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AT THE MOVIES



Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard: So-so sequel [25]



TIME TO VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITES! [7]



Winning Images

Check out our annual photography contest's winners [13]

NEWS State rental assistance cuts it close [6]

ARTS Live theater returns to Central Coast [24]

EATS Kay's Orcutt County Kitchen reopens [26]



Attention local singers, songwriters, musicians, & bands:

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Contents

JUNE 24 - JULY 1, 2021 VOL. 22 NO. 17

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then we've got 32,000 beautiful, captivating, intimate, and skillfully wrought "words" for you this week. We're pleased to present the top photos from this year's Winning Images annual photography contest. Despite pandemic shutdowns, these intrepid photographers of all ages got behind their lenses to capture moments of drama, peace, and light in landscapes, animals, people, and everything in between. Give yourself plenty of time to enjoy these photographs [13].

You can also read about local counties helping renters as state assistance funds are slow in coming [6]; SLO Rep bringing live theater back to in-person audiences [24]; and the owner and namesake reopening Kay's Orcutt County Kitchen [26].

Andrea Rooks
associate editor



VIEW MASTER: Jonathan Shapiro won third place in the Open category for his photo, *Back Roads, Rome*, in this year's Winning Images contest.

Cover photo by Jonathan Shapiro > Cover design by Alex Zuniga

NEWS

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| News Briefs | 3 |
| Political Watch | 3 |
| Spotlight | 10 |

OPINION

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Web Poll | 11 |
| Mayfield | 11 |
| Canary | 12 |

EVENTS CALENDAR

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Hot Stuff | 20 |
|-----------------|----|

ARTS

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Arts Briefs | 24 |
|-------------------|----|

MOVIES

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Reviews | 25 |
|---------------|----|

CLASSIFIEDS, HOME, AND REAL ESTATE

| | |
|-------|----|
| | 28 |
|-------|----|

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Political Watch

• On June 17, **U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal** (D-Santa Barbara) announced that the IRS is extending a small businesses tax credit through September. The credit covers the cost of paid sick and family leave for workers. Workers can use leave to care for themselves or family members who are sick and to get their COVID-19 vaccines and recover from any temporary side effects. “Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and they were hit especially hard by the pandemic. This assistance will allow them to continue operations while prioritizing their workers’ health and safety,” Carbajal said in a statement. “This is one component of the American Rescue Plan that will help our community crush the virus, by allowing workers the time needed to get vaccinated or care for their health while also supporting employers who want to keep their workers and customers safe.” Businesses with fewer than 500 employees can receive more than \$17,000 per employee to provide workers up to 10 days of qualifying sick leave and 12 weeks of family leave, now extended through the end of September. “Certain self-employed individuals in similar circumstances are entitled to similar credits, as are schools, public hospitals, and other state and local government employers,” according to Carbajal’s office. “Roughly 6 million businesses and more than 30 million workers are eligible for this credit. Businesses can access the advanceable, refundable tax credit in real time by reducing the amount they set aside to pay payroll taxes and employee withholding. Employers can then claim any excess on their quarterly tax filings or request an advance payment from the IRS.”

• **Gov. Gavin Newsom** signed an emergency proclamation on June 17 to free up energy capacity amid the heat wave hitting California. In preparation for the extreme temperatures, California energy agencies called on individuals and businesses to “flex their power” by reducing energy use in the evenings through Friday, June 18, according to Newsom’s office. The proclamation suspended certain permitting requirements, “allowing the use of backup power generation and freeing up additional energy capacity to help alleviate the heat-induced demands on the state’s energy grid.” Individuals were also urged to take precautions and conserve energy where possible as temperatures soar. “Since last summer, the state’s energy agencies have taken swift action to ensure grid reliability—both this summer and into the future—to build the state’s climate resilience,” according to Newsom’s office. “This includes requiring utilities to procure additional energy resources to meet forecasted demand during extreme weather, bringing on additional storage and launching the revamped Flex Your Power campaign to help California conserve energy.”

• **U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal** (D-Santa Barbara) issued a statement on June 17 in reaction to **President Joe Biden** signing S. 475 into law, making Juneteenth a federal holiday. The bill passed with bipartisan support in the House before heading to the president’s desk. “Slavery was a scourge on our nation’s history that should not be ignored or swept under the rug. Today, we took a small but important step to reckon with our past and look to the future,” Carbajal said in his statement. “I was proud to cast my vote to make Juneteenth a federal holiday, cementing this celebration of freedom for enslaved African Americans as an American tradition. This is long overdue, and I am thankful for the advocacy of all those who have helped make this possible. ... As we celebrate Black lives and liberation, we must continue working to address systemic racism in order to make our nation more equal, fair, and free.” The statement added that Carbajal recently gave the 2021 Congressional Women of the Year Award to Central Coast racial justice advocates: **Santa Barbara poet Sojourner Kincaid Rolle** and **co-founder of R.A.C.E. Matters SLO Courtney Haile**. ○

Santa Maria gives another \$2 million to Police Department in budget amendments

Tax revenues ended up being higher than anticipated for the city of Santa Maria over the past pandemic year. The City Council recently passed budget adjustments that will increase funding for public safety and other departments, which the Police Department plans to use for a mental health response vehicle.

The city passed its biennial budget a year ago, so the City Council considered recommendations for mid-cycle amendments to the budget at a June 15 meeting. Despite concerns that city sales tax revenue would plummet during the COVID-19 pandemic, that income actually remained steady in fiscal year 2019-20 (\$23.7 million) compared to 2018-19 (\$24 million), and those revenues are anticipated to have increased in 2020-21 (\$26.1 million), City Manager Jason Stilwell told the council.

“We’re fortunate in a couple areas compared to some of the other cities that were really impacted with loss of revenue,” Stilwell said. “One is our revenue tends to be locally grown. ... It’s people who are here, who are shopping here, living here. And then the other side of it is our revenues tend to be basic commodities such as our big-box retailers, vehicle sales—things that remained strong during this past year.”

Some revenue streams did feel the COVID-19 impact, such as the transient occupancy tax (TOT). But Santa Maria doesn’t rely on these taxes as much as other cities do.

“Our TOT revenue is the revenue we get off of tourists and travelers staying in our hotels, primarily,” Stilwell said. “It’s not one of our primary revenues compared to some of our neighboring communities either to the north or south. It did take a large drop as the stay-at-home order was in effect, as people weren’t able to travel.”

Despite those TOT losses, the city is in a much better financial position than it anticipated during budget discussions last year. Stilwell said he expects Santa Maria’s total general fund revenues to be nearly \$73 million for the past year.

“Last year at this time when the council adopted the budget, we thought that those revenues would be \$70 million,” he said.

The city appropriated \$72.4 million for fiscal year 2020-21, and the originally adopted budget appropriated a similar amount for 2021-22. But with the better-than-expected tax revenues, city staff recommended increasing the 2021-22 appropriation to \$76.4 million.

Of that \$4 million increase in appropriations, about half will go to the Santa Maria Police Department.

“There’s a number of shifts in order to maintain and enhance police and fire, and public safety, and so you’ll see on the Police Department here we’re able to increase that budget in the general fund [by] \$2.1 [million],” Stilwell said.

Councilmember Gloria Soto asked for more information about a mental health response vehicle the Police Department plans to use part of the money to purchase.

“We’re in the process of working on an MOU with Behavioral Wellness to have a co-response vehicle, much like they have in the Sheriff’s Department,” Police Chief Marc Schneider said at the meeting. “And ideally we want to do that with an unmarked vehicle, so when the officer and the clinician respond out to help somebody in a crisis, that they can do that in the most nonthreatening way possible.”

With no public comment requests, the proposed amendments to the budget passed unanimously.

—Marea Martin



POLICE FUNDING: Santa Maria made more in sales tax revenues than expected, and about half of the excess will be appropriated to the Police Department, which requested funds for a mental health response vehicle. The department needs a new vehicle, which will be used to assist residents in mental health crises, without the decals already on the force’s cars.

Solvang allows electric trolleys

The Solvang City Council approved a license program for electric trolley services on June 14.

Tracy Beard, executive director of the Solvang Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber supports electric trolleys and advocates for that service in the city.

“It’s part of the [Santa Barbara Go Green programs] that we have for going into the 21st century. I think electric is what we all agree on,” Beard said.

She said the chamber sponsored three local businesses this year within the Go Green program, and Solvang’s electric trolley is one that the chamber would like to see move forward.

Interested businesses or companies that wish to operate an electric trolley must apply for the specific license whether they have an animal-drawn conveyance license or not.

Under the electric license, the council is required to hold a public hearing prior to making a decision on a license application. The licensee would need to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and related regulations, including ensuring the trolleys meet accessibility specifications and operators don’t discriminate against passengers.

According to a staff report, all electric trolley operators would be required to wear attire that is consistent with the Danish theme or motif of the city.

Electric trolleys would not be permitted to drive more than 25 mph or on roads with speed limits greater than 35 mph. Operators must also hold a valid California driver’s license with a passenger endorsement.

Currently, the only business owner interested in the license is Hector Sal Orona, who runs the Solvang Trolley and Carriage Company. He wants to obtain an electric trolley because his current route options with horse-drawn carriages are limited due to COVID-19 street closures.

Orona has stated in previous City Council meetings that the current route situation is making it difficult for his horse-drawn trolleys to maneuver through the streets.

On June 14, Orona said he was concerned about the requirement for the electric trolley to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. He told the council that he already has one trolley that’s specifically built to meet ADA requirements.

The council’s legal team said the city will enforce ADA compliance if there’s a compliance issue. However, they added that the ADA law has equivalent service standards—if the city analyzes Orona’s transportation offerings and finds that it’s providing equivalent services or has services available for people with disabilities, then that existing ADA-compliant trolley service would be sufficient.

The council—Mayor Pro Tem Claudia Orona, whose family owns Solvang Trolley, recused herself—unanimously approved the first reading of the ordinance.

—Karen Garcia

Santa Maria Recreation offers summer fun despite staffing challenges

The Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Department is gearing up to bring local residents a summer of fun with new programming and opportunities for everyone from youth to the elderly. Finding the staff to operate these programs, though, has proven difficult.

Recreation Services Manager Dennis Smitherman said that while the past year was challenging for his department, it also created time to reflect on what the community needs from Recreation and Parks.

“I think what we’ve done during this previous year is just reevaluated how we’re offering services. The public has let us know what’s most important in getting back to normal,” Smitherman said. “We are running a little more activities and programs, but not always in the traditional manner. We’re doing a lot more pop-ups in the park for youth and teens, more recreational swim in the pools.”

The department first started to roll out pop-up activities for youth at local parks in 2019, before the pandemic forced them to go on hold.

“People have been asking for more programs in the parks,” Smitherman said, because it gives parents a logistically easy option to keep their kids occupied and supervised.

“The difference between pop-ups and normal programming is there’s no set park each week, they pop around to parks in the city,” Smitherman said.

Recreation and Parks is looking to bring as many water activities as it can to the city’s 28 parks this summer, such as water balloon fights or building water rockets.

“[The rockets] provide a level of STEAM [science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics] education,” Smitherman said. “But we also want to have fun, so water balloons are for that.”

A new program called Safe and Strong All Summer Long is already underway, and will continue Monday through Friday, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., until Aug. 6 at various parks around the city. No registration is necessary for kids ages 6 to 12 to come and enjoy physical education and games.

Smitherman said the department is also putting on Summer Camp at the Cabin, a recreation-based camp for kids aged 6 to 12 that will be held mostly outdoors. The camp will run weekly until Aug. 6 at Buena Vista Park, with different themes each week, such as “out in space,” “all things nature,” and “Hawaiian luau.” It costs \$60 per week for city residents and \$72 for non-city residents, and registration is required.

In addition to outdoor programming, the city’s Elwin Mussell Senior Center is open again, as well as the Abel Maldonado Community Youth Center.

“While they’re not running at 100 percent,

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FILE PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL NELSON AQUATIC CENTER'S FACEBOOK

NEWS from page 3

they're open," Smitherman said. "Our teen center traditionally would run until 8 p.m. during the week and 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, but due to staffing shortage, the teen center hours are now 12 p.m. to 5 p.m."

Staffing is proving to be one of the largest hurdles for Recreation and Parks.

"We've been looking for good staff who want to help improve lives ... but right now we're just not able to recruit the quality staff we're looking for," Smitherman said. "Fifteen people apply but only two or three show up for the interview. It is a huge challenge this summer now that we're ready to roll out programming."

Despite these challenges, the department is still providing accessible summer fun to community members. Smitherman said the city had a recreational swim session on June 16, the first in more than a year.

"To walk out to the pool and see all these families and kids having a great time during the heat wave collectively made the department staff feel really good," he said. "We have 28 beautiful parks, and people are using them all."

The department is also ensuring that parks are accessible. The city announced that starting July 1, Recreation and Parks will give out 1,300 31-day bus passes to Santa Maria students in grades seven through 12 who can identify financial need. Students can apply at the Abel Maldonado Community Youth Center, Monday through



REC IS BACK: The Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Department held its first recreational swim sessions in more than a year starting June 16.

Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

"The Youth Adventure Pass is part of a Mayor's Task Force on Youth Safety's initiative to provide youth with transportation to recreation programming," according to city officials, who added that \$40,000 from the state's Low Carbon Transit Operation Program made these passes possible.

Residents interested in Recreation and Parks programming can head to cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/recreation-and-parks to learn more about this summer's offerings. ○

—Malea Martin

SMAT

Santa Maria Area Transit

SMAT will reinstate bus fares on Thursday July 1, 2021

Only passengers who have paid a cash fare or have a valid bus pass will be allowed to ride the bus. Please be sure to have your fare ready commencing July 1st 2021. Thank you for your cooperation.

Bus Passes can be purchased at the following locations:

- SMAT Transit Center: 400 Bone St., Santa Maria
- SMAT Office: 1303 Fairview Drive, Santa Maria
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What's Your Take?

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

This week's online poll 6/24 - 7/1

- How did you survive the heat wave?
- By staying indoors: This is why I have air conditioning.
 - I got out in nature (but stayed in the shade, of course).
 - I enjoyed the Santa Maria pool's first rec swim in more than a year.
 - I took advantage of the warm evenings and ate outdoors at a local restaurant.

Enter your choice online at: SantaMariaSun.com



Ready for Camp?

Talking to your children about stranger danger is good, but did you know that in over 90% of child abuse cases children are hurt by someone they know? Talking to your child about consent and that no one has the right to touch them without their permission may be difficult, but it is critical. Now is the time, if you already have not, to have that conversation about Good Touches, Bad Touches, and Confusing Touches and to empower your child to know that it is okay to tell if someone hurts them. Practice scenarios about what to do if someone asks them to do something sexually and encourage them to always tell!

Summer Camp is full of fun and excitement ... but did you know there are hidden dangers?



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Lisa Wilkerson, 2021



Wyatt Stapp, 2021

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Down to the wire

*With state rental assistance
slow to arrive, tenants and
service groups look anxiously
to the end of eviction
protections*

BY PETER JOHNSON

Adam Schooley of Los Osos owes more than \$4,000 in back rent to his landlord after he lost his job in December for the second time during the pandemic.

So in March, when the state announced a new rent relief program that would assist the estimated 900,000 California households also behind on rent due to COVID-19 hardships, Schooley applied on Day One.

"I've never missed rent payments before, even credit card payments," said Schooley, who worked as a manager in the San Luis Obispo County hospitality industry. "This is something I never expected to come up in my life."

To avoid eviction from his apartment, Schooley paid 25 percent of his rent using unemployment benefits, while anticipating that the state would come through with aid before the statewide "eviction moratorium" lifted on June 30.

But three months later, with that June 30 deadline soon approaching, Schooley hasn't seen a dime from the program yet—neither has he received word from the state that his application was approved, he said.

"Since the end of April, I've been unable to get any information from official sources. ... My case manager stopped replying to my emails and phone calls," Schooley said on June 18. "I'm still \$4,000 in the hole since January, and I'm expected to pay that in 13 days. I'm scared. I have no idea what's going to happen."

Schooley isn't alone. California is facing a mountainous backlog of applications for its rent relief program from tenants and landlords. Recent data reported by *Cal Matters* indicates that only \$50 million of the \$1.4 billion allocated to the program has been delivered to households thus far.

Delays aren't the only problem with the program. Stakeholders also criticized its cumbersome application (which the state has revised to improve simplicity); its commitment to refund landlords only 80 percent of their owed rent, which leaves tenants in a position to receive only 25 percent if a landlord doesn't participate; and its exclusion of tenants who'd gone into credit card debt to pay their rent.

"The application was very long initially," said Steve Ortiz, CEO of the United Way of Santa Barbara County, which has assisted Santa Maria households with rent relief applications. "The guidelines were restrictive. But I think they'll start moving faster now."

Given the hiccups, most stakeholders anticipate that the Legislature will extend eviction protections past June 30 and tweak the program's parameters to refund tenants and landlords for all owed rent (instead of 80 or 25 percent). But as of press time, those decisions were still up in the air.

"It's all predicated on the Legislature," said Janna Nichols, executive director of the Five



TRYING TO AVOID EVICTIONS: A state program aimed at assisting households behind on their rent amid COVID-19 has not kept up with demand.

Cities Homeless Coalition, a nonprofit based out of Grover Beach. "I think we're going to get there. I think they're going to work it all out."

Two counties, two experiences

While tenants in SLO County, like Schooley, anxiously await word from the state about rent relief, about 1,000 households in Santa Barbara County have already received payments.

That's because Santa Barbara County decided to administer a local rent relief program that ran parallel to the state's—an option given to all counties back in March. Basically, California gave counties the chance to get federal funding to run a localized rental assistance program, or defer that money and responsibility to the state.

Santa Barbara County opted to partner with United Way to run a \$12 million local program, which is helping eligible tenants cover 100 percent of their owed rent and utilities. As of June 18, Ortiz said about \$8.4 million had gone out to 1,001 households—including \$3.6 million to supervisorial Districts 4 and 5, which include the Santa Maria Valley.

"I think that was the best decision by our local supervisors because we are able to move much faster on a local level," Ortiz said. "We've been told we're one of the fastest-moving programs in the state."

But the demand for rent relief is so high, Ortiz said, that United Way had to close its application portal after receiving more than 6,500 applications. Households making less than 80 percent of the median income are eligible, but the program will prioritize those at 50 percent or lower.

"We're churning through the applications that have already been submitted," Ortiz said. "The funding—it's not enough to cover all of the individuals."

California recently allocated another \$14 million in rental aid to Santa Barbara County as part of its state-level program, according to Ortiz, and United Way is now helping households navigate that application process. But the concern now is that the money will not get out quickly enough to enough people with June 30 approaching.

"We're starting to hear the desperation of the tenants and landlords, just knowing that that deadline is looming and there is need for funds," Ortiz said. "There is hope and an expectation that additional funds will come down, we're just not sure they'll arrive in time."

These concerns are even more profound in SLO County, a jurisdiction that decided not

to set up its own local rent relief program, deferring about \$17.5 million in aid to the state's program. In SLO County, nearly all tenants and landlords still await rental assistance.

According to Nichols, of the Five Cities Homeless Coalition, out of the more than 350 applications her organization has assisted with thus far, only 10 had been paid out as of June 14.

"It's been really slow. And everybody acknowledges this," Nichols said.

Up until the state recently simplified and streamlined the application, the process of applying for aid often took three hours, a litany of documents, and multiple meetings, Nichols said. Then households waited months for their applications to move through the state system.

"Our job is to enroll people, and there's another company that has the responsibility of doing case management," Nichols explained. "I think they were just woefully understaffed."

Despite the frustrations, Nichols said the state seems to recognize the problems and is fixing them. She expects the process to start moving much more quickly. She also said she's confident that the Legislature will extend eviction protections past June 30 and will also commit to subsidizing 100 percent of applicants' back rent.

"I do believe the state understands the problem," she said. "I think the Legislature is going to make a change."

Most troubling to Nichols, she said, is the number of households that went into credit card debt to pay their rent over the pandemic. That debt is not currently eligible for relief under the program. But Nichols said those tenants could be eligible for future rental assistance, so she encourages them to apply at housingiskey.com

"There really should be no reason that a tenant or landlord doesn't apply for this program," she said.

If the state does push out the June 30 deadline, it could keep thousands of Californians housed and give the state's program proper time to dole out resources, advocates say. If it doesn't, starting July 1 full rent is due, and starting Aug. 1 landlords can take tenants to small claims court for past rent owed.

"It is definitely the feeling among our staff and partners," Ortiz said, "that unless there are changes in policy, we'll probably be seeing a good amount of evictions." ○

New Times Assistant Editor Peter Johnson can be reached at pjohnson@newtimeslo.com.



News Flash: We made it through the COVID-19 pandemic! Although nobody made it through unscathed, here we are, on the uphill side, climbing our way back out. And we're ready to print some good news. We want to know all about the eateries, drinkeries, businesses, and people that make Northern Santa Barbara County so special.

Now is the time to tout your favorites. Tell their stories. Shout their names through our megaphone, so we can get the word out. We want to write all about it. Then talk to your family, friends, and neighbors, and tell them we want to hear from them too.

You can even go online to vote at santamariasun.com. Just remember, you need to complete at least 25 categories to make the cut. Return this ballot to the Sun office or go online by 5 p.m. on July 6. Then keep an eye out for our biggest issue of the year to spread the news about the winners on Aug. 19.

Tell everyone!

DINE AND DEVOUR

1. Best Santa Maria Restaurant
2. Best Nipomo Restaurant
3. Best Orcutt Restaurant
4. Best Lompoc Restaurant
5. Best Guadalupe Restaurant
6. Best Los Alamos Restaurant
7. Best Los Olivos Restaurant
8. Best Buellton Restaurant
9. Best Solvang Restaurant
10. Best Santa Ynez Restaurant
11. Best Restaurant. Period.
12. Best Breakfast
13. Best Weekend Brunch
14. Best Outdoor Dining

15. Best Cheap Eats
16. Best Restaurant to Impress
17. Best Place to Go On a First Date
18. Best Family Meal
19. Best Kid-Friendly Restaurant
20. Best Chinese Food
21. Best Italian Food
22. Best Japanese Food
23. Best Mediterranean Food
24. Best Authentic Mexican Food
25. Best Thai Food
26. Best Seafood
27. Best Sushi
28. Best Barbecue
29. Best Vegetarian Food

30. Best Food Truck
31. Best Farm/Produce Stand
32. Best Caterer
33. Best Breakfast Burrito
34. Best Salsa
35. Best Burrito
36. Best Taco
37. Best Carniceria
38. Best Burger
39. Best Sandwich
40. Best Steak
41. Best Tri-Tip
42. Best Wings
43. Best Pizza
44. Best Wood-Fired Pizza

BEST OF BALLOT continued on next page



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BEST OF BALLOT from previous page

- 45. Best Salad
- 46. Best Ice Cream
- 47. Best Frozen Yogurt
- 48. Best Doughnut
- 49. Best Dessert
- 50. Best Panaderia
- 51. Best Bakery
- 52. Best Grocery Store
- 53. Best Vitamin Store
- 54. Best Natural Food Store
- 55. Best Hispanic Market
- 56. Best Place for a Cup of Coffee
- 57. Best Juice Place
- 58. Best Winery for Red Wine
- 59. Best Winery for White Wine
- 60. Best Winery for Sparkling Wine
- 61. Best Dog-Friendly Winery
- 62. Best Tasting Room
- 63. Best Tasting Transportation
- 64. Best Brewery
- 65. Best Dive Bar
- 66. Best Michelada
- 67. Best Margarita
- 68. Best Place for a Beer

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

- 69. Best Community Event (specify city)
- 70. Best Movie Theater
- 71. Best Theater Group

- 72. Best DJ
- 73. Best Local Band or Musician
- 74. Best Place to Catch a Band
- 75. Best Photographer
- 76. Best Kids Arts Program
- 77. Best Music School
- 78. Best Local Artist
- 79. Best Place to View Art
- 80. Best Place to Get a Tattoo
- 81. Best Bookstore
- 82. Best Museum
- 83. Best Media Personality
- 84. Best Place for a Big Bash
- 85. Best Place to Have a Kids Party
- 86. Best Place to Shop for a Quinceañera
- 87. Best Car Show

BURNING CASH

- 88. Best Antique Shop
- 89. Best Thrift Store
- 90. Best Home Decor
- 91. Best Furniture Store
- 92. Best Mattress Store
- 93. Best Solar Company
- 94. Best Hardware Store
- 95. Best Used Car Dealer
- 96. Best New Car Dealer
- 97. Best Car Wash
- 98. Best Car Audio/Security
- 99. Best Tire Store
- 100. Best Oil Change
- 101. Best Flower Shop
- 102. Best Local Nursery/Garden Store
- 103. Best Eyewear Store

- 104. Best Jewelry Store
- 105. Best Place to Buy Kids Clothes
- 106. Best Women's Clothing Store
- 107. Best Place to Pamper Your Pet
- 108. Best Pet Supply Store
- 109. Best Place for Gifts
- 110. Best Carpet/Flooring Company
- 111. Best Place to Fill Up Your Car
- 112. Best Feed Supply Store
- 113. Best Tack Store

ABOUT TOWN

- 114. Best New Company of 2020
- 115. Best Cleaning Service
- 116. Best General Contractor
- 117. Best Home Painting Service
- 118. Best Landscape Design Company
- 119. Best Yard Maintenance Service
- 120. Best Moving Company
- 121. Best Pest Control Service
- 122. Best Tree Trimming Service
- 123. Best Window Cleaning Service
- 124. Best Auto Maintenance/Repair
- 125. Best CPA
- 126. Best Lawyer
- 127. Best Local Bank/Credit Union
- 128. Best Mortgage Company
- 129. Best Plumber
- 130. Best Insurance Agent
- 131. Best Real Estate Company
- 132. Best Real Estate Agent
- 133. Best Customer Service
- 134. Best Electrician
- 135. Best Senior Living Community

FEELING GOOD

- 136. Best Hair Salon
- 137. Best Barber Shop
- 138. Best Nail Salon
- 139. Best Place for Skin Care
- 140. Best Place to Get a Massage
- 141. Best Health Club/Gym
- 142. Best Yoga Studio
- 143. Best Martial Arts Studio
- 144. Best Alternative Healer
- 145. Best Cannabis Dispensary
- 146. Best Cannabis Delivery Service
- 147. Best Tanning Salon
- 148. Best Acupuncturist
- 149. Best Chiropractor
- 150. Best Doctor
- 151. Best Lasik Surgery
- 152. Best Dentist
- 153. Best Orthodontist
- 154. Best Veterinarian
- 155. Best OB-GYN
- 156. Best Pediatrician

GET OUT

- 157. Best Hike or Bike Trail
- 158. Best Bike Shop
- 159. Best Hotel or Resort
- 160. Best Golf Course

- 161. Best Staycation
- 162. Best Dog Park
- 163. Best Day Trip
- 164. Best Place to Put Up Visiting Family

GETTING HITCHED

- 165. Best Wedding Venue
- 166. Best Wedding/Event Planner
- 167. Best Place to Buy a Wedding Ring
- 168. Best Limo Service
- 169. Best Wedding Caterer
- 170. Best Place for Wedding Flowers
- 171. Best Wedding Band
- 172. Best Tuxedo Rental
- 173. Best Place to Buy a Wedding Dress
- 174. Best Place for Wedding Reception
- 175. Best Winery Wedding Venue

COMMUNITY WATCH

- 176. Best Nonprofit
- 177. Best Environmental Watchdog
- 178. Best Eco-Friendly Business
- 179. Best Man or Woman Behind the Badge (specify city)
- 180. Best Radio Station
- 181. Best News Source
- 182. Best Social Media Influencer
- 183. Best Place to Volunteer
- 184. Best Take-It-To-The-Man Local Activist

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THE RULES: One ballot per person. No more than two ballots may be submitted per envelope or in person at one time. No photocopies can be accepted. To prevent ballot-box stuffing (also known as cheating), all ballots must have at least 25 categories completed and must include the name and address of the voter, for verification purposes only. All information is kept in complete confidence. Ballots must be in our office by Tuesday, July 6, at 5 p.m. Winners will be announced in our Aug. 19 special publication. All entries become the property of *Sun*.

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Food adventures

Inspired by nostalgia and an old ice cream cart, Paleta & Co. started serving popsicles and ice cream in March

PHOTO COURTESY OF STEFANIE ELIZABETH PHOTOGRAPHY

BY KAREN GARCIA

Brittany Gonsalves was looking to get her creative juices flowing last year after the pandemic halted her business operations.

"I was trying to find something to keep occupied, be creative, and have an outlet to stay hopeful and keep going," she said.

She and her husband, Rigoberto Guzman, had started the Central Coast Tacos Catering Company in 2018. Aside from providing customers with savory carne asada or soyrizo tacos, the pair also offers bartending, busing, setup, and cleanup services—an added bonus that Gonsalves said not many small catering companies provide.

The venture, which she now solely owns, was the career change that Gonsalves was looking for after giving birth to her second child in 2018. At the time, she worked for the San Luis Obispo County Public Defender's Office and was simultaneously trying to balance her home life. A mix of the high cost of child care, a full-time workload, and the duties of caring for an infant were enough for Gonsalves to reconsider her career choice.

With her new business on hold two years later, she searched for a passion project, and she found it in a junkyard. Gonsalves stumbled upon an old ice cream pushcart that needed a lot of care but was full of potential—just the project she was looking for.

She describes the cart as a vintage 1980s retrofitted ice cream pushcart that reminded her of the *paletero* man, or a street vendor of *paletas* and *helados* (which translate to popsicles and ice cream), visiting neighborhoods or setting up on street corners in the city of Santa Maria.

Nostalgia and the potential for turning the pushcart into a business moved Gonsalves to put life back into it. The cart came with all of the bells and whistles—it just needed a tune-up, which Gonsalves said became a family effort.

"We had to replace everything, from the wheels and really everything. It was pretty much an Igloo box on wheels," she said.

Once they revived the cart, Gonsalves decided to create a second arm of her catering business that included popsicles and ice cream. She called it Paleta & Co. and slapped a bright pink neon sign on the side of the pushcart.

The cart made its debut alongside those tacos in March of this year at Hammer Sky Vineyards in Paso Robles. Ever since their March return, Gonsalves has also provided her savory and sweet services once a month at There Does Not Exist brewery in San Luis Obispo.

Gonsalves said she's grateful and ready to bring tacos and paletas to Santa Maria and SLO County cities alike. Wherever the cart goes, she said, people's responses are positive.

"It's so much fun to take it to events, parties, weddings. You know, everyone enjoys ice cream, so it's just a nice special treat to add to a party," she said.

This is a unique time to launch the Paleta & Co. because people are ready to gather with their



POPSICLE FUN: (Left to right) Nolan Spears and Sophia Guzman enjoy a cold treat on top of the Paleta & Co. ice cream cart.

families, attend events, and visit pop-up vendors at their favorite brewery.

"We're getting like 22 phone calls a day from people asking us to cater. Unfortunately we don't have the availability, we're booked all the way up to October, but it's great because we can refer them to someone else," she said.

Highlights

- Ahead of Fourth of July weekend, Santa Barbara Humane is offering free microchipping for cats and dogs at both its Santa Barbara and Santa Maria campuses. According to a statement announcing the promotion, more animals go missing on Fourth of July than any other day of the year, as fireworks and festivities increase stress in animals and lead to escape attempts. Pet owners can book a chipping appointment at sbhumane.org/clinic or by calling (805) 964-4777. While microchips are not a tracking device, they contain an identification number. Should a lost pet be turned in, the number is used to reunite the pet with its owner. "Our pets' ears are incredibly sensitive, and anxiety from fireworks can set in quickly," Dr. Katie Marrie, chief veterinary officer at Santa Barbara Humane, said in the statement. "The last thing anyone wants is to lose a pet. Microchips are a great tool to help make sure that lost animals can be returned to their families."

- The Santa Barbara Foundation is seeking nominations from the Santa Maria Valley for the annual Celebrate Philanthropy event, open now through Aug. 9. "The Santa Maria Valley community is invited to submit a nomination for any individual, couples, or family who, through direct service or financial support, have demonstrated outstanding civic and charitable work to make the Santa Maria Valley a better place," according to the foundation. Nominations can be submitted at sbfoundation.org/cpawards. ○

Staff Writer Karen Garcia wrote this week's Spotlight. Send tidbits to spotlight@santamariasun.com.

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- Virtual programs (in person programs coming soon)



Online Poll

How do you feel about California reopening on June 15?

- 37% It's great that events can get going again, but I'll be wearing my mask to them.
- 24% Great! This is what we've been working toward for more than a year now.
- 22% I'm excited for a post-pandemic world but nervous about most restrictions being off.
- 17% This should have happened months ago, but it's better late than never.

29 Votes

Vote online at www.santamariasun.com.

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

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Prevention is protection

Is drug use a victimless crime?

BY RON CUFF

On June 4, in Indianapolis, Crystal Martin admitted before a court to giving her 3-year-old son, Johnathan Johnson, two 100mg pills of Zoloft, an antidepressant drug, before leaving him unsupervised to play near a creek, where he was found face down in 4 feet of water. Three Heritage Ranch residents were recently charged by San Luis Obispo County District Attorney Dan Dow with the tragic death of a 7-month-old infant due to alleged methamphetamine and fentanyl poisoning.

Many people are against incarcerating people for drug use because they believe drug use is a "victimless crime." But child deaths like these are not isolated cases, and the abuse or death of a child due to parental drug use is certainly not "victimless." Drug and alcohol abuse, especially by parents, profoundly affects all of us. Drug overdoses alone killed a record 80,000 plus last year, leaving approximately 820,000 parents, grandparents, and friends to suffer immeasurable grief. Furthermore, all of the people who love the 40 million Americans currently struggling with and disabled by substance use disorder are also victims.

Our current system that addresses the consequences of drug use, including homelessness, requires a shocking amount of financial and human resources, including but not limited to shelter beds, hospital care, mental health care, long- and short-term treatment, law enforcement and prisons, paramedics and firefighters, social workers, and homes for abandoned children. In some locales, taxpayers now employ one "homeless services" coordinator for every three unsheltered persons. There are many people struggling to keep a

roof over their head, but for the vast number of people living unhoused, a roof does not begin to address their very real health problems.

California state data shows that the majority of people living unhoused suffer from an untreated mental illness, substance use disorder, or both. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, nine of every 10 people suffering from the incurable chronic brain disease called addiction began using drugs or alcohol before the age of 18. Until K-12 prevention occupies the lion's share of resources expended, the cycle of disability that results in "homelessness" will never be broken.

Consider for a moment how we feel when we are told that leaving a person on the side of the street with their worldly belongings in plastic bags is "the best that we can do." It's reasonable to expect that one of the wealthiest communities in the world would ensure that substance-disabled people are guided into long-term

Are we content to simply accept the high rate of addiction as a natural consequence of hedonism fed by greed and creative marketing?

residential treatment and aftercare. Since 2016, counties in California have been able to provide assistance through Laura's Law, which provides such care for people suffering from drug-induced schizophrenia or bipolar disorders.

It's similarly reasonable to expect that one of the most advanced countries in the world would choose to prevent the early adolescent substance use that leads to addiction. The United States represents only 4.5 percent of the world's population, and yet it's estimated that it consumes 50 to 80 percent of the world's drugs. Are we content to simply accept the high rate of addiction as a natural consequence of hedonism fed by greed and creative marketing? Or can the most compassionate and cost-effective solution be found in the robust protection of our youth?

Due to normal human brain development, youth are inclined to both peer pressure and

risk taking, which can include drug use. During adolescence, our unused brain synapses shrink, and those that remain are strengthened. This puts teens at risk of unwittingly training their brains to become dependent on the chemical reactions caused by drug use. And, regardless of which drug—nicotine, alcohol, marijuana, or prescription opiate—an adolescent uses first, the likelihood that they will use another drug is increased.

Addiction is an early onset adolescent disease, not a character flaw. Therefore, we must stop stigmatizing people caught in the cycle of addiction and get them into treatment because it's the only debilitating and deadly disease for which people don't usually want treatment. Drug legalization robs us of the tool that courts need to give people a "nudge from the judge." Though never curable, addiction can be managed, and people can regain their functionality. There is always hope.

Most importantly, we must invest in real primary prevention, which means reducing the demand for drugs and alcohol created by normalization and widespread commercial exposure in the faces of youth. Over time, this strategy will reduce the rate of substance use disorder that negatively impacts 50 percent of families and results in hundreds of thousands of us living unsheltered on public property. ☉

Ron Cuff is a retired naval aviator; co-founder of Santa Barbara-based safelaunch.org, a primary prevention initiative; and a former president of the San Luis Obispo Child Abuse Prevention Council. Cuff resides in Paso Robles. Send responses for publication to 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). 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.

LETTERS

When it comes to mockers, COVID-19 may have the last laugh

Many thanks to Rita Casaverde's Sun commentary ("Jordan Cunningham mocks COVID-19 restrictions," April 15) calling out Jordan Cunningham's sardonic efforts at making fun of COVID-19. When I think of the hundreds of thousands who have suffered family deaths, illnesses, and long-term side effects due to COVID-19, I find Cunningham's remarks beyond the pale. While he and his fellow Republicans attempt to thwart President Biden's sincere attempts to make our country's citizens safe by vaccinating enough people for us to achieve herd immunity, we all remain at risk due to their ignorance and conspiracy-loving ways.

We expect our elected leaders to exercise sound judgment; Jordan Cunningham comes up short. Sadly, when it comes to people like him, COVID-19 may have the last laugh.

Bruce Badrigian
Morro Bay

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AMINI, PARVIN, 91, of Arroyo Grande passed away 6/16/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

ARELLANO, PAULINE, 60, of Santa Maria passed away 6/11/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

AVALOS, ANDREA, 73, of Lucerne Valley passed away 6/15/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home and Crematory

BARRAGAN, SALVADOR VALENCIA, 91, of Santa Maria passed away 6/19/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

BROWN, CONNIE JO, 78, of Santa Maria passed away 6/21/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

BURDA, JAMES, 94, of Cambria, passed away 6/22/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

CALINGO, DANILO BERVISCO, 74, of Santa Maria passed away 6/16/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home and Crematory

CALLAHAN, JULIE, 79, of Paso Robles passed away 6/16/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

CONTRERAS, PEDRO JR., 39, of Paso Robles passed away 6/1/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nicolay Funeral Home

CUEVAS, ISMAEL, 51, of Guadalupe passed away 6/18/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home and Crematory

FIKE, GLORIA, 88, of Santa Margarita passed away 6/16/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

FLORES, GEORGE DAVID, 69, passed away 6/11/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nicolay Funeral Home

GIBSON, PEGGY, 55, of Atascadero passed away 6/10/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

HARRIS, DONALD B., 93, of Santa Maria passed away 6/16/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home and Crematory

HARRISON, NORMA LETICIA, 34, of Nipomo passed away 6/6/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

HOLLAND, JAMES JOSEPH, 78, of Orcutt passed away 6/18/2021 arrangements with Lori Family Mortuary

HUNTEMAN, STEVEN RYAN, 66, of Paso Robles passed away 6/14/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nicolay Funeral Home

KAYLOR, CAROL H., 80, of Santa Maria passed away 6/14/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

KEANE, CARIDAD, 90, of San Luis Obispo passed away 6/20/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

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VECENTE, CHERYL K., 73, of Santa Maria passed away 6/21/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home and Crematory

WEIR, JAMES, 92, of Atascadero passed away 6/13/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

Details, decals

What's better than a cop with little to no mental health training responding to someone in crisis? That same cop rolling up in a random, unmarked sedan!

During a June 15 meeting, the **Santa Maria City Council** approved mid-cycle budget amendments that will tack on an extra \$2 million to the **Police Department's** nearly \$30 million piece of the general fund pie. The department plans to use part of these extra funds to buy a mental health crisis response vehicle.

"We're in the process of working on an MOU with Behavioral Wellness to have a co-response vehicle, much like they have in the Sheriff's Department," **Santa Maria Police Chief Marc Schneider** said during the council meeting. "And ideally we want to do that with an unmarked vehicle, so when the officer and the clinician respond out to help somebody in a crisis, that they can do that in the most nonthreatening way possible."

Look, I'm all for funding mental health crisis intervention, and having an officer arrive alongside a mental health professional sounds like a step in the right direction. But how is someone supposed to know that they're getting help, and not being kidnapped, when the vehicle is unmarked?

Schneider explained that this plan requires a vehicle "without any decals," but right now, "we don't have any vehicles currently in our fleet that we can designate for that." Since all of the department's police vehicles already have those super threatening "Our community ... your police" decals on the side, I guess the only option is to buy a new vehicle.



Wait a minute ... hasn't Schneider ever heard of a new paint job? Or decal removal?

Last year, when Santa Maria thought the pandemic would wreak havoc on tax revenues, the community was up in arms about the already barely funded **library** facing budget cuts. Well, turns out the city didn't need to defund the library after all.

"Our revenues tend to be basic commodities such as our big-box retailers, vehicle sales—things that remained strong during this past year," City Manager Jason Stilwell explained.

Big shocker! The city's sales tax revenue did just fine because people kept going to **Walmart** last year.

To be fair, the library is getting part of the unanticipated tax revenue—a few hundred thousand dollars—but it appears that these budget scraps going to the Police Department would fill the library's entire budgetary pantry, so to speak.

But remember, our uniformed police officers need a low-key vehicle to make people having mental health crises feel less threatened while they're being arrested!

And none of the current fleet will do the job because, you know ... those pesky decals.

Speaking of men in uniform, **Solvang's** new electric trolley operators will be required to wear Danish attire, according to a staff report presented to the City Council. The city approved a license program for electric trolley services on June 14.

Maybe Santa Maria and Solvang should join forces and create the nation's first mental health crisis response trolley. Personally, I'd find a man in tights and clogs to be least threatening in my time of need. ☉

The Canary is keen on birds in uniform. Send birdseed and juicy tips to canary@santamariasun.com.

James J. Holland

Long time resident of Orcutt James J. Holland past away unexpectedly of natural causes on 18-June-2021 in Orcutt, CA. Jim was born in Chatsworth, CA. He was a graduate of Loyola Marymount University where he loved being on the rowing team. He was married and moved his family to the central coast in the late 60s and began a career in the oil fields. He had several jobs but his final was being a real estate agent. He played slow pitch softball for years and was well known in the community.

He is survived by three of five children Rita Merhabskie, Samuel Holland, and Seon Holland; grandchildren Jacob Long, Joshua Pollard, Brittany Pollard, Jordan Pollard, Jessica Kosai, Zachariah Holland, Kimberly Holland, Chelsea Holland, Samuel Holland, Joseph Holland; great-grandkids Macey Long, Owen Long, Easton Long, William Castellanos, Addy Kosai, Henrik Kosai. He was preceded by his daughter Peggie Pollard and son Michael Holland and wife Poullette Holland.

He loved having family time and was very proud of all of his children and grandchildren which called him Papa. He was a big sports fanatic and life long fan of the Dodgers, Lakers and Rams.

He was a big part of our family, much loved and will be missed.

Friends and family will gather to have a celebration of life on 3-July-2021. Please reach out to Rita Merhabskie if you would like further details at ritamerhabskie@yahoo.com.



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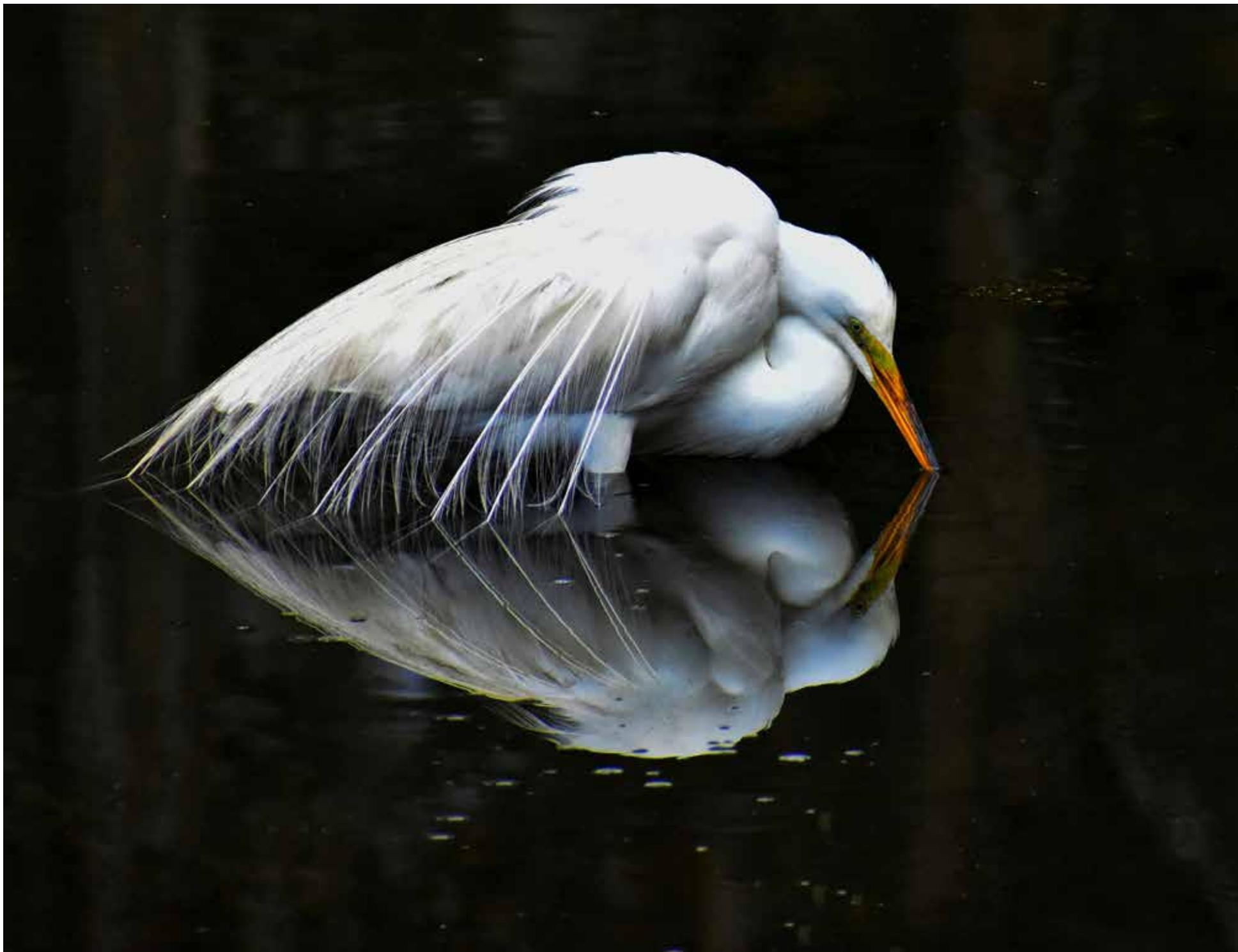
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Wayne Angeloty, Animals, *Great Egret Repose*, **First Place & Best of Show**

Flash in time

Local photographers capture milliseconds of life from behind the lens

BY CAMILLIA LANHAM

Pictures encapsulate a moment, a look, a perspective, without using words. Photographs are as different as the attitude of the person who took them. They seize on an instant in time and keep it forever, just as it was—faces, light, and landscape.

Since 1994, New Times Media Group has invited local photographers to show us life from their point of view in our annual Winning Images contest. This year, because of COVID-19, we once again conducted an all-digital contest and received more than 475 photos. Our judges narrowed them down to three winners each in eight categories, plus

eight honorable mentions.

Every entry also came in with a \$10 fee, which will be rolled back into prize money for the winners, who also receive awards from the contest's sponsors.

While you can see the winning images from 2021 on the following pages, you can also view them in Paso Robles through July 24 at Studios on the Park, 1130 Pine St., from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and noon to 9 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. ○

Contact Editor Camillia Lanham at clanham@santamariasun.com.

Judges

Brittany App is a local photographer, filmmaker, voice artist, and self-proclaimed shepherdess-in-training. She grew up in Los Osos and now lives off the grid on the vast Carrizo Plain with her rescue-dog, Luna; 13 lucky ducks; and a rag-tag wooly crew of sheep and alpacas. Her first feature-length documentary film, titled *Where There Once Was Water*, is currently touring the 2021 film festival circuit. She ruminates to the beat of Mary Oliver these days: "Tell me, what is it you plan to do ... With your one wild and precious life?"

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRITTANY APP



San Luis Obispo native and perennial Winning Images judge **Peggy Mesler** is a photographer and the owner of The Photo Shop in SLO, where she shares her appreciation for—and knowledge of—photography with customers, clients, and friends. Peggy graduated with a journalism degree from Cal Poly, and she opened her shop in 1995.

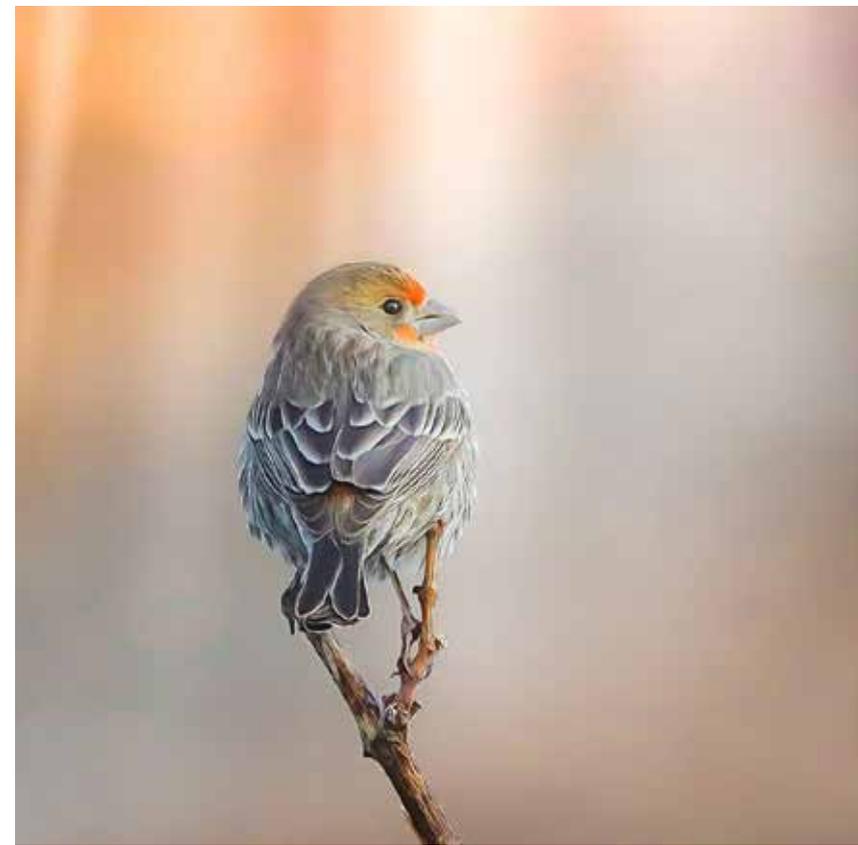
PHOTO COURTESY OF PEGGY MESLER



Stephanie Secrest has a master's degree in photojournalism from Ohio University. She's been a freelancer for more 15 years and was with the press for 21 years before that. Stephanie was invited to attend the exclusive Eddie Adams Workshop, a top honor for photojournalists. She was also a pre-qualification judge for Adobe with its ADAA contest. She's been published in *Newsday*, *The London Sunday News Magazine*, *The Boston Globe*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Baltimore Sun*, and *San Francisco Chronicle* among others and was chief photographer and photo editor for two newspapers. ○

PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHANIE SECREST

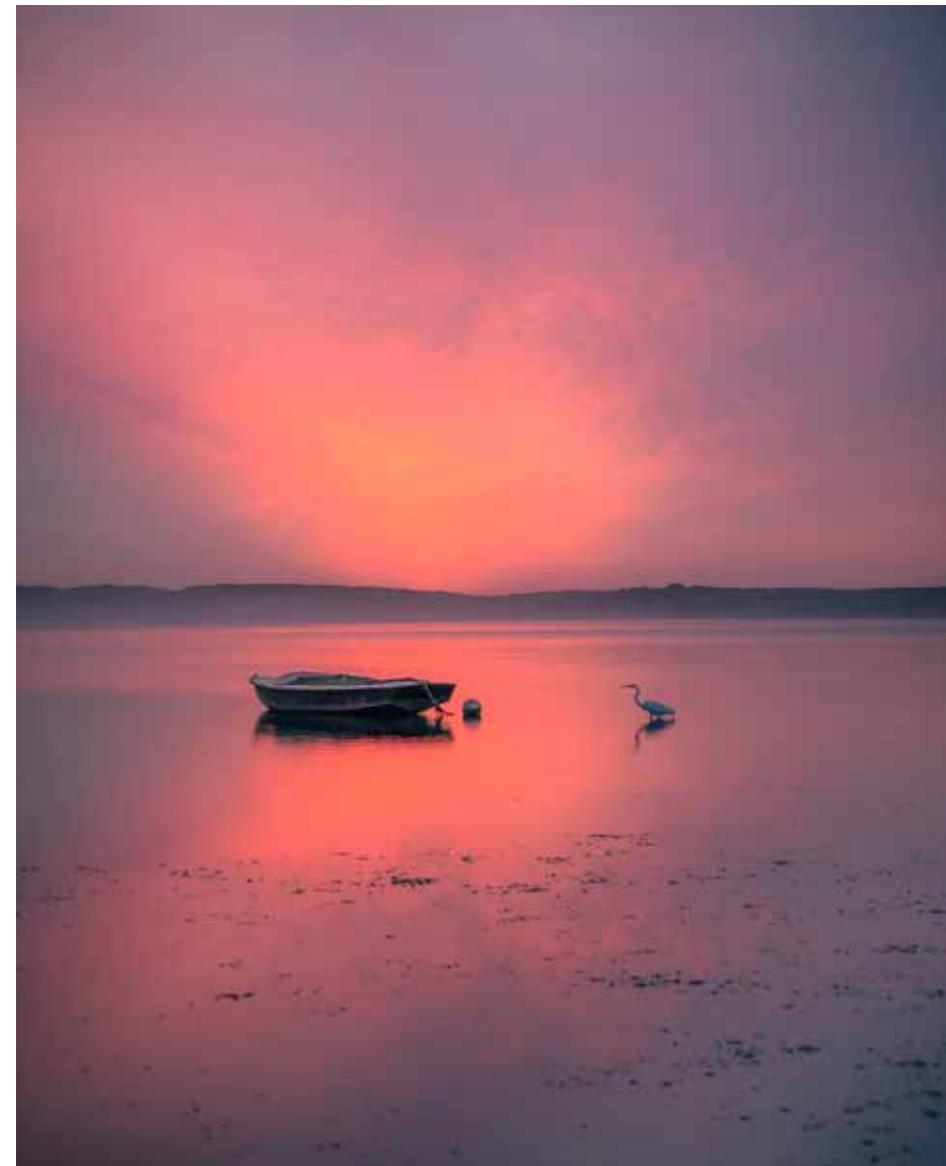




Kelly Bilu, Animals, *House Finch Art*, **Second Place**



Kelly Bilu, Animals, *New Life*, **Third Place**



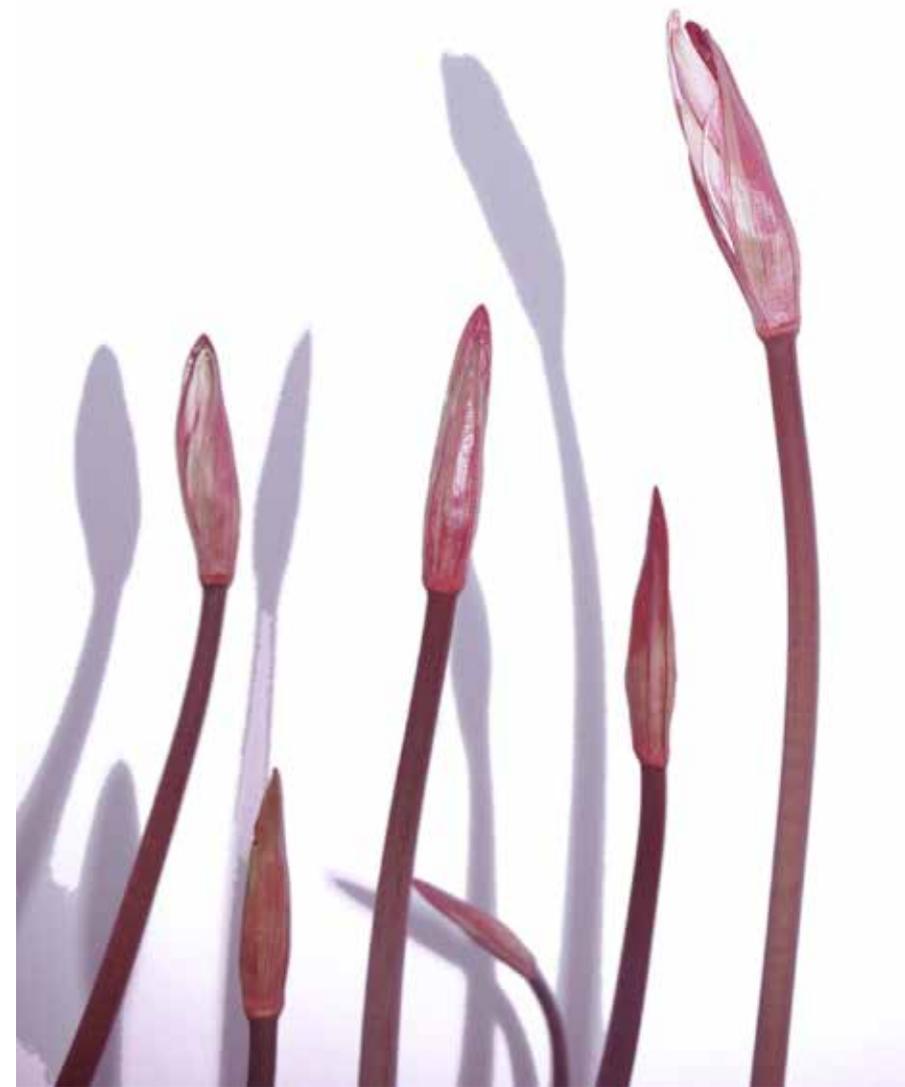
Dylan Kyle, Animals, *Heron vs. Dingy*, **Honorable Mention**



Jonathan Shapiro, Flora, *Purple Flower with Dew*, **Third Place**



Bob Canepa, Flora, *Japanese Maple Leaves*, **Honorable Mention**



Marlin Harms, Flora, *Bare Naked Ladies*, **First Place**



Lisa Wilkerson, Flora, *Water Lily & Friend*, **Second Place**



Kelly Bilu, In Motion, *California Thrasher in flight*, **Second Place**



Lance Wilson, In Motion, *Lunar Eclipse Sequence*, **Honorable Mention**



Bob Canepa, In Motion, *Osprey Breakfast*, **Third Place**



Bob Canepa, In Motion, *The Look*, **First Place**



Kip Lorenzetti, Land/Seascape, *Stroll at Sunset*, **Honorable Mention**



Bill Rumbler, Land/Seascape, *Storm Over Hollister Peak*, **Third Place**



Paul Irving, Land/Seascape, *Misty Morning*, **Second Place**



Jenn Lawrence, People, *World Market*, Honorable Mention



Michael Aponte, Land/Seascape, *Weston Was Here*, First Place



Cheryl Strahl, Open, *Running Toward the Catch*, Second Place



Michael Aponte, People, *Pull*, Third Place



Kathleen Gerber, People, *Local Rancher*, Second Place



Andrew Gin, People, *Untitled*, **First Place**



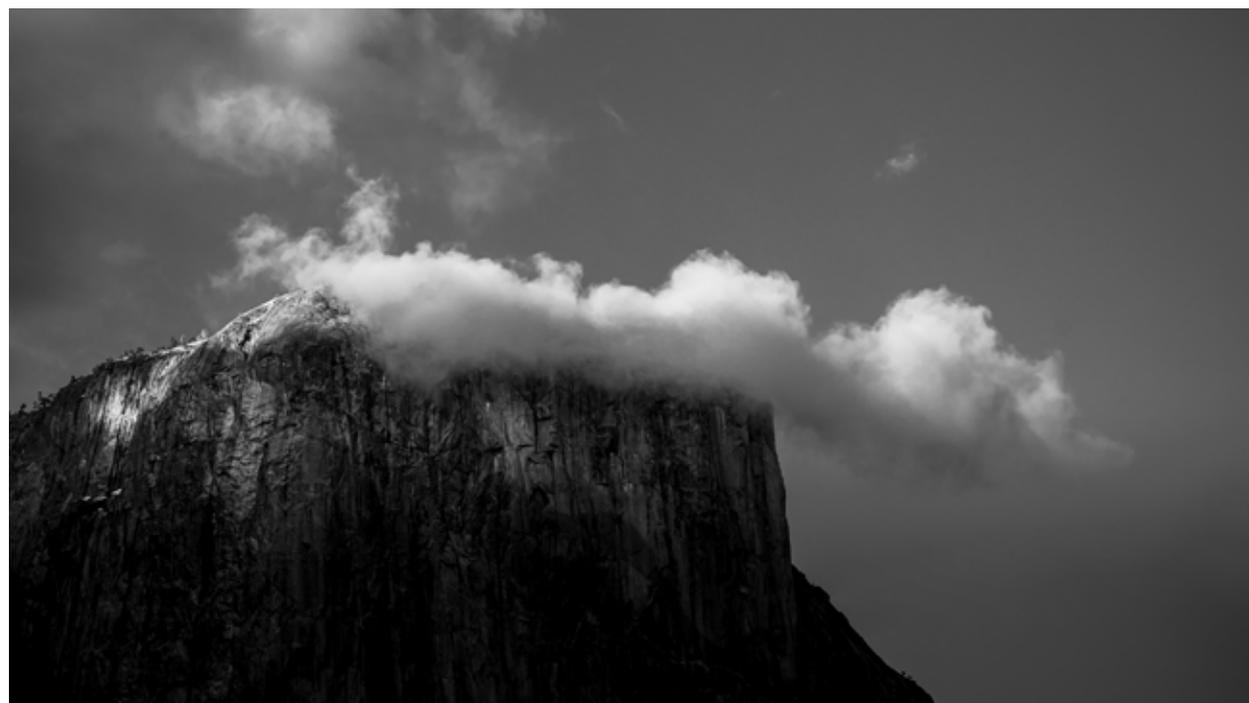
Mimi Ditchie, Travel, *Skyline Arch*, **First Place**



Andy Samarasena, Travel, *New York*, **Second Place**



Jonathan Shapiro, Travel, *Sequoia Moon*, **Third Place**



Kip Lorenzetti, Open, *Last Light on El Capitan*, **First Place**



Lance Wilson, Youth (under 18), *Field of Dreams*, **First Place**



Dylan Kyle, Open, *Tucker and Rachel*, **Honorable Mention**



Lance Wilson, Youth (under 18), *Calm Before the Storm*, **Second Place**



Haley Wilson, Youth (under 18), *Splash*, **Third Place**



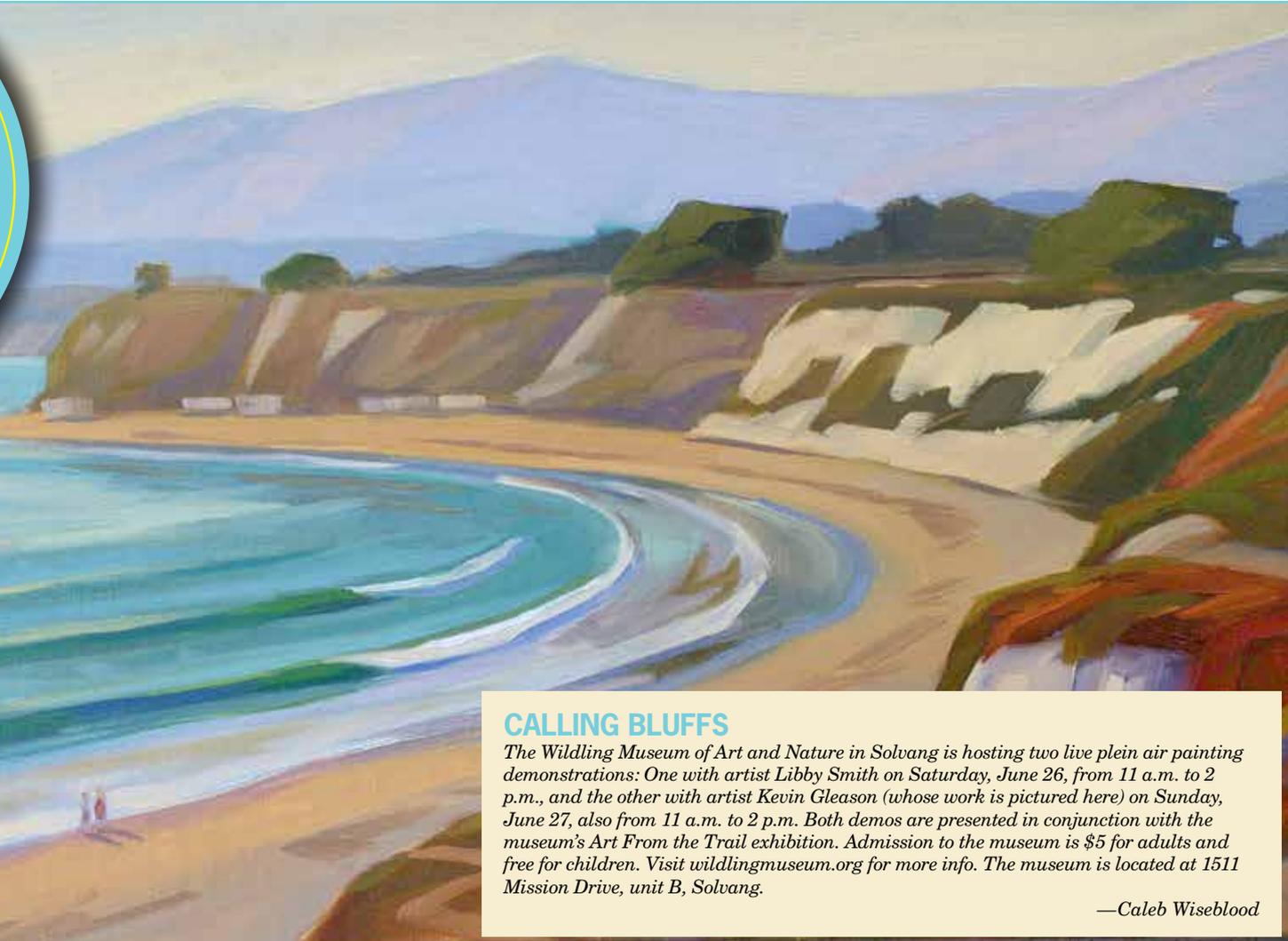
Dawn Cerf, Travel, *Moroccan Music*, **Honorable Mention**



Wyatt Stapp, Youth (under 18), *The King of Snakes*, **Honorable Mention**

HOT STUFF

JUNE 24 – JULY 1
2021



CALLING BLUFFS

The Wildling Museum of Art and Nature in Solvang is hosting two live plein air painting demonstrations: One with artist Libby Smith on Saturday, June 26, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and the other with artist Kevin Gleason (whose work is pictured here) on Sunday, June 27, also from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Both demos are presented in conjunction with the museum's Art From the Trail exhibition. Admission to the museum is \$5 for adults and free for children. Visit wildlingmuseum.org for more info. The museum is located at 1511 Mission Drive, unit B, Solvang.

—Caleb Wiseblood

COURTESY IMAGE BY KEVIN GLEASON

ARTS

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

ART FROM THE TRAIL: EXPLORING THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF SANTA BARBARA COUNTY Celebrates the Central Coast with 38 artworks by 27 local artists from the Oak Group, SLOPE (San Luis Outdoor Painters for the Environment) and SCAPE (Southern California Artists Painting for the Environment). Saturdays, Sundays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. through Oct. 3 \$5 General Admission; ages 17 and under are free. 805-688-1082. wildlingmuseum.org/news/art-from-the-trail. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang.

ART IN THE GARDEN Painters, photographers, poets, and other practitioners of the arts are welcome to gather once a month for a free, self-directed happening described by art therapist Stacey Thompson as "an outlet for people during this difficult time." Last Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. santaynezvalleybotanicgarden.org/. Santa Ynez Botanic Garden, 151 Sycamore Drive, Buellton.

BIO/MASS: CONTEMPORARY MEDITATIONS ON NATURE Invites viewers to engage with art through the eyes of the artists as observers and interpreters of the world around them. The exhibition highlights eleven contemporary artists who create work in series, exploring some element of nature. Saturdays, Sundays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. through Sept. 5 \$5 General Admission; ages 17 and under are free. 805-688-1082. wildlingmuseum.org/news/biomass. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang.

HOLLI HARMON: THE NATURE OF CLOUDS Chandelier crystals, spider plants, and various succulents are among the items suspended by invisible threads, all under a ceiling designed to resemble a cumulus-cloud-filled sky, in artist Holli Harmon's window installation inspired by the water cycle. Through Nov. 1 wildlingmuseum.org. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082.

SOLVANG SCHOOL: BIRD STUDIES A collaboration with educator Erin Dunkle and middle school students enrolled in Solvang School's Art and Science elective class to explore birding and the art of John James Audubon. Through Sept. 12 Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082, wildlingmuseum.org.

LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

A CORNUCOPIA OF COLOR: CHRISTINE JESZECK Featured artist Christine Jeszeck's fluid acrylic work is very bold and colorful. Fridays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. through July 25 Free. Cypress Gallery, 119 E Cypress Ave., Lompoc, 805-705-5328, lompoart.org.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

FEATURED ARTIST: MARILYN DOVER BENSON

On display now through the end of July, at the Shepard Hall Gallery at the Santa Maria Public Library. Exhibiting the works of Central Coast artist Marilyn Dover Benson. Through July 29 Free. cityofsantamaria.org. Shepard Hall Art Gallery - Santa Maria Public Library, 421 South McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-925-0994.

JUNE CAMPS: WINE AND DESIGN Check website for more info. Through June 25, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and Through July 2, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Admission varies. Wine and Design, 3420 Orcutt Road, suite 105, Orcutt, wineanddesign.com/orcutt-ca/.

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. Coelho Academy of Music, 325 E. Betteravia Rd., Santa Maria.

OUTDOOR UKULELE LESSONS For individuals 50 years and up, at no charge. Participants will learn to play chords, melodies, and familiar songs. Five baritone ukuleles are available to borrow, or class members may bring one of their own. Tuesdays, Thursdays, 12:30-1:30 p.m. cityofsantamaria.org/register. Elwin Mussell Senior Center, 510 Park Ave., Santa Maria.

PAINTING IN THE VINEYARD Spend the afternoon sipping delicious wine and capturing the beauty of the vineyard on canvas. June 26, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. \$75. artspotonwheels.com. Ca' Del Grevino Estate Winery, 2510 East Clark Ave., Santa Maria, 805-621-5889.

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. 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. PCPA, Santa Maria, 805-922-8313, pcpa.org.

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. You may also email calendar@newtimeslo.com. Deadline is one week before the issue date on Thursdays. Submissions are subject to editing and approval. Contact Calendar Editor Caleb Wiseblood directly at cwiseblood@newtimeslo.com.

SMCT PRESENTS A BENEFIT DRAG SHOW An evening of food, festivities, and fabulous performers. Presented with the help of H.O.P.E. (House of Pride and Equity), SMCT hopes to give the gift of laughs, music, and fun. Everyone will be encouraged to show their appreciation by cheering and tipping their favorite performers. June 26, 7 p.m. my805tix.com. Santa Maria Civic Theatre, 1660 N. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

SONGS, SONNETS, AND SPRINGTIME (VIRTUAL) Enjoy poetry readings with selections from Shakespeare to Edna St. Vincent Millay to jubilant songs from musical theatre, along with original songs all presented by PCPA's Resident Artists. Through June 27 Free to stream. pcpa.org/Springtime/. PCPA: The Pacific Conservatory Theatre, Santa Maria, 805-922-8313.

SUMMER CAMPS AT WINE AND DESIGN Offered during various weeks of June and July (check site for full list of camps). Through July 23 Wine and Design, 3420 Orcutt Road, suite 105, Orcutt, wineanddesign.com/orcutt-ca/.

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.

TEEN RAINBOW PAPER EXPERIMENT PACKS: SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY Pick up a pack to transform plain black paper into a beautiful piece of art with just a few supplies. Combining STEAM concepts, this unique pack is open to junior high and high school students only. June 26, June 28, June 29, July 1, July 2 and July 3 Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

TRASH, A MUSICAL ABOUT A VERY UNTIDY DEATH The fourth and most ambitious production of the LATG. A cast of 14. A dozen original songs. Music and comedy on a serious theme. Tickets sales donated to nonprofit organizations; more than \$12,000 raised to date. July 2, 8-9:30 p.m. and July 3, 8-9:30 p.m. \$25. 805-344-1144. latgstore.square.site. Los Alamos Theatre Group, 515 Bell Street, Los Alamos.

VALLEY ART GALLERY: FEATURED ARTIST DENISE GIMBEL The Valley Art Gallery's new art exhibit at the Santa Maria Airport opens June 8 and runs

through July. Featured artist Denise Gimbel displays her recent collection of contemporary, colorful, abstract paintings of giant kelp, manzanita and mushrooms. Other local artists' work on view also. Through July 1 Free. 805-550-8449. valleygallery.org. Santa Maria Airport, 3249 Terminal Dr., Santa Maria.

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.

YOUTH ARTS ALIVE CLASSES The City of Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Department and Youth Arts Alive will be offering youth arts classes, at no charge, for youth and teens ages 8 to 18 years of age. Classes held outdoors. Through July 2 Free. youthartsalive.org. Abel Maldonado Community Youth Center, 600 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

YOUTH SUMMER CAMP AT HOME PACKS Create a summer camp experience at home; each pack has outdoor and indoor activities. June 24, June 25 and June 26 Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

INTRO TO IMPROV Looking for something new in 2021? Intro to Improv classes are now in-person and they're a casual and fun way to build confidence and develop your improv skills. Wednesdays, 6-8 p.m. through July 14 \$150. centralcoastcomedytheater.com. Broad Street Public House, 3590 Broad Street, San Luis Obispo, 805-439-3055.

MIXED MEDIA FOR AGES 5-6 AND 7-12 For ages 5-6 (Mondays) and 7-12 (Tuesdays). Mondays, Tuesdays, 3:15-4:15 p.m. 805-668-2125. lila.community. LiLA Creative Community, 1147 East Grand Ave. suite 101, Arroyo Grande.

OPEN STUDIO FOR ADULTS Call to reserve. All materials included. Tuesdays, 6-9 p.m. and Wednesdays, 12:30-3:30 p.m. \$35. 805-668-2125. lila.community. LiLA Creative Community, 1147 East Grand Ave. suite 101, Arroyo Grande.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

ACT SUMMER THEATRE CAMPS Enjoy a whole week of theatrical fun in a safe, welcoming environment. Students (ages 5-18) will learn a variety of theater skills, including improvisation, movement, character exploration, and acting basics. Camps conclude with a performance for family and friends. Scholarships available. Mondays-Fridays, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. through July 30 \$150-\$300. 805-781-3889. slorep.org/education/act-theatre-camps/. San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre, 888 Morro St., San Luis Obispo.

ARTS continued page 21

INDEX

Arts[20]

Culture & Lifestyle.....[22]

Food & Drink.....[23]

Music[23]

ATMOSPHERES DEEP SLOMA presents a multimedia exhibition exploring themes of ecology and environmentalism. Through Aug. 1 sloma.org/exhibition/atmospheres-deep/. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

BRUCE EVERETT: OPEN STUDIO ART TOUR Small to large local landscapes. Open daily. Call or email for address and information. ongoing 818-384-6125. bruceeverett.net. Private home, Private address, TBA.

CALLING ALL ARTISTS: CAMBRIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS VIRTUAL JURIED SPRING SHOW Seeking artists for Spring Juried Exhibit. Art Take-in (online) deadline is April 26. Questions: gallery@ cambriaarts.org. Mondays-Sundays. through June 27 free. 805-434-7060. cambriaarts.org. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (ABRIDGED) SLO REP returns with a madcap comedy, which features 3 actors who weave their wicked way through all of Shakespeare's comedies, histories, and tragedies in one wild ride that will leave you breathless and helpless with laughter. Fridays, Saturdays, 7 p.m. and Saturdays, Sundays, 2 p.m. through Aug. 8 \$20-\$35. 805-781-3889. slorep.org. San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre, 888 Morro St., San Luis Obispo.

CONTROLLED CHAOS Art Central is proud to present Judy Maynard in a solo exhibit featuring her latest alcohol ink paintings. Please stop by the gallery to view this colorful exhibit during store hours. Mondays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sundays, 12-4 p.m. through June 28 Free. 805-747-4200. artcentralslo.com. Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

GRAY HAIRS AND GOLD GRILLS: DIGITAL INSTALLATION A digital installation that visualizes the upcoming Lorde Sanctus single of the same name. One purchase unlocks a minidisc player and a minidisc with a recording of the single, a custom 18-karat six piece bottom gold grill, and a 10% streaming royalty from the Tidal, Spotify, and Apple Music revenue. Visit site for bidding info. **June 25** lordesanctus.com. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

LINDA WEINBERG-HAMMER: PASTEL EXHIBIT Pastel artist Linda Weinberg-Hammer will have her works on display. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, please contact the artist directly. ongoing 913-522-9457. Jamaica You, 1998 Santa Barbara Ave., San Luis Obispo.

OBJECTIFYING SLOMA presents a showcase of contemporary sculpture by Elisa Ortega Montilla. Through June 27 sloma.org/exhibition/objectifying/. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

PAINT YOUR CELEBRITY CRUSH Have a crush and want everyone to know it? Honor your feelings by immortalizing your celebrity crush on canvas. We will create a beautiful monochromatic painting with acrylic. Ticket price includes all materials. **June 26**, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. \$40. 805-550-2181. blackrabbitstudioslo.com/ classes. Black Rabbit Studio SLO, 1154 Mill St., San Luis Obispo.

SNAIL MAIL PRINTS: THE CENTRAL COAST PRINTMAKERS The Central Coast Printmakers started an art project during quarantine to stay connected, they took inspiration from the Exquisite Corpse Project popularized by 1920's surrealists. In their version, each began an original print and mailed it to the next member to add to it. Sundays, 12-4 p.m. and Mondays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. through Aug. 30 Free. 805-747-4200. artcentralslo.com/portfolio/central-coast-printmakers/. Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

SPIRITUAL MOVIE DISCUSSION (VIRTUAL) Supported by Unity 5 Cities, this weekly virtual group discusses popular movies with spiritual themes (please watch movies in advance). Contact Melissa at meliss.crist@gmail.com to be added to the email list and receive the link. Tuesdays, 6-7:30 p.m. Free. 805-440-9461. unity5cities.org. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

SUMMER CAMP: VIDEO GAME CODING, CARTOONING, CLAYMATION, AND MORE Ray Mullikin (of Raytoons Cartoons) will be teaching his online classes through OutschooL this year instead of Cuesta College For Kids. He will be teaching classes in Cartooning, Claymation, 2-D Animation, Video Game Coding, Comic Book Making, and much more. Mondays-Fridays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. through Aug. 6 \$40. 805-590-7334. outschooL.com. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

TEEN ART WAREHOUSE Free art space and supplies provided for teens, Monday and Friday afternoons. Photography corner for photo shoots and videos. Also features painting, collaging, sewing and more. Mondays, Fridays, 12-1 p.m. through Aug. 20 Free. 805-270-3346. t-mha.org. Transitions Mental Health Warehouse, 784 High Street, 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. 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.com/category/gallery-exhibits/virtual-gallery/. Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

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

VIRTUAL STUDENT EXHIBITION This year, the Cuesta College Harold J Miossi Student Exhibition went online. View student work, including the Salon des Refuses, on the website. Mondays-Sundays hjmgallery2020studentshow.org/. Harold J. Miossi Gallery, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo, 805-546-3202.

NORTH SLO COUNTY

COASTAL ATTITUDES The ocean batters the land in endless waves; no apologies, no letup. The land is stubborn and hangs on, then throws a handful of scenic highway right back at the ocean. Through June 30 Paso Robles Art Association Gallery, 1130 Pine St., Paso Robles, pasoroblesartassociation.org.

GLASSHEAD STUDIO ANNIVERSARY POP-UP ART SHOW Glasshead Studio is celebrating 2 years in business with a Pop-Up Art Show, featuring art from several local artists on display and for purchase. This free event is open to all ages. **June 27**, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. 805-464-2633. glassheadstudio.com. Glasshead Studio, 8793 Plata Lane, Suite H, Atascadero.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM Go online for more info. Through June 28 Studios on the Park, 1130 Pine St., Paso Robles, 805-238-9800, studiosonthePark.org.

NEW MEDIA DISCOVERY SATURDAY Explore new art media without the investment: encaustics (wax media), watercolor, tools, collage transfer, jelly printing, and more. All supplies provided. Taught by local artist, Vicky Hoffman. **June 26**, 1-4 p.m. \$50. 310-993-1732. Marie A Ramey, 7460 Pinal Ave, Atascadero.

THE RAINBOW LIZARD (VIRTUAL PERFORMANCES) Presented by the Traveling Lantern Theater Company and the Paso Robles City Library. Through June 26 Paso Robles City Library, 1000 Spring St., Paso Robles, 237-3870.

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

TEEN SUMMER CAMP (AGES 13-18) Students learn how to safely use the various tools needed to create unique designs in a working glass studio. Projects include a stained glass sun catcher and a fused glass plate or bowl. Limited to 6 campers. Masks required. Pre-registration required. Every 4 days, 9 a.m.-noon \$375. 805-464-2633. glassheadstudio.com. Glasshead Studio, 8793 Plata Lane, Suite H, Atascadero.

TIE DYE CLASS Create a one of a kind, tie-dye shirt. You'll learn a few different design methods, and choose from a variety of fun colors. All supplies are provided, including aprons and gloves. **June 26**, 12-3 p.m. \$30. 805-464-0533. the1artery.com. The ARtery, 5890 Traffic Way, Atascadero.

WATER BEAD STRESS BALL GRAB AND GO KIT Part of the 2021 Summer Reading Program. **June 29**, 4 p.m. Paso Robles City Library, 1000 Spring St., Paso Robles, 237-3870.

WESTERN TRADITIONS The West conjures up images of cowboys, Native Americans, ranching, and open plains. For some, the west represents a rough lifestyle that hasn't changed in over 100 years. **June 29-Aug. 30** Studios on the Park, 1130 Pine St., Paso Robles, 805-238-9800, studiosonthePark.org.

WINGS OF CHANGE: VETERANS' VOICES 4 ART EXHIBITION An outdoor butterfly sculpture garden. Through June 30 310-621-7543. Deprise Brescia Art Gallery, 829 10th St., Paso Robles.

NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

ARDELLA SWANBERG: FINE ART WATERCOLOR Ardella's painting inspirations have been the subjects found in the many places she has lived—from living on a cattle ranch north of Cayucos to the beautiful harbor of Morro Bay. Through June 29 Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

ARTIST SALON 2021 EXHIBIT This special exhibit celebrating 70 years of MBAA will feature MBAA Member Artists and their choice of artwork that best represents their personal artistic journey. Artwork will be accompanied by the artist's photo and brief bio. All art media and artistic approaches will be represented. Through July 12, 12-4 p.m. Free. 805-772-2504. artcentermorrobay.org. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

ILLUMINATE: VIRTUAL SHOW Cambria Center for the Arts presents its spring juried virtual exhibit. Mondays-Sundays, 12-11:30 p.m. through June 27 Free. 805-434-7060. cambriaarts.org. Cambria Center for the Arts, 1350 Main St., Cambria.

MY 805 TIX
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Virtual Lighthouse Tours ON DEMAND
Point San Luis Lighthouse, Avila Beach



In-Person Lighthouse Tours WEDNESDAYS & SATURDAYS
Point San Luis Lighthouse, Avila Beach



Chakra Meditation and Breath Work THURS & FRI, JUNE 24 & 25
Aurora Adventures, Morro Bay



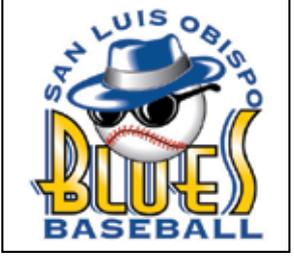
SLO Blues Baseball vs. Humboldt Crabs
FRI, SAT, SUN, JUNE 25, 26, 27
Sinsheimer Park, SLO



Benefit Drag Show SATURDAY, JUNE 26
Santa Maria Civic Theatre, Santa Maria



SLO Blues Baseball vs. Conejo Oaks
FRIDAY, JULY 2
Sinsheimer Park, SLO



SLO Blues Baseball vs. Arroyo Seco Saints
SATURDAY, JULY 3
Sinsheimer Park, SLO



SLO Blues Baseball vs. Santa Barbara Foresters
TUES & WED, JULY 6 & 7
Sinsheimer Park, SLO



Drive-Thru BBQ Fundraiser SATURDAY, JULY 10
Atascadero United Methodist Church



The Mother Corn Shuckers SATURDAY, JULY 10
Point San Luis Lighthouse, Avila Beach



SLO Blues Baseball vs. Orange County Riptide
SATURDAY, JULY 17
Sinsheimer Park, SLO



Patriot Cruise of San Luis Bay SUNDAY, JULY 18
Point San Luis Lighthouse, Avila Beach



The Frenz SATURDAY, JULY 24
Point San Luis Lighthouse, Avila Beach



Yoga at the Lighthouse SATURDAY, JULY 31
The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center



Yoga at the Lighthouse SATURDAY, JULY 31
Point San Luis Lighthouse, Avila Beach

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OPENS SAT, MAY 29

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sbnature.org/tickets



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MEDIA SPONSOR: NOOZHAWK



ARTS from page 21

MOSAICS FOR BEGINNERS Check website to see if in-person class or kit pick-up. All projects are super simple and perfect for a beginner. Everything is provided to complete the project including the base piece, broken china pieces, baubles, glue, grout, and instruction. Students will need a wheeled nipper. **June 27**, 10-11 a.m. Various. 805-286-5993. CreativeMeTime.com. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

NANCY JENSEN: FINE ART WATERCOLOR In her watercolor paintings, Jensen honors the fruits of the harvest in local vineyards, the springtime surprises of bright wildflowers and blooming gardens, the fresh produce of local farms, and the gifts of the sea scattered on local sandy beaches. Through June 29 Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

SEA GLASS HAMMERED METAL JEWELRY

Check website to see if in-person class or kit pick-up. Learn how to drill holes in sea glass, how to harden, strengthen and texturize metal, and basic jewelry making techniques to create a gorgeous jewelry set. No experience necessary. Preregistration required. **June 26**, 1-3 p.m. Various. 805-286-5993. CreativeMeTime.com. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

SEA GLASS WIRE WRAP JEWELRY

Learn basic wire wrapping to create a lovely necklace and two pierced earrings. All materials are provided including local sea glass, jewelry findings, and wire except for wire cutters, round nose pliers and flat nose pliers. Check website to see if in-person or kit pick-up. **June 26**, 10-11 a.m. \$35. 805-286-5993. CreativeMeTime.com. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

LOMPOC/VANDEMBERG

2021 SUMMER DROP-IN Features outdoor games, movie days, arts and crafts, sports, and more. For ages 6 to 12. Sibling discount offered. Presented by the City of Lompoc Recreation Division. Mondays-Fridays, 12:30-5:15 p.m. through Aug. 13 Admission varies. 805-875-8100. Anderson Recreation Center, 125 W. Walnut Ave., Lompoc, cityoflompoc.com/parks_rec/anderson.htm.

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. ongoingpartnersincaring.org. Santa Maria, Citywide, Santa Maria.

CENTRAL COAST CORVETTE CLUB Open to Corvette owners and enthusiasts. First Thursday of every month, 7 p.m. Free. 805-934-3948. Home Motors, 1313 E. Main St., Santa Maria.

FEEL GOOD YOGA Tuesdays, Thursdays, 8:30-9:30 a.m. 805-937-9750. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

FUN IN THE SUN JUNE TEEN PROGRAM Local teens are invited to participate in a free outdoor event series with various activities to kick off a season of summer fun. The four-week program is open to all 7th through 12th grade students. Wednesdays, 4 & 5:15 p.m. through July 1 Free. cityofsantamaria.org/register. Abel Maldonado Community Youth Center, 600 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. Divine Inspiration, 947 E Orange St., Santa Maria.

LINE DANCING Mondays, 6:30-9 p.m. 805-937-9750. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

REFLEXOLOGY AT OASIS Tuesdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 805-937-9750. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

SUMMER READING PROGRAM: SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY Sign up for the Summer Reading Program at your local library branch. There is a special

reading program for every age level from toddlers to adults. Each program offers activities and challenges as well as prizes for reading, based on age level. Through July 31 Free. 805-925-0994. cityofsantamaria.beanstack.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

TEEN ANIME CLUB PACKS: SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY Register to pick up a Teen Anime Club Pack, which will include something bookish, crafty, and of course, something yummy. When you register you will also be invited to a Zoom meeting on June 28 at 4 p.m. **June 24, June 25 and June 26** Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

FILE PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MOLLY RINGWALD PROJECT



MOLLY HOLIDAY

The Molly Ringwald Project is performing on Saturday, June 26, starting at 6 p.m., in the Solvang Festival Theater's Patron Garden. Guests of this outdoor concert can expect to hear a mix of 1980s pop and rock covers. For tickets and more info, call (805) 686-1789 or visit solvangfestivaltheater.org. The venue is located at 420 2nd St., Solvang.

—C.W.

TEEN STEAM MAKER SPACE PACKS (KIT 2)

Teens, get a free STEAM Pack from any SMPL branch. This project was supported in whole or in part by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian. **June 24, June 25 and June 26** Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

TEEN STEAM MAKER SPACE PACKS (KIT 2): SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY

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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.

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

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

AMPSURF KIDS SUMMER SURF CAMP (WEEKLY JUNE TO SEPT) All children with all abilities invited to participate. Early signups can use promo code KIDSURF21 for \$50 off. Mondays-Fridays, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. through Sept. 3 \$0-\$350. 805-441-5271. ampsurf.org. Addie Street Surfer Parking Lot, Addie Street, Pismo Beach.

AMPSURF LEARN TO SURF CLINIC Many believe that the ocean has the power to heal; surfing is one form used to help people with mental and physical disabilities. **June 26**, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. \$50. 805-441-5271. ampsurf.org. Addie Street Surfer Parking Lot, Addie Street, Pismo Beach.

BRAIN AND BODY BOOTCAMP FOR KIDS For ages 9-15; attend 1 day; 3 days; or 9 days. 6/15-7/1; 7/27-8/12. Tuesdays-Thursdays, 1:15-2:45 p.m. through July 1 \$50. 805-295-9505. mpspost.wordpress.com/applied-neurology-2/. Central Core, 1160 Price Street, Pismo Beach.

CATCH OF THE CENTRAL COAST: 27TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISER All proceeds will directly support the aquarium and local marine science education. Features multi course dinner, live music, and more. **June 26**, 4:30 p.m. Central Coast Aquarium, 50 San Juan St., Avila Beach, 805-595-7280, centralcoastaquarium.org.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE continued page 23

SUMMER CAMP (GRADES 1-6) Held at different elementary schools in Nipomo. Camps feature games, arts and crafts, movies, STEAM activities, and more. Through Aug. 13 805-929-5437. nipomorecreation.org. Nipomo, Citywide, Nipomo.

SUMMER YOUTH BASKETBALL CAMP All skill levels welcome. For boys and girls, grades 1-6. **June 28-July 1**, 9 a.m.-noon 805-929-5437. nipomorecreation.org. Nipomo High School, 525 N Thompson Ave, Nipomo.

VAIRFEST A car show and benefit raffle in the Village of Arroyo Grande. All net proceeds will be donated to SLO Food Bank. To enter your car, please visit our website. Spectators welcomed at no charge. **June 26**, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. 805-481-5757. centralcoastcorsa.org. Heritage Square Park, 201 Nelson St., Arroyo Grande.

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, 5cityswimschool.com.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

CIRCUS VARGAS Circus Vargas is proud to present a new 2021 production, "Mr. V's Big Top Dream", at the Madonna Inn. Check website for tickets and more info. Mondays, Wednesdays-Sundays, 7 p.m. through July 5 \$28-\$70. circusvargas.com. Madonna Inn, 100 Madonna Rd, San Luis Obispo, 877-468-3861.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND BOUNDARIES Have your communication skills gotten a little rusty during the shutdown? How can you improve your relationships and workplace communication skills? This is important, and so is allowing others to express themselves. Tuesdays, 9-10:30 a.m. through Aug. 17 Free. t-mha.org. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

HEARST CASTLE VIRTUAL TOURS Enjoy a virtual tour with a State Park tour guide and learn fascinating stories behind the art (6/18) and architecture (6/25) of Hearst Castle. Great for all ages. Registration required (see link). Part of the 2021 Summer Reading Program. **June 25**, 11:15 a.m.-noon Free. 805-781-5775. slolibrary.org. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

MEET AN AMAZING ANIMAL EACH WEEK (LIVE VIA ZOOM) Each Tuesday, meet a different animal through Zoom, and learn about the people who work with them. Part of the 2021 Summer Reading Program. Tuesdays, 10:30-11 a.m. through July 27 Free. 805-781-

5775. slolibrary.org. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION A safe place to experience reality through mindfulness and meditation practices. Learn about benefits of mindfulness; being aware of what you're doing, thinking and feeling in the moment. Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.-noon through Aug. 26 Free. 805-270-3346. t-mha.org. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

MODERN DANCE FITNESS CLASS FOR ADULTS Rhythmic and exploratory movement rooted in expressive modern dance style. This class is suitable for all levels. Wednesdays, 9-10 a.m. World Rhythm and Motion Studio, 3422 Miguelito Ct., Studio #3, San Luis Obispo, 805-596-0609, worldrhythmndmotion.com.

ONE COOL EARTH'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY GARDEN PARTY Features booths, live music, workshops, and more. **June 25**, 4-7 p.m. bigbig5lo.com. San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd., San Luis Obispo.

RENEWING THE PROCESS OF CREATION (ZOOM) John Horsley will be leading four week on-line book study based on "Renewing the Process of Creation" by Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson. This book draws on process theology, Judaism, and science to consider the meaning of Creation, and humanity's role. Thursdays, 10-11:15 a.m. through June 24 Free. 805-528-0652. stbenslososos.org. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

SEA ANIMALS OF THE CENTRAL COAST Meet a fascinating sea creature with the Central Coast Aquarium. Learn about crabs, sharks, rays, and other amazing local sea animals. Part of the Summer Reading Program. Videos premiere on Mondays on our YouTube channel. 31st of every month, 8:30-9 a.m. through Aug. 2 Free. 805-781-5775. slolibrary.org. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

SLO BLUES BASEBALL Come see the Blues take on various teams at the ballpark. Tickets are limited; early purchases recommended. Visit site for more details. **June 25**, 6 p.m., **July 2**, 6 p.m. and **July 3**, 6 p.m. my805tix.com. Sinsheimer Park, 900 Southwood Dr., San Luis Obispo, 805-781-7222.

SLOROLL: A COMMUNITY INITIATIVE A free pop-up roller skating event. Locations posted the day of at 4 p.m.

Follow @thesloroll. First Saturday of every month Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

STEAM EXPERIMENTS LIVE As part of the SLO County Library's Summer Reading Program, join a Zoom STEAM class on making slime, kitchen science, and more. Pick up a free science kit at your local library the week before (while supplies last). Registration required. Wednesdays, 10:30-11 a.m. through June 30 slolibrary.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. Kalyra Winery, 343 N. Refugio Rd., Santa Ynez.

STANDING SUN: CELLAR CLUB Visit site for Cellar Club details and more info. Mondays-Thursdays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. 805-691-9413. standingsunwines.com. Standing Sun Wines, 92 2nd St., Unit D, Buellton, 805-691-9413.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

PRESQU'ILE WINERY: WINE CLUB Call or go online to make a reservation to taste at the winery or find more info on the winery's Wine Club offerings. ongoing presquilewine.com/club/. Presqu'ile Winery, 5391 Presqu'ile Dr., Santa Maria, 805-937-8110.

WINE AND DESIGN VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON CLASSES Check Wine and Design's Orcutt website for the complete list of virtual and in-person classes, for various ages. Also offering kids camps for summer. ongoing Varies. wineanddesign.com/orcutt. Wine and Design, 3420 Orcutt Road, suite 105, Orcutt.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

SLO GRILLED CHEESE FESTIVAL Community members and visitors are encouraged to visit participating restaurants, try the grilled cheese sandwich, take a pic, post a Yelp review, then go to the website to vote: Best SLO Grilled Cheese 2021. Through June 30 Prices vary. slogrilledcheese.com. San Luis Obispo, Citywide, SLO.

NORTH SLO COUNTY

CENTRAL COAST RESERVE WEEKEND:

LAKESIDE WINE FESTIVAL Escape into the magic of the Central Coast Reserve Experience with a full weekend to enjoy various festivities in Atascadero. **June 25**, 5-8 p.m., **June 26**, 8 a.m.-noon and **June 27**, 3-8 p.m. Varies based on event. atascaderochamber.org. Atascadero Lake Park, 9305 Pismo Ave., Atascadero, 461-5000.

MUSIC

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

TRANSFORMATION: BENEFIT CONCERT Featuring pianist Robert Cassidy and Camerata Pacifica's Principal Cellist Ani Aznavoorian. Donations will be encouraged to benefit the upcoming Santa Ynez Valley Concert Series season running from October through early May. **June 26**, 5-6 p.m. Free; donations accepted to benefit SLO Food Bank. smitv.org/syv-concert-series.html. St. Mark's in the Valley Episcopal Church, 2901 Nojoqui Ave., Los Olivos.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

CENTRAL COAST BEAT SOCIAL: COURTYARD CULTURE An ongoing series of outdoor music events at different venues in Santa Maria, Guadalupe, and other cities along the Central Coast. Hosted by Central Coast Beat Social. ongoing centralcoastbeatsocial.com/. Santa Maria, Citywide, Santa Maria.

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. Soundcloud (Santa Maria Philharmonic), Online, Santa Maria.

NORTH SLO COUNTY

AMERICANA SONGWRITERS PLAY LIVE PASO SHOW Songwriters at Play host Steve Key is joined by folk-country vocalist Ynana Rose, and storytelling troubadour Bobbo Byrnes. Joining us for guest sets: Sonya Heller, Lauren Hatcher, and Kevin Sean. **June 26**, 12-3 p.m. Free. 805-204-6821. stevekey.com/events. Sculpterra Winery, 5015 Linne Rd., Paso Robles.

NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

FIVE PARTS DEVIL LIVE **June 27**, 1 p.m. Castoro Cellars, 1315 N. Bethel Rd., Templeton, 805-238-0725, castorocellars.com. ☉

PCPA PACIFIC CONSERVATORY THEATRE

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

Together

A Musical Journey



Solvang Festival Theater
July 21 - Aug 8

Written by Erik Stein
Music Selected & Arranged by Michael Wilkins

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AT EMERSON'S BAR AND GRILL



SOLVANG FESTIVAL THEATER
AUG 19 - SEPT 5

BY LANE ROBERTSON

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COURTESY PHOTOS BY RYLO MEDIA DESIGN, RYAN C. LOYD

Arts Briefs

Santa Maria Civic Theatre and HOPE co-host A Benefit Drag Show

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE SANTA MARIA CIVIC THEATRE



The Santa Maria Civic Theatre presents a special one-night fundraiser event, A Benefit Drag Show, in collaboration with House of Pride and Equality (HOPE), on Saturday, June 26, from 7 to 9 p.m. Attendees of this adults-only show (only ages 18 and older will be admitted) are required to wear masks inside of both the lobby and theater. During the performance, only cast members will be unmasked.

Guests are encouraged to arrive early and enjoy a pre-show reception, where they'll have the opportunity to meet cast members, enjoy food and drinks, and visit information tables hosted by local LGBTQ groups.

Admission to the show ranges from \$25 to \$35, and tickets are available for purchase in advance at my805tix.com. Proceeds from the event will support the Santa Maria Civic Theatre as the group recovers from the financial impacts of its closure throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

To find out more about the performance and other upcoming programs hosted by the Santa Maria Civic Theatre, visit smct.org. The theater is located at 1660 McClelland St., Santa Maria.

Gallery Los Olivos holds July duo show, Inside/Outside

Inside/Outside, an upcoming duo exhibition at Gallery Los Olivos, premieres on Thursday, July 1, and is scheduled to remain on display through Saturday, July 31. This exhibit showcases pastel paintings by Jim Tyler and oil paintings by Renée Kelleher.

COURTESY IMAGE BY RENEE KELLEHER

A pastel painter for more than 20 years, Tyler is best known for his distinctive style, especially his emphasis on lighting and composition. Tyler often focuses on contrasting strong lighting and deep shadows within his pastel pieces. This local artist is a founding member of the Central Coast Pastel Society, and he's also a member of both the Pastel Society of the West Coast and the Sierra Pastel Society.

Kelleher (whose work is pictured above) is also drawn to capturing strong contrasts in her oil paintings, most of which are interior landscapes and still life pieces. Also similar to Tyler, Kelleher enjoys painting moments from everyday life, she explained in a press release from the gallery.

"Both of us find inspiration in our daily lives. As we come upon special lighting, touching an edge of something, for instance, it's as if that moment in time is ours to capture on paper or canvas."

To find out more about Inside/Outside, call Gallery Los Olivos at (805) 688-7517 or visit gallerylosolivos.com. The gallery is located at 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos. ○

Arts Briefs is compiled by Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood. Send information to cwiseblood@santamariasun.com.



TAMING OF THE CREW: Cast members Jeff Salsbury, Suzy Newman, and Billy Breed (pictured, left to right) task themselves to perform as many highlights as they can from all 38 of Shakespeare's plays in a single sitting during San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre's production of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare [abridged]*.

A bard day's night

Live, in-person theater makes a Central Coast comeback with SLO Rep's The Complete Works of William Shakespeare [abridged]

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

To see, or not to see, that is the question. In the case of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare [abridged]*—San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre's first live, in-person production in more than a year—the answer is yes!

Cast members Billy Breed, Suzy Newman, and Jeff Salsbury—three very familiar faces to Central Coast theater buffs, each sharing past credits with both PCPA and the Great American Melodrama—task themselves to perform as many highlights as they can from all 38 of Shakespeare's plays in a single sitting, dividing the major and minor roles among themselves, in under three hours.

The end result is chaotically irreverent in all the right ways, paying tribute to Shakespeare's works while checking off too many pop culture references to keep track of—*Charlie's Angels*, *Edward Scissorhands*, *The Matrix*, the list goes on. Even if younger viewers don't get *The Love Boat* jokes, they'll have the last laugh when older folks start scratching their heads over the *Mortal Kombat* spoof.

But before the trio's deep dive into Shakespeare's portfolio begins, Salsbury (as himself, or assumedly an exaggerated version of himself, simply referred to as Jeff) kicks off the show by reminding the audience to silence

their phones and refrain from recording the production in any shape or form, while ironically posing for a recurring camera flash.

Newman and Breed, also referred to by their first names, soon make their introductions to the audience as well, and once that fourth wall is torn down, it never goes back up.

In fact, some of the best bits in the show involve audience participation. While tackling Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the trio enlists one audience member to play Ophelia during the "Nunnery Scene." Breed asks for the lucky participant's name but immediately opts to call them "Bob" instead, as it's much easier to remember.

During this segment, the rest of the audience is broken up into three sections (representing Ophelia's ego, superego, and id, respectively), and each section is instructed to yell out a separate phrase over and over again, up until "Bob" lets out a much needed, therapeutic shriek. In those moments, it's as if the audience is collectively slipping into madness together. It's honestly a fever dream of an experience (of the midsummer night variety, so to speak).

Luckily for attendees, the darkest bit in the show doesn't involve audience participation, as the trio reinterpret *Titus Andronicus* as a Food Network cooking show, with a Guy Fieri-esque version of Titus (played by Newman) cracking jokes about grinding the bones of his enemies and baking their decapitated heads. This skit gives a whole new meaning to Emeril's "Bam!" catchphrase.

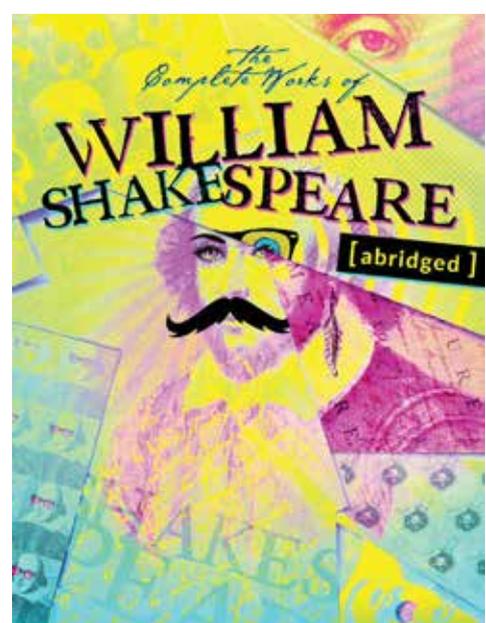
The show's director, Kevin Harris (SLO Rep's managing artistic director since 2008), has lovingly described *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare [abridged]* as a celebration of not



SHAKESPEARE 'I' LOVE: As the self-described preeminent Shakespeare scholar in the area, Suzy (played by Suzy Newman), helps provide literary context for each play she and her two fellow cast members attempt to tackle.



KINDRED KINSMEN: Billy Breed (left) and Jeff Salsbury (right) switch back and forth between several roles of major and minor characters, with some characters only lasting a few seconds each, in their exploration of all 38 of William Shakespeare's plays.



SHAKE IT OFF, SHAKE IT OFF: *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare [abridged]* premiered on June 18 and is scheduled to run through Aug. 8. This show marks SLO Rep's first live, in-person production since last March.

only its titular playwright, but the concept of live theater in itself. In this way, the show was an ideal candidate for the return of live, in-person performances at SLO Rep.

"We couldn't be happier to welcome you back to SLO Rep with this production, with this cast, with this crew, in this special place," Harris said in the show's program. "We missed you so much." ○

Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood is stoked to be seeing live plays again. Contact him at cwiseblood@santamariasun.com.

Hamlet du fromage

The San Luis Repertory Theatre presents its production of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare [abridged]* through Aug. 8, with performances on every Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m., and every Saturday and Sunday at 2 p.m. Call (805) 786-2440 or visit slorep.org for more info. The venue is located at 888 Morro St., San Luis Obispo.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MILLENNIUM MEDIA AND SUMMIT ENTERTAINMENT

Wounded

Tom O'Connor directs this sequel to the 2017 film *The Hitman's Bodyguard*, about formerly AAA-rated bodyguard, Michael Bryce (Ryan Reynolds), who was tasked with protecting hitman Darius Kincaid (Samuel L. Jackson), who was scheduled to testify in the International Criminal Court. As they fought off bad guys trying to stop Darius from testifying, they formed a kind of friendship. This time around, Darius' wife, Sonia (Salma Hayek), enlists Bryce to retrieve her husband from some mobsters, setting in motion a series of international misadventures. (99 min.)

Glen: I'm so excited to be back in theaters that even this so-so sequel felt like a worthy excuse to pony up some dough and sit in a dark room with strangers. If you saw the first movie, you know what to expect. Bryce is a former top-rated bodyguard who's fallen from grace and desperately wants to regain his triple-A rating. He's in therapy, but he's so needy and desperate for validation that even his therapist wants to get rid of him, telling him he's "graduated" from therapy and that he needs to put down the guns, give up on bodyguarding, and learn to make peace with himself. He heads to a tropical resort to do just that. Kincaid is a profane, violent, and basically unkillable killer whose wife, Sonia, is even more profane and violent. If you don't like gunfire and F-bombs, this isn't the film for you. Essentially, the trio finds themselves under threat by Greek criminal Aristotle Papdopolous (Antonio Banderas, who definitely doesn't sound Greek ... at all). Aristotle,

bristling at the treatment Greece received during the global recession, has a plan to tap into the European Union's grid and destroy its economy. It all makes about as much sense as casting Spanish Banderas as a Greek. Desperate to survive, Bryce goes to the only place he can think of: his stepfather Bryce Sr.'s (Morgan Freeman) Tuscan villa. Bryce Sr. turns out to be full of surprises as the story moves forward. **Anna:** I know I saw its predecessor, but I completely forgot about it, and I came in to this movie not knowing it was a sequel. That being said, it was an easy watch, and the storyline isn't hard to catch up on even if you didn't see the first film or (like me) totally forgot about it. Reynolds has a great brand of comedy, and he plays it up here. It's big and loud, and while every joke isn't a pot of gold, there are some great quippy moments between the characters, and the cast isn't lacking in the least—this is full of big names. Hayek plays the perfect foulmouthed hottie who has no qualms about shooting her way out of a problem, but what she wants most in the world is to be a mother. Her new husband, Darius, is a handful himself, and the two are a lot of fun together on-screen. I have to think having Banderas play a Greek guy who in no stretch of the imagination sounds Greek is a joke written into the script—if you let the discrepancy irk you, it could be annoying. It's best to just let him be the generic bad guy and not let it ruin the film for you. This flick is silly and ridiculous, but I'd watch pretty much anything in the theater now since we were deprived for so long. You could do a lot worse than this action-filled romp. It's worth beating the heat for a bit and settling into a comfy theater recliner with cool AC to have some fun with Reynolds and company. **Glen:** Reynolds is very funny here, but his Bryce is a bit more of a sniveler than many of his other

THE HITMAN'S WIFE'S BODYGUARD

What's it rated? **R**
When? **2021**
Where's it showing? **Movies Lompoc, Regal Arroyo Grande, Regal Santa Maria RPX**
What's it worth, Anna? **Matinee**
What's it worth, Glen? **Matinee**



THEY'RE BACK! Hitman Darius Kincaid (Samuel L. Jackson, left) and bodyguard Michael Bryce (Ryan Reynolds) are back for another violent misadventure in the sequel *The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard*, now in theaters.

characters, such as Deadpool or Van Wilder. It's also pretty fun watching Freeman play against type, and there's undeniable chemistry between the cast. Bryce and Kincaid are an odd couple, which is the source of the story's tension and humor, but the story itself is pretty ridiculous. Richard Grant returns as the insufferable Seifert, an old client of Bryce's, but he's woefully underused and his appearance goes nowhere. There are exotic and beautiful locales, but again, nothing much is made of them. This is a film that might have been above average, but the writing simply isn't worthy of the terrific cast. Even with its flaws, however, it's an enjoyable 99-minute diversion. I didn't love it, but I don't regret the time I spent watching bullets fly and bad guys die. **Anna:** It's not going to be up for any awards, but that doesn't mean it isn't a fun watch. The script is definitely a little punchy, and like you said it doesn't deserve this cast, but I'm not going to complain—the cast is what makes even a mediocre flick fun to watch and is for sure the best thing going for this

budding franchise. I'm not sure whether they'll decide to eek this series out any more, but I hope not. This feels like a nice ending, and anything beyond it is going to feel pretty tired. We're rolling into summer blockbuster season, and this innocuous action movie is a nice warm-up for plenty more mindlessly fun movies to come. We saw a preview for the new *Fast and Furious* film that is on its way, and boy oh boy, talk about an explosives budget! *The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard* is much more my speed. It's an easy watch and the cast brings out the best parts of a pretty predictable script. ○

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

Film Reviews

ANOTHER ROUND

What's it rated? **Not rated**
When? **2020**

Where's it showing? **The Palm Theatre in SLO**

Co-writer/director Thomas Vinterberg (*The Hunt*) helms this story about four friends, all high school teachers, suffering various levels of midlife crises. They decide to test a theory that human beings are born with an alcohol deficiency, and that they're at their optimum if they maintain a .05 blood alcohol content. It's won Best International Feature Film at this year's Academy Awards.

The story centers on Martin (Mads Mikkelsen), whose students have lost interest. In short, the formerly charismatic history instructor has lost his mojo. He and his wife have lost their spark. When he and his colleagues start day drinking, however, they become engaging, inspiring, and education superstars ... until they take things too far.

There are moments of real joy in this film, especially one in which Martin's youth coach colleague guides his wimpiest player to a huge win. There's also tragedy. Alcohol can be insidious in the wrong hands, and alcoholism is a progressive

PHOTO COURTESY OF ZENTROPA ENTERTAINMENT



BOTTOMS UP: Martin (Mads Mikkelsen), a joyless high school history teacher, experiments with alcohol to enliven himself, in *Another Round*, an Academy Award winner screening exclusively at The Palm in SLO.

disease. Its ending definitely sends a mixed message, but that's something I like about foreign films: They don't feel the need to tie up every loose end or offer a clear resolution like most Hollywood films. (In Danish and Swedish; 117 min.)

—Glen

THE LAST CRUISE

What's it rated? **TV-14**

When? **2021**

Where's it showing? **HBO Max**

Now that vaccination numbers are up and death tolls are down, I felt OK to watch a documentary highlighting the scary beginning of the pandemic and the ill-fated cruise ship *Diamond Princess*. Featuring interviews with both cruise ship guests and workers, this short HBO original uses handheld camera footage from the ship as it became a petri dish for the unknown virus. Guests are soon on lockdown in their staterooms while the staff continues to work to bring them the food and supplies they need to make it through their mandated quarantine.

The film chronicles the days on board, and we hear the captain announce first the news of coronavirus around the world and then soon that the virus is indeed on the ship. To say the virus changed the way we travel is never clearer than when we see these couples and crew members succumbing one by one to the virus, being offloaded to the hospital if they test positive. We watch as the cloud of COVID-19 descends on the world and on the thousands of people trapped in a floating prison.

It's a unique look at the beginning of this nightmare and a reminder of all the things we didn't know just a year ago.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DEEP CUT AND HBO DOCUMENTARY FILMS



CAPTIVE: In the HBO documentary short *The Last Cruise*, we witness the fate of *Diamond Princess*, a cruise ship that became site of the first and largest COVID-19 outbreak outside of China.

It's a sobering journey but an interesting perspective that is kept to a manageable length. It serves to remind us all what an absolutely insane journey this worldwide health crisis and pandemic has been. (40 min.) ○

—Anna

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PHOTO BY CALEB WISEBLOOD



MEET KAY: Before the year 2000, Kay's Orcutt Country Kitchen was simply known as Orcutt Country Kitchen, where Kay Tims (pictured) worked as a waitress for nearly a decade before becoming its owner.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KAY'S ORCUTT COUNTRY KITCHEN



WELCOME BACK: Father's Day weekend marked the official reopening of Kay's Orcutt Country Kitchen since its closure last November.

PHOTO BY CALEB WISEBLOOD/COURTESY OF KAY'S ORCUTT COUNTRY KITCHEN

Yay for Kay's!

Kay's Orcutt Country Kitchen reopens for indoor seating after six-month closure

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

Why watch the *Friends* reunion when you could just live it instead? While Father's Day weekend marked the official reopening (albeit, a "soft opening") of Kay's Orcutt Country Kitchen (closed since last November), the iconic eatery is formally celebrating the occasion with an upcoming reunion of its own.

On June 26 and 27, five of Kay's former servers are returning to the restaurant for Old Time Workers weekend.

"We're just gonna rock and roll it, even though none of them have really done it for 15 years," owner Kay Tims said of the group—made up of her three daughters and two longtime family friends, each of whom worked at Kay's around the early 2000s.

"They worked this job through junior high and high school, and then they'd come here and work through college on vacations and so forth," said Tims, who admittedly felt a tad reluctant when the reunion idea was first brought up.

"They were more excited than me; I was more like, 'Jeez, it's been a long time since these girls worked with me,'" Tims said. "Their response: It's like riding a bike."

Tims added that she hopes longtime customers get a kick out of seeing the five servers' faces again, namely the regulars who basically "watched them grow up," she said.

She also feels grateful that the group offered to help out as the restaurant gets back in the swing of things during the reopening.

"I'm still shorthanded. I brought back all of my cooks, and I've got about half of my front staff, but a couple of them have moved on," Tims said. "But I'm figuring it's going to work itself out; I think everybody's shorthanded."

Tims can vividly remember her initial reactions to news of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the red flags leading up to the shutdown last March.

"We started to hear rumbles in the news, and we had become so slow the week before. We knew that this was no joke, people were really getting scared. So we felt it coming," Tims said. "And then when they declared it was a pandemic and they were going to close businesses, it seemed surreal. It seemed like I was in a movie; that this really couldn't be happening."

"My reaction was, 'I need to protect my employees,'" she added. "I just told them, 'You need to go home, do what you need to do, and we'll come back and fight another day.'"

In June of 2020, Kay's did reopen for takeout and outdoor dining, but the restaurant shut its doors again in November. During that window though, Tims hoped the restaurant would have been able to return to some form of indoor dining, which unfortunately never became a possibility.

"I came back in the middle of June, and we were supposed to be open 50 percent [capacity, for indoor dining], and then I never even got to that point," Tims said. "I got the food and I got everything ready and they had already closed us for indoor dining. First it was

To the old town road

To find out more about Kay's Orcutt Country Kitchen, visit kayscountrykitchen.com. The restaurant is located at 135 E. Clark Ave., Orcutt.

only to-go, and then shortly after that they let us do outdoor dining."

In November, Tims decided the takeout and outdoor dining options were no longer going to work for them, she said.

"There just wasn't enough—we were losing money. We were not getting enough to pay our bills," Tims said. "And I figured the only way to save the restaurant was if I closed her down—unplugged all the lights, turned the gas off."

In Tims' opinion, a sentiment certainly shared by many Orcutt locals, there's a very big difference between eating Kay's food inside the restaurant and outside the restaurant.

"It's not the same having us outside," Tims said, while glancing at the restaurant's photo-laden walls, rich in history of both the restaurant's evolution over the years (including more than a few photos of Tims and her daughters while they were working there) and Old Town Orcutt as a community.

Before the year 2000, Kay's was simply known as Orcutt Country Kitchen, where Tims worked as a waitress for nearly a decade before becoming its owner.

"I was scared, I was very afraid to step out and own the restaurant," said Tims, recalling when she found out the restaurant was for sale. "My parents were actually the ones who encouraged me. They were like, 'Come on, you could do this thing.' And I never looked back. They were like, 'Kaylynn'—I mean, nobody calls me Kaylynn anymore—but they said, 'Kaylynn, you know, you should do this, it'd be a perfect job for you, you'd be home every night; it's only daytime hours.'" And it still is.



FAMILY PORTRAIT: "It's not the same having us outside," Kay Tims said, while glancing at the restaurant's photo-laden walls, rich in history of both the restaurant's evolution over the years (including more than a few photos of Tims and her daughters while they were working there) and Old Town Orcutt as a community.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KAY'S ORCUTT COUNTRY KITCHEN



BEAUTY AND ... : Kay's Orcutt Country Kitchen is probably best known, locally and abroad, for its popular breakfast dishes, including The Beast, a biscuit topped with chicken-fried steak, hash browns, cheddar cheese, two eggs, and homemade gravy.

Prior to the pandemic, Kay's was open seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., but for now the restaurant is open Thursdays through Mondays, but with the same traditional breakfast/lunch hours.

"Who doesn't like breakfast? Just talking about it makes me hungry,"

Tims said before revealing her favorite item on the kitchen's menu.

"Bacon. I have the best bacon," she said. "I love my bacon." ○

Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood would never refuse bacon. Send comments to cwiseblood@santamariasun.com.

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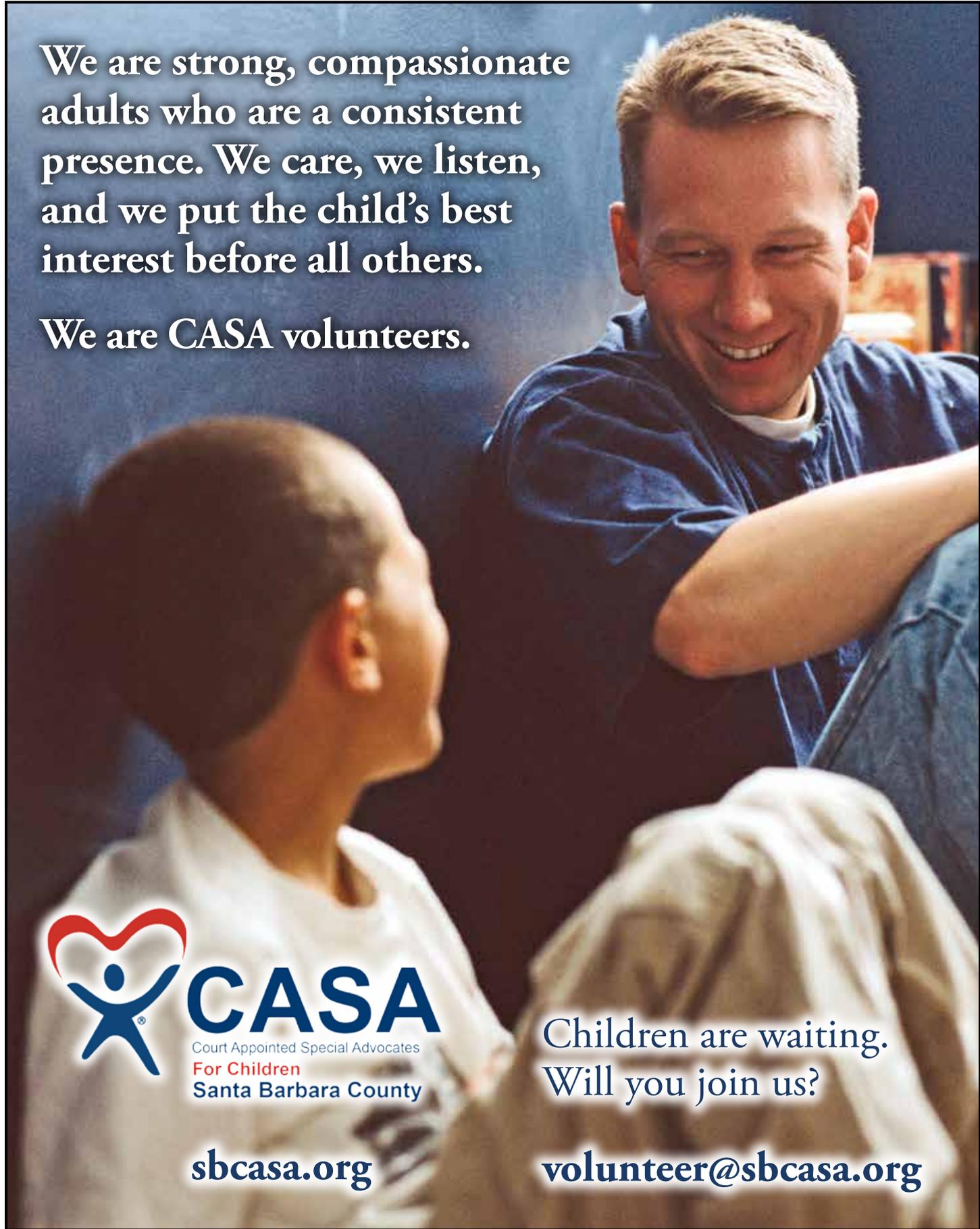
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