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AT THE MOVIES



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Waiting for care

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Monday – Friday

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Local health officials say a Marian Regional Medical Center's new Behavioral Health Outpatient Unit is needed more than ever after the trauma of 2020, but it has yet to receive California Department of Public Health approval. It would be the only place on the Central Coast that provides involuntary crisis care 24 hours a day. Although it's ready to open, the unit's application is caught up in red tape, and local legislators aren't happy about it. Staff Writer Malea Martin talks to health and elected officials about the holdup [6].

You can also read about why the Santa Maria Raceway is closing [4]; Kara Walker's foray into reality television [17]; and why you should head to downtown San Luis Obispo for wine tasting [20].

Camillia Lanham
editor



CARE ON HOLD: The new behavioral health center in Santa Maria is waiting on state approval.

Cover image from Adobe Stock > Cover design by Alex Zuniga

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Political Watch

• **U.S. Sens. Alex Padilla** (D-California) and **Dianne Feinstein** (D-California) released a joint statement on Aug. 5 following new vehicle emissions rules announced by the **Biden administration**, which set higher standards for emissions and set a target to make half of all new cars sold in 2030 zero emission. The new standards are based on California's framework agreement for voluntary vehicle emissions, which Padilla and Feinstein called upon Biden to use to set the national standards earlier this year. According to **Gov. Gavin Newsom**, the state standards were signed in 2019 with five major automakers "to serve as a path forward for clean vehicle standards nationwide in the face of Trump administration rollbacks," according to the governor's office. "We are proud to see the White House respond to our calls to build on California's leadership by setting clean car standards modeled on the 'California Framework Agreement,'" the senators said in a joint statement. "We are grateful for the steadfast efforts of the administration, automakers, environmental advocates, autoworkers, and labor unions to advance clean car standards that protect public health and reduce carbon pollution." The legislators also called upon the president to go further by setting a target for all vehicles sold after model year 2026 to be zero emission. "We must decarbonize the transportation sector as quickly as possible to give us a fighting chance to breathe the clean air and attain a prosperous, clean energy economy that works for everyone," their statement said. "The automobile industry has shown it has the ability and willingness to make this transition while creating good-paying jobs and saving Americans money." Newsom also released an Aug. 5 statement commending Biden's actions. "California applauds the Biden administration's move to boldly reduce climate pollution from cars, inspired by California's nation-leading framework. The climate emergency demands no less," he said in the statement. "Today's proposal will help to clean the air and create a healthier future for our children and our planet. We look forward to continuing our decades-long collaboration with federal partners to build on California's clean car leadership and deliver the investments needed to support the nationwide build-out of clean vehicle infrastructure."

• The Special Olympics of Southern California commended **state Sen. Monique Limón** (D-Santa Barbara) for her support on Aug. 4. "Thanks to Sen. Monique Limón for supporting Special Olympics California's inclusion in the state budget!" the organization wrote in a Facebook post. Limón wrote in response, "I will continue to be a supporter of the Special Olympics. The programs impact our communities by helping improve health, wellness, and independence among athletes with intellectual disabilities while promoting acceptance and inclusion." This time last year, funding for the Special Olympics was cut from the 2020 state budget, but the governor signed a budget trailer bill on July 12, 2021, that included \$6 million in funding for Special Olympics Northern California and Southern California, according to a statement from **Assemblymember Jim Frazier** (D-Fairfield). According to Frazier's statement, there are about 60,000 Special Olympics athletes in the state who will be supported by this budget inclusion.

• In an Aug. 4 Facebook post, **Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham** (R-San Luis Obispo) voiced his concern about increasing cases of domestic violence during the pandemic. "While we were able to secure a funding increase for shelters and prevention efforts in the last two budgets, there is work yet to be done to secure permanent funding for DV [domestic violence] shelters and prevention programs," he wrote. "I will continue to prioritize policies that protect victims of domestic violence in the Legislature." He added that anyone experiencing domestic violence can contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-7233 for support and referrals, or text START to 88788. ○

Santa Maria Raceway to shut down, owner announces

Central Coast residents will soon lose a venue that has operated in Nipomo for decades. Santa Maria Raceway, home of Stadium805, is planning to cease operations, owner Nick Duggan announced in an Aug. 9 Facebook post.

The raceway has hosted stock car races for more than 40 years, and after a series of different owners, Duggan purchased it in 2018 hoping to make the venue more financially viable by adding concerts and other events. But after a challenging permitting process and a looming lawsuit from disgruntled neighbors, Duggan said the decision to close down the facility was a financial one.

"I think the final straw was when the county started fining us such huge amounts of money that we had to pay up front," Duggan told the *Sun*. "We need that money to operate the business."

According to Duggan, he bought the raceway under the impression that he could use it to host concerts and other events.

"It was confirmed by [San Luis Obispo] County staff as well as our district supervisor that the Santa Maria Raceway use permit allowed many forms of entertainment, including concerts, color runs, festivals, and other non-racing events without the need to pull additional permits for each event," he said in the Aug. 9 Facebook post.

But soon after starting these types of events, Duggan began to receive noise complaints from residents of the nearby Costa Pacifica Estates. SLO County informed the venue that it would need to file for a 6.56 Entertainment License to put on live music events, Duggan said. He applied for the license and was granted it.

"However, the Costa Pacifica Homeowners Association then filed a lawsuit under the California Environmental Quality Act [CEQA] contending that the county had improperly granted us an exemption from conducting an Environmental Impact Report (EIR)," Duggan wrote.

SLO County 4th District Supervisor Lynn Compton said the 6.56 permit was a path forward for Stadium805 to do the events it hoped for and comply with county requirements, and she supported it. But when the lawsuit was filed, she said Duggan told the board he didn't want to go through with the license after all.

At the time, Duggan told the *Sun*, he chose to back out of the permit because it was too hard to plan for events due to COVID-19 uncertainty. In his recent Facebook post, he wrote that "the license was rescinded" until COVID-19 conditions improved.

"We requested a reinstatement of the previously approved entertainment license to resume normal operations," Duggan wrote. "But the county is now saying we must start this expensive process all over again."

According to Compton, the license was only rescinded at Duggan's request. She said it was Duggan's choice to back out of it, and that's why the county would require him to apply for it again.

"He came to the Board [of Supervisors] and he said he did not want to move forward with it," she said. "We had to withdraw it based on him coming to us and saying he didn't want to do it. Then he decided to move forward, and he has to operate within the code."

From Duggan's perspective, he said he's



FINAL LAP: Santa Maria Raceway and Stadium805 owner Nick Duggan announced on Facebook that the venue will soon shut down due to financial invariability.

now stuck between two bad options: Either cease operations and potentially violate the contracts he's already signed with upcoming event promoters or continue operations and keep getting fined. So, he's opting to shut down.

"We sincerely and unreservedly apologize to our community of devoted fans and racers," Duggan wrote in his Facebook post.

Hundreds of community members commented, offering their support. Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham told the *Sun* in an emailed statement that he was saddened to see the venue go.

"As someone that has been going to the raceway since I was kid, I was very disappointed to hear this news," he said. "This serves as a reminder of the ongoing toll of this pandemic, and the need to give support to our local businesses that are still trying to recover."

—*Malea Martin*

Santa Barbara County reimplements mask mandate amid rise in cases, hospitalizations

Santa Barbara County Public Health Department started mandating face coverings indoors again on Aug. 6—a departure from current state guidelines—amid rising COVID-19 cases.

California's current statewide guidelines require masks in some settings, like public transit and K-12 schools. In retail stores, restaurants, and other private indoor settings, masks are required for unvaccinated people but only recommended for vaccinated people, according to state guidance released on July 28.

But Santa Barbara County's new mask mandate requires face coverings for everyone indoors, regardless of their vaccination status. It's one of the first times that the county has implemented stricter rules than the state during the pandemic.

"We chose this path because we looked at our numbers. When we look at our case rate and when we look at our hospitalizations, these were increasing exponentially, at least the case rate was, and it got us worried," Public Health Director Dr. Van Do-Reynoso said. "We looked at what other jurisdictions were doing and we came to that conclusion for our community."

Santa Barbara County is the only Central Coast jurisdiction requiring masks for everyone right now. SLO County and Ventura County are following the state by only recommending them

for vaccinated people as of Aug. 9.

Do-Reynoso believes that requiring everyone to mask up indoors, combined with a continued push to get people vaccinated, will help slow the spread of the virus and the Delta variant. She said she does not anticipate that the county will have to implement any other stricter health orders to get there.

"At this point in time, we want to really focus on vaccination and increasing that percentage in our community," she said. "What we would want to do is continue to recommend, in addition to getting vaccinated, in addition to masking, for people to avoid crowds and make sure they're masked if they're in a crowded situation."

As of Aug. 2, the county's case rate per 100,000 sits at 12.3. One month prior, the case rate was just 2.3.

Another major concern for the county is the number of people hospitalized. As of Aug. 6, 29 people were hospitalized with four in the ICU from COVID-19. Overall, 69 percent of hospital beds are in use. This includes those hospitalized for other reasons.

"When the percentage of hospital beds in use reaches the red zone, [that's] where we get worried, and we're there," Do-Reynoso said.

She said the main concern is if the county gets to a place where elective surgeries or other critical health care needs have to be put off in order to care for those hospitalized. But with the new masking mandate in place, Do-Reynoso said she's hopeful that the current rise in cases will soon hit its peak. She encouraged community members to follow the rules and take other precautions to limit possible exposure to the virus.

—*Malea Martin*

Solvang City Council members call by-district elections 'complicated,' 'ridiculous'

Although Solvang held the first of five public hearings on Aug. 9 about how the city will be split up for by-district elections, city elected officials were only clear about one thing: They don't like it.

"It just seems complicated," City Councilmember Robert Clarke said during the Aug. 9 meeting. "This attorney out of Malibu, he's running around suing everybody, and I don't want to spend a dime on it ... so obviously we're going to have to do this. ... It just seems weird for such a small town."

NEWS from page 4

Last summer, the Solvang City Council voted to transition from at-large to by-district City Council elections after receiving a letter from Malibu-based attorney Kevin Schenkman, who has sent similar letters to other cities and said he represents the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project and its members who live in Solvang. Schenkman claimed that the city's at-large voting system is racially biased and that Latinos, who make up almost 30 percent of the city's population, have been historically underrepresented on the governing body.

The city hired the National Demographic Corporation, which has done similar work with other California cities, including Buellton, to help them transition. Corporation Consultant Daniel Phillips told the council that the California Voting Rights Act, which was written to encourage by-district elections, made it easier for cities like Solvang to be held liable for "racially polarized voting."

Hundreds of jurisdictions across the state have gone to court over the matter and settled, with more than \$16 million in total settlements and awards so far. Not one jurisdiction has won a case, Phillips said.

He explained that the city needs to be split up into four districts, one per City Council member. And it needs to follow federal and state laws to draw districts that are equal in population, don't dilute certain protected classes (such as Latinos), aren't racially gerrymandered, are contiguous, avoid splitting up neighborhoods or communities of interest, are compact, have identifiable

boundaries, and don't favor or discriminate against a political party.

"The idea of these state and federal criteria that I've lined out, the intent is to reduce gerrymandering," Phillips said. "To draw districts that are inherently fair."

With an estimated population of 6,000 residents, Solvang would be split into districts with about 1,500 people per district, he said.

"... 23 percent of the city's voting eligible population is Hispanic, and most of the remainder is white," Phillips said, adding later that the majority of that demographic is concentrated within the central commercial area of Solvang in higher density housing.

The questions that the city needs to answer before drawing the districts include those about where existing neighborhoods and their boundaries are, where communities of interest are, and whether those areas would benefit from being included in a single district.

Mayor Charlie Uhrig said that Solvang isn't a very large community with some pockets of voters of color.

"It seems so ridiculous to me to have to break this down by race," he said.

City Attorney Dave Fleishman said that the purpose of by-district elections is to make the City Council more representative of the city it presides over.

"In practice, it's more messy than that," Fleishman said.

The city's next by-district hearing is Aug. 23, where it will take more public comment from residents about where district lines should be drawn. ○

—Camillia Lanham

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City Transit Division to Host Proposed Revised Title VI Plan FY2022 – 2024 Public Meeting.

The City of Santa Maria Transit Division (SMAT) is holding two public meetings on Thursday, August 12th opened to all businesses, vendors, and community partners with an interest in public transportation. The first public meeting will start at 4:30 p.m. and the other at 5:30 p.m. Due to ongoing public safety concerns, opportunities for remote viewing are being made available at this time.

4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. meeting

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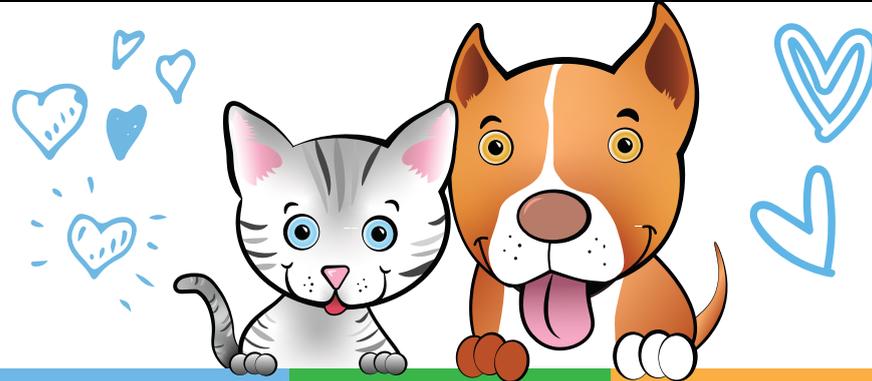
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5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m. meeting

Webinar ID: 834 1416 9630

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Public comments are encouraged and will be accepted online at SMATComments@CityofSantaMaria.org or by mail sent to Santa Maria Transit at 110 S. Pine Street, Suite 101, Santa Maria, CA 93458 Attention: SMAT Title VI.



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Crisis intervention

A much-needed mental health crisis unit is ready to open on the Central Coast, but it's caught in the state's approval process

BY MALEA MARTIN

After years of planning and preparation, Marian Regional Medical Center's new Behavioral Health Outpatient Unit is ready to open, and local health professionals say it's needed more than ever after the trauma of the past pandemic year. But red tape at the state level is road-blocking the unit from accepting patients just yet, leaving hospital and elected officials searching for clarity.

Dr. David Ketelaar, a Marian emergency medicine physician and the lead on the project, said the behavioral health unit is a big part of Marian's efforts over recent years to shore up its mental health services for the community. The unit has been in the works for at least five years, he said.

"In my prior role as the [emergency department] medical director ... I saw that crisis units of this type were starting to pop up elsewhere in the state of California and across the country," Ketelaar said. "So I came to our hospital, and our hospital then went to the county, with this idea."

The facility plans to be open 24 hours a day for "intervention, assessment, evaluation, therapy, and support for those experiencing a mental health crisis," according to a statement from the hospital. When it opens, Ketelaar said the unit will bring a whole new type of service for the Central Coast community.

"There are other crisis units in San Luis Obispo and in Santa Barbara, but they don't take patients on an involuntary basis," Ketelaar said. "So that really limits their effectiveness from the hospital standpoint because the persons we are holding, waiting for mental health care in our emergency department, are generally ones who are so ill that they require involuntary care."

But mental health services like this, Ketelaar said, are notoriously complex when it comes to funding streams, contracting, and licensing. In an Aug. 4 letter to California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director Dr. Tomás Aragón, signed by Assemblymember

Jordan Cunningham (R-San Luis Obispo), state Sen. Monique Limón (D-Santa Barbara), and state Sen. John Laird (D-Carmel), the elected officials probed for answers as to why the agency hasn't approved Marian's new unit yet.

According to the letter, the hospital first submitted its application to CDPH in February, and then resubmitted it in April after the state requested that the hospital change some terminology in its application.

Then, on Aug. 6, the hospital's application to add a Behavioral Health Unit to their existing license was denied, CDPH told the *Sun* in an email. When asked what specifically didn't meet the requirements, the department said it could not respond before the *Sun's* deadline.

Marian CEO Sue Andersen told the *Sun* that the hospital will now make changes to its application and resubmit it to CDPH. Simultaneously, as recommended by CDPH, the hospital will also seek licensing through the county and the Department of Health Care Services' mental health division, an alternate way to get the unit licensed.

Andersen said the county is already on board, and Marian will go with whichever licensing avenue is approved first to get the unit open as soon as possible. She added that hospital officials

'... the persons we are holding, waiting for mental health care in our emergency department, are generally ones who are so ill that they require involuntary care.'

—Dr. David Ketelaar, Marian Regional Medical Center

will be in conversation with CDPH this week as they sort things out.

"We went and visited other units in the state that are very similar to our unit, and they're all licensed by CDPH, so we fully expect that we will get licensing,"



FILLING A NEED: Mental health crisis services are lacking on the Central Coast, and Marian Regional Medical Center is hoping to mitigate some of that need with its new Behavioral Health Outpatient Unit, pictured. But the hospital is running into some hurdles at the state level.

Andersen said. "We hope to make a lot of headway this week ... because our concern is the patients that are suffering right now without having ample services in Santa Maria."

According to the letter written by Assemblymember Cunningham and state Sens. Limón and Laird, based on similar units, the license approvals process typically takes about two months.

"But, for reasons unexplained, it has been nearly four months since CDPH received a revised application, and Marian Regional Medical Center has had no explanation of why the

"All the while, similar units already operate in Sacramento (Mercy San Juan Medical Center) and San Pedro (Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Center) under CDPH licensure," the letter said. "This behavioral health center is needed in this community, and is fully staffed and ready to open. The delayed licensing process has cost the nonprofit hospital hundreds of thousands of dollars, money that could have been spent on patient care."

Cunningham told the *Sun* that, from his experience, rural areas have a harder time getting things approved at the state level.

"They've approved licenses for very similar facilities in urban areas," he said. "I'm pretty familiar with the state taking its time on stuff that affects rural California. ... It tends to require some involvement from elected officials to get it going. I wish it weren't the case."

Ketelaar said there is no shortage of need for a unit like this to open: He expects the outpatient unit's eight chairs to be full or close to full as soon as Marian gets the go-ahead from the state.

"Right now, every day in Marian's emergency department, we're holding

several persons awaiting inpatient mental health care," he said. "Every day when we try to transfer these patients, we run into roadblocks because there's a lack of availability. Many of these patients have a crisis that, if we were able to work with them in the right setting, intensely with mental health services, with psychiatrists, and with specially trained staff, we can shorten that crisis period."

And after the past year of economic turmoil and COVID-19 tragedy, the need for better mental health services

is higher than ever, Ketelaar added. "There was a great need before the pandemic, but it's only significantly increased the need since the pandemic," he said.

Until Marian's Behavioral Health Outpatient Unit gets the state's stamp of approval, the patients who need this type of care can't get it.

"The longer we go without this unit being open, the greater impact it has in terms of creating greater need," Sen. Limón told the *Sun*. "It's a health issue, and it's a safety issue." ○

Reach Staff Writer Malea Martin at mmartin@santamariasun.com.

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Celebrating 20 years

The Mixteco Indígena Community Organizing Project celebrates two decades of serving local migrant communities

BY MALEA MARTIN

After opening an office in Santa Maria in 2019, the Mixteco Indígena Community Organizing Project (MICOP) quickly became a fixture in North County communities, particularly known for its translation and outreach services that helped get critical information to local residents during the pandemic. But locals might not know that the organization has actually been around for a couple of decades.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of MICOP. "It started in 2001, very small, by one person: Family Nurse Practitioner Sandra Young," MICOP Executive Director Arcenio Lopez said. "The reason why she started it is because she noticed that a lot of her patients, they were not able to communicate either in Spanish or English, so she identified many of them being from the Mixteco community."

Young advocated for a Mixteco interpreter to be hired at her clinic, and they brought someone on part time at first.

"Soon they realized that there were so many Mixteco patients that they made the interpreter full time," Lopez said. "On the side, outside [Young's] work, she started inviting people to these monthly community gatherings where they were distributing information and basic necessities for families."

These community meetings soon became MICOP.

"It just came from a very organic point of organizing communities and volunteers," Lopez said. "They started with direct services. It was pretty hard to ignore the immediate needs

of our communities. But at the same time, they recognized that there were social issues, and there was a need to create this other arm about advocacy and community organizing, and looking to create long-lasting, systematic change."

In 20 years, MICOP went from "a tiny organization, a small budget, no offices," to now having dozens of employees and four offices: two in Ventura County, and two in Santa Barbara County.

"Through the years, we were developing programs based on the need that we hear from the community," Lopez said. "We have an Indigenous Advisory Committee, mainly leaders from indigenous communities, giving guidance to the [MICOP] board of directors on what is needed. Based on that, we started many different programs."

This includes interpretation services, a radio station called Radio Indígena, a youth group, a scholarship program, and more. These programs became acutely important during the pandemic, as MICOP is the only organization working with and for indigenous migrant communities, Lopez said.

"All these years being present, working with communities... there was already a trust established with communities," Lopez said. "We started doing Facebook Live, started using Radio Indígena. We never imagined that Radio Indígena would be such a crucial tool during this moment. This pandemic

forced us to be in these virtual platforms."

Radio Indígena already was a trusted source of information within local indigenous migrant communities, particularly among farmworkers, Lopez said, making it an important tool to reach those people with COVID-19 information.

"When they're working, they're always carrying a radio and listening to radios, so that just became so handy during the pandemic," he said.

MICOP was also one of 12 organizations to partner with the state for the Disaster Relief Assistance for Immigrants project, which provided one-time assistance to undocumented adults who weren't eligible for other types of aid. As one of the partner organizations, MICOP distributed the aid to individuals in Santa Barbara and Ventura counties last year.

As the organization looks to the future, it's hoping to expand beyond Ventura and Santa Barbara counties.

"People from San Luis Obispo were traveling to [MICOP's] Santa Maria office because they started hearing about the organization and they wanted to be able to get that support," Lopez said.

In partnership with the Labor and Workforce Development Agency's statewide COVID-19 workplace outreach campaign, MICOP was able to add a community outreach position in SLO County, based in Paso Robles, earlier this year.

"We pushed for this vision and said, 'Why not [the whole] Central Coast?'" Lopez said. "So that's our new vision, mission statement: To support, organize, and empower indigenous, migrant communities in California's Central Coast... We're already looking into expanding to San Luis Obispo, and that's probably the next step."



TWENTY YEARS: Mixteco Indígena Community Organizing Project (MICOP) is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. The organization is a vital resource for Mixtec community members.

Highlight

• The Lompoc Parks and Recreation Division is hosting its annual Skateboard Competition at the Lompoc Skate Park on Aug. 28. Skaters aged 7 and older can join the competition, which is co-sponsored by Surf Connection. According to the city, there will be prizes awarded in each category and age group, and participants must comply with the skate park's rules and regulations and wear appropriate safety equipment. Competitors can register ahead of time by filling out the form found at cityoflompoc.com/recreation and dropping it off at the Lompoc Parks and Recreation Division, located at 125 W. Walnut Ave., or they can register on-site at the event.

Check-in begins at 10, and the contest kicks off at 11 a.m. It costs \$5 per event. ○

Staff Writer Malea Martin can be reached at mmartin@santamariasun.com.

Promote!

Send business and nonprofit information to spotlight@santamariasun.com.

ChildSAFE

ChildSAFE programming will be starting soon for children in northern Santa Barbara County schools. Some workshops will be in person and others will be by video. These vital personal safety workshops are great opportunities for children to learn about different types of touch in the "Good Touch, Bad Touch" presentation. Older students will receive an extended lesson on abuse which also concentrates on how to recognize and prevent potentially dangerous situations. To learn more about the ChildSAFE Program, reach out to the Center today.



School is starting and Center staff are ready to present to your children . . .

Say No - Get Away - Tell Someone!



To find out when your child's classroom will be receiving instruction call North County Rape Crisis and Child Protection Center's School Program Coordinator, Margaret at (805)736-8535 x 107 or email margaret@ncrccpc.org

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DEATH NOTICES

ALANIS, FELIX, 92, of Nipomo passed away 7/14/2021 arrangements with Lady Family Mortuary

ARAGON, EILEEN, 72, of Santa Maria passed away 8/3/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

ATKINSON, JEANNETTE, 87, of Paso Robles passed away 7/22/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

BAKER, GWEN, 65, of Los Osos passed away 8/6/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

BERTREM, DOUGLAS ALVIN, 92, of Arroyo Grande passed away 7/18/2021 arrangements with Lady Family Mortuary

BLACK, ROBERT JAMES, 85, of Santa Maria passed away 8/5/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

BONNIFIELD, ALBERTA, 95, of San Miguel passed away 7/31/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

BOUGHER, HAROLD F., 99, of Paso Robles passed away 8/4/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

BURGESS, MARY LOUISE, of Templeton passed away 8/2/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

CORTEZ, VIRGILO SR., 69, of Lompoc passed away 8/1/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

DAWSON, KELLY ANN, 57, of San Miguel passed away 7/24/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

DOOLEY, DONALD, 87, of Paso Robles passed away 7/29/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

ENDICOTT, TERI, 59, of Grover Beach passed away 8/2/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

FARAR, JUDITH, of Paso Robles passed away 7/23/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

FISHER, EVELYN JOSEPHINE, 92, of Paso Robles passed away 7/30/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

GAGE, FRED LEE, 90, of Paso Robles passed away 8/6/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

GOULD, DEBORAH LEA, of Paso Robles passed away 7/24/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

GREEN, JULIUS L. JR., 70, of Lompoc passed away 7/16/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

HAMILTON, PATRICIA ANN, 92, of Paso Robles passed away 7/30/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

HARRIS, JOANNE KEIG, 89, of Paso Robles passed away 7/29/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

HORTON, KAREN ANN, 79, of Paso Robles passed away 7/22/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

INGRAM, EVELYN, 89, of Atascadero passed away 7/29/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

KITCHENER, LINDA ELIZABETH, 75, of Paso Robles passed away 8/4/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

LANCER, WILLIAM ANTHONY, 85, of Paso Robles passed away 7/31/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

LUIS, JERRY R., 86, of Santa Maria passed away 8/2/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

MURR, JAMES "JIM" JR., 74, of Santa Maria passed away 8/4/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

NUNNELEE, CHRISTINE RENEE, 70, of Lompoc passed away 7/18/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

PHILLIPS, TERRIE LEE, 63, of Templeton passed away 7/31/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

RAMOS, FRANCISCO R., 73, of Santa Maria passed away 8/10/2021 arrangements with Magner-Maloney Funeral Home & Crematory

SLATTERY, JACOB, 26, of Templeton passed away 8/2/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

STEFANOWICH, VERNA, 93, of Santa Maria passed away 8/3/2021 arrangements with Magner-Maloney Funeral Home & Crematory

VAN NESS, MARGUERITE JEAN, 80, of Paso Robles passed away 7/19/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

WARE, HARVEY H., 80, of Santa Maria passed away 8/7/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

WRIGHT, JOYCE WILMA, of Templeton passed away 7/27/2021 arrangements with Kuehl-Nocolay Funeral Home

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Are rising COVID-19 cases and the Delta variant changing your behavior?

- 69% Yes, I'm back to masking up indoors, and I'm trying to limit my large social gatherings.
- 12% Not yet, but I will gladly change my ways if there's a public health mandate to do so.
- 10% We can't go back into lockdown—COVID fatigue is too high, and the economy can't handle another shutdown.
- 9% No, I'm vaccinated and trust that it will keep me safe.

39 Votes

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

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Phantom surplus

Does the city of Lompoc have a sound financial plan?

BY RON FINK

The budget is a topic that isn't normally of concern to most people; in fact, I would guess that most residents in Lompoc or anywhere else don't even know what's in the budget or how it is prepared. Most certainly very few people know anything about the principles that govern municipal budgets. History suggests that elected officials don't know these principles either or just simply ignore them.

Municipal governments operate using a two-year budget cycle; the staff proposes and the City Council authorizes this financial strategy. But sometimes the elected officials' thought process is hard to understand.

Prior to the approval of Lompoc's current budget on June 15, the management services director advised in his staff report that: "The above City Council action (approving the budget) would set the biennial budget at a \$1.3 million surplus. However, after consideration for expected COLA [cost-of-living adjustment], and budget reductions, the current proposed budget is projected to have a \$6 million deficit."

He and the council knew that the city was in the process of negotiating pay/benefit raises for all the city employees. Although the amount wasn't publicly known yet, I guess he was setting aside some money as a "reserve" to cover the increases. You see, he couldn't list the increases in the budget because no raises had been agreed to and/or approved yet.

Then the council authorized a total of \$1.8 million in pay/benefit increases.

There is another aspect to the budget that is as important as day-to-day operating costs are—it's what's known as the "stabilization reserve." In 2011, the City Council passed a resolution that stated, "Whereas, the policy entitled 'Fund Balance Policy—General Fund and Other Governmental Funds' states the intent of the City Council to maintain a minimum of two months of regular general fund operating uses in the stabilization reserve when amounts are not adequate to fund the stabilization reserve commitment of \$4.6 million."

But poorly thought-out City Council majority actions (led by former Councilmember Jim Mosby) that ignored the 2011 resolution during 2017-19 budget preparations, an informed source said, resulted in the following: "We had \$4 million in reserves on June 30, 2017; \$3.5 million on June 30, 2018; \$2.5 million on June 30, 2019, and \$0.5 million on June 30, 2020. So, for example in 2017-18, the target would have been between \$6 million to \$8 million."

Mosby also led an effort to keep a 1 percent sales tax increase off the ballot that year, which plunged the city into a deep financial hole.

All of this could have been avoided; my source goes on to say, "Had we [the citizens] been able to vote on a sales tax in 2013 as requested by staff, we would not be in this position to crawl out of. So, a substantial portion of the remaining Measure I and cannabis taxes will need to go towards repayment to the reserve over the next five years."

In 2020, a 1 percent temporary sales tax increase was approved by voters, but another Mosby-led initiative committed all these new funds for the 15-year life of the tax to pay down pension debt.

So in a few short years, initiatives led by former Councilmember Mosby eliminated the reserve fund and any chance of a tangible benefit from a temporary sales tax increase.

To sum up, in 2021 now the staff was telling the council that they had a "surplus," when in fact they were already \$8 million in the hole and still hadn't approved any raises. Well, on Aug. 2 the council approved the final raise package; all the city raises had reached a little over \$1.8; thus, it appears that in one month the council had eliminated the "surplus," authorized a substantial operating deficit, and did nothing to address replenishing reserves.

Certified financial planners will always recommend that families have a reserve fund to cover unplanned expenses like plumbing, roof, or car repairs. The Governmental Accounting Standards Board is the authoritative body that sets accounting principles for governmental entities, such as the city of Lompoc, which are designed to bring greater clarity and consistency to fund-balance reporting.

Municipal bond analysts review fund-balance information for credit reviews of existing or pending municipal bonds. Fund balance refers to the difference between assets (what the city owns) and liabilities (what the city owes) in the governmental balance sheet.

The city currently has some substantial infrastructure needs; since there isn't any funding available to address these needs, a municipal bond would seem to be reasonable solution. Borrowing money for fire or police station construction or major park overhauls isn't new; many cities use this method to provide needed services to their citizens.

But by totally depleting the reserve fund and having no plan to replenish it any time soon, the great political thinkers have probably taken this option off the table. The interest rate for a municipal bond would be substantially higher because there were no reserves to use as collateral.

I have been watching the actions taken by our City Council for about 30 years. It doesn't

seem to matter who is sitting in those five chairs—they always seem to have trouble with city finance, specifically with the strategic thinking that's necessary to sustain the city and allow the infrastructure to grow as the demand for services increases. ○

Ron Fink writes to the Sun from Lompoc. Reach him through the editor at clanham@santamariasun.com

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

LETTERS

We need the freedom to choose

There was a time in this country when people suffering from disease were forbidden the opportunity to try experimental treatments for their malady. President Trump succeeded in getting a "right to try" bill passed because it was his view that, as a human being, your liberty to choose your treatment, experimental though it may be, was your right under our Constitution.

Somehow, "through the looking glass," experimental RNA injections are now being mandated for everyone, denying us "our freedom to choose." Further, the therapeutics such as hydroxychloroquine have been forbidden to be used, denying the patient the right to try.

I don't think you need a college education in deductive reasoning to see something is wrong with this equation. Pandemic or not. If vaccinated and unvaccinated people can spread the new variant, then I think we've reached the point of freedom to choose.

Jan Lipski
Vandenberg Village

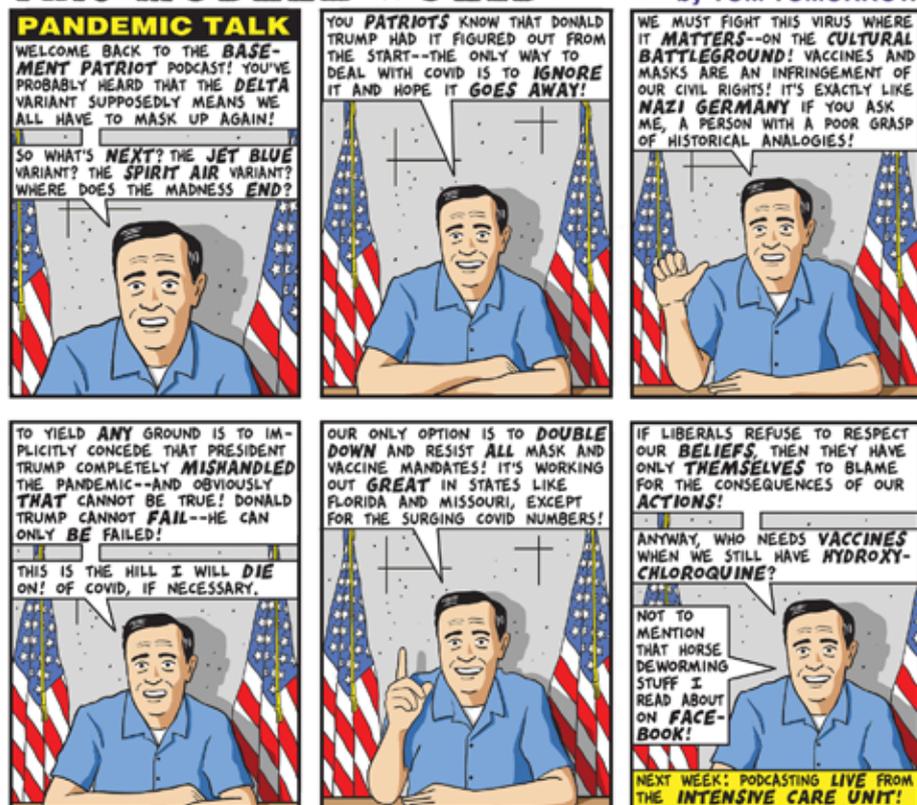
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Send us your views and opinion to letters@santamariasun.com.



THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



Raceway rescinded

I don't know whether I'm surprised or not, but the owner of Stadium805—aka the Santa Maria Raceway—announced the impending closure of the landmark of Highway 101.

Owner Nick Duggan

posted his long rant about why and when via Facebook on Aug. 9.

Apparently, it's all San Luis Obispo County's fault—well, big, bad SLO County and Costa Pacifica Estates residents, who complained about the noise from concerts that weren't a part of what they were expecting when they purchased homes next to a racetrack.

Well, they actually did more than complain, though. The homeowners association actually sued Duggan and the county over a temporary permit SLO County issued to Stadium805 allowing the events center to host concerts. But that's all in the past.

This convoluted tale of terrible business woes starts with a permit apparently issued in the 1960s and ends with Duggan asking the county to rescind his temporary permit for concerts in January 2021, then hosting concerts anyway, getting fined thousands of dollars for doing so, and blaming the county for his bad luck. How does that make sense?

There's likely more to this story: In 2019, 4th District Supervisor Lynn Compton told the Sun that the raceway's existing decades-old operating permit allowed it to hold concerts, races, festivals, and other events. She said the county couldn't legally change the specifics of the license or force Stadium805 to get a new one.

In other words, Costa Pacifica Estates residents: Tough cookies!

But, and this is me reading between the lines of stories printed in this very paper, I bet those pesky homeowners just kept pestering the county over the old license and what it allowed because the music was rattling their windows! And the county acquiesced to something, because, eventually, Duggan applied for a temporary permit allowing six concerts in 2021.

That temporary permit included caveats, which were supposedly a result of compromise with homeowners to appease some of their concerns, and county supervisors approved it in November 2020. Duggan told the Sun how pleased he was at the time: "We're extremely happy."

He emphasized that the raceway needed more than just races to survive: "We've had to go with that model to keep racing there."

Then, the homeowners association sued Duggan and the county. Over six concerts a year that would have ended by 10 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, only. Seriously?

Between that and COVID-19 uncertainty, Duggan asked the county to rescind his temporary permit. But then he started having concerts anyway. So the county started fining him. And that, Duggan said, was the final straw!

After pulling out from the permit, he asked for it to be reinstated because COVID-19 restrictions eased. But the county told him he had to start the whole process all over again! Duh. It's like waiting in line at the DMV, leaving because you're impatient, missing your number being called over the loudspeaker, coming back later, and expecting to be first in line.

So, in what I can only assume was a middle finger to everyone, Duggan thought he could what? Get away with having concerts next to the nosy neighbors who sued the county?

And now the raceway is closing. Which is sad, but I'm not sure that the county is the only one to blame. ☹️

The Canary rescinds the blame game. Send a note to canary@santamariasun.com.



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Seeking Professional Architectural-Engineering Services for Ambulance Station/Administrative Offices Pre-Design Work.

The Cambria Community Healthcare District (CCHD) announces the issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP) to provide professional architectural-engineering pre-design services for its ambulance station and administrative offices located at 2515 Main Street, Cambria, CA 93428. The requested services include a facilities condition assessment (FCA), architectural programming, feasibility and conceptual design studies, and conceptual project budgets and schedules.

The Request for Proposal is posted on the District's website at Cambria Community Healthcare District: www.cambria-healthcare.org/rfp.html. A pre-submittal job site meeting will be held at 2:00 pm on Saturday, August 14, 2021. Responses to the RFP must be received no later than 2:00 pm on Wednesday, August 25, 2021.

Cambria Community Healthcare District (CCHD) is a public, tax and fee supported Special Services District serving Cambria, San Simeon and the surrounding rural areas in San Luis Obispo County, California. The District operates an Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance service, provides community health education, and works to fulfill unmet health needs of District residents. CCHD offers a highly trained team of EMTs/Paramedics and Staff dedicated to providing the highest level of pre-hospital care with sensitivity, compassion, integrity, and quality.



For more information regarding the District or this RFP contact: Mike McDonough
 Administrator, Cambria Community Healthcare District
 (805) 801-0279 • mmcdonough@cambria-healthcare.org

HOT STUFF

AUG. 12 – AUG. 19
2021

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

LIFE'S A BEACH

The Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center hosts a dog-friendly group hike to the ridge overlooking Point Sal on Sunday, Aug. 15, starting at 9 a.m. Participants are asked to wear proper hiking attire and footwear and bring water and hand sanitizer. Donations of \$5 are suggested and accepted in advance at my805tix.com. The starting point of the Point Sal trail is located on Brown Road in Guadalupe. Visit dunescenter.org for more details.

—Caleb Wiseblood

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GUADALUPE-NIPOMO DUNES CENTER

ARTS

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

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

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

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

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

LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

CENTRAL COAST NATIVES ART SHOW Featured artist Diane Atturio will be showcasing her watercolor work, during Central Coast Natives. Fridays-Sundays, 12-4 p.m. through Aug. 29 Free. Cypress Gallery, 119 E Cypress Ave., Lompoc, 805-705-5328, lompoart.org.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

MUSIC LESSONS AT COELHO Call or go online for the Academy's current offerings. The Academy offers private lessons by the hour or half hour for all age groups and

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

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

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

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

TEEN DIY COASTERS PACKS: SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY Visit a local Santa Maria Public Library branch to pick up a Teen DIY Coasters Pack. Packs will contain supplies to make four custom drink coasters. This program is open to junior high and high school students only. **Aug. 14, Aug. 16, Aug. 17, Aug. 18, Aug. 19, Aug. 20 and Aug. 21** Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. SM Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

WORKSHOPS VIA ZOOM Sara Curran Ice, PCPA's Technical Theatre Program Coordinator/Designer, is conducting Workshops via Zoom for local high school drama students. Check site or call for

more info. ongoing PCPA: The Pacific Conservatory Theatre, Santa Maria, 805-922-8313, pcpa.org.

YOUTH ART PACKS: SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY Pick up an art pack at the Santa Maria Public Library Youth Services desk to create a masterpiece at home. Art packs include projects that guide students in learning basic principles of art. These packs are geared towards aged 6 to 12. **Aug. 14, Aug. 16, Aug. 17, Aug. 18, Aug. 19, Aug. 20 and Aug. 21** Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. SM Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

CENTRAL COAST COMEDY EVENT Join us for a night of nonstop laughs, amazing food, and awesome music for a charitable cause as we've partnered with the United Way of Santa Barbara to help those in need and bring smiles back throughout the Central Coast. **Aug. 21**, 5 p.m.-midnight \$99. 909-242-5687. my805tix.com. Willow Ranch, 660 Cherokee Pl, Nipomo.

COMEDY TONIGHT A two-act vaudeville revue filled with puns, parodies, song, and dance starring some of your Melodrama favorites. Sundays, 6-8 p.m. through Sept. 12 \$25-\$32. 805-489-2499. americanmelodrama.com/. Great American Melodrama, 1863 Front St., Oceano.

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

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

POP-UP ART FAIR Features paintings, drawings, sculptures, books, games, and so much more. Come support our local artists. **Aug. 14**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. 805-668-2125. lila.community. LiLA Creative Community, 1147 East Grand Ave. suite 101, Arroyo Grande.

SUBMIT YOUR EVENTS

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

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SAN LUIS OBISPO

ART CLASS: IMAGINATIVE MASKS WITH DOROTHY Use brightly colored paper, maps, feathers, pictures and text from magazines for project. For ages 7 to 11. To register, contact Dorothy by email at timdorothy60@charter.net. **Aug. 21**, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. \$20. 805-747-4200. artcentralslo.com/workshops-events/. Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

ART CLASS: LAYERING WITH WATERCOLOR AND OTHER MEDIA Learn how to combine a variety of materials to enjoy in all your painting ventures with Shirley Horacek. For ages 18 and older. **Aug. 14**, 10:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. \$40. 805-747-4200. artcentralslo.com/workshops-events/. Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

ART DEMO: EXPRESSIVE FIGURE DRAWING WITH DAVID LIMRITE In this two-hour demo, Limrite will demonstrate creating an emotionally charged, expressive figure drawing with oil paint sticks from a live model. **Aug. 15**, 1-3 p.m. Free. 805-747-4200. artcentralslo.com/workshops-events/. Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

PAINT BEES IN WATERCOLOR Learn how to paint Bees in Watercolors with Hilda Vandergriff. No experience required. For ages 8 and older. **Aug. 13**, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. \$49. 559-679-5099. artcentralslo.com/workshops-events/. Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

RETURNING HOME: SCULPTURES BY KRISTIN LINDSETH This series of sculptures explores the idea of home through miniature houses mounted on top of metal armatures. Reflecting on her experiences regarding the California wildfires of August 2020, Lindseth considers the implications of vulnerability, loss, and hope. Mondays, Thursdays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. through Sept. 26 Free. 805-543-8562. sloa.org. San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Club St., 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.

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ARTS from page 12
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 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

FEATURED GUEST ARTIST ERNIE BENTLEY: MOSAIC AND PAINTED COW SKULLS A special exhibit featuring meticulously crafted mosaic and painted cow skulls. Both July and August, during "Art and About Paso", listen to Ernie describe his inspiration and process. **Aug. 21**, 5-9 p.m. Free. 805-286-4430. Park Street Gallery, 1320 Park Street, Paso Robles, parkstreetgallery.com.

MOSAIC MIRROR WORKSHOP This is a 2-day workshop: the first day we will design and glue, the next day we will grout. All materials included. **Aug. 14**, 10 a.m.-noon and **Aug. 15**, 12-1 p.m. \$75. 805-464-2633. glassheadstudio.com. Glasshead Studio, 8793 Plata Lane, Suite H, Atascadero.

MOVIES IN THE GARDENS Come see some movies with your family under the stars. Movies are free to the public. Food is available. Call for more details. **Aug. 14**, 8-11 p.m. Free. 805-470-3360. visitatascadero.com/events. Sunken Gardens, 6505 El Camino Real, Atascadero.

STEVE MARTIN AND MARTIN SHORT: FUNNIEST SHOW IN TOWN AT THE MOMENT Featuring iconic actors and comedians Steve Martin and Martin Short. **Aug. 22**, 8-10 p.m. \$60-\$150. 805-286-3680. vinaroblesamphitheatre.com. Vina Robles Amphitheatre, 3800 Mill Rd., Paso Robles.

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.

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.

NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

COASTAL LIFE PERSPECTIVE THROUGH THE ARTS Recently new owners of the gallery have revamped the interior and recreated an art show showcasing more than nine new painters and assorted ceramicists and jewelry artisans. Current oil paintings by Michael Mote and many other artists along the Central Coast and California. Mondays-Wednesdays, Fridays-Sundays, 12-4 p.m. through Sept. 23 Bronze Silver Gold Gallery, 786 Main Street, Cambria, 805-927-5421, bronzesilvergoldgallery.com.

COSTA GALLERY'S FIRST YEAR ANNIVERSARY Celebrate Costa Gallery's first anniversary with Los Osos/Baywood Park Chamber of Commerce's Ribbon Cutting and ARTS Obispo's "Art and About Los Osos." Enjoy mocktails, snacks, and Zen Mountain Poets' live music. **Aug. 14**, 12-4 p.m. Free admission. 559-799-9632. Costa Gallery, 2087 10th Street, Los Osos.

AN EVENING WITH MAVEN: OPEN GATHERING AND FILM SCREENING Visit the Maven gallery and leather studio for local art, refreshments and a short film screening of "The Advertisement," a dark comedy in which a husband and wife have opposing experiences after answering an ad. The short was filmed in Cayucos and features a large local cast. **Aug. 20**, 7-9 p.m. 805-458-3912. Maven Gallery and Leather Studio, 146 North Ocean Avenue, Suite B, Cayucos, mavenleather.com.

FOREVER STOKED PAINT PARTY Join us at the gallery, for a few hours to travel on a creative paint journey guided by a member of the fun loving FS crew. You will receive as much or as little instruction as you prefer. No artistic experience is necessary. Saturdays, 7-9 p.m. \$45. 805-772-9095. Forever Stoked, 1164 Quintana Rd., Morro Bay.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS Morro Bay Art Association is proud to present The Great Outdoors. Features artworks inspired by the beautiful scenery and colorful wildlife found in San Luis Obispo County from their respective studios. View nature inspired scenes in all media. Through Sept. 6 Free. 805-772-2504. artcentermorrobay.org. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

PATRICIA NEWTON: FEATURED ARTIST "My style is representational, my current body of work has



COURTESY IMAGE BY CAROL TALLEY

IMPRESSIVE IMPRESSIONS

Gallery Los Olivos presents its latest duo exhibition, *Lyrical Impressions*, which will remain on display through the end of August. Both of the exhibit's featured artists, Carol Talley (whose work is pictured here) and Terri Taber, are signature members of the Pastel Society of the West Coast. Call (805) 688-7517 or visit gallerylosolivos.com to find out more about the show. The gallery is located at 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos.

—C.W.

been inspired by the powerful movement of the sea and magnificent coastline," Newton said in an artist statement. Through Aug. 29, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. 805-772-1068. galleryatmarinasquare.com. Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

ROSEMARY PISCIOTTA RETROSPECTIVE: OPEN TO THE PUBLIC Cambria Center for the Arts is thrilled to reopen its gallery doors on July 24. The current show is a retrospective honoring Rosemary Pisciotta's life-drawings/paintings. Please consult website regarding gallery hours and other details. Through Aug. 29, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. 805-927-8190. cambriaarts.org/gallery-exhibits/. Cambria Center for the Arts, 1350 Main St., Cambria.

SILK SCARF DYEING WORKSHOP Sharon Gellerman is a local artist who creates one-of-a-kind, hand-marbled, silk scarves and silk tallits. Sharon will guide you through the process and techniques used to obtain beautiful patterns and colors within your silk scarf. All materials,

tools, and supplies are provided for you. **Aug. 21**, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. \$45. 805-772-2504. artcentermorrobay.org. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

SUMMERFEST: IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL FILM FESTIVAL Offering over a dozen feature and short films screening both in-person and virtually, SummerFest focuses on films made by locals or with a local connection or theme. Opening party on Friday night. Films shown live on Saturday. **Aug. 21**, 12-9 p.m. \$10 to \$50. 805-927-8190. cambriafilmfestival.com. Cambria Center for the Arts Theatre, 1350 Main St., Cambria.

THOMAS BROWN: FEATURED CRAFT ARTIST Working with crystalline glazes has become Brown's passion, while working as an Art Instructor during the past 20 years. His constant endeavor is in the subject of ceramics and creating exciting pieces for your home.

ARTS continued page 14

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Through Aug. 29, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. 805-772-1068. galleryatmarinasquare.com. Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

VIRGINIA MACK: FEATURED ARTIST "I have been immersed in studying birds and painting them for the last decade. With this show, I am celebrating my outdoor journeys in discovering birds, wild animals, and more," Mack said in an artist statement. Through Aug. 29, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. 805-772-1068. galleryatmarinasquare.com. Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, 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, cityoflompoc.com/parks_rec/anderson.htm.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

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

DOCENT-LED HIKE TO POINT SAL OVERLOOK Beautiful wildlife, flora, and stunning views of the northern Santa Barbara coastline await those that attend. This will be a dog-friendly hike, please feel free to bring along your furry friend. **Aug. 15**, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. my805tix.com. Point Sal State Beach, Brown Rd, Guadalupe, 805-733-3713.

FEEL GOOD YOGA Tuesdays, Thursdays, 8:30-9:30 a.m. 805-937-9750. 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. Divine Inspiration, 947 E Orange St., Santa Maria.

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

PRESCHOOL ACTIVITY PACKS: SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY Learning and talking about colors at home with a preschooler? Pick up a Preschool Activity Pack on the theme of colors. These packs focus on strengthening fine motor skills, identification of shapes, colors, and textures, all while encouraging learning through play. **Aug. 12, Aug. 13** and **Aug. 14** Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. SM Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

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

TEEN ANIME CLUB PACKS: SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY Register to pick up a Teen Anime Club Pack, which will include something bookish, crafty, and of course, something yummy. When you register, you will also be invited to a Zoom meeting on August 30. **Aug. 21** Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. SM Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

TEEN STEAM MAKER SPACE PACKS (KIT 6): SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY Teens get a free STEAM Pack from any SMPL branch. This project was supported in whole or in part by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act. **Aug. 14, Aug. 16, Aug. 17, Aug. 18, Aug. 19, Aug. 20** and **Aug. 21** Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. SM Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

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

YOUTH BACK TO SCHOOL MINDFULNESS PACKS: SANTA MARIA PUBLIC LIBRARY Create important moments of mindfulness with the Back-to-School Mindfulness Youth Pack. This pack will contain activities to help create a moment of stillness, design a Zen garden, and yoga cards to stretch and learn breathing exercises. Pick up a pack from the Youth Services desk. **Aug. 21** Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. SM Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

AMPSURF KIDS SUMMER SURF CAMP (WEEKLY JUNE TO SEPT) All children with all abilities invited to participate. Early signups can use promo code KIDSURF21 for \$50 off. Mondays-Fridays, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. through Sept. 3

\$0-\$350. 805-441-5271. ampsurf.org. Addie Street Surfer Parking Lot, Addie Street, Pismo Beach.

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 Aug. 12 \$50. 805-295-9505. mpspost.wordpress.com/applied-neurology-2/. Central Core, 1160 Price Street, Pismo Beach.

EMBROIDERER'S GUILD OF AMERICA The Bishop's Peak Chapter of the Embroiderer's Guild of America would like to invite you to attend our meeting on the third Saturday of each month. Third Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. through Aug. 21 Free. 805-801-2149. egausa.com. Grover Beach Community Center, 1230 Trouville Ave., Grover Beach.

HIKE DISCOVERY TRAIL AT PISMO PRESERVE A 5.2 mile hike in the Pismo Preserve. Meet at the entrance by restrooms. If the parking lot is full, overflow parking available across from the Ventana Grill. Bring water, snacks. Dress in layers. Masks required if not vaccinated. RSVP to Bonnie@pacifcoastpro.com. **Aug. 14**, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. Discovery Trail, Pismo Preserve, Pismo Beach, 805-543-8717.

POINT SAN LUIS LIGHTHOUSE VIRTUAL TOUR Join a live docent via Zoom for an interactive virtual tour of the Point San Luis Lighthouse. Wednesdays, 11 a.m. \$10. pointsanluislighthouse.org/. Point San Luis Lighthouse, 1 Lighthouse Rd., Avila 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. Nipomo, Citywide, Nipomo.



NOAH'S ART

Big Sky Cafe in SLO is showcasing a collection of abstract paintings by local artist Noah Erenberg through the end of August. Many of Erenberg's bold, colorful paintings are the result of energetic brush strokes. Find out more about the artist at artlifting.com/collections/noah-erenberg. For more info on the exhibit, call (805) 545-5401 or visit bigskycafe.com. The cafe is located at 1121 Broad St., San Luis Obispo. —C.W.

UNITY FIVE CITIES WEEKLY SERVICE Unity Five Cities offers a friendly, welcoming environment for those seeking a positive path for spiritual living. Music and lesson followed by pot luck social time every Sunday; frequent concerts in the garden and other fun activities. Sundays, 10-11:15 a.m. Free. 805-440-9461. unity5cities.org. The Victorian, 789 Valley Rd., Arroyo Grande.

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. 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-

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE continued page 15

21ST ANNUAL Best of Northern Santa Barbara County Readers Poll



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FOOD & DRINK

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

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

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

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

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

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

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

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

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

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.

ALAMOS

CENTRAL COAST BEAT SOCIAL:

COURTYARD CULTURE

An ongoing series of outdoor music events at different venues in Santa Maria, Guadalupe, and other cities along the Central Coast. Hosted by Central Coast Beat Social. ongoing centralcoastbeatssocial.com/. Santa Maria, Citywide, Santa Maria.

LET'S DANCE! The Santa Maria Valley Senior Citizens Club presents this concert featuring Riptide Big Band and vocalist, Bob Nations. Funded by Community Foundation of SLO County. **Aug. 15**, 1:30-4 p.m. Free. 775 813-5186. RiptideBB.com. Elwin Mussell Senior Center, 510 Park Ave., Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

LIVE AT THE LIGHTHOUSE: ZONGO ALL-STARS Presented in celebration of the 12th annual Zongo Yachting Cup, the Central Coast's biggest offshore sailing race. No outside chairs, food, or beverage, please. No pets please. This is a smoke free site. **Aug. 14**, 3-7 p.m. my805tix.com. Point San Luis Lighthouse, 1 Lighthouse Rd., Avila Beach.

REBELUTION: GOOD VIBES SUMMER TOUR 2021 **Aug. 15**, 4 p.m. Avila Beach Golf Resort, 6464 Ana Bay Rd., Avila Beach, 805-595-4000.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

ALISA FINEMAN AND KIMBALL HURD: CUP OF KINDNESS The Jewish Community Center-Federation of San Luis Obispo is excited to host the renowned folk duo of Alisa Fineman and Kimball Hurd for an afternoon of music. **Aug. 15**, 1-3 p.m. \$25 for adults; Children under 15 get in for free. 805-426-5465. jccslo.com/alisa-and-kimball-jcc-concert.html. JCC-Federation of SLO Property, 875 Laureate Lane, San Luis Obispo.

MIRAGE: A NEW ALBUM FROM C. HITE A new album available for streaming and download. Artist statement: "Visually captivating and orchestrated music reminds listeners, 'If the Sky Were the Sea', there would be whales swimming in the shimmering phenomenon known as 'Mirage'." Through Sept. 2 carolbethhite.bandcamp.com. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

RESONANCE PRESENTS:

SEASONS

Featuring the music of Eric Whitacre, Ola Gjeilo, Benjamin Britten, Giovanni Gabrieli, Ralph Vaughan-Williams, and more. **Aug. 14**, 8-9:30 p.m. my805tix.com. Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, 751 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, 781-8220. ○

SAN LUIS OBISPO

CAL HOPE SLO GROUPS AT TMHA Visit website for full list of weekly Zoom groups available. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays calhopeconnect.org. Transitions Mental Health Warehouse, 784 High Street, San Luis Obispo, 805-270-3346.

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

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. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

THE GRIEF RECOVERY PROGRAM: 8 WEEK CLASS ONLINE This class is a step-by-step action program for unlocking and respecting our emotional experience of our grief, both immediate or past. Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m.-11:30 p.m. through Sept. 28 \$59.99 includes book and all 8 weeks. 714-273-9014. facebook.com/grief.loss. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

INSPIRED HOME AND HEALTH EXPO OF SAN LUIS OBISPO Connects you, the consumer, to local businesses for all your health, wellness, home improvement, and garden needs. Features more than 100 home improvement experts, who offer resources, medical screenings, remodeling ideas, health advice, and more. **Aug. 21**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and **Aug. 22**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. 805-772-4600. inspiredexpos.com/. Alex Madonna Expo Center, 100 Madonna Rd, San Luis Obispo.

LITERACY FOR LIFE VIRTUAL TUTOR TRAINING Literacy For Life has a San Luis Obispo countywide need for tutors. As we slowly transition to in-person tutoring, this training will focus on hybrid models of tutoring, including how to tutor both virtually and in-person. Tutors must attend both Zoom training sessions. **Aug. 14**, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. and **Aug. 21**, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 805-541-4219. literacyforlifeflo.org/become-a-tutor.php. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

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

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

MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION (ONLINE MEETING) Zoom series hosted by TMHA. Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.-noon Transitions Mental Health Warehouse, 784 High Street, San Luis Obispo, 805-270-3346.

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, worldrhythmandmotion.com.

PERSONS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES SUPPORT GROUP Open to the public at no charge. The group, led by a trained facilitator, offers a safe space to share experiences with challenge, change, grief, loss, and resilience with peers. Mondays, 4:30-6 p.m. hospiceslo.org/support-groups. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

SIERRA CLUB HISTORIC WALK: JAZZ AGE SLO TO WORLD WAR II On a downtown stroll, visit 14 historic sites to learn about changing public life from Model T years to Prohibition, Depression, and Pearl Harbor. No fee or reservations. Masks required if not vaccinated. Leader: Joe Morris. **Aug. 22**, 2-3:30 p.m. Free. 805-549-0355. Marsh and Toro, Corner of Marsh and Toro Streets, 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.

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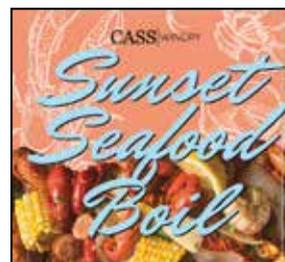


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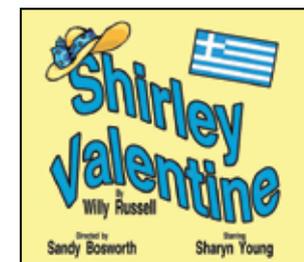
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Sunset Seafood Boil
FRIDAY, AUGUST 13
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Paso Robles



Shirley Valentine
FRI, SAT, SUN, AUGUST 13-15
By the Sea Productions,
Morro Bay



Zongo Yachting Cup
SATURDAY, AUGUST 14
Morro Bay Yacht Club,
Morro Bay



Zongo All-Stars
SATURDAY, AUGUST 14
Point San Luis Lighthouse,
Avila Beach



Resonance presents:
Seasons
SATURDAY, AUGUST 14
Mission San Luis Obispo



Dunes Center Docent-Led Hike to Point Sal Overlook
SUNDAY, AUGUST 15
Point Sal Trail, Guadalupe



Chakra Meditation and Breath Work
AUGUST 18, 19, 25, 26
Aurora Adventures, Morro Bay



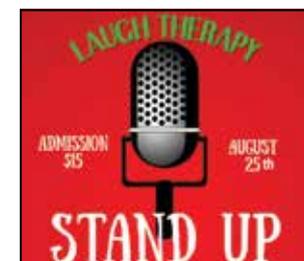
805 Wave Comedy Event: Bringing Smiles Back
SATURDAY, AUGUST 21
Willow Ranch, Nipomo



Cass-ino Night in the Vineyard
SATURDAY, AUGUST 21
Cass Winery, Paso Robles



Barrel Room Concert: Shawn Clark Family Band
SUNDAY, AUGUST 22
Cass Winery, Paso Robles



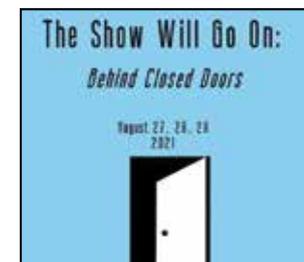
Laugh Therapy Stand Up Comedy
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25
Maverick Saloon, Santa Ynez



Everyday Kindness Fundraiser with Zongo All-Stars
FRIDAY, AUGUST 27
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- I've never gone to an event there, so I'm indifferent.
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Sun

PHOTOS COURTESY OF EVANS VESTAL WARD/NBC

Arts Briefs

Wildling Museum invites public to free Summer Open House event and announces fall exhibition

On Sunday, Aug. 29, the Wildling Museum of Art and Nature in Solvang will be hosting its Summer Open House event, from 2 to 6 p.m. Admission to this family-friendly event is free. Festivities will include a variety of activities, including face painting provided by Parties and Paint by Kate (from 2 to 4 p.m.), and AR Catering's food truck will be on-site for attendees to enjoy throughout the event's duration.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WILDLING MUSEUM OF ART AND NATURE



Guests of the museum will also have the chance to meet some of the featured artists in its current exhibitions, including Bio/Mass: Contemporary Meditations on Nature and Art from the Trail: Exploring the Natural Beauty of Santa Barbara.

"We are excited to host our first in-person event at the museum since COVID," Wildling Museum Executive Director Stacey Otte-Demangate said in a press release. "We feel it is important that our open house be something fun that the whole community can enjoy, with a little something for everyone."

The Wildling Museum also recently announced plans for its next duo exhibition in the fall, *Sharing the Light*, which will showcase photos by historic nature photographer Ansel Adams (1902-1984) and his former assistant Alan Ross. The exhibit is scheduled to premiere on Saturday, Sept. 25, and remain on display through spring of 2022.

Ross said in a press release that this upcoming nature-themed exhibit will mark the first time he and Adams have ever been showcased together, side by side.

"Ansel and his work have been such a huge part of my life for the last 48 years; it is indeed a very wonderful feeling to be sharing the same wall space in a museum—especially a museum so dedicated to the environment," Ross said.

For more details, call (805) 688-1082 or visit wildlingmuseum.org. The Wildling Museum of Art and Nature is located at 1511 Mission Drive, unit B, Solvang.

Cypress Gallery showcases watercolor artist Diane Atturio

COURTESY IMAGE BY DIANE ATTURIO



The Lompoc Valley Art Association presents Central Coast Natives, a new solo exhibition at Cypress Gallery, which premiered at the start of August and is scheduled to remain on display through the end of the month. This watercolor exhibit showcases a variety of artworks by painter Diane Atturio.

The show is available to view during the gallery's regular hours, every Friday through Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. For more info, call (805) 705-5328 or visit lompcart.org. Cypress Gallery is located at 119 E. Cypress Ave., Lompoc. ○

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



DO-IT-YOURSELF: Orcutt resident Kara Walker (pictured) is one of the crafters featured on season 3 of NBC's *Making It*, which currently airs on Thursday nights. Filming took place in October and November of 2020, over the course of five weeks, Walker said.



PARKS AND REC PEEPS: "Amy is definitely like the mom type you just want to tell all your secrets and where you bury the bodies. And then, Nick, he's more, you know, the strong, silent type," Walker said of *Making It*'s duo of co-hosts, Amy Poehler and Nick Offerman.

Show and tell

Orcutt artist Kara Walker competes in NBC's crafting competition series, *Making It*

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

The first time that do-it-yourself crafter Kara Walker applied to join NBC's *Making It* was a few years ago, as she hoped to compete on season 2 of the popular TV series (which aired in 2019). But after a few preliminary Skype interviews, Walker was turned down.

"I was devastated. This was made for me, how could they not pick me?" said Walker, a self-employed artist and interior designer. "I applied again for season 3, and I told them, 'You might as well just put me on because I'm not going to stop applying.'"

Her efforts were not in vain. In October 2020, Walker got the official confirmation she had been accepted into season 3's lineup of crafters, but with short notice, she explained.

"I didn't know I was going to be on the show until two days before I had to go down to LA," the Orcutt resident said.

After getting to her hotel, Walker—like her fellow contestants—was quarantined for a week before filming, due to COVID-19 safety protocols. Filming lasted about five weeks, during which Walker enjoyed bonding with her crafting peers, as well as connecting with co-hosts Amy Poehler and Nick Offerman.

"They're not even acting, that's just them," Walker said of the duo. "Amy is definitely like the mom type you just want to tell all your secrets and where you bury the bodies. And then, Nick, he's more, you know, the strong, silent type."

"I always like when he [Offerman] comes up with these criticisms, and I would find a way to flip it right back at him," Walker added, before dishing out an example.

"Nick made a comment that I use foam a lot.

He said, 'Can you do anything other than foam?' and I said 'Why don't you keep me around to find out,'" Walker said, laughing.

Foam is in fact Walker's favorite medium to craft with, especially while creating her lavish Halloween props she's become locally known for. Tim Burton-esque arches, spiraled trees, and other handcrafted creations await trick-or-treaters who frequent her home in Orcutt each year. The tradition started during the fall of 2018, after Walker became inspired to try making some Halloween-themed molds after browsing on Pinterest.

"I saw some spooky trees, and I'm like, 'Oh that's cool, I want to try that,'" said Walker, who gave it a whirl and hasn't stopped crafting since.

That Halloween marked Walker's first foam sculpting endeavor, but her first artistic passion was oil painting, which she became interested in as a teenager.

"I discovered I could paint when I was 16, and it was at that point that I started getting creative," said Walker, who discussed her intro to painting during her interviews while applying to join season 3, which currently airs Thursday nights on NBC at 8 p.m. (the next episode, the sixth of the season, airs on Aug. 12).

Bringing up aspects of her young adulthood and childhood made this round of the interview process feel a lot more personal than Walker's previous experience applying for the show, she explained.



TRICKS AND TREATS: Kara Walker has become well known locally for creating lavish Halloween props, including Tim Burton-esque arches, spiraled trees, and other handcrafted creations, which await trick-or-treaters who frequent her home in Orcutt on Halloween night.

"I just started bawling, like ugly crying—and they loved it," the 40-year-old artist said. "They're like, 'This is what we want. Everyone says they like art, they like to make stuff, but we want to know why.'"

During these interviews, Walker brought up the multiple surgeries she had gone through as a child. Diagnosed with Goldenhar syndrome, Walker was born without an eardrum in one ear, and is half deaf in the other ear.

Following her first appearances on *Making It*, Walker said she has been receiving some heartwarming feedback from viewers who also have Goldenhar syndrome.

"I've had so many people contacting me—at least five—saying that they have the syndrome that I have, and how encouraging it was for them

to see someone with the same disability on TV being presented in a positive manner," Walker said. ○

Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood is rooting for Kara. Send comments to cwiseblood@santamariasun.com.

Showtime!

Send gallery, stage, and cultural festivities to arts@santamariasun.com.



Soul man

Writer-director Edson Oda in his feature-length debut helms this supernatural drama about Will (Winston Duke), a reclusive man who conducts interviews with human souls to determine whether they should be given a chance at being born in a process that takes nine days. (124 min.)

Glen: Sometimes the story is in the telling, and this very simple story is beautifully told and requests a hefty emotional thought experiment of the viewer. Will spends his days watching TV monitors that track the moment-to-moment lives of souls he formerly sent to live out their human existence. He watches—among others—a woman preparing for her blissful wedding, a timid school boy relentlessly bullied by his classmates, and his favorite, Amanda, a gifted concert violinist. His only companion is Kyo (Benedict Wong), who comes over for tea and tries to keep Will on an even keel. When Amanda crashes her car before a big recital and dies, her TV screen goes to the “test” pattern, and Will knows that the next day a group of newly created souls will arrive at his desert home, and he’ll need to interview them to determine which one is best suited for a chance at a successful life. Unlike Kyo, Will was once alive, and there’s a suggestion that Will’s life was difficult, which makes him the perfect arbitrator. Will’s big conundrum is whether to pick a soul strong enough to endure life’s difficulties or someone kind and gentle. It’s a salient question. Is it better to go through life protecting yourself from pain

or is it better to go with an open heart that can be easily damaged? The two leading candidates for the dichotomy are Kane (Bill Skarsgård) and Emma (Zazie Beetz), respectively, and the various questions and tasks Will assigns them and how they respond also test Will’s notions of what a life well lived actually means.

Anna: Will is somehow detached from his life before, yet he wears it as a badge—his once being alive makes him feel superior at arbitration, but in reality it only makes him more human. We meet five prospects. The lightness of only being a soul allows them to accept their tasks easily and without question at first; either they make it through to the end or they don’t. In the beginning, it seems so easy for the recruits—they don’t seem to worry too much, or wonder. The weight of mortality doesn’t exist in their world, but soon we see those cracks start to arise as they learn through Will’s television screens and psychological tests what it really means to live a life, to be human, to sit in love and fear, and to experience the utter beauty that we all take for granted every day. This film made me cry at the simple beauty of a bicycle ride and what it feels like to run your hands through the sand. This is all about small moments that those not lucky enough to make it to day nine choose to have just once, and about the resolute and seemingly detached character of Will—how he reconciles denying a soul a chance at life. When Amanda dies, Will starts to question everything, and recruit Emma is like a sliver under his fingernail: irritating and unreachable, something he must grapple with. It’s a character study in moments, but in the end, this film is about the nuances of being human, and how both beautiful and flawed all of the messiness of life can be.

Glen: I’ve never seen any of writer-director Edson Oda’s short films, but he’s got nine listed from 2009 through 2017

on his Internet Movie Database page. He’s best known as a successful commercial director in his home country of Brazil (he’s of Japanese descent) with a thriving career in advertising. I’ll say one thing: This is one hell of a feature-length debut. He won the Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award at the Sundance Film Festival for it. Booth Beetz and Duke took home Excellence in Acting Awards from the Denver International Film Festival, and the Film Independent Spirit Awards nominated Wong for Best Supporting Male and Oda for the top prize of Independent Spirit. It truly is a singular vision, and performances by Duke and Beetz elevate the film. I also need to mention Tony Hale as Alexander, who first wheedles, then begs, then attacks Will in his effort to be chosen. Hale’s terrific in the role. This is a small, fairly low-budget film (\$10 million, I read, shot in just 25 days), and a potent reminder of what can be accomplished outside the studio system. It’s a beautiful vision.

Anna: Hale is wonderful here—perhaps the most “human” of all the candidates, and Skarsgård turns out a great performance as Kane, a cynical realist who if chosen would enter the world with a chip already on his shoulder. While most of the film happens within the walls of Will’s house, the exterior shots are arresting. Nothing but a dusty plane with not a neighbor or tree in sight,

NINE DAYS

What’s it rated? **R**
When? **2020**
Where’s it showing? **Palm Theatre of San Luis Obispo**
What’s it worth, Anna? **Full price**
What’s it worth, Glen? **Full price**

SUN SCREEN

PHOTO COURTESY OF 30WEST, BAKED SRUDIOS, AND JUNIPER PRODUCTIONS



SONG OF MYSELF: Will (Winston Duke, left) must interview new human souls, like Emma (Zazie Beetz, right), to determine if they’re worthy of life, in *Nine Days*.

with the house planted firmly in the middle of all that nothing. It’s impressive that this is Oda’s first full-length film. It really is a work of art, one that manages to keep several balls in the air and begs its audience to feel the dark, deep recesses of what it means to be and to live, and where true importance lies. This is a heavy one, and I can see some audience members feeling it’s a bit out of reach, but instead of being pretentious, I argue it invites pondering. The end is particularly meaningful, and Duke turns in a beautiful performance. This is definitely worth the price of admission. ○

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

Film Reviews

THE SUICIDE SQUAD

What’s it rated? **R**
When? **2021**

Where’s it showing? **Regal Edwards & RPX Santa Maria, Movies Lompoc, Regal Arroyo Grande, and HBO Max**

Writer-director James Gunn (*Super, Guardians of the Galaxy*) helms this outrageous new installment of the Suicide Squad franchise. I can almost imagine Gunn’s pitch to Hollywood’s money people: “We airdrop a bunch of homicidal reprobates into an island jungle for a gory, bloody battle, and they have to fight their way to a secret installation where for 30 years an alien starfish has been experimented on, and it gets loose and rampages like a giant kaiju across the island amassing a zombie army of people whose brains are controlled by smaller starfish.”

Yeah, OK! Sounds great! This time around, unscrupulous U.S. government stooge Amanda Waller (Viola Davis) recruits super villains Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie), Bloodsport (Idris Elba), Peacemaker (John Cena), and other Belle Reve Prison convicts to join Col. Rick Flag (Joel Kinnaman) and Task Force X on a mission to Corto Maltese to face the starfish.

New Flicks



SUICIDAL: A team of criminals—including (left to right) Polka Dot Man (David Dastmalchian), Peacemaker (John Cena), Bloodsport (Idris Elba), and Ratcatcher 2 (Daniela Melchior)—are recruited for an impossible mission, in *The Suicide Squad*.

It’s violent, funny, wicked, madcap, subversive, and occasionally emotionally resonant, and it has Sylvester Stallone voicing King Shark, a dumb but lovable anthropomorphized great white with a taste for human flesh. The flick’s sort of wonderful and ridiculous, and it’s much better than earlier incarnations. (132 min.)

—Glen

TIG NOTARO: DRAWN

What’s it rated? **Not rated**
When? **2021**

Where’s it showing? **HBO Max**

I’ve been a fan of Tig Notaro and her particularly tonal, dry comedy for a long time, so any TV special she puts out, I’m going to watch. *Drawn* adds in the element of animation, something I wasn’t sure was working for me for the first few minutes but that quickly delighted me as Notaro walked us through stories both anecdotal and personal. Whether it’s taking the audience through the process of the Kool-Aid Man’s signature burst through walls or a hilarious tale of a wisdom teeth removal gone wrong, Notaro manages to make even tough stuff seem pretty funny.

Instead of sticking with one style of animation, the filmmaker switches it up from segment to segment, a wonderful tactic to keep the audience engaged despite not actually watching the stand-up comic perform.

If you’re familiar with Notaro, you most likely know she battled breast cancer, and while she was a comic before her double-mastectomy, it’s become ingrained in her act. She has a talent for keeping it real, even when that’s

Guilty PLEASURES



CARTOON TIG: Tig Notaro: *Drawn*, the stand-up comedian’s new animated TV special, explores everything from the mysteries of the Kool-Aid Man to cancer to Dolly Parton.

uncomfortable. Her usual timing and brand of comedy is on point here. (60 min.) ○

—Anna

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Rock/Alternative County/Americana/Folk R&B/Blues
 Hip-Hop/Rap Open Youth

SONG TITLE #3 _____

Name of performing artist(s) EXACTLY as it should appear on CD (band name, stage name, etc.) _____

Rock/Alternative County/Americana/Folk R&B/Blues
 Hip-Hop/Rap Open Youth

SONG TITLE #4 _____

Name of performing artist(s) EXACTLY as it should appear on CD (band name, stage name, etc.) _____

Rock/Alternative County/Americana/Folk R&B/Blues
 Hip-Hop/Rap Open Youth

SONG TITLE #5 _____

Name of performing artist(s) EXACTLY as it should appear on CD (band name, stage name, etc.) _____

Rock/Alternative County/Americana/Folk R&B/Blues
 Hip-Hop/Rap Open Youth

SONG TITLE #6 _____

Name of performing artist(s) EXACTLY as it should appear on CD (band name, stage name, etc.) _____

Rock/Alternative County/Americana/Folk R&B/Blues
 Hip-Hop/Rap Open Youth

SONG TITLE #7 _____

Name of performing artist(s) EXACTLY as it should appear on CD (band name, stage name, etc.) _____

Rock/Alternative County/Americana/Folk R&B/Blues
 Hip-Hop/Rap Open Youth

SONG TITLE #8 _____

Name of performing artist(s) EXACTLY as it should appear on CD (band name, stage name, etc.) _____

Rock/Alternative County/Americana/Folk R&B/Blues
 Hip-Hop/Rap Open Youth

2

SONGWRITER CATEGORY ENTRY

Upload (or include) a .doc file of lyrics with your entry.

Song Title #1 _____

Song Title #2 _____

Song Title #3 _____

3

BEST ALBUM ENTRY (only 1 total)

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4

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENTRIES _____ x \$20 = _____

PAYMENT ENCLOSED _____

I certify that I am the writer or co-writer of the song(s) or lyrics submitted. I also certify that I have read, understood, and accept the rules and regulations of the New Times Music Awards. If entrant is under 18 years old, the signature of a parent or guardian is required.

Signature _____

Date _____

LOCAL LEGEND AWARD NOMINEE

The Local Legend Award recognizes an individual or group who has contributed to help enrich, support, and further music's reach in our community; someone whose ideas, inspiration, and dedication to this art scene have helped nurture and grow the music scene—whether it's bringing new sounds to the area or

giving people the tools they need to create their own. We would love your input! **Please use this space to nominate an individual, group, or organization, you feel should be considered for this award:**

ONLINE ENTRIES ARE PREFERRED, BUT YOU MAY ALSO MAIL OR DROP OFF SUBMISSIONS AT EITHER OF OUR OFFICES. Additional entry forms are available at either of our offices or on our website: www.NewTimesSLO.com.

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GENERAL RULES

- All entries must be received by 5pm on Monday, August 16, 2021, to be considered for the 2021 New Times Music Awards (NTMAs).
- Entries are \$20 for each song and for the Best Album award.
- Participants may enter a maximum of 13 songs (10 genre category, 3 songwriting category) and 1 album.
- ONLINE ENTRIES ARE PREFERRED.** Please fill out the entry form, upload songs, and pay for your entries with a credit card at www.NewTimesSLO.com.
- If you wish to pay with cash or check, you may drop off your entries at either the New Times or Sun offices. Bring your music entries on a CD or USB drive along with your completed entry form. Checks should be made payable to "New Times."
- All entrants must reside primarily in San Luis Obispo County or

Northern Santa Barbara County.

- All entrants must be able to play at the showcase event in November. Official date to be determined.
- All entrants under 18 years of age must select the Youth category and must have a parent or guardian sign the entry form.
- By entering the contest, all entrants give permission to New Times Media Group to reproduce submissions on compact disc and on the web. All entries remain the property of performers.
- New Times Music Awards is not responsible for lost, damaged, incomplete, or late entries.
- The top 3 songs in each category need to provide high-quality versions of their songs (16 Bit, 44.1 Sample Rate).
- Songs may have multiple co-writers, but please designate one contact name only on entry form.
- Winners will be chosen by a select panel of judges.

- Songs will be judged on overall performance.
- Live performers will share the 'Back Line.'
- Check NewTimesSLO.com or contact NTMA@NewTimesSLO.com for more information.
- The New Times Music Awards Showcase and Competition is an all-ages show. Performers agree to eliminate explicit lyrics during their performance.

GENRE CATEGORIES

- The Youth category is for anyone entering music who is under the age of 18.
- The Open genre includes reggae, world beat, jazz, classical, new age, electronic, etc.
- Each song submission must have a genre selected. If nothing is selected, the song will go into the Open genre.

- If judges determine a song to be a better fit with a different genre category than what was originally submitted, they reserve the right to recategorize it.

SONGWRITER CATEGORY

- You may enter up to 3 songs in the Songwriting genre, which is being judged separately.
- Upload (or include) a .doc file of lyrics with your entry.

ALBUM CATEGORY

- Albums must have been released between July 1, 2020 and August 16, 2021 to be eligible. Please deliver a hard copy to either the New Times or Sun office along with a completed entry form by 5pm on Monday, August 16, 2021 for consideration. The entire presentation will be judged, including quality of songs, sound, and packaging.
- Only 1 album per entrant total.



Urban tasting trend

Ragtag opens its doors in downtown San Luis Obispo and hopes other wineries will follow suit

BY CHERISH WHYTE

Just a little ways north, downtown San Luis Obispo has hotels, restaurants, bars, shops, historic buildings, and parks. It also has loads of tourists, which dwarf the city's 47,000 population.

Until recently it lacked one vital ingredient: a tasting room. With hundreds of wineries fanning out across the county—and annual visitors estimated at 7 million, according to tourist board Visit SLO CAL—local entrepreneurs Deron and Sarah Brewer thought the concentrated downtown audience would provide a lucrative secondary outlet for the industry.

So they brought their Ragtag Wine Co. to Higuera Street, SLO's main pedestrian artery.

While several Central Coast cities such as Los Olivos and Old Town Orcutt have a thriving wine scene—with nearly 30 tasting rooms in Los Olivos alone—Santa Maria's neighbor to the north has largely missed the boat, the Brewers said.

"We are really hoping that we can lead the charge to bring other wineries to downtown San Luis Obispo," Deron Brewer said. "That would benefit us all because not everybody wants to drive to Paso or even Edna Valley."

Brewer said wineries find strength in numbers. "I call it the Kettleman City effect," he explained.

Halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles along Interstate 5, Kettleman City provides a convenient stop for gas.

"If you're driving down the freeway and you see just one gas station, you're probably not going to stop," he said, "but if you see several options, you might pull off."

One tasting room might not prove a huge draw, but multiple options within walking distance of each other would help establish SLO as an urban wine destination, he continued.

The Brewers, who own several businesses in town, including Edna Valley Market and Dave's Automotive, had always dreamed of owning their own winery. The conditions were ripe when Sarah's brother, Jeff Huskey, graduated from Cal Poly with a degree in wine and viticulture. After a three-year stint at Harmony Cellars as its assistant winemaker, Huskey was ready for the lead job.

The trio launched their Ragtag label in 2016. Operating out of a partially finished wine



INVITING VIBE: From left, servers Luke O'Leary, Ryan Moreira, and Thomas Grandoli, and tasting room manager Patrick McTiernan greet customers at Ragtag's recently opened tasting room in downtown San Luis Obispo.

production facility on Clarion Court in SLO and producing only 2,000 cases annually, Huskey quickly established himself as an accomplished winemaker, with multiple accolades already under his belt.

His 2017 chardonnay, petite sirah, pinot noir, malbec, and Meritage, as well as his 2019 rosé have garnered industry awards ranging from gold and platinum to *Wine Enthusiast's* Editor's Choice designation.

With the winemaker position filled, the co-owners set out to find the perfect person to run their future tasting room.

Brewer found the ideal candidate at the Madonna Inn in late 2019. Steakhouse and banquet server Patrick McTiernan "blew me away," he said.

"I fell in love with him as soon as I met him. I went home and told my wife I've found the perfect guy. I was amazed by how incredible he was at everything he did. We went to coffee after that, and it took off from there," Brewer said.

McTiernan had years of management experience at restaurants in Portland before moving to the Central Coast in 2016 and landing a position at the Madonna Inn.

Initially, McTiernan shadowed Huskey at the production facility, receiving a crash course in winemaking. Then, in 2020, another cog fell into place. The Brewers found the ideal tasting room.

"We went downtown to Higuera and Chorro streets," Brewer said, "and serendipitously there was a spot exactly where we wanted to be that had just become available. It was in the perfect building and the perfect space."

The Brewers secured the tasting room at 779 Higuera St. and set about transforming the former Pura Vida skin care store into a hip hangout with an eclectic ambience.

"The name Ragtag is a tribute to the diversity of the terroir of the area," Brewer said. "It celebrates our abundant grape varieties, but also reflects every other aspect of our new business venture."

"The basic premise behind Ragtag is how absolutely boring and drab everything would be if people were exactly the same. It's the concept that it's the differences between us that make things interesting and fun, and allow people to grow and do better," he added. "As we bring more people into the project, their unique perspectives make us all... better off as a whole. That is our metaphor representation for what we mean as a brand."

After a soft opening earlier this year—and

maneuvering COVID-19 related obstacles—the Ragtag team plans to celebrate its official grand opening on Aug. 20.

McTiernan feels the tasting room has all the necessary elements to flourish: incredible wines, a cool vibe, outstanding service, and unique décor.

"These were the four points I wanted to hit," he said. "I kept that mantra going in my head. That's what people tell their friends about."

Meanwhile, at the winery production facility, Ragtag nabbed the dynamic duo of Alyssa Ball and her assistant, a blind chocolate Labrador named Scout. Ball ran the direct-to-consumer program at Talley Vineyards in Arroyo Grande for more than a decade before becoming Ragtag's administrator and e-commerce sales director.

"Patrick and I make a great team because we are both in positions that allow us to play to our strengths," Ball said. "Patrick is a hospitality super star and thinks through every detail to ensure an amazing customer experience."

"I love to live in the numbers, dive into data and metrics, create sales projections—all that exciting stuff! Between the two of us I believe we are going to be able to build out a great road map for Ragtag's future."

Recent customers Pam and Jeff Forrest were so impressed with their overall experience at Ragtag that they joined its wine club.

"The crew at Ragtag were attentive, informative, and friendly," Jeff said. "Patrick is delightful and is an excellent historian about the building, the landlord, the winemaker, the décor, and... how Ragtag got started."

"Pam loved the chardonnay the best, and I teeter-tottered back and forth between the cab sauv and the Meritage."

The Ragtag team is just getting started. Future plans include a second tasting room and event venue at the wine



DIG IT: Winemaker Jeff Huskey shovels skins following fermentation. Stay tuned for the future release of his 2019 vintage of 100 percent petit verdot.

PHOTO BY CHERISH WHYTE



TABLE FOR THREE: Customers Jeff and Pam Forrest and their Pomeranian, 13-year-old Rambeau, enjoy the patio area fronting the tasting room.

production facility, as well as art workshops and other unique experiences at the downtown tasting room.

Huskey, meanwhile, plans to drop a "flavor bomb," with a 2019 single varietal petit verdot.

"Most often you only see [petit verdot] used as a blending tool, and that's to add tannins and mid-palate weight to whatever they're blending it with. But as 100 percent, it's just delicious," he said.

Additionally, Huskey plans to harvest grenache and syrah, then blend the two with a dash of pinot noir to create a GSP.

"I always try to have interesting new things that we're releasing," he said. "In the world of wine, they always consider us California winemakers as cowboys doing crazy stuff. I love it. I never want our tasting menu to get stale." ○

Contributor Cherish Whyte's new summer sip of choice is Ragtag's albariño. Reach her through the editor at clanham@santamariasun.com.

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