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# SUN

AT THE MOVIES



*The Fast Saga:  
Over the top [22]*



LAST WEEK  
TO VOTE! [11]



# Helpful hand

*During COVID-19, animal shelter providers in Santa Barbara County pivoted to a model that aims to keep pets in homes [7]*

**NEWS** Equity and access at Santa Maria-Bonita [4]

**ARTS** A passion for the real and abstract [20]

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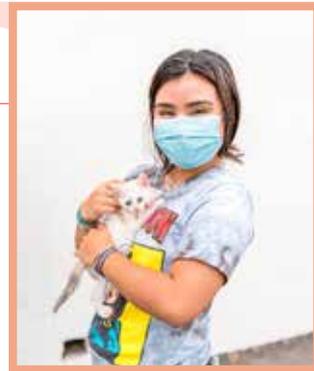
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JULY 1 - JULY 8, 2021 VOL. 22 NO. 18

Santa Barbara County Animal Services is shifting toward a community-based sheltering model for pets that might otherwise end up in local shelters. As part of that effort, the county closed its animal shelter in Lompoc during 2020 and opened three pet resource centers in 2020 and 2021. Their goal is to provide residents with the resources they need to keep their pets at home. Staff Writer Malea Martin speaks with pet owners and others about how the effort is going [7].

You can also read about Santa Maria-Bonita School District's goals to increase student equity [4]; Marilyn Dover Benson's abstract and realistic art pieces at the Santa Maria Airport [20]; and Dreamers Vegan Takeout popping up in Lompoc and Santa Maria [24].

Camillia Lanham  
associate editor



**HELPING PETS:** Santa Barbara County Animal Services has opened two additional pet resource centers in collaboration with community partners. These centers offer free pet food and other low cost services to pet owners.

Cover courtesy photo by Winkface Photography > Cover design by Alex Zuniga

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## Political Watch

• After President Joe Biden's announcement that a deal was reached with the Senate on infrastructure spending, U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara) issued a statement commending the agreement. "Gridlock has kept us from modernizing our roads, bridges, trains, buses, and water pipes for long enough," Carbajal said. "This deal is proof that we can get things done if we roll up our sleeves and work together. Glad President Biden achieved this bipartisan deal, which has eluded previous administrations." Carbajal, a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, added that the committee passed the Invest in America Act earlier this month to fund transportation systems. "I helped secure \$20 million for Central Coast projects that will buy electric buses, a new bike path, and ease traffic on Highway 101," Carbajal said. "I will keep fighting to make sure we invest in the things that matter, including funding to tackle the climate crisis and measures to create good-paying jobs. Now, let's get to work on another comprehensive plan to meet the needs of Central Coast families." Among the funding that Carbajal secured for the Central Coast is \$11 million for the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments to fund the Highway 101 Multimodal Corridor Project and other street improvements. U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla (D-California) also issued a statement after Biden's announcement of the bipartisan infrastructure deal. "I'm encouraged by the progress made with the bipartisan infrastructure deal announced today, but by itself, it does not meet all the critical infrastructure needs of the country," Padilla said. "Today's bipartisan proposal is historic. We need to invest in our roads and transit systems, in the resiliency of our electric grid, expand and upgrade broadband, and improve our water systems. But our human infrastructure needs are equally important—tackling the climate crisis, fixing our broken immigration system, and investing in our care economy."

• On June 25, Gov. Gavin Newsom and state Senate and Assembly leaders announced an extension of the state's eviction moratorium and increased rent relief. Assembly Bill 832 extends the current eviction moratorium through Sept. 30 and ensures "that California quickly uses the more than \$5 billion in federal rental assistance to help the state's tenants and small landlords and protect vulnerable households from eviction," according to Newsom's office. "The agreement widens rental assistance by enhancing current law. Provisions include increasing reimbursement to 100 percent for both rent that is past due and prospective payments for both tenants and landlords." Newsom said in the statement that the economic impacts of COVID-19 disproportionately impact low-income Californians, and that the moratorium extension will aim to close that gap. "That's why I am thankful for today's news from the Legislature—protecting low-income tenants with a longer eviction moratorium and paying down their back-rent and utility bills—all thanks to the nation's largest and most comprehensive rental assistance package, which I am eager to sign into law as soon as I receive it," he said. "Our housing situation in California was a crisis before COVID, and the pandemic has only made it worse—this extension is key to making sure that more people don't lose the safety net helping them keep their home." Senate President pro Tempore Toni G. Atkins (D-San Diego) said in the statement from Newsom's office. "People are trying to find jobs and make ends meet and one of the greatest needs is to extend the evictions moratorium—which includes maximizing the federal funds available to help the most tenants and landlords possible—so that they can count on a roof over their heads while their finances rebound." ○



**SUPPORTING ACHIEVEMENT:** With more than 75 percent of students below grade level, the Santa Maria-Bonita School District is looking to address equity issues.

## Santa Maria-Bonita School District works to increase student equity

The Santa Maria-Bonita School District hopes to increase equity between its students by putting a preschool at every elementary school site and making sure kids are progressing by at least one grade level every year.

These are among the six goals and priorities in support of equitable student outcomes that Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services Melissa Dutra presented during a June 23 board meeting.

"We've learned that COVID-19 has had devastating impacts on students and our families," Dutra said, which has only exacerbated some of the gaps and learning loss that already existed.

The first district equity priority is that students will perform at proficient or beyond in all academic areas. But this goal, Dutra said, is a lofty one.

"This is our ultimate goal, but we also know that we've got to build to that," she said. "All' can be so far away when we're looking at 75 percent of our kids are far away from that right now. We want to have some goals that are attainable every single year."

With more than 75 percent of SMBSD students below grade level, Dutra said "there's also some real gaps around some of our student populations." As SMBSD Coordinator of Assessment and Accountability Laurie Graack presented at a March 24 special meeting earlier this year, Mixteco-speaking and English-learning students in the district have historically seen lower success than their peers.

Another goal of the district is that every student progresses by at least one grade level each year. Dutra explained that the goal is "at least" one grade level because some kids need to improve by more than that to get up to speed.

"These kids who are behind, we have to not only catch them up by a year, they have to double down and make up ground every single year in order for us to actually close the gap for those kids," she said.

The district's also looking at ways to address inequities as early in a child's education as

possible, such as through preschool.

"This is so important because we know early education is so critical for our students. ... This is also an equity and access issue," Dutra said. "We don't want it to be that you get a preschool program because there happens to be one at your neighborhood school, versus you don't."

The district added two more preschool programs this year at Libbon and Liberty elementary schools, and are adding one next year at Arellanes. With a goal to put a preschool at every elementary school, the district has five more to go. The majority of the preschool programs are bilingual, Dutra added.

At the June 23 meeting, the district unanimously approved a First Five Early Learning Grant, which will help move these efforts along.

"The board had approved us applying for this grant, this is saying that we've now received the grant," Dutra said before the vote.

The grant will give the district \$150,000 per year for four years to support its preschool programs.

Dutra said that from August to October this year, the district will be undergoing a student equity audit. The audit will look at the opportunities students have to master grade-level content, the factors keeping students out of class, the grades earned in class, and the opportunity to have teachers who reflect students' identities. From there, the district plans to create a diversity, equity, and inclusion road map to help "define and align" its equity work, Dutra said.

All these efforts are in pursuit of students moving a minimum of one grade level each year.

"This is our legal obligation," Dutra said. "That when kids are under our charge, we move them a grade level every year."

—Malea Martin

## Immigrant advocates ask Sheriff's Office to stop collaborating with ICE

In 2020, the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office released 12 undocumented immigrants into Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) custody.

"From 2019 to 2020, the number of ICE requests decreased substantially, and the number of ICE rearrests also decreased substantially," Sheriff Bill Brown told the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors during a June 22 Truth (Transparent Review of Unjust Transfers and Holds) Act forum.

The Truth Act, which became law in 2017, requires local legislative bodies to host a community forum once a year if local law enforcement allows ICE access to any individual in their custody. In 2018, the Values Act modified some provisions in the Truth Act and restricted the ways in which law enforcement agencies in California can collaborate with ICE. Local law enforcement can choose to notify ICE or Border Patrol of a release if a criminal is convicted of most felonies and some higher-level misdemeanors.

ICE requested information for 132 Santa Barbara County Jail inmates in 2020, down from 448 in 2019. The Sheriff's Office collaborated with ICE on 43 of those inmates in 2020 and ICE arrested 12 of them. ICE picked up 38 in 2019.

Brown said those picked up in 2020 were convicted of felony or higher-misdemeanor crimes, including spousal battery, drug possession, and sex with a minor. Several had been arrested multiple times.

"They're all for serious crimes of some sort," Brown said during his presentation. "We're on track this year for perhaps even fewer numbers."

Immigrant advocates who spoke during public comment at the meeting said that the Sheriff's Office shouldn't collaborate with ICE at all and asked for the Board of Supervisors to support the Vision Act, which recently passed the state Assembly. The legislation would bar local law enforcement agencies from working with ICE.

They compared the collaboration process to a two-tiered system where undocumented immigrants who serve the time allotted to their convictions get rearrested upon their release from jail.

"People who commit crimes should be held accountable for their crimes, but when sheriffs act as deportation agents it undermines trust and confidence in all law enforcement, making



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NEWS from page 4

our communities and families feel less safe," Pam Gates said over Zoom. "Like all people, an immigrant who is released from jail should be able to restart their life with their families and in their communities rather than face the threat of deportation."

Mario Espinoza-Kulik, who is a health policy research scholar with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and teaches ethnic studies and gender and queer studies at Cal Poly, said that immigration enforcement activities create a major barrier to public health care. A Central Coast health equity survey completed by the La Gente Unida project found that nearly 1 in 5 Spanish-speaking respondents had avoided health care in the last three months because of their documentation status.

Local law enforcement agencies working hand-in-hand with ICE to deport undocumented immigrants erodes trust in public entities and creates fear within the community, advocates said. Instead of eroding trust, the Sheriff's Office should implement policies to build up trust with the community.

"We do not enforce immigration law," Sheriff Brown said in response to public comments. "To the extent that we notify ICE at their request of the release of a suspect who is wanted by the federal authorities, it is all done through the parameters of the existing law."

Fifth District Supervisor Steve Lavagnino said that the report presented by the sheriff showed a different picture than what some of the public speakers brought up.

"We've now honed this thing down to 12 individuals that quite frankly no one should be defending," he said. "It's not pro-immigrant

to advocate for these people to go back into the community. ... I'm not judging the immigrant community by these 12 people by any stretch because every group has these 12 people in it; it's just a fact of life."

Lavagnino asked the sheriff if they had access to ICE arrests that happened outside the bounds of collaboration with local law enforcement. Brown replied that he didn't. People who commit minor offenses aren't the ones who end up transferred from Sheriff's Office custody to ICE, Lavagnino said.

"It sounds like that's the fear from what we're hearing in the community," he said, adding that gaining a fuller picture of what ICE does might help bring even more transparency to what the Sheriff's Office does and doesn't do to collaborate with the federal agency. Lavagnino committed to trying to bring ICE in front of the Board of Supervisors for a hearing.

"We'll try to figure out a way to get that other information because I think it's critical that people in the community understand that at least our Sheriff's Department is not out enforcing federal immigration policy," he said.

—Camillia Lanham

## North Blosser Road to get protected bike lanes, new crosswalk

Santa Maria residents will see some construction along Blosser Road over the next few months as the city adds protected bike lanes and pedestrian-friendly crosswalks, and brings sidewalks up to current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

David Beas, the city's principal civil engineer, said the North Blosser Road Improvement Project will take 75 working days to complete. The nearly \$800,000 project is made possible thanks to a Cycle 7 Highway Safety Improvement Program Grant, which Beas said the city applied for a few years ago.

"We had some staffing challenges that we had to go through because we have lots of projects that we're working on, so it took us a little bit," Beas said.

The project, which will make improvements between Taylor Street and Atlantic Place, will add a landscaped median in the center of the road, reducing the lanes from two to one in both directions. This change is designed to slow vehicles.

Protected class II bike lanes will also be added. "A class II is essentially you have the roadway, and also a separate striped bike lane," Beas said. "In this particular case there's a buffered bike lane which is proposed to be 10 feet [wide], which is separated by an asphalt berm."

A berm is a slightly raised barrier, in this case about 6 inches tall, that stops cars from veering into the bike lane.

"With the physical barrier it is safer for bicyclists," Beas said.

The project will also update sidewalk corner ramps to meet current ADA standards. Beas said that when the sidewalks were originally designed, they met the ADA standards at the time, but those requirements have changed. The slope of the sidewalk must be less than a 2 percent grade, and some are slightly higher.

"When there's a construction project, we're required by law to make certain that all ADA accessible facilities are within current compliance," Beas said. "So during a cursory

review of the facilities we found them not to be in current compliance."

Finally, the project will add a high-visibility crosswalk on Atlantic Place so that pedestrians can more easily access the Santa Maria Levee Trail. Beas said it will be similar to an existing crosswalk at the intersection of Broadway and Battles.

"Essentially it's a crosswalk that almost looks like a ladder. There's this vibrant striping that enhances the awareness of the motoring public," Beas said, as well as fluorescent signage.

"On top of the levee there's a multipurpose trail and it commences right at Atlantic," Beas said. "So the people who live in that neighborhood ... are able to access the levee trail via this enhanced crossing."

These changes are in line with many of the goals laid out in the city's 2020 Active Transportation Plan, a guide for making Santa Maria a more accessible place for bikers, pedestrians, those with disabilities, and other car-free commuters. While the grant funding for the North Blosser Road Improvement Project is a different pot of money than the funds the Active Transportation Plan is seeking, the projects outlined in the plan contain similar elements to the improvements being made on Blosser: better accessibility for bikes, pedestrians, and those with disabilities.

When construction is happening, Beas said pedestrians and motorists can expect some minor traffic delays, particularly when the asphalt berms and road medians are being put in place.

"We generally like to work around the motoring public as far as commencing work after rush hour," he said. "It's all dependent upon traffic patterns." ○

—Malea Martin

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# Keeping pets in homes

*The pandemic ushered in an industry-wide wave of community-based sheltering for animals*

BY MALEA MARTIN

Bob, a Santa Maria local, is a longtime dog owner. He used to own three dogs but now owns just one, a rambunctious Australian shepherd mix who loves to run, he told the *Sun*.

Instead of going to the pet supply store to buy food for his dog, Bob (who asked the *Sun* not to use his last name) goes to the Santa Barbara County Animal Services' Santa Maria pet resource center, where he can pick up dog food for free. He said having this option has greatly benefited him.

"I'm a senior citizen, and that's another bill that I don't need to pay for my dogs," Bob said.

The Santa Maria Pet Resource Center that Bob benefits from is one of three that Santa Barbara County Animal Services runs in collaboration with local pet organization partners. The Santa Maria center was launched in January 2020 in partnership with CARE4Paws, a nonprofit working to keep pets out of shelters. It was "a super success," county Responsible Pet Ownership Program Coordinator Jessica Ortega-Wiebe said, and it was clear that other local communities would benefit from having a similar resource. In late May, two more pet resource centers opened in Lompoc and Goleta.

The centers are part of a larger shift within county Animal Services toward what the pet sheltering industry calls "community-based sheltering." The goal is to provide community members with the resources they need to keep their animals in their homes, rather than being forced to surrender them to a shelter.

Pet owners can pick up free dog and cat food and other supplies at the resource centers as well as sign up for pet medical services at either a CARE4Paws mobile clinic or the Santa Barbara County Animal Services clinic.

This resource is particularly important for Lompoc. In November 2020, the county announced that it would no longer be sheltering animals at its Lompoc facility.

But county Animal Services wants to ensure that Lompoc pet owners can still access resources they might need. While the Lompoc shelter no longer houses animals, it's now the new pet resource center where people can pick up pet food and sign up for low-cost veterinary services. Companion Animal Placement Assistance (CAPA), a volunteer-run nonprofit, is the leading agency operating the Lompoc resource center.

In addition, CARE4Paws and Animal Services reach the Lompoc community with pet services on Tuesdays and Fridays, and run a mobile clinic every first Sunday of the month at Ryon Park.

"We're working hard together to provide as much support in the community as we possibly can so that the community members don't feel like they're that impacted by the shelter being closed," CARE4Paws Executive Director Isabelle Gullo said. "If they would normally go to the Lompoc shelter to get assistance with something, they can come to a CARE4Paws event that we're doing with Animal Services."

Ortega-Wiebe said this collaboration is part of a larger shift in the vision and mission of sheltering: measuring success by how many pets stay with families, rather than how many animals end up in the shelter.

"We don't want anyone to give up their pets, so if they need food then we have it," she said. "If they need leashes and beds, we have it. We have low-cost



PHOTO COURTESY OF SANTA BARBARA COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

**FREE FOOD:** Santa Barbara County Animal Services offers free pet food and other services at its pet resource centers located throughout the county.

medical care now, we have spay-neuter resources."

Angela Walters Yates, director of Santa Barbara County Animal Services, said the pandemic provided an opportunity to step back and find the root causes of animals ending up in shelters in Santa Barbara County.

"It's a win-win: There's a cost to our taxpayers in the county when animals come into the shelter system, and if we can provide a little food or support or supplies during a turbulent or insecure time for people, that allows them to keep their pets with them, that's a huge win for the community," Walters Yates said. "And we're seeing the benefits of it—we are really seeing a lot of those adoptable, social, family animals staying put in their homes and not coming into the shelter."

Ortega-Wiebe said people who come in to surrender their pets often say it's because they can't afford their pet's medical bills.

"We don't want people to have to choose between paying bills and feeding their animals," she said. "That's why we're here, and that's why community-based sheltering is bringing those resources into the communities."

Animal Services recently won a grant from Maddie's Fund—a national foundation that awards money to pet shelters and foster care organizations—for the work that the county's animal control officers have done to embrace community-based sheltering.

"The grant money will go back into these services, and we specifically are earmarking it for the outreach services," Ortega-Wiebe said.

Another aspect of community-based sheltering is the movement toward a less punitive approach from entities like county animal control.

Before, "our officers were always more like, 'Do you have a license?' And if you don't, 'Let's give you a ticket,'" Ortega-Wiebe said. "And now it's like, 'You don't have a license? Well, here, let me help you get it. I can sell you one.' ... It's about offering them all the resources right then and there on the spot, versus sending them back to the shelter or just being a heavier hand, as the traditional animal control used to be."

This is especially important in North County communities that have more barriers to access.

"The lack of technology and resources that people don't have are demographic here, especially in the North County," Ortega-Wiebe said. "There's a big portion of them that don't have access to internet, they don't have cellphones. So part of that community-based sheltering is how can we help those people that don't have that, and how can we bring it to them?"

Walters Yates said that in South County, there's a higher return-to-owner rate than in the north.

"Yesterday, in a single day, we had four or five dogs come in to the [Santa Barbara] shelter, and then within an hour their owners were at the shelter reclaiming their dogs," she said. "In the South County, a lot of the dogs are microchipped, or they

have ID tags on them. They're very easy for us to keep out of the shelter or have their stays be very brief."

Another key difference is that North County is physically more spread out and agricultural.

By comparison, "the South County's concentrated, it's a more urban environment, it's easier to have access to services," Walters Yates said. "In the North County, it really behooves us to take those services, like microchipping and licensing and vaccination clinics, out into the individual pockets of the community."

Animal Services and its community partners are offering free microchipping countywide, which ensures that more pets can be reunited with their owners if they ever go missing. On June 27, the county went to Guadalupe to meet hard-to-reach pet owners where they're at.

"The Fourth of July is coming up so we don't want all these animals to be in the shelter if they get out because it's scary, the noises aren't fun," Ortega-Wiebe said. "So we're doing this big microchip campaign right now with our partners, and it's free microchips countywide."

But a question that looms for county Animal Services and its partners is: Will the positive effects of the pandemic—such as an increased interest in fostering—continue in a post-COVID world? There's some concern that people who adopted a pandemic puppy will suddenly find themselves with less time to care for it as the world opens back up.

"We have seen an uptick in stray animal intake and owner surrenders. We have seen 11 owner surrenders since June 15, 2021, when California technically opened," Ortega-Wiebe said. "People are adjusting to getting their lives back on track. ... We are hoping that this will level out and won't be a continued trend."

Walters Yates added that there will always be a need for animal shelters: A 100 percent shift to community-based sheltering isn't realistic because there will always be animals that need a safety net.

"But I think the sincere hope with this is that the days of the massive shelters that are housing hundreds of animals at a time will be a thing of the past," Walters Yates continued. "In the animal sheltering industry, when everybody had to stay at home and COVID first hit, the first thing people did was want an animal. ... The shelters across the country were cleared out, and stayed that way. We were able to open up foster homes that previously weren't available."

However, she added, it's too early to tell. But the county's new services, like the pet resource centers, won't be going anywhere.

"Even though things are opening up, we are still going to continue that work," Ortega-Wiebe said. "I think that's the blessing in the pandemic: We all realized what we can and can't do." ○

Reach Staff Writer Malea Martin with story ideas or comments at [mmartin@santamariasun.com](mailto:mmartin@santamariasun.com).



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# Luffa love

*The Luffa Farm in Nipomo doesn't just sell luffas—it will also teach you something new about nature's sponge*

BY MALEA MARTIN

What comes to mind when you hear the word “luffa”? Is it the brightly colored, meshy plastic bath sponge? The rough, dense exfoliator, often tacked to the end of a wooden stick, that you might find at the drugstore?

If you haven't yet visited The Luffa Farm in Nipomo, chances are these are the only types of luffa you've encountered: either the fake ones made of plastic, or the highly processed natural luffa that doesn't exactly leave your skin feeling soothed.

The Nipomo-based Luffa Farm's products are grown right here on the Central Coast—yes, grown. Contrary to popular belief, luffas don't come from the sea but grow inside of what looks like a large squash. Natural luffas sold in the bath aisle at drugstores are often grown outside the country and must be fumigated when they are imported, leaving them stiff, brittle,

and not very spongy.

Supervisor Brooklynn Gamble told me the story of how The Luffa Farm got its start, the growing process, and what sets the farm's luffas apart.

Initially, Luffa Farm owner Deanne Coon started growing the gourds as a hobby after a friend was given mystery seeds for a college class. Coon and her friend finally figured out what the seeds were when the plant dried up on the vine and revealed its inner fibers, what we know as a natural bath sponge.

“This was the first greenhouse that was built. This greenhouse has about 300 plants in it,” Gamble said as we stood in the humid structure. “They grow an average of 17 inches in the summertime.”

Today, the farm has three greenhouses with about 1,000 total plants, from which they harvest between 12,000 and 15,000 luffas each year.

“The luffa itself just grows right out the back of the flower, and grows to whatever size the vine can support,” Gamble said. “When the flower dies, it is actually edible. . . . To me it tastes just like summer squash.”

But Gamble and the other farm employees don't eat them much because they're trying to get the luffa out of the plant.

If you leave it, it'll keep growing, Gamble said. “When it gets too heavy, instead of rotting or falling off, the vine sucks all the water and nutrients back out. . . . The luffa fibers, which are just the veins that feed the water and

nutrients throughout the rest of the fruit and seeds, those get thicker and denser.”

Once the luffa is all dried up, they cut it off the vine, shake all the seeds out, and soak it in water to peel the skin off.

“From there, all we have to do is rinse the rest of the residue out, trim them into whatever size pieces we need, let them dry, put a label on them, and they're ready to go,” Gamble said.

The final product is nothing like luffas found at the drugstore: It's a “soft, washable, non-abrasive plant-based sponge,” as the farm's website describes it.

All this is accomplished with a staff of just seven people, who also lead the visitors on educational tours and run the gift shop. At the beginning of the pandemic, the farm had to close to the public for a bit to comply with stay-at-home orders, but the staff kept plenty busy.

“We have a fully functional website that people can shop at,” Gamble said. “We had so many orders off of our website from people who had been here before, just trying to support small businesses. We had so many orders that we were still working full time.”

Now that The Luffa Farm is back open to the public, and the state's COVID-19 business restrictions are officially lifted, Gamble said things are beginning to look more normal again.

“Within the last couple of months, as travel has increased, and people are going out more, we're seeing business almost like it was pre-pandemic,” Gamble said. “It's been

really nice the last month or two.”

While other domestic luffa farms do exist, to Gamble's knowledge, The Luffa Farm in Nipomo is the only one open to the public.

“There is one in Central California, but it's not related to us. And as far as I'm aware, they're not open to the public, they're just growing for commercial purposes,” Gamble said. “We're basically the only place you can go learn about how luffas grow in the United States.”

Whether you're looking to buy a luffa or learn more about where they come from, The Luffa Farm is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. every Wednesday through Sunday; visit [theluffafarm.com](http://theluffafarm.com) for more info.

## Highlight

• The Santa Barbara County Commission for Women announced on June 24 the release of a new educational video, *Pass the Mic*, which “addresses sexual health education for age-appropriate youth in California public schools that is consistent with the requirements of The California Healthy Youth Act that took effect in 2016,” according to the commission. The 30-minute documentary features local Santa Barbara high school students “who share their individual coming-of-age stories about navigating the challenges and uncertainties of adolescence, sexual identity, and other sexual health matters in a safe and secure space,” as well as local public health experts. The



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LUFFA FARM

**STRAIGHT OFF THE VINE:** Before drying out and becoming what we know as luffas, the natural sponges start off looking like squash.

documentary can now be used as part of “any school's sexual health education curricula compliance,” according to the Commission for Women. ○

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

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# DEATH NOTICES

**ANDERSON, LACEY M.**, 42, of Lompoc passed away 6/19/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**BECERRA, CHESTERLYN JANET**, 75, of Arroyo Grande passed away 6/23/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**BEDARD, MICHAEL**, 78, of Iowa passed away 6/25/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**BENNETT, LESLIE**, 81, of Paso Robles passed away 6/25/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**BOWSER, JUDITH PEARL**, 81, of Lompoc passed away 6/14/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

**BULLITT, JAMES "JIM" B.**, 79, of Oceano passed away 6/24/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**CARLSON, FRANCES**, 78, passed away 6/24/2021 arrangements with Los Osos Valley Mortuary & Memorial Park

**CERVANTES, CARLOS**, 60, of Santa Maria passed away 6/27/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home and Crematory

**CLAUD, VIOLET**, 89, of Atascadero passed away 6/25/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**CONRAD, MONICA ANN**, 40, of Lompoc passed away 6/3/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

**CORNEJO, BARBARA J.**, 90, of California passed away 6/21/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

**CRENSHAW, ALICE "JEAN,"** 83, of Santa Maria passed away 6/26/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home and Crematory

**CRUZ, ZEFERINO ARISTEO**, 71, of Santa Maria passed away 6/22/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**DODSON, ELIZABETH JOY**, 92, of Lompoc passed away 5/31/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

**FERNANDEZ, JOSE F.**, 69, of Lompoc passed away 6/16/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

**FLORY, CHARLES**, 74, of Paso Robles passed away 6/24/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**FOOTE, MICHAEL**, 67, of Paso Robles passed away 6/22/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**FREDERICK, MARY RUTH**, 90, of Santa Maria passed away 6/23/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**GUERRA, CELIA AGUILAR**, 67, of Arroyo Grande passed away 6/21/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**HOLMES, FRED LEON**, 84, of Lompoc passed away 6/6/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

**LACONO, LYNDA**, 72, of Morro Bay passed away 6/22/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**LEONARD, MARION**, 93, of San Luis Obispo passed away 6/23/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**LUBENSKY, JACK**, 75, of Nipomo passed away 6/27/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home and Crematory

**MARTINEZ, WANDA**, 85, formerly of Santa Maria passed away 6/17/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home and Crematory

**MESENGER, RICHARD "RICH LOVE,"** 77, of Arroyo Grande passed away 6/22/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**MEYER, ALICE ALBRO**, 94, passed away 6/25/2021 arrangements with Los Osos Valley Mortuary & Memorial Park

**OSBORNE, MELISSA MAY**, 56, of Lompoc passed away 6/1/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

**PEPIN, HENRI ARTHUR**, 69, of Nipomo passed away 6/22/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**PONOMAROFF, PHYLLIS**, 91, of San Luis Obispo passed away 6/24/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**RAMIREZ, LYDIA A.**, 59, of Goleta passed away 6/15/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

**RANGEL, RACHEL BONNET**, 102, of Nipomo passed away 6/27/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home and Crematory

**REIZER, JAMES BARRY**, 71, of Lompoc passed away 6/23/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

**SALAS, MIGUEL ANGEL**, 26, of Lompoc passed away 6/22/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

**SCHLEICHER, SOFIA**, 91, of San Luis Obispo passed away 6/26/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**SHIELDS, VALRAY**, 69, of San Luis Obispo passed away 6/27/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**STEPHENS, C. KENT**, 69, of Santa Maria passed away 6/21/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**TUTTLE, SUSAN MARY**, passed away 6/8/2021 arrangements with Los Osos Valley Mortuary & Memorial Park

**WICHERN, GERALD DEAN**, 80, of Lompoc passed away 6/18/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

**WITTMAN, ROSA**, 66, of Lompoc passed away 6/13/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

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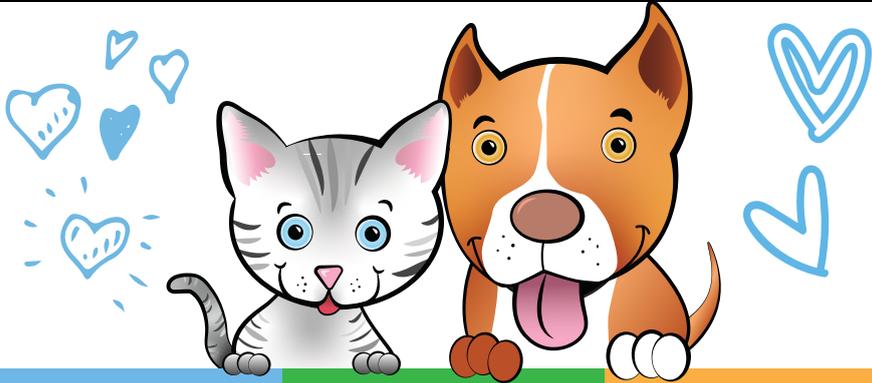
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The results of our 21st annual Best of Northern Santa Barbara County readers poll will be announced.

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**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](http://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

## LIQUID CONNECTIONS

- 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

## 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

## 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

## 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

## 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

## 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

## 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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Ballots must be in our office by Tuesday, July 6, at 5 p.m., to be eligible for inclusion in the poll results.

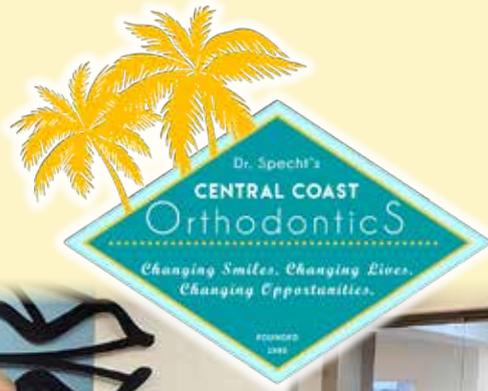
**THE RULES:** One ballot per person. No more than two ballots may be submitted per envelope or in person at one time. No photocopies can be accepted. To prevent ballot-box stuffing (also known as cheating), all ballots must have at least 25 categories completed and must include the name and address of the voter, for verification purposes only. All information is kept in complete confidence. Ballots must be in our office by 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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Monday – Friday

### Online Poll

#### How did you survive the heat wave?

- 69% I got out in nature (but stayed in the shade, of course).
- 19% I took advantage of the warm evenings and ate outdoors at a local restaurant.
- 12% By staying indoors: This is why I have air conditioning.
- 0% I enjoyed the Santa Maria pool's first rec swim in more than a year.

16 Votes

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# A living document

*Though the approved Lompoc budget won't be changed on the day it goes into effect, it will change many times during its life*

BY RON FINK

A few weeks ago, I said, "The local government budget is usually the last thing anyone thinks of or is even interested in. The last Lompoc budget document was 189 pages of numbers, staffing charts, service descriptions and explanations of how much funding it takes to run the city.

"Even though it is a tedious read you should show some interest in the budget hearings; after all, it is your money they are spending to provide services you use every day and those you only need in an emergency," ("Follow the money," June 3).

So, in case you missed the budget hearing, I'll try and recap what happened. On June 15, the Lompoc City Council adopted a two-year budget that starts July 1. This time there was no drama, no theatrics designed to belittle the staff, and a noticeable absence of micromanagement by council members, as there have been over previous budget cycles. Instead, discussions ran smoothly, and ultimately the council approved the budget in a unanimous decision.

During the staff report, the management services director said it was a sound budget, however, "everything could change on July 1." Of course, he was being facetious, but it will certainly change considering other actions taken by the council both during this meeting and potential revenue changes in the months that follow.

The first change will be the impact of an earlier hearing during this meeting concerning a request by the Strauss Wind Energy project to transport wide and heavy loads through the city. Previously the council had rejected a meager reimbursement proposal by Strauss LLC. In this hearing, however, a much better proposal had been negotiated to recover nearly \$3 million for any impacts to the city.

Much of these funds will be used for repairing any damage caused by transporters, but a half-million will be added to the general fund to be used for "public benefit." This will be the first of many other changes that could occur. In addition, Strauss LLC will reimburse the city for all support related to pre- and post-engineering studies of the roadway route, staff and legal expenses, and any other costs to support their project.

Then there is the first of two \$6 million installments received as a result of the American Rescue Plan Act grants from Washington, D.C., to use during the coming fiscal year. Since the U.S. Treasury hasn't finalized a list of allowable uses, the staff cannot provide spending plan guidance to the council.

The city manager anticipates that the feds will be finished in mid to late July, but considering the way government works and all the "special interests" awaiting their rewards, it may take longer. A second check will arrive in the second half of the two-year budget cycle, and both will offer significant relief either through direct application or by replacing other budgeted expenditures, thus freeing up funds for other projects.

Next is a proposal to levy a cannabis manufacturing tax; this measure will go to voters in a special mail-in election in August of this year. If approved, the city would begin collecting the proceeds late next spring. While this tax would have little impact on what local consumers pay, it would provide a significant rise in general fund revenue for the foreseeable future.

Lastly there will be the proceeds from any appreciable post COVID-19 economic recovery.

As the supply chains are restored to meet consumer needs, businesses are fully reopened, new businesses are started, and shelves are restocked, there should be an increase in sales tax revenue. Local hotels should see an increase in visitors too. While opening the economy will likely return tourists to Lompoc, the lost revenue will be lost forever; however, it could return to pre COVID-19 levels.

Another factor is that automobile sales, a major contributor to the general fund, suffered when an overseas factory producing a critical electronic component was destroyed. Once these components reach manufacturers, the local lots should begin being restocked with new vehicles, and this sector of the business community should regain its former tempo.

Considering all the anticipated changes, it's important to note that the staff didn't include assumptions or rosy projections of future revenue gains as part of the plan. Instead staff used proper budgeting protocols as opposed to recklessly allowing for unsustainable programs that ultimately lead to the elimination of reserves, as was the case with the previous council majority's budgets.

The city is still far away from the established policy level for reserves in the general fund, so providing needed services is at risk when the next economic shock strikes the local area.

While the approved spending plan probably won't change on the day after it goes into effect, it will certainly change many times during the life of the document. Any change to the plan must be approved by the City Council, so this isn't the last of this discussion. ○

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

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

### Old jobs, new faces

It was April 30 of last year when I wrote about the fear of opening our economy and people venturing out for the first time as we get back to normal. Man, did I miss that. Shocking. We are learning how wrong Fauci has been. How unnecessary and destructive the lockdowns have been. How physiologically damaging mask wearing and school closings have been to our students. How flawed the testing methods have been and still are.

Despite California being among the lowest count in new infections, whatever that means considering what I've pointed out, they are still trying to scare the hell out of us with variants and forcing, by guilt, vaccinations. In any event to my point.

There are new, unfamiliar faces in our places of business. Yes, we all enjoy seeing the familiar ones who braved it over this nightmare. These new folks are venturing into the job market perhaps for the first time. They're replacing folks who got too much of our free tax dollars to sit at home. For the new folks, maybe this was a "first opportunity" since the pre-pandemic shutdown to find a job. So they're learning new skills. Learning to engage customers.

We are frustrated because the pandemic crap has gone on way further, if even necessary, than it should have. Even now the taste of freedom seems vulnerable to be yanked away again.

But as confidence is gained, these new people will be thankful for the job. Perhaps more than the people they are replacing. They'll be happy to make you happy, and we'll have a new beginning. Good luck for the folks who will be trying to find a job again sometime later.

Jan Lipski  
Vandenberg Village

**THIS MODERN WORLD**  
by TOM TOMORROW

REPUBLICAN SENATORS MAKE CONTACT WITH EXTRATERRESTRIALS.  
THE ALIEN FLEET WILL ARRIVE ON EARTH IN TWO YEARS--AND THEY HAVE AGREED TO INSTALL REPUBLICANS IN POWER PERMANENTLY!

WHEN THEY ARE DONE ENSLAVING AND EATING EVERYONE ELSE!  
HA HA! I NEED TO FIND MY OLD "LIBERAL TEARS" COFFEE MUG!

DEMOCRATS TRY TO ADDRESS THE CRISIS.  
WE MUST PASS THE "FOR THE PEOPLE WHO DON'T WANT TO BE EATEN BY SPACE ALIENS" ACT IMMEDIATELY AND PROHIBIT COLLUSION BETWEEN REPUBLICAN LAWMAKERS AND HOSTILE ALIENS!

SURELY OUR FRIENDS ACROSS THE AISLE WHO ARE CONSPIRING WITH THE ALIENS WILL AGREE!

MCCONNELL FILIBUSTERS THE EFFORT.  
THIS IS A DEMOCRAT POWER GRAB THAT INFRINGES ON OUR FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION!

BESIDES, THE ALIENS TOLD ME THEY JUST WANT TO SAVE US-- FROM CRITICAL RACE THEORY!  
THEY'RE COMING TO HELP!

HUMANITY'S ONLY HOPE LIES WITH RECALCITRANT DEMOCRATIC SENATORS. ELIMINATING THE FILIBUSTER WILL DO FAR MORE DAMAGE TO DEMOCRACY THAN ALIENS WHO PLAN TO ENSLAVE AND EAT US!

THE REPUBLICAN PROPAGANDA MACHINE KICKS INTO HIGH GEAR. THE ALIENS DON'T POSE ANY THREAT-- AT LEAST NOT TO REAL AMERICANS! IF THEY DO EAT ANYONE, IT'LL JUST BE DEMOCRATS! AND, YOU KNOW, FOREIGNERS AND STUFF.

TWO YEARS LATER...  
I GUESS THE IMPORTANT THING IS, THEY PRESERVED THE FILIBUSTER! IT'S TOO BAD MCCONNELL DUMPED IT FIRST CHANCE HE GOT.

AND ALSO THAT WE NOW LIVE IN A ONE-PARTY TOTALITARIAN STATE BACKED BY ALIENS WITH A TASTE FOR HUMAN FLESH!  
YEAH, WHAT CAN YOU DO.

WELCOME FRIENDS

HA HA HA!

www.thismodernworld.com...twitter.com/tomtomborrow

# The whole story

You know what the big bad U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency does when it wants local law enforcement to hand over information about a criminal in custody? It sends a fax.

A fax! The inmates can hear that little fax coming in from down the hall. No notification needed.

But really, what era are we living in?

According to Santa Barbara County Sheriff Bill Brown, if his department decides it wants to hand over said information, it responds via email. You know, like a normal entity participating in the year 2021. Which brings me to my next complaint.

Why is the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office communicating with ICE at all?

Several immigrant advocates had the same question at a June 22 Board of Supervisors forum where Brown gave his little compliance report on how many county jail inmates were released into ICE custody after already serving the time for their crimes. In 2020, 12 inmates found ICE on the other side of their jail cells, waiting to scoop them up and cart them away to a new cage.

While members of the Board of Supervisors patted their sheriff on the back for a job well done, advocates pushed back—telling them that any collaboration between a local law enforcement agency and ICE causes ripple effects in the community that go beyond the justice system. For instance, undocumented immigrants cite a fear of deportation as a reason they don't seek out public health care.

They don't trust government entities with their personal information. Hey, I know there are some conservatives out there in North County who can empathize with that!

Well, that's just one of a long list of other reasons, including a lack of access to medical insurance due to their undocumented status and the cost of health care (which is ridiculously high, on that everyone should agree).

Plus, advocates argued: If someone has already paid their penance to society, why should they have to do it again? CAUSE (Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy) policy intern Jennifer Cervantes called it a "two-tiered system of justice where individuals are punished twice simply because they are immigrants."

The truth is also that CAUSE employees/interns made up at least half of the callers who spoke during the Zoom public comment. And I guess 4th District Supervisor Bob Nelson was not impressed, because he told the advocacy organizations that their advocacy message was all wrong!

It's only bad people who are getting deported, he said.

You see, advocacy organizations—who see themselves as immigrant advocates—aren't seeing the right story! The story Nelson sees is one where the Sheriff's Office and ICE are working together to protect our community against criminals. That's apparently the story he thinks advocacy organizations should be telling.

The story I see is why Nelson isn't working for a nonprofit as an immigrant advocate.

People who have served the time for their crime are supposed to be released to restart their lives no matter what their crime was. And that's not what's happening in the case of this whole collab between law enforcement agencies, which are actively working to prevent certain people from restarting their lives.

And those certain people happen to be undocumented immigrants. ○

The canary knows all of the stories. Send your thoughts to [canary@santamariasun.com](mailto:canary@santamariasun.com).



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# HOT STUFF

JULY 1 – JULY 8  
2021

## THE GIVING TREES

Gallery Los Olivos presents a new duo exhibition, *Inside/Outside*, which debuts on Thursday, July 1, and will remain on display through Saturday, July 31. This exhibit features a collection of pastel paintings by Jim Tyler (whose work is pictured here) and oil paintings by Renée Kelleher. Call (805) 688-7517 or visit [gallerylosolivos.com](http://gallerylosolivos.com) to find out more. The gallery is located at 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos.

—Caleb Wiseblood

COURTESY IMAGE BY JIM TYLER

## 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](http://wildlingmuseum.org/news/art-from-the-trail). Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang.

#### 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](http://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](http://wildlingmuseum.org). Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082.

**INSIDE/OUTSIDE** Gallery Los Olivos presents artists Renee Kelleher and Jim Tyler in an exhibit of pastel and oil paintings. The pair share their passion for rich color, lighting, composition, and strong value contrasts. Mondays, Thursdays-Sundays, through July 31 805-688-7517. [Gallery Los Olivos](http://GalleryLosOlivos.com), 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos.

**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](http://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, [lomdocart.org](http://lomdocart.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](http://cityofsantamaria.org). Shepard Hall Art Gallery - Santa Maria Public Library, 421 South McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-925-0994.

#### INCORRUPTIBLE: AN SMCT READERS THEATRE

Presented in a Readers Theatre format for one weekend only. Written by Michael Hollinger and directed by Stuart Wenger. **July 9**, 7-9 p.m. [my805tix.com](http://my805tix.com). Santa Maria Civic Theatre, 1660 N. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

#### JULY CAMPS: WINE AND DESIGN

Check website for more details. **July 5-9**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Admission varies. Wine and Design, 3420 Orcutt Road, suite 105, Orcutt, [wineanddesign.com/orcutt-ca/](http://wineanddesign.com/orcutt-ca/).

#### JUNE CAMPS: WINE AND DESIGN

Check website for more info. Through July 2, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Admission varies. Wine and Design, 3420 Orcutt Road, suite 105, Orcutt, [wineanddesign.com/orcutt-ca/](http://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](http://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](http://cityofsantamaria.org/register). Elwin Mussell Senior Center, 510 Park Ave., Santa Maria.

#### PCPA: ACTORS TALKBACK

Streams

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

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

**PCPA READS AT HOME** A literacy project that uses our students' learning to serve children and parents who are learning at home. Co-hosted by Allan Hancock College and the Santa Maria-Bonita School District to bring a love of stories and language to people right in their homes. ongoing PCPA: The Pacific Conservatory Theatre, Santa Maria, 805-922-8313, [pcpa.org](http://pcpa.org).

#### SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY: BOOK CLUB

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

**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/](http://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](http://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. **July 1, July 2** and **July 3** Free. 805-925-0994. [engagedpatrons.org](http://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., **July 3**, 8-9:30 p.m., **July 9**, 8-9:30 p.m., **July 10**, 8-9:30 p.m. and **July 11**, 2-3:30 p.m. \$25. 805-344-1144. [latgstore.square.site](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://youthartsalive.org). Abel Maldonado Community Youth Center, 600 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](http://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](http://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](http://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,

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SUBMIT YOUR EVENTS

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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.

**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.

**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.

**MINIMAKERS SUMMER SESSIONS** MiniMaker Summer Sessions will be held at SLO MakerSpace, July 5 through Aug. 13. Week-long programs in many making mediums for students in grades K-8 will be offered. **July 5** Cost varies. 805-316-1434. mini-makers.com/. SLO MakerSpace, 81 Higuera St., Ste. 160 and 180, San Luis Obispo.

**SLO CAMERA CLUB** Online Zoom meetings and competitions. Everyone is welcome. Visit site for meeting links. Second Thursday of every month Free to guest. slocameraclub.org. Online, See website, 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 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.wordpress.com/category/gallery-exhibits/virtual-gallery/. Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

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

#### NORTH SLO COUNTY

**DATE NIGHTS AT GLASSHEAD STUDIO** Share a creative evening with your special loved one. Work together on an 8"x 8" fused glass plate while enjoying a glass of wine or non-alcoholic beverage, and a small charcuterie plate. Limited to 6 participants. **July 2**, 6-8 p.m. Starting at \$150. 805-464-2633. glassheadstudio.com. Glasshead Studio, 8793 Plata Lane, Suite H, Atascadero.

**FUSED GLASS PLATE OR BOWL CLASS** Learn the basics of fusing and slumping in this 2-hour beginner class. Make an 8" x 8" plate or bowl. You may use pre-cut glass pieces, or learn how to cut glass shapes to create your own unique design. All materials included. Limited to 6 people. **July 10**, 10 a.m.-noon \$100. 805-464-2633. glassheadstudio.com. Glasshead Studio, 8793 Plata Lane, Suite H, Atascadero.

**FUSED GLASS SUSHI SET** Perfect 5-piece serving set to impress your guests or give as a gift. Create a 12" x 7" rectangular fused glass sushi plate with matching square dipping bowls, and 2 chopstick holders. All materials included. Limited to 6 people **July 7**, 6-8 p.m. \$200. 805-464-2633. glassheadstudio.com. Glasshead Studio,



### REPERTORY REPUTATION

The San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre premiered its first live, in-person production of the year, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare [abridged]*, at the end of June. This madcap comedy is scheduled to run through Sunday, Aug. 8, and stars Suzy Newman, Jeff Salsbury, and Billy Breed (pictured, left to right). Call (805) 786-2440 or visit slorep.org for more details. SLO Rep is located at 888 Morro St., San Luis Obispo.

—C.W.

8793 Plata Lane, Suite H, Atascadero.

**MARBLE PAINTING KIDS CLASS** Get the kids creative with this simple yet fun painting technique. Each participant will roll paint covered marbles over a piece of paper contained in a tray, to create a completely unique piece of art. All supplies are provided. **July 10**, 12-1:30 p.m. \$30. 805-464-0533. the1artery.com. The ARtery, 5890 Traffic Way, Atascadero.

**SCREEN PRINTING CLASS** Print a custom design using the screen printing technique by pushing ink, through a stencil on a screen, to make a customized tote bag or t-shirt. All supplied provided, including snack and beverages. Appropriate for students ages 13 and up. **July 3**, 12-3 p.m. \$75. 805-464-0533. the1artery.com. The ARtery, 5890 Traffic Way, Atascadero.

**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.

**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. Through Aug. 30 Studios on the Park, 1130 Pine St., Paso Robles, 805-238-9800, studiosonthepark.org.

**WINNING IMAGES 2021** Since 1994, New Times Media Group has invited local photographers to show us life from their point of view. Come check out of this year's winning photos on display. Through July 24 newtimeslo.

ARTS continued page 18

## FOXEN® VINEYARD & WINERY



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Concert tickets - \$35 ea  
SM Style BBQ - \$20 ea

# What's That SMELL?



**HINT: It's not a skunk...**

*..It's the smell of failure.*

Our County has failed to put even basic regulations on large-scale cannabis. Unregulated cannabis grows affect the quality of life of thousands of people who live next to them.

**It's time for the county to fix this mess. It's time to stop the skunk. It's time for a change.**

**File your odor complaint today at: [www.sbcountycoalition.com/file](http://www.sbcountycoalition.com/file)**



**"Being a member of the Chamber has opened doors for Wine & Design that we may not have found otherwise! The camaraderie and extensive networking opportunities are second to none."**

Julie Jorge, Owner, Wine & Design Orcutt

The Santa Maria Valley Chamber is here for business. Join our organization by calling (805) 925-2403 or visit [www.santamaria.com](http://www.santamaria.com).

Catalyst. Convener. Champion.



ARTS from page 17

com. Studios on the Park, 1130 Pine St., Paso Robles, 805-238-9800.

## NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

### 65TH ANNUAL MORRO BAY ART IN THE PARK

Features 100 fine artists and craft designers. Presented by the Morro Bay Art Association. **July 2-4** Free. [morrobayartinthepark.com](http://morrobayartinthepark.com). Morro Bay City Park, Corner of Morro Bay Blvd. and Harbor St., 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](http://artcentermorrobay.org). Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

## CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

### LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

**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, [cityoflomdoc.com/parks\\_rec/anderson.htm](http://cityoflomdoc.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](http://ongoingpartnersincaring.org). Santa Maria, Citywide, Santa Maria.

**ANDROID PHONE CLASS** First Thursday of every month Oasis Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

**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](http://oasisorcutt.org). Oasis Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS CLASS** Tuesdays Oasis Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

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

**LINE DANCING** Mondays, 6:30-9 p.m. 805-937-9750. [oasisorcutt.org](http://oasisorcutt.org). Oasis Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

**REFLEXOLOGY AT OASIS** Tuesdays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 805-937-9750. [oasisorcutt.org](http://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](http://cityofsantamaria.beanstack.org). Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**TEEN STEAM MAKER SPACE PACKS (KIT 3)** Teens can get a free STEAM Pack from any SMPPL branch. **July 3, July 6, July 7, July 8, July 9 and July 10** Free. 805-925-0994. [engagedpatrons.org](http://engagedpatrons.org). Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS OVER ZOOM** Visit site or call to learn about various virtual workshop offerings. ongoing Varies. Unwind Studio, 130 N. Broadway, suite B, Santa Maria, 805-748-2539, [unwindsantamaria.com](http://unwindsantamaria.com).

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

## 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](http://ampsurf.org). Addie Street Surfer Parking Lot, Addie Street, Pismo Beach.

**AVILA BEACH 4TH OF JULY DOGGIE PARADE** Start off your holiday celebration with your puppies on the Avila Beach Promenade for our annual 4th of July Doggie Parade. All dogs must be registered and checked

in to park in the parade. Guests can pre-register online at [avilabeachcc.com](http://avilabeachcc.com) or at check-in table. **July 4**, 11 a.m.-noon \$5. 805-627-1997. Avila Beach Promenade, 404 Front St., Avila Beach, [avilabeachpier.com/information/avila-beach-promenade.html](http://avilabeachpier.com/information/avila-beach-promenade.html).

**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/](http://mpspost.wordpress.com/applied-neurology-2/). Central Core, 1160 Price Street, Pismo Beach.

**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](http://nipomorecreation.org). Nipomo, Citywide, Nipomo.

**SUMMER YOUTH BASKETBALL CAMP** All skill levels welcome. For boys and girls, grades 1-6. Through July 1, 9 a.m.-noon 805-929-5437. [nipomorecreation.org](http://nipomorecreation.org). Nipomo High School, 525 N Thompson Ave, Nipomo.

**VETSURF FRIDAY** Veterans encouraged to join us for these weekly VetSurf programs to share the camaraderie. Surfers and non-surfers are welcome; enjoy coffee and snacks on the beach or paddle out to share some waves with fellow Veterans. Fridays, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Free admission. 805-441-5271. [ampsurf.org](http://ampsurf.org). Addie Street Surfer Parking Lot, Addie Street, Pismo Beach.

**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, [5citieswimschool.com](http://5citieswimschool.com).

## SAN LUIS OBISPO

**CAMP SHORESHIM** The JCC is thrilled to host its 10th summer of Camp Shoreshim. We welcome you and your family to our Ancient Hebrew Village. This will be a summer to remember and we welcome campers and families of all backgrounds to join us. **July 5**, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., **July 6**, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., **July 7**, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., **July 8**, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. and **July 9**, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. \$295. 805-426-5465. [jccslo.com/camp-shoreshim.html](http://jccslo.com/camp-shoreshim.html). JCC-Federation of SLO Property, 875 Laureate Lane, 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](http://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](http://t-mha.org). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**DEALING WITH OVERWHELMING EMOTIONS: ONLINE STRESS SUPPORT (ZOOM)** Feelings got you dazed and confused? Not dealing well with yet more changes? We have some awesome, kind, caring, and wise folks from FEMA Crisis Counseling team and TMHA who can try and help the stress get less. Mondays, 5-6:30 p.m. through Aug. 30 Free. [zoom.us/j/85989402573](http://zoom.us/j/85989402573). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**MEDITATION COURSE VIA ZOOM** Learn to meditate from the comfort of your home from an experienced, certified meditation teacher. For beginners as well as those seeking to extend an existing practice. Email ([info@theartofsilence.net](mailto:info@theartofsilence.net)) or text for more info. Wednesdays, Sundays, 11 a.m.-noon and Sundays, 6-7 p.m. Donation based. 559-905-9274. [theartofsilence.net/events](http://theartofsilence.net/events). 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](http://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](http://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](http://worldrhythmndmotion.com).

**SLO BLUES BASEBALL** Come see the Blues take on various teams at the ballpark. Tickets are limited; early

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE continued page 19

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE | page 18  
 purchases recommended. Visit site for more details. **July 2**, 6 p.m., **July 3**, 6 p.m., **July 6**, 6 p.m. and **July 8**, 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.

**STORYTIME TALES FROM AROUND THE USA** Each Friday this summer, we will premiere a story time from around the USA, each recorded in a different state. Fridays, 6 a.m. through July 30 Free. 805-781-5775. slolibrary.org. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**SUMMER SUPER CAMP-A-PALOOZA** Summer camps for ages 4 and up. Each week has a different theme with special guests and fun activities. Through Aug. 18 805-549-8408. iflipforccg.com. Central Coast Gymnastics Sports Center, 21 Zaca Lane, 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

COURTESY IMAGE BY CHRISTINE JESZECK



### COLOR MY WORLD

The Lompoc Valley Art Association presents its next solo exhibition, *A Cornucopia of Color*, starting on Friday, July 2, and running through Sunday, July 25, at the Cypress Gallery. This exhibit showcases a collection of bold and colorful acrylic pieces by Christine Jeszeck (whose work is pictured here). Admission to the show is free. Call (805) 737-1129 or visit lompcart.org to find out more. Cypress Gallery is located at 119 E. Cypress Ave., Lompoc.

—C.W.

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.

**SIMPLY SOURDOUGH** First Thursday of every month Oasis Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

**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.

### SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

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

**PISMO BEACH FARMERS MARKET** Features various vendors selling their goods. Wednesdays, 4-7 p.m. Pismo Beach Farmers Market, Pismo Pier, Pismo Beach.

### NORTH SLO COUNTY

**TAPAS ON THE HILL** Kick off your weekend on our hilltop patio with traditional tapas, award-winning wine, and stunning panoramic vineyard views. Call or email to reserve your table. Fridays, 5-7 p.m. through Oct. 29 805-434-3333. AronHill Vineyards, 3745 West Highway

46, Templeton, vineyards.com.  
**VIRTUAL WINE TASTING PACKAGES AT CASS WINERY** Wine by the glass and bottles are also available for purchase. Check site for specific virtual tasting packages. ongoing Free. 805-239-1730. casswines.com/. Cass Winery And Vineyard, 7350 Linne Rd., Paso Robles.

## MUSIC

### SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

**LIVE MUSIC SUNDAYS** Sundays, 2-5 p.m. Brick Barn Wine Estate, 795 W. Hwy 246, Buellton, 805-686-1208, brickbarnwineestate.com.

**WINE DOWN WEDNESDAYS** Wednesdays, 5-7 p.m. Brick Barn Wine Estate, 795 W. Hwy 246, Buellton, 805-686-1208, brickbarnwineestate.com.

### SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**BRIDGE THE GAP TOUR: MEET AND GREET PARTY** A meet and greet event with featured artist BOBBYBEENFRESH and album guests Pofsky, Connect the Coast, Trey Anthony, Niko Cochise, and others. **July 2**, 3-5 p.m. connectthecoast.co/. Passport, 1954 S. Broadway, suite L, Santa Maria, 805-862-2566.

**CELEBRATE THE 4TH OF JULY WITH TEMPLE BETH EL** Enjoy a barbecue lunch with live bluegrass/Americana music. Options include burgers, veggie burgers, hot dogs, desserts, and drinks. Featured artists are Amaya Rose on violin and Julio Boysenberry on banjo and vocals. **July 4**, 12-3 p.m. \$15 for members; \$18 for non-members. 805-478-1463. Temple Beth El, 1501 E. Alvin Ave., Santa Maria.

**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.

### SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**GROVER BEACH SUMMER CONCERT SERIES** Features Unfinished Business (July 4), Stevie Nicks Illusion (July 11), Dark Desert Highway (July 25), Careless Whisper (Aug. 1), Scratch (Aug. 8), and Rock Odyssey (Aug. 15). **July 4**, 3-6 p.m. and **July 11**, 3-6 p.m. Free. grover.org. Ramona Garden Park Center, 993 Ramona Ave., Grover Beach, (805)473-4580.

### SAN LUIS OBISPO

**ANCHOR AND BEAR LIVE** **July 2**, 5 p.m. Baileyana, 5828 Orcutt Rd., San Luis Obispo, 805-269-8200, baileyana.com.

**BRASS MASH (FIRST FRIDAYS)** Seating will be extremely limited so make sure to get here early if you want a seat. First Friday of every month, 6 p.m. through Oct. 1 liquidgravitybrewing.com/. Liquid Gravity, 675 Clarion Court, San Luis Obispo.

**BRIDGE THE GAP TOUR: BOBBYBEENFRESH** Enjoy live music with featured artist BOBBYBEENFRESH and album guests Pofsky, Connect the Coast, Trey Anthony, Niko Cochise, and others. **July 2** connectthecoast.co/. Dairy Creek Golf Course, 2990 Dairy Creek Rd., San Luis Obispo, 805-782-8060.

**MARATHON: NEW ALBUM RELEASE** Local artist C. Hite is releasing *Marathon*, a collection of original techno music, to run by that was created and broadcast for marathon runners in a downtown SLO race. **July 1-Aug. 5** carolbethite.bandcamp.com. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

### NORTH SLO COUNTY

**ATASCADERO 4TH OF JULY MUSIC FESTIVAL** A fundraiser for the Atascadero Printery. Features a beverage booth with beer, wine, and more. Check website for more details. **July 4**, 4-8 p.m. atascadero4thofjuly.org/. Atascadero Lake Park, Atascadero, 461-5000.

**BURNING JAMES AND POHO BLUES ALL-STARS** **July 4**, 3 p.m. The Pour House, 525 Pine St., Paso Robles, 805-239-1000, pasobrewing.com.

**EASTON EVERETT TRIO** This trio performs neo-folk pop. **July 3**, 1-4 p.m. Rava Wines + Events, 6785 Creston Rd., Paso Robles, 805-238-7282.

**PASO SHOW FEATURES THREE TROUBADOURS** Songwriters at Play host Steve Key shares the Sculpterra garden stage with Bakersfield-based artists Crimpton Skye, and Jon Ranger. Joining us for guest sets: Sarah Molly, Rob Kimball, Sean Pawling. **July 3**, 12:30-3:30 p.m. Free. 805-204-6821. stevekey.com/events. Sculpterra Winery, 5015 Linne Rd., Paso Robles.

**SOUNDHOUSE LIVE** **July 2**, 6 p.m. Derby Wine Estates, 525 Riverside Ave, Paso Robles, 805-238-6300. ○



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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



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



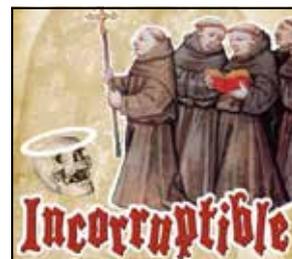
**SLO Blues Baseball vs. Santa Barbara Foresters**  
**TUES & WED, JULY 6 & 7**  
 Sinsheimer Park, SLO



**SLO Blues Baseball vs. Orange County Riptide**  
**THURSDAY, JULY 8**  
 Sinsheimer Park, SLO



**SLO Blues Baseball vs. Conejo Oaks**  
**FRIDAY, JULY 9**  
 Sinsheimer Park, SLO



**Incorruptible**  
 An SMCT Readers Theatre  
**TUE, WED, THU, JULY 9, 10 & 11**  
 Santa Maria Civic Theatre



**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. Arroyo Seco Saints**  
**FRI & SUN, JULY 16 & 18**  
 Sinsheimer Park, SLO



**Nature Walk at Oso Flaco**  
**SUNDAY, JULY 18**  
 The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center



**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



**Symphony of the Vines Fundraiser**  
**SUNDAY, JULY 25**  
 Pear Valley Vineyard, Paso Robles



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

Interested in selling tickets with My805Tix?  
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POWERED BY: *NewTimes* & *Sun*

## Arts Briefs

### Santa Maria author Viviana Hall releases bilingual poetry collection, *Poems of Love*

RoseDog Books recently published *Poems of Love*, a paperback collection of poems, in both English and Spanish, by Santa Maria-based poet, journalist, and social worker Viviana Hall. This 60-page book costs \$10 and can be purchased at [rosedogbookstore.com](http://rosedogbookstore.com).

To find out more about the author, whose other poetry compilations include *Miedos* and *Poemas del Cielo y de la Tierra*, visit [vivianahall.com](http://vivianahall.com).

### Flying Goat Cellars in Lompoc showcases paintings by local artist Vicki Andersen

FILE IMAGE COURTESY OF VICKI ANDERSEN



A collection of paintings by local artist Vicki Andersen is currently on display in the Flying Goat Cellars' tasting room gallery. Featured paintings include *Sunflower Vintage* (pictured), among other still life and landscape pieces.

For more info on the exhibit, call (805) 736-9032 or visit [flyinggoatcellars.com](http://flyinggoatcellars.com). The tasting room is located at 1520 E. Chestnut Court, suite A, Lompoc. To find out more about the artist, visit [vickiandersen.com](http://vickiandersen.com).

### Great American Melodrama announces 2021 season, starting with new vaudeville revue, *Comedy Tonight*

The Great American Melodrama in Oceano presents *Comedy Tonight*, an original two-act vaudeville revue, which is scheduled to premiere on Thursday, July 15. Performances will run through Sunday, Sept. 12.

Described as a two-hour evening of puns, parodies, song, and dance, *Comedy Tonight* will mark the Melodrama's first production since its closure in March 2020. While the theater is adhering to current health and safety guidelines as set by the CDC and the State of California, the Melodrama is asking all patrons who are not fully vaccinated to respectfully wear a face mask while inside the venue. To ensure the safety of attendees, all cast and staff members are fully vaccinated. The theater will be operating at full capacity (252, excluding cast and staff members) during performances of *Comedy Tonight*.

The Melodrama also announced two other upcoming productions in its 2021 season, *Frankenstein's Bride* (Thursday, Sept. 16, through Sunday, Nov. 14) and *The Holiday Extravaganza* (Thursday, Nov. 18, through Friday, Dec. 31). *Frankenstein's Bride* follows a mad scientist who attempts to reanimate Frankenstein's monster 15 years after the creature was destroyed, according to the Melodrama's website. Not long after this horror spoof closes, the theater will transition to its winter triple bill, *The Holiday Extravaganza*, which includes an one-act iteration of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, an original opera full of several fairy tale characters, and the venue's traditional Holiday Vaudeville Revue.

To purchase tickets or find out more about the Great American Melodrama's 2021 season, call (805) 489-2499 or visit [americanmelodrama.com](http://americanmelodrama.com). The theater is located at 1863 Front St., Oceano. ○

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



**HALL FOR ARTISTS:** Fans of local artist Marilyn Dover Benson's work can look forward to finding some of her most recent paintings in a new solo exhibition at Shepard Hall (located inside the Santa Maria Public Library). The exhibit is scheduled to run through the end of July.

## Lost in the moment

Shepard Hall showcases eclectic paintings by Marilyn Dover Benson with new exhibit, *Realism versus Abstract: What Is Your Passion?*

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

While her realistic landscapes aim to capture the world as we know it, acrylic artist Marilyn Dover Benson has described her vibrant, abstract pieces as “out of this world.”

Although the local painter enjoys working in both concentrations, she believes realism is the trickier of the two, at least in her experience, she said.

“Realism is a much more challenging mode, as everything has to be so detailed,” the Santa Maria-based artist said. “I use a small brush, it literally takes me hours, sometimes weeks, to capture all the fine details.”

Fans of Benson's work can look forward to finding paintings from both ends of the spectrum in her latest showcase, a new solo exhibition at Shepard Hall (located inside the Santa Maria Public Library).

“Santa Maria Library's Shepard Hall is a dream location for any artist; there's lots of wall space and wonderful lighting,” said Benson, whose new exhibit is appropriately titled *Realism versus Abstract: What Is Your Passion?*

In Benson's case, the answer to the titular question she raises is both, or simply painting in general, no matter what style or subject.

Throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, Benson was able to maintain a rigorous, self-imposed painting schedule—painting daily in her private studio, specifically from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Already a self-described homebody and introvert prior to stay-at-home orders, Benson felt grateful being able to continue painting from the comfort and safety of her own home during periods of quarantine.

Now armed with a plethora of output of pieces she painted over the past year and a half, Benson has chosen 23 paintings to display in her Shepard Hall show, which premiered in early June and is scheduled to run through the end of July.

“My abstract pieces mostly have celestial titles,” said Benson, referring to ethereal paintings like *Genesis*, *Let There Be Light*, and other works included in the abstract side of the colorful exhibit.

Guests of the show are invited to compare and contrast Benson's paintings that hail from both

extremes, as the abstract pieces have been hung side-by-side with landscapes, portraits, still life pieces, and other works of realism.

Sometime during the first week of July, the 23-piece show will get an upgrade to 24, as Benson is adding an additional painting to the exhibit, one she is calling her personal favorite animal portrait to date: a 36-by-36-inch acrylic painting of a horse, titled *Pride of the West*.

Even more of Benson's animal-themed works, which include several other horse portraits, as well as cat and dog portraits, can be found online to view for free on her website.

And alongside Benson's new in-person show at Shepard Hall (admission to the exhibit is free during the Santa Maria Public Library's regular hours), there are currently a handful of other Central Coast locations where viewers can find her artworks displayed, including the Santa Maria Airport.

“I am so pleased with them, and they add such a splash of color to the airport walls,” Benson said of her three poppy paintings hanging near the



COURTESY IMAGE BY MARILYN DOVER BENSON

**CAPTURING REALITY:** “Realism is a much more challenging mode, as everything has to be so detailed,” Marilyn Dover Benson said, comparing the ways in which she approaches realistic paintings versus abstract pieces.

entrance of the airport's baggage claim area.

You can also find one of Benson's latest abstract seascapes, titled *Surf's Up*, on display at Piper's Kombucha in Orcutt. For Benson, one of the biggest incentives to uphold her aforementioned painting routine is the prospect of ultimately showcasing her works to the public through various venues and outlets.

“I adore painting and displaying my work, whether at the local airport or various shops around town,” Benson said. “It encourages me to pursue my passion of painting daily, and lose myself in whatever subject I wish to paint.” ○

*Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood likes getting lost too. Send him a map (preferably a treasure map) at [cwiseblood@santamariasun.com](mailto:cwiseblood@santamariasun.com).*

PHOTO BY CALEB WISEBLOOD



**FLIGHTS AND FLORALS:** “I am so pleased with them, and they add such a splash of color to the airport walls,” Marilyn Dover Benson said of her three poppy paintings currently on display in another exhibit at the Santa Maria Public Airport, near the entrance of the airport's baggage claim area.

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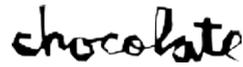
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## Faster & fierouser

PHOTO COURTESY OF ONE RACE FILMS



**CALL FIRST NEXT TIME:** Dom (Vin Diesel) and Letty (Michelle Rodriguez) react to unexpected visitors at their secluded home, in *F9: The Fast Saga*, now screening at local theaters.

**Justin Lin** (*Better Luck Tomorrow, The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift, Star Trek Beyond*) directs this ninth installment in the popular *Fast & Furious* franchise. This time around, Dom (Vin Diesel) is confronted by his estranged brother, Jakob (John Cena), who's been enlisted by villain Otto (Thue Ersted Rasmussen) to find a device that can upload a computer virus to a satellite and give Otto control of all the world's weapons systems. (145 min.)

**Glen:** If you have a middle-school grasp of physics and a general idea of how magnets function, you're going to have a really hard time suspending your

disbelief for this inane pile of over-the-top nonsense. Between the stunts and the "technology," almost every moment on screen is preposterous in this unintentional comedy. When it's trying to be funny, it's not, and when it's trying to be serious, it's laugh-out-loud hilarious. I'm not familiar with the entire series, having lost interest early on, but apparently the franchise's raison d'être is to one-up—or maybe 10-up—its predecessor to the point of utter absurdity. The film opens with a flashback to Dom and his brother, Jakob (Dom has a brother? Apparently!) watching their father in a race that ends in tragedy. Dom lands in prison for beating up the driver that caused the crash but comes to the realization that his brother is actually responsible. After Dom is released, he and Jakob have a street race, with the loser being exiled, which explains why we didn't know about Dom's brother for, like, eight films. Dom's now retired from the international saving-the-world game, living in seclusion with his girlfriend, Letty (Michelle Rodriguez), and Dom's son, Brian (Isaac and Immanuel Holdane), from a previous relationship. Then his old crew shows up. Just when he thought he was out, yada yada yada, car races, explosions, fistfights, gun battles, and a rocket-propelled Pontiac Fiero in space. Ta-da!

**Anna:** I'll preface this by saying the only related film I've seen was *Hobbs and Shaw*, so I have no idea who these characters are, what they've done in the past, or how they relate to each other. Needless to say, it didn't take more than a minute to get the gist, and even without their backstories, I was able to

piece together enough of the relationships to not feel lost. Over-the-top insanity follows for a solid 2 1/2 hours where each scene is trying to one-up the last and where the writers prove that much like *Insane Clown Posse*, they too have wondered, "Water, fire, air, and dirt. F\*\*\*ng magnets, how do they work?" Well, kids—it isn't like *this!* I can tell you that much. The dialogue is eye-rolling bad or cheesy, but let's face it—we didn't come here to hear Shakespeare. This is all about cars that swing off of a cliff, catch onto a metal cable, and land safely on the other side of a canyon, which is apparently across some border. It's a wild ride, and one I never, ever intend on going on again.

**Glen:** Nice *Insane Clown Posse* reference, dear! A lot of the characters are fun in their own particular ways. Roman (Tyrese Gibson) has a theory that they're all unkillable, otherwise how would they pull off these amazing stunts and weather these hails of gunfire and never get so much as a scratch on them? That's about as close as this film gets to acknowledging how outlandish it is. Ramsey (Nathalie Emmanuel), the British tech whiz, manages to hold her own in this boys' club, making her my personal hero. Otto (Rasmussen) is a scenery-chewing villain who's gleefully evil in an adolescent way. My trio of favorites is Sean (Lucas Black), Twinkie (Shad Moss), and Earl (Jason Tobin), who are the Pontiac Fiero "engineers." They're the closest we get to intentional comic relief. There is also a bevy of gig stars in small roles like Charlize Theron's Cipher, Kurt Russell's Mr. Nobody, and Helen Mirren's Queenie, and they all do their part to make this as watchable as possible, but they're no match for the real battle between Diesel and Cena to see who can offer the most wooden performance. I'm calling it a tie, and the audience is the loser.

**Anna:** Here I thought those two were in a thick-neck contest, which is also a tie and also puts the audience solidly in the loser position. We know why they're here though: Someone has to fill the screen with an outlandish amount of muscle. I actually really liked Roman. He was a little bit of comic relief, and those few moments where the film isn't taking itself seriously are welcome. Kudos to the actors who managed to not have their characters killed off and continue through this series. There's no end in sight, and these films are always huge money machines. Its first weekend made more than \$70 million, and we're just barely walking around without masks on, let alone back in theaters! There's only one way to see movies like this, which is on a big screen. Can your huge flatscreen translate closely enough? Maybe, but would I have actually watched it if I had the option to get up and entertain myself with a nice puzzle or podcast in the other room? Probably not. If you're a fan, you know it and you don't need me to tell you how to spend your money, so if seeing unbelievable driving surrounded by an even more unbelievable storyline is your jam, have at it. ○

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

### F9: THE FAST SAGA

What's it rated? **PG-13**  
Where's it showing? **Hi-Way Drive-In, Regal Santa Maria RPX, Movies Lompoc, Regal Arroyo Grande,**  
What's it worth, Glen? **Matinee (if you're a fan; otherwise forget it)**  
What's it worth, Anna?  
**What Glen said**

## Film & TV Reviews



### THE KINGDOM

What's it rated? **R** When? **2007**  
Where's it showing? **HBO Max**

Peter Berg (*Friday Night Lights, Lone Survivor, Patriots Day*) directs this post 9/11 film about an elite team of FBI investigators seeking the truth about a terrorist bombing on an American military base in Saudi Arabia. The film truly got short shrift upon its release, receiving an unfair 51 percent critics score on [rotten tomatoes.com](http://rotten tomatoes.com). It's one of the most compelling and politically astute films of the genre—perhaps not as good as *Green Zone* (2010), but it's absolutely gripping and concludes with one of the most intense action sequences ever put to film.

After the bombing on Saudi soil, FBI Agent Ronald Fleury (Jamie Foxx) wants a crack at finding the terrorists, knowing that Saudi authorities will be less than thorough. He assembles his team—Janet Mayes (Jennifer Garner), Grant Sykes (Chris Cooper), and Adam Leavitt (Jason Bateman)—and despite U.S. resistance to sending them in, lands in Saudi Arabia to discover a whole other wall of Arab bureaucracy standing in his way.



**STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND:** American FBI Agents Ronald Fleury (Jamie Foxx) and Janet Mayes (Jennifer Garner) race against time to find a terrorist cell responsible for an attack on a U.S. military base in Saudi Arabia, in *The Kingdom*, screening on HBO Max.

With Col. Faris Al Ghazi (Ashraf Barhom), his Saudi liaison, begrudgingly willing to help, Fleury and his team race against time to catch the terrorist cell before it strikes again ... this time with his team as its target. Berg is a terrific director, and this story by Matthew Michael Carnahan (*World War Z, Deepwater Horizon*) is thoroughly engrossing. (110 min.)

—Glen

## BINGEABLE

### CRUEL SUMMER

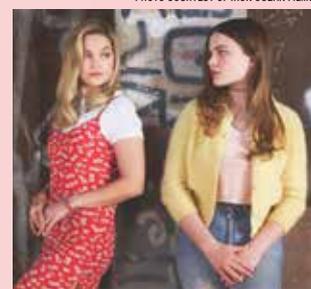
What's it rated? **TV-14** When? **2021**  
Where's it showing? **Hulu**

From executive producers Jessica Biel, Tia Napolitano, and Michelle Purple comes this unconventional drama about getting the life you've always dreamed of and the price you pay for living it. The episodes span three years, intermixing timelines to build the story of what really happened to Kate Wallis (Olivia Holt) and Jeanette Turner (Chaira Aurelia) over that time.

Jeanette is an awkward and overlooked teen with zero social clout beyond the love of her two best friends, Mallory (Harley Quinn Smith) and Vince (Allius Barnes). She secretly yearns to be like the popular and much cooler Kate Wallis, who's a year above her, dresses cute, and can suck face with her super cute boyfriend, Jamie (Froy Gutierrez), without braces getting in the way. When Kate goes missing, the entire community is shocked, but as life wanders on, Jeanette soon finds herself growing up and growing into a life that looks eerily similar to the one Kate had—or at least the one she seemed to lead on the surface. When we flash forward to the third year, we find

Jeanette embroiled in a legal battle when Kate claims Jeanette witnessed her captivity and essentially kept quiet so her new lifestyle wouldn't be at risk.

It's teenage drama mixed with many unknowns about what the truth really is. There's a season 2 slated, and I can't wait to see what more this drama has in store for us. It's hard to peel your eyes from the screen, so be prepared for a binge with this one. (10 42- to 45-min. episodes) ○



**SWITCHEROO:** After Kate (Olivia Holt, left) is abducted, school wallflower Jeanette (Chaira Aurelia) seems to effortlessly take her place as the popular girl in school, acquiring both her friends and boyfriend, in the Hulu TV series *Cruel Summer*.

—Anna

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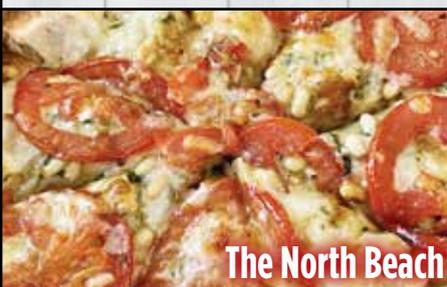
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- I'll be staying home and supporting the local economy this summer.

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## Daydream believers

*Dreamers Vegan Takeout hosts pop-up events in Lompoc, Santa Maria, and beyond*

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

If you give a mouse a cookie, society has been groomed to assume the rodent will consequently demand a glass of milk. But what if said cookie giver doesn't carry dairy products?

While probably best known for its vegan burger, burrito, and taco offerings, Dreamers Vegan Takeout in Lompoc offers a rotating menu of delicious desserts as well, including cookies—whether they're intentionally or unintentionally vegan, co-owner Lauren Velazquez explained.

"We've done deep-fried Oreos, because Oreos are accidentally vegan," Lauren said. "And I've taken my family's secret recipe for homemade chocolate chip cookies—which we're locally famous for. But I re-created that recipe and substituted things to make it vegan."

Founded in January, Dreamers Vegan Takeout began with Lauren's husband, David, who dreamt about bringing quality vegan comfort food to Lompoc, even while working full time at an unrelated job. As big fans of both Ziggy's in San Luis Obispo and Rascal's Pop-Up in Santa Barbara, David and Lauren often wondered why it was so hard to find vegan vendors closer to home.

"Literally between Santa Barbara and SLO, they're aren't any options," David said. "I mean, maybe you can get like a black bean burger somewhere, or potato tacos and put some lettuce on it and 'you're good to go,' but no 'real' vegan options."

During the week, you will probably find the couple at their respective day jobs (David is a sales rep for Verizon, and Lauren is a graphic designer for Allan Hancock College). While their weekends are now usually reserved for hosting Dreamers events, David and Lauren used to spend their free days traveling either up north or down south to attend the vegan pop-ups that inspired them to start a similar business of their own.

"So many of the best vegan options are either in LA or way up north, there's nothing in between really. Especially in Lompoc, there's just no vegan options, period."

### Dream on

Find out more about Dreamers Vegan Takeout at [dreamersvegan.com](http://dreamersvegan.com). The next pop-up event takes place on Sunday, July 4, from noon to 4 p.m., at the Royal Healing Emporium, located at 721 W. Central Ave., suite D, Lompoc.



**BURRITO BAE:** Founded in January, Dreamers Vegan Takeout began with Lompoc locals David and Lauren Velazquez, who felt the town was in need of a quality vegan comfort food option. As big fans of both Ziggy's in San Luis Obispo and Rascal's Pop-Up in Santa Barbara, the couple often wondered why it was so hard to find vegan vendors closer to home.

Lauren said. "We're the closest thing to a vegan restaurant, even though we're just a pop-up."

Throughout 2020, David and Lauren discussed the possibility of starting their own pop-up business. At the end of December, David decided the potential venture would be his New Year's resolution for 2021.

"It was New Year's Eve, and I remember thinking, 'It's now or never, I'm done with just thinking about it, let's just do it, let's launch it,'" said David, a DACA recipient who chose to name the company Dreamers as a loving tribute to "all of those who have come to the U.S. to make a life for themselves and their loved ones."

David woke up early the following morning, New Year's Day, with his resolution in mind.

"I woke up at 8 a.m. and started the Instagram page, and followed a bunch of friends—from there it just exploded."

"We had 100 followers within a day, 1,000 within a week, and it's just been growing steadily ever since," Lauren said.

David and Lauren brought their longtime friend—who David has known since third grade—and fellow vegan foodie, Andrew Smith,



**A WISH YOUR HEART MAKES:** Throughout 2020, husband and wife David and Lauren Velazquez discussed the possibility of starting their own pop-up business. At the start of 2021, Dreamers Vegan Takeout became a reality.

into the business. It was during high school, in fact, that David and Smith became vegetarian at the same time, after finding peta.org and becoming passionate about animal rights. They later went on to become vegan together.

During the trio's pop-up events, which they've hosted at venues in Lompoc, Santa Maria, and Arroyo Grande so far, Lauren handles customer service while David and Smith—each equipped with their own grill—divvy up the orders.

The first venue to host the Dreamers pop-up team (or "the Dream Team," as Lauren calls them), was the Royal Healing Emporium in Lompoc, back in February.



**HOP ON POP-UPS:** While their weekends are now usually reserved for hosting Dreamers Vegan Takeout events, David and Lauren Velazquez used to spend their free days traveling either up north or down south to enjoy the vegan pop-ups that inspired them to start a similar business of their own.



**LET'S TACO ABOUT IT:** Dreamers Vegan Takeout offers a rotating menu of vegan tacos, burritos, nachos, burgers, and desserts.

"We showed up expecting that it might be kind of slow, thinking people didn't really know who we are yet," David said. "Literally an hour in, we were completely sold out. It was insane, it was really exciting to see."

The Dream Team is heading back to the Emporium on Sunday, July 4, for its next pop-up event (scheduled from noon to 4 p.m.).

Over the past seven months, one of the group's favorite parts of running the business so far has been simply introducing people to vegan comfort food, especially those who assumed the term only applied to salads, smoothies, etc., Lauren explained.

"It's so much more than that. Vegan comfort food is such a growing industry right now, especially with the boom of Impossible meat and Beyond Burgers," Lauren said. "It's picking up traction in the United States right now, which is really cool to see."

"We wanted to bring that [option] to our little sleepy small town where people don't really try new things," Lauren continued. "It's been really cool to see a lot of new faces at every pop-up, and we've already got regulars that we know by name." ○

Mr. Sandman, send Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood a dream at [cwiseblood@santamariasun.com](mailto:cwiseblood@santamariasun.com).

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Contact info is agent is Debbie Murphree at **805-598-0001**

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