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SUN

Up in the air

*Nipomo residents lament
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BY BULBUL RAJAGOPAL

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Nipomo resident Jameson Lucero has seen firsthand the benefit of recreation opportunities for kids, especially those who'd otherwise end up in gangs. The Salinas native says that kids who don't gravitate to team sports need facilities like skate parks to provide them with healthy outlets. His community doesn't have such outlets, so Lucero and other community members are continuing to make their voices heard at the county level. *New Times* Staff Writer Bulbul Rajagopal talked with other parents and government leaders about the need—and hope—for rec funding [7].

You can also read about the county's decision to overturn an appeal filed against former Lt. Gov. Abel Maldonado's proposed cannabis grow [4]; poet who writes visual homages to the local dunes [20]; and the most recent artistic additions to Cordon's new tasting room in Solvang [23].

Andrea Rooks
associate editor



KICKED TO THE CURB: Some Nipomo residents feel that their community is getting overlooked when it comes to recreation funding from San Luis Obispo County.

Cover photo by Jayson Mellom > Cover design by Alex Zuniga

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Political Watch

• **U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal** (D-Santa Barbara) announced Dec. 15 that the first installments of federal funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law are heading to the Central Coast soon. The Federal Aviation Administration allocation includes more than \$7.3 million to local airports like the SLO County Regional Airport and the Santa Maria Airport. California as a whole will receive more than \$4.8 billion in Federal Highway Administration funds to improve roads and bridges in the state. This first round is 20 percent more funding for highways compared to last year, according to a statement from Carbajal's office. "This new funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will go a long way to improve quality of life on the Central Coast," Carbajal said in the statement. "These federal dollars will put people to work improving our travel infrastructure, which will make our roads safer, cut down on commute times, and help small businesses get their goods to people's doorsteps. I was proud to vote for the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and I look forward to seeing more federal resources flow to our communities." The announcement of funding allocations comes exactly a month after the bill was signed into law by **President Joe Biden**, which Carbajal got to witness. "It was an honor to stand beside my colleagues and the president as he signed the historic Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law," Carbajal said in a statement. "This bill is a once-in-a-generation investment that will propel our economy forward and improve quality of life for every American." In addition to fixing roads and bridges, and funding local airports, the bill will allow the Central Coast to expand internet connectivity, improve public transportation, and bolster clean water infrastructure. "We are thrilled for the continued investment in our region's multimodal transportation system," said **Peter Rodgers, executive director of the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments**, in the statement. "We expect this infrastructure reauthorization to deliver much-needed increases to our existing funding programs, so that our communities can pave more roads, fix more bridges, improve and electrify transit, and advance safety for bicyclists and pedestrians. This legislation also offers the single biggest investment in rail in over 50 years, and we want to see some of that invested in Central Coast passenger rail."

• On Dec. 20, **Gov. Gavin Newsom** announced that California's mortgage relief grant program, which will provide \$1 billion to tens of thousands of homeowners who are struggling due to the pandemic, was approved by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. This will allow the program to fully launch in the coming weeks, a statement from Newsom's office said. The California Mortgage Relief Program will help an estimated 20,000 to 40,000 struggling homeowners, according to the statement, with funds reserved for homeowners in socially disadvantaged and underserved communities often hit hardest by the pandemic. "We are committed to supporting those hit hardest by the pandemic, and that includes homeowners who have fallen behind on their housing payments," Newsom said in the statement. "No one should have to live in fear of losing the roof over their head, so we're stepping up to support struggling homeowners to get them the resources they need to cover past due mortgage payments. Our Housing is Key program has already provided renters and landlords with the assistance and resources they need to stay afloat. Now, with our California Mortgage Relief Program, we are extending that relief to homeowners." The program will provide up to \$80,000 maximum per household recipient, with a direct payment to qualified homeowners' mortgage servicers. "The financial support is provided as a one-time grant that qualified homeowners will not have to repay, so that they can get caught up and have a fresh start," according to Newsom's office. Funding for the program is allocated through President Biden's American Rescue Plan Act's Homeowner Assistance Fund. ○

County supervisors side with Maldonado in cannabis project appeal

Nobody wants to argue with their neighbors, but former Lt. Gov. Abel Maldonado said there isn't anything he can do to make Bien Nacido Vineyards happy when it comes to his 48-acre cannabis cultivation project.

"I'm just negotiating with myself," Maldonado said during a Dec. 14 Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors meeting.

He told supervisors that after the Millers—who live, grow grapes, and make wine next to his property at the confluence of the Santa Maria and Cuyama rivers—lost their appeal of the Planning Department's approval of the CannaRios project, he continued to make changes to the initial proposal even though he didn't have to. The county Planning Commission unanimously voted to deny the appeal on May 5, but Maldonado said he took comments from Commissioner John Parke to heart in an attempt to be a good neighbor.

The CannaRios project—which includes a little more than 46 acres of outdoor cannabis cultivation, 1.45 acres for an indoor cannabis nursery, two harvests per year, and no on-site processing—moved the site to provide a larger setback from Bien Nacido's new tasting room.

The project also nixed a proposed flash freezer, moved the water well it would be using, and added more hoop houses, which would cut down on potential pesticide-drift conflicts with surrounding legacy agriculture operations.

"It's the last minute, and there's more stuff coming," Maldonado during the Dec. 14 hearing on the appeal of the Planning Commission's decision. "They just started throwing everything at it."

The Millers' initial appeal included assertions that the project was incompatible with the county's comprehensive plan and land use development code; failed to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), specifically taking issue with the county's programmatic environmental impact report that applies to cannabis cultivation projects; unlawfully modified the Cuyama River with an improperly permitted berm; and didn't receive approval from the appellant to use a shared water source.

In the appeal of the Planning Commission decision, the Millers included supplemental issues, alleging new information about air quality impacts and inadequate consideration of hydrofluorocarbon emissions.

Courtney Taylor, who represented the Millers and Bien Nacido, said that any changes CannaRios might have made to the project weren't changes they requested, calling Maldonado's statements about project changes and allegations that the Millers were abusing CEQA a "gross mischaracterization."

"These are very serious issues to the Miller family," Taylor said. "They take air quality very seriously. This is a real issue to them, and they take properly permitted river crossings very seriously."

Taylor said the changes CannaRios did make were submitted late in the game, giving her and her clients just a short time to review them before the appeal hearing. For instance, she said, the project's well wasn't moved until the Friday before the Dec. 14 meeting, adding that "we are skeptical" about "the real reason" the well was moved.

Fifth District County Supervisor Steve



NEIGHBOR V. NEIGHBOR: The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors denied Bien Nacido Vineyards appeal of former Lt. Gov. Abel Maldonado's 48-acre cannabis project, which will include almost 1.5 acres of indoor cannabis nursery cultivation.

Lavagnino, whose district includes the project site and the Millers' adjacent property, said he's disappointed when projects get appealed.

"Bien Nacido wines are awesome," he said, adding that both the Millers and the Maldonados are important in the Santa Maria Valley. "Both families have history, and it would be nice if everything could work out. But at the end of the day, business is business."

The project is properly zoned in an agricultural area, complies with the county comprehensive plan and land use code, and has no notices of violation on the property, he said. It has a noise plan, odor abatement plan, habitat plan, transportation plan, water efficiency plan, and more. The staff report and appeal comprise more than 400 pages of work.

"This has been exhaustively evaluated," he said. "For me this project has been vetted."

It was a clash of the titans, 3rd District Supervisor Joan Hartmann said, but she couldn't find a reason not to support staff's recommendation to uphold the project's approval.

Bob Nelson, 4th District supervisor, said he had to take the names off the documents he was reading and approach the project like he would any other.

"There's going to be constant conflict moving forward between legacy agriculture and cannabis," Nelson said. "For me to uphold this appeal and deny the project, I need to find that staff erred somewhere. ... I've tried to find the fly in the ointment here, and I just can't."

Supervisors voted 4-1 to deny the Millers' appeal of the project, with 1st District Supervisor Das Williams dissenting. He took issue with CannaRios' refusal to include a cap on the number of plants per acre in project documents even though CannaRios project lead Brandon Gesicki said they would limit it to 1,500 or less during his presentation.

"I've never had an applicant put forward testimony and not be willing to have that in the conditions of approval, so this is a first for me," he said.

—Camillia Lanham

Cunningham's district removed from Santa Barbara County in final redistricting map

The California Citizens Redistricting Commission wrapped up its work on Dec. 20—finalizing a set of new boundaries for state Senate, state Assembly, and congressional districts that will be in effect for the next decade.

The new maps—which account for population changes and the loss of a congressional district in California for the first time in state history—will likely cause northern Santa Barbara County to lose at least one of its current representatives (unless he moves).

According to the new lines, Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham's (R-San Luis Obispo) 35th District will shift north past the Santa Barbara/San Luis Obispo county line. The district, which currently includes Santa Maria, Guadalupe, and Lompoc, will drop all those communities as well as Nipomo and Oceano in SLO County.

Going forward, Cunningham's district will cover the majority of SLO County as well as a long, narrow stretch of coastal Monterey County and Santa Cruz County—from Big Sur to Capitola.

Santa Maria, Lompoc, and Guadalupe will move into the 37th District, which is currently represented in the Assembly by Steve Bennett (D-Ventura). After redistricting, though, Ventura will no longer be part of that district, which stretches from Nipomo south to Carpinteria.

Cunningham, who lives in Templeton, did not return a request for comment from the *Sum* about his new district before press time.

Experts say that Cunningham's new district leaves him vulnerable to a Democratic challenger. His last election opponent, Dawn Addis, a Democrat from Morro Bay, has already announced her 2022 candidacy.

"Cunningham's district would become a lot more Democratic," Cal Poly Political Science professor Michael Latner told the *Sum*. "One of the things we're seeing in California, for sure, is less incumbent protection. It looks like a lot more incumbents are in trouble."

Santa Barbara County's new 37th Assembly District also figures to lean Democratic with its inclusion of Santa Barbara city.

In state Senate and congressional redistricting, northern Santa Barbara County will see less change. Sen. Monique Limón's (D-Goleta) district picks up territory in southern SLO County and will be renamed the 21st District.

U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal's (D-Santa Barbara) 24th congressional district continues to include all of Santa Barbara County. It drops areas of northern SLO County and picks up more territory in Ventura County, including Ojai.

"With the district being redrawn, I will work closely with my colleague Rep. Panetta to ensure all of San Luis Obispo County continues to be well-represented in Congress, and I will do the same for the areas of Ventura County that are being added to my district," Carbajal said in a statement to the *Sum*.

—Peter Johnson

Santa Maria Planning Commission rejects proposal for Starbucks drive-through

A local Starbucks was denied the permits needed to add a drive-through after the project's applicant doubled-down on their stance against altering the proposal.

The request was originally presented to the Santa Maria Planning Commission during its Nov. 17 meeting, where commissioners initially moved to deny the project proposed for a Starbucks on East Main



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NEWS from page 4

Street in Santa Maria. But commissioners also agreed to save their final decision for a future meeting.

The item was revisited on Dec. 15. According to the meeting's staff report, reasons for denial include findings that "the project would exacerbate the existing traffic congestion in the area," which could "further impede" ambulances from reaching Marian Regional Medical Center, located nearby, and that a lack of opportunities for legal U-turns across from the Starbucks would result in unsafe driver behavior.

"Drivers choosing to make illegal and dangerous vehicular maneuvers to access the site results in additional broadside vehicular collisions on Main Street, which have historically occurred at this site," the staff report stated.

During the Dec. 15 meeting, Greg Fick, a representative of the project's applicant, Cadence Acquisition, criticized the findings as not supported by facts and refused to consider any significant adjustments to the proposal, which he described as the product of a year-long process.

"I'm still in shock that this decision was made," Fick said during the meeting. "There was absolutely no evidence before you that this project was going to generate any more traffic [than the existing conditions]. ... I'm not sure how we can arbitrarily make a finding that more traffic is generated because of this project."

Fick argued that because of the applicant's plan to remove two tenants from its property—Al Pho and Subway—to make room for the proposed drive-through and Starbucks alone, traffic congestion in the area would actually decrease. A traffic study in the proposal estimates that the site would attract about 700

fewer average trips from drivers on a daily basis.

"What's the point of us creating a traffic study if it's going to be completely ignored," said Fick, who also criticized the Planning Commission for not consulting the project's traffic engineer, who was in attendance at the Nov. 17 meeting.

"If there were any concerns, they [the traffic engineer] certainly should have been consulted. They were in the front row—we mentioned twice that they were there, ready to answer any questions that were completely ignored that night," Fick said.

Before voting on the item, the Planning Commission considered tabling the discussion once again—provided that the applicant pitch new ideas or make adjustments to the proposal that could resolve commissioners' remaining concerns over the project's potential impact on neighboring businesses and residential areas.

"We're limited. ... At the end of the day, there's not much we can do," as far as making substantial changes to the proposal, Fick said, adding that a couple of proposed resolutions (including widening the road on Main Street) were already ruled out.

"I haven't seen anything here tonight to change my opinion from the last meeting," Commissioner Tim Seifert said shortly after Fick's response. "They're [the applicant] either unwilling or can't change their project—they're not hearing, I guess, what we're saying."

The Planning Commission ultimately voted to deny the proposal, 4-0, with Commissioner Tom Lopez abstaining, as he was absent when the request was first heard at the Nov. 17 meeting. ○

—Caleb Wiseblood

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FILE PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLOM

No fun and games

Nipomo's residents are waiting for recreational facilities as the county waits on potential skate park grants

BY BULBUL RAJAGOPAL

Former Santa Cruz locals Jameson and Laura Lucero were in for a shock when they moved to Nipomo five years ago. Coming from the “skate capital of the world,” the couple found Nipomo’s lack of recreational activities staring starkly at them.

“It’s really sad, because I have young children, and when I take them to the little kids playground at the park where the skate park is supposed to be, the middle-schoolers are blasting music [there]. The moms are staring, giving them dirty looks. They literally have no space here,” Laura said.

Laura used to work at Dana Elementary Bright Futures, which put her close to the concerns of Nipomo’s children and teens. Bright Futures is an after-school program conducted by the elementary school on Tefft Street, a little more than a mile from the old recreation center where Nipomo’s youth set up a makeshift skate park. But in April 2021, the DIY skate park known locally as “the Rec” was torn down to pave the way for a shopping center to include outlets like a Tractor Supply Co. and a Wendy’s restaurant.

Community members have been waiting for a skate park since 2017, a project they’ll likely have to wait for longer because of budget constraints. The Rec’s demolition underscored Nipomo’s underserved status when it comes to recreational facilities. San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation Department officials attributed the lack of amenities to low funding and tight purse strings. But Nipomo residents claim the town’s revenue is redirected away from them.

“People here feel like all of these out-of-town investors are buying up real estate in this small town and pumping out these fast and cheap money-making franchises with no regard for the values, the health, or the culture of kids in our community. The interest of the youth aren’t represented the way they deserve,” Laura said.

Laura mentioned 24-year-old local Matthew Diaz, who was fatally struck by a car in 2019 when he was riding his skateboard at night on the Frontage Road near the Rec. His death made waves in Nipomo’s skating community, and residents even called for better street lighting and sidewalk improvements. This month, the county Public Works Department started construction on the crosswalks beside Dana Elementary, close to where the future skate park will be, to make it safer for pedestrians.

Recreational facilities like the ones Nipomo wants fall under the purview of the Parks and Rec Commission, which assigns priority to projects once the SLO County Board of Supervisors allocates funds for them. Second District Parks Commissioner Pandora Nash-Karner told *New Times* that the county has been strict with fund distribution, which contributed to areas receiving fewer amenities.

“There’s absolutely no money. It’s always been my feeling that the Board of Supervisors doesn’t see arts as really important. The board hears from all the departments and basically thinks of Parks as swing sets for Donnie and Susie to play, not understanding that people need to be outside, they need to connect with others, they need all the things that nature provides,” she said.



REMEMBERING HOME: In 2017 Cody Barrackman skates at “the Rec,” a makeshift skate park that no longer exists at the site of Nipomo’s old recreation center, which was destroyed by arson in 2008.

Nash-Karner added that the commission has two needs from the county before it can effectively address the gap in recreation: funding to hire another planner to research and write more grants that are up for grabs, and a higher marketing budget for Parks and Rec to boost its revenue generation.

Nick Franco, the director of Parks and Rec, told *New Times* that the county is also stretched thin because all of its regions need their own recreational facilities.

“We have to try and provide that equitable amount throughout the county. That is the challenge. We’re going to get a skate park in Nipomo and we have one in Los Osos. But we

‘There’s really nothing for them to do if you’re not into basketball or team sports. Coming from Salinas—there’s a lot of gangs and violence—I’ve seen what skate parks can do for communities.’

—Jameson Lucero, Nipomo resident

don’t have anything up in North County. That should be a priority as well,” Franco said. “We have ball fields in Nipomo and we have some in El Chorro ... but do we have anything up in Cambria? No, we don’t.”

But lifelong Nipomo residents like Elijah Coleman think their town needs more than just the four baseball fields it houses. He played there as a child, and now, 35 years later, his children bat there, too. Coleman, a Little League board member, thinks it’s time for an upgrade.

“Nipomo doesn’t get their fair share of recreation

revenue even though they produce most of it in the county. Nipomo Little League maintains and improves the baseball fields strictly on volunteer time and sponsor money,” he told *New Times* via Facebook. “The skate park is a great start to getting some of that revenue back to Nipomo instead of it going to Avila/SLO. It would be nice to get funds to fix the existing baseball fields and add more.”

Franco mentioned an added obstacle to installing more ball fields: SLO County’s dwindling water levels. He said that using the available water for recreation would affect the amount needed for housing.

Coleman hopes that revenue generated from the expected Dana Reserve—a Nipomo-based county project proposed to have almost 1,300 housing units—could be used to build a sports complex.

He isn’t the only resident offering a roadmap to a coveted local facility. Laura and her husband, Jameson Lucero, are also working with a business-mentoring group called SCORE SLO to figure out how they can set up a skateboard shop in Nipomo. They plan to donate the projected revenue to build the proper skate park, an area that Nipomo’s skaters want dedicated to the late Diaz. To Salinas-native Jameson, skateboarding is a beacon of light for young people.

“There’s really nothing for them to do if you’re not into basketball or team sports. Coming from Salinas—there’s a lot of gangs and violence—I’ve seen what skate parks can do for communities,” he said. “When they built the park there, I saw a lot of kids have outlets to express themselves. It gave them a safe place.”

Reach Staff Writer Bulbul Rajagopal from the Sun’s sister paper, *New Times*, at brajagopal@newtimeslo.com.

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Hands-on discovery

Exploration Discovery Center in Grover Beach offers science exhibits and tactile fun for kids

PHOTO COURTESY OF EXPLORATION DISCOVERY CENTER

BY MALEA MARTIN

Between an aquaponic garden, a 25 foot tall Aztec pyramid replica, and an Inventors' Lab with enough tactile treasures to fill a whole day of play, the Exploration Discovery Center in Grover Beach is more than your typical children's museum.

Debra Ugalde taught as a bilingual educator for 25 years in Santa Maria and is a founding board member of the center, which opened in its current form just a few months ago. She explained as we walked through the museum's outdoor space that the aquaponic garden is self-sustaining. In one bucket, koi fish swim around. In another, connected with piping, various plants grow tall. Ugalde said the fish fertilize the plants and vice versa. The only upkeep the garden requires is adding water when it evaporates. Children can see plants growing, and watch them progress when they come back.

This is just one of more than a dozen interactive exhibits and stations that kids can roam through at the Exploration Discovery Center.

Once home to the Grover Beach Volunteer Fire Department, the center's three garage doors (built originally to accommodate fire engines) are now painted bright purple, blue, and green. The story of the fire department becoming a children's center starts in 1999, when former firefighter Clifford Clark leased the building. After a decade of remodels, Clark opened the building as the Exploration Station, with a sprinkling of indoor exhibits aimed at 10 and 11 year olds.

Years later, Ugalde was looking for a space to bring her dream of a local cultural center for kids to life. She merged with the existing Exploration Station, and Exploration Discovery Center was born. It just opened to the public earlier this year.

The new museum features many of the exhibits from the past, but takes things up a notch by providing outdoor spaces for visitors too, and extending the age range that can enjoy the space.

"Everything you see is hands-on," Ugalde said. "They're not doing anything on the computer. Most people spend two hours when they come."

In the front, younger kids ages 2 to 4 can play with a water feature, and then head inside to the pretend veterinary station and the mock kitchen, or get creative in the craft room.

For kids aged 5 to 8, the exhibit room, archeology room, music shed, outdoor water play, craft room, and a racetrack are recommended.

In the back outdoor space, there are koi fish, ducks, and turtles for kids to gawk at. Youth aged 9 to 12 are encouraged to check out the aquaponic gardening area.

But the main attraction in the back area is a rotating exhibit. For the last few months it was an Egyptian-style pyramid, and next it will morph into an Aztec pyramid. This is where the cultural education aspect comes to life for Ugalde, who said she was inspired by her students she worked with in Santa Maria.

"My kids in Santa Maria hadn't even been to the ocean, and when you take them on field trips, that's amazing to them," Ugalde said.

So asking children to learn about even farther away places like Egypt, she continued, is a challenge without the right tools. "If you can [make] it



MAKING MUSIC: A young Exploration Discovery Center patron makes some tunes in the Music Shed.

tactile, showing them a movie, touching, feeling, then you're opening their horizons," Ugalde said. "I think in this world one of the things we need most is to appreciate other cultures."

The center is ADA compliant, Ugalde added.

"It's all accessible. Everything that I've put

I made sure to make it low enough," she said. "We had some speech therapists come in [with] children, who asked if they could recommend this place, because they had never seen the children they were observing talk so much in their

life before. ... We're here for the kids."

The center's Craft Room can also be rented out for birthday parties, and field trips are welcomed too.

For admission and pricing, visit the Exploration Discovery Center's website at gbdiscoverycenter.org.

Highlight

• Lompoc utility customers are encouraged to swap out old, inefficient light strings for new LED lights through the Lompoc Conservation Division's Christmas light exchange program. LEDs use 75 percent less energy than conventional, incandescent light strings, allowing up to 20 strings to be connected without overloading a wall socket. They also reduce fire risks, burnt fingers, and broken lights. The exchange program is on a first-come, first-served basis until Jan. 28, 2022, or while supplies last. The program can be found at the Lompoc City Hall, 100 Civic Center Plaza, Monday through Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and at the Lompoc Home Depot, 1701 E. Ocean Ave., Thursday and Friday from noon to 5 p.m. Participants are required to bring a current utility bill, a photo ID, and their old holiday lights to participate. Questions can be directed to the Lompoc Utility Conservation Division at (805) 875-8252. ○

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Reach Staff Writer Malea Martin, from the Sun's sister paper, at mmartin@newtimeslo.com.

DEATH NOTICES

UPCOMING SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS

AIKEN, FRED JAMES, 76, of Santa Maria passed away 12/14/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

BALDERAMA, FRED, 91, of Santa Maria passed away 12/14/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

BAZZELL, WINTFORD "DICK" JR., 69, of Lompoc passed away 11/25/2021 arrangements with Starbuck- Lind Mortuary

BENFIELD, MARY C., 82, of Atascadero passed away 12/14/2021 arrangements with Los Osos Valley Mortuary

BOND, KATHLEEN, 61, of Atascadero passed away 12/10/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

BORELLO, LAURIE LYN, 64, of Los Osos passed away 12/14/2021 arrangements with Los Osos Valley Mortuary

BROWN, HAZEL ROUMEL, 90, of Santa Margarita passed away 12/10/2021 arrangements with Chapel of the Roses

CASTILLO, ISAAC THOMAS, 70, of Santa Maria passed away 12/16/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

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

DODSON, WILLIAM RICHARD, 65, of Atascadero passed away 12/11/2021 arrangements with Chapel of the Roses

FERRY, MARY, 100, of Atascadero passed away 12/9/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

FRANCK, BEVERLYANN, 94, of La Mirada passed away 12/12/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

FREITAS, RICHARD J. SR., 83, of Santa Maria passed away 12/20/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home

GALAS M.D., STANLEY M., 95, of Santa Maria passed away 12/19/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

GAMINO, ANGEL VELAZQUEZ, 76, of Santa Maria passed away 12/19/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

GOLDIE, SHIRLEY LUCILLE, 95, of Atascadero passed away 12/14/2021 arrangements with Chapel of the Roses

LIU, ALICE CHIWEN, 83, of Paso Robles passed away 12/13/2021 arrangements with Chapel of the Roses

LOVERN, MELINDA ANN, 80, of Arroyo Grande passed away 12/10/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

MATASCI, ELMER, 91, of Nipomo passed away 12/16/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home

MATSON, TRUDY L., 86, of Grover Beach passed away 12/3/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

MOCK, KAREN LOUISE, 70, of Atascadero passed away 12/11/2021 arrangements with Chapel of the Roses

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

NEWMAN, GLENN EDWARD, 80, of Santa Maria passed away 12/16/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

NICHOLAS, JORDANA, 60, of Templeton passed away 12/12/2021 arrangements with Chapel of the Roses

REYES, ANTONIO "TONY" JR., 64, of Santa Maria passed away 12/16/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

ROSALES, CRISTOBAL SANDOVAL, 96, of Santa Maria passed away 12/16/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

SANDER, JEAN HELEN, 90, of Santa Maria passed away 12/14/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

SECREASE, SHIRLEY, 72, of Orcutt passed away 12/10/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

STUART, BARBARA J., 93, of Santa Maria passed away 12/14/2021 arrangements with Magner Maloney Funeral Home

SWIONTEK, LINDA, 78, of Santa Maria passed away 12/16/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

VAN HAGEN, JANE FULTON, 91, of Lompoc passed away 12/13/2021 arrangements with Starbuck- Lind Mortuary

VAN STONE, DOROTHY "DORRIE" M., 91, of Santa Maria passed away 12/8/2021 arrangements with Dudley-Hoffman Mortuary, Crematory & Memory Gardens

VORLICKY, ELIZABETH, 40, of Paso Robles passed away 12/13/2021 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

WILSON, KENNETH C. JR., 86, of Pismo Beach passed away 12/13/2021 arrangements with Marshall Spoo Sunset Funeral Chapel

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PUBLICATION DATE: January 13

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BOOK ADS BY: January 21

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The Central Coast guide to everything outdoors covering both SLO and Santa Barbara Counties

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- 7%** It's very slow with a lot of connectivity problems.

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

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Unnecessary

Designating a national marine sanctuary off the coast of the Central Coast isn't needed to protect an already protected ocean

BY LORI FRENCH

In 1974, President Ford established the first National Marine Sanctuary off North Carolina—The USS Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. It was established to protect the shipwreck, and is currently being considered for expansion to protect additional shipwrecks.

Currently there are five National Marine Sanctuaries off the West Coast, four of which are located off the coast of California. California also has 124 Marine Protected Areas with an additional five Groundfish Conservation Areas. Here on the Central Coast, the waters off of Diablo Canyon Power Plant and Vandenberg Space Force Base are restricted and hinder our ability to provide you with fresh seafood sustainably harvested.

Another protected area is just not needed off the Central Coast.

While there may be discrete areas worthy of designation within the footprint of the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, it cannot be claimed that the entire area is. The proposed sanctuary is approximately 7,000 square miles. Its total area vastly exceeds what is thought to be necessary to recognize and preserve the Chumash tribal history the sanctuary seeks to protect. How large of an area is necessary to protect these discrete locations?

The original map area of the proposed sanctuary has been changed to exclude the proposed Morro Bay 376 Wind Energy Area—the first large-scale industrial offshore

wind farm off the West Coast. While the area has been excluded from the proposed sanctuary, what about the infrastructure necessary to get this unproven resource ashore—such as substations (fixed and/or floating) and transmission cables. It is likely that these high voltage components of the wind farm will have to cross through the proposed sanctuary.

According to the potential economic impacts of the proposed sanctuary, a study prepared for the Sierra Club, the proposal could, and this is a very big could, add \$23 million per year and create almost 600 jobs:

1. Government expenditures on sanctuary offices, staff, and infrastructure, as well as additional research money raised by sanctuary staff.
2. Money raised by local NGOs and academics to conduct sanctuary-related research.
3. Increased coastal tourism and the increases in relevant business revenues from it (due to both market signaling and improved ocean and coastal resource stewardship).
4. Increased property values, property taxes, and business, local, state, and federal tax revenues due to sanctuary proximity.

Government money spent on sanctuary offices and infrastructure is linked to construction and provides temporary jobs. The potential economic report, using employment multipliers from IMPLAN (economic modeling software) predicts a total of 44 new jobs. This is a very far cry from the touted 600.

We must also be cognizant that jobs may be lost as a result of the sanctuary's designation. Between 2010 and 2017, local fishermen landed, on average, 5 million pounds of seafood annually with ex-vessel revenues of \$8.75 million. It bears noting, ex-vessel revenues are dollars paid to local fishermen and does not include the downstream economic benefits, which surely exceeds the \$23 million boasted by proponents of the sanctuary. In effect, there may be a net economic loss to the local economy if the sanctuary greatly impacts commercial fishing in the area. There is no clear link and no

current research that connects a sanctuary with increased tourism. The Sierra Club's report also associates a marine sanctuary with UNESCO heritage sites for increased tourism. The proposed sanctuary is not a UNESCO site.

People already come here for the clean beaches, wildlife, Morro Rock, fishing, and water sports. We have plenty of tourism already. The proposed growth and jobs coming from increased tourism are not head-of-household jobs and put a strain on local infrastructure and housing. While proponents of the sanctuary opine that tourism will benefit from its designation, they fail to provide how. If you are standing on the beach looking out from any of the 156 miles of coastline encompassing approximately 7,000 square miles of ocean, it won't look any different than it does today. Sure, there may be a few more signs and a visitor center, but the ocean won't look any different.

The proposed economic impact report states that the sanctuary would "prohibit the sighting of offshore oil and gas rigs that would likely get built without the [National Marine Sanctuary] designation." California blocked any new oil and gas drilling in 1969. U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-California) has introduced a bill, The West Coast Ocean Protection Act, which would permanently ban oil and gas drilling in federal waters off the coast of California, Oregon, and Washington. President Biden has put in place a temporary moratorium. The people of California have a vested interest in protecting their coastline from contamination from oil spills—as does the fishing community.

While dredging is still permitted within a national marine sanctuary, the commercial fishermen of Morro Bay have some concerns over dredged material removal. Currently, the materials are taken offshore and dumped. The concern is that materials may have to be taken farther out at an increased cost. An increased cost could jeopardize the regular maintenance of the harbor, something commercial fishermen have fought for more than 34 years after veteran Al French lost his life on a routine return to Morro Bay. There is much concern that an additional layer of permits will slow down the entire process, putting lives at risk once again.

Water quality is a huge part of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, and since the sanctuary designation, an entire industry of water quality control testing and reporting has sprung up for area growers. Every year, the costs associated with testing and reporting water wells increases and becomes more cumbersome for our local growers.

As for climate change claims, many commenters opine that establishing the Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary will help address the impacts of climate change. Without regard to the veracity of that statement, merely establishing a sanctuary will not, in any way, address the underlying causes of climate change nor mitigate against its impacts.

Commercial fishermen on the Central Coast also have a rich history with the local waters, and that should not be ignored. There is strong pride in being able to provide a healthy food source from our local waters to the public who might not otherwise have access. Commercial fishermen strive to protect the ocean that sustains their livelihoods but feel that another layer of protection is just not needed where there are already a wide variety of protected areas off of the Central Coast in addition to federal and state management measures protecting the fisheries. ○

Lori French is the director of the Pacific Coast Federated Fisherman's Association and a member of the Morro Bay Commercial Fishermen's Organization. Send a response for publication to letters@santamariasun.com.

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



Cannabis. Cannabis.

almost felt bad for the **Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors** on Dec. 14 when they had to decide on yet another appeal of an approved cannabis cultivation project.

Only this time, the decision before them felt like it had higher stakes. Former **Lt. Gov. Abel Maldonado** was on one side, and the **Millers** who own **Bien Nacido Vineyards** were on the other.

“It’s a clash of the titans,” **3rd District Supervisor Joan Hartmann** said. “Yes, two of our counties’ most illustrious families are at odds over what else? Cannabis.”

With the legacy of **Helios Dayspring** dangling over their heads, and his permitted cannabis cultivation operation on which he did unpermitted things, and the reality that the county’s cannabis cultivation permitting process is a clunky and long event—according to **5th District County Supervisor Steve Lavagnino** the county loses \$1 million in revenue annually because of its slow-ass process—supervisors had the choice of pissing off one big name with lots of influence or another.

Maldonado is all in on cannabis. He’s grown hemp over the last few years as well as medical marijuana on the property in question, and he’s ready to jump into the recreational cannabis industry with two feet and 48 acres of cultivation. But his neighbors at Bien Nacido aren’t so keen on his scheme.

The Millers’ list of grievances with the project is long: It doesn’t agree with this county plan or that code. It violates the Williamson Act. The county’s programmatic environmental impact report for cannabis cultivation isn’t good enough. Maldonado is stealing water from the Millers and the Cuyama River, is polluting the air with cannabis smell and taint, and he illegally created an illegal river crossing. Whoa. Anything else, guys?

Well, county staff went through that little list of “issues” and answered with a long document, which, simply put, says, “Not even!”

Maldonado accused **Marshall Miller** of saying that the only things CannaRios (the cannabis project) could do to make him happy with the project would be to move the mountain behind Maldonado’s house and the Pacific Ocean. Inconceivable!

Lavagnino tried to do a little compliment sandwich for the Millers.

“Bien Nacido wines are awesome,” he said.

But ... ?

“The strategy seems to be: Keep asking for stuff, for concessions, and then when those get made, say there wasn’t enough time to review it and then ask for more,” Lavagnino said.

At least Maldonado did change some of the project components in what he called an attempt to be neighborly, but a certain **Starbucks** in Santa Maria is choosing not to change anything about its project in response to the **Santa Maria Planning Commission’s** requests.

This Starbucks on Main Street wants to put in a drive-through, but its neighbors don’t want it, citing traffic issues—like accidents and illegal U-turns—and commissioners agreed that traffic is a major problem. Project representative **Greg Fick** was apoplectic at the Dec. 15 commission meeting.

“I’m not sure how we can arbitrarily make a finding that more traffic is generated because of this project,” he said. “At the end of the day, there’s not much we can do” to change the project.

Welp. Then, I guess you don’t get to have a project. ☹️

The canary is clunky and long. Send thoughts to canary@santamariasun.com.



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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!

HOT STUFF

DEC. 23 – DEC. 30
2021



FEELIN' 2022

Arrowsmith's Wine Bar in Solvang hosts its New Year's Eve Party and Fundraiser on Friday, Dec. 31, from 7 to 10 p.m. Guests can look forward to enjoying wine, beer, cheese plates, and a glass of prosecco to toast the new year. Proceeds will benefit AnimalsAsia, a Hong Kong-based nonprofit. Admission is \$25. Cocktail attire is encouraged. Visit arrowsmithwine.com for more info. The venue is located at 1539 Mission Drive, Solvang.

—Caleb Wiseblood

FILE COURTESY PHOTO BY HEATHER DAENITZ

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/. Santa Ynez Botanic Garden, 151 Sycamore Drive, Buellton.

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. 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. 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. Elverhoj Museum of History and Art, 1624 Elverhoj Way, Solvang, 805-686-1211.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

DECEMBER ART WORKSHOP: PIÑATA MAKING Corazon del Pueblo will be hosting an art workshop for the month of December. We will be holding a in-person workshop on how to make piñatas, to celebrate the holiday season. Dec. 29, 3-5 p.m. Free. 209-312-8653. corazondepueblo.org. Corazon del Pueblo Office, 124 W. Main St., Santa Maria.

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.

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

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

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. 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. Wine and Design, 3420 Orcutt Road, suite 105, Orcutt.

SUBMIT YOUR EVENTS

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

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 seasonal music in our Holiday Vaudeville Revue. Wednesdays-Sundays. through Dec. \$30-\$35. 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. rmarstudios.com. RM Art Studios, 831 Robin Circle, 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. LiIA 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.

OPEN STUDIO FOR ADULTS Call to reserve. All materials included. Tuesdays, 6-9 p.m. and Wednesdays, 12:30-3:30 p.m. \$35. 805-668-2125. LiIA 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. DANA Adobe Cultural Center, 671 S. Oakglen Ave., Nipomo.

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SAN LUIS OBISPO

A CHRISTMAS CAROL: A RADIO PLAY BY CUESTA DRAMA (VIRTUAL) This radio play is only virtual; there is no in-person event. Enjoy a radio play based on the Charles Dickens classic short story. Make Cuesta's first ever radio play part of your holiday tradition. Through Dec. 31 \$10-\$20. tickets.cuesta.edu. Online, See website, 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. \$210 per month. 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/. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

CERAMIC LESSONS AND MORE Now offering private one-on-one and group lessons in the ceramic arts. Both hand building and wheel throwing options. Beginners welcomed. ongoing 805-835-5893. hmcrucceramics.com/. 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. slo.ma.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. slo.ma.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. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

ARTS continued page 13

Recent “noise” surrounding the Santa Maria Cemetery

The CDC reported that over 3.35 million people died in 2020. That is nearly a 170% increase from the total number of deaths in 2017. With the increase of deaths, there has also been a correlated increase in the amount of people visiting cemeteries nationwide. Visiting a cemetery is a great part of the healing process and something that is highly encouraged. How often you visit a grave is up to you and while grief is very personal and can make you feel lonely, you can temper your grief through visiting a grave of a loved one. Although most religions teach that this isn't where your loved one's soul resides, it is still nice to make a connection to the one you've lost. For many people, visiting a grave of a loved one is a cause for comfort, peace, and healing. For others, the gravesite of a loved one – or a much-admired public figure – can become a gathering place for the living to show their fondness for the departed and keep their memory alive. Often, families will visit the grave of a loved one when they are able to get together, especially if they all live far away from one another. While it is encouraged to visit the cemetery, you are also highly encouraged to be mindful of other mourners who are also visiting their loved ones, to be mindful of the surrounding community, and to be respectful of the cemetery's rules and regulations.

Regrettably, over the past year, with the increase of the number of people visiting the cemetery, there also has been an increase in disregard of the surrounding community, as well as the cemetery's rules and regulations. In addition, there also has been a noticeable lack of respect of others who may be visiting the cemetery or for others' graves. Unfortunately, Santa Maria Cemetery is not alone; many of the cemeteries within the entire state of California has seen an uptick in this behavior and cemetery offices consistently receive complaints from the public regarding this insensitive conduct. Some examples here in Santa Maria include



smoking and/or drinking of alcohol on cemetery grounds, conducting unauthorized barbecues on the grounds, setting up tables over other loved one's graves, placing tents or awnings over other's graves, and even bringing unauthorized porta-potties onto the cemetery grounds. In fact, just recently, the maintenance staff discovered unexpended bullets around a grave and it has been noted that other cemeteries within California have had instances where rival gangs have had confrontations on cemetery grounds.



In addition to the objectionable activity surrounding the cemetery, there has been a definite increase in the number of unauthorized flowers/decorations on the cemetery grounds. Often, the staff must take more time to clean up and remove excessive and unauthorized decorations due to potential safety issues to visitors, the equipment, and to themselves. While any maintenance staff's priority is performing services to prepare for the internment of deceased loved ones for grieving families, with this need to interrupt their normal upkeep activities, it obviously affects all other aspects to the performance of their duties.

Specifically in the case of the bullets, if a mower had hit these, there would be the possibility of causing harm to anyone or anything in the surrounding area and may have even been fatal. This also applies to small rocks, marbles, or other potential projectiles. The cemetery is trying to be accommodating to the public and as such they have adopted a policy that all flowers/decorations must be inside the approved cemetery galvanized vase. Concerning the upkeep of the grave, it can only be the cemetery staff that makes any kind of ground change or

improvement for legal purposes. The key point to keep in mind, that seems to have some misconception, is the cemetery owns the entire cemetery grounds, and the owner of the grave has only purchased the burial rights; meaning they have only purchased the right to bury a loved one in that particular spot of the cemetery.

For education purposes, the cemetery here in Santa Maria is part of the Santa Maria Cemetery District (“SMCD” or District”) and is an Independent Special District Public Cemetery. The District is governed by a Board of Trustees (“Board”) that has statutory authority to exercise all rights and powers to own, operate, improve, and maintain the cemetery. The California Health and Safety Code along with other California statutes has provided legislation which empowers the Board to adopt rules and regulations as they pertain to cemetery operations and decorum. The Board, having jurisdiction and control of the cemetery, may make and enforce general rules and regulations, and appoint managers or other officers to enforce obedience to the rules and regulations with such powers and duties regarding the cemetery as may be necessary. (California Health and Safety Code §8133). These Rules and Regulations shall be reviewed annually by the Board; however, the Board can make amendments to these Rules and Regulations with proper notice at public meetings.

As the governing authority, and in response to the recent increase in objectionable behavior, the cemetery Board has recently decided to return to firmly enforcing the current rules and regulations. Yet, an adverse part of returning to these current rules and regulations is that these were last approved in 2010. So, with the overall change in societal norms, the newly hired district manager is in the process of revamping these outdated conditions. For example, rather than not allowing solar lights on the cemetery grounds at all, the district manager has advised the Board to authorize them. However, as with all decorations, they must fit securely inside the cemetery approved galvanized vase. Another area that recently changed is the locking of the Newlove entrance gate around 4:15pm daily with the possibility of complete lockup during the weekend. This was done for various reasons, but visitors will be rest assured that they still have continued access to the Southlawn part of the cemetery through the main set of gates off College Road. Furthermore, in response to inquiries from the public, the cemetery has initiated potential negotiations with security companies to provide reassurance to



the public that they may visit the cemetery with their overall safety and security in mind when the cemetery staff is not present.

As for the overall directions concerning flowers and decorations, the cemetery has decided to maintain mostly traditional norms simply due to safety and security concerns and how it pertains to the general maintenance. There are a variety of things considered “traditional” to leave at gravesites, and many of these things even are encouraged by any cemetery manager to keep the cemetery from feeling too bleak. Sometimes, people want to leave an item at the gravesite as a remembrance, whether it’s flowers, a stuffed animal, or, in the case of some others, it may be empty liquor or beer bottles. While it may seem like a great idea to leave a little memento on someone’s grave as a memorial, there are some Dos and Don’ts about the practice. For example, anything that could jeopardize the safety and security of visitors, the maintenance staff, or even to the equipment is

discouraged, is considered a violation, and will be discarded once identified. Before you think that you want to leave something, you should always check with any individual cemetery’s rules and regulations before planning to leave anything at a gravesite. When you do bring something, be sure that whatever you do bring won’t blow away easily or otherwise impede the ability of the maintenance staff to maintain the grounds. If you do decide to not abide by the rules and regulations of the cemetery, there should be no surprise if your decoration is discarded by the maintenance staff with no compensation for the removal and if the disregard for the flowers and decorations continue, the Board may be forced into other options for compliance.

Conversely, as our cemetery here in Santa Maria completes its planned expansion over the next couple of years, the community will definitely be able to identify changes to the cemetery. The Board, in conjunction with the district manager, will be consistently addressing new areas of operations, and possibilities, in hopes of bringing the cemetery into the 21st century and in lockstep with the current societal environment. It is the hope that these changes will be appreciated as the cemetery staff and Board of Trustees try to beautify the cemetery as well as bring more technology into being. One current example is if anyone is looking to identify the location of a loved one’s grave, they simply can go to the cemetery website, santamariacemetery.com, and on the Home Page there is a link to “Search for a Loved One”. Also, this webpage will eventually be able to be accessed by scanning a QR Code, via your smartphone, that will be on signs on the cemetery grounds. Furthermore, this QR Code may be accompanied by another QR Code where the public will be able to access the full set of currently approved rules and regulations. Likewise, there are plans to integrate LED signs at the entrances of the cemetery that will provide daily updated information to the public such as services scheduled, dates of any planned complete purge of the cemetery, as well as any pertinent information dealing with upcoming special events valuable to the public (for instance, Memorial Day activities). As well, the cemetery is researching the possibility of incorporating solar projects to assist with the maintenance of the grounds and to possibly utilize EV’s into the maintenance inventory so the cemetery will lower its carbon footprint. Finally, the cemetery is exploring the possibility of bringing in alternatives to traditional burials and cremations that have been the norm for several decades. Examples of this would include the possibility of cremation boulders, scatter gardens, as well as a possible ossuary.

So as the cemetery makes changes that will be to the overall benefit of the public and to the Santa Maria community, the cemetery is asking for patience and understanding. They are also respectfully asking that everyone’s behavior be guided accordingly to ensure

everyone garners the respect their loved one and others should receive while visiting the cemetery and the cemetery grounds. If you have questions, inquiries, suggestions, or concerns surrounding the cemetery and its operations, the public is encouraged to make an appointment to speak with the district manager about what is happening at the cemetery. Unfortunately, what normally occurs is that some rumor or inuendo gets started on social media, or even on the cemetery grounds, and then it picks up steam as people add new and possible inaccurate information to the story. So, if you want to ensure that you have the most current information, as the cemetery makes changes or returns to following the current rules and regulations, you are encouraged to check out the cemetery website, santamariacemetery.com, or even follow the advice of an “old saying” ... “go straight to the horse’s mouth” and speak to the district manager. •



CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP (ONLINE) Join us for this Caregiver Support Group online. Sponsored by the Santa Maria Wisdom Center and Dignity Health Family Caregiver Support Program. Open to everyone. Call to have zoom link emailed, or for questions. Fourth Tuesday of every month, 1:30-2:30 p.m. through Dec. 31 Free. 805-354-5326. smwisdomcenter.org. 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.

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 in 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.

VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS OVER ZOOM Visit site or call to learn about various virtual workshop offerings. ongoing. Unwind Studio, 130 N. Broadway, suite B, Santa Maria, 805-748-2539, unwindstamaria.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. 23**, 2-4 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

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. Mondays-Sundays, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. through Jan. 9 Varied. 805-674-4277. Halcyon Store, 1275 W. Grand Ave, Grover Beach, halcyonstore.

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

PENCIL PENSIVE

Art Center Morro Bay presents Sketchbook Freedom, a one-day sketching workshop, on Monday, Jan. 3, 2022, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The class is suitable for experienced artists and beginners alike. Admission ranges from \$50 to \$60. Call (805) 772-2504 or visit artcentermorrobay.org for more info. Art Center Morro Bay is located at 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

—C.W.



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/. Online, See website, 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. 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. Transitions Mental Health Warehouse, 784 High Street, San Luis Obispo, 805-270-3346.

CAL POLY BASKETBALL VS. CAL STATE FULLERTON Celebrate the New Year with Cal Poly Basketball. Get 2 tickets for \$22 to bring in 2022. **Jan. 1**, 7-9 p.m. gopoly.com/. Mott Athletics Center, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

CAL POLY BASKETBALL VS. LONG BEACH STATE It's Youth Night, so all kids ages 13 and under get in for free, and the first 100 kids get a color changing cup. **Dec. 30**, 7-9 p.m. gopoly.com/. Mott Athletics Center, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

CENTRAL COAST CONJURERS (SLO COUNTY MAGIC CLUB) Monthly meeting of magicians of all levels. Please call or email for more info. Meet like-minded folks with an interest in magic, from close-up to stage performances. Last Wednesday of every month, 6:30-9 p.m. Free. 805-440-0116. IHOP, 212 Madonna Rd., San Luis Obispo.

CITY FARM SLO'S YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM Check site for more info on programming. cityfarmslo.org. San Luis Obispo, Citywide, SLO.

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. through Dec. 24 downtownslo.com/events/holidays/holidayplaza. Mission Plaza, 989 Chorro St, 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.

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.

PLANET FUNK NEW YEAR'S EVE BASH Enjoy champagne toasts, a midnight balloon drop, delicious comfort food dishes, craft cocktails and live music. Features a headlining performance by funk/jazz/soul fusion band Diggin' Dirt in our Event Center. **Dec. 31**,

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE continued page 18

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Christmas Tree Collection

CITY OF SANTA MARIA RESIDENTS

Discarded Christmas trees will be collected at no charge from the curb on your scheduled trash collection day during the week of **JANUARY 10, 2022–JANUARY 14, 2022**, on residential trash collection routes. (Charges apply after January 14.)

Place your Christmas tree on the curb, at least **three feet away from your trash container**, on your scheduled collection day. Trees must be free of all stands, tinsel, and ornaments. **Flocked trees or artificial trees are not accepted.**

Cut-up trees can be placed in green waste containers.



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www.cityofsantamaria.org

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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



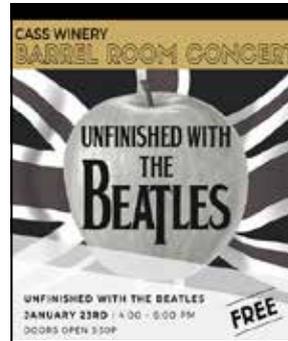
Symphony of the Vines: Mighty Beethoven
FRIDAY, JANUARY 14
Mission San Miguel



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



The Tramp and Roughrider - Fundraiser Event
SAT & SUN, JANUARY 22 & 23
KDA Studios, Santa Maria



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
Cass Winery, Paso Robles



Symphony of the Vines: Gallant Guitar
SUNDAY, MARCH 20
Cass Winery, Paso Robles



Three Speckled Hens: Antiques & Old Stuff Show
SAT & SUN, APRIL 30 & MAY 1
Paso Robles Event Center



Symphony of the Vines: Joyful Beethoven
FRIDAY, MAY 27
Mission San Miguel



Evening Under the Estrella Sky Winemakers' Dinner
SATURDAY, AUGUST 20
Hartley Farms, San Miguel

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8:30 p.m. slobrew.com/
events/. SLO Brew Rock,
855 Aerovista Pl., San Luis
Obispo, 805-543-1843.

**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.

**SLO NOONTIME TOASTMASTERS CLUB
MEETINGS** Want to improve speaking and leadership
skills in a supportive and positive environment? During
COVID, we are meeting virtually. Contact us to get
a meeting link for info. Tuesdays, 12-1 p.m. Free.
sloontime.toastmastersclubs.org. Zoom, Online,
Inquire for Zoom ID.

SLOROLL: A COMMUNITY INITIATIVE A free pop-up
roller skating event. Locations posted the day of at 4
p.m. Follow @thesloroll. First Saturday of every month
Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**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.

TRANS* YOUTH PEER SUPPORT GROUP This
group is a safe place for trans* and gender non-
conforming people, as well as those questioning, from
ages of 11 to 18. A facilitated emotional support group
to be heard, share your story, and hear stories that may
sound surprisingly like your own. Fourth Tuesday of every
month, 6-8 p.m. Free. GALA Pride and Diversity Center,



GUIDE MY SLEIGH TONIGHT?

Costa Gallery in Los Osos is currently featuring a selection of local artist Larry Le Brane's fused glass reindeer (pictured) and holiday-themed dishware, through Friday, Dec. 31. For more info on Le Brane, who also frequently hosts local classes on fused glass art, visit facebook.com/larry.lebrane. Costa Gallery is located at 2087 10th St., Los Osos.

—C.W.

1060 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, 805-541-4252.

NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

AXE THROWING Enjoy the art of axe throwing in a
safe and fun environment. Kids ages 10 and older are
welcome with an adult. No personal axes please. Fridays,
11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. and Saturdays, 12-6 p.m. \$20. 805-
528-4880. baysidemartialarts.com. Bayside Martial Arts,
1200 2nd St., Los Osos.

CAMBRIA CHRISTMAS MARKET Call or check
website for admission details. Dinner reservations or
overnight packages may be required to attend. Through
Dec. 23 800-966-6490. cambriachristmasmarket.com.
Cambria Pines Lodge, 2905 Burton Dr., Cambria.

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,
12-2:25 p.m. Arroyo Grande Farmers Market, Olohan
Alley, Arroyo Grande.

NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATORY DINNER This
special Executive Chef Barajas' dinner at delightful
Somerset Grill is a wonderful way to usher in 2022.
Dec. 31, 5-10 p.m. \$49-\$129. Vespera Resort,
147 Stimson Ave., Pismo Beach, 805-773-1011,
vesperapismo.com.

PISMO BEACH FARMERS MARKET Features various
vendors selling their goods. Wednesdays, 4-7 p.m.
Pismo Beach Farmers Market, Pismo Pier, Pismo Beach,
805. 773.4382.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

SLO FARMERS MARKET Hosts more than 60 vendors.
Saturdays, 8-10:45 a.m. World Market Parking Lot, 325
Madonna Rd., San Luis Obispo.

NORTH SLO COUNTY

TACO TUESDAYS La Parilla Taqueria will be in
courtyard serving up their delicious tacos and tostadas
every Tuesday. Tuesdays, 5-8 p.m. Ancient Owl Beer
Garden, 6090 El Camino Real, suite C, Atascadero, 805-
460-6042, ancientowlbeergarden.com.

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

NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

MORRO BAY FARMERS MARKET A delightful mix
of local farm fresh products, baked goods, crafts,
and more. Saturdays, 2:30-5:30 p.m. 805-824-7383.
Morro Bay Main Street Farmers Market, Main Street
and Morro Bay Boulevard, Morro Bay, facebook.com/
MorroBayMainStreetFarmersMarket/.

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.

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

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

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

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

NOON YEAR'S EVE Featuring
Riptide Big band with vocalists

Spread
the word!

Send event information to
calendar@santamariasun.com.



Bob Nations, Mitch Latting, and Liz Douglas. Funded by
the Community Foundation of San Luis Obispo County.
Presented by Santa Maria Valley Senior Club. **Dec. 31,**
11 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. 775-813-5186. RiptideBB.com. Elwin
Mussell Senior Center, 510 Park Ave., Santa Maria.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

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/.

FOREVER GREEN: CARA AND CHRISTI BROWN
Identical twin sisters Cara and Christi Brown create neo/
folk/pop/rock music with a little edge and a modern
twist. They combine traditional acoustic guitar and
percussion with touches of electronic synth and live
creation groove box beats, with their angelic vocal
harmonies. **Dec. 23, 4:30-6:30 p.m.** SLO Wine and Beer
Company, 3536 S. Higuera Street, Suite 250, San Luis
Obispo, 805-544-9463, slowineandbeerco.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.

NORTH SLO COUNTY

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Arts Briefs

PCPA brings Education and Outreach Tour to schools across SB and SLO counties

SCREENSHOT COURTESY OF PCPA.ORG



The Pacific Conservatory Theatre (PCPA) announced the return of its Education and Outreach Tour, which will kick off on Feb. 1, 2022. Schools throughout Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties are now able to reserve a slot on the tour, scheduled to run through March 11. This program marks PCPA's first multi-school tour since before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

As part of the tour, four actor interns and a stage management intern will travel from school to school presenting a performance of *Breaking Through*, a story by Francisco Jimenez, adapted for the stage by Leo Cortez.

The play follows a family's journey back into the U.S. after having been deported to Mexico. The show's protagonist, a high school student named Francisco, discovers he has a passion for literature and dreams of going to college after graduation. But Francisco's aspirations clash with the wishes of his father, who fears college will bring financial ruin upon the family.

Bookings for the tour include resources for teachers (of all grade levels), including pre-performance and post-performance lesson plans, activities, and class discussions about the play's content, as well as a link to a virtual study guide for students to download. Each performance of the show runs about 50 minutes and is followed by a Q-and-A session for students to ask the participating actors any questions they have.

For additional info on PCPA's Education and Outreach Tour, *Breaking Through*, and other upcoming programming hosted by the theater company, visit pcpa.org. To book a slot on the tour, call (805) 928-7731, Ext. 3156, or email lcortez@pcpa.org.

Schools in Santa Barbara County are eligible for a potential discount on booking costs through the Children's Creative Project. Contact the nonprofit's Santa Barbara office at (805) 964-4711.

Lompoc announces winners of annual Holiday Decoration Contest

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CITY OF LOMPOC



Lompoc's Urban Forestry Division recently announced the winners of the 27th annual Lompoc Holiday Decoration Contest. The judging of participating homes and businesses throughout Lompoc took place on Dec. 9.

The winning addresses in the residential category are: 432 S. A St. (first place), 1352 Marigold Way (second place), and 304 Ladera (third place). The contest's nonresidential winners are the Garden Shoppe, at 111 S. H St. (first place), the Box Shop, at 740 N. H St. (second place), and Cornerstone Realty, at 503 E. Ocean (third place).

For more info on Lompoc's annual Holiday Decoration Contest, visit cityoflompoc.com.

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



PHOTO BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

COURTESY PHOTO BY KARL KEMPTON

PROLIFIC AUTHOR: Signed copies of Central Coast local Karl Kempton's most recent books, including *Sandskrit of the Oceano Dunes* (pictured, center), can be found locally at the Place on PCH in Oceano. To date, Kempton's diverse writings and visual poems have been published in more than 60 books and 70 anthologies, and showcased in more than 100 group exhibitions.

Showtime!
Send gallery, stage, and cultural festivities to cwiseblood@santamariasun.com.

Pillar of sand

Visual poet Karl Kempton's new photography book offers unique meditations on the Oceano Dunes

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

Nearly two decades after his first poem was published, Oceano resident Karl Kempton envisioned a new way for Central Coast locals to enjoy poetry, without necessarily having to open a single book or crash an intimate, live reading.

"In 1983, I thought the area could and should support an annual open poetry festival. I called a meeting inviting several San Luis Obispo city and county poets to discuss the idea," said Kempton, who co-created the SLO Poetry Festival with Kevin Patrick Sullivan.

"Only Kevin saw and felt what I saw and felt. That is how he and I co-founded the festival," said Kempton, who explained how the festival gradually expanded over the years. "The first year it was in Linnaea's Cafe. It grew each year. Soon we needed to be outside in the street, requiring SLO city approval."

Linnaea's also became the venue for Kempton and Sullivan's monthly poetry reading series, Corners of the Mouth. While Kempton's traditional poems can be read aloud during this type of event, his visual poems require eyes rather than ears.

"A visual poem is a poem composed such that it requires being seen for the full experience," said Kempton, whose visual poems use letters, words, sentences, symbols, diagrams, hieroglyphs, pictographs, and other elements, which he described as becoming "transformed into new forms and abstractions," once combined.

"By crossing literary and art boundaries, the visual poem works in a field of multimedia,

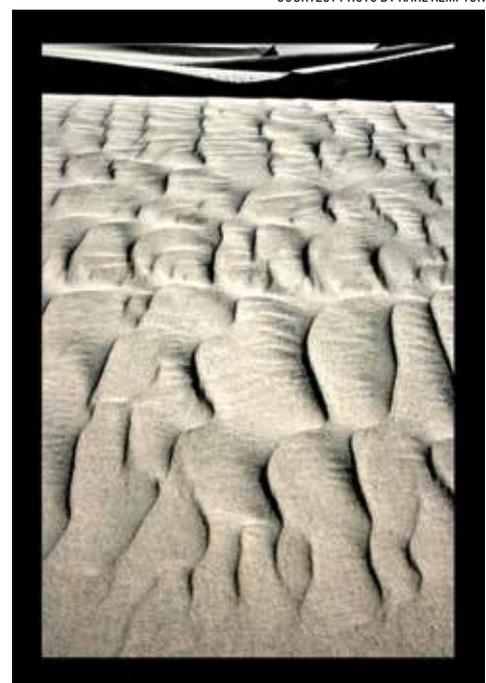
borderblur or intermedia, composing seamless works of fusion," said Kempton, a firm admirer of Ralph Waldo Emerson's famous quote, "Every word was once a poem."

"To explain my visual poetry, I sometimes point to the fact that we are like fish in water; our water is language, especially the written, taken for granted," Kempton added. "Its shapes and forms are assumed and ignored; each letter has its own history of development to this moment."

When composing his poetry, Kempton often finds inspiration from his surroundings, which often also become muses for his photography pursuits. One of his most treasured subjects isn't too far from his home in Oceano, where he lives with his wife, Ruth. This coastal gem is also one of the couple's favorite places to relax and soak in its serene atmosphere, especially when it's not too crowded.

"The Oceano Dunes, for me and Ruth, provide a place allowing us to remove ourselves to a pristine setting and become transcended by the unspeakable beauty of ever-changing environment," Kempton said. "It was even holier, so to say, during the beach and dune vehicle shutdown caused by the initial phase of COVID. The only sounds were an occasional bird, ocean waves rolling to their roiled ending, a breeze, or slithering sand scooted by the wind."

Over just the past three years, Kempton said he's



WAVES TO RAVE ABOUT: Over just the past three years, Karl Kempton said he's taken thousands of photographs at the Oceano Dunes. Some of these photos were compiled and included in *Sandskrit of the Oceano Dunes*, one of Kempton's latest books, published earlier this year.

Oceano eyes

For more info on Oceano-based poet and photographer Karl Kempton, visit karlkempton.net. Copies of Kempton's books are available at the Place on PCH, an art gallery located at 1699 Front St., Oceano.

taken thousands of photographs at the Oceano Dunes. Some of these photos were compiled and included in *Sandskrit of the Oceano Dunes*, one of Kempton's latest books, published earlier this year.

"My photography contains moments of captured, abstract writings," said Kempton, referring to the "wind written" strokes in the sand he sought to capture, being fascinated by their structure that resembled cursive sentences. He described the wavy lines he saw as dazzling, optical sculptures.

Signed copies of *Sandskrit of the Oceano Dunes* and other books by Kempton can be found locally at the Place on PCH, an art gallery in Oceano. To date, Kempton's diverse works have been published in more than 60 books and 70 anthologies and showcased in more than 100 group exhibitions.

Kempton lived in various cities around the country and outside the U.S. before moving to the Central Coast in 1975, and he considers this region home and hasn't relocated since.

"I live where folks come to visit and vacation," said Kempton, who was seeking a peaceful place to live "outside urban density" when he decided to move here from Sacramento.

"Once here, I stayed," he said. "For me, this is truly home." ○

Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood is a lifelong Central Coast resident. Send comments to cwiseblood@santamariasun.com.

IMAGE COURTESY OF KARL KEMPTON



ENGAGING ENIGMAS: "A visual poem is a poem composed such that it requires being seen for the full experience," said poet Karl Kempton, whose visual poems use letters, words, symbols, diagrams, and other elements, which he described as becoming "transformed into new forms and abstractions," once combined.

Born to lose

Co-writer and director Guillermo del Toro (*Pan's Labyrinth*, *The Shape of Water*) helms this neo-noir psychological thriller film adaptation of William Lindsay Gresham's 1946 novel about Stan Carlisle (Bradley Cooper), a carnival medium adept at manipulating people, who eventually joins forces with Dr. Lilith Ritter (Cate Blanchett), a corrupt psychiatrist, to grift Chicago's elites. (150 min.)

Glen This is classic old-school film noir filled with depraved characters, double-crosses, and murder. Dark and gritty, it's well-deserving of its R rating, and it looks every inch a film noir except it's in color. The cinematography by Dan Lausten (who teamed with del Toro on the fantastic 2017 Best Picture Academy Award-winner *The Shape of Water*) is absolutely amazing, as is the set design, lighting, and *mise-en-scène*. It's just masterful filmmaking all around. It's also filled with incredible performances. Cooper digs deep to conjure our cynical lead Stan Carlisle, an unscrupulous manipulator who's dragging around enormous guilt. Set during the Great Depression, Stan is destitute but stumbles upon a traveling carnival and an opportunity for work. He's soon learning the angles in this seedy, low-rent, roadside attraction. An opportunist to his core, he ingratiates himself to Zeena the Seer (Toni Collette) and her alcoholic mentalist partner Pete (David Strathairn), picking up their tricks on how to work an audience. When Stan thinks he's ready to take his mentalist act to a classier clientele, he sweeps "electric woman" Molly (Rooney Mara)

off her feet and they head to Chicago and begin working supper clubs, which is where he meets Lilith (Blanchett, who does her finest Veronica Lake impression physically and Hannibal Lector impression characteristically). She's all menace. It's just a matter of time until this femme fatale digs her claws into him.

Anna This is definitely a visually beautiful film, and juxtaposed with the dark and seedy tale, it's hard to look away from. Stan is a bit of a mystery. The opening scene lets us know he is anything but innocent, but to what end we don't know right away. He's a charmer, handsome, and a quick study, eager to please and even more eager to make money—even if that means taking on deception as a profession. He watches people, studies them. When Pete starts to share his secrets to a money-making mentalist show, Stan knows he's found his road to fortune. Once Stan and Molly are in Chicago, the cracks in his nice guy routine start to show, and when the allure of more money comes around, Stan has no qualms with putting on a "spook show" (conversing with the dead)—something Molly is totally against. After meeting Lilith, Stan morphs into the depraved menace that has been lurking under his skin all along. It's gritty and very noir, a stunning film in both look and story, and the casting here is perfect. It's a long film, but del Toro makes every moment count.

Glen It's certainly much longer than the first time the story was adapted to film, in 1947 by director Edmund Goulding and screenwriter Jules Furthman, starring Tyrone Powers as Stan and Helen Walker as Lilith. That one clocks in at just under two hours. This one takes its time. Both Zeena and Pete warned Stan never to do a

NIGHTMARE ALLEY

What's it rated? **R**
 What's it worth, Anna? **Full price**
 What's it worth, Glen? **Full price**
 Where's it showing? **Regal Edwards RPX Santa Maria**



GRIFTERS? In the film noir thriller *Nightmare Alley*, sideshow "psychic" Stan Carlisle (Bradley Cooper) teams with corrupt psychiatrist Dr. Lilith Ritter (Cate Blanchett) to bilk Chicago's elite, but who's conning whom?

"spook show" because people get hurt, but the lure of money is too much for Stan, who's hired by rich and ruthless Ezra Grindle (Richard Jenkins), who's desperate to convene with his long-dead girlfriend who miscarried their child. Because Ezra is a former patient of Lilith's, she's able to feed Stan enough information to bilk Ezra out of his money, but Lilith has her own agenda and ax to grind with Ezra, and she and Stan are like two hungry, untrusting lions pacing around one another ready to pounce. Someone's going to lose, but who? It's such an amazing cast. Willem Dafoe is at his sleazy best as Clem Hoatley, who runs the traveling carnival. Ron Perlman stars as Bruno, the "World's Strongest Man," who's Molly's protector. Holt McCallany is menacing as Ezra's bodyguard, Anderson. There are a lot of familiar faces in small but pivotal roles. I mean, who wouldn't want to work with del Toro, hot off his 2018 Best Director win for *The Shape of Water*? This is another Oscar contender, and I predict a nomination for Best Actor for Cooper and Best Director for del Toro.

Anna We'll definitely be seeing this one on nomination lists again and again. Del Toro knows how to make visually arresting art, and because his

works are so top-notch, there's no doubt he has his pick of Hollywood's elite, which he puts to good use. Stan is such an enigma of a character, as is Lilith. We're still learning things about them until the end of the film, and Stan's especially twisted and sticky past comes to light piece by piece. This is a film worthy of a theater viewing. It envelops you. Del Toro is just one of those directors that should not be missed. I'll watch anything he does. In *Nightmare Alley*, we watch the behind-the-scenes of conning—whether that's simple sideshow trickery or Stan and Lilith's larger, more devious plan. It's an ugly side of humanity played out for us in a rich and dynamic world. ○

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

TV Reviews

THE SHRINK NEXT DOOR

What's it rated? **TV-MA**
 When? **2021**
 Where's it showing? **Apple TV Plus**

While the television series doesn't seem to be quite the hit its podcast predecessor was, *The Shrink Next Door* manages to stay compelling (and infuriating) in this eight-part miniseries. Do audiences not want to see America's sweetheart and *People* magazine's Sexiest Man Alive Paul Rudd play the part of a conniving shyster? My guess is no, but Rudd brings it in his portrayal of real-life psychiatrist Isaac "Ike" Herschkopf, who for more than 30 years took advantage of a bunch of patients. But the focus here is on his biggest get, Marty Markowitz.

Will Ferrell stars as Marty and plays the part of a patsy well. He's unassuming and sweet, just looking for some guidance after the death of his parents. Through his own brand of "therapizing," Ike's approach with his clients was friendship, whether real or manufactured, to gain their trust and then manipulate them into doing whatever it is he wanted. He is a fame chaser, filling endless frames with photos of himself and celebrities and sports stars, throwing lavish parties and



PHOTO COURTESY OF BLOOMBERG MEDIA

building a life that was a house of cards, lie after lie piling up on each other.

I had listened to the Wondery podcast when it first came out and was familiar with the story, the conclusion, and the aftermath, but Rudd and Ferrell breathed new life into these characters I already thought I knew. The whole series is now on Apple TV, and if you're a subscriber, it's definitely bingeable. If you want to get even more in depth with the story after that, give the podcast a listen. It's a wild ride, and what this con artist shrink pulls off is both disgusting and incredible. (eight 35- to 49-min. episodes)

—Anna

BINGEABLE

THE GREAT

What's it rated? **TV-MA**
 When? **2020-present**
 Where's it showing? **Hulu**

If you liked the tone and vibe of writer-director Sofia Coppola's 2006 film *Marie Antoinette*, you'll dig this not-very-accurate "historical biography" of Catherine the Great (Elle Fanning), a Prussian princess married off to Peter III (Nicholas Hoult), the depraved and dangerous ruler of Russia, titled onscreen as *The Great: An Occasionally True Story*. "Occasionally" is right. Don't watch for the history; watch for the entertainment!

Created by Tony McNamara (*The Favourite*, *Cruella*), the series—now in its second season—examines the Russian royal court, its intrigues, debauchery, and machinations. Peter is a weak leader, more interested in bedding other men's wives, drinking and eating, posturing as a great military mind, and fretting about living in the shadow of his forebear, Peter the Great. He has to deal with his military, most notably the drunken General Velementov (Douglas Hodge), the conniving archbishop of the Russian Orthodox Church (Adam Godley), and his sycophantic "friends," who more fear his power than respect him.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THRULINE ENTERTAINMENT

It's a blast watching Catherine gain confidence, and with her lover, Leo (Sebastian De Souza), gifted to her by Peter; her confidant and maid, Marial (Phoebe Fox); and sympathetic bureaucrat, Orlo (Sacha Dhawan), plot Peter's overthrow with the hope of enlightening Russia and her people with art, science, and other progressive ideas. Funny and engaging—this one's easy to binge. (20 approximately 50-min. episodes) ○

—Glen

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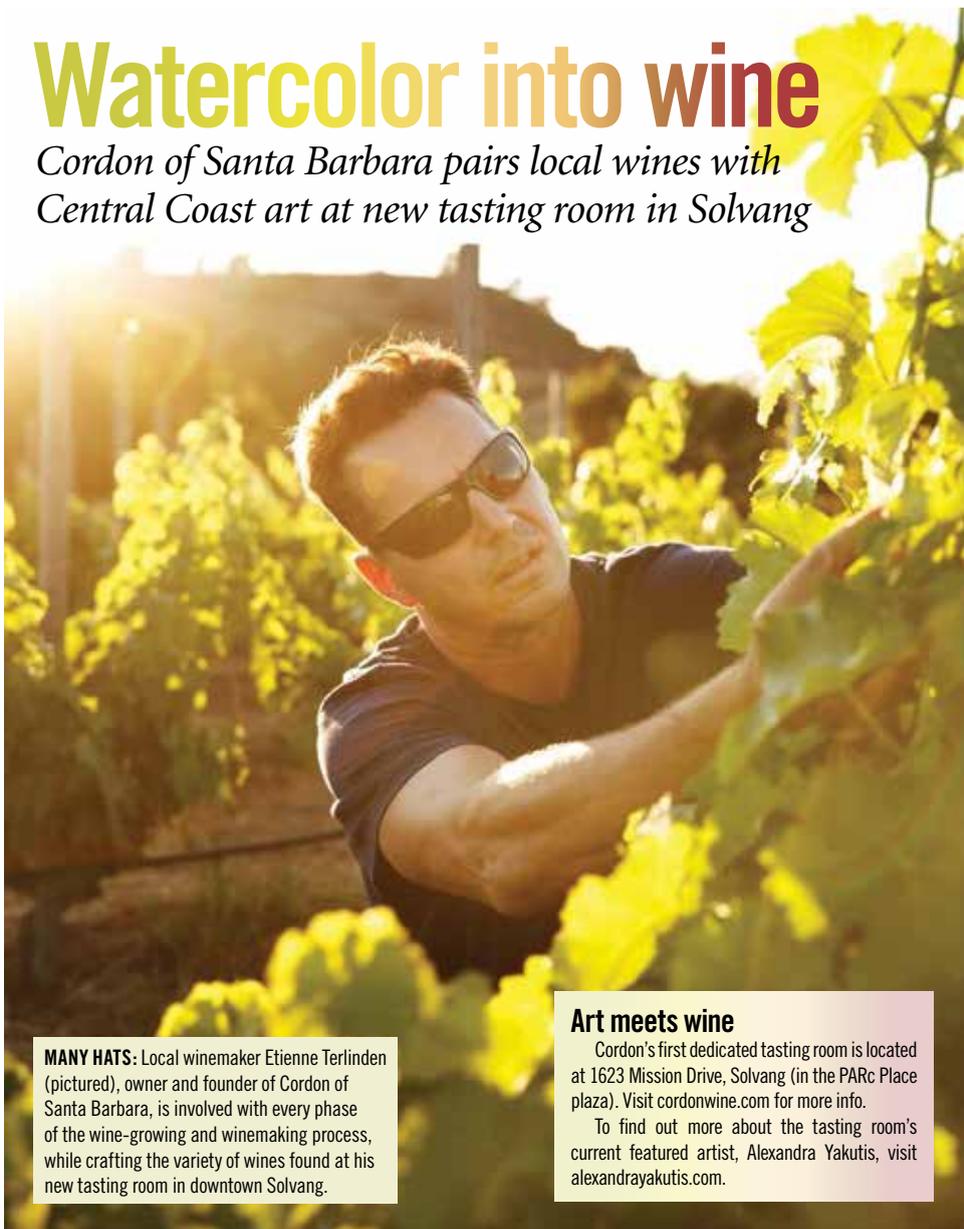
- Yes, there are plenty to choose from.
- Probably, but I wouldn't be opposed to just one more.
- Depends on which part of Santa Maria you're talking about.
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Watercolor into wine

Cordon of Santa Barbara pairs local wines with Central Coast art at new tasting room in Solvang



MANY HATS: Local winemaker Etienne Terlinden (pictured), owner and founder of Cordon of Santa Barbara, is involved with every phase of the wine-growing and winemaking process, while crafting the variety of wines found at his new tasting room in downtown Solvang.

Art meets wine

Cordon's first dedicated tasting room is located at 1623 Mission Drive, Solvang (in the PARc Place plaza). Visit cordonwine.com for more info.

To find out more about the tasting room's current featured artist, Alexandra Yakutis, visit alexandrayakutis.com.

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

Looking back on his youth, one local winemaker recalls fond memories of exploring his grandfather's wine cellar—but not for the reasons some might expect.

"The cellar was pretty vast and it was below the house, so we'd hide there during hide and seek," said Etienne Terlinden, owner and founder of Cordon of Santa Barbara.

Between the ages of 8 and 17, Terlinden spent every summer break at his grandparents' countryside house in Belgium. As he got older, he began to share his grandfather's interest in wine, admiring the variety of labels and producers collected in the aforementioned cellar.

Terlinden's eventual foray into the wine industry started a bit later, in Santa Barbara during his college years, he said.

"I worked at a wine shop called Wine Time. Back then, you could count on your fingers the amount of wineries in Santa Barbara County," said Terlinden, who gradually moved his way up from there, from working directly for a winemaker at a vineyard to becoming a winemaker himself.

In 2001, Terlinden launched his own label, Cordon of Santa Barbara, based at a custom crush facility in Buellton—where he crafts his wines using grapes sourced from throughout Santa Barbara County. Some of his most popular, locally produced wines include chardonnay, sourced from the Santa Maria Valley; pinot noir, sourced from the Sta. Rita Hills; and sauvignon blanc, sourced from Happy Canyon.

Terlinden proudly referred to Cordon's wines as "an expression of this geography," thanks to Santa

Barbara County's diverse variety of microclimates.

"Our wines are really reflective of the region," Terlinden said. "We have some very nice, bright, acidic wines, and then we also have some lush, round, tannic wines."

Jamie Edlin, communications director at Cordon of Santa Barbara, described Terlinden's wines as displaying a certain Old World sensibility and simplicity.

"None of them are big, overblown wines. They all have a certain grace and restraint," Edlin said. "You can taste the layers. You can taste the nuances. None of the wines will hit you over the head with a two-by-four. They're really beautifully balanced, very expressive."

While Terlinden's crush facility in Buellton does include a tasting area, open by appointment only, the local vintner and his team had always hoped to open an official tasting room someday.

"We've been flirting with the idea of a dedicated tasting room for a long time," said Edlin, who's worked with Terlinden for more than a decade.

At the end of November, the Cordon team celebrated the grand opening of the label's first tasting room, in the heart of downtown Solvang. The new venue is located in the recently renovated PARc Place plaza, where several businesses share a large patio—perfect for hosting collaborative events between neighbors, Edlin explained.

"Now that we're all right here, we're going to create a courtyard community, where we can collaborate on holiday parties, musicians, singers, right here in the middle of the courtyard," Edlin said.

Aside from teaming up with businesses next door and across the patio for special events, the new



ART HOUSE: Every six weeks or so, Cordon's tasting room will showcase a different local artist. Owner Etienne Terlinden described this combination of art and wine as pairing "art for the eyes" with "art for the palate."



Share tasty tips!



Send tidbits on everything food and drink to cwiseblood@santamariasun.com.

TIME WARP: In 2001, Etienne Terlinden (pictured) launched his own label, Cordon of Santa Barbara, based at a custom crush facility in Buellton, where he crafts his wines from grapes sourced throughout Santa Barbara County. In 2021, Terlinden opened his first dedicated tasting room in Solvang.

tasting room will also function as a year-round collaborative effort within its own walls. Every six weeks or so, the tasting room will showcase a different local artist.

Terlinden described this combination of the visual and the quaffable as pairing "art for the eyes" with "art for the palate."

"I had a longtime fantasy, as did Etienne, of a gallery," Edlin said. "It seemed like a great way to decorate our walls, a great way to cross-promote both the wines and the artists."

Cordon's first featured artist is Alexandra Yakutis, whose watercolor paintings and multimedia works are currently on display in the tasting room. Both Yakutis' abstract and realistic pieces often express her love of nature, particularly shorelines and trees.

Even if the promise of art and wine doesn't draw potential tasters into the venue, Edlin said visitors probably won't be able to resist hopping over to see the tasting room's rescue dog, Oliver, a purebred golden retriever.

"He's a retriever, because we put him out in the



WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR? The new tasting room is located in the recently renovated PARc Place plaza, in which several Solvang businesses share a large patio and courtyard—perfect for hosting collaborative events between neighboring venues (live music, etc.).

courtyard and [he] retrieves people, hopefully to the tasting room," Edlin said. ○

Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood wants to give a loving shout-out to his family's golden retriever, Seymour. Send comments to cwiseblood@santamariasun.com.

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