, Inquire for Zoom ID.

**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. 805-747-4200. artcentralslo.wordpress.com/category/gallery-exhibits/virtual-gallery/. Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

**VIRTUAL OPEN STUDIOS ART TOUR** Visit ARTS Obispo's Facebook page to view works from several local artists and artisans. ongoing Free. facebook.com/artsobispo. Downtown SLO, Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo.

**VIRTUAL WORKSHOP: ARTFUL QUILTING** Inspired by Picasso's etchings and Matisse's cutouts, create a series of drawings with fabric and thread. Instructor Gina Gilbert will teach you how to transfer drawings to quilted projects using appliqué, traditional quilting, trapunto, and hand and machine stitching. Tuesdays, Saturdays, 10-11:30 a.m. through Nov. 21 \$160 members, \$175 general. 805-543-8562. sloma.org/product/quilting-zoom/. San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

**WINTER SNOWFLAKE CERAMIC CLASS** A socially distanced hand-building ceramic, snowflake class. Ceramic artist Heather Cruce guides this workshop. Through Jan. 31, 2021 slomakerspace.com/. SLOMakerSpace, 81 Higuera, suite 160, San Luis Obispo, 805-225-4783.

**SUCCULENT WORKSHOP** Choose from succulent pumpkin, round wreath, square wreath, heart wreath, or grapevine wreath kits. Preregistration required. This is an at-home project. Instructor will provide all supplies (except pumpkin) and a how-to video. **Nov. 29**, 10-11 a.m. Various. 805-286-5993. creativemetime.com. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

**WOMEN OF WARWICK MAKERS MART POPUP SALE** Features crocheted, embroidered goods, hand forged jewelry, painted notecards, soaps and oil, and more. **Nov. 27**, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. and **Nov. 28**, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. \$5-\$100. 805-927-4805. Happy Hill Hippiie Haven, 345 Warwick St., Cambria, ladytiedi.com.

FILE PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LOMPOC VALLEY ART ASSOCIATION



**HOT  
STUFF**  
NOV. 19 - NOV. 26  
2020

**GLAD AS A HATTER**

The Lompoc Valley Art Association presents *Uniquely Yours*, a duo exhibition showcasing local artisans Joellen Chrones and Toni Zybelle, at Cypress Gallery through Sunday, Nov. 29. The exhibit features a variety of knitted items and handcrafted jewelry. Items on display are also available to purchase. Visit lompoctart.org to find out more about *Uniquely Yours*. Cypress Gallery is located at 119 E. Cypress Ave., Lompoc.

—C.W.

**NORTH SLO COUNTY**

**CALL FOR ARTISTS: THE ARTERY'S ANNUAL UNDER \$200 ART SHOW** Open call has begun for The ARtery's Annual Under \$200 Art Show. An unjuried and all skill level show without an entry fee, this show features a diverse selection of artwork priced feasibly for the average collector. Accepting art until the end of November. **Nov. 19**, 12-6 p.m., **Nov. 20**, 12-6 p.m., **Nov. 21**, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., **Nov. 24**, 12-6 p.m., **Nov. 25**, 12-6 p.m. and **Nov. 28**, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. 805-464-0533. theartery.com/gallery. The ARtery, 5890 Traffic Way, Atascadero.

**SLOPE PAINTERS AT STUDIOS ON THE PARK** Please stop by to see paintings by San Luis Outdoor Painters for the Environment (SLOPE), at Studios on the Park. SLOPE painters have been sheltering at home and are now ready to break out to show paintings and prints at open galleries. Fridays, Saturdays, 12-9 p.m. and Wednesdays, Thursdays, 12-4 p.m. through Dec. 31 Free. 805-238-9800. Studios on the Park, 1130 Pine St., Paso Robles, studiosonthepark.org.

**STUDIOS ON THE PARK: ONLINE CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS** Check site for a variety of virtual classes and workshops online. ongoing studiosonthepark.org. Studios on the Park, 1130 Pine St., Paso Robles, 805-238-9800.

**NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY**

**ANNUAL WINTER FAIRE AND JURIED CRAFT SHOW** A collective of exceptional paintings, photography and fine crafts, spanning a variety of artistic mediums from traditional to contemporary. Crafts include fiber, wood, glass, sculpture, pottery, jewelry and more. Through Jan. 3, 2021 Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay, 805-772-2504, artcentermorrobay.org.

**CALLING ALL ARTISTS: CAMBRIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS VIRTUAL JURIED SHOW** Fall juried exhibit will be held virtually and will feature paintings only. Cash prizes given by Juror. Mondays-Sundays through Jan. 3 \$15-\$25 per piece. 805-927-8190. Gallery@CambriaCenterfortheArts.org. Cambria Center for the Arts, 1350 Main St., Cambria.

**GALLERY AT MARINA SQUARE. FEATURED ARTISTS** Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. through Nov. 29 Free. 805-772-1068. galleryatmarinasquare.com. Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

**MOSAICS FOR BEGINNERS** Learn everything you need to complete an awesome mosaic project from home. Perfect for beginners. Preregistration required. **Nov. 28**, 10-11 a.m. Various. 805-286-5993. creativemetime.com.

**CULTURE & LIFESTYLE**

**LOMPOC/VANDBERG**

**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. Facebook, Online, Inquire for Facebook address.

**SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS**

**30 VOLUNTEERS NEEDED IN SANTA MARIA/ ORCUTT** Community Partners in Caring is seeking volunteers to help support dependent older adults and seniors. partnersincaring.org. Santa Maria, Citywide.

**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. 805-570-0620. Santa Maria Airport, 3249 Terminal Dr.

**CHRISTMAS IN THE COUNTRY: DRIVE-THRU EVENT** A holiday light display to bring you all the warmth of the holidays. Drive through the gleaming light displays created by local organizations and families. **Nov. 27-Jan. 3**, 7-10 a.m. \$40. 805-925-4125. elksrec.com. Elks Unocal Event Center, 4040 Highway 101, 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. Divine Inspiration, 947 E Orange St., Santa Maria.

**VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS OVER ZOOM** Visit site or call to learn about various virtual workshop offerings. ongoing Varies. Unwind Studio, 130 N. Broadway, suite B, Santa Maria, 805-748-2539, unwindstamaria.com.

**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. Yoga for Mankind, 130 N Broadway, suite B, Orcutt.

**CULTURE & LIFESTYLE** continued page 18



CHAMBER WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

*October 2020*

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But we are seeing more children than ever experience a trauma no child should suffer. Since March, CASA has been assigned to an additional 200 cases. ***That's more children experiencing abuse and/or neglect than we see in an entire year...***

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Give the gift of advocacy at [sbcasa.org/donate](http://sbcasa.org/donate).

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**SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY**

**INFANT DROWNING RESCUE COURSES** Join twice a week classes on Tuesday/Thursday or the once a week class on Friday and receive \$10 off. Drowning Rescue Courses are a great way to learn water safety in a fun, loving way. Fridays, 2-6 p.m. and Tuesdays, Thursdays, 2-6 p.m. Members \$130; Non-members \$160. 5 Cities Swim School, 425 Traffic Way, Arroyo Grande, 805-481-6399, 5cityesswimschool.com.

**POINT SAN LUIS LIGHTHOUSE VIRTUAL TOUR** Zoom with a docent on a virtual tour of the Point San Luis Light Station. Travel back in time to 1890, delve into the history of the light station, and see all the places you'd see on an in-person tour, plus more. Wednesdays, 2-3 p.m. \$10. 805-540-5771. pointsanluislighthouse.org/. Point San Luis Lighthouse, 1 Lighthouse Rd., Avila Beach.

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

**ACORN ADVENTURES** Kids are invited to discover the natural world with Environmental Management and Protection major, Danika. Explore and get hands-on with nature to better understand the plants, animals and natural processes found around us. Parents welcome. Wednesdays, 3-4 p.m. through Dec. 2 Free. 805-541-1400. slobg.org/calendar-of-events/acorn-adventures. San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd., San Luis Obispo.

**CENTRAL COAST CONJURERS (SLO COUNTY MAGIC CLUB)** Monthly meeting of magicians of all levels. Please call or email for more info. Meet like-minded folks with an interest in magic, from close-up to stage performances. Last Wednesday of every month, 6:30-9 p.m. Free. 805-440-0116. IHOP, 212 Madonna Rd., San Luis Obispo.

**GIVE JOY HOLIDAY CAMPAIGN** Family Care Network's Give Joy Campaign matches families' needs with our community's heart to give. Help raise awareness, funds, and resources to make sure our families have everything they need for this holiday season and beyond. Participate and donate today. Through Dec. 31 fcni.org/givejoy. Online, See website, 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.slucsd.org. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CLASSES FOR SENIORS** Have you heard the phrase, "Sitting is the new smoking"? Cuesta College's Emeritus exercise program, taught by Doris Lance, is offering a 45-minute class of stretching, balance, and cardiovascular fitness three days a week to seniors. Tuesdays-Thursdays, 9-9:45 a.m. through Dec. 18 Free. 805-546-3942. cuesta.edu. Online, Inquire for Zoom ID.

**PLAN TO AGE BETTER: LIFE CHOICES TO MAKE NOW** Wondering how to plan for serious medical conditions and decision making? Want to know when to use the different types of powers of attorney? Retired attorney Angie King will discuss these and other important legal issues. **Nov. 23**, 1:30-3 p.m. Free. 805-242-6440. slovillage.org. Zoom, Online, Inquire for Zoom ID.

**SLOBG: ONLINE FALL PLANT SALE FUNDRAISER** A semi-annual plant sale. Find the perfect plant for your garden. Greenhouse open to the public for a two-week plant blow-out. Enjoy a wide selection of drought-tolerant and volunteer-grown plants. Members save 10%. Through Nov. 21, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Varies. 805-541-1400. slobg.org/calendar-of-events/plantsale. San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd., San Luis Obispo.

**SPOKES BOARD ACADEMY** Whether you are an experienced board member or just considering becoming one, the Spokes Board Academy will equip you with the knowledge you need to be an informed and effective member of a nonprofit board of directors. There will be 7 sessions on different topics. **Nov. 24**, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. spokesfornonprofits.org/upcoming-events/academy/. Zoom, Online, Inquire for Zoom ID.

**VIRTUAL TURKEY TROT FOR THE SLO FOOD BANK** Join the SLO Food Bank on Thanksgiving for a virtual Turkey Trot. Participants can run, hike, bike, or walk anywhere of their choosing. All participants will receive an event t-shirt and socks. Proceeds provide holiday meals to those in need; \$1 provides seven nutritious meals. **Nov. 26**, 8:30-11:30 a.m. \$25. 805-458-8840. slofoodbank.org. SLO County, Countywide.

**NORTH SLO COUNTY**

**OPEN AIR VINEYARD YOGA** Intentionally carve out time for quiet, movement, and a little self pampering in the open air of the vineyard with Yogi Chelcy Westphal Johnson, of Mindful Movement Collective. Fridays, 9:30-10:30 a.m. \$28-\$150. Cass Winery And Vineyard, 7350 Linne Rd., Paso Robles, 805.239.1730.

**PASO, HERE WE COME** Redwings Horse Sanctuary is making their permanent home on Union Road in Paso Robles. Donate to its \$1 million fundraising campaign. Redwings offers public tours, volunteering with the horses, and a foster to adopt program. ongoing Redwings Horse Sanctuary, Union Road, Paso Robles, 831-386-0135, RedwingsHorseSanctuary.org.



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NOV. 19 - NOV. 26  
2020

**SUNRISE TO SUNSET**

Gallery at Marina Square in Morro Bay presents a showcase of landscapes and seascapes by local painter Spanky Anderson through Sunday, Nov. 29. According to press materials, Anderson's artistic inspiration is dictated by his "peripheral vision of the Central Coast." Visit galleryatmarinasquare.com for more info. The gallery is located at 601 Embarcadero, suite 10, Morro Bay.

—C.W.

**FOOD & DRINK**

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**KALYRA: PURCHASES AND PICK-UPS** Offering varietals from all over the world. Tuesdays-Sundays, 12-5 p.m. 805-693-8864. 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. Standing Sun Wines, 92 2nd St., Unit D, Buellton, 805-691-9413.

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**SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS**

**GOOD SAMARITAN SHELTER ANNUAL TURKEY DRIVE** Turkey, other foods, and monetary donations to benefit Santa Barbara Counties' most vulnerable families this holiday season. Santa Maria contactless drop off: Stowassers Pontiac GMC on Betteravia. Lompoc: Grocery Outlet. **Nov. 19**, 6 a.m.-7 p.m. Free. 805-354-9307. goodsamaritanshelter.org. Citywide, Santa Maria.

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

**WHAT'S COOKIN' SANTA MARIA? (VIRTUAL)** Join Santa Maria Public Library's cookbook club for a video conference discussion on *The New Homemade Kitchen*

PHOTO COURTESY OF CREATIVE ME TIME



**WREATH WONDERLAND**

Creative Me Time hosts a pickup date for its take-home wreath workshop on Sunday, Nov. 29, from 10 to 11 a.m., at Art Center Morro Bay. Participants will get to choose between kits for round wreaths, heart wreaths, or grapevine wreaths. Each kit includes supplies and a how-to video. Visit creativemetime.com. Art Center Morro Bay is located at 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

—C.W.

by Joseph Shuldiner. Choose a recipe to make from the book and share the results with the group. **Nov. 21**, 3-4 p.m. 805-925-0994. cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**NORTH SLO COUNTY**

**2020 FRIENDSGIVING** A wine paired dinner. This event may be held indoors, and is subject to all state and local guidelines for restaurants and wineries. **Nov. 20**, 5:30-8:30 p.m. \$90. my805tix.com. Cass Winery And Vineyard, 7350 Linne Rd., Paso Robles, 805.239.1730.

**MUSIC**

**SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS**

**SANTA MARIA PHILHARMONIC: SOUND CLOUD** Features recordings of the Mozart Sinfonia from the Philharmonic's last live concert and other recordings. ongoing Free. smphilharmonic.org. Soundcloud (Santa Maria Philharmonic), Online, Santa Maria.

**SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY**

**GENTRI: THE GENTLEMEN TRIO (VIRTUAL)** Pioneering a signature sound they call "Cinematic Pop," the music of GENTRI is transfused with lush, epic orchestrations and rich, dynamic three-part harmonies. GENTRI has released 3 EPs and 3 full length albums. **Nov. 28**, 6-7 p.m. Free; Donation requested. clarkcenter.org/event/gentri-the-gentlemen-trio/. Clark Center for the Performing Arts, 487 Fair Oaks Ave., Arroyo Grande, 805-489-9444.

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

**BEATS FOR THE BAY: BENEFIT CONCERT FOR MORRO BAY ESTUARY** This show features Upside Ska, a full eight-piece band of veteran Central Coast musicians. Tickets are free and donations are encouraged. All proceeds benefit the Morro Bay National Estuary Program. **Nov. 19**, 6-8 p.m. Free. bigbig5lo.com/mbnep. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**A CONVERSATION WITH ALICE DADE AND SCOTT YOO** A conversion of intrigue and delight. Get to know community leaders and musical superheroes Scott Yoo and Alice Dade. Go online for more info. **Nov. 19**, 4:30-6 p.m. \$15 for members; \$20 for future members. 805-781-2777. slochamber.org/event/conversation-with-alice-dade-scott-yoo/. Zoom, Online, Inquire for Zoom ID.

**DRIVE-IN CONCERT: BRYNN ALBANESE** The JCC is excited to host local violinist, Brynn Albanese, for her one-woman, drive-in concert. This is a COVID-19 responsible event. Masks and social distancing required. Listen from inside car or sit directly outside. **Nov. 29**, 2-3:15 p.m. Suggested donation: \$20 per car; more or less welcome. 805-426-5465. jccslo.com/calendar.html. JCC-Federation of SLO Property, 875 Laureate Lane, San Luis Obispo.

**NORTH SLO COUNTY**

**SATURDAY IN THE PARK: VIRTUAL CONCERT SERIES** Concerts will be available to stream for free through YouTube. Upcoming acts include Chad Land Band (Sept. 5), Rockin' Bs Band (Sept. 19), and Ghost/Monster (Oct. 3). Saturdays, 6-7:30 p.m. Free admission. atascadero.org/youtube. Atascadero Lake Park, 9305 Pismo Ave., Atascadero, 461-5000. ☪

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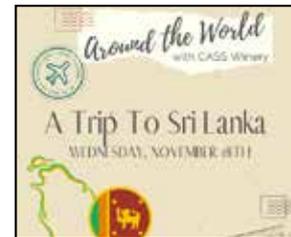
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2020 Friendsgiving at Cass  
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20  
Cass Winery, Paso Robles



2020 November Wine Seminar: Bubbles  
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Cass Winery, Paso Robles



Fin's "Giving Tuesday" Drive-Thru Seafood Dinner  
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5Cities Homeless Coalition



2020 Holiday Market at Cass  
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## Arts Briefs

### Santa Maria Public Library's virtual cookbook club discusses *The New Homemade Kitchen*

The Santa Maria Public Library holds its next virtual cookbook meeting—What's Cookin' Santa Maria?—on Saturday, Nov. 21, from 3 to 4 p.m. Participants will discuss author Joseph Shuldiner's *The New Homemade Kitchen*. This cookbook was written with both professional chefs and home cooks in mind and includes 250 different recipes as well as tips on preserving, canning, and fermenting.

Prior to this month's meeting, attendees are also encouraged to choose a recipe from the book to make and share their results with the group. Library card holders can access the book through Hoopla (email [ssarnaud@cityofsantamaria.org](mailto:ssarnaud@cityofsantamaria.org) for details). For more info on the club, call (805) 925-0994 or visit [cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library](http://cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library).

### The Nipomo Artists hosts open studio event that accommodates social distancing

The Nipomo Artists presents its Socially Distanced Open Studio event on Saturday, Nov. 28, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., at various locations throughout Nipomo and Arroyo Grande. Visit [nipomoartists.com](http://nipomoartists.com) for a map and list of the event's featured locations and respective addresses. This group show and sale will include paintings, jewelry, ceramics, sculptures, and other media.

Participating artists and craft vendors include Moreno Creations, Maggie Pickering, Tina Ellis, Marjorie Lane, The Clay Geeks, Rose and Stone Pottery, The Harried Potter, and Karen Fields, who launched the Nipomo Artists website as an ongoing outlet for her and other local artists. For more info on the group and its upcoming event, call (805) 633-0796 or email [info@nipomoartists.com](mailto:info@nipomoartists.com).

FILE PHOTO COURTESY OF TINA ELLIS



### The ARtery seeks Central Coast-based artists for its annual Under \$200 Art Show

The ARtery in Atascadero is accepting submissions for this year's rendition of its annual Under \$200 Art Show, an unjuried showcase open to all skill levels. Local artists hoping to participate can submit their artworks through the end of November. There is no entry fee. The ARtery is seeking one or two original art pieces from each participant that can be displayed freestanding or on the gallery's walls.

The Under \$200 Art Show aims to showcase a diverse selection of artworks priced to be attainable by the average art collector, according to press materials. The show will open during the first week of December and is scheduled to run through January.

Call (805) 464-0533 or visit [theartery.com/gallery](http://theartery.com/gallery) to find out more about this year's showcase and other updates from the ARtery. The gallery is located at 5890 Traffic Way, Atascadero. ☪

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



**TICKET TO TIDE:** "I remember Ray photographing the student exploring the tide pools. It was a terrific field trip, and Ray captured what NatureTrack is all about," Sue Eisaguirre, NatureTrack founder and executive director said, discussing Ray Hunter's painting, *The Explorer*.

## Natural cause

### Oak Group hosts virtual art show and sale to benefit the NatureTrack Foundation

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

While driving home one evening, Santa Barbara artist Linda Mutti couldn't pass up the opportunity to stop and capture Hendry's Beach (aka Arroyo Burro Beach) just before sunset, near the peak of golden hour. Mutti had already passed the beach before deciding to turn around, she explained.

"I made a U-turn and headed straight for the beach. And boy, it did not disappoint. I love the golden light of late day," said Mutti, while discussing the origin of her pastel landscape, *Arroyo Burro Gold*. "I grew up going to this beach, so it holds many special memories for me. It is a place that I go back to over and over again."

Stunning scenery aside, Hendry's Beach is also known for spoiling visitors with sightings of dolphins and whales, said the local pastelist, who described the area as a wonderful place to explore. It's no surprise that the beach is often frequented by the NatureTrack Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to facilitating cost-free outdoor activities and field trips for students throughout Santa Barbara and Ventura counties.

Mutti recently participated in the Oak Group's online exhibition and fundraiser to benefit NatureTrack, in which she submitted *Arroyo Burro Gold*. Mutti's piece has already been sold, but the ongoing exhibit features artworks from more than 20 contributors and will remain online through the end of December.

"The theme of the show is to paint NatureTrack field trip locations for school kids, who would otherwise have been unable to have these educational experiences in nature with teachers and volunteers," participating artist and Oak Group member Chris Chapman told the *Sun*.

The subjects of Chapman's watercolor landscapes in the show include the Arroyo Hondo Preserve, the Sedgwick Reserve, the Salt Marsh Reserve, and other natural areas.

#### Link up

The Link Between Man and Nature will remain online through the end of December. View the online gallery at [oakgroup.org](http://oakgroup.org) or [naturetrack.org](http://naturetrack.org).

Chapman has been a member of the Oak Group

since 1996. The group originally planned to hold its NatureTrack benefit exhibit at the Santa Barbara Central Library prior to the COVID-19 closures, Chapman explained.

"When the library had to close its doors to the public, we decided to go forward with a virtual show, as several other organizations have done with their art fundraising efforts," Chapman said.

Inspired by a quote from Leo Tolstoy—"One of the first conditions of happiness is that the link between man and nature shall not be broken"—the show is titled *The Link Between Man and Nature* and marks the Oak Group's inaugural



**STAY GOLD:** "I grew up going to this beach, so it holds many special memories for me. It is a place that I go back to over and over again," artist Lina Mutti said, discussing her pastel piece, *Arroyo Burro Gold*.

virtual exhibition. The online gallery (available to view on [oakgroup.org](http://oakgroup.org) and [naturetrack.org](http://naturetrack.org)) launched on Nov. 1.

While all paintings in the show depict areas where NatureTrack has hosted free field trips, some of the paintings directly illustrate moments from those excursions. Participating artist Ray Hunter, for example, based his painting *The Explorer* off a photograph he took while accompanying the NatureTrack Foundation on a field trip to El Capitan State Beach in Santa Barbara.

"I remember Ray photographing the student exploring the tide pools. It was a terrific field trip, and Ray captured what NatureTrack is all about," Sue Eisaguirre, NatureTrack founder and executive director, told the *Sun*.

While NatureTrack strives to "create stewards of our natural resources" through free, educational programming for school-aged children, the foundation's goals align with the Oak Group's 34-year tradition of supporting the preservation of open spaces in the natural world through art, Eisaguirre explained.

"The Oak Group also connects people to nature, maybe not physically, but by the beauty of their art, which allows viewers to enjoy and appreciate locations they may never be able to see otherwise," Eisaguirre said. "They too are creating stewards of the natural world, not only through their generous donations, but by their talent to bring nature to life in their artwork." ☪

Send your favorite golden hour stories to Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood at [cwiseblood@santamariasun.com](mailto:cwiseblood@santamariasun.com).



**LANDSCAPE ESCAPE:** The subjects of Chris Chapman's watercolor landscapes in the show include the Arroyo Hondo Preserve, the Sedgwick Reserve, the Salt Marsh Reserve, and other natural areas. Chapman has been a member of the Oak Group since 1996.

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# GOOD NEWS!

## The *Sun* is announcing a new **Matching Grant Program**

available to all nonprofit  
and arts organizations in  
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The *Sun* will provide matching funds to local nonprofit and arts organizations for a print and digital marketing campaign in the *Sun* from now until the end of 2020.

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For any questions, or to apply for a matching funds grant, please call **(805) 347-1968 ext. 111**

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# Celebrate book times, come on!

*The Book Loft in Solvang celebrates its 50th anniversary with an eventful weekend*

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

On Friday, Nov. 20, Solvang City Councilmember Robert Clarke will present a unique, commemorative banner to local bookstore owner Kathy Mullins, who co-founded The Book Loft in 1970 with her late husband, Gary. In celebrating the shop's 50th year in business, Book Loft lovers and the public are invited to a weekend of special events, all of which follow COVID-19 safety protocols.

After Clarke's 4 p.m. presentation, the celebration kicks off Friday evening in the Book Loft's outdoor courtyard, from 4:30 to 5 p.m., with live music from students enrolled in Solvang's Song in My Heart Studio.

The following morning, at 10 a.m., the shop will unveil a special Book Loft-themed gingerbread house, created by the Solvang Bakery. Throughout the day, the store will offer special discounts on books and other merchandise, and guests will be able to browse through a historical exhibition that explores the Book Loft's history over the past five decades.

"We'll have a display of past articles about the bookstore, including when the building itself was built, some bookmarks from the past 50 years that the store gave out, photos, and book signing notices—some with well-known authors," Dawn LeFever, the Book Loft's marketing representative, told the Sun. "We'll also have a guestbook for people to sign and add their memories of The Book Loft or what it means to them."

Although the planning for the Book Loft's 50th anniversary celebration started long before the COVID-19 closures began in March, the store was able to adapt the proposed events accordingly, LeFever explained.

"We had started to discuss what we might do last year, before the pandemic shut things down. So when it started to open back up, it was mostly a struggle of finding our footing again to get back to the plan," LeFever said. "We are utilizing



**FIVE DECADES LATER:** In celebrating its 50th year in business, the Book Loft in Solvang is inviting the public to a weekend of special events in its outdoor courtyard, all of which follow COVID-19 safety protocols.



**BETWEEN THE LINES:** Kathy Mullins (pictured) co-founded The Book Loft in 1970 with her late husband, Gary. On Friday, Nov. 20, Solvang City Councilmember Robert Clarke will present her with a celebratory banner, in honor of the store's 50th anniversary.

## Book it

The Book Loft is located at 1680 Mission Drive, Solvang. Call (805) 688-6010 or visit [bookloftsolvang.com](http://bookloftsolvang.com) for more info.

our outdoor courtyard, as small as it is, much more than we probably would have otherwise. But we don't necessarily feel like we've had to give too much up because of the restrictions."

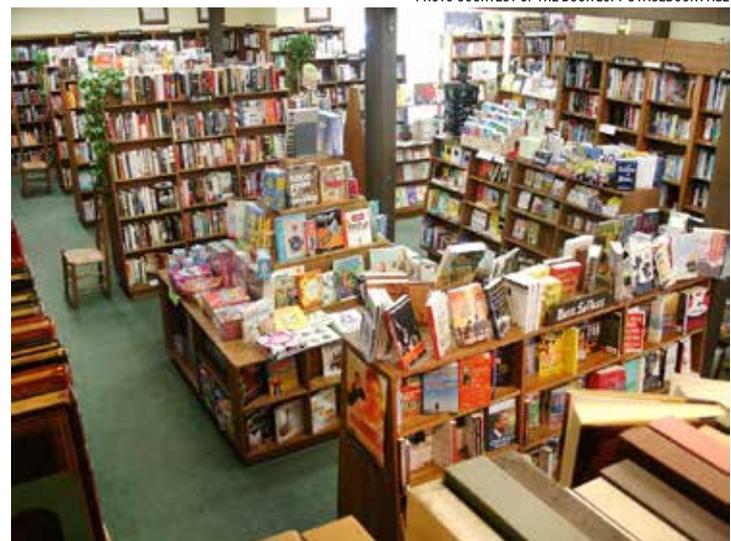
Face masks will be required during each of the celebration's events, which also include two family-friendly meet-and-greets and photo opportunities with two beloved Hans Christian Andersen characters, the Little Mermaid (Saturday, Nov. 21, from 1 to 2 p.m.) and the Snow Queen (Sunday, Nov. 22, from 11 a.m. to noon).

The shop will also host a special, commemorative bookmark crafting workshop on Sunday, Nov. 22, from 2 to 3 p.m. Each event is outdoors in the aforementioned courtyard with space to accommodate social distancing.

The celebratory events will highlight the Book Loft's enduring connection to the Solvang



**MAN, MYTH, LEGEND:** The second floor of the Book Loft is home to the Hans Christian Andersen Museum, which exhibits a history of the author and his literary impact. The museum is currently open with a capacity limit (face masks are also required).



**TREASURE TROVE:** The Book Loft is currently open daily for in-store browsing and shopping with restrictions (call or visit the store's site for operating hours and details).

community, between different generations of locals and among visitors who find themselves returning over the years, LeFever explained.

"We have locals that came to the store as children and now return with their own children," LeFever said. "We have people who make annual treks to the area that make a point to always stop

in the store. We have celebrities who visit and travelers from all over the world. It's actually really fun how people from so many different paths all come to our doors." ○

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



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PHOTO COURTESY OF FLITCRAFT

# The price of genius

**C**reators Scott Frank and Allan Scott helm this TV miniseries about orphaned chess prodigy Beth Harmon (Isla Johnson as young Beth, and Anya Taylor-Joy as teen and young adult Beth), whose prodigious talent comes at a price. Based on Walter Tevis' 1983 novel, it begins in the 1950s and moves into the '60s, as Beth moves up the chess ranks while struggling with mental health and addiction issues. (seven 55-min. episodes)

**Glen:** This wonderfully told story moves back and forth through time, from Beth's stay in an orphanage where she befriends fellow orphan and resident bad girl Jolene (Moses Ingram) and learns to play chess from custodian Mr. Shaibel (Bill Camp), to her rise to fame as Kentucky state champ and later U.S. champ taking on Russian grand masters, and all the way back to her childhood with her troubled but brilliant mathematician mother, Alice (Chloe Pirrie). Better living through chemistry is on full display at the orphanage, where the girls are given tranquilizers to keep them compliant. These pills seem to enhance Beth's spatial intelligence, and though at first reluctant because "girls don't play chess," Mr. Shaibel agrees to teach her the game and quickly recognizes her brilliance. This "woman in a man's world" theme is explored throughout the series, and Beth learns to use it to her advantage. There's strategy in life, too, and as someone who's

very inward-looking and self-contained, Beth learns to protect herself and control her environment, except when her inner demons and alcohol and pill addictions spin her out of control. You'll gobble this up one episode after another. If you've got the time, set aside 6 1/2 hours and consume it all at once!

**Anna:** When Beth is 15, she's adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Wheatley (Patrick Kennedy and Marielle Heller). While her new father's interest in her is nonexistent, her new mother—a lonely and troubled lush named Alma—finds in Beth a new best friend and a reason to keep going even after her marriage fails. Beth is internal and odd, a nut that refuses to crack. Taylor-Joy is brilliant here, and she adeptly moves the character through her teenage years and into her early 20s. She may seem demure and shy, but the real Beth is just under the surface—biting and whip-smart and unafraid to use anger to fuel her. She may not fit in with most

kids her age, but along the way she does find friends who share her obsession with chess, though none to the same degree. Harry Melling plays Harry Beltik, a foe turned friend turned sexual partner who reappears in Beth's life once she has gained some fame for her cutthroat style of play. Benny Watts (Thomas

Brodie-Sangster) acts as a mentor until she soon surpasses his skill level. These two soon start to see the cracks in Beth's facade and warn her of becoming a washed-up pill addict by the age of 21, something that doesn't seem too far off when Beth starts to spiral.

### THE QUEEN'S GAMBIT

What's it rated? **TV-MA**  
 What's it worth, Anna? **Full price**  
 What's it worth, Glen? **Full price**  
 Where's it showing? **Netflix**

**Glen:** It's less about chess and more about the dark side of genius and addiction. It's also about a woman who doesn't know how to navigate human relationships. Mr. Shaibel, in addition to teaching her chess, tries to teach her how to seem more empathetic and human. We've seen stories like this before—*A Beautiful Mind* and *Good Will Hunting* tread similar themes—but *The Queen's Gambit* gets to take its time, and Taylor-Joy is certainly up to the task. She seems like a little girl when the film transitions from Isla Johnson as Beth to Taylor-Joy, but by the end, her Beth is a sophisticated, worldly, savvy young woman. I'm sure you can speak to this better than me, but I was also completely wowed by the costuming and sets. These hotels, rooms, and homes just scream out early 1960s, and Beth and her mother's dresses and styles are so spot on. Hats off to the costume designer, set decorator, and art directors. You deserve Emmys! Likewise to the music selector! So many great period songs! This is TV at its finest.

**Anna:** The sets and costuming are amazing, as is the way they're shot. At one point, they're in a hotel in Mexico City and the camera sweeps along up stairways and open-plan lobbies through this retro hotel. It's really clever camera work and beautiful as well. Beth isn't the only one who can be her own worst enemy. Mrs. Wheatley is desperate for



**KILLER QUEEN:** Anya Taylor-Joy stars as orphaned chess prodigy Beth Harmon, whose keen mind makes her a world-class player but also causes her torment, in *The Queen's Gambit*, on Netflix.

love and affection, and a boozehound to boot. She hitches her ride to Beth's career because, quite frankly, if she didn't, she probably would have drunk herself to death alone in the house. Instead, she becomes Beth's sounding board as she relives her triumphs and tears herself apart over losses. You're right, this isn't so much about chess as it is about the trappings of genius, but it's also about human connection and disconnection, and how relationships can be navigated even if you aren't inherently someone who naturally bonds. I'm definitely adding this book to my reading list; I can't wait to see how similar or different it is to the series. I plan on a re-watch too. It hit me just right emotionally and is an absolute visual feast. This is a winner! ○

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

## Film Reviews

### THE LAST BLACK MAN IN SAN FRANCISCO

What's it rated? **R**  
 When? **Screening and streaming Saturday, Nov. 21, at 6 p.m.**  
 Where's it showing? **SLO's A Satellite of Love during a SLO Motion Film event**

Co-writer Joe Talbot directs this story, co-written by Ron Richert and the film's protagonist Jimmie Fails (who plays himself), a young black man in San Francisco who reclaims his childhood home, a Fillmore District Victorian house supposedly built by his grandfather.

This charming 2019 independent film is a reminder of what's possible outside the big-money studio system, and it establishes first-time feature-length director Talbot as someone to watch. Poetic, soulful, and elegiac—it's a lament for what's been lost to gentrification, a poignant examination of race and class, and a swan song to a deeply felt male friendship.

There's some breathtaking cinematography by Adam Newport-Berra and arty direction by Talbot, but what really sells this film are stars Fails and Jonathan Majors, whose performances are so perfect, so affecting, and so nuanced. Sometimes a mere look is enough to break your heart, and



PHOTO COURTESY OF A24

**SPECIAL SCREENING:** See *The Last Black Man in San Francisco* on Nov. 21, at 6 p.m., outside at SLO's A Satellite of Love, during a limited in-person screening, or an online virtual screening, both to benefit R.A.C.E. Matters SLO. The event opens with the 12-minute short, *Restrictions Apply*. Visit [slomotionfilm.com](http://slomotionfilm.com) for tickets.

your heart will surely break with the conclusion of this achingly tender story of two men in love with a city that doesn't seem to love them back. (121 min.)

—Glen

### THE OPERATIVE

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

Writer-director Yuval Adler (*Bethlehem*, *The Secrets We Keep*) helms this story based on former Israeli intelligence officer Yiftach R. Atir's 2016 book *The English Teacher: A Novel*, about Rachel (Diane Kruger), a young Western woman recruited by the Mossad to work undercover in Tehran, Iran. We meet her handler, Thomas (Martin Freeman), and her target, Farhad (Cas Anvar), as Israel purposely feeds faulty intelligence to Iran as they work to build their nuclear capabilities. Atir's novel was censored purportedly because it revealed too many spy-craft secrets.

Rachel is the perfect recruit. Her mother's dead, and her father's estranged. She's close to no one, and she moved around frequently throughout her childhood. Proficient at multiple languages, she takes on the role of a language teacher, building her background and bona fides over a year before she's finally turned loose in Iran on assignment.

It's a taut, fascinating thriller, and Kruger is terrific as Rachel, both capable and steeled, and vulnerable and endangered. She's also a little bit of a wild card. Unlike most



PHOTO COURTESY OF BLACK BEAR PICTURES

**DANGER EVERYWHERE:** Mossad operative, Rachel (Diane Kruger), walks away from her handler, Thomas (Martin Freeman), in the 2019 spy thriller, *The Operative*, screening on HBO.

Mossad operatives, she isn't burdened by dogmatic ideology, but she is burdened by morals, which puts her at odds with Mossad. If you're in the mood for a realistic and tight little spy flick, this one's worth a couple of hours. (116 min.) ○

—Glen

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**TEAMWORK:** Mike and Nellie Sewall are the co-owners of Alfie's Fish & Chips in Lompoc.



**EAT UP:** Hush puppies, cole slaw, and fish and chips are all on the menu at Alfie's in Lompoc.



**NEW PUB:** The expanded space at Alfie's year-old location on North H Street allows the restaurant to have an English pub, with beer and wine offerings.

## Tried and true

*Alfie's Fish & Chips celebrates a year at its expanded location, continuing to serve fried goodness through COVID-19 challenges*

BY KENNY CRESS

This year has been particularly hard on the owners of Alfie's Fish & Chips in Lompoc, Mike and Nellie Sewall. Similar to other Santa Barbara County restaurants, the pandemic has forced the longtime Lompoc establishment to shut down not once, but twice.

And on top of that, Nellie has been battling cancer.

"I was diagnosed with (non-Hodgkin's lymphoma) in early April," she said during the second week of November. "I had hopefully my last round of chemotherapy last week. I'll find out in two weeks if the cancer's all gone."

Through it all, the 20-year owners of Alfie's, who have four adult children and three grandchildren, have persevered, although Nellie has modified the amount of time she spends at the restaurant.

"Before I was diagnosed with cancer, I was at the restaurant every day," Nellie said. "I'm not here as much in person now."

With the change in their situation, Mike said his staff has stepped up.

"We don't do as much cooking as we used to. Our staff has stepped in and done a wonderful job. They've been very leadership-oriented," he said.

Alfie's recently celebrated a year in its current location, just down North H Street from the old spot, and the Sewalls said the expanded space has increased the restaurant's opportunities.

"The dining area in our new place is much bigger than our old one," Nellie said, noting that the previous location was 1,400 square feet and their new location is about 2,300 square feet.

That, the Sewalls said, has come in particularly handy because of the restrictions the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on indoor dining.

"We're allowed 25 percent indoor dining capacity," Nellie said. "With that, we can seat 32 people. In our old place, with 25 percent capacity, we could have seated eight."

Besides allowing for an expanded dining area, Alfie's has an actual kitchen at the new place, Nellie said, which led to other changes.

"We have an actual English pub," that sells beer and wine, Mike said.

Nellie said that while the restaurant's former location got 80 percent of its business from takeout orders, much of the business at the new location still comes from primarily takeout orders.

Alfie's Fish and Chips gets the word out about its facilities and its fare through its catchy radio commercials. A man and woman banter back and forth,

### Taste it

Find Alfie's Fish & Chips at 610 N. H St., open from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week. For information about the restaurant's menu, visit [alfiesfish.com](http://alfiesfish.com), find it on Facebook at @AlfiesFishAndChips, or call (805) 736-0154.

the man with an English accent.

"You always have to have the last word," the woman remarks near the end of one commercial.

"Do not," the man retorts.

Mike and Nellie are that man and woman. Mike speaks with an English accent in the commercial—and though Alfie's boasts authentic English fish and chips, Mike's accent is less than authentic in real life.

"But I have strong English and Irish in my blood," Mike said with a smile.

Mike was born and raised in the Lompoc Valley. Nellie is an Ohio native.

"I came out here to marry him," she said.

But Mike still manages to pull off a convincing English accent when the pair's commercials are taped at KBOX 104.1FM Pirate Radio in Lompoc.

"Mike is dressed up as the Alfie's character, complete with the ears," Nellie said of the restaurant's logo.

Fish around on their website, and you'll learn that Alfie is "the cute little English bloke wearing the scarf and bowler hat." The site also boasts that "since 1969 Alfie's has been serving the best authentic English style fish and chips this side of England."

Alfie's started in 1969 as a franchise, according to local lore detailed on the restaurant's site. "Opening hundreds of stores in the first few years was too much, too fast. The Alfie's corporation went bankrupt in 1972. Since then each store

has been family owned and operated. The first Alfie's in Texas City, Texas (near Galveston), closed in 2019, making the Alfie's in Lompoc the very last location!"

The restaurant's history page goes on to explain that the Lompoc store—Alfie's No. 27—was opened in 1969 by Jack and Margaret Cairney, a Scottish couple. They passed it on to their daughter, Colleen Staffel, and in 2001 she sold the business to Mike and Nellie.

The rest, as they say, is modern history.

On the menu, hungry diners will find three traditional combos—offering one, two, or three pieces of fish—with each including the traditional chips (french fries), two hush puppies, and cole slaw.

Family meals include a half bucket (five pieces of fish), a full bucket (10 pieces of fish), and a combo bucket (five fish, five chicken strips, and 21 popcorn shrimp). Each of those includes a pound of chips, sauces, and the diner's choice of seven hush puppies or one pint of cole slaw.

Shrimp, oyster, catfish, clam strips,

and calamari entrees are also on the menu, along with some "lighter bits," including baked fish and cucumber wasabi coleslaw. And diners can also get their fish on a large French roll with sauce.

But for their widely traveled clientele, the fried fish is king.

"We have a lot of customers from Vandenberg Air Force Base, a lot of airmen from Alabama and Kentucky," Nellie said. "Catfish is a big seller with the military [customers]. Fish and chips is still the best seller on the menu."

The restaurant, Mike said, has a lot of regulars from the area.

"People are coming in and out from all over the place," he said.

And they seem to like Alfie's Fish and Chips' new location just fine.

"The public has been very supportive," Mike said. ○

*Contributor Kenny Cress is all about seafood. Send fresh catches to the editor at [clanham@santamariasun.com](mailto:clanham@santamariasun.com).*

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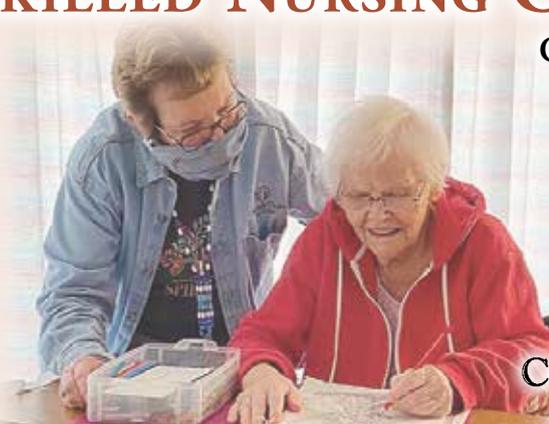
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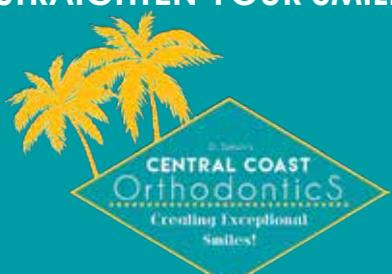
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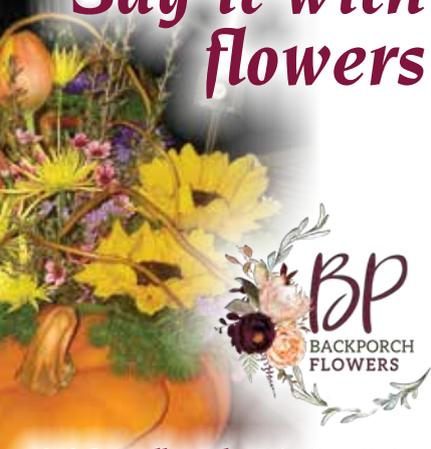
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