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# Sun

AT THE MOVIES



News of the World:  
An adventure [17]

# Positively negative

*Cases of influenza  
are much lower  
than usual [6]*

BY MALEA MARTIN

HEALTH &  
WELLNESS

**NEWS** We're back in  
the purple tier [4]

**ARTS** Peace and solace  
in Los Olivos [16]

**EATS** Try a pinsa in  
Santa Ynez [18]

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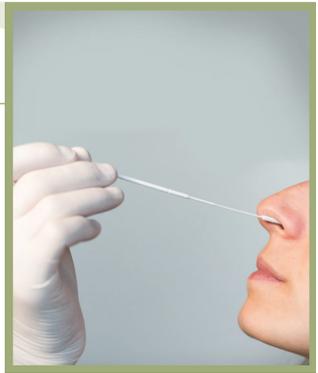
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JANUARY 28 - FEBRUARY 4, 2021 VOL. 21 NO. 48

It's near impossible to talk about public health right now, without discussing COVID-19, so for our annual Health and Wellness issue, Staff Writer Malea Martin writes about flu cases being lower than usual, and local public health experts say that COVID-19 precautions have helped [6]. Staff Writer Kasey Bubnash speaks with a nutritionist about COVID-19 weight gain, diets, and the best way to lose weight and keep it off [8].

This week, with COVID-19 regional stay-at-home orders lifted, Santa Barbara County reverts to the purple tier [4]; landscape painter Karen McGaw finds solace during the pandemic [16]; and introducing the pinsa—a light, Roman-style pizza [18].

Camillia Lanham  
editor



**TESTING, TESTING:** This season's influenza tests, which are often administered via a throat or nasal swab, are coming back negative.

Cover photo by Adobe Stock > Cover design by Alex Zuniga

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## Political Watch

• **U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal** (D-Santa Barbara) issued a video statement following the inauguration of **President Joe Biden** and **Vice President Kamala Harris** on Jan. 20. "Today was a great and historic day for our country where we witnessed, yet again, the peaceful transition of power, the seating and inauguration of the Biden-Harris administration," Carbajal said in the statement. "I really appreciated and resonated with President Biden's call for unity. We must come together and turn a new chapter, where we work together in unity to try and improve the lives of all Americans." Carbajal continued that he is particularly looking forward to the way the Biden-Harris administration addresses issues like climate change, the ongoing pandemic, and economic recovery. "That we address prosperity and economic prosperity for all Americans, that we bring forward immigration reform, and that we continue to improve making health care more affordable and accessible for all Americans," Carbajal added. "I am looking forward to working with this administration to improve the lives of everyone throughout the country and on the Central Coast."

• **Gov. Gavin Newsom**, **Senate President Pro Tempore Toni Atkins**, and **Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon**, issued a statement Jan. 25 on the state's success in extending the eviction moratorium through June 30, 2021. "COVID-19 continues to devastate communities across our state and too many Californians remain one paycheck away from losing their apartments or homes. These families need protection and relief now," the statement said. In addition to the eviction moratorium extension, the state will move forward "as quickly as possible to deploy California's share of the latest federal stimulus bill" in a way that is equitable and accountable. "These critically needed federal funds, targeted to the most at-risk households with unpaid back rent, will help tenants stay afloat during and after this pandemic," according to the statement. "Income-qualified tenants and their landlords can choose to receive direct rental assistance in exchange for forgiving prior rental debt." The statement concluded that while the eviction moratorium and stimulus money are important steps, there is still work to be done "to tackle the structural housing cost crisis in California." "The pandemic exacerbated these issues, it did not create them," the statement concludes. "And our work to address these fundamental issues must continue with urgency and resolve."

• On Jan. 23, **Women's March San Luis Obispo** held a virtual event in lieu of the typical march that has taken place annually since **former President Donald Trump's** 2017 inauguration. "We will come together safely to celebrate the outcome of our work and the hard won victories—including inauguration of **Kamala Harris** as the first ever woman vice president of the United States, a record number of women elected to the U.S. Congress, and a diverse new administration," a Jan. 23 Women's March SLO Facebook post stated. "Democracy only works if we do. We recognize the work ahead for social, racial, and environmental justice, and pledge to continue building a positive and just future for all! There can only be true democracy when all voices are heard and when all people are able to participate." Among those invited to speak at the event was state **Sen. Monique Limón** (D-Santa Barbara), who wrote after the event that the virtual march was dedicated to the victims of COVID-19. ○

## Redistricting commission votes to keep controversial demographer

Santa Barbara County residents are raising concerns about the demographer selected to help the county redraw its supervisorial districts, a company that some claim has a history of being politically biased and creating districts that protect incumbent elected officials.

The National Demographics Corporation (NDC) is a consulting agency that provides demographic analysis, redistricting assistance, and public opinion surveys to state and local governments. NDC has worked on more than 300 such projects in the U.S., including several in Santa Barbara County, and was brought on to help the county's Citizens Independent Redistricting Commission in October 2020, according to Assistant County Executive Officer Nancy Anderson.

"We learned of NDC from the city of Santa Barbara, who had contracted with them in a previous engagement and highly recommended them," Anderson wrote in an email to the *Sun*. "The cities of Lompoc and Santa Maria also used them successfully. There are not many firms with extensive experience in this field of work, and based on the positive reviews from the cities, NDC was engaged."

But that decision was made before all 11 members of the redistricting commission were chosen. The first five commission members—one from each current supervisorial district—were randomly chosen from a pool of around 45 of the most qualified applicants on Oct. 13, 2020. Those five members were then tasked with filling the remaining six commission seats by Dec. 31, 2020. Although the ongoing redistricting process is intended to be almost entirely independent from the county and its elected officials, Anderson said the county appointed NDC to its position in October so that the commission would have independent administrative and demographic services as soon as all commissioners were selected.

Some community members have a problem with that appointment process, and critics say a new demographer should be chosen through a request for proposal process, which the commission is using to select legal counsel and allows for public input.

"In the ordinance that created this body, it really puts the power in all of you, the commissioners, to draw the lines, and I think the initiative was called, 'You Draw the Lines,'" Santa Barbara County resident Spencer Brandt said at a Jan. 19 commission meeting. "But the truth of the matter is that most of the staff work, or all of the staff work, a lot of the legwork really, that goes into what those lines look like is going to be performed by your demographer. And you want to be able to have a demographer that you can trust and rely upon and data that you're able to inspire confidence in the process."

When it comes to the National Demographics Corporation and its president, Douglas Johnson, Brandt said that trust isn't there for many community members.

Brandt noted Johnson's time as a research fellow for the Rose Institute of State and Local Government, another demographic analysis firm that is widely considered to lean Republican and was co-founded by Thomas Hofeller, a Republican political strategist known for his gerrymandering tactics. NDC itself, Brandt said, has been criticized by residents of cities across the nation for drawing district boundaries that prioritize and benefit incumbent politicians over the people district-based elections are intended to help.

Several other community members and organizations share Brandt's concerns, including the League of Women Voters of Santa Barbara,



**DEMOGRAPHICS EXPERT:** Douglas Johnson of the National Demographics Corporation stands behind former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger at press conference on redistricting reform.

which asked in a Jan. 7 letter to the redistricting commission that it request proposals for the demographer position.

"There is still time to do a robust search and interview your options for a demographer, as other independent commissions have done," the letter reads. "There are several very qualified law firms and demographic service companies in California and nationally who would likely bid if there is an open, transparent, and competitive process."

But at the Jan. 19 meeting, commissioners said the actual map-drawing process won't be left entirely up to NDC, and instead will be open, transparent, and involve significant community input. Commissioners decided to continue their services with NDC, but emphasized that the contract can be discontinued at any time with a 30-day notice. In the meantime, commissioners directed the county to build a list of other demographers who might be interested in working on the redistricting process if things with NDC don't work out.

The redistricting commission also invited community members to send in their questions regarding NDC's history and experience.

While NDC President Johnson told the *Sun* that many of the accusations against him and his company are inaccurate and misleading, he's happy to address the public's concerns and plans to do so at a meeting in the near future.

—Kasey Bubnash

## Newsom lifts regional order, Santa Barbara County back to purple tier

Gov. Gavin Newsom lifted his regional stay-at-home order on Jan. 25, but this doesn't mean that all bets are off for COVID-19 restrictions. Instead, counties will be judged individually in the state's tiered reopening system.

Nearly all of California's counties—including Santa Barbara County—remain in the purple, most restrictive tier.

The stay-at-home order was first enacted on Dec. 3, when Newsom's office announced that falling ICU availability statewide warranted restrictions that were more stringent than what was within the Blueprint for a Safer Economy framework. The state was divided up into five regions, with Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties placed in Southern California. If a region's ICU capacity dropped below 15 percent, it had 24 hours to implement the order.

At the time, Southern California's ICU capacity was already low enough to send it into lockdown

as soon as the new rules went into effect. With the order came a slew of closures and restrictions, including restaurants only being allowed to provide takeout and pickup, and hair salons being required to shut down entirely.

But from the get-go, the state also established a way out: "Counties are eligible to come off the Regional Stay-at-Home Order after three weeks if their hospital ICU capacity projected four weeks out reaches 15 percent," Newsom's Dec. 3 order stated.

As of Newsom's Jan. 25 press conference, Southern California was projected to have 33.3 percent ICU capacity by Feb. 21—the highest in the state. The other four regions are also expected to exceed 15 percent ICU capacity by Feb. 21.

Newsom said the state looks at current ICU capacity, community transmission, regional case rates, and the proportion of cases admitted to the ICU to make its projections.

"Remember, ICU is a lagging indicator: What's happening with positivity rates, case rates, community spread, really is the forecast that gives us confidence on where we will land in a number of weeks," Newsom said. "There are variables that are constantly changing, but again, these are the projections."

While these projections allowed the state to lift the regional stay-at-home order, Newsom emphasized that "we are not out of the woods."

"Now that we are in the purple tier for those vast majority of counties, it means restaurants can open for outdoor dining with modifications, nail, hair salons can open with modifications, certain youth sports can resume for competition in particular, with, again, modifications and considerations," Newsom said.

Santa Barbara County still has a long road ahead before it will be able to move up in the tier system. As of Jan. 19, Santa Barbara County had a 16 percent positivity rate, and its adjusted case rate was 64.6, according to state data. To move into the red tier, the county must have a 5 to 8 percent positivity rate, and just four to seven new daily cases per 100,000.

However, Public Health Director Dr. Van Do-Reynoso said at a Jan. 22 press conference that the county appears to have passed the peak of its curve.

"The data that we are running is showing that our case rate and test positivity have peaked on Jan. 9, and have since decreased," Do-Reynoso said. "While case rate and test positivity remain high, they have been decreasing in the last 13 days. Case rate decreased by over 20 percent, and testing positivity decreased by 13 percent."

NEWS from page 4

Despite the encouraging moves, as Do-Reynoso emphasized a few days earlier, the county is currently still struggling to meet hospital needs. According to data presented at the Jan. 22 press conference, the county had 0 percent adjusted ICU availability that day.

"We do expect a high number of COVID-19 hospitalizations for the next few weeks to come, because of our high case rates," Do-Reynoso said. "[We] are unfortunately experiencing a large number of deaths. ... It is really important to remember that, and maintain your due diligence."

—Malea Martin

## Cunningham questions state's vaccine allocation process

Some lawmakers are demanding answers from the state as to how COVID-19 vaccines are distributed to counties, while Gov. Gavin Newsom said the federal government sends doses directly to county public health departments.

Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham (R-San Luis Obispo) and a group of bipartisan state legislators penned a letter on Jan. 21, asking California Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly for more information about vaccine distribution, in particular for rural communities.

"While our counties are being told that they will be receiving miniscule amounts of COVID-19 vaccines for their residents, the [Newsom] administration has propped up at least four large vaccine distribution sites in major population areas and has yet to explain where those doses are coming from," Cunningham said in a statement.

Newsom said at a Jan. 25 press conference that vaccines don't physically pass through state hands on their way to counties.

"We don't have a warehouse of doses," Newsom said. "They're sent directly to counties, counties to providers, in some cases to providers directly."

Newsom added that there is "a complicated network" of 5,000 providers statewide, making data collection on vaccine administration a challenge.

"Some [providers] are very small, some are very efficient getting data back in the system," Newsom said. "Some are very inefficient, because they see that as tertiary, not even secondary, to getting these things administered."

At a Jan. 22 press conference, Santa Barbara County Public Health Director Dr. Van Do-Reynoso said doses get from the federal to county level in two possible ways—one of which involves the state.

"The federal government contracts directly with CVS and Walgreens to offer vaccines at the long-term care facilities," Do-Reynoso said. "The federal government also allocates vaccines to the state of California, and our state offers us a set vaccine number each week. In turn, when we receive that allocation number, we offer it to our community providers, and we retain some as well for our public health community vaccination sites."

Do-Reynoso didn't elaborate on the state's role in determining the number of vaccines each county gets. The letter from Cunningham and his colleagues demands clarity from the state.

"We still do not know what factors go into [California Department of Public Health's] decision-making when determining how many doses are sent to each county," the letter states. "Is it solely based on total population size, or is it priority population size? Does the county's vaccine distribution infrastructure and plan play

a factor in determining whether a county will get 100 or 1,000 doses in a week?"

The letter adds that "a lack of communication and transparency from the administration has resulted in mass confusion by both the general public and our local public health officers."

As of Jan. 26, Cunningham had not received a response from the state, according to his office.

—Malea Martin

## Carbajal reintroduces bill on legal status of parents of veterans

U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara) reintroduced a bill on Jan. 26 that would help parents of veterans become lawful permanent residents without needing to leave the country.

The Flores family from Goleta inspired the bill after their mother, Juana Flores, was deported in April 2019 to Jesús María, Aguascalientes, in Mexico.

Juana is a mother of 10 children and 18 grandchildren who came to the United States without documentation in 1988 with her husband who worked in the country.

Under the Immigration and Nationality Act passed in 1997, Congress created a penalty for immigrants without documentation (a visa, for example) or with expired visas who leave the country and return without permission.

Individuals who cross the United States border under these circumstances are immediately barred from returning. Juana visited Mexico in 1999 to visit her dying mother and attend the funeral that followed. That trip caused her April 2019 deportation and a 10-year ban on returning.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

temporarily postponed Juana's removal order several times on humanitarian grounds—she was a caregiver for family members who had learning disabilities. However, on Feb. 26, 2019, the Los Angeles ICE office denied Juana's postponement request, and she was deported two months later.

One of Juana's sons, Caesar Flores, is a Senior Airman E-4 for the U.S. Air Force and hoped to assist his mother with her legal status. Although men and women who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces are eligible to apply for naturalization, that option isn't available to their parents.

Moved by the Flores family situation, Carbajal introduced the Protect Patriot Parents Act in 2019 to create a way for parents of veterans to become permanent residents while continuing to live in the U.S. The legislation would apply to parents of U.S. citizens who served in the U.S. Armed Forces either on active duty or as a reserve member.

"It is no secret that for the past four years, all immigrants have been under constant attack by the president, who is no longer in office," Carbajal said during a Jan. 26 virtual press conference.

He said he's hopeful that with the new Biden administration, immigration policies such as those that banned Juana from the U.S. will change.

"The challenge is going to be that President Biden has put forth a framework that's going to come forward in the form of legislation to address comprehensive immigration reform. The question will be is this something that could be included in that, is seen as a separate bill, or how will this bill be impacted by that," he said.

During the conference, Juana's legal team noted that the immigration reform Biden introduced includes a provision for eliminating or revising the three- and 10-year bars. ○

—Karen Garcia

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# 'Respiratory etiquette'

Local public health experts have a few theories as to why influenza hasn't made much of a mark this year—COVID-19 precautions are one

BY MALEA MARTIN

Infectious diseases haven't exactly been a source of good news over the past year, but officials say one annual virus is sickening an unusually low number of people this winter: influenza.

When someone comes into one of Santa Barbara County's five hospitals with influenza-like symptoms, they are tested "for a whole set of viruses," including COVID-19 and the flu, county Public Health Officer Dr. Henning Ansorg said at a Jan. 15 press conference.

According to the county's Community Data Dashboard flu report, there have been zero positive rapid flu tests among Cottage Health, Marian, and Lompoc in-patients since October, which is considered the start of flu season.

Hospitals have administered more than 700 rapid flu tests since the start of the season, all of which have come up negative, according to the data.

"As a physician in the hospital, I have not seen influenza this year," Marian Regional Medical Center Chief Medical Officer and Infectious Disease Specialist Dr. Trees Ritter told the *Sun*. "I saw one single case of influenza in Northern San Luis Obispo County in the fall, but that was the only positive flu test that I've seen this year."

This isn't to say there are no cases of flu in the community, as the county's data just reflects in-patient hospital testing. But it does indicate a much smaller prevalence this year, public health officials said. In the 2019-20 flu season, for example, 27.8 percent of hospital lab rapid flu tests came up positive in the second week of January. During the 2018-19 flu season, 21.9 percent came up positive in the same week.

"I see a much, much lower trend across the prevalence and hospitalization as compared to other years," Public Health Director Dr. Van Do-Reynoso said at the Jan. 15 press conference. "What I'm hearing is that it's due to the social distancing, it's due to people wearing their masks, so those are netting good results with regard to the spread of flu."

According to the Centers for Disease Control, COVID-19 appears to spread more easily than the flu. But in other ways, Ansorg said, the flu virus is "similar to the coronaviruses, because it's a respiratory virus that is spread through our exhalations with tiny droplets."

"So if more people protect themselves with wearing masks, washing their hands more often, and keeping at least 6 feet distance from each other, it will protect from other viruses," Ansorg explained. "We are also seeing that other normal cold viruses are much less prevalent so

far this winter. The only explanation we have so far is that it's really the protection that a lot of people are maintaining."

Melissa DeBacker, chief of Quality Assurance Process Improvement, Risk Management, and Infection Control at Lompoc Valley Medical Center, told the *Sun* that it's too early to say for certain what is causing the lower flu rates.

"There hasn't been time for any real research to be put out on it, because we're still in it. All it can really be is speculation," DeBacker said. "But since influenza and COVID are transmitted similarly, it just makes sense that the source control, the distancing, and other mitigation measures put in place would also help squelch the flu."

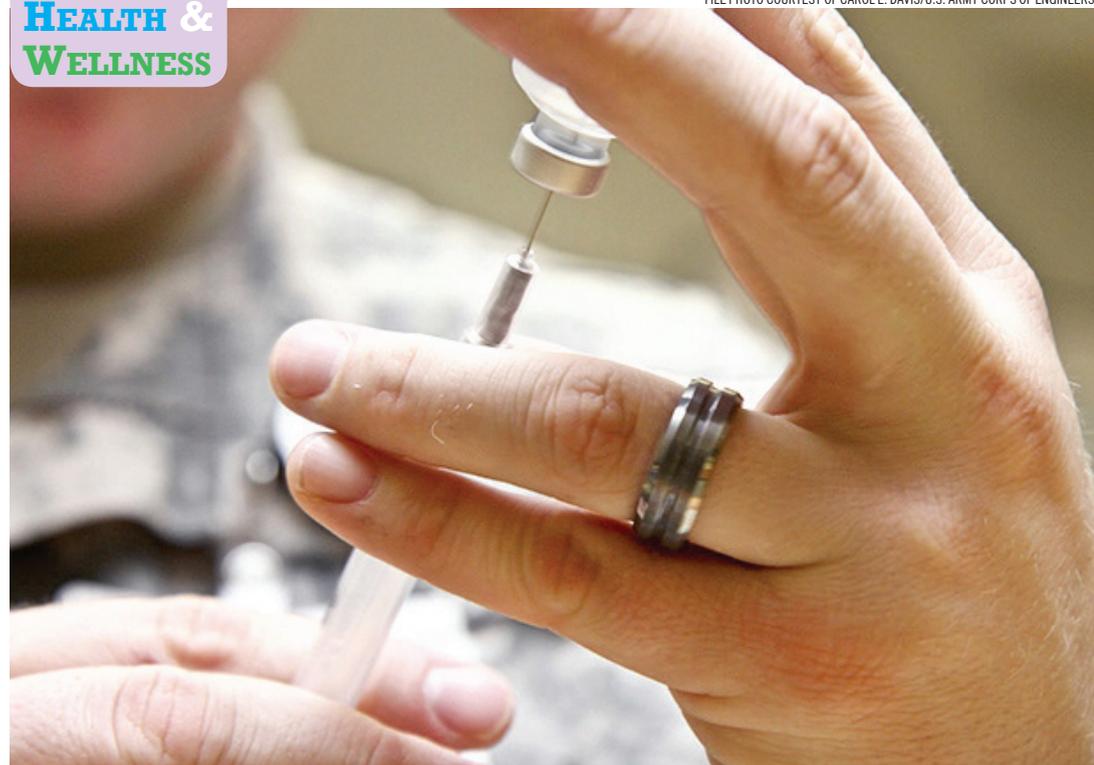
DeBacker theorized that other factors—such as schools being closed, teleworking, no large events, vaccination—could also influence the flu's spread locally.

Before flu season started, the county pushed out strong and consistent messaging in both English and Spanish encouraging community members to get vaccinated. Throughout October, the county offered free drive-up clinics in Lompoc, Santa Barbara, and Santa Maria so residents could get their flu shots. Another free flu shot event was held in Guadalupe in November. And on Sept. 15, 2020, the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department issued a Health Officer Order that mandated flu vaccinations for all health care workers. If a worker couldn't provide documentation of a flu vaccine, they would be required to wear a mask while working in patient care during the flu season.

The Public Health Department's flu clinics immunized nearly four times as many people this year compared to last year, according to Senior Epidemiologist Joy Kane.

"We're in frequent calls with Public Health regularly, and there was a big concern months ago about the upcoming flu, and the possibility of co-infection with COVID and influenza," DeBacker said. "So there was a big push by Public Health to really protect the public and get the flu vaccine out, ensure that as many people got vaccinated as possible."

Despite the many scientific explanations and theories that public health officers have offered



**FEWER FLU:** Health professionals say a combination of COVID-19 precautions and widespread flu vaccination is the probable cause of low flu infections this year.

**'... if more people protect themselves with wearing masks, washing their hands more often, and keeping at least 6 feet distance from each other, it will protect from other viruses.'**

—Dr. Henning Ansorg, Santa Barbara County Public Health officer

as to why flu numbers are low, some conspiracy theories have cropped up, particularly on social media.

In a Dec. 5 post made to the "Protect Five Cities" Facebook group with several hundred members, Facebook user Robert M Stone lamented that San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties were being lumped in with Southern California in the state's regional reopening plan. User Rolfe Nelson commented, "Do those [COVID-19] numbers include the flu?" and another user replied sarcastically, "there is no flu anymore just like the elderly have not died from old age in 2020."

Ansorg said the implication that flu cases are being counted as COVID-19 is a "completely unfounded claim" and "misinformation."

"Unfortunately that spread [on] social media widely," he said. "The urgent care centers, the emergency rooms are testing for a whole set of viruses when somebody comes in with these symptoms, and the test results don't lie."

Ritter said another reason we are seeing so little flu infection could be that "it's not penetrated into the population."

"When people get together they're not going to be spreading it if it's not there, whereas COVID is in the population at this point and the people are spreading that when they interact with each other," he said.

Ritter added that the newfound attention people are paying to "respiratory etiquette" also plays a role, and could teach valuable lessons for future flu seasons.

"All cultures may have to reassess what they do in the wintertime, and I would think that there may be more acceptance of masking in the wintertime when there are a lot of circulating viruses," he said. "I've talked to doctors who say, 'Next winter, I might wear a mask even if I don't have to,' simply because we found that they're so effective." ○

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

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# The quarantine 15

Learn some practical tips from a pro about living a healthier pandemic lifestyle



**ASK A NUTRITIONIST:** Stephanie Killen is a certified nutritional therapy practitioner at Sound Body Nutrition in San Luis Obispo.

BY KASEY BUBNASH

**P**andemic pounds, the quarantine 15, the COVID-19. You know what I'm talking about. The COVID-19 pandemic completely disrupted most of our lives and routines; led to spikes in stress, anxiety, and uncertainty; and left many of us with little else to do but sit around. With gyms closed and millions of jobs lost, it's only natural that many of us dropped our healthy habits and traded them in for comfort food.

An October 2020 survey conducted by researchers at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Louisiana found that sedentary time increased among nearly 8,000 respondents during the pandemic, while time spent in physical activity decreased. The result, in about 28 percent of cases, was weight gain.

Weight fluctuation is normal, natural, and human. Gaining weight isn't always a bad thing, and fat certainly isn't always a sign of an unhealthy lifestyle.

But for those of you who feel like your COVID-19 weight gain is the result of some bad habits, Stephanie Killen, a certified nutritional therapy practitioner at Sound Body Nutrition in San Luis Obispo, can help. Killen works with her clients to address digestive, hormonal, and weight issues through holistic nutrition and lifestyle remedies.

**Sun:** Have you heard from a lot of clients who have gained weight during the pandemic?

**Killen:** I actually have not. I've heard it throughout just people in general, you know, as I mingle about. "Oh, you know, I've put on weight because I'm just eating at home," and that kind of thing. So

**'I think there's just this really restrictive, almost negative connotation with dieting. And I think that gets old for people, real quick.'**

—Stephanie Killen, certified nutritional therapy practitioner

it's definitely circulating and I have heard it. But my clients in particular, the ones that come to me for weight loss, it's been an issue since before the pandemic. So I'm not sure if it's actually made it worse for them or not.

**Sun:** So we had the pandemic on top of the holiday season. I personally always gain weight during the holiday season because there're so many cookies. And then now with the new year I'm seeing lots of posts on social media about resolutions to lose weight and fad diets. So what do you think of fad diets like keto and stuff like that? Do they work?

**Killen:** Even the word "diet" is something that we try to stay away from when I work with my clients because it's more of a lifestyle change than a diet—because diets fail. And it's a mindset around the word "diet" that kind of is restrictive and freaks people out, and a lot of people aren't successful with it. I mean, there are certain health issues that could benefit from certain specialty diets, like keto, like paleo, like Whole30. Those are definitely warranted in some situations. Then there're also detoxes—you'll see that in the beginning of the year, and I think it could be a good kick-start into

the year if it's truly a goal of yours to kind of clean out and lose weight and start again. I do think that those programs can be helpful in kick-starting that, but in all reality, most people don't even make it through and go back to what they're doing, either during or right after any of those programs.

**Sun:** What do you think it is about diets in general that leads people to not be successful?

**Killen:** I think a lot of it is meal planning, whether it's too time consuming, whether they don't know what to eat, whether they don't know what to eat that tastes good is a big one. A lot of people dislike cooking, or they just want something quick and easy and convenient. And when it comes to actually cooking meals, they don't know what to cook and how to make it tasty and how to make it quick. So I think that that's probably the biggest hiccup for diets. And then another thing is the mentality that, "Oh, well I screwed up. So I'll just start again, like, next Monday." So it's like they screw up once and then it's out the door until they feel like this is a good starting point again, instead of just realizing that progress over perfection. Then you have words like "cheat" and "cheat days" and "I cheated." And

I think there's just this really restrictive, almost negative connotation with dieting. And I think that gets old for people, real quick.

**Sun:** As a nutritionist, what kinds of tips do you give to people typically who want to lose weight in a healthy, long-term sort of way?

**Killen:** Honestly I tell them first and foremost we are not counting calories. This isn't a counting calorie game. I also tell them that it's about nourishing your body. It's about bringing your body back into balance. ... But I say throw your timeline out the door, because if you put a timeline on this, all that's going to do is create pressure and that's not in the recipe for success. Because weight loss is kind of like layers, and it's mindset and it's body and it's soul. There's an emotional aspect to eating and emotional eating, and there's obvious the physical part of exercising and being active, and then there's also the mental part with staying motivated. So it's a multi-layered issue, and you need time to address each layer and build on each layer. ... Carving out a time to meal prep is one. So meal prepping for the week includes making your shopping list, going grocery shopping, and preparing the things that you can do ahead of time to make your week easier. I think clearing the crap out of your house is another. So that you don't have things that are tempting you when you open the cupboard and you open the fridge. If you replace those things with healthier options or healthier versions of those items, you're going to grab those when you're hungry instead of going for the Cheetos that are hidden in the corner. I think that's a big one. Staying hydrated is another one. Water is going to be your best friend, and trying to stay hydrated throughout your day so that your body functions properly is another good one. And taking the time to really go to a health food store and peruse the aisles and see what kinds of snacks they have and what kind of alternative things there would be healthier for you. So I think healthy substitutes for things you would go for during a snack time or mealtime are really important.

**Sun:** Do you have any motivational words for people who are struggling with staying healthy right now or are just coming out of the pandemic and the holiday season feeling bad about themselves?

**Killen:** I think this is actually a really good time for resources right now. A lot of businesses, as far as like fitness things go, mindset things go, nutrition goes, a lot of a lot of those experts are offering free advice online. They're offering free programs, they're offering paid programs. And, you know, to get someone's support so that you can be successful is one of the things that I think would be the best advice. It's hard to always hold yourself accountable, but if you have somebody like a health coach or nutritionist or a fitness expert, who's going to support you and motivate you, I think that's one of the best things that you could do for your body. ○

Staff Writer Kasey Bubnash can be reached at [kbubnash@newtimeslo.com](mailto:kbubnash@newtimeslo.com).



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## NEWS

## SPOTLIGHT

PHOTO COURTESY OF NATURETRACK

# Staying on track

NatureTrack found a way to keep honoring its mission while also filling a need in the community

BY MALEA MARTIN

NatureTrack's mission is to foster a lifelong fascination with nature through outdoor field trips, but COVID-19 makes the logistics of these excursions more challenging. And with kids still mostly learning from home, it became more difficult for NatureTrack to reach its target audience.

That's when founder Sue Eisaguirre had an idea, a way to put outdoor exploration into a new format and then distribute it to the kids who need it most.

"I came up with it after I had read an article about how many kids nationwide were not getting their meals that they normally would get when school was in session, because they didn't have a means of picking them up at the schools," Eisaguirre told the Sun. "I thought we could help them out by delivering the food and then with each delivery, give a little nature card that gives them an activity that they could do right there in their backyard."

After pitching the concept to the Lompoc Unified School District (LUSD)—which, incidentally, had just identified families who didn't have the means to pick up the free meals the district offers—"nature notes" were born. Eisaguirre calls it "nutrition with a side of nature."

Since December, Eisaguirre and NatureTrack's team of volunteers have delivered meals to LUSD families every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and they plan to continue the effort until kids are back in school. With each delivery, the team drops off a nature note, a journal, and a small pencil.

"It just happened to be the right timing to call [the school district]," Eisaguirre said. "They needed the service, so it was meant to be. And it gives us a way to still do what our overarching goal is, and that's to connect kids to nature."

So far, NatureTrack has created a set of 19 nature notes and hopes to expand it up to 30 in the near future. One card leads children through a weather observation; another includes a baggie of paint samples, encouraging participants to match the colors with what they find in nature; another instructs kids to make a sound map, recording any outdoor noises they hear into their journals.

"The volunteers have all helped with these cards too," Eisaguirre added. "Jenny Morrell, our program director, has been creating them in InDesign. We had a pool of volunteers that sent in ideas. We've got one on bugs, rocks, animal tracks, cloud watching, shelter building, a scavenger hunt," and the list goes on.

Normally known for its outdoor excursions, NatureTrack also found a way to bring field trips online with virtual trips. Teachers can use them as a resource for their classes, and then students can look back on the "trip" or share



HELPING HAND: NatureTrack is helping Lompoc Unified School District deliver meals to families who are unable to pick them up, and the organization is including "nature notes" along with each delivery to get kids outdoors.

memories with their parents by rewatching the video.

"This was one of the ways that we reimagined what we can do during COVID," Eisaguirre said. "Our hope is to continue to do this, so that even when we're back out on the trail, it's great for the kids when they get back to go show their parents where they went, or just to review."

Earlier in the pandemic, NatureTrack was able to adjust its transportation methods to safely take kids on in-person, outdoor field trips. But currently the numbers are too high to do so.

"Before this second lockdown, we were working with the YMCA in Lompoc and doing field trips for their pods. So we'll go back once we're allowed to get out and partner with them again," Eisaguirre said. "Most of the kids have a minimal day, because they only are online 4 1/2 days out of the week, so on those minimal days is when we try to schedule these trips and take them to the beach or trails or wherever."

In the meantime, NatureTrack will continue to deliver "nutrition with a side of nature" to Lompoc Unified School District students who need it, and it's finding alternative ways to celebrate its 10th year serving the community.

"I've been pulling together photos of the last 10 years. That really brings back some good memories, just to remember some of the activities that we did in different times," Eisaguirre said. "It's been a strange year, but like everyone else we get together on Zoom. ... It's a great group of people."

### Highlight

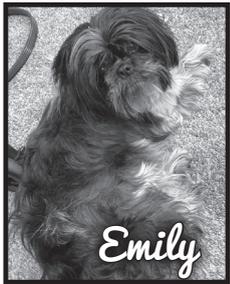
• The Central Coast Rescue Mission—an outreach ministry that provides hot meals, a residential recovery program, transitional housing, and vocational training and placement for men—announced Jan. 15 that Chris Rutledge was named director after serving as the interim director since August, and as program manager for three years before. Central Coast Rescue Mission has continued to serve vulnerable community members throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. ○

Staff Writer Malea Martin wrote this week's Spotlight. Send tips to [spotlight@santamariasun.com](mailto:spotlight@santamariasun.com).

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# DEATH NOTICES

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**LINDA MARLENE DIETRICH**, 67, of Atascadero passed away 1/8/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nicolay Funeral Home

**SIMONE BRUNSCHWILER**, 93, of Cambria passed away 1/8/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**ERIC KEITH GLIDDEN**, 54, of Santa Margarita passed away 1/9/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nicolay Funeral Home

**MICHAEL CHARLES MORRIS**, 62, of Paso Robles passed away 1/10/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nicolay Funeral Home

**MELECIO RENDON-SANTIAGO**, 87, of Paso Robles passed away 1/10/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nicolay Funeral Home

**JOSEPH ASSANTE**, 91, of Santa Maria passed away 1/10/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**MONYEEEN LEE BLACK**, 49, of Paso Robles passed away 1/11/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nicolay Funeral Home

**GERARD DOSER**, 99, of San Luis Obispo passed away 1/12/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**MARY HARRIS**, 77, of Los Osos passed away 1/12/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**MATTHEW SPURR**, 62, of Pismo Beach passed away 1/12/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**JACQUELYN SULLIVAN**, 80, of Grover Beach passed away 1/13/2021 arrangements with Marshall-Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**JOSEPH HAFLER**, 68, of Atascadero passed away 1/13/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**JERRY YOUNG**, 81, of Santa Maria passed away 1/13/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**ROBERT BEHNKE**, 90, of Paso Robles passed away 1/14/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**RONALD JULIAN EDAR**, 76, of Grover Beach passed away 1/14/2021 arrangements with Marshall-Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**ROBERT GIBSON**, 89, of San Luis Obispo passed away 1/14/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**KARLA KAY KNIGHT**, 81, of Santa Maria passed away 1/15/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**LORI ANN GIRARD**, 64, of Arroyo Grande passed away 1/15/2021 arrangements with Marshall-Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**NICOLE DEYOUNG**, 38, of San Luis Obispo passed away 1/15/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**VICTORINO PEREZ**, 76, of San Luis Obispo passed away 1/15/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**RUDOLF W. WOLFF**, 90, of Santa Maria passed away 1/16/2021 arrangements with Magner-Maloney Funeral Home & Crematory

**DAVID WEBB**, 80, of Santa Margarita passed away 1/16/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**PAUL GASPER DROUIN**, 90, of Santa Maria passed away 1/16/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**RICHARD DEANE CHENOWETH**, 80, of Santa Maria passed away 1/16/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**EVA RODRIGUEZ RAYAS**, 69, of Santa Maria passed away 1/16/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**JOE D. SILVA**, 89, of Santa Maria passed away 1/16/2021 arrangements with Magner-Maloney Funeral Home & Crematory

**STANFORD JUNIOR MCFADDEN**, 63, of Santa Maria passed away 1/16/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**GARY KRATOCHVIL**, 69, of Santa Margarita passed away 1/16/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**ROBERT "BOB" TRUE**, 98, of San Luis Obispo passed away 1/16/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

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**MARY E. CLABORN**, 81, of Santa Maria passed away 1/16/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**GINGER SUE KENNEDY**, 74, of San Luis Obispo passed away 1/16/2021 arrangements with Marshall-Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**IMOGENE HAMLIN**, 91, of Morro Bay passed away 1/17/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**SYLVIA THOMPSON**, 90, of San Luis Obispo passed away 1/17/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**SCOTT KREMKE**, 65, of Atascadero passed away 1/17/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**JOHN MANUEL JIMENEZ**, 79, of Santa Maria passed away 1/18/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**BEATRICE "BETTY" HOPE**, 100, of San Luis Obispo passed away 1/18/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**TINA HERRMANN**, 53, of California Valley passed away 1/19/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**DICK WHITTEN**, 93, of Pismo Beach passed away 1/19/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**CAROL RAMSEY**, 86, of Atascadero passed away 1/19/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**ELLIS JUMP**, 87, of San Luis Obispo passed away 1/19/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**ROY M RAWLINGS**, 76, of San Luis Obispo passed away 1/19/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

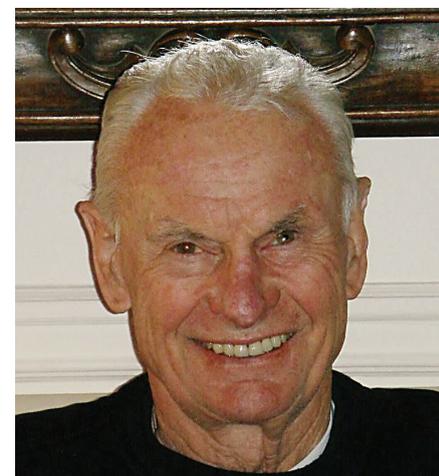
**JAMES MONTGOMERY**, 76, of Morro Bay passed away 1/20/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**JOAN MAE RATZLAFF**, 86, of Santa Maria passed away 1/20/2021 arrangements with Magner-Maloney Funeral Home & Crematory

## Gregory Clifford Welton

Greg Welton was born in Santa Ana, California in June of 1929 to Harold E. Welton and S. Gladys Welton. He grew up in Fullerton, CA on his family's farm and orange groves, and he turned into a 6 ft 4 in colossus sporting size 14 cleats when he played offensive and defensive tackle for the University of Redlands Bulldogs in the early 1950s. He volunteered for the U.S. Coast Guard after graduation and served on a destroyer escort in the Pacific. He married the love of his life, Ruth Marlene Coggan, on June 29, 1955, at "The Glass Church" Wayfarers Chapel on the Palos Verdes Peninsula. Greg and Marlene moved to Palos Verdes in the early 1960s where they built the family home and raised their four surviving children, Kathleen A. Welton, G. Christopher Welton (Bélinda Martinez Welton), Jeffrey S. Welton (Susan Heery Welton) and Drew A. Welton (Isabelle Welton).

Greg was one of the world's first computer salespersons. He successfully convinced avant garde business professionals to set aside an entire large room to install a single, bulky Burroughs computer with the power of today's handheld calculators. He later worked as an executive for Coldwell Banker as a commercial realtor before finishing his career as a stockbroker for Morgan Stanley. Greg and Marlene retired to Solvang, CA in the early 1990s. After Marlene passed away in 1995, Greg traveled the world, splitting



his time between Paris, France and Miami, FL before settling down in Palm Desert, CA in 2009.

A gifted athlete his entire life, Greg loved tricking his children to follow him down black diamond runs at Mammoth Mountain (they finally got their revenge during the winter of his 65th year: "Follow us, Dad, we know the best way down"). A lifelong runner, he ran and completed the Paris Marathon in 2000 at the age of 70. It was often said that Greg had only two speeds in life: Full Speed Ahead and Stop. And that is how he finished out his days in Palm Desert where he passed away in his sleep on January 24, 2021, at age 91.

In addition to his four children, Greg is survived by four granddaughters, three grandsons and one great granddaughter. His brother Donald E. Welton passed away in 2006. Greg leaves numerous friends and extended family members, including Dr. David Welton (Dr. Georgia Edwards) and his sisters and their son Nathan Welton as well as Ronald and Carolyn Beaton and their family.

To paraphrase Mark Antony in Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar": "Friends, family, countrymen, lend us your ears. We come not to bury Greg Welton, but to praise him...The good that men do lives after them." May he rest in peace.

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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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## What's a CIP?

Hint: It's something all city residents should care about

BY RON FINK

Some Lompoc City Council members might think that a CIP is what you do with a cool beverage, but that's not the case.

As a city service area grows, additional facilities and equipment are needed to provide citizens with an adequate level of service. The capital improvement program (CIP) is the long-range overarching management tool used to estimate the future needs of the city; usually this program is geared to span a 15-year growth period.

For example, in the early 1980s, that's more than 40 years ago, Lompoc saw a substantial growth period because the space shuttle program was being established at nearby Vandenberg Air Force Base. With that project came thousands of new workers, so housing and commercial growth occurred to accommodate their needs.

Two public safety facilities were renovated, and Fire Station 2 was constructed. One of the renovated facilities was the Police Department; because of budget cuts made by the City Council during construction, it was undersized on the day it opened. It remains so today, as every available square foot, including former closet spaces, are used for administrative, interview, and storage spaces.

Fire Station 2 was supposed to be a temporary facility; however, it seems to have become a permanent fixture on the north end of town near the library. At the time it was built, it was adequate, but as the build-out of their service area continued at a rapid pace and their calls for service increased, it soon became apparent that the station needed to be moved; but council members, with an apparent lack of vision, have not supported this need in the past.

Fire Station 1, in the old downtown area, was renovated in the late 1970s; however, age has not treated this building kindly. If an objective engineering assessment of the building condition

were made today, it would likely cost millions just to repair structural and electrical/mechanical system issues.

An important part of the CIP is the master facilities plan (MFP), which is a comprehensive document that lists all the capital improvements, specifically fixed assets such as fire/police stations, support buildings, power distribution systems, stormwater handling systems, and any other permanent improvement that a city would need if the growth envisioned by the general plan is realized.

The importance of the MFP is that it establishes a metric for the assessment of developer fees to cover the cost of additional city facilities and equipment that may be needed to support projected growth. In 2017, the total cost of the 174 MFP 15-year projects exceeded \$342 million.

In years past, the various City Council members have not clearly understood how to fund growth needs. They have consistently demanded that "developer fees" either be waived for some improvements or significantly reduced, believing the developers when they claim that "increased property and sales taxes will support your needs." Of course, this isn't the case and never has been.

Currently the city is experiencing stagnant growth. Some minor projects are being built; however, there has only been one 44-unit housing project started in the last decade. There are other much larger projects in the queue, but most have been there for well more than a decade with little progress. Besides, even if the current council were to increase development fees to support the master facilities plan, these projects would still pay the fees that were in place at the time they were originally approved.

So, why should you be interested in this subject? Suppose Fire Station 1 were to be closed because it was unsafe to occupy; that means that an emergency allocation would be needed to relocate the staff and their equipment to another temporary location while a project was developed to either repair or replace the station. Seismic upgrade costs are currently estimated to be more than \$4 million; to fully renovate the station would be substantially more expensive considering new building code requirements.

And if Fire Station 2 isn't relocated, it means that residents on the north and west ends of their district are underserved because the crew can't meet national response time standards. And any new construction or annexations would be irresponsible until the appropriate level of emergency services could be provided.

I know that many of you don't have much interest in how the city is run, but this is your town, and if you don't start caring about it, it will continue to deteriorate as you sit idly by and watch. ○

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

**WRITE NOW!** We want to know what you think about everything. Send your 250-word letter to Sun Letters, 2450 Skyway Drive, suite A, Santa Maria, CA 93455. You can also fax it (1-805-347-9889) or e-mail it ([letters@santamariasun.com](mailto:letters@santamariasun.com)). All letters must include a name, address, and phone number for verification purposes; may be edited for space or clarity; and will be posted to [santamariasun.com](http://santamariasun.com).

## LETTERS

### 'Where we are headed now is the wrong path'

Outgoing Secretary of State Mike Pompeo expressed his opinion on multiculturalism and was hammered with the "woke crowd" calling him everything but something good to eat. What's happening in our country is a division by ethnicity, color, and economic status. It's by design to separate us from our Americanism.

You can move to France, but you can never claim to be a Frenchman. Same goes for every other country on this planet. But if you come to America and pledge your allegiance to our country and flag, you are an American. It's the only country that was invented. It's the only country where the Constitution declares our rights are God given and government serves us, not the other way around.

President Theodore Roosevelt, one of the presidents honored at Mount Rushmore, plainly said that there is no room for a hyphenated American.

We are Americans first and foremost. This is the country that has fought wars to free other people from tyranny asking nothing in return. We are the country with the resources to respond to disaster wherever on the planet it occurs, the first there with the most to give and the last to leave.

We espouse individual freedom to pursue happiness, not guarantee it. We have a history of Americans who have succeeded and built public libraries, medical clinics, hospitals for children with diseases, pioneered space travel with a new breed of rocketry.

We are the only country to successfully put man on the moon six times and put landers on Mars seven times where everyone else has failed.

Now you want to crush a president who has not started a new war and brought men home from conflicts. Freed us from Middle East oil dependence. Destroyed the Islamic Caliphate. Created economic opportunity for Black communities, stopped the deluge of illegal immigrants that has been going on for decades.

Are you people serious? Can you look at freedom and progress and spit on our flag and our Constitution. We need a reckoning with where we have come from and where do we want to go. Where we are headed now is the wrong path.

Jan Lipski  
Vandenberg Village

**THIS MODERN WORLD**  
by TOM TOMORROW

**LIFE IN THE LIMINALVERSE**  
2019 WE WON AND THEREFORE GET TO DO WHATEVER WE WANT!  
2021 WE LOST SO YOU MUST LET US HAVE WHATEVER WE WANT!  
BECAUSE OF THE UNITY!

**THE SONG REMAINS THE SAME**  
JOE BIDEN IS COMPLETELY DISREGARDING THE WILL OF TRUMP VOTERS! WHY CAN'T DEMOCRATS RESPECT OUR FEELINGS--THE WAY WE WERE EXTREMELY GRACIOUS AND ACCOMMODATING TO THEM IN 2017?  
THIS IS DEFINITELY A THING THAT HAPPENED!

**THE INDIGNITY OF IT ALL**  
HOW DARE YOU ATTACK ME, PERSONALLY, IN THIS MANNER!  
THIS DIVISIVENESS WILL TEAR THE COUNTRY APART!

**THE QUEST FOR UNITY**  
FOLKS, WHITE SUPREMACY IS BAD!

**AN EVOLVING NARRATIVE**  
UNDER JOE BIDEN'S PRESIDENCY, A DEADLY PANDEMIC OF WHICH I HAVE ONLY RECENTLY BECOME AWARE IS COSTING FOUR THOUSAND AMERICAN LIVES EVERY DAY!  
WE ALSO HAVE RECORD JOB LOSSES AND A SKYROCKETING DEFICIT!  
COMING UP NEXT: HOW HAS HE MANAGED TO DO SO MUCH DAMAGE AFTER ONE WEEK IN OFFICE?

**THE IMPERSISTENCE OF MEMORY**  
IT IS TIME TO PUT JANUARY 6 BEHIND US, AND NEVER SPEAK OF THE MATTER AGAIN!  
INDEED! LET US NOT BICKER ABOUT WHO DID OR DID NOT INCITE A MURDEROUS MOB!  
WE MUST FOCUS ON THE REAL PROBLEM--WHICH IS OBVIOUSLY ANTIFA!

**LISTENING TO REAL AMERICA**  
WE TURN NOW TO A RANDOM AVERAGE CITIZEN IN FLORIDA! SIR, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE IMPENDING IMPEACHMENT TRIAL?  
IT'S VERY DIVISIVE, SEAN! DEMOCRATS SHOULD ADMIT TRUMP WON, AND ALSO MAKE JACK GIVE HIM BACK HIS TWITTER ACCOUNT!  
FOR UNITY!

Tom Tomorrow

# Vaccination nation?

What's up with COVID-19 vaccine distribution in this state? It would appear that nobody knows. Not Gov. Gavin Newsom, not the counties, not the general public—nobody.

According to Newsom, the federal government sends vaccine doses directly to county public health departments. The state, he said, doesn't have warehouses of vaccines ready to ship to counties. So, is the state involved at all in determining where the doses go?

From the Gavinator's Jan. 25 press conference, I couldn't say for sure. He's sort of long-winded and has a habit of saying a lot of words that have little meaning. According to the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department, the federal government allocates vaccines to the state, which in turn offers counties a set number of vaccines each week. So the state does have a hand in determining vaccine distribution?

Umm, maybe?

Newsom isn't being candid, and Public Health Director Dr. Van Do-Reynoso isn't really in the know about things that go on above her pay grade. The government seems to rely on for-profit pharmacies like CVS and Walgreens as better vaccine distributors than the amalgamation of private-public-nonprofit health care providers that we've managed to limp along with thus far. And those drug stores are in every community, right? Wrong.

Why don't we have the ability to get good data on vaccine distribution?

"Some [providers] are very small, some are very efficient getting data back in the system," Newsom said. "Some are very inefficient, because they see that as tertiary, not even secondary, to getting these things administered."

There's an answer for you. Hey guys, it's not us, it's the *small guys*.

Meanwhile people like Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham (R-San Luis Obispo) are eager to point the finger at Newsom's administration, which could do a better job of informing the public its meant to serve.

In reality, though, our health care system sucks. It isn't built to serve everyone, which is what we're now expecting it to do. The system is actually built to serve private citizens who have the dollars to be served by private, for-profit providers.

But the laws of supply and demand don't work in an industry expected to serve everyone, and low-income, underserved populations fall through the cracks. So we have a patchwork system of public agencies and nonprofits that attempt to fill those gaps. And that part of the system is underfunded because the people who it serves can't pay for the services it provides.

The system that actually serves the greater public lacks the infrastructure it needs to serve everyone because it wasn't designed to do so. And the private part of our health care system wasn't designed to discuss its business with the public. Our capitalist system—which, in reality, depends on government to fill in where capitalism fails—is ironically insistent that depending on government-funded services is a failure, not of the system itself, but of individuals within that system.

So here we are. In the middle of a national emergency, unable to do what needs to be done and playing the blame game. Guess what? The mess that COVID-19 revealed is everyone's fault. Because we built the system that's failing us and we insist on keeping it. ☐

The canary is sick of health care. Send comments to [canary@santamariasun.com](mailto:canary@santamariasun.com).



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# HOT STUFF

JAN. 28 – FEB. 4  
2021

**NOTE:** Most venues are canceling or postponing events due to concerns about the spread of COVID-19. Please check with venues to make sure that scheduled events are still, in fact, happening, and most of all, stay safe!

## SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY

### FIRST RULE OF WRITE CLUB

The Santa Maria Public Library hosts pickup dates for its Writing Club to-go packs on Thursday, Jan. 28; Friday, Jan. 29; and Saturday, Jan. 30. This take-home youth workshop is designed for aspiring writers and includes a journal and other materials. Each pack is free, but pre-registration is required at [engagedpatrons.org](http://engagedpatrons.org). Call (805) 925-0994 or email [libraryyouth@cityofsantamaria.org](mailto:libraryyouth@cityofsantamaria.org) for more info. The library is located at 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

—Caleb Wiseblood

FILE PHOTO BY ZAC EZZONE

## 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 Elverhoj Way, Solvang, 805-686-1211.

**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).

**NEW PERSPECTIVES** A collection of paintings by the gallery's newest artists. **Feb. 1-March 1** Gallery Los Olivos, 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos, 805-688-7517, [gallerylosolivos.com](http://gallerylosolivos.com).

**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).

**WINTER SALON: ANNUAL GROUP SHOW** Over 50 artists display all fine art mediums hung floor to ceiling, "salon style". Features all sizes, all subjects, framed, unframed, etc. Through Jan. 31 [GalleryLosOlivos.com](http://GalleryLosOlivos.com). Gallery Los Olivos, 2920 Grand Ave., 805-688-7517.

### 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).

**SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY: BOOK CLUB OVER THE PHONE** A teleconference book discussion group, meets on the first Tuesday of each month. For more information email [jgaytan@cityofsantamaria.org](mailto:jgaytan@cityofsantamaria.org) First Tuesday of every month, 2-3 p.m. 805-925-0994. [cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library](http://cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library). SM Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

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

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

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

### SAN LUIS OBISPO

**CALL FOR ARTISTS: ART CENTRAL'S VIRTUAL GALLERY** Most Fridays, Art Central publishes a "Virtual Gallery" and is looking for more artwork to include. Please email us your artwork so we can continue to encourage, support, and inspire the local art community.

Attach your image, name, title, medium, size and any inspiring words you would like to share. Fridays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. through May 28 Free. 805-747-4200. [artcentralslo.wordpress.com/](http://artcentralslo.wordpress.com/)

**SUBMIT YOUR EVENTS**

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).

blog/. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**CAMBRIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS: VIRTUAL EXHIBIT WITH PLEIN AIR PAINTERS** A call for artists. Contact the Gallery Director for questions ([gallery@cambriacenterforthearts.org](mailto:gallery@cambriacenterforthearts.org)). Through Feb. 28 Free; entry fees vary. 805-434-7060. Online, See website.

**CAMBRIA FILM FESTIVAL** A fully virtual festival featuring independent feature films and shorts from around the world, all with a focus on romance and the complexities of love. Full details on website. **Feb. 3, Feb. 4, Feb. 5 and Feb. 6** Varies. 805-927-8190. [cambriafilmfestival.com](http://cambriafilmfestival.com). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**LABORATORY VII: CARLOS MARTIEL** New York-based, Cuban born performance artist Carlos Martiel will talk about his work, as part of an ongoing series of artist talks with Black identified artists. **Jan. 28**, 5-6:30 p.m. Free. 805-546-3201. [cuesta.edu](http://cuesta.edu). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**PAINTING WITH PAPER ART WORKSHOP** Ever wondered what to do with left over birthday cards, old textbooks, event tickets and outdated wrapping paper? Before you throw them into the recycle, why not take an art workshop from the safety of your own home? **Jan. 29-30**, 10-11:30 a.m. \$45 to \$50. 805-772-2504. [artcentermorrobay.org](http://artcentermorrobay.org). Online, See website.

**PANEL DISCUSSION: GREASE, WATER, AND STONE** Join SLOMA for a lively panel discussion with printmakers Steve Andrews, Conrad Schwable, and Jeff Sipple to discuss his Gray Wing exhibition, "Grease, Water, and Stone: An Ocean Works Retrospective." The exhibition features lithographs created by Ocean Works Press between 1979 and 1983. Through Feb. 28, noon Free. 805-543-8562. [slo.ma.org/panel-discussion-ocean-works/](http://slo.ma.org/panel-discussion-ocean-works/). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**ROSEY 'N' BARB: STILL AT IT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS** Barbara and Robert "Rosey" Rosenthal, award-winning printmakers, have been art partners since 1980. For this unique show, Barbara is showing her rich, landscape paintings and Rosey his colorful, gouache paintings. Mondays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. through

March 29 Free. 805-747-4200. [artcentralartsupply.com](http://artcentralartsupply.com). Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

**SAN LUIS OBISPO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL 2021** Stream entertaining musicals, comedies, dramas, and documentaries that explore Jewish life around the world. Also features filmmaker conversations and other free live-stream events each week. **Jan. 28** \$10-\$50. 805-426-5465. [slojff.com/](http://slojff.com/). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**SLOPE PAINTS THE SERENE MAGIC OF SANTA RITA RANCH: A VIRTUAL ART EXHIBIT** SLOPE painters celebrate with The Land Conservancy of SLO their acquisition of the incredible Santa Rita Ranch, a 1715-acre jewel at the top of Highway 46 West between the Pacific Ocean and Templeton. The Land Conservancy will receive a portion of art sale proceeds. **Jan. 28-Feb. 28**, 6-midnight Free. 805-544-9096. [slope-painters.com](http://slope-painters.com). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**VIRTUAL ART AFTER DARK** Tune into Facebook to see what local artists are up to. First Friday of every month Free. [facebook.com/artsobispo](http://facebook.com/artsobispo). Downtown SLO, Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo.

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

**VIRTUAL OPEN STUDIOS ART TOUR** Visit ARTS Obispo's Facebook page to view works from several local artists and artisans. Free. [facebook.com/artsobispo](http://facebook.com/artsobispo). Downtown SLO, Higuera Street, 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 [slo.makerspace.com/](http://slo.makerspace.com/). SLOMakerSpace, 81 Higuera, suite 160, San Luis Obispo, 805-225-4783.

### NORTH SLO COUNTY

**SLOPE PAINTS TO PRESERVE** Please stop by to see this exhibit of stunning originals and prints by San Luis Outdoor Painters for the Environment (SLOPE), featuring some of our region's top landscape artists, who use their art to raise awareness, funding, and education for the Central Coast's treasured open spaces. Wednesdays-Sundays, 12-8:45 p.m. through Feb. 28 Free. 805-238-9800. [slope-painters.com/](http://slope-painters.com/). Studios on the Park, 1130 Pine St., Paso Robles.

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

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**NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY**

**CALL FOR ARTISTS: FLOWER POWER** This exhibition will embrace the diversity of florals through two-dimensional and three-dimensional interpretations. Artists are invited to submit up to three 2-D (wall-hung) artworks in all media and 3-D: vases (up to three) and one Ikebana arrangement. Open to MBAA members and non-members. Through Feb. 9 Entry fees vary; see entry forms. 805-772-2504. [artcentermorrobay.org/index.php/upcoming-exhibits/](http://artcentermorrobay.org/index.php/upcoming-exhibits/). Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

**CULTURE & LIFESTYLE**

**LOMPOC/VANDENBERG**

**ELEVATE LOMPOC AND BIRRIA BOYZ SALE** Features a variety of discounts and special offers. Call or visit site for more details. **Jan. 30**, 8 a.m.-10 p.m. 805-819-0077. [elevatelompoc.com](http://elevatelompoc.com). Elevate Lompoc, 118 South H St., Lompoc.

**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](http://partnersincaring.org). Santa Maria, Citywide.  
**DIY PLAYDOH PACK: SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY** Register to pick up a DIY Playdoh Pack which will contain everything you need to make your own dough. Making playdoh from scratch provides an introduction to science and math concepts. Registration is required. **Jan. 28, Jan. 29 and Jan. 30** Free. 805-925-0994. [engagedpatrons.org](http://engagedpatrons.org). SM Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

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

**LEGO PACK PROGRAM: SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY** SMPL is offering a take-home Lego program for children aged 6 to 17. Registration required. **Jan. 30, Feb. 1, Feb. 2, Feb. 3, Feb. 4, Feb. 5 and Feb. 6** Free. 805-925-0994. [engagedpatrons.org](http://engagedpatrons.org). SM Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**MY HEART IS LIKE A ZOO PACK: SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY** Register to pick up a craft pack to design animals from Michael Hall's 'My Heart is Like a Zoo'. Registrants will be invited to join our weekly story time live (virtual) for a reading of the book on Feb. 3. Registration begins Jan. 30. **Jan. 30, Feb. 1, Feb. 2, Feb. 3, Feb. 4, Feb. 5 and Feb. 6** Free. 805-925-0994. [engagedpatrons.org](http://engagedpatrons.org). Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**STORY TIME LIVE FOR FAMILIES: VIRTUAL EVENT FROM SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY** Join us for a live story time for families; bilingual on alternating weeks. Includes songs, finger plays, and a few stories. Tune in for a fun story time the whole family will enjoy. Registration is required for a Zoom link. Wednesdays, 4-4:30 p.m. through Feb. 24 Free. 805-925-0994. [engagedpatrons.org](http://engagedpatrons.org). Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**VALENTINE'S DAY CRAFT KITS FOR ADULTS: ORCUTT LIBRARY** The Orcutt Library will have a limited number of Craft Kits for adults. Each kit includes supplies to make two duct tape rose writing pens. **Feb. 1, Feb. 2, Feb. 3, Feb. 4, Feb. 5 and Feb. 6** 805-925-0994. [cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library](http://cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library). Orcutt Library, 175 S. Broadway, Orcutt.

**VALENTINE'S DAY GRAB-AND-GO BOOK BAGS WITH CRAFT KIT FOR ADULTS: SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY** The Library will have a limited number of Valentine's Day themed grab bags for adults available for pick up at the sidewalk service pick-up window. **Feb. 1, Feb. 2, Feb. 3, Feb. 4, Feb. 5 and Feb. 6** [cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library](http://cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library). SM Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-925-0994.

**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, [unwindsantamaria.com](http://unwindsantamaria.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](http://yoga4mankind.org). Yoga for Mankind, 130 N Broadway, suite B, Orcutt.

**YOUTH ART PACKS: SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY** Register to pick up an art pack to create your



**POP-UP PREVIEW**

*The Equality Mural Project is hosting a pop-up art gallery at Z Villages in Atascadero through the end of February. This exhibition highlights renderings of 10 murals proposed to be featured throughout the city later this year. Donations are currently being accepted to help fund the project. Visit [equalitymuralproject.com](http://equalitymuralproject.com) to find out more. The pop-up gallery is located at 6100 El Camino Real, suite B, Atascadero.*

—C.W.

own masterpiece at home. Art packs include projects that help students learn basic principles of art. These packs are geared towards ages 6 to 12. Registration begins Feb. 6. **Feb. 6 and Feb. 7** Free. 805-925-0994. [engagedpatrons.org](http://engagedpatrons.org). Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY**

**WEEKLY DROWNING RESCUE COURSES** Facility advertised as open and safe. Give the office a call to register over the phone. Mondays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Members \$130; Non-members \$160. 805-481-6399. 5 Cities Swim School, 425 Traffic Way, Arroyo Grande, [5citysswimschool.com](http://5citysswimschool.com).

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

**2021 WELLNESS KICKOFF (ONLINE)** Start the new year off on a positive note by taking some time to focus on health and self-care at the 2021 Wellness Kickoff. Central Coast residents are invited to enjoy live music, a mindfulness activity, and the chance to win wellness-themed prizes. **Jan. 28**, 4 p.m. Free. 805-541-9005. [support.t-mha.org](http://support.t-mha.org). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**ARE BOARDS BROKEN? DISCUSSION ON NONPROFIT GOVERNANCE MODELS** Join this study session and explore alternatives to the traditional non-profit board governance model. Optional reading materials will be provided prior to the session. **Feb. 4**, 12:30-1:45 p.m. \$7.50. [spokesfor nonprofits.org](http://spokesfor nonprofits.org). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**KIDS YOGA AT THE JACK HOUSE** Bring the kids outside for sunshine, yoga, and fun. Offered every Tues. and Thurs. afternoon by SLO Yoga Center at the Jack House and Gardens. Ages 3 to 10 are welcome. Tuesdays, Thursdays, 3:30-4:30 p.m. through March 30 \$5. 805-598-7100. [sloyogacenter.com/schedule](http://sloyogacenter.com/schedule). The Jack House, 536 Marsh St., San Luis Obispo.

**LITERACY FOR LIFE TUTOR TRAINING** Literacy For Life has a SLO countywide need for tutors. Work one-on-one with non-literate adults learning to read, write, and speak English. Tutors must attend both sessions. If you are interested but need help using Zoom, please email [assistant@literacyforlifelo.org](mailto:assistant@literacyforlifelo.org). **Jan. 30**, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Free. 805-541-4219. [literacyforlifelo.org/become-a-tutor.php](http://literacyforlifelo.org/become-a-tutor.php). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**UNVEILING OUR BODY'S WISDOM: MOVEMENT CLASS SERIES** An 8-week series to explore with motion, color, words, and breath. Participants dive deep into themselves, connect to their inner power, and create the language and the space for their bodies to express their wisdom, their stories. Thursdays, 5-6:30 p.m. through March 4 \$108 for series. 707-266-8945. [athasomatics.org](http://athasomatics.org). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

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**WINTER SHRUB DISCOVERY: IDENTIFICATION AND PROPAGATION WORKSHOP** Join SLOBG for this special Zoom workshop about winter shrubs. Learn to identify winter shrubs and grow your own with master arborist Rodney Thurman in a two part workshop consisting of an online class about native shrubs followed by an interactive propagation session. **Jan. 30-31**, 1-3 p.m. \$30 members; \$35 nonmembers. 805-541-1400. [slobg.org](http://slobg.org). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID (ONLINE)** Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHPA) is a comprehensive, online training that teaches educators, family members, and caregivers (ages 18 and older) to approach, assess, and assist a young person with a mental health challenge or substance use concern. **Jan. 30**, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Free.

978-697-0629. [bethedifference.org](http://bethedifference.org). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**FOOD & DRINK**

**SANTA YNEZ VALLEY**

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

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

**LOMPOC/VANDENBERG**

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

**SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS**

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

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

**SUPER BOWL SUNDAY STAY-AT-HOME BARBECUE FUNDRAISER** Whip up your favorite barbecue recipe from home and please donate to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. High School Memorial Scholarship Fund, online or by mailing a check to P.O. Box 1693, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406. **Feb. 7** Donations accepted. [mlkfund.org](http://mlkfund.org). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**WINEMAKER LIBRARY VERTICAL VIRTUAL TASTING** Releasing two special library verticals with an extra discount on top, and free shipping, this month only. **Feb. 3**, 4-5 p.m. \$180-\$243. 805-237-1245. [shop.mcpricemyers.com/](http://shop.mcpricemyers.com/). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**NORTH SLO COUNTY**

**WEDNESDAYS AROUND THE WORLD: INDIA** Enjoy an elevated dining experience and savor the spices of India. The cuisine of India is one of the world's most diverse cuisines, characterized by its sophisticated and subtle use of the many spices, vegetables, grains, and fruits grown across India. **Feb. 3**, 6-9 p.m. \$96-\$120. 805-239-1730, Ext 111. [my805tix.com](http://my805tix.com). Cass Winery And Vineyard, 7350 Linne Rd., Paso Robles.

**MUSIC**

**SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS**

**SANTA MARIA PHILHARMONIC: FIRST FRIDAYS AT FOUR** Featuring musicians from the Santa Maria Philharmonic, this monthly series of musical adventures are recorded in local settings and offered free to the public. First Friday of every month Free. [smphilharmonic.org](http://smphilharmonic.org). Soundcloud (Santa Maria Philharmonic), Online, Santa Maria.

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

**W. TERENCE SPILLER: PIANO RECITAL (VIRTUAL)** Pianist and Cal Poly Music Professor W. Terrence Spiller will give a virtual recital. On demand through Feb. 7. **Jan. 29-Feb. 7**, 7:30 p.m. \$5 donation. [pacsl.org](http://pacsl.org). Performing Arts Center, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 756-4849. ○



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### Arts Briefs

#### Wildling Museum presents Nocturnes and Envisioning the Night Sky: A Conversation with Nathan Huff and Nathan Vonk

On Feb. 10, the Wildling Museum of Art and Nature in Solvang will host a virtual panel and discussion with artist Nathan Huff (pictured right) and art gallery owner Nathan Vonk (pictured below), titled *Nocturnes and Envisioning the Night Sky*. Huff and Vonk will take part in a live conversation from 4 to 5 p.m. via Zoom, to explore topics regarding the history of nocturne painting and the ways in which different artists choose to depict the night sky in their works. Admission to join the Zoom meeting is free, but a donation of \$5 is encouraged.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WILDLING MUSEUM OF ART AND NATURE



Huff's own nocturne pieces were showcased in the Wildling Museum's exhibition, *Starry Nights: Visions of the Night Sky*. A prolific painter and sculptor, Huff earned his bachelor's degree in art education from Azusa Pacific University in 2003 and his master's degree in drawing and painting from CSU Long Beach in 2010. Some of his artworks are included in the permanent collections of the Culver Museum, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, the Hilbert Museum of California Art, and other venues. Huff currently teaches art classes in Santa Barbara, as an associate professor at Westmont College.

Vonk is the owner of Sullivan Goss: An American Gallery in Santa Barbara, where he oversees sales and acquisitions and advises clients on building their own art collections. The gallery typically hosts about 20 exhibitions a year, including solo shows for contemporary or historic artists as well as curated thematic exhibits. Vonk became passionate about art

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WILDLING MUSEUM OF ART AND NATURE



museums during weekend train trips to various museums in London, while living in Brighton, England, during grad school.

Call (805) 688-1082 or visit [wildlingmuseum.org](http://wildlingmuseum.org) to find out more about the upcoming Zoom program. The Wildling Museum of Art and Nature is located at 1511 Mission Drive, unit B, Solvang.

#### Santa Maria Public Library offers Youth Art Packs to students

Starting on Feb. 6, students grades six through 12 can sign up online to receive the Santa Maria Public Library's Youth Art Pack for free, by visiting [engagedpatrons.org](http://engagedpatrons.org). The pickup date for this take-home project is Feb. 13 at the library. Topics of this beginners' workshop cover various principles of art.

Although the Youth Art Pack is free, pre-registration is required. Call (805) 925-0994 or email [libraryyouth@cityofsantamaria.org](mailto:libraryyouth@cityofsantamaria.org) for more info. The Santa Maria Public Library is located at 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria. ○

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

# Resilient reflections

Gallery Los Olivos' featured artist Karen McGaw paints new landscapes following shoulder surgery

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

**Editor's note:** This is the third and final installment in a series profiling the three featured artists of *New Perspectives*, a biennial group exhibition at Gallery Los Olivos.

Over the spring and summer of 2020, Karen McGaw found solace in three hobbies to combat pandemic-induced monotony: painting, tennis, and bike riding. Unfortunately for her, the latter activity ended up sabotaging the other two.

"I had a bike mishap in August that led to surgery, and I was unable to paint for three months," said McGaw, who landed badly on her right shoulder during the accident, injuring her rotator cuff. "After the surgery, I was in a sling for six weeks. I had no idea it would change my life so drastically for months to come."

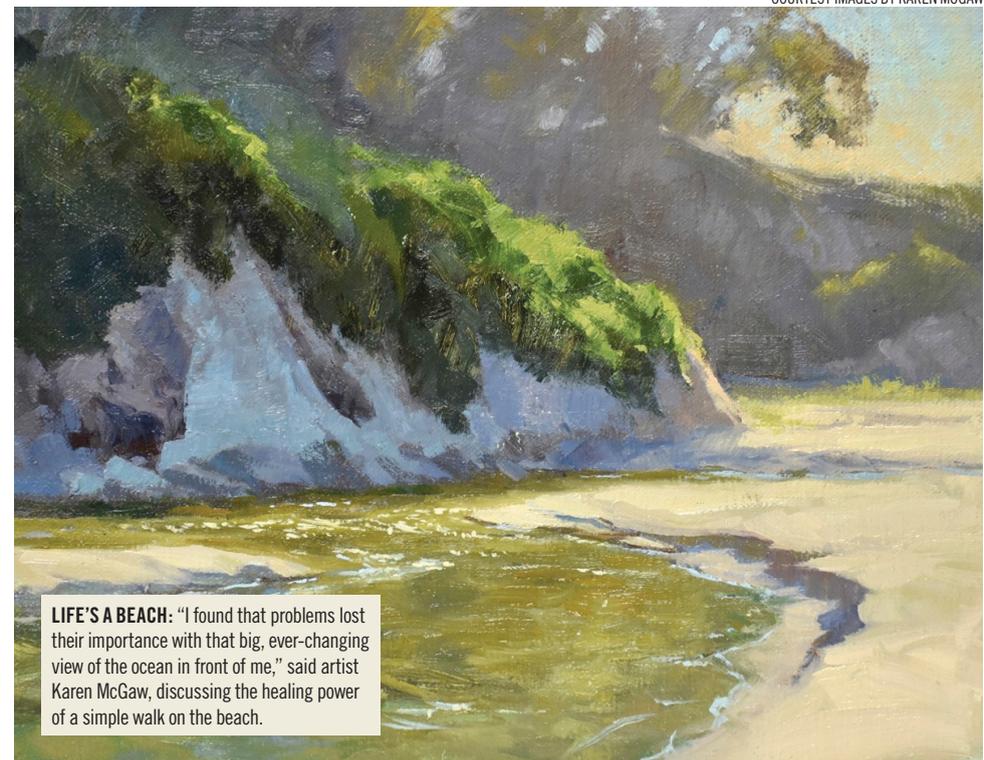
But autumn of last year marked a glorious return to painting for McGaw, who primarily used to paint most of her vivid landscapes in watercolor. Her most recent works however, many of which are set to be showcased in Gallery Los Olivos' next group exhibition, are oil paintings.

"When I'm working in oils, I can paint at a slower pace and stop when I need to without being critical to the painting," said McGaw, who still aimed to capture certain attributes of her previous watercolor works within her new pieces.

"I love the fluid transparency of watercolors, and I'm trying to achieve the same feeling and effect in the oil paintings," McGaw said.

In the upcoming Los Olivos exhibit, *New Perspectives*, McGaw's paintings will be displayed alongside the exhibit's other two featured artists, Jim Tyler and Neil Andersson. Although all three artists are local to the Central Coast, they haven't been able to congregate much socially, outside of coordinating the exhibit together (mainly virtually or through email), something McGaw hopes will change as soon as the ongoing pandemic subsides.

"I don't know Jim or Neil very well, but I look



**LIFE'S A BEACH:** "I found that problems lost their importance with that big, ever-changing view of the ocean in front of me," said artist Karen McGaw, discussing the healing power of a simple walk on the beach.

forward to a time when we can paint together in the future," McGaw said. "I admire their work and really look forward to our show together."

Most of McGaw's landscapes in the trio exhibit, which is scheduled to open on Feb. 4, depict destinations in Santa Barbara and embody a running theme of tranquility.

"I've chosen local scenes that give me a feeling of peace and quiet retreat in our time of COVID isolation," McGaw said. "Being a Santa Barbara native, these are also scenes that I know very well."

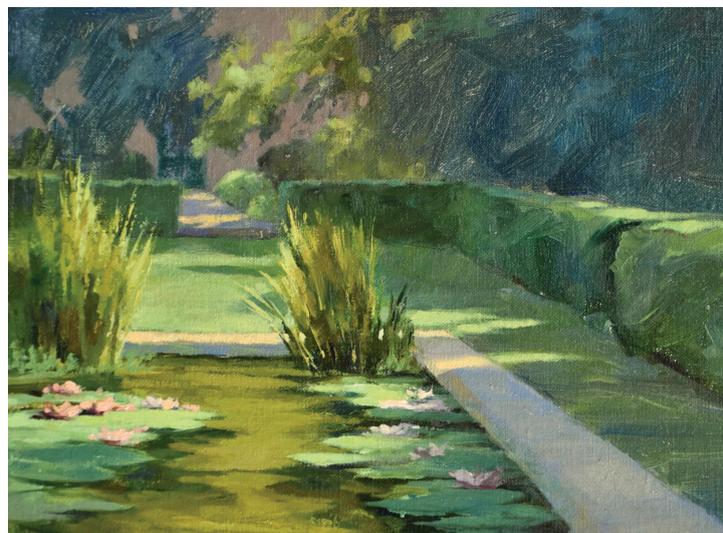
"All these places were painted on location, another practice I enjoy to survive this time of isolation," McGaw added.

Two of McGaw's featured paintings in the show capture the pond and water lilies that inhabit the courtyard area of the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, which she called "a peaceful, reflective place to paint."

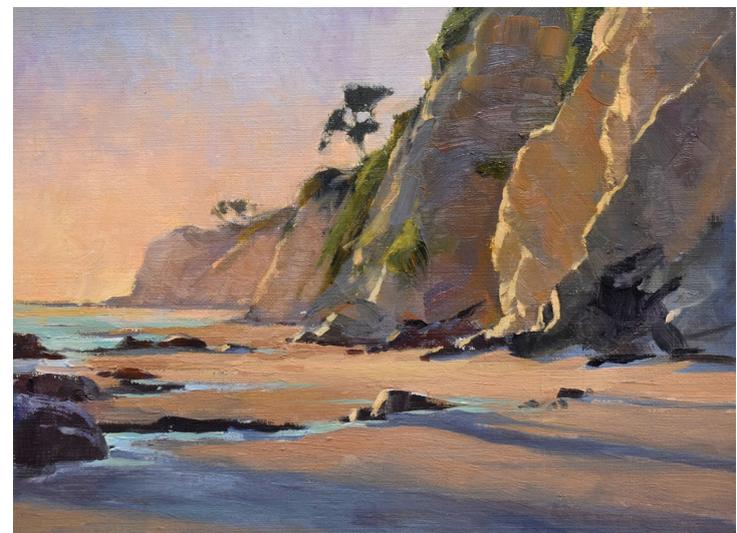
McGaw said she admires the academy's European vibe, especially in light of having to cancel a trip to Limoux, France, last year due to the pandemic.

"It has become a home away from home with many friends, beautiful scenery to paint, and wonderful food," McGaw said of the region she's frequently traveled to on painting expeditions and other memorable occasions over the past two decades.

McGaw's academy paintings particularly stand



**SIGHTS AND SOUNDS:** "I've chosen local scenes that give me a feeling of peace and quiet retreat in our time of COVID isolation," said oil painter Karen McGaw, who painted this piece on location at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara.



**SERENE SETTING:** "The coastal scenes have always been my places to go to reflect, a habit I started in high school to help get through tough times," artist Karen McGaw said, tracing her love of the beach to her teen years.

#### Trinity and beyond

Gallery Los Olivos presents its biennial showcase, *New Perspectives*, which is scheduled to open on Feb. 4 and run through March 1. The gallery is located at 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos. Call (805) 688-7517 or visit [gallerylosolivos.com](http://gallerylosolivos.com) for more details on this trio exhibit. For more info on one of the show's three featured artists, Karen McGaw, visit [mclean-mcgaw.com](http://mclean-mcgaw.com).

out as outliers when compared to the majority of her oil pieces in the show, which are primarily coastal landscapes and seascapes depicting Santa Barbara County beaches.

"The coastal scenes have always been my places to go to reflect, a habit I started in high school to help get through tough times," McGaw said, tracing her appreciation of living so close to the coast to her youth. "My solo beach visits started when I was able to drive. I had a dog who loved the beach, so walking him at the beach became a weekly habit."

"I found that I always came home uplifted and feeling good about everything," she continued. "Walking on the beach allowed me time to contemplate. I found that problems lost their importance with that big, ever-changing view of the ocean in front of me." ○

*Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood is down by the seaside at [cwiseblood@santamariasun.com](mailto:cwiseblood@santamariasun.com).*

PHOTO COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES

# In search of home

**C**o-written and directed by Paul Greengrass (*The Bourne Supremacy*, *Green Zone*, *Captain Phillips*) and based on Paulette Jiles' 2016 novel, the story follows Capt. Jefferson Kyle Kidd (Tom Hanks), a Civil War veteran who in 1870 travels through Northern Texas reading the news to paying audiences. As he's traveling to a new town, he comes upon a young orphaned girl (Helena Zengel), who as a child was kidnapped and raised by the Kiowa as one of their own. With her Kiowa family dead, no English speaking ability, and nowhere to go, Kidd reluctantly agrees to take her to her aunt and uncle 400 miles away, sending the two on a harrowing adventure. (118 min.)

**Glen:** I love Westerns, and this one is in some ways very straightforward but in other ways very nuanced. On the surface, it's the story of evading danger and trying to get a little girl to her family, but just under the surface is America's ugly stain of racism, our genocide of Native Americans, and the still-fresh wound between Northerners and Southerners. All these ideas churn through the story in subtle ways, giving it a surprising depth. Ultimately, it's about a search for a place to call home for two people who have lost everything and everyone that mattered to them. Johanna, as Kidd comes to call the little girl, resists being returned to her white family, who she has no memory of. She's truly alone. Kidd lives an itinerant life, resigned to his solitude as he makes his way from town to town. Unable to communicate with one another, Kidd and Johanna learn to know

each other through their actions, and their evolving relationship makes for compelling viewing. They turn out to be a good team,

coming to each other's rescue as they encounter criminals, despots, Indians, and the harsh conditions of the wilderness they traverse in an episodic adventure. This is the best new Western since *The Sister Brothers* (2018), *Hostiles* (2017), and *In a Valley of Violence* (2016). If you like Westerns, it's worth the \$19.99 to stream.

**Anna:** The danger Kidd and Johanna face together draws them into a tight bond; both are protective of each other. While we know Johanna is alone and Kidd's work is inherently lonely, we don't immediately get his backstory except for a mention of a wife back home. Hanks is so good here; he's stoic and fatherly and all too aware of the dangers they face on the road. I haven't seen Helena Zengel in anything before, but she was flat-out impressive, especially in a part where language can't be her form of communication. When three men try to buy Johanna from Kidd and then chase them down after a scuffle with the authorities, things look dire for the two, but Johanna's quick thinking ends up saving them. It's nail-biting moments mixed with tenderness as the two leads get to know and care about each other. It's a Western, but it isn't just gun battles and horses, there is a truly great story here. I loved it.

**Glen:** Hanks does play a terrific everyman. He just exudes decency. His Capt. Kidd is a man who's seen terrible things, and you get the feeling the only reason he was fighting for the South instead of the North was geography. Unlike the three desperados you mentioned, who are also Civil War

### NEWS OF THE WORLD

What's it rated? **PG-13**  
 What's it worth, Anna? **Full price**  
 What's it worth, Glen? **Full price**  
 Where's it showing? **On demand**

vets from the South, Kidd hasn't let all the horrors he's seen diminish his morality. And you're right about Zengel. She communicates volumes. There's clear intelligence behind those eyes. It's amazing to watch her spin her emotions on a dime, going from frightened to fierce, from curious to defiant. Director Greengrass and his cinematographer, Dariusz Wolski (*Crimson Tide*, *Dark City*, *Prometheus*, *The Martian*), find another character in the desert landscape where the film was shot. Both beautiful and unforgiving, the New Mexico setting is a good stand-in for Texas. The story is very sentimental, and the ending is predictable, but after a year in quarantine, I'm in the mood for things to work out. This Hollywood ending is entirely welcome.

**Anna:** Same here. I need the feel-good stuff wherever I can get it. While I would have loved to have seen this on the big screen—some of the action scenes and a particularly crazy dust storm would have shined bright—I'm just happy to have new content and Hollywood budgets to create them. Hanks is always charming, and something about his nature screams that he's a



**ON THE ROAD:** Kidnaped by the Kiowa as a small child, Johanna (Helena Zengel) is being escorted home to the white family she doesn't remember by Civil War veteran Capt. Jefferson Kyle Kidd (Tom Hanks), in the episodic Western *News of the World*, screening on demand.

decent and kind person. I'll watch him be a good guy all day long. In fact, when we rented this on demand, we had 24 hours to watch the film, so we watched it two days in a row, and I'd watch it again without hesitation. I rooted for the pair both times, cried both times, and loved the ending both times. Director Greengrass makes some pretty compelling films—some of the *Bourne* films and *Captain Phillips*. The guy knows how to keep you on your toes. While this film may be rooted in the relationship between the two, there's no shortage of action and adventure. It's definitely worth the \$20 price tag. ○

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

## TV & Film Reviews

### SEARCH PARTY

What's it rated? **TV-MA**  
 When? **2016-present**  
 Where's it showing? **HBO Max**

When former college classmate Chantal (Clare McNulty) goes missing, Dori Seif (Alia Shawkat) soon becomes obsessed and drags her boyfriend, Drew (John Reynolds), and best friends Portia (Meredith Hagner) and Elliot (John Early) into an increasingly ludicrous and dangerous situation as they try to hunt down what happened to Chantal. Now in its fourth season, *Search Party* follows the four self-absorbed 20-somethings through the search, a murder, a trial, and a kidnapping.

The group is needy, self-obsessed, and foolish all at the same time—but somehow you're still rooting for them. Shawkat is fantastic as the lead, a lost woman who doesn't know what her next step in life should be living with a lot of what-ifs and if-onlys. The dark comedy is a wild ride through a whole lot of poor decision-making and insufferable self-absorption, and it takes some pretty crazy turns I absolutely wasn't expecting, especially in this latest season.

The characters may drive you nuts, but I can't stop



PHOTO COURTESY OF JAX MEDIA

**INSUFFERABLE:** Self-absorbed friends (left to right) Portia (Meredith Hagner), Drew (John Reynolds), Dori (Alia Shawkat), Julian (Brandon Micheal Hall), and Elliot (John Early) set off to discover what happened to a missing college acquaintance, in the TV series *Search Party*, screening on HBO Max.

watching these four in train wreck after train wreck. With episodes only 24 minutes long, you can move through this pretty quickly, and HBO is releasing new episodes three at a time. (40 24-min. episodes)

—Anna

### THE LIE

What's it rated? **R**  
 When? **2018**  
 Where's it showing? **Amazon Prime**

Writer-director Veena Sud (*The Salted Sea*) helms this crime drama about a family torn apart by a tragedy. After Kayla (Joey King) kills her best friend, Britney (Devery Jacobs), her father, Jay (Peter Sarsgaard), and mother, Rebecca (Mireille Enos), now face the impossible situation of protecting their daughter or turning her in.

Based on the 2015 German film *We Monsters*, *The Lie* premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2018 but only found distribution in 2020 when Amazon Studios picked it up. Something of a psychological thriller, the story follows Jay and Rebecca as they struggle to protect Kayla, as Britney's father, Sam (Cas Anvar), becomes increasingly suspicious that Kayla had something to do with his daughter's disappearance.

A third-act twist sets up a dramatic conclusion, and while the film has its merits, it all feels rather forced. I can see why it took so long to reach an audience. Still, if you're a fan of crime dramas and B movies, it's fun to watch Jay and Rebecca devolve into desperate



PHOTO COURTESY OF BLUMHOUSE PRODUCTIONS

**LIARS:** After killing her best friend, Kayla (Joey King, center) and her parents, Jay (Peter Sarsgaard) and Rebecca (Mireille Enos), work to cover up the crime, in *The Lie*, available through Amazon Prime.

people willing to trade their morality for their daughter's freedom. (97 min.) ○

—Glen



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## Kindred kitchens

S.Y. Kitchen expands takeout menu while sister restaurant, Nella Kitchen and Bar, temporarily closes

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

Somewhere between the realms of pizza and focaccia, wishful cravings became reality in the form of pinsa—one of Nella Kitchen and Bar’s signature Italian dishes. Described as a reinterpretation of an ancient recipe, the main characteristic that sets this Roman-style pizza apart from traditional pizza is its lightness.

“Pinsa comes from the Latin ‘pinsera,’ meaning to push the dough by hand,” Santa Ynez Valley local Dario Dell’Anno told the *Sun*. “It is a fluffier, more airy—for lack of a better term—dough with a crispy texture on the outside and incredible softness and lightness on the inside.”

Dell’Anno is the general manager of both Nella Kitchen and Bar (established in 2020) and its sister restaurant about 5 miles to the east, S.Y. Kitchen (established in 2013). Although Nella celebrated a soft opening (for outdoor dining) in August of last year, the Los Olivos eatery recently closed its doors to gear up for a proper grand opening sometime later this year, once state and local guidelines allow on-site dining to resume.

But Nella Kitchen and Bar was originally supposed to open nearly a year ago, Dell’Anno explained, when an unprecedented crisis made it an impossibility.

“Plans for the new restaurant actually began in December of 2019, and we were planning on a March 2020 opening,” Dell’Anno said. “COVID obviously changed those opening plans. We didn’t want to open Nella in any capacity until outdoor dining was allowed.”

“We were finally able to open in late summer of 2020, in a limited capacity, but weren’t able to do a true ‘grand opening’ before this recent shutdown closed the new restaurant to diners, once again,” Dell’Anno added.

While on-site dining is also currently suspended at S.Y. Kitchen in Santa Ynez, the restaurant will remain open for takeout options, and it recently updated its menu.

“We just expanded the to-go menu offerings by adding a few more entrees and salads, and launching lunch service in addition to takeout dinner service,” Dell’Anno said, discussing S.Y. Kitchen’s “online market” platform.

Through this feature on S.Y. Kitchen’s website, guests can preorder a variety of takeout options for pickup at the restaurant. Among the featured



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRI BURKETT



**PINSA MY HEART:** “Pinsa comes from the Latin ‘pinsera,’ meaning to push the dough by hand,” said Dario Dell’Anno, general manager of both S.Y. Kitchen and Nella Kitchen and Bar. “It is a fluffier, more airy—for lack of a better term—dough with a crispy texture on the outside and incredible softness and lightness on the inside.”

dishes is a rotating selection of house-made pastas, each made with wheat semolina, farm-fresh eggs, and organic flour and durum.

The different types of pasta to preorder will vary from week to week, depending on which ingredients are available from nearby farms, for example, and other factors. Each pasta is also served in reusable packaging.

Patrons can also pre-order soups and sauces made from scratch, including S.Y. Kitchen’s popular wild mushroom sauce (sold in sealed packets), as well as freshly grated Grana Padano.

Speaking of sauce, S.Y. Kitchen’s online market also offers a unique assortment of bottled cocktails, including El Viejo (made with Del Maguery Vida mezcal, Fresno chili, lime juice, pineapple, basil, and sal de gusano) and The Valley Girl (made with Koskenkorva vodka, St. Germain, lime, strawberry, and basil).

Tying in to the sibling motif even further, both S.Y. Kitchen and Nella Kitchen and Bar can appropriately be described as the “brain children” of executive chef and co-owner Luca Crestanelli. Born and raised in Verona, Italy, Crestanelli moved to the U.S. in 2002. During the decade that followed, he worked as a chef for Vincenti, Toscana, and Bar Toscana, all in

### Bros before doughs

S.Y. Kitchen is located at 1110 Faraday St., Santa Ynez. Visit [sykitchen.com](http://sykitchen.com) for the restaurant’s online market and more info. For updates on S.Y. Kitchen’s sibling restaurant in Los Olivos, Nella Kitchen and Bar, visit [nellakitchen.com](http://nellakitchen.com).

Brentwood, California, before moving to the Central Coast and launching S.Y. Kitchen with co-owners Kathie and Mike Gordon in 2013.

In 2019, Crestanelli and the S.Y. Kitchen team set their sights on potential spaces to open a new sister restaurant in Los Olivos.

“Luca was the creative mind behind the menu and design,” Dell’Anno said, discussing the development of Nella Kitchen and Bar over the past couple of years.

“It was all rather fortuitous,” Dell’Anno said, commenting on their partnership with the Fess Parker Wine Country Inn, once an accommodating space at the hotel became available to house Nella. “The S.Y. Kitchen team had been looking for a space for a while to create the pinsa concept.”

Once Nella Kitchen and Bar is able to reopen for on-site dining, the restaurant will eventually provide room service options to guests at Fess Parker Wine Country Inn, as well



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRI BURKETT

**DINNER IS SERVED:** “We wanted a more casual environment for lingering over craft cocktails, lounging with cheese and charcuterie boards, and gathering with friends over our signature pinsas,” Dario Dell’Anno said, discussing the setting of Nella Kitchen and Bar, in comparison to the wine country farmhouse style of S.Y. Kitchen.



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**COCKTAIL CONCOCTIONS:** S.Y. Kitchen’s online market offers a unique assortment of bottled cocktails (750 ml) available to preorder for pickup, including El Viejo (made with Del Maguery Vida mezcal, Fresno chili, lime juice, pineapple, basil, and sal de gusano) and The Valley Girl (made with Koskenkorva vodka, St. Germain, lime, strawberry, and basil).

as food and beverage service at the hotel’s pool area. Catering for private events booked at the hotel will also be provided by Nella.

As sister restaurants, the similarities between Nella Kitchen and Bar and S.Y. Kitchen are on par with their differences, much like any pair of actual siblings.

“The ambience and menu format at Nella is more modern, perhaps a bit more urban,” Dell’Anno said. “S.Y. Kitchen is refined-yet-rustic Italian, done in wine country farmhouse style—in terms of both food and decor. While Nella has the same Italian hospitality sensibilities, we wanted a more casual environment for lingering over craft cocktails, lounging with cheese and charcuterie boards, and gathering with friends over our signature pinsas.”

Reaching Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood is a piece of pinsa at [cwiseblood@santamariasun.com](http://cwiseblood@santamariasun.com).

FILE PHOTO BY WENDY THIES SELL



**BEHIND THE SCENES:** “Luca [Crestanelli] was the creative mind behind the menu and design,” Dell’Anno said, discussing the development of Nella Kitchen and Bar in Los Olivos over the past two years. Crestanelli (pictured) is the executive chef and co-owner of both Nella and its sister restaurant, S.Y. Kitchen.

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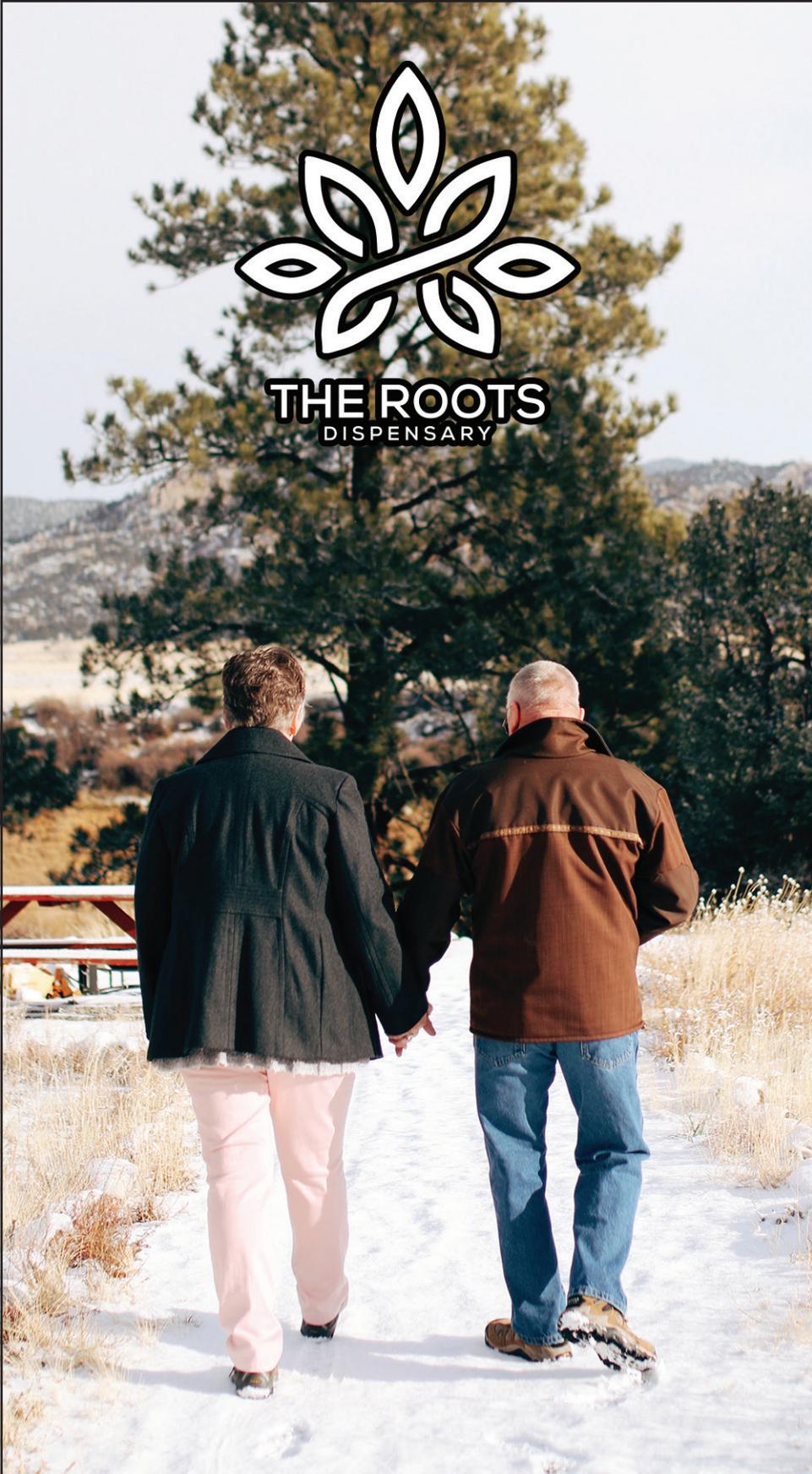
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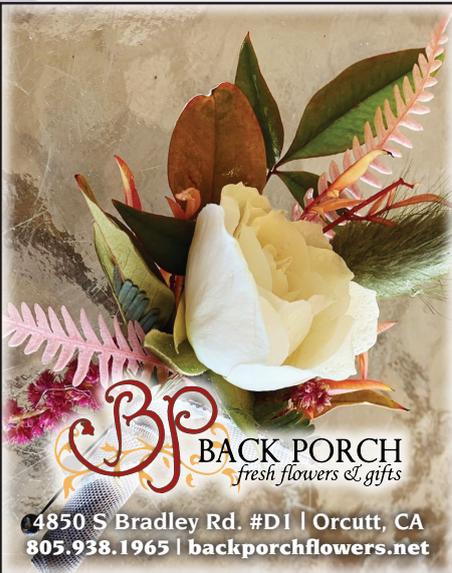
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