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AT THE MOVIES

*Power of the Dog:*  
Two thumbs up [26]

# Sun Internet for all

*Santa Barbara County  
is working on a plan to  
get broadband access for  
everyone in the region [6]*

**NEWS**

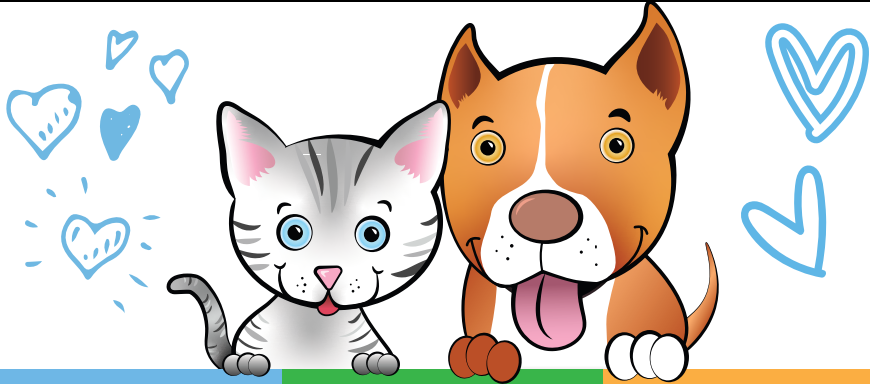
Improving public transit  
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A local librarian's  
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The Tavern's take  
on a sports bar [27]



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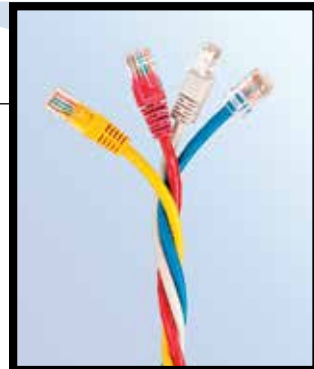
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DECEMBER 16 - DECEMBER 23, 2021 VOL. 22 NO. 42

**C**ommunication during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic was primarily dependent on two things: cellphones and the internet. Access to either or both isn't equal across regions of Santa Barbara County, something a group of organizations is working to fix with a focus on increasing the broadband fiber-optic network. Staff Writer Taylor O'Connor speaks with the county and others this week about how they're planning to move forward with potential broadband projects and what the obstacles could be [6].

You can also read about potential changes to public transportation in Santa Maria [4]; a local librarian who penned a series of mysteries [24]; and The Tavern at Zaca Creek, which is now serving sports bar fare on Sunday and Monday nights [27].

*Camillia Lanham  
editor*



**BROADBAND PLAN:** One in four Santa Barbara County residents don't have access to internet services, something a group of organizations hopes to help change.

Cover image from Adobe Stock > Cover design by Alex Zuniga

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## Political Watch

• **U.S. Sens. Alex Padilla** (D-California) and **Roger Wicker** (R-Mississippi) recently introduced the Revitalizing Small and Local Businesses Act, bipartisan legislation that would create a new competitive grant program through the Economic Development Administration (EDA). “The holiday shopping season serves as a reminder of how important small businesses are to our communities and local economies,” Padilla said in a statement. “Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on many small businesses, particularly those in low-income, rural, and minority communities. ... The Revitalizing Small and Local Businesses Act would provide funding to organizations that support our small businesses, leveraging their expertise and knowledge of local neighborhoods to help entrepreneurs thrive.” The bill would authorize \$250 million for this program over the next five years to fund community-based initiatives to help small businesses identify resources and develop skills to retain and create jobs. The grant program creates additional support that is tailored to individual businesses’ needs as it recognizes the unique challenges that businesses face.

• The **Santa Barbara County Fire Department** recently released a public service announcement regarding winter fire safety. As temperatures drop during the winter months and more time is spent inside, residents should make sure their home is protected from any fire hazards, the department stated. The first suggestion is to hire a professional and have the furnace checked annually. It is better to know when something is not working properly than to have it abruptly break down when it’s needed the most. Homes with fireplaces should get a chimney inspection to make sure there aren’t any hazards capable of starting a fire. It’s important to remember to use dry, seasoned wood—which produces more flame with less smoke—when starting a fire and that fireplaces should always be covered by a metal screen or tempered glass to protect from any sparks leaving the fireplace. Double check that smoke alarm batteries are fresh, the department said, adding that smoke alarms should be located in the hallway outside bedrooms, in each bedroom, and on every floor, regardless of whether there is a bedroom on that floor. Finally, the department suggests being aware of lit candles and space heaters. Candles may set the mood for a relaxing evening, but can be easily knocked over by kids or pets. Space heaters should not be placed near curtains, tablecloths, or other flapping fabrics. Space heaters should have an automatic shutoff switch that forces the heater to turn off as soon as it reaches a dangerously high heat level.

• **Gov. Gavin Newsom** issued a Dec. 11 statement regarding the **U.S. Supreme Court’s** decision on Texas’ abortion rules. “I am outraged by yesterday’s U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing Texas’ ban on most abortion services to remain in place and largely endorsing Texas’ scheme to insulate its law from the fundamental protections of *Roe v. Wade*. But if states can now shield their laws from review by the federal courts that compare assault weapons to Swiss Army knives, then California will use that authority to protect people’s lives, [whereas] Texas used it to put women in harm’s way,” Newsom said in a statement. The Texas abortion law bars the procedure after the first six weeks of pregnancy, and the court’s action means that the case will return to a district court for further proceedings. ○



**POLICE POLICY:** Highlights from the Santa Maria Police Department’s 2022-24 strategic plan were discussed during the City Council’s Dec. 7 meeting. The document includes various goals the department seeks to achieve over the next two years.

## Santa Maria City Council approves transit service improvements

Beginning in January 2022, Santa Maria public transportation users will see 25 new bus stops, 45-minute frequencies, consistent schedules, and easier bus transfers, Santa Maria Regional Transit Manager Gamaliel Anguiano said.

Although the pandemic challenged the public transportation system, Anguiano said it also presented an opportunity to fix the system through service changes—which the Santa Maria City Council approved during its Dec. 8 meeting. “We view transit as a lifeline service. We realize public transit helps some of the most vulnerable people have access to their jobs—not providing service is not an option,” Anguiano said.

The Santa Maria Regional Transit plan was data driven and relied on community feedback after a series of virtual workshops that more than 70 area residents attended to ask questions and add input, he said.

“Within the plan, we had comments, suggestions, and requests. Whenever they were operational, logistically feasible, they ultimately shaped the plan the council adopted,” Anguiano said.

One solution the transit team included is the “hub-and-spoke” approach, where the hub is the transit center and spokes are the routes. This provides a timed transfer between routes available at the transit center, making it more efficient for riders to get to their destinations and back, he said.

“[We’re] realigning and restructuring our routes in a way that we can support our community, [which] is a huge value to the city,” Anguiano said.

The changes add a new one-day pass for \$3, discontinues fee transfers, adds a new \$12 seven-day pass, and temporarily reduces the cost of the 31-day pass from \$48 to \$31. Eventually, the transit division would like to include a bus-tracking app, smartphone bus passes, and electric buses.

The weekday and weekend schedules will also be the same—focusing services from 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m.—and transit users will only have to learn one schedule, Anguiano continued.

“This makes it much easier for our riders to know what time the buses are coming. The current

model has a separate schedule for the weekend; now, they align so they are one and the same,” he said.

The changes result in a need for fewer drivers, which is important for maintaining service levels during the driver shortage, Anguiano added.

“The whole industry has been impacted by a labor shortage. This has affected both school districts and people at a time where they rely on public transit like never before,” he said. “By shortening our routes, we are able to provide an equivalent level of service, but with less resources.”

Santa Maria’s transportation department understood that many of the school districts had to stop several school bus routes, and students moved to the public transit system to get to and from school, Anguiano said.

“By designing a route that was more amenable to students making that connection, we are able to better serve students and families,” he said.

These changes are “guidance documents” for the next five years, and can be adjusted with data and more public input in the years to come, Anguiano added.

“The plan is not prescriptive; it’s a living document. It’s flexible and understands that the world continues to change and evolve. The plan is there to reassure the public that their public funds are being invested in the best way possible,” he said.

—Taylor O’Connor

## SMPD finalizes first multi-year strategic plan

After eight months in development, the final draft of the Santa Maria Police Department’s first formal strategic plan is now available to the public.

The multi-year plan outlines a variety of the department’s future goals, with scheduled action items ranging between January 2022 and December 2024. Santa Maria Police Chief Marc Schneider described the document as a roadmap for current and future staff members of the department, during the Santa Maria City Council’s Dec. 7 meeting.

Schneider referred to the plan as “a clear vision of what we want to accomplish here at the Police Department,” and said it offers the

public (including future hires) a way to view the department’s long-term priorities.

The first objective outlined in the plan deals with promoting health and wellness for members of the Police Department. By Jan., 30, 2022, the department will identify a Wellness Committee, whose purpose will be “to ensure that the department is accomplishing its Wellness Program goals and objectives,” according to the document.

“It’s a priority for us to really focus on our people and to provide them with an opportunity to not only be physically well, but also emotionally well,” Schneider said during the Dec. 7 meeting.

The plan also states that by June 30, 2022, the Wellness Committee will organize and publish a calendar of training events and activities to promote health and wellness. The group is also assigned to develop and distribute a “wellness pamphlet” full of health and wellness resources and offerings to all department employees by Dec. 21, 2022.

Other objectives in the plan include “engaging our community,” which addresses the department’s goal of communicating with the public through social media and in-person events, and “protecting our city,” which outlines the department’s employment of modern policing strategies, including drones.

Some of the plan’s action items are more detailed than others. For example, while the document lists a deadline for the department’s Wellness Committee to host its first appreciation luncheon/barbecue for employees and their families (by June 30, 2023), specifics on some of the plan’s training topics are absent or undefined.

Santa Maria Councilmember Gloria Soto pointed this out during the Dec. 7 meeting.

“I didn’t see anything on implicit bias training,” Soto said. “So, I’m curious what the Police Department is doing to receive training on that?”

“There’s actually quite a bit of training, we just didn’t, obviously, list everything. But that is part of it,” Schneider said. “We’ve actually had a handful of folks already go through our implicit bias training. In 2022, we’ll be trying to get the remainder of the department through that as well.”

—Caleb Wiseblood



NEWS from page 4

## Lompoc's College Park granted \$3.6 million for site improvements

California State Parks selected the Lompoc College Park Renovation project as one of 112 park grant projects it will be funding statewide.

The proposed College Park design features a completely redone skate park, a playground and game area, basketball courts, a picnic area, landscaping, lighting for extended use, and security cameras, Lompoc Recreation Manager Mario Guerrero Jr. said.

"It was a long application process with community outreach; it was a true team effort across the board to be able to be a successful grant applicant," Guerrero Jr. said.

The city held a series of virtual and in-person meetings in late 2020 and early 2021 to gather community input for College Park designs as part of the city's grant application process. Residents were invited to take an online survey and compare park project designs through interactive design tools that were available to the public, he added.

"Our goal is to make it a community park for everyone in the neighborhood. We are excited that the neighborhood is getting something that will benefit all ages and abilities," Guerrero Jr. said.

One of the takeaways included renovating the skate park, which was highlighted by community members and local partners like the surf and skate shop Surf Connection.

"Surf Connection really brought out the skate community to participate in the community outreach," Guerrero Jr. said. "The skate park is over 20 years old, there's been new design elements the community has been excited for, and the community's been using the same one for many years."

He said the park's current layout has the skate park in the middle with grass and trees around it and nothing else in the park.

"The skate park was a byproduct of enhancing the park in order for the community to enjoy it. Our goal was to enhance the community's access throughout the day for all ages and abilities. That's why we focused on adding the playground, basketball courts, concrete pingpong tables, cornhole, and enhancing the skate park as well. They are different things for those in that area of town," Guerrero Jr. continued.

The \$3.6 million grant comes from the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68), and is part of State Parks' Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program. The grant also looked at median incomes, and whether an area has fewer than 3 acres per 1,000 residents, he said.

"The grant was geared to help low-income and underserved areas; being a competitive grant, we scored well in the area of income, and [because] there's less than a half-acre of park land per 1,000 residents," Guerrero Jr. explained.

There's currently no specific timeline for the park's renovation, but the recreation department hopes to break ground by 2023. There will be continued community engagement on certain features on the skate park and the playground.

"We're very excited and hopeful for the community. I've been working here for 20 years, it's the first time that we've been able to get a new park from top to bottom. I'm just happy to be a part of it," Guerrero Jr. said. ○

—Taylor O'Connor

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### ABOUT DVS

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# 'The fourth utility'

*Santa Barbara County officials collaborate on a strategic plan for greater internet service across communities*

BY TAYLOR O'CONNOR

Some of the only ways to communicate during the pandemic were through cellphones or online, but not everyone in Santa Barbara County has access to cell coverage and internet service.

The Santa Ynez Band of Chumash experienced a double whammy with poor cell service and no internet access, said Sam Cohen, government and legal specialist for the tribe.

"The Santa Ynez Indian Reservation is [on] a river bed. As a result, all of the houses are built on the banks of the river, and there's very little line of sight for the internet. ... Anyone who needs to use the internet for a Zoom meeting, they are forced to go to the tribal hall and use a conference room to get internet service," Cohen said. "The best example is Tribal Chairman Kenneth Khan cannot do Zoom meetings from his house, and has to go to the Tribal Administration Building or go off reservation in order to log into the internet."

A lack of internet also complicated telemedicine opportunities, remote learning, and general socialization, he continued.

"The tribal members are uniquely at risk. They have lots of health issues and many of them are older. Two-thirds are over 50, and due to the lack of housing on the reservation, we have lots of people living in multi-generational housing situations. People really were afraid and tried to limit their exposure to other people as much as possible, which really isolated them," Cohen said.

The pandemic has yet to end, and internet and cell connectivity remain major issues. To solve this, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash formed a partnership with the EconAlliance—a cross-industry alliance that advocates for Northern Santa Barbara County communities—along with the Broadband Consortium of the Pacific Coast (nonprofit that works to create a robust broadband infrastructure across the state), and the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) to create a regional, strategic plan to expand high speed and quality internet access to all Santa Barbara County residents.

Vicki Conner, a previous EconAlliance leader, said internet expansion discussions began in 2013 when they identified broadband as a key economic development, or asset that was needed in the communities. Landspeed—a Southern and Central California technology and services team—helped the alliance conduct preliminary broadband speed testing, Conner said.

The testing and research helped Conner and her team discover the need for a broadband ring—a loop connecting Santa Barbara County through infrastructure providing high speed internet access with technologies like fiber-optic cables.

"We need some redundancy and resilience in the network. That [testing] was the catalyst of our efforts in North County because we had more specifics to look at," Conner recalled.

In 2016, the Broadband Consortium conducted a further broadband analysis, and gave Santa Barbara County a D-minus. Currently there are two telephone companies and four cable companies providing broadband for the region, not nearly enough to serve all of the county, Conner said.

"People need broadband," she said. "They can't go with the old megabytes per second. We learned from the Chumash experience—and serving individual areas like Los Alamos—[that] people have quite different needs and different experiences."

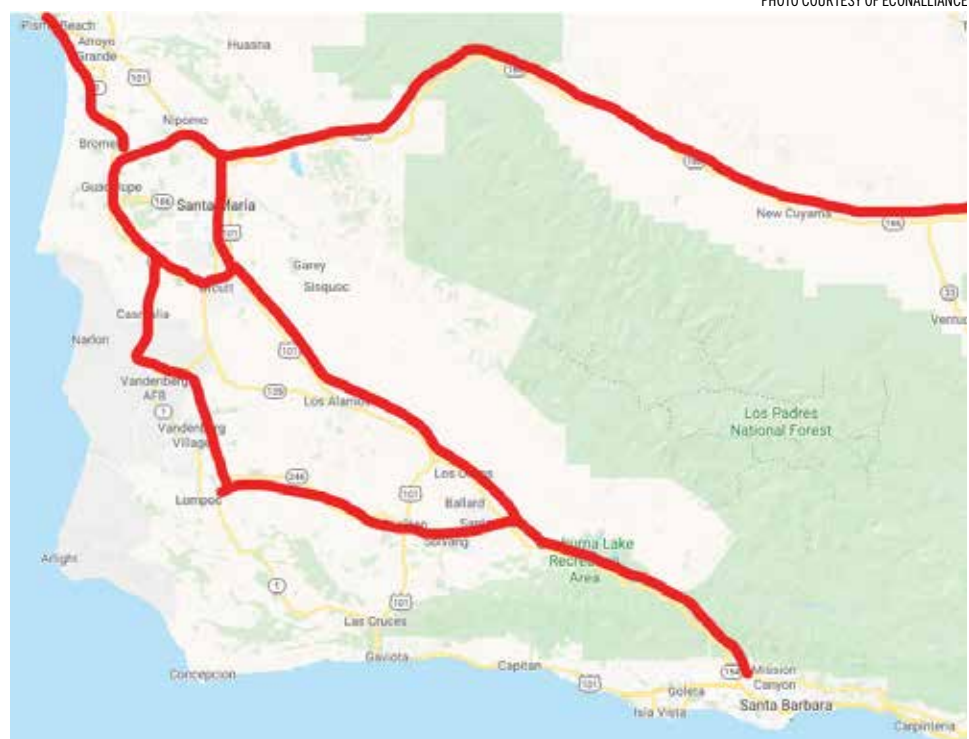
The alliance's partnership with the Broadband Consortium enabled them to further improve broadband with the goal of making it universal in everyone's homes, Consortium President Bill Simmons said. Historically, there were many discussions about the fiber cables that exist between communities, but the last 18 months sped up the conversation, Simmons said.

"COVID's changed everything. It was like putting lighter fluid on a fire," he said. "We ended up realizing through COVID that broadband affects everyone; you just need broadband, and we didn't have the capacity."

Part of the capacity issues stem from historical funding with a lot of state and federal dollars financing only a certain level of service—usually much lower than what's needed today, Simmons said.

"Everyone needs gigabyte service, not something we would have known a few years ago because utilization wasn't as advanced as it is today. A lot of the funding sources don't provide money to the level of service that's needed today," he added. "We want broadband in everyone's house; a fourth utility throughout the county."

Creating that level of service requires local government entities—the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and city councils—to help fund broadband expansion. EconAlliance and the consortium presented the regional plan to the Board of Supervisors during the Sept. 19 meeting, 3rd District Supervisor Joan Hartmann said.



**FIBER RING:** The original drawing of the North County fiber ring (pictured above), which would connect all the incorporated cities with some form of fiber and indirectly connect much of unincorporated Santa Barbara County.

"After COVID, we saw that 1 in 4 households don't have access to broadband. ... The demand is leaping exponentially, and we have to provide a means to make that possible," Hartmann said.

California allocated \$6 billion statewide, and at the federal level, the Biden administration invested \$65 billion to get improved broadband because of its importance for health care, education, and economic participation, she continued.

"There's nothing like money on the table that gets people to work together earnestly. With more people working at home than ever, the need for broadband internet access is acute—particularly in North County. With all this funding coming through, we want to be well poised to receive that funding," Hartmann said.

The county allocated \$200,000 toward the regional plan, and SBCAG met with all eight cities to discuss support for the plan, SBCAG Public Information Manager Lauren Bianchi Klemann said.

"Internet and getting online is no longer a consumer choice. The digital divide in our communities prevents our residents [from] accessing education and community engagement," Bianchi Klemann said. "SBCAG begins that regional dialogue across jurisdictional boundaries to get involved, and then identifies priority projects to get that funding for projects available."

All eight of the county's cities supported participating in the process, meaning SBCAG will be able to do a deep dive and further assess the cities' needs, she added.

"We want to know what the pulse is of the cities and the priority needs, not only access to infrastructure to broadband and the fiber, but also affordability within each of the cities," she said.

City funding will depend on each city's population and how much it can afford to contribute to the broadband projects. Santa Maria—for example—has a large population but was concerned about the amount it could pay for broadband, Bianchi Klemann said.

"A component of the funding will be part of the strategic plan. The cities will be able to use this strategic plan to find their own funding for projects. We are facilitating all this great work and creating a cohesive voice for our county," she said.

The strategic plan will be ready in 2022, and SBCAG hopes to present it to the county and cities by next fall.

"We're just really excited. I think it's so notable how this one topic has really been able to bring communities and leaders together. You have decision makers in north and south counties expressing the need—and that is the need for better quality and access to broadband within their communities. Our economy is dependent on high speed internet access, and this one issue is allowing us to come together and find solutions," Bianchi Klemann said. ○

Reach Staff Writer Taylor O'Connor at [toconnor@santamariasun.com](mailto:toconnor@santamariasun.com).

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PHOTO COURTESY OF SANTA MARIA VALLEY DISCOVERY MUSEUM

# Wildflower Women

"A Central Coast Boutique"



**EXPERIENCE:** The Vandenberg Launch Experience exhibit is the result of a Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) collaboration between Vandenberg Space Force Base and the Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum.

## The gift of discovery

*The Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum opens for the first time since the pandemic with children's winter camps over the holiday break*

BY TAYLOR O'CONNOR

Parents wanting to fill their child's time during winter break with a fun and educational opportunity should look toward the Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum's winter camps.

Normally offered in the summer, the two science-based camps give children the chance to be with kids their own age and learn about robotics or space, Program Manager Donna Beal said.

"As a mom, I really want to make sure that my children have as much opportunity to compliment what they did in school with additional activities where they can apply the science and the math with additional learning in camps," Beal said.

From Dec. 20 to 23, parents can sign up their young ones for the Discovery Space Camp and older kids for the Robotics camp, Beal said.

The Discovery Space Camp—for ages 6 to 10—will begin the museum's day at 9 a.m. Children will have the opportunity to learn about constellations, the solar system—Mars in particular—space nebulae, and how craters are made, through a variety of creative activities, she said.

"The Discovery Space Camp is inspired by a few exhibits we have in the museum. ... In particular the Vandenberg Launch Experience," she added.

Through a partnership with Vandenberg Space Force Base, the museum designed exhibits related to space exploration and recently installed the Celestial Ceiling—a planetarium software that allows children to see the planets and stars on a screen.

Once space camp is wrapped up, at 1 p.m. the Robotics Camp begins—for ages 8 to 14—where children can learn about science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) through robot building and coding. The camp follows First Lego League's program, an organization that guides children through early STEAM learning and exploration.

"The robotics we are doing is following what [the] First Lego League teaches during competition season. They are going to learn coding and coding for specific missions, which is defined in the First Lego League website," she said.

Students from Orcutt Academy's Spartatroniks Robotics Team and Righetti High School's Ability, Service,

Training, Responsibility, Achievement (ASTRA) Club work as counselors to assist campers each day, Beal continued.

"Many of the youth are volunteering as counselors in keeping the kids engaged and just having a great time. They get community service hours for it," she said.

The camps are essentially a soft opening for the museum; since the pandemic began, the museum's been closed to the public. Camps have a maximum capacity of 20 kids per group. There's plenty of places for children to wash hands, and masks are required and temperatures will be taken every day.

After hosting the camps, the museum may be able to transition to having weekend hours in the new year, Beal highlighted.

"I think for both camps, one of the critical things that is underlying is the STEAM we are doing. ... Science, technology, engineering, all of that is incorporated in all of those camps, and we do it in such a fun way in both of those camps," Beal said.

High school volunteer slots are full, but those interested in volunteering for summer should reach out to the museum for later opportunities.

The cost for both camps is \$125 for museum members, and \$150 for non-members. To sign up for the winter camps, email Beal at donna@smvdiscoverymuseum.org. The Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum is located at 705 S. McClelland St., in Santa Maria.

### Highlight

• Need to hide gifts from snoopy kids or a curious special someone? Patrons are invited to bring their gifts to the Santa Maria Public Library and use its free gift-wrapping station. The library will provide a workspace, wrapping paper, tape, scissors, ribbons, and gift tags; the station will be available from 2 until 4 p.m. on Dec. 11, 18, 21, 22, and 23. Supplies and space are limited, and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration is not required.

The library's located at 421 S. McClelland St. Call the library's information desk for more info, (805) 925-0994, Ext. 8562. ○

Taylor O'Connor wrote this week's Spotlight. You can reach her at toconnor@santamariasun.com.

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# DEATH NOTICES

**BAUGHMAN, AMANDA JEAN**, 92, of Santa Maria passed away 12/9/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**CABIGAS, MARY R.**, 89, of Guadalupe passed away 12/5/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**CORIA, GERARDO**, 67, of Nipomo, passed away 12/8/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**CUSICK, PAUL BERNERD**, 90, of Lompoc passed away 12/7/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**DE LUNA, JESSE**, 69, of Lompoc passed away 12/10/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

**DEBLAUW, RICHARD PAUL**, 81, of Arroyo Grande passed away 11/15/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**ESTRADA, WANDA SUE**, 72, passed away 12/7/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**FLECK, PAM L.**, 93, of Santa Maria passed away 12/7/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**GRANDDO, PHILIP**, 76, of Paso Robles passed away 12/4/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**GRANTHAM, TOMMY**, 72, of Morro Bay passed away 11/22/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**GREEN, STELLA CLARICE**, 92, of Santa Maria passed away 12/2/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home

**HILLBERG, GORDON ALVER**, 89, of Santa Maria passed away 12/6/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**HOOPER, STEVEN LEE**, 63, passed away 12/3/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**HUBBARD, JOHN W.**, 64, of Santa Maria passed away 12/9/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home

**HULSEY, CHADWICK "CHAD,"** 78, of Santa Maria passed away 12/10/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**HUNSAKER, WILLIAM ROY**, 66, of Nipomo passed away 11/26/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**JOHNSON, MICHAEL ALAN**, 82, of Arroyo Grande passed away 12/7/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**KINNEY, NATALIN LUCILLE**, 78, of Paso Robles passed away 12/6/2021 arrangements with Chapel of the Roses

**KROPP, PAULA**, 66, of Templeton passed away 12/6/2021 arrangements with Chapel of the Roses

**LEES, ANTHONY JOSEPH**, 88, passed away 12/10/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**LIZARRAGA, JOHN P.**, 96, of Lompoc passed away 12/7/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

**MACKENBERG, EDMUND "ED,"** 85, of Arroyo Grande passed away 11/16/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**MAES, NORMAN DAVID**, 87, passed away 12/8/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**MANCHA, DOROTHY H.**, 96, of Atascadero passed away 12/6/2021 arrangements with Chapel of the Roses

**MARLETT, RANDALL**, 70, of Atascadero passed away 12/5/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**MOORE, THERESA LYN**, 68, of Templeton passed away 12/3/2021 arrangements with Chapel of the Roses

**MORRISON, AMY LOUISE**, 101, of Santa Maria passed away 11/28/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

**MURILLO, SHERYL L.**, 62, passed away 12/6/2021 arrangements with Lady Family Mortuary

**PERRY, SHAYE L.**, passed away 12/4/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**PINKERTON, AURETA "RITA,"** 89, of Morro Bay passed away 12/7/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

**PLANTING, WILLIAM**, 80, passed away 12/7/2021 arrangements with Reis Family Mortuary

**RAMEY, LARRY DOUGLAS JR.**, 49, of Arroyo Grande passed away 11/14/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**ROWEN, GERALD W.**, 77, of Paso Robles passed away 12/9/2021 arrangements with Los Osos Valley Mortuary & Memorial Park

**STOLL, ROBERT ARTHUR**, 88, of Lompoc passed away 12/4/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

**TAYLOR, HELEN MARIE**, 88, of Grover Beach passed away 11/22/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

**WYNNE, HARVEY DOUGLAS**, 78, of Lompoc passed away 12/4/2021 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary



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## Online Poll

### How are you feeling about your holiday shopping?

**46%** I'm sweating bullets 'cause I haven't started yet.  
**27%** So-so. I'm about halfway done.  
**27%** I'm sitting pretty—I got everything done during Black Friday/Cyber Monday!  
**0%** Whatever. I'm only gifting myself this year.

11 Votes

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## To the rescue?

*American Rescue Plan Act funds will save Lompoc, but only if council members can make up their mind*

BY RON FINK

The Lompoc budget, like many other municipal budgets, covers a span of two years. A lot can happen to both revenue and expense predictions during that period. The Lompoc City Council wisely chose to have a periodic review to see where they were with the spending plan.

On Dec. 7 they received that update, and some of the numbers were worth noting.

First the staff said, "For the period ending June 30, 2021, the general fund actual revenues exceeded actual expenditures, which resulted in estimated surplus of \$8.0 million to unassigned fund balance." That's good news considering all the economic chaos that was created with COVID-19 business interruptions.

They go on to explain, "This was mainly attributed to the passing of I2020 sales tax ballot measure and the federal government passing the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) both of which were not included in the FY [fiscal year] 2020-21 budget. In May of 2021, the city received \$6.3 million of ARPA funds from the U.S. Department of Treasury to help mitigate the city's impacts from the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic."

One councilman, Dirk Starbuck, had been very concerned about the following: "For the period ending June 30, 2020, the city actually had an unassigned fund balance of negative \$215,999." Meaning that the city was in the hole.

But because of the unplanned revenue, the final balance was a plus \$8 million, thus his concerns were not justified. This was the result

of the arrival of ARPA funds and an unexpected windfall from the sales tax increase, largely because anything purchased outside of Lompoc is subject to the tax, the outcome was that the general fund balance is the best it's been in more than a decade.

The city staff and the council knew that this revenue was coming, but good budget practices precluded including it in the budget. In other words, "don't count your chickens before they hatch."

For several budget cycles, the reserve fund has been declining and is near zero. Here is what the adopted 2021-23 budget says about that: "The adopted biennial budget for FYs 2021-23 general fund reflects a surplus of \$2 million. The projected surplus is vital to restore the general fund's depleted unassigned fund balance. As of June 30, 2020, the city's unassigned fund balance was negative \$0.2 million."

"The City Council's adopted general fund reserve policy target is 25 percent of annual expenditures of approximately \$11 million. While the (current) surplus is a positive achievement for Lompoc, the general fund will require an additional \$9 million to follow the city's funding policy and restore the general fund's reserve fund to the target of \$11 million. Each budget for the next four budget cycles will attempt to restore full reserves."

During the staff update, they concluded, "Staff recommends the City Council consider holding \$4 million in reserves. This would follow the city's fund balance policy to reestablish its goal of a 25 percent reserve within a period of five years. The fund balance policy also states at least 50

percent of any surplus should be put into reserve until the 25 percent goal is achieved. That being said, the \$8 million of unassigned fund balance could be split, with \$4 million being held in reserve and the

remaining \$4 million used for one-time capital outlays." The majority of the council supported this idea.

All right, that sounds like a good strategy; spend part of it on immediate needs and save the rest for a rainy day. Lompoc is currently rated as the worst credit risk in California based on a near zero balance in the reserve fund. This has a serious impact on our ability to use municipal bonds for infrastructure improvement, so it is extremely important that the city reestablish a healthy reserve fund balance.

American Rescue Plan Act funding will total \$12.9 million over the next two years. The first increment was for salary/benefit costs associated with reacting to COVID-19, and that freed up budgeted general fund monies for other one-time uses.

**Lompoc is currently rated as the worst credit risk in California based on a near zero balance in the reserve fund. This has a serious impact on our ability to use municipal bonds for infrastructure improvement.**

So, what does the council want to spend the money on? Some of the one-time purchase items will require well over a year to obtain; for example, if new fire equipment is purchased today, it will take almost a year for the new truck(s) to be built. So, the staff was suggesting that the council provide direction sooner rather than later.

Staff was recommending that the council approve the purchase of a new fire pumper so a contract could be signed. Payment for this truck would be delayed until it arrived on-site, however considering the newly improved revenue outlook there will be more than enough money available at that time.

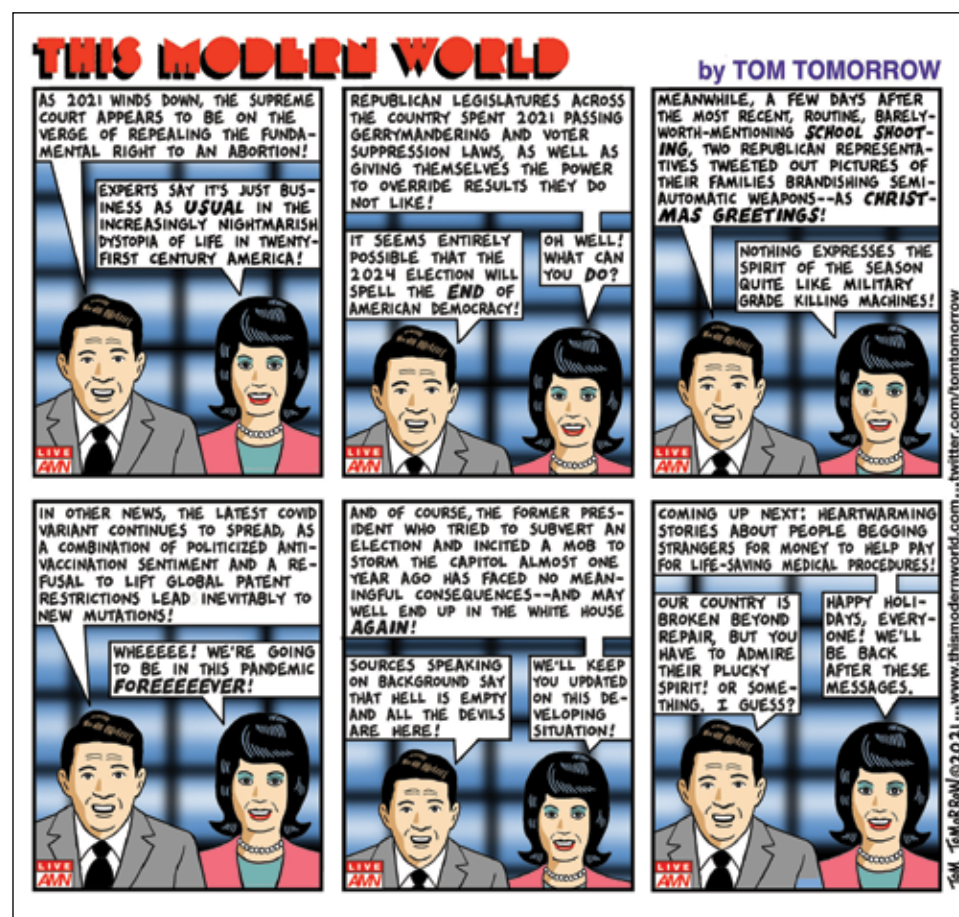
The council discussed many things, however the staff stressed that this was a workshop and they only wanted to know what the council wanted them to bring back at a later meeting. In other words, no hard decisions were made. Only one council member, Starbuck, was able to provide the information requested in a clear and concise manner; the others used the opportunity for political speeches.

Mayor Jenelle Osborne pointed out that the council needed to start making decisions soon because the federal requirement was that this year's funding increment be spent "this year" and that six months had already gone past waiting to figure out what the rules would be.

Considering the diverse thinking among the five council members and the wide-ranging priorities of the community, it's going to be extremely difficult to please everyone, but they must come to a consensus on this issue soon or they risk losing much needed ARPA funds. ○

Ron Fink writes to the Sun from Lompoc.  
 Send a response via the editor at [clanham@santamariasun.com](mailto:clanham@santamariasun.com).

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# Season's Greetings

During this season of togetherness and joy, as we focus on the many blessings of the holiday, we want to express our appreciation and celebrate all we have to be thankful for.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our dedicated team of physicians, nurses, employees, and volunteers that provide compassionate care for our patients. Many thanks to our community for the ongoing support, which has lifted the spirits of our staff during this unprecedented time. And we are immensely grateful for our generous donors who support our commitment to care.

From all of us at Arroyo Grande Community Hospital and Marian Regional Medical Center, we wish you a beautiful holiday season and a new year filled with peace and happiness!

Enjoy friends and family, and stay safe and healthy.

Sue Andersen  
*President and CEO*  
*Arroyo Grande Community Hospital and*  
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## OPINION

### Undefined plans

**B**efore I move to the dark side, I'm going to give a shoutout to the Alisal fire burn scar for making it through this last storm relatively intact!

According to Santa Barbara County Public Works rain gauges, areas of the county tallied between 1.3 and 7.5 inches of rain. Wowzers!

And kudos to Santa Barbara County for raising the alarm early about the potential for evacuations in the area, which received more than 5 inches of rain in some places. By the time the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office issued an evacuation order, the evacuation center was all ready to go and hopefully all the evacuees were too, thanks to the warning.

Speaking of the Sheriff's Office, sounds like Sheriff Bill Brown has some competition in June 2022. The *Independent* in Santa Barbara reported that for the second cycle in a row the Santa Barbara Deputy Sheriff's Association is endorsing Brown's opponent, who this year happens to be Lt. Juan Camarena, who currently manages the Sheriff's Criminal Investigation Division.

Must be tough to be unsupported by personnel you oversee, but Brown shrugged it off. He's got bigger fish to fry, such as getting his \$110 million-plus North County Jail open. Like, for real, for real.

What's unreal is the recently approved Santa Maria Police Department "Strategic Plan" for 2022-24, which would be more aptly titled: Committees That Will Accomplish Things We Have Yet to Define. The plan is long on vague, ill-defined words and short on details and definitions.

For instance, this plan has a deadline for the Wellness Committee to hold its first appreciation event for employees and their families, but doesn't detail what wellness is or what exactly the department is lacking. Which is where I would assume a strategic plan needs to start.

Is staff wellness actually an issue? Shrug. Suffice to say that after eight months of work, the department's strategy for the next two years is to invest in its people, engage the community, and protect the city. And I'm guessing that was the strategy for the last two years as well—although this is the *first ever* strategic plan for the SMPD, which Santa Maria City Council members were just thrilled about!

Congratulations all around! Except from City Councilmember Gloria Soto, who wondered why the document wasn't more specific.

"I didn't see anything on implicit bias training. ... So, I'm curious what the Police Department is doing to receive training on that?" she asked during a Dec. 7 meeting.

To which Police Chief Marc Schneider said: Don't worry about it. It's covered.

"We just didn't, obviously, list everything. But that's part of it," he said.

Wonderful! I guess accountability for those unlisted items is also covered?

### Correction

• I got a head of myself last week ("Lines drawn," Dec. 9) when I said where the county's redistricting map would head next. The Santa Barbara County Citizens Independent Redistricting Commission was scheduled to (and did indeed) make tweaks to and approve a more final map on Wed., Dec. 8. I regret my error and will keep flying above these county lines! ○

The Canary is drawing in the sand. Send boundaries to [canary@santamariasun.com](mailto:canary@santamariasun.com).



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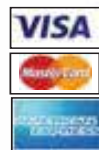


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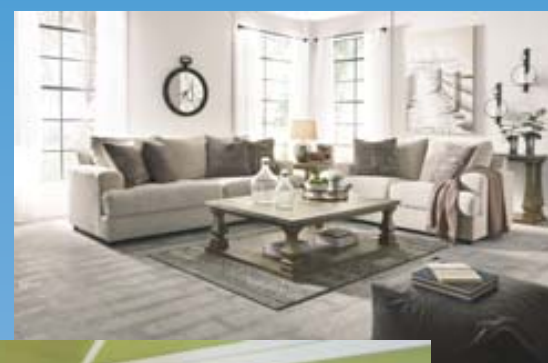
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# HOT STUFF

DEC. 16 – DEC. 23  
2021

**NOTE:** Local COVID-19 case numbers and changing health precautions may cause some event cancellations and venue closures. Please check with the venues directly, and most of all, stay safe!



## BEAR FLAIR

*The Elverhøj Museum of History and Art in Solvang hosts its final Makers Market event on Saturday, Dec. 18, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Local artisans Mary Stanley (whose fiber bears are pictured), Shelley Nakano, and Syd McCutcheon will be displaying and selling a variety of their handcrafted goods throughout the day. Admission is free. Visit [elverhoj.org](http://elverhoj.org) to find out more. The museum is located at 1624 Elverhøj Way, Solvang.*  
—Caleb Wiseblood

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ELVERHOJ MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND ART

## ARTS

### SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

**ART IN THE GARDEN** Painters, photographers, poets, and other practitioners of the arts are welcome to gather once a month for a free, self-directed happening described by art therapist Stacey Thompson as “an outlet for people during this difficult time.” Last Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. [santaynezvalleybotanicgarden.org/](http://santaynezvalleybotanicgarden.org/). Santa Ynez Botanic Garden, 1511 Sycamore Drive, Buellton.

**MAKERS MARKET AT THE ELVERHOJ** The Elverhøj Museum of History and Art in Solvang is hosting a series of makers market events. Talented artisans from area studios and workshops will showcase and sell their handmade gifts and goods. Saturdays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. through Dec. 18 Free. 805-686-1211. [elverhoj.org](http://elverhoj.org). Elverhøj Museum of History and Art, 1624 Elverhøj Way, Solvang.

**SHARING THE LIGHT: ANSEL ADAMS AND ALAN ROSS** This duo exhibition showcases the photography careers of both Ansel Adams (1902-1984) and Alan Ross (whose work is pictured), a longtime friend and former assistant of Adams. Through March 20, 2022 [wildlingmuseum.org](http://wildlingmuseum.org). Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082.

**THIRD ANNUAL WINTER SALON** Gallery Los Olivos presents its third annual Winter Salon group show. Gallery artists display their creative work hung “salon style” floor to ceiling. All fine art mediums represented. Mondays, Thursdays-Sundays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. through Jan. 31 805-688-7517. [GalleryLosOlivos.com](http://GalleryLosOlivos.com). Gallery Los Olivos, 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos.

**WIDENING CIRCLES: LANDSCAPE PORTRAITS OF SOLVANG** Both of the show's featured artists, husband and wife John Iwerks and Chris Chapman, will also be hosting periodic art demonstrations at the museum (Oct. 9, Oct. 30, and Nov. 13). Through Feb. 1, 2022 [elverhoj.org](http://elverhoj.org). Elverhøj Museum of History and Art, 1624 Elverhøj Way, Solvang, 805-686-1211.

### SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**GRAPHITE ART OF MINNIE ANDERSON** Now through the month of January 2022, Minnie Anderson's exhibit is on display in Shepard Hall and features selected graphite works using a number 2 pencil on paper. The works feature portraits, pets, and family relationships. Through Jan. 28, 2022 Free. 805 925-0994 x 2832. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**THE LITTLE MERMAID** St. Joseph Community Theatre presents this theatrical adaptation of Disney's animated classic. **Dec. 17**, 7 p.m., **Dec. 18**, 7 p.m. and **Dec. 19**, 5 p.m. \$10-\$50. 805-937-2038. St. Joseph High School, 4120 S. Bradley, Santa Maria.

**LOCAL AND FEATURED ARTIST EXHIBITS** Valley Art Gallery, located in the SM Airport, exhibits local and featured artist work. New exhibits are mounted the first Tuesday of even-numbered months. Wide variety of art available for purchase. ongoing, 8 a.m.-10 p.m. Free. 805-922-0663. Santa Maria Airport, 3249 Terminal Dr., Santa Maria.

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

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

**THE SECRET GARDEN** Adapted from the novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett. Orphaned by an epidemic, young Mary Lennox is sent from British colonial India to a home she has never known in Yorkshire, England. There she finds a mysterious house and a family shrouded in secrets. Through Dec. 23 [pcpa.org](http://pcpa.org). Marian Theatre, 800 S. College Dr., Santa Maria, 805-928-7731.

**SOCIAL DIS-DANCE** Classes available for all skill levels. Class sizes limited. ongoing Everybody Can Dance, 628 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-937-6753.

**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](http://wineanddesign.com/orcutt). Wine and Design, 3420 Orcutt Road, suite 105, Orcutt.

### SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**HOLIDAY EXTRAVAGANZA** See Scrooge find his Christmas spirit in a heart-warming tale of holiday magic, laugh until your sides ache at the zany characters in a fractured fairy tale opera, and celebrate the music of the season in our Holiday Vaudeville Revue. Wednesdays-Sundays. through Dec. 31 \$30-\$35. [americanmelodrama.com](http://americanmelodrama.com). Great American Melodrama, 1863 Front St., Oceano.

**HOLIDAY VIEWS** Visit RM Art Studios to see more than 50 original paintings by Mike and Rosemary Bauer at their home studio/gallery. Treat yourself or a loved one to a gift of art featuring scenes from our own Central Coast. Call or email for your private appointment. Through Dec. 29, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. 805-390-2497. [rmartstudios.com](http://rmartstudios.com). RM Art Studios, 831 Robin Circle, Arroyo Grande.

**AN IRISH CHRISTMAS** As seen on PBS. Join an award-winning cast of riverdance principals and world champion dancers in a celebration of the great traditions of Christmas in Ireland: butter-making, chasing the wren on St. Stephen's Day, drawing down the half door, and more. **Dec. 18**, 7:30 p.m. \$40-\$58. 805-489-9444. [clarkcenter.org/shows/an-irish-christmas](http://clarkcenter.org/shows/an-irish-christmas). Clark Center for the Performing Arts, 487 Fair Oaks Ave., Arroyo Grande.

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

**OCCULT AND METAPHYSICAL ART SHOW** An exhibition of the occult and metaphysical paintings by Bay Area artist Leona Lee. Reception: Nov. 28, from 3 to 5 p.m. Through Jan. 15, 2022 Puffers of Pismo, 781 Price St., Pismo Beach, [puffersofpismo.com](http://puffersofpismo.com).

**OPEN STUDIO FOR ADULTS** Call to reserve. All materials included. Tuesdays, 6-9 p.m. and Wednesdays,

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 [newtimesslo.com](http://newtimesslo.com). You may also email [calendar@newtimesslo.com](mailto:calendar@newtimesslo.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@newtimesslo.com](mailto:cwiseblood@newtimesslo.com).**

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12:30-3:30 p.m. \$35. 805-668-2125. LiA Creative Community, 1147 East Grand Ave. suite 101, Arroyo Grande.

**RANCHO NIPOMO: MOVING WITH THE TIMES EXHIBIT** This exhibit also includes the restoration efforts of the Dana Adobe which had their start in the 1930s and remain ongoing to this day. Through Jan. 15, 2022, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. \$5, free for DANA members and children under 12 years of age. 805-929-5679. [danaadobe.org](http://danaadobe.org). DANA Adobe Cultural Center, 671 S. Oakglen Ave., Nipomo.

### SAN LUIS OBISPO

**ACTOR'S EDGE: ACTING CLASSES** Actor's Edge offers film and television acting training in San Luis Obispo, plus exposure to Los Angeles talent agents. All ages and skill levels welcome. Classes available in SLO, LA, and on zoom. ongoing \$210 per month. [actorsedge.com](http://actorsedge.com). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**CALIFORNIA CENTRAL COAST PASTEL SOCIETY: 3CPS MEMBER ONLINE SHOW** Discover California Central Coast Pastel Society's new online exhibit, with vibrant contemporary and classical paintings in varied styles and themes. Find exhibit, workshop, membership, paint-out dates, and event info on website. Through March 31, 2022 Free. [3cps.org/3cps-online-show/](http://3cps.org/3cps-online-show/). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**EXPOSURE COMPOSURE** While photography has historically been valued for its ability to depict our world objectively, some photographers seek to reveal it to us by abstracting objects and moments they observe. This exhibition explores examples of abstract photography created by members of The Photo Society. Through Jan. 30, 2022, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. 805-543-8562. [sloma.org/exhibition/exposure-composure/](http://sloma.org/exhibition/exposure-composure/). San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

**FREE DOCENT TOURS AT SLOMA** Gain a deeper understanding of the artwork on view with SLOMA's new docent tours. Saturdays, 11 a.m. Free. 805-543-8562. [sloma.org](http://sloma.org). San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

**FREE MEMBERSHIP IN CENTRAL COAST SCULPTORS** Central Coast Sculptors welcomes CA artists, teachers, and students working in 3D art media, and sculpture enthusiasts. Join for free until Dec. 31. No geographic requirements. Enjoy distinctive exhibits such as 'The Phantom Project,' pop-ups, juried member showcases, and more. Through Dec. 31 Free membership. 505-690-4283. [centralcoastsculptors.org/membership.html](http://centralcoastsculptors.org/membership.html). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**I'D TELL YOU IF I COULD** Paintings and works on paper by London-based artist William Brickell. Through Feb. 6, 2022, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. 805-543-8562. [sloma.org/](http://sloma.org/)

ARTS continued page 19



# Connecting Families to Mental Health Resources

Celebrating  
5 years!

# IT'S OK TO  
ASK FOR HELP

# AWARENESS  
MATTERS

RESOURCE DIRECTORY • WORKSHOPS • AWARENESS • COLLABORATIVE

## YouthWell



*I wanted to reach out to thank you for your incredible resources and work on behalf of our young people in town. I visited your site briefly, and for the first time as a principal, I feel that I have the ability to send desperate families to a thorough, well-curated resource. What a relief!*

*—School Principal*



# No one should suffer in silence.

## WHY PREVENTION & EARLY INTERVENTION [PEI]?

According to the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission... Left unaddressed, mental health needs can escalate over time, requiring higher levels of support and potentially leading to negative long-term outcomes that impact not only individuals themselves, but also the families and communities that support them. There is a need for services to recognize the challenges and strengths of their communities while increasing accessibility and awareness. Strategies that advance PEI have the potential to reduce negative mental health outcomes, reduce disparities, and improve the collective wellness of communities.

“The last few months have felt lonely at times, but taking time to connect with others helps and makes you realize how much we all have in common with each other. Learning about mental health has made me a more compassionate person and I feel prepared to help others who are struggling and to help myself.”  
—Student

## MENTAL HEALTH STATS & FACTS

- 1 in 6** youth aged **6-17** experience a **mental health challenge** each year
- 50%** of all adults with mental illness experienced symptoms by age **14** & **75%** by age **24**
- 70%** of youth in the juvenile justice system have **at least 1 mental health condition**
- 50%** of youth aged **6-17** with a mental health condition receive treatment each year
- Suicide is the **2nd leading cause of death** among ages **10-24**
- 90%** of individuals who die by suicide had an **underlying mental illness**
- Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are **4x more likely** to attempt suicide than straight youth

## BENEFITS of PREVENTION & EARLY INTERVENTION

- Less intense treatment
- Fewer and less severe continuing symptoms
- Reduces risk factors
- Strengthens protective factors
- Reduces risk for suicide
- Can improve outcomes for youth and families
- Reduces family disruption and distress
- Reduced disruptions to school attendance. Health and wellness contributes to student academic success.
- Access to appropriate resources and supportive social networks can increase a person's resilience.
- Learning positive coping tools for managing stress and emotions can build social and emotional skills.



**YouthWell**  
PARTNERS

**SERVICE PROVIDERS...** AHA!, CADA, CALM, Carpinteria Children's Project, Children's Medical Clinic, Casa Pacifica/SAFTY, Children & Family Resource Services, Promotores Network, Community Counseling and Education Center, Domestic Violence Solutions, Evolve Treatment Centers, Family Service Agency, Hospice of Santa Barbara, IV Youth Projects, Just Communities, Mental Wellness Center, Mission Harbor Behavioral Health, New Beginnings Counseling Center, Noah's Anchorage [YMCA], Pacific Pride Foundation, Sanctuary Centers, SB CAMFT, SB County Behavioral Wellness, SB County Psychological Association, SB Neighborhood Clinics, SBPAL, STESA, St. George Teen Center, SYV People Helping People, Transitions Mental Health Association, What Is Love  
**SCHOOLS, DISTRICTS & COLLEGES...** Bishop Garcia Diego High School, Buellton Union School District, Carpinteria Unified School District, Goleta Union School District, Homeschool community, Hope Elementary School District, SB City College, SB County Education Office, SB Middle School, SB Unified School District, SYV Union High School District, UCSB, Westmont  
**LAW ENFORCEMENT...** SB County Sheriff's Department, SB County Probation Dept.

Thank you to our funders and private donors over the past 5 years... Deckers Brands, Cottage Population Health,



It's OK to ask for help.

## FIND RESOURCES ON YOUTHWELL.ORG



It can be overwhelming to know where to start when a young person is struggling with a mental health challenge. YouthWell works with our community partners to reduce stress for families by simplifying the process of connecting to resources in Santa Barbara County. Find helpful tips and resources at [YouthWell.org](https://youthwell.org).

### COMMUNITY CALENDAR



View the [YouthWell.org](https://youthwell.org) calendar to find community support groups for parents and youth as well as educational workshops and Youth Mental Health First Aid trainings.



## WELLNESS WORKSHOPS

YouthWell provides monthly virtual Wellness Workshops for youth (**ages 10-25**), parents, grandparents, and those working with youth, in order to eliminate stigma and open up conversations about teen mental health. ***\*Spanish interpretation is provided.***

Workshops are designed to empower parents and youth with a strength-based approach providing tools that promote connection, wellness, and self-care in order to build resilience so that we are better equipped to cope with stress and challenging situations.



## YOUTH & FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS RESOURCE DIRECTORY

An online directory to help youth, ages 0-25, and families access appropriate and available mental health and wellness services that can be viewed in English and Spanish at [YouthWell.org](https://youthwell.org).

Find therapists, support groups, treatment programs, crisis resources, and postvention resources for those in recovery. Find tips to learn about mental health disorders, how to choose a program, questions to ask a therapist, insurance terms, screening tools, and more to help you navigate. Find a list of books, articles, and videos to help you on your journey. Find videos of past Wellness Workshops. Find useful handouts for youth, caregivers, and teachers that help with managing self-care, improving communication, and recognizing the signs of emotional distress.





# You are not alone.

## LET'S ALL PRIORITIZE EARLY INTERVENTION

**As a community, we have achieved our goals when...**

- ✓ We normalize the conversation around mental health so that youth and caregivers do not feel shame asking for help.
- ✓ We treat mental health challenges with the same respect and care we show someone who has a physical illness or injury.
- ✓ Families feel supported and informed and know where they can go to find mental health services in the community and on their school campuses.
- ✓ We remove the barriers that keep youth and families from accessing services and ensure they are connecting to appropriate resources through a warm handoff.
- ✓ Schools are incorporating wellness practices for students on campus.



## GET INVOLVED

**Help YouthWell address the need for increased early intervention efforts in our community so that our youth don't have to wait until they are in crisis to get help.**

### **DONATE:**

Your contribution supports the online resource directory and monthly wellness workshops.

### **BE INFORMED:**

Learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health challenges. Attend Wellness Workshops, take Youth Mental Health First Aid, visit the YouthWell resource directory for great books and articles, and learn what is available in our community.

### **SHOW YOUR SUPPORT:**

You don't have to have all of the answers. You just need to be willing to lean in, listen, and show compassion.



## CONTACT US

- Email us... [Info@youthwell.org](mailto:Info@youthwell.org)
- Follow us... on Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter - [@YouthWell](https://www.instagram.com/YouthWell)
- Register for YouthWell Wellness Workshops at [YouthWell.org/workshops](https://youthwell.org/workshops)

- Stay informed. Subscribe to the **YouthWell Newsletter** for monthly mental health community updates
- Visit [YouthWell.org](https://youthwell.org) to access the online Youth & Family Mental Health & Wellness Resource Directory and Community Calendar

## YouthWell Team

**Rachael Steidl**, Executive Director • **Elise Fields**, Community Liaison • **Dee Dee Conrad**, Social Media & Outreach Specialist



visit/ San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

**IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE: A LIVE RADIO PLAY** SLO REP presents this radio broadcast iteration of the holiday classic. Show info and tickets online. Fridays, Saturdays, 7-8 p.m. and Saturdays, 2-3 p.m. through Dec. 18 \$20-\$25. 805-786-2440. [slorep.org/shows/its-a-wonderful-life-a-live-radio-play/](https://slorep.org/shows/its-a-wonderful-life-a-live-radio-play/). San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre, 888 Morro St., San Luis Obispo.

**LITTLE TREASURE: HOLIDAY ART EXHIBIT** Features artwork of all mediums by local artists, and all priced at \$100 or less. Great for holiday shopping, collecting sweet and creative gifts that are one of a kind. Exhibit runs Dec. 3 through Jan. 31. Mondays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. through Jan. 31 Free. 805-747-4200. [artcentralslo.com/gallery/](https://artcentralslo.com/gallery/). Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

**MASK MAKING AND HAT MAKING** Geared for children and adults. ongoing Spirits of Africa Gallery, 570 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo, [spiritsofafricagallery.com/](https://spiritsofafricagallery.com/).

FILE IMAGE COURTESY OF ST. JOSEPH COMMUNITY THEATRE



## UNDER THE SEA

*St. Joseph Community Theatre will hold three performances of its production of The Little Mermaid, on Friday, Dec. 17, and Saturday, Dec. 18, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 19, at 5 p.m. Admission to this theatrical adaptation of the popular Disney film ranges between \$10 to \$50. Call (805) 937-2038 or visit the production's Eventbrite page for more info. St. Joseph High School is located at 4120 S. Bradley Road, Orcutt.*

—C.W.

**PAINTING CLASSES** Easels, brushes, and canvases provided. Limited to 20 students. ongoing Spirits of Africa Gallery, 570 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo, [spiritsofafricagallery.com/](https://spiritsofafricagallery.com/).

**SLO JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL** Twenty films, twenty days, to stream the SLO Jewish Film Festival. Includes feature films, documentaries, and shorts from around the planet celebrating the Jewish experience. Streaming starts Jan. 9. **Dec. 20-Jan. 30** \$50 All-Access Festival Pass; \$25 Three-Movies Pass; \$10 One-Movie Pass. 410-693-2949. [slojff.com](https://slojff.com). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**SLOMADE HOLIDAY FAIRE** Join us on the solstice for a holiday faire. Browse locally made delights, perfect for holiday gift-giving. Learn to create some felt mistletoe ornaments and watercolor gift tags. Tour SLO MakerSpace and take home a laser-cut snowflake. **Dec. 21**, 3-8 p.m. Free. 805-225-4783. [slo-makerspace.com/](https://slo-makerspace.com/) slo-made-faire. SLO MakerSpace, 81 Higuera St., Ste. 160 and 180, San Luis Obispo.

**TOUCHY TOUCHY BY ARTIST MARRIN LEE MARTINEZ** Soft kinetic sculpture exploring motherhood. The objects on display in this exhibition are a collection of kinetic creatures that explore a mother's physical sensitivity to their child's constant touch. Visitors are invited to interact with the forms, as suggested by adjacent action words. Through Feb. 28, 2022, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. 805-543-8562. [slo-ma.org/exhibition/touchy-touchy/](https://slo-ma.org/exhibition/touchy-touchy/). San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

**THE VELVETEEN RABBIT: BALLET THEATRE SLO** See Margery Williams' classic children's tale come alive on stage. Then enjoy a grand skate with "Les Patineurs (The Skaters)." **Dec. 17**, 7 p.m., **Dec. 18**, 7 p.m. and **Dec. 19**, 2 p.m. [pacslo.org](https://pacslo.org). Spanos Theatre, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7113.

**VIEWPOINTS: A SPECIAL EXHIBITION** Viewpoints

is an exhibition by four artists who observe the world from different directions. Kim Snyder, Rod Baker, Barry Lundgren, and Janice Pluma each offer a unique perspective on nature's many faces. Through Dec. 31 805-926-5050. SLO Gallery, 1019 Broad Street, San Luis Obispo, [slogallery.com](https://slogallery.com).

## NORTH SLO COUNTY

**BRUCE MUNRO: LIGHT AT SENSORIO** Acclaimed artist Bruce Munro's Light at Sensorio features two walkthrough installations: "Field of Light" featuring almost 60,000 color-changing blooms covering 15 acres of rolling hills; and "Light Towers," celebrating Paso Robles wine country with 69 towers composed of more than 17,000 illuminated wine bottles. Thursdays-Sundays. through Jan. 2 \$9.50-\$110. 805-226-4287. [sensoriopaso.com/](https://sensoriopaso.com/). Sensorio, 4380 Highway 46 East, Paso Robles.

**COMEDY AT THE CASTLE** Back by popular demand, Comedy Night at The Castle returns. This time, we have comedian Andy Hendrickson to keep you laughing. **Dec. 18**, 6-9 p.m. \$30. 805-369-6100. [toothandnailwine.com/pages/live-music-events](https://toothandnailwine.com/pages/live-music-events). Tooth and Nail Winery, 3090 Anderson Rd., Paso Robles.

## DEPRISE BRESCIA ART GALLERY: OPEN DAILY

Features a large selection of encaustic art, sculpted paintings, art installations, acrylic palette knife paintings, digital art, glass, jewelry, stones, fossils, and a butterfly sculpture garden. [DepriseBrescia.com](https://DepriseBrescia.com). Deprise Brescia Art Gallery, 829 10th St., Paso Robles, 310-621-7543.

**HANDCRAFTED FOR THE HOLIDAYS 2021** Premier craftspeople from San Luis Obispo County and beyond are featured in this unique exhibition and retail sale devoted to bringing wide public attention to the field of fine craft. A portion of every sale supports Studios on the Park. Through Jan. 3, 2022 Free. 805-238-9800. [studiosonthepark.org](https://studiosonthepark.org). Studios on the Park, 1130 Pine St., Paso Robles.

## NEEDLE FELTED SNOWMEN: SCULPTING WITH WOOL

Learn the basics of felting and craft some super cute snowmen that you'll be proud to decorate your house with. This class will require patience, and uses sharp implements; recommended for ages 16 and older. **Dec. 18**, 4-6 p.m. \$45. 805-464-0533. [the1artery.com/events/needle-felting](https://the1artery.com/events/needle-felting). The ARtery, 5890 Traffic Way, Atascadero.

**STUDIOS ON THE PARK: ONLINE CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS** Check site for a variety of virtual classes and workshops online. ongoing [studiosonthepark.org](https://studiosonthepark.org). Studios on

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

## NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**ALLISON REIMUS: FEELINGS IN A FAMILIAR FRAMEWORK** New paintings by New Jersey-based artist Allison Reimus. Opening reception is from 5 to 7 p.m. ongoing 805-305-9292. [leftfieldslo.com](https://leftfieldslo.com). Left Field Gallery, 1036 Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos.

**ART AND ABOUT MORRO BAY** Join us for Art and About Morro Bay, a self-guided art walk that gives the community an opportunity to experience visual, literary, and performing art in galleries and other venues. Visit site for a map of locations. (Events will not occur on major holidays). Fourth Saturday of every month, 1-4 p.m. Free. 805-544-9251. [artsobispo.org/art-and-about](https://artsobispo.org/art-and-about). Morro Bay (participating artists), Townwide, Morro Bay.

**BAYWOOD PHOTOGRAPHY: CALENDAR AND NOTE CARD PICK-UP** Paul Irving publishes a stunning, annual wall calendar and boxed sets of note cards featuring the images captured in and around Baywood Park, Morro Bay, and Montaña de Oro State Park. **Dec. 20**, 2-5 p.m. [my805tix.com](https://my805tix.com). Marea Art Studio, 1316 2nd St., Los Osos.

**CRAFT ARTIST: LISA KANOFSKY** A showcase of jewelry, encompassing a mix of pendants and beaded necklaces accented with a variety of metals and other textures, and other small artworks. Through Dec. 29 Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

**FEATURED ARTIST: DON DOUBLEDEE** Doubledee's specialties are fine art drawing and painting. His artworks capture the environment he lives in: Morro Bay. Through Dec. 29 Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

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## Pfizer Covid Vaccine Now Available for Children 5 and Over



Pediatric Medical Group wants to ensure all newborns, infants, children and adolescents are up-to-date on their comprehensive well-child care, inclusive of appropriate screenings, complete physical exam, laboratory exams, fluoride varnish and vaccines.

Pediatric Medical Group is scheduling well exam visits for children of all ages. Strict safety precautions have been put in place to ensure the safety of patients and their parents.

- We provide rapid COVID-19 tests (15 Min results) Flu tests, and Flu vaccines.
- All individuals entering the building are pre-screened and temperature is taken.
- Face masks are required to be worn
- Strict sanitation practices are in place including disinfecting exam rooms after each visit.

Call to schedule your child's well exam today.



Pediatric Medical Group  
OF SANTA MARIA, INC.



David Ikola, M.D.



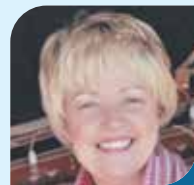
Shane Rostermundt, D.O.



Joseph Nunez, M.D.



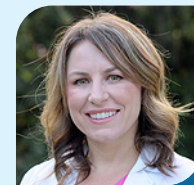
Dr. Michele Kielty, D.O.



Lynn Peltier, C.P.N.P.



Geronna Leonards, N.P.



Jessica Prather, C.N.P.

1430 E. Main St.  
Santa Maria, CA

[www.pmgsm.com](https://www.pmgsm.com)  
805-922-3548

Monday – Friday



**FEATURED JEWELRY ARTIST LISA KANOFSKY** Lisa Kanofsky is a Central Coast Artist living in San Luis Obispo. Lisa's jewelry encompasses a mix of pendants and beaded necklaces accented with creativity and love. Reception: Dec. 11, from 5 to 7 p.m. Through Dec. 29, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. galleryatmarinasquare.com. Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

**FINE ART DRAWING AND PAINTING BY DON DOUBLEDDEE** Don Doubleddee has been drawing all his life. A Cal Poly graduate in architecture, Doubleddee has been a resident of Morro Bay since 1970. Reception: Dec. 11, from 5 to 7 p.m. Through Dec. 29, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. 805-772-1068. galleryatmarinasquare.com. Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

**FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY BY KERRY DRAGER** Kerry Drager is a photographer, writer, and instructor who lives in Morro Bay. He is the author of three photo how-to books and the co-author of two photo-essay books, all nationally published. Reception: Dec. 11, from 5 to 7 p.m. Through Dec. 29, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. 805-772-1068. galleryatmarinasquare.com. Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

**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.

**FREE CREATIVITY DAY** This ongoing group is free, informal, and open to the public. Meet in the Studio at Art Center Morro Bay. Bring your art work, in any medium and join others working in various mediums. Bring your lunch and join the fun. Choose your attendance time. Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. through Jan. 26 Free. 805-772-2504. artcentermorrobay.org/index.php/comingevents/classes/. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

**JERILYNNE NIBBE: A RETROSPECTIVE** Featuring monoprints, watercolors, and woodcuts. Through Jan. 2, 2022, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. 805-772-6394. Morro Bay Library, 625 Harbor St., Morro Bay.

**KERRY DRAGER: FINE ART PHOTOGRAPHY** Drager is a photographer, writer, and instructor who lives in Morro Bay. He is the author of three photo how-to books and the co-author of two photo-essay books. Through Dec. 29 Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

**LEARN BURNING FUSED GLASS WITH LARRY LE BRANE** Call or email host, or check website for more precise info on workshop dates (dates vary). Make fused-glass home/garden décor, gifts, dishware, or use in your own artwork. No previous art skills are needed. All materials for 3-5 projects are included in \$135 fee. For 4-6 students. No drop-ins. Registration at larron4@charter.net Through Jan. 29, 2022 \$135. 805-528-8791. facebook.com/larry.lebrane. Central Coast Glass Blowing and Fusing, 1279 2nd Street, Los Osos.

**LIVE FIGURE DRAWING CLASS** Open to vaccinated adults. All levels and art techniques are welcome. 18 ages and over. No photos allowed. Bring your own art materials. First come, first served. Wednesdays, 6-9 p.m. through Jan. 26 \$10 members; \$12 non-members. 805-772-2504. artcentermorrobay.org/index.php/comingevents/classes/. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

**MOSAIC TRIVET WORKSHOP** During this workshop, you will learn how to design and create a mosaic trivet. You will learn how to select materials, lay out a pleasing pattern, and adhere the tiles to the trivet base. You will learn how to properly grout and seal your project. ongoing, 1-4 p.m. and **Dec. 19**, 1-4 p.m. \$60. 805-772-2504. artcentermorrobay.org/index.php/workshops/. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

**WINTER FAIRE AND CRAFTS SHOW** This very special holiday event offers a collection of exceptional paintings, photography and fine crafts, spanning a variety of artistic mediums from traditional to contemporary. Crafts include fiber, wood, glass, sculpture, pottery, jewelry, and more. Through Jan. 3, 2022, 12-4 p.m. Free. 805-772-2504. artcentermorrobay.org. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

**WINTER MARKET** An Art Fair on the Patio, with a free Alcohol Ink Ornament Make it/Take it, and music and treat offerings. **Dec. 18**, 1-7 p.m. and **Dec. 19**, 1-4 p.m. Free. 805-772-2504. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay, artcentermorrobay.org.

## CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

**SOLVANG JULEFEST** Julefest returns with a modified, pandemic-safer set of events and happenings throughout the 2021 holiday season. Through Jan. 1, 2022 solvangjulefest.org/. Downtown Solvang, Citywide.



## 'TWAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

*St. Benedict's Church in Los Osos presents Carols and Communion on Friday, Dec. 24, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. The church will be decorated with flowers and candles, and guests can look forward to hearing or singing along with a variety of Christmas carols. Those who can't attend this service in-person can view it virtually through Facebook. Admission is free. Call (805) 528-0654 or visit stbenslosos.org for more info. The church is located at 2220 Snowy Egret Lane, Los Osos.*

—C.W.

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.

**CHRISTMAS IN THE COUNTRY** A special holiday drive-through event hosted by Elks Recreation. Through Dec. 26 ElksRec.com. Elks Unocal Event Center, 4040 Highway 101, Santa Maria.

**CORAZON DEL PUEBLO POSADA 2021** Celebrating the end of the year by hosting this community event. Offers food for purchase, games where you can win prizes, craft tables, and live music. **Dec. 18**, 4-7 p.m. Free. 209-312-8653. Corazon del Pueblo, 124 W. Main Street, Santa Maria.

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

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

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

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

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE continued page 22

Every child  
deserves a champion.



**Angels**  
Foster Care

www.angelsfostercare.org

Lic# 427806809

*A Savior has been born*

**Living Nativity** Dec. 19th, 4:00-6:00 p.m.  
followed by "Las Posadas" at 6:00

**Family Candlelight Service**  
Christmas Eve: 7:00pm



**Star of Bethlehem**  
Lutheran Church

4465 S. Blosser Road, Orcutt  
starlutheran.org



for every child

**JOIN MISSION**  
**UNSTOPPABLE**

**HELP END THE PANDEMIC.**  
unicefusa.org/endthepandemic





**Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>**

**10am-1pm**

Event included with  
General Admission!

\$10/ person (Adults 13 & over)

Ages 5-12 \$8; Ages 3-4 \$5

Seniors 65+ \$9/ person

Children 2 & under free

Zoo open 10-4 pm



Thank you to  
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**New Times**

**HOLIDAY MAGIC**



**CHARLES PADDOCK ZOO**

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2. Upload the photo to the link below & you'll be entered to win one of 7 cash prizes totalling \$3,000!



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**Santa Barbara  
County  
is running  
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A square mile of  
cannabis crops requires  
**300 million gallons**  
of water a year, and the  
Board of Supervisors  
approve more acres of  
cannabis every month.

With limited water  
resources, Cachuma Lake  
is down to just 53% of  
its capacity, and no end  
in sight, it's time to hit  
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new cannabis cultivation  
and save our water.

 **COALITION**  
for responsible cannabis

**Join the Fight  
and Learn More at:  
[sbcountycoalition.com](http://sbcountycoalition.com)**



# VOLUNTEERS

**BOOK ADS BY:** January 7  
**PUBLICATION DATE:** January 13

Showcase how your business lends a helping hand in our community

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

**BOOK ADS BY:** January 21  
**PUBLICATION DATE:** January 27

Promote your beauty, health, fitness, and wellness offerings

# GET OUTSIDE

**BOOK ADS BY:** February 10  
**PUBLICATION DATE:** March

The Central Coast guide to everything outside

**SPRING ARTS** March 17  
**MENUS** April  
**STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL** April 28

**CONTACT US FOR MORE INFO TODAY**

**Sun**

NORTHERN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY  
(805) 347-1968 • [advertising@santamariasun.com](mailto:advertising@santamariasun.com)

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE from page 20

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

**WRAP IT UP** Looking for a place to wrap gifts? Visit our free self-service gift-wrapping station. You bring the gifts, and we'll provide the paper, tape, ribbon, and gift tags. While supplies last; no registration required. **Dec. 18,** 2-4 p.m., **Dec. 21,** 2-4 p.m., **Dec. 22,** 2-4 p.m. and **Dec. 23,** 2-4 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. [cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library](http://cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library). Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

## SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**HOLIDAY HIKE** Hosted by the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center. Hikers will begin their adventure walking through a wooded area of arroyo willows and wax myrtle, as they head to a bridge that crosses the lake. **Dec. 19,** 9 a.m.-noon [my805tix.com](http://my805tix.com). Oso Flaco Lake Natural Area, Oso Flaco Lake Rd., Nipomo, 805-343-2455.

**HOLIDAY WREATH AUCTION** The Clark Center Wreath Auction bidding will kick off on Black Friday. Bidders will have the opportunity to "Buy It Now" for early pick up. Mondays-Sundays. through Dec. 19 805-489-9444. [clarkcenter.org/shows/wreath-auction/](http://clarkcenter.org/shows/wreath-auction/). Clark Center for the Performing Arts, 487 Fair Oaks Ave., Arroyo Grande.

**LAST MINUTE GIFTS POP-UP** Stop and shop in this nursery setting from more than 10 vendors and artisans for all of your last minute holiday gift needs. **Dec. 18,** 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Birchwood Garden Barn & Home, 323 West Tefft Street, Nipomo.

## NEW LOCATION CELEBRATION: HALCYON STORE

Celebrating new location at 1275 W. Grand Ave Grover Beach. Scheduling Readers and Classes now store hours 10 a.m.-6 p.m. daily. **Dec. 20,** 10 a.m.-6 p.m., **Dec. 21,** 10 a.m.-6 p.m. and Mondays-Sundays, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. through Jan. 9 Varied. 805-674-4277. Halcyon Store, 1275 W. Grand Ave, Grover Beach, [halcyonstore.com](http://halcyonstore.com).

**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/](http://pointsanluislighthouse.org/). Point San Luis Lighthouse, 1 Lighthouse Rd., Avila Beach.

**SANTA'S CHRISTMAS VILLAGE AND LIGHTS SPECTACULAR** To expand and evolve Christmas in the Village into a spectacular for locals and tourists while at the same time honoring the unique historic charm. Through Dec. 26 Donations accepted. [my805tix.com](http://my805tix.com). Historic Village of Arroyo Grande, Branch and Short St., Arroyo Grande.

**STORYTIME WITH SANTA** Santa will make a special appearance at the Grover Beach Community Library parking lot to read "Twas the Night Before Christmas" to all the children, pose for photos, and perhaps stick around for some treats. Free and outdoors. Bring your camera. **Dec. 18,** 11 a.m.-noon Free to attend. 805-481-4131. [groverbeachlibrary.org](http://groverbeachlibrary.org). Grover Beach Community Library, 240 N 9th St., Grover Beach.

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

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

## SAN LUIS OBISPO

**BDSM 101** This monthly class from the Central Coast Kink Community provides a basic overview of kink, consent, rules, and information to help practitioners be successful and safe. Attendees must be 18+ years of age. Virtually meets via Zoom. Fourth Friday of every

month, 6-8 p.m. No admission. [galacc.org/events/](http://galacc.org/events/). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**BIRD (AND BOTANY!) WALK** The Garden is excited to present a monthly bird walk series which explores the intersection of birds and botany. Allow for a two-hour exploration on mostly flat terrain. Third Thursday of every month, 8-10 a.m. through Feb. 24 \$10/members, \$20/public. 805-541-1400. [slobg.org/calendar](http://slobg.org/calendar). San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd., San Luis Obispo.

**BIRDS AND BOTANY MONTHLY WALK AT SLO BOTANICAL GARDEN** The Garden is excited to present a monthly bird walk series on the fourth Thursday of every month which explores the intersection of birds and botany. Fourth Thursday of every month, 8-11 a.m. \$10 for Garden Members; \$40 for general public. 805-541-1400. [slobg.org](http://slobg.org). San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd., 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](http://calhopeconnect.org). Transitions Mental Health Warehouse, 784 High Street, San Luis Obispo, 805-270-3346.

**CAL POLY WOMEN'S BASKETBALL VS. CAL BAPTIST** Come enjoy some afternoon basketball as the Mustangs take on Cal Baptist. **Dec. 21,** 1-3 p.m. [gopoly.com](http://gopoly.com). Mott Athletics Center, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

**CITY FARM SLO'S YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM** Check site for more info on programming and summer camps. [ongoingcityfarmslo.org](http://ongoingcityfarmslo.org). San Luis Obispo, Citywide, SLO.

FILE PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTERY



## THE ICE MEN COMETH

*The ARtery in Atascadero hosts a felting workshop, Needle Felted Snowmen: Sculpting with Wool, on Saturday, Dec. 18, from 4 to 6 p.m. Attendees will learn the basics of felting and will craft their own felted snowmen. The class is recommended for ages 16 and older. Admission is \$45. Call (805) 464-0533 or visit [theartery.com](http://theartery.com) for more info. The ARtery is located at 5890 Traffic Way, Atascadero.*

—C.W.

**CLASSIC CAROUSEL AT MISSION PLAZA** Children of all ages can ride the Classic Carousel in Mission Plaza; carousel rides cost \$3 per person; 5-ride packages are available for \$10. Wednesdays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-8 p.m. and Mondays, Tuesdays, 12-8 p.m. through Dec. 24 [downtownslo.com/events/holidays/holidayplaza](http://downtownslo.com/events/holidays/holidayplaza). Mission Plaza, 989 Chorro St, San Luis Obispo.

**GALA PRIDE AND DIVERSITY CENTER BOARD MEETING (VIA ZOOM)** Monthly meeting of the Gala Pride and Diversity Center Board of Directors. Meets virtually via Zoom and is open to members of the public. Visit [galacc.org/events](http://galacc.org/events) to fill out the form to request meeting access. Third Tuesday of every month, 6-8 p.m. No admission fee. [galacc.org](http://galacc.org). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**HOLIDAY GIFT CARD DRIVE** You can mail gift cards to PO Box 125, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406, or drop them off at office locations in SLO and Paso Robles. Through Dec. 20 [luminaalliance.org](http://luminaalliance.org). Lumina Alliance, 51 Zaca Lane, suite 150, 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.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE continued page 23



**CULTURE & LIFESTYLE** **MONTHLY TRANS\* THERAPY GROUP** Join our therapist led group for local trans\* community members. Please email therapists@galacc.org for a screening interview prior to your first group. Offers in-person and video-conferencing options. Sponsored by GALA Pride and Diversity Center and Tranz Central Coast. Fourth Monday of every month, 5:30-7 p.m. through June 28 805-762-4598. galacc.org/events/#calendar. GALA Pride and Diversity Center, 1060 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo.

**Q YOUTH GROUP (VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM)** This is a social support group for LGBTQ+ and questioning youth between the ages of 11-18. Each week the group explores personal, cultural, and social identity. Thursdays, 6-8 p.m. Free. galacc.org/events/. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**QI GONG FOR MIND, BODY, AND SPIRIT** Learn and practice qi gong, a Chinese system for physical, mental and spiritual development. This class is conducted outdoors in a beautiful setting, which is the best place to do qi gong, as its inspiration is drawn from nature. Certified instructor: Devin Wallace. Tuesdays, 10-11 a.m. \$10. 805-709-2227. Crows End Retreat Center, 6340 Squire Ct., San Luis Obispo.

**SANTA'S HOUSE DOWNTOWN SLO** We are so excited to bring back in-person visits with Santa this holiday season. To keep you safe, Santa will be meeting all visitors on his front lawn this year. Thursdays-Sundays, 12-7 p.m. through Dec. 24 downtownslo.com/events/holidays/holidayplaza/santas-house. Mission Plaza, 989 Chorro St, San Luis Obispo.

**SIERRA CLUB VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS HISTORIC WALK OF SAN LUIS OBISPO** Guided stroll past 15 holiday-lit houses in Old Town Historic District to recall Christmas customs, events, and locales of the 1890s. Flashlights recommended. Masks required if not vaccinated. No reservation. Meet in front of St. Stephen's Church. Leader: Joe Morris. **Dec. 19**, 5-6:30 p.m. Free. 805-549-0355. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church SLO, 650 Pismo St., San Luis Obispo.

**SLO LEZ B FRIENDS (VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM)** A good core group of friends who gather to discuss topics we love/ care about from movies, outings, music, or being new to the area. We come from all walks of life and most importantly support each other. Transgender and Nonbinary folks welcome. Third Friday of every month, 6:30-9 p.m. Free. sloqueer.groups.io/g/lezbfriends. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**SUNDAY EVENING RAP LGBTQ+ AA GROUP (VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM)** Alcoholics Anonymous is a voluntary, worldwide fellowship of folks from all walks of life who together, attain and maintain sobriety. Requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. Email aarapgroup@gmail.com for password access. Sundays, 7-8 p.m. No fee. galacc.org/events/. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**TRANS\* TUESDAY** A safe space providing peer-to-peer support for trans, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and questioning people. In-person and Zoom meetings held. Contact tranzcentralcoast@gmail.com for more details. Tuesdays, 7-9 p.m. Free. GALA Pride and Diversity Center, 1060 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, 805-541-4252.

**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.

**LIBRARY MONTH AT ZACA MESA WINERY** This holiday season, taste the treasures of our cellar. In our limited-time Library Flight, you will sip wine that has been artfully aged to delicious perfection. Available Thursday through Monday. Mondays, Thursdays-Sundays, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. through Dec. 31 805-688-9339. zacamesa.com/upcoming-events/. Zaca Mesa Winery, 6905 Foxen Canyon Rd, Los Olivos.

**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.

**SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY**

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

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

**SPREAD THE WORD!** Send event information to calendar@santamariasun.com.

## MUSIC

**SANTA YNEZ VALLEY**

**ADRIAN GALYSH: LIVE MUSIC AT ZACA MESA WINERY** Listen to the live melodies of Adrian Galysh while delighting in a flight of our highly-rated, handcrafted wines. By the bottle or by the glass will be available as well. Reservations are not required but are recommended. **Dec. 26**, 12-3 p.m. Free. 805-688-9339. zacamesa.com/upcoming-events/. Zaca Mesa Winery, 6905 Foxen Canyon Rd, Los Olivos.

**CHRIS BELAND LIVE** Listen to the live melodies of Chris Beland while delighting in a flight of our highly-rated, handcrafted wines. By the bottle or by the glass will be available as well. Reservations are not required but are recommended. **Dec. 19**, 12-3 p.m. Free. 805-688-9339. zacamesa.com/upcoming-events/. Zaca Mesa Winery, 6905 Foxen Canyon Rd, Los Olivos.

**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.

**LOMPOC/VANDENBERG**

**WINTER RECITALS** Certain Sparks' recitals return to the barrel room stage. **Dec. 17**, 6-8 p.m. and **Dec. 18**, 5-9 p.m. Lompoc Wine Factory, 321 N. D St., Lompoc, 805-243-8398, lompocwinefactory.com.

**SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS**

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

**SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY**

**CHRISTMAS FROM A CELTIC TABLE** From the intimate setting of the Clark Center's Studio Theatre, take a journey through Christmas in Ireland with superb storytelling, dancing, and authentic, traditional Irish music celebrating the international spirit of the holiday season. **Dec. 17**, 7:30-9 p.m. \$35-\$55. 805-489-9444. clarkcenter.org/shows/christmas-from-a-celtic-table/. Clark Center, 487 Fair Oaks Ave., Arroyo Grande.

**UNITY HOLIDAY PARTY/CHOIR CONCERT** Join us for Unity Five Cities' annual Holiday Party and choir concert, this year held in the beautiful garden at the Victorian. Bring treats and your holiday spirit to share as we sing along with the Mighty Lights choir. **Dec. 19**, 1:30-3 p.m. Free. 805-440-9461. unity5cities.org. The Victorian, 789 Valley Rd., Arroyo Grande.

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

**15TH ANNUAL WINTERDANCE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION** Enjoy hearing seasonal music of the Celtic and Nordic lands with New World String Project and Champion Irish Dancers. **Dec. 19**, 4-6 p.m. \$30-\$35. 805-215-0306. newworldstringproject.com. Octagon Barn Center, 4400 Octagon Way, San Luis Obispo.

**CUESTA CHOIRS HOLIDAY CONCERT** Enjoy the classical holiday chestnuts that you love and crave, sung by Cuesta's award-winning choirs and vocal jazz group. Help us ring in the holiday season and the new year with this festive musical event. Presented by the Cuesta Chamber Singers and Voce. **Dec. 17**, 7:30-9:30 p.m. General admission \$15; Students \$10. tickets.cuesta.edu. Cuesta College Cultural and Performing Arts Center, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo, 805-546-3198.

**DRUM CIRCLE SING-A-LONG** Limited to 20 drummers. Learn African music through drumming and song. ongoing Spirits of Africa Gallery, 570 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo, spiritsofamericagallery.com/.

**LIVE MUSIC WITH GRAMMY AWARD-WINNER LOUIE ORTEGA** Enjoy live music with Louie Ortega every Wednesday, while sipping your favorites in the Wine Bar and Craft Beer Garden. No cover. Wednesdays, 4-7 p.m. Free. 805-544-9463. slowineandbeerco.com/events. SLO Wine and Beer Company, 3536 S. Higuera Street, Suite 250, San Luis Obispo.

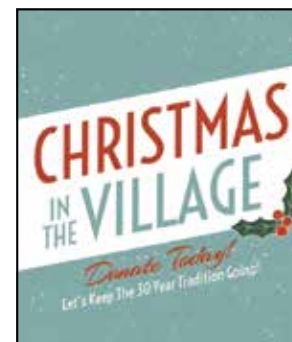
**SLO MASTER CHORALE: HOLIDAY FESTIVAL** The San Luis Obispo Master Chorale will present its Holiday Festival, featuring part I of Handel's Messiah and other seasonal favorites, exquisite music for brass, orchestra, and the Forbes Pipe Organ. **Dec. 18**, 7-9:30 p.m. \$10-\$26. 805-538-3311. slomasterchorale.org/. Performing Arts Center, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo.

**VIRTUAL MUSIC VIDEO PREMIERE FROM NICOLE STROMSOE** "I Am Fine" was recorded in the folk/country genre; a nod to Nicole's upbringing and renewed life on the golden Central Coast of CA. The scenic video, filmed in Morro Bay and Los Osos, captures the atmospheric quality of our unique and awe-inspiring area. **Dec. 17**, 6 p.m. YouTube.com/NicoleStromsoe. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo. ○

**MY 805 TIX**

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**My805Tix.com**



**Santa's Christmas Village and Lights Spectacular**  
**TUE, THU, SAT, SUN THRU DEC**  
Village of Arroyo Grande



**Holiday Hike at Point Sal Trailhead**  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19**  
Point Sal State Beach



**Baywood Photography Calendar & Note Cards for Sale**  
**DECEMBER 20**  
Merea Art Gallery, Baywood Park



**New Year's Eve Cassino Party!**  
**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31**  
Cass Winery, Paso Robles



**Wednesdays Around the World: Argentina**  
**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12**  
Cass Winery, Paso Robles



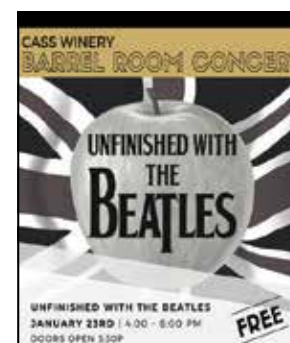
**Symphony of the Vines: Mighty Beethoven**  
**FRIDAY, JANUARY 14**  
Mission San Miguel



**The Full Monty: The Musical**  
**FRI/SAT/SUN: JAN 14-16, JAN 21-23, JAN 28-30**  
SMCT, Santa Maria



**In-Person Lighthouse Tours**  
**WEDNESDAYS & SATURDAYS**  
**Virtual Tours ON DEMAND**  
Point San Luis Lighthouse



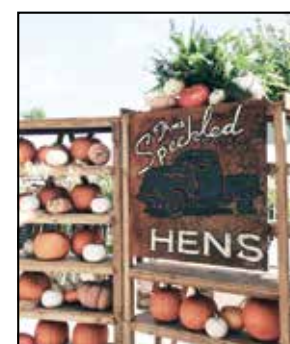
**Barrel Room Concert: Unfinished with the Beatles**  
**SUNDAY, JANUARY 23**  
Cass Winery, Paso Robles



**Ted's Estate Beef Winemaker Dinner: Short Ribs**  
**FRIDAY, JANUARY 28**  
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## Arts Briefs

## Santa Maria announces winners of Lights, Sights, and Holiday Nights Decorating Contest

The city of Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Commission recently announced the winners of the 25th annual Lights, Sights, and Holiday Nights Decorating Contest. A total of 37 entries were considered by the contest's judges, which is the highest number of submissions the yearly contest has received to date, according to the city.

The following families each won an award in their respective categories: the Gonzalez family, 1028 W. Cypress, for Best Decorated Rookie; the Price family, 526 Boscoe Court, for the Country Christmas Award; the Kosmala family, 801 S. Miller, for the Home Spun Holiday Award; the Salinas family, 225 S. Oakley, for the California Dreamin' Award; and the Melena family, 1051 W. Stowell, for the Simply Christmas Award.

The city also announced this year's inductees into the contest's Holiday Hall of Fame: Michael Clayton, 400 E. Orange; the Melena family, 515 N. Lucas; the Bernard family, 228 S. Linda; the Hindle family, 1030 Cortez; the Cardona family, 2040 Lassen; the Dickerson family, 104 Palm Court; and the Urquhart family, 1026 Butterfly Court.

A map of Santa Maria that highlights the locations of the contest's winners, including additional entries that received honorable mentions, is available on the city's website, [cityofsantamaria.org](http://cityofsantamaria.org). This year's contest was a collaboration between People for Leisure and Youth (PLAY), and Santa Maria's Recreation and Parks Department and Recreation and Parks Commission.

## Elks Event Center holds Christmas in the Country drive-through event

Elks Recreation presents its second annual Christmas in the Country at the Elks Event Center in Santa Maria through Sunday, Dec. 26. Attendees will enjoy a variety of holiday light displays, decorated by local businesses and community members, as they drive through the venue.

For tickets and more info, call (805) 925-4125 or visit [elksrec.com](http://elksrec.com). The Elks Event Center is located at 4040 Highway 101, Santa Maria.

## Jazz Divine Quartet holds free Christmas concert in Lompoc

IMAGE COURTESY OF GEOFFREY MORAN



The Valley of the Flowers United Church of Christ presents A Very Merry Jazz Divine Christmas, featuring the Jazz Divine Quartet, on Saturday, Dec. 18, at 3 p.m. Admission to this special holiday concert is free. Attendees can look forward to hearing jazz renditions of a variety of popular Christmas songs.

To find out more about the concert, call (805) 944-7335. The Valley of the Flowers United Church of Christ is located at 3356 Constellation Road, Lompoc. [O](#)

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

# Lost and found

Novelist and librarian Nancy Meddings revisits a long-lost manuscript to pen new detective series

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

While cleaning out her garage one day, local librarian Nancy Meddings uncovered a box of old papers—about 50 pages of a novel she'd started writing in 1984 but never finished.

Meddings was a student at Cal State Northridge when she began writing the book as an assignment for one of her English courses. Meddings decided to make it a mystery novel, as she had been a fan of the genre since her youth.

"I started being a serious mystery fan in high school. Favorite authors included Dick Francis, Ed McBain, and P.D. James," said Meddings, a semi-retired, part-time librarian at Allan Hancock College's Lompoc campus. "Later on, I discovered Michael Connelly and Tess Gerritsen."

Meddings said she based her story's detective protagonist, Matilyn Rose, on a real private investigator she had read about just before drafting the novel.

"I immediately thought of a small newspaper story I had seen on a true-life female private investigator. Currently, about a third of all PIs are female, but back then, it was rare," Meddings said. "One of the things that appealed to me was that she specialized in missing person cases, which gives a writer a lot of options, as opposed to say homicide—where someone has to die."

"She also solved cases more through deduction and legwork, and a lot less through muscle and guns, which I liked."

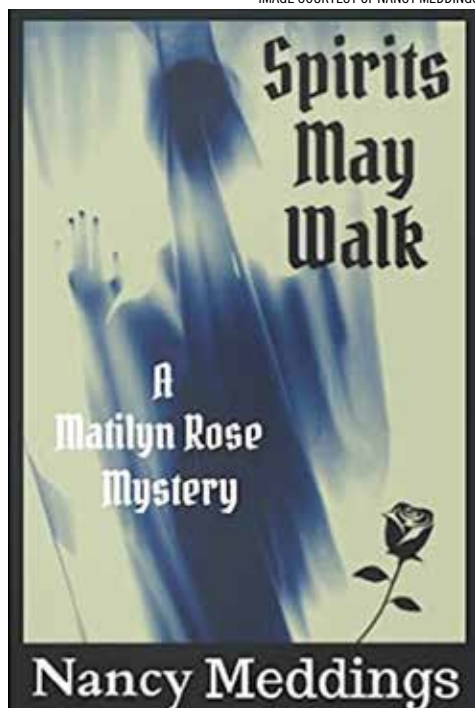
After college though, Meddings shelved the unfinished book and hadn't thought about it for decades. Extra time at home during the pandemic inspired Meddings to declutter her garage, where her hidden manuscript resurfaced.

"Like everyone else, being homebound during COVID gave me lots of time to focus on sprucing up our home," Meddings said. "It was a total surprise to find my old writing file, and, even more surprising, that the story had aged pretty well."

While the setting of her original draft is Phoenix, Arizona (where Meddings previously lived for a few years), she decided to alter the story to take place closer to her current home on the Central Coast. Meddings described revising the book's setting as easy for the most part, which "probably speaks to the way I write, which is to focus on my characters, with plot and setting coming later," she said.

"You really can't take Hillerman's Joe Leaphorn too far from his tribal police setting, for example, but my characters could be set almost anywhere," Meddings continued. "It actually

IMAGE COURTESY OF NANCY MEDDINGS



**SPIRITED AWAY:** The adventures of Matilyn Rose continue in Nancy Meddings' sequel, *Spirits May Walk: A Matilyn Rose Mystery*, which was published in September. This entry in the ongoing series follows Rose and her partner as they investigate a mysterious building, allegedly haunted by a ghost.

### Roses are read

The first two books in mystery novelist Nancy Meddings' Matilyn Rose series, *Melted Into Thin Air: A Matilyn Rose Mystery* and *Spirits May Walk: A Matilyn Rose Mystery*, are available to purchase through Amazon. To find out more about the local author, visit [nancymeddings.com](http://nancymeddings.com).

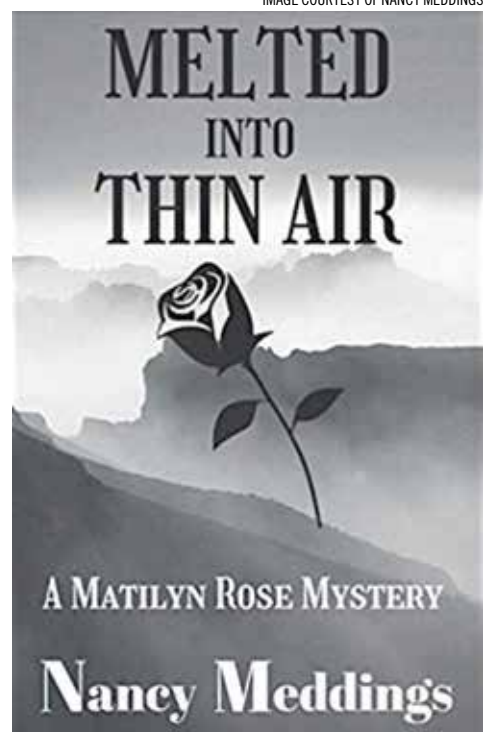
### Showtime!

Send gallery, stage, and cultural festivities to [cwiseblood@santamariasun.com](mailto:cwiseblood@santamariasun.com).



**PAWS AND REFLECT:** In 2020, semi-retired librarian Nancy Meddings (pictured) rediscovered an unfinished detective novel she'd started writing in college during the '80s. She decided to finish the book and write a sequel as well. A third entry is set for a 2022 release. Here's Meddings pictured with her rescue dog, Skeeter.

IMAGE COURTESY OF NANCY MEDDINGS



**WITHOUT A TRACE:** Nancy Meddings said she based her novel's detective protagonist, Matilyn Rose, on a real private investigator she found out about in a newspaper article before drafting the novel. "One of the things that appealed to me was that she specialized in missing person cases, which gives a writer a lot of options, as opposed to say homicide—where someone has to die," Meddings said.

Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood always loves to hear from local authors. Send comments to [cwiseblood@santamariasun.com](mailto:cwiseblood@santamariasun.com).



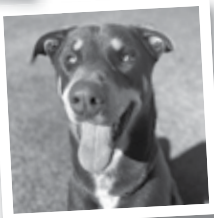
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## Devil in disguise

Writer-director Jane Campion (*The Piano*) brings the 1967 Thomas Savage novel of the same name to the screen. It's 1925 Montana, and ranchers and brothers Phil (Benedict Cumberbatch) and George Burbank (Jesse Plemons) run the show. They couldn't be more different. George is quiet and measured, while Phil is revered by his men but cruel to his brother and others. Their lives are routine until George courts and abruptly marries a local widow, Rose Gordon (Kirsten Dunst), who has an effeminate son, Peter (Kodi Smit-McPhee), who Phil is especially abusive toward. (126 min.)

**Glen:** Believe the hype. This is an amazing film. If you don't have Netflix, find a friend who does and invite yourself over. I don't think I've ever had my feelings toward characters shift so radically as they did in this film. Phil is a horrible person. He and his brother clearly have some past demons, and while they both speak reverently of their mentor "Bronco" Henry, there seems to be more to the story. The brothers own a beautiful ranch with a huge ranch house, yet they still share a bedroom with two narrow beds. Their relationship is clearly complicated, and though Phil seems to be the natural leader, he always includes George in decisions, which is why he feels a particular betrayal when George takes a wife who Phil assumes is just a gold digger. When she moves into the house, Phil is aggrieved, but one summer after Rose's son, Peter, comes home from his first year of college to stay at the ranch for a few months, things become even more complicated. Peter is a fascinating character. He's very sensitive, but as a pre-med student, he can also snare a rabbit, bring it home, and dissect it.

This unusual boy, at first the brunt of Phil's abuse, becomes Phil's protégé, which Rose—who's been driven to alcoholism by Phil's cruelty—is none too pleased with. She fears Phil's attention toward Peter is dangerous. It's a setup for an amazing ending that I didn't see coming. If you've heard critics saying this is one of the year's best, believe them.

**Anna:** This was definitely not what I was expecting, and Cumberbatch earns his stripes here. His portrayal of Phil is brutal yet reserved—a man I thought I would surely hate until the end of time, yet who I also found a soft spot for in the end. This film also benefits from the beautiful but empty atmosphere; while filmed in New Zealand, this story takes place in the endless countryside of Montana. Dunst is powerful here as the broken, timid Rose who lost her first husband to suicide and can't seem to connect with her new beau. She loves and is protective of her son, and once he's away at school, she's heartbroken and lonely, hiding booze in every corner of the house and becoming more and more unglued from those around her. This film is all about relationships, healthy or not. I can't give Cumberbatch enough praise on this role. It's meaty and mean and way more complicated than I expected. Phil seems to have an almost godlike opinion of their mentor "Bronco" Henry, but almost immediately we know that there is a lot more to the story. While it isn't spelled out in dialogue, the film trusts its audience to suss out the nuance. Phil's the real-deal tough cowboy, but it seems that a lot of that bravado is actually a form of self-protection.

**Glen:** I was very surprised to learn the Rotten Tomatoes audience score was only 62 percent, while critics ranked it 96. I think it's an amazing film with stunning performances. In fact, I haven't seen a performance as riveting as Cumberbatch's since Daniel Day Lewis gave up acting. He fully embodies

### THE POWER OF THE DOG

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

Phil—every complicated inch of him. Watching him strut around the ranch with his fur chaps, hearing the frightening sound of his boots and spurs across the wood floors of the house—he's all menace. He doesn't like the "house" bathtub, preferring to scrub with mud and bathe in a secluded area of a nearby creek. Phil at first appears to be a knuckle-dragging asshole, but we learn he graduated at the top of his class at Yale, where he studied "The Classics." He's a walking contradiction. His over-the-top machismo and casual cruelty turn out to be a hard shell he's created to protect himself. He's deeply lonely, especially after his brother gets married. I think this may well be a career-best performance for Cumberbatch, and I'll be shocked if he and Campion aren't nominated for Academy Awards for their work on this remarkable, unforgettable film. **Anna:** I have to say, audiences don't know what they are talking about on this one. It's a stunning film, and I also would be gobsmacked if Campion and Cumberbatch don't get nominated. Jesse Plemons is always a solid casting, and while he isn't the focus of the film, he's a strong and clearly thought-out character. Let's face it, it would suck to have a brother like Phil—one who calls you "fatso" as his play at affection and makes you feel worthless and foolish



**ON THE RANGE:** Effeminate teenager, Peter (Kodi Smit-McPhee), develops a relationship with a hardened Montana rancher, Phil (Benedict Cumberbatch), in *The Power of the Dog*, based on the 1967 novel by Thomas Savage and brought to the screen by Jane Campion, playing on Netflix.

and simple. While it seems Phil is just a brute in chaps, we soon see that he's a well—deep and unknown, and unfortunately addicted to misery. He taunts Rose, either out of jealousy for his brother's attention or maybe even as a backhanded way of trying to connect with her. Because of the nature of this film and the way it all wraps up, we can't say much about the nuances of the ending, but I'll ask you to trust me here: It pays off in a way both shocking and emotional but does so with a subtle hand. We couldn't stop talking about this movie once it was over. It's worth turning the lights out and paying attention to. ○

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

## Film & TV Reviews

### THE BEATLES: GET BACK

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

Where's it showing? **Disney Plus**

Peter Jackson (Lord of the Rings trilogy, *The Lovely Bones*, *They Shall Not Grow Old*) directs this documentary culled from in-studio footage of The Beatles in 1969 and 1970 as they developed their final album, *Let It Be*, which at the time had the working title *Get Back*. The footage was originally captured for Michael Lindsay-Hogg's 1970 documentary *Let It Be*, which depicted rancor among the band members.

Jackson's documentary paints a somewhat different picture of one of rock's most seminal bands in its twilight. Playful, friendly, and synergistic—they hardly seem like a band on the verge of implosion, and though Lindsay-Hogg's documentary made it seem like Paul McCartney ended the band, the truth is more complex. John Lennon and Yoko Ono are much more responsible, and I had no idea that George Harrison actually quit and came back during the making of *Let It Be*.

**BINGEABLE**



For me, the most amazing thing about this long piece of film is watching these classic songs come together organically. Paul or John might come in with an idea, a riff, or a chorus, but watching the band work together to flesh out the song was revelatory. And Jackson wisely lets the footage tell the story—no narration or explanation, just a fly-on-the-wall view of creative genius in action. I have a new appreciation for The Beatles. (three episodes totaling seven hours and 48 min.)

—Glen

PHOTO COURTESY OF WALT DISNEY PICTURES

### TICK, TICK ... BOOM!

What's it rated? **PG-13**

When? **2021**

Where's it showing? **Netflix**

*Rent*heads rejoice! Jonathan Larson's catalog is given a fresh breath in Lin Manuel Miranda's production of *tick, tick ... Boom!*, which Larson wrote chronicling his 30th birthday and the events surrounding his showcase for *Superbia*, an ill-fated production whose failure Larson was sure would ruin his life. Detailing the difficulties of being a broke artist in New York, the palpable heartbreak of the AIDS crisis, and the utterly soul-crushing reality of writer's block on a deadline, *tick, tick ... Boom!* manages to blend the light with the dark.

Laughing, crying, singing—you'll do it all while watching this film. Miranda lends his expert touch of blending film and live theater. We're watching a beautiful movie that feels like an onstage production. The music here is Larson's signature stuff, a rock-band-meets-Broadway lyrical trip that breathes life into these characters. Larson's life was cut short at 35 when he died of an aortic dissection, so while having a life crisis over turning 30 seems a little silly, when you think that he unknowingly was

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in the last act of his life, it lends a lot of gravity to this particular crossroad.

No, *Superbia* wasn't his big break, and Larsen sadly passed before seeing his hit *Rent* on Broadway, but I can belt out every tune and name every character. His legacy lives on, and *tick, tick ... Boom!* is a wonderful way to get to know the man behind the music. (115 min.) ○

—Anna

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**ROOT FOR THE HOME TEAM:** The Tavern's general manager, Stephen Villa (left), and executive chef, Cullen Campbell (right), reporting for duty at the popular Buellton bar and restaurant, which recently launched a new sports-themed menu (available Sundays and Mondays only).



**THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME:** Kitchen member Jim Lane, who helped spearhead the venue's new sports menu, said one of the reasons he enjoys working at the Tavern so much is that there's a sense of family among both the staff and the patrons.

## Hunger games

*The Tavern at Zaca Creek launches new sports-themed cuisine and cocktail menu*

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

Thanks to a newly launched sports bar menu, guests of the Tavern at Zaca Creek in Buellton on Sunday and Monday nights will be tempted to try the brown-butter Buffalo wings, among several other new food items and cocktails.

Kitchen member Jim Lane—a die-hard Lakers fan who helped spearhead the sports menu and is widely regarded as “the biggest sports fan” on staff—would rank the new chicken wings at the top of his personal favorites.

“Chef Cullen [Campbell’s] recipe he brought from his Memphis roots are the best wings I have ever tasted,” Lane said, “and his homemade ranch is delectable.”

The new menu, which premiered at the beginning of December, was

designed to entice fans to visit the Tavern on game nights, which is why the bar added new television screens recently as well. Whether he’s working the night of Monday, Jan. 10, or not, Lane said he’s especially stoked for the College Football National Championships to start up.

“[It’s] right around the time for the race for the playoffs for the last few weeks of the NFL Regular Season,” Lane said. “The year has been so crazy, and a tight race in both conferences, that it will be interesting to see who actually makes the playoffs.”

Born and raised in Ballard, Lane said one of the reasons he enjoys working at the Tavern so much is that there’s a sense of family among both the staff and the patrons.

“I feel at home when I am at work,”

### Homerun haven

The Tavern at Zaca Creek is located at 1297 Jonata Park Road, Buellton. Call (805) 688-2412 or visit [zaca-creek.com](http://zaca-creek.com) for more info. The venue's new sports menu is available every Sunday and Monday from 2 to 8 p.m.

Lane said, “and I feel the customers appreciate the extra hospitality we are able to provide.”

While trying to draw in passionate sports fans like Lane, the Tavern’s kitchen staff sought to curate a crowd-pleasing selection of heightened comfort foods.

“We wanted easy, delicious, and slightly indulgent menu items. When you think of sitting back on a Sunday afternoon with your friends and watching some games, you’re not thinking about steaks and caviar,” said Stephen Villa, the Tavern’s general manager. “You want simple yet incredibly tasty items, so we threw on a fantastic smash burger, jalapeño poppers, onion rings—just things that scream hangout bites; items that

EATS continued page 28



**CREEK SEEKING:** Those planning to visit Zaca Creek soon should keep in mind that the Tavern will be closed between Dec. 20 and 26. Although the popular bar and restaurant will be closed during Christmas, the venue has big plans in the works to help ring in the new year with a gala and fundraiser on Dec. 31.

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## EATS

COURTESY PHOTOS BY MICHELLE RAMIREZ PHOTOGRAPHY



**FELLOWSHIP OF THE RINGS:** The Tavern's new sports-themed menu features a variety of savory bites and sugary desserts, including onion rings and churros, respectively.

### EATS from page 27

can be shared and eaten with only a slight bit of guiltiness."

The beverage side of the new sports menu features a selection of locally produced beers for \$6 each and a variety of specialty cocktails for \$9 each. These offers are exclusive to guests of the Tavern every Sunday and Monday from 2 to 8 p.m.

But those planning to visit Zaca Creek soon should keep in mind that the bar and restaurant will be closed between Monday, Dec. 20, and Sunday, Dec. 26.

Although the popular eatery will be closed during Christmas, the venue has big plans in the works to help ring in the new year, Villa explained.

"For New Year's Eve, we're throwing a black tie gala here at Zaca," Villa said. "It's been a long, hard year for everyone, so we wanted to create a night for everyone to come out and

enjoy themselves safely with food and drinks, plenty of bubbly, a live jazz band, raffles, and games throughout the evening, along with other activities."

Villa added that, thanks to a collaboration with Jim Vreeland Ford, a sober driver program will be available for the gala's guests to use for drop-offs and pickups throughout the event.

The New Year's gala will also work as a fundraiser, with proceeds set to benefit the Stage Four Foundation, a new charity created by Zaca Creek, "which will devote its resources to helping late-stage cancer patients deal with the financial difficulties that present themselves

when dealing with a life-threatening challenge," Villa said. ○

Send your New Year's resolutions to Arts Editor Caleb Wisblood at [cwisblood@santamariasun.com](mailto:cwisblood@santamariasun.com).

### Share tasty tips!

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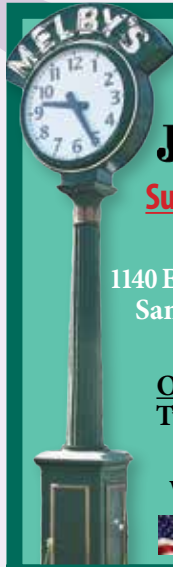
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