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**AT THE MOVIES**

*Moonfall: Epic fail [26]*



*Santa Barbara County wineries have a post-COVID-19 influx of weddings [6], and mini weddings and elopements are on the rise [10]*

**BY SUN STAFF**



# Love and marriage

**NEWS** 'The keys to housing the homeless' [4]

**ARTS** *Muskie Love* at the Melodrama [24]

**EATS** Garagiste Wine Fest returns to Solvang [27]

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# Contents

FEBRUARY 10 - FEBRUARY 17, 2022 VOL. 22 NO. 50

After taking a year off due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Sun's annual wedding issue is back—and the wedding industry almost didn't skip a beat. Although some wedding celebrations were put on temporary hold and then had to make adjustments in 2020 and 2021, 2022 is moving full speed ahead for tying the knot. This week, Staff Writer Taylor O'Connor speaks with local wineries and other wedding venues about what some of those changes entailed and how busy they are heading into the summer [6], and Staff Writer Malea Martin details the rise of the mini wedding [10].

You can also read about COVID-19's lingering presence in Santa Barbara County [4]; a modern take on *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Melodrama [24]; and the Garagiste Festival is back and showcasing renegade wines in Solvang [27].

Camillia Lanham  
editor



**MAKING ADJUSTMENTS:** Roblar Winery is one of many event venues in Santa Barbara County that's accommodating for weddings both big and small this year with pandemic safety precautions in place.

Cover courtesy photo by Jessica Maher Photography > Cover design by Alex Zuniga

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## Political Watch

• **U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal** (D-Santa Barbara) announced on Feb. 2 the first round of investments to repair California bridges under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act he helped pass. Carbajal voted to deliver \$4.25 billion to fix bridges this year, as part of a total \$27.5 billion investment in bridge repair over the next five years, according to the congressman's office. According to the **Department of Transportation**, there are 52 bridges in Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties that are in poor condition. The bipartisan infrastructure act also includes a separate program designed to support larger bridges through a competitive grant program. Details on that program will be announced at a later date. "We promised to make long overdue investments in our dilapidated infrastructure, and I am proud to say we delivered. The bipartisan infrastructure law is the largest investment our nation has ever made to repair our bridges, which will help Central Coast residents get to school and work, create good-paying jobs, connect communities, and drive commerce," Carbajal said in a statement. "The bipartisan infrastructure law is a once-in-a-generation investment that will improve the lives of everyone on the Central Coast. I'm proud to have worked with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get this bill across the finish line."

• **Gov. Gavin Newsom** announced on Feb. 3 that more than \$923 million for affordable housing projects is available across the state as part of the California Housing Accelerator—a \$1.75 billion investment to provide bridge funding to shovel-ready projects that were unable to begin construction due to a shortage of federal tax credits and bonds. In total, 27 statewide projects have been approved with nearly all of the projects expected to break ground this summer. When fully completed, the projects will create 2,300 housing units—500 are for those experiencing homelessness, according to the governor's office. Newsom's plan to address homelessness and housing affordability includes multi-year investments and new laws and accountability measures. "We're building more housing for people at risk of homelessness to prevent folks from ending up on the streets, and we're doing it faster than ever before," Newsom said in a statement. "We're getting shovels in the ground in a matter of months, creating thousands of new affordable homes for people at the economic margins who need these new units the most." The Housing Accelerator prioritizes projects for those experiencing homelessness and for those living below 30 percent of an area's median income.

• **U.S. Sen. Alex Padilla** (D-California) led 13 of his Senate colleagues in sending a letter to the **Biden-Harris administration** calling for the creation of an Urban Indian Interagency Work Group that would identify the needs of urban Native Americans and Alaska Natives and implement strategies to support them in urban setting, according to a Feb. 3 statement. "In light of the goals you outlined in the Biden-Harris Plan for Tribal Nations, specifically to ensure that urban AI/ANs receive 'quality health care, culturally relevant education, adequate and affordable housing, and other needed resources,' we urge the administration to form an Urban Indian Interagency Work Group to identify the critical needs of urban AI/AN populations and develop strategies to implement real change that uplifts urban AI/ANs," the letter stated. Today, approximately 70 percent of Native Americans reside in urban cities as a direct result of the federal government's assimilation policies as well as the efforts of tribal members seeking out education and employment opportunities. The establishment of an interagency work group would help identify federal funding strategies to better address the needs of urban-living Native Americans, according to Padilla's office. ○

## Santa Barbara County passed its omicron peak

COVID-19 case numbers had dropped by 66 percent from Santa Barbara County's peak in January, county Public Health Director Van Do-Reynoso said on Feb. 8.

"We looked at other places internationally that were ahead of us, and we saw that same rapid decline. We are pretty confident that the omicron variant had its peak in January," Do-Reynoso said.

As of Feb. 8, there were 2,555 active cases, which is down from a two-week average of 4,496; hospitalizations had dropped 17 percent; and the county was seeing an 80 percent drop in new cases, she said.

"If you look at our county case rate, it mirrors other jurisdictions because the increase happened around the holidays where people travel, there's cooler temperatures, and people tend to be inside. All of those contributed to the spread of the omicron variant," Do-Reynoso explained. "Our community quickly followed public health interventions and encouragement. People became more consistent with face masks and limited their indoor gatherings."

Do-Reynoso also highlighted that more people got tested for COVID-19, resulting in better isolation and limiting the the variant's spread. The county's vaccination rate climbed up to 66.8 percent.

"There's also a notion between vaccinated individuals and natural immunity—it's infected everyone that could be infected—added to slowing down the infection and the declining rates," she said.

As a result, hospitals are less crowded and fewer staff are at risk, Do-Reynoso added.

"We saw around our peak our hospital capacities were on the brink, and we [saw] an increased number of people needing to be hospitalized and staff being sick," Do Reynoso said. "There is a corresponding decrease with the deep decline in case rates. It's nice to say that as well."

Lompoc Valley Medical Center's Chief Executive Director Steve Popkin said the center's now able to run efficiently and serve the current number of patients without major problems as COVID-19 numbers decline.

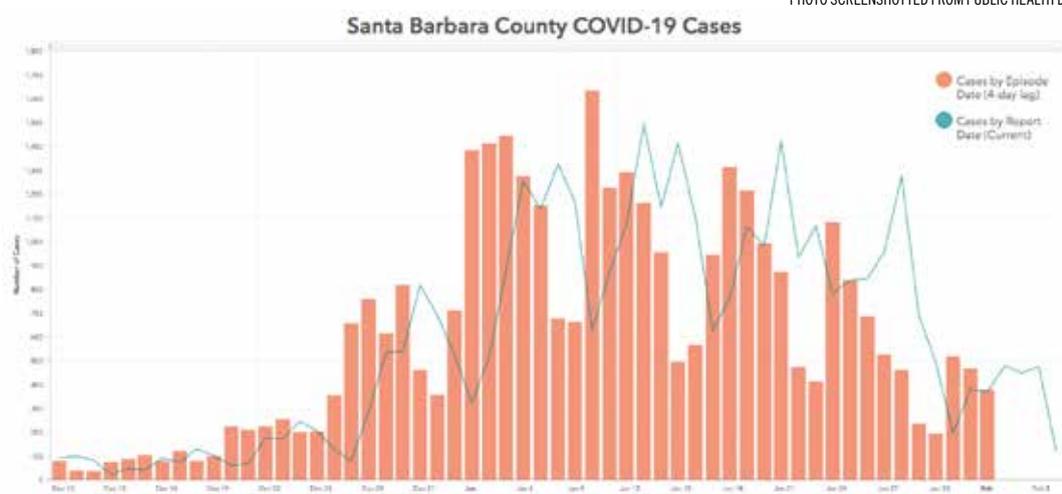
"We are optimistic things will continue in a positive way, and continue to decrease in hospitalization. That's what is being projected for the Central Coast Region, and California in general," Popkin said.

As of Feb. 8, the Lompoc Valley Medical Center (LVMC) had seven COVID-19 positive hospitalized patients, and three of those were in the ICU. During the omicron surge, there were 23 hospitalized COVID-19 positive patients. Although there are positive shifts, Popkin said the hospital is prepared for potential sudden changes.

"We've learned to be very nimble in decision making. We don't make any decisions too far out. Since we prepare for the worst for COVID, it makes it easier to operate the hospital," Popkin said.

The state is feeling optimistic, too. On Feb. 15, the California Public Health Department's universal indoor masking mandate will expire, and the state will only require face coverings for unvaccinated individuals, Do-Reynoso said.

Officials at the county level are still analyzing local hospitalizations and changing their perspective on required case rates to end mask mandates due to omicron's high transmission rate. The decision will be announced in a few days, Do-Reynoso said.



**A DROP:** On Feb. 6, County Public Health data reported 118 COVID cases, which can be seen on the far right on the blue line of the graph.

"I want to applaud our community for supporting these public health measures. I know we are all a little tired and a little frustrated. I want them to know I appreciate them for accommodating the indoor masking order and praise those getting their vaccines and boosters. All of those actions have contributed to county cases declining," she said.

—Taylor O'Connor

## Grand jury points out issues with projects Homekey and Roomkey

While state-funded projects helped address some homelessness issues by creating more housing units during the pandemic, a recent Santa Barbara County grand jury report found that the county needs more permanent funding sources to continue its recent successes.

"The grand jury found there was overwhelming evidence that demonstrated the effectiveness of Project Roomkey in providing a non-congregate shelter option for hotel and shelter rooms. The state Homekey program took it a step further to provide state resources to local governments for repurposing for interim or permanent housing," said Dinah Lockhart, the deputy director of the county's housing and community division.

Lockhart presented the jury's findings to the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors during its Feb. 8 meeting and discussed its response to the jury's report.

"The keys to housing the homeless," the grand jury recommended establishing programs similar to Roomkey in both North and South County, collaborating with other county entities to create a potential site roster, working with city officials to develop and implement local programs, and creating a funding plan, she said at the meeting.

"The county Community Services Department formed a roster of [potential] hotels and motels for the Roomkey program. It's noted in the county responses to the grand jury report that the county continues to work with local jurisdictions to identify Homekey sites," Lockhart said.

Current projects in North and South County include DignityMoves in Santa Barbara, the Isla Vista Pallet Shelter program, and the Lompoc Pallet Shelter program, plus the county Housing Authority submitted applications for locations in Santa Maria and Goleta, Lockhart said.

"Roomkey was successful in transitioning senior and medically fragile community residents to housing placements, [but] without a sustained funding source beyond emergency federal or state funding this model is not sustainable," Lockhart said.

The state of California allocated \$1.45 billion in 2021-22 fiscal year, and \$1.3 billion in the 2022-23

fiscal year for Homekey projects at local levels. Santa Barbara County applied and received \$3.12 million for a Lompoc studios project—providing 14 units—and \$7 million for an Isla Vista shelter with 22 rooms and 50 beds, she said.

About \$22.2 million in U.S. Department of Health and Human Services funds are allocated to different sites, services, sanitation and cleanup, and outreach teams in the county, but the grand jury report suggests finding a long-term funding source if the county wants to continue pushing the Homekey and Roomkey program, she continued. "The grand jury report [also] noted the county and community providers found it challenging to find hotels or motels willing to participate," Lockhart said.

Most recently the county had issues working with Santa Maria and converting a Motel 6 to provide 75 additional sheltering units, 2nd District Supervisor Gregg Hart pointed out.

"I just think that demonstrates that we can't collaborate or communicate enough, but we are going to continue because we know this approach works," Hart said.

Regardless, the county has continued making progress, Hart said, and the public should be pleased to see the program's success.

"It's not easy, but the successes are real. They are individual people—our neighbors—and it can be difficult for us to contemplate the trauma and the tragedy they experience. ... The pandemic is exacerbating this problem, and we are trying to get folks on this path that works and get all local governments on the same strategy," Hart said.

—Taylor O'Connor

## Solvang struggles with ongoing backyard shed debate

A Solvang resident who urged the city to change its tune on backyard shed policing is not satisfied with the city's suggested solutions so far, and neither is the Solvang Planning Commission.

Both the resident, Chris Horn, and some members of the Planning Commission expressed concerns with a recent proposal from city staff, heard during the commission's Feb. 7 meeting.

The proposal includes revisions to Solvang's municipal code that staff drafted with an aim to "provide people with the most flexibility to have sheds," City Manager Xenia Bradford said. But Horn said the suggested changes are still not flexible enough to accommodate at least half of the homeowners under fire for shed violations in the Skytt Mesa neighborhood—where the ongoing dispute originated.

In July of 2021, about 20 homeowners in Skytt Mesa, including Horn, became subject to code enforcement for having sheds in their yards

NEWS from page 4

that violated Solvang's setback rules. During a City Council meeting in October, Horn argued that punishing the group would be unfair and arbitrary, while claiming that hundreds of homeowners throughout Solvang are violating the current code as well.

The Solvang City Council then asked the Planning Commission to provide recommended revisions to the municipal code that would apply not only to residents of Skytt Mesa, but every neighborhood within city limits.

"We're trying to come up with a general standard to apply across the whole city," Assistant City Attorney Chelsea O'Sullivan said during the Feb. 7 meeting, while explaining how the proposed revisions could exempt some homeowners from enforcement action, while also putting new unexamined cases under scrutiny.

During public comment, Horn argued that homeowners should have the chance to defend their own sheds on a case-by-case basis, which Commissioner Justin Rodriguez expressed his support for. Rodriguez also criticized elements of city staff's proposal as "pretty cookie cutter," and admitted that, if passed, the new regulations would force him to alter his own backyard shed situation.

"It's not like a one-size-fits-all solution," Rodriguez said. "What about the common sense proposals that Chris asked about? That sounded reasonable to me. It doesn't seem like a burden to the community to do so on a case-by-case basis, to see which ones are within compliance and which ones are without." Reiterating another

suggestion from Horn, Rodriguez said he wouldn't be opposed to excusing the original Skytt Mesa homeowners from enforcement action if they're able to pass an inspection with the Santa Barbara County Fire Department.

"As far as I know, fire coming out and saying 'OK, seems good,' is still not consistent with the code. If there's an inconsistency with the code, that's the code enforcement officer's purview, not fire," O'Sullivan responded. "So whether it's fire safe is a separate question from whether it's a code violation."

City staff did discuss the proposed code revisions with the Santa Barbara County Fire Department however, which became the subject of a separate concern from the Planning Commission.

One of the suggested design standards, drafted as a preference from the Fire Department, is to enforce that all backyard sheds remain at least 5 feet away from the home, so firefighters can have space for easy ladder access.

"It just seems illogical," Commissioner Aaron Petersen said. "Because I can fill my 5 feet with trees and you'd never get through it, and shrubs, and everything else, and wheelbarrows, and whatever I wanted to put over there."

Petersen asked staff if the 5 feet notion was a request or a requirement of the Fire Department, which O'Sullivan and Planning Consultant Laurie Tamura could not provide a definitive answer to.

The Planning Commission ultimately decided not to take official action on the proposal and directed staff to seek clarification from the Fire Department on its stance.   
 —Caleb Wiseblood

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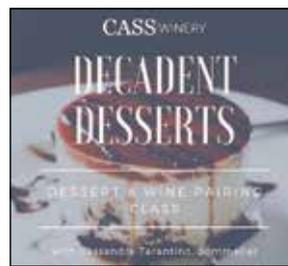
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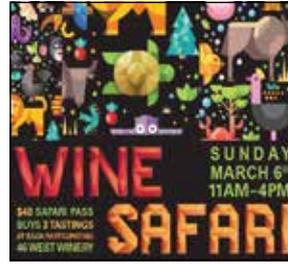
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- **Save Our Water** [www.saveourwater.com](http://www.saveourwater.com)
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- **DEADLINE: All posters MUST be turned in by Friday, April 8, 2022, by 4:00 p.m., at the Santa Maria Regional Landfill located at 2065 East Main Street.** Only winning posters will be returned to students.

# Wedding season is on

North County event venues get influx of weddings this year with COVID-19 cautions still in place



and right now, coming into Valentine's Day we will get another rush of inquiries coming in," Ramirez said. "We've got quite a few events booked, which is beautiful for the industry because it keeps everyone working."

Ramirez said she's gotten inquiries for 2023 and had some dates already booked for that year.

"It's common once it hits January; we have those couples that like to plan, and then we get the last-minute couples that are happy to book a wedding six to nine months out. It's pretty normal to be booking out to 2023," she said.

However, Ramirez said there seems to be a greater sense of urgency when it comes to finding a venue and picking a date, and booking the venue for an entire weekend as opposed to having a single-day wedding.

Roblar Winery's director of events, Leanne Elliott, noticed a similar pattern with more people willing to spend more on their weddings after a long wait, and possibly more income after the stay-at-home orders faded.

"People are tired of waiting, they are done waiting, they are ready to be together, and people are ready to [celebrate] together again," she added.

Couples will typically plan a weekend filled with a wine tasting that flows into a rehearsal dinner, followed by golfing events, the wedding itself, and then a departing brunch before everyone goes home.

"[We] pride ourselves in our ability to pivot. Because we have multiple properties, we are able to accommodate all those needs and desires. When I see a recurring theme or trend, I will create a package of all of those experiences," Elliott said. "Last year was dark as an industry until about July, when we got the green light to have in-person events with guidelines. Our winery and farm were packed. We were doing two years' worth of events in six months."

WEDDINGS continued page 8

MEMORABLE MOMENTS: Gainey Vineyard—a family-run winery now in its third generation—has been operating and hosting events, including weddings, for 35 years.

COURTESY PHOTO BY ANNA DELORES

## BY TAYLOR O'CONNOR

Santa Barbara County's green rolling hills, beach access, and vast array of vineyards can make anyone's fairy tale wedding dream come true. People can stay in rustic-style cottages or high-end hotels and can partake of farm-to-table meals with fresh produce from a local farm.

In 2020, many weddings were canceled, and wineries temporarily stopped hosting events until safety measures allowed otherwise. By 2021, wineries were busier than ever with rescheduled 2020 weddings plus new couples booking venues.

In 2022, the wedding industry is showing no sign of slowing with

bookings extended to 2023—and 2024 is already under discussion for some venues. As a result, venues have increased their prices and are flexing with the current supply chain issues. Wineries and event centers alike are adapting to the increased demand for events and adjusting their packages to accommodate the variety of needs.

## A lot of growth

After many months of being shut down, Santa Ynez-based Gainey Vineyard had a great 2021 wedding season, said Events Manager Sunny Ramirez.

"As a whole, everybody's excited to have another successful year,

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**THE SETUP:** Zaca Creek's stone buildings, lush landscape, and helpful staff can make any wedding a beautiful event all while continuing to maintain COVID-19 safety precautions, co-owner Chelsea Rushing said.



**FARM FRESH:** Roblar Winery offers in-house catering with a menu based on the season's harvest from the Roblar Farm.

**WEDDINGS** from page 6

So far in 2022, Roblar's received more inquiries than ever, reaching dates in 2024. Elliott said people feel more confident the season will continue—even with the omicron variant, which isn't causing as severe of symptoms, and restrictions remaining minimal.

**Lingering fear**

Even with anticipation and excitement for celebration, co-owner of Buellton's Zaca Creek Chelsea Rushing said her clients have a more cautious approach after COVID-19's havoc.

"I've had brides lose their family members due to COVID a month before their wedding, and they want to push it back because they don't want people to be talking about that at the wedding," Rushing said. "I've had couples push it back three times [because] they are looking at losing family members to this unstoppable situation."

It's been a roller coaster for couples; they want to celebrate but feel conflicted because it's during a time of social distancing and health precautions, she said.

"Navigating weddings has been incredibly emotional; looking at the full picture of what their family used to look like and then what it looks like two years later, I would say people have had vast changes," Rushing said.

As a result, she said Zaca Creek's been very accommodating to rescheduling and helping couples have COVID-19-cautious weddings with safety standards in place. She explained that some parties used bracelets for guests to display various levels of comfort: Green means they can be hugged and touched, yellow means they can be approached but not touched, and red means stay socially distanced from them.

"It's so interesting to see all of the stuff pop up because of the

pandemic. Sanitizer stations are really common and rapid test purchases for guests to make everyone feel comfortable, and that's in addition to running a normal wedding," she said.

There are also many parties switching to weekday weddings and an uptick in weddings with fewer than 100 guests and intimate elopements with fewer than 50 guests, she said.

"It's been one of those things where the name of the game is pivot," Rushing said. "Who knows how it will transition. I know people have wanted it the way it was before, but I don't know if that's going to be a possibility."

"I'm hopeful we can get to the point of large gatherings, but it's so hard to know and say, 'Let's plan this.'" ○

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



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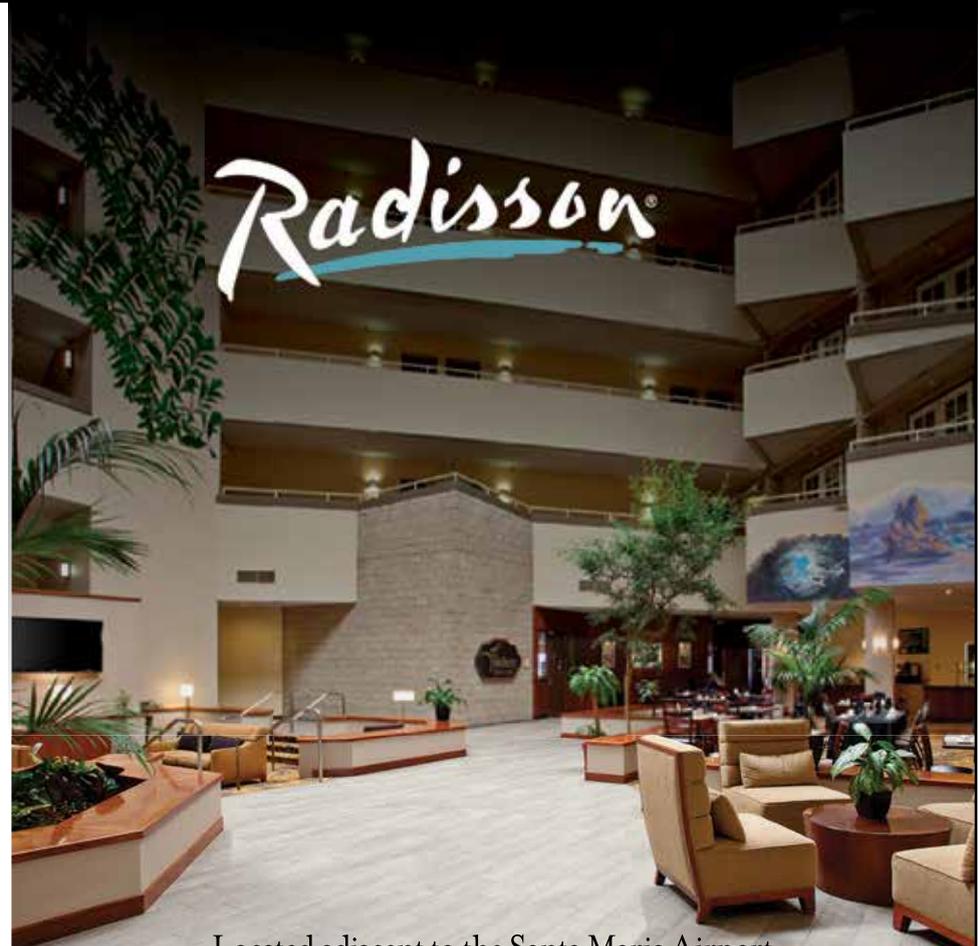
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# Rise of the minimony

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## An intimate 'I do'

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then flowers. One hour, and everybody's happy," Peterson said. "Then, within the last five years or so, a majority of our clients have requested if they can have maybe five people attend, to now we're having 20 to 30 people attend."

This trend became a necessity during the pandemic, as couples like the Buxtons were forced to cancel their bigger plans and opt for something smaller. But once the "I dos" were all said and done, the Buxtons said they wouldn't have had it any other way.

"I think we both agree that we were both happy that we actually did a smaller guest count," Alec said. "The intimacy of that was nice."

Jaime added that with the smaller guest list, it was easy to keep the party rolling after the wedding.

"We took a small party bus into San Luis Obispo, and most of the guests got to ride on that," she said. "If we had done a really big wedding we wouldn't have been able to do that, and spend that extra time with people."

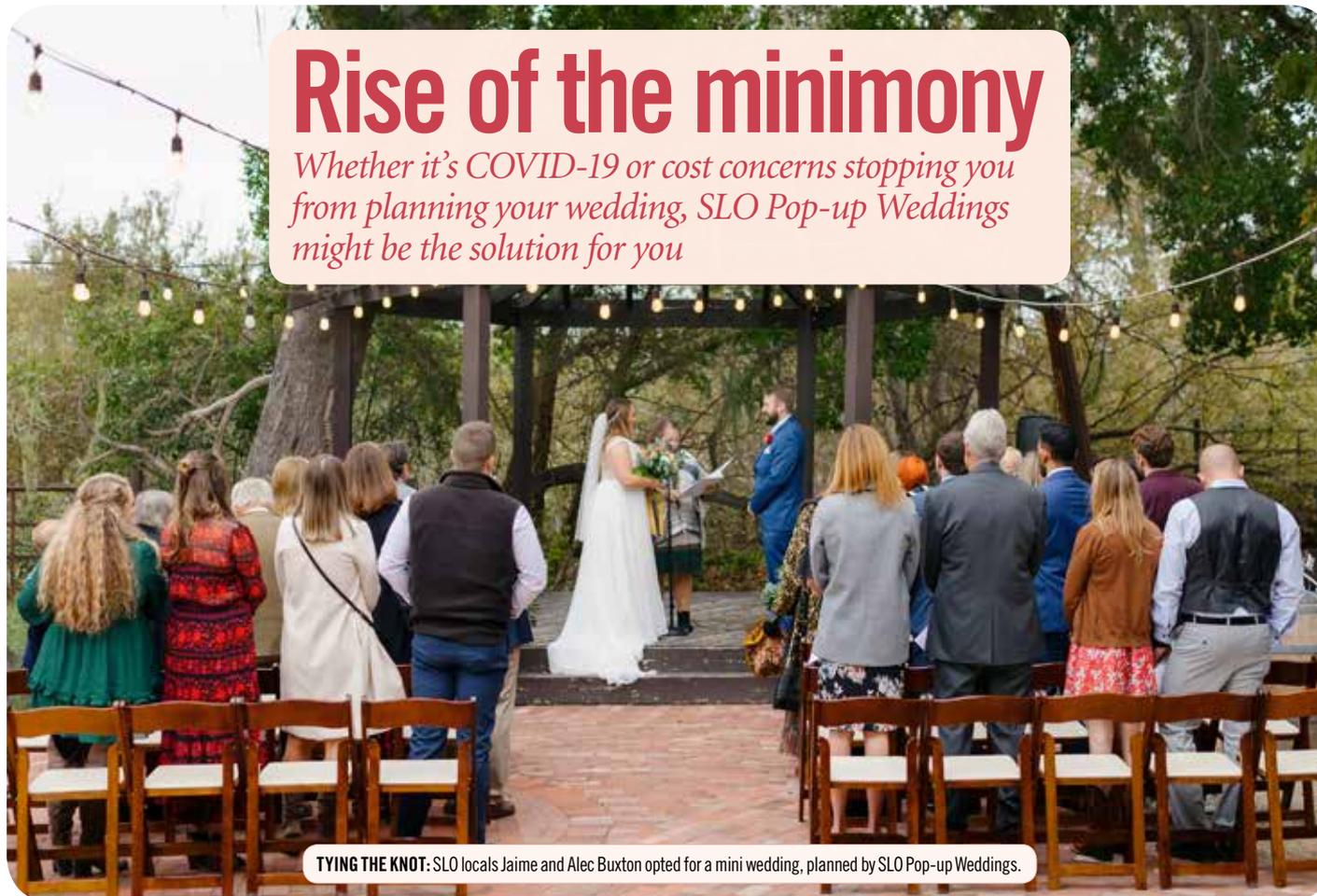
Since Peterson also plans full-scale weddings through her company, she's able to use the connections she already has in the wedding community to put on smaller weddings without the huge price tag.

"Our package is all in one: You get the photographer, the officiant, a coordinator, we handle the flowers. We really customize the ceremony," Peterson said.

Whether a couple chooses to have 20 or 200 attendees, Peterson said all the weddings she plans come back to sharing your special day with the people you love the most.

"I think the pandemic has made a lot of people realize the really important people in their life." ○

Reach Staff Writer Malea Martin, from the Sun's sister paper, at [mmartin@newtimesslo.com](mailto:mmartin@newtimesslo.com).



**TYING THE KNOT:** SLO locals Jaime and Alec Buxton opted for a mini wedding, planned by SLO Pop-up Weddings.

COURTESY PHOTO BY TAYLER ENERLE

## BY MALEA MARTIN

Jaime and Alec Buxton had their dream wedding planned for 2020: a traditional ceremony with close to 100 of their friends and family there to celebrate with them. But the pandemic stopped the Buxtons and many other couples from tying the knot in the way they had originally envisioned.

"We postponed it a couple of times," Alec said. "It got to the point where we started to have to really finalize the details, and we realized that there was no end in sight to the pandemic. At that point, it was like, 'OK, when are we ever going to get married?'"

The Buxtons decided to do a mini wedding in late 2021: 35 guests; a small, intimate ceremony; and way less fuss.

"This smaller wedding had both less planning involved in it, less impact on our friends and family, less cost impact, but also we just wanted to get it over with," Alec laughed. "Not in a negative way, but we were just tired of waiting."

The Buxtons hired Korinna Peterson, founder of SLO Pop-up Weddings, to help them plan their small and intimate wedding. Peterson also does full-blown weddings through her company Le Festin Events, but the pop-up division specializes in planning smaller weddings and elopements across the Central Coast, offering an easier and more affordable option for clients who just want to keep it sweet and simple.

"There's two different kinds of couples out there," Peterson said. "One who wants the full-blown wedding, and there are others who definitely just want the smaller, more intimate elopement."

Within the past two years particularly, Peterson has seen the demand for those smaller weddings grow.

"There are a lot of couples who were propelled to elope or have these mini weddings, but they still wanted to get that feel of a ceremony and reception," Peterson said. "I think a majority of the people are definitely looking at the cost factor."

For the Buxtons, hiring a wedding planner wasn't originally in the budget. But once they switched gears to planning a mini wedding, they realized it was well worth it.

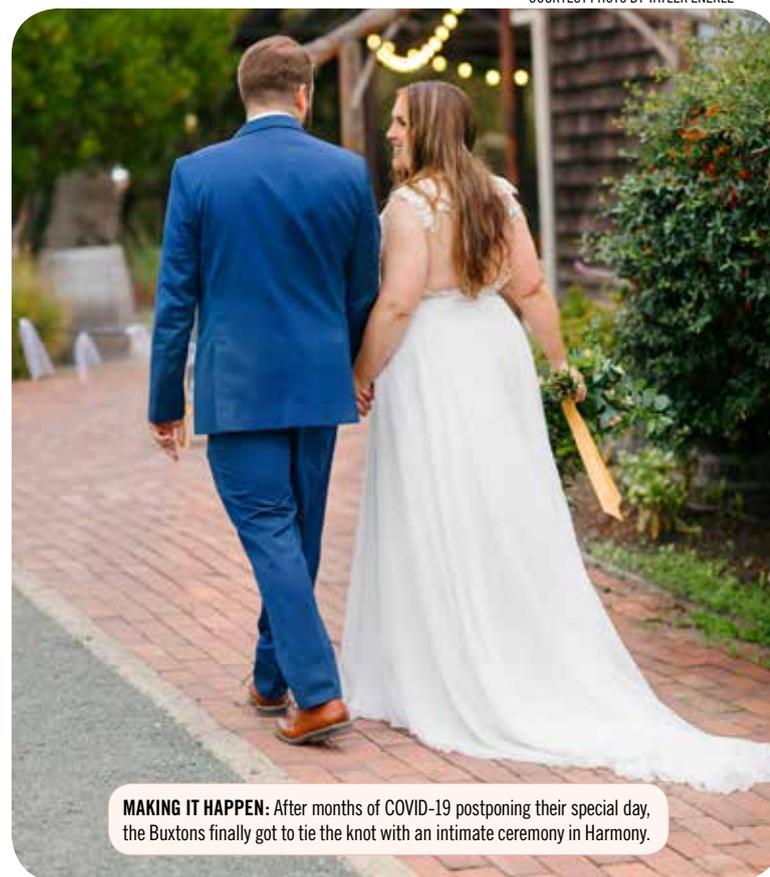
"I think when I originally started planning our wedding, I was like, 'I could never get a wedding planner, I couldn't afford this,'" Jaime said. "Then when I started talking to Korinna, she just was so affordable. To have someone help coordinate, it was amazing."

Peterson has witnessed a new type of wedding emerge in recent years: It lies somewhere in between an elopement at the courthouse and a 200-person celebration.

"Originally, when I started the pop-up division of my company, it was really based more toward the traditional elopement: two people, a photographer, a coordinator, the officiant, and

COURTESY PHOTO BY LOVERIDGE PHOTOGRAPHY

**ALL IN ONE:** SLO Pop-up Weddings' all-inclusive packages allow clients to throw the mini wedding of their dreams, minus the stress.



**MAKING IT HAPPEN:** After months of COVID-19 postponing their special day, the Buxtons finally got to tie the knot with an intimate ceremony in Harmony.

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**BELL, VIRGINIA RUTH**, 73, of San Luis Obispo passed away 1/23/2022 arrangements with Los Osos Valley Mortuary & Memorial Park

**BENOIT, JOHN**, 89, of San Luis Obispo, passed away 1/27/2022 arrangements with Blue Sky Cremation Service

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**VELASQUEZ, BERTHA REYES**, 90, of Lompoc passed away 1/21/2022 arrangements with Starbuck-Lind Mortuary

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SCREENSHOT FROM BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING



**CELEBRATION:** Santa Maria-Lompoc NAACP President Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt virtually attended the Feb. 1 Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors meeting to recognize 20 Black health care professionals and receive the county's Black History Month resolution.

## Joy and legacy

*The Santa Maria-Lompoc NAACP receives county recognition and hosts several Black History Month events*

BY TAYLOR O'CONNOR

At the beginning of the month, Santa Maria-Lompoc NAACP President Lawanda Lyons-Pruitt drove up and down Santa Barbara County to receive resolutions from several cities and the Board of Supervisors recognizing February 2022 as Black History Month.

"Our theme is Black joy and legacy and focuses on health and safety. ... We talked about highlighting the Black professionals—past and present—who have been pivotal to our history and made a difference in our community," Lyons-Pruitt said. "That's the idea behind Black history; to celebrate the troubles and triumphs of Black people. Although Black people have experienced racism and discrimination, we rejoice and still have been able to overcome those things."

With that in mind, the NAACP celebrated 20 Black health care professionals in Santa Barbara County, five of them from North County, and Lyons-Pruitt presented them to the Santa Maria City Council, the Lompoc City Council, and the Board of Supervisors.

"Generally we always have a program that's usually in-person, and we'd go in person with the Board of Supervisors. There's usually a reception, but not this year or last year," she said.

A lot of NAACP programming moved online or was canceled due to the omicron variant, but there are a few local, outdoor opportunities for people to celebrate Black History Month. The first is a vaccine clinic in Lompoc, and the second is the second annual Black History Celebration in Lavagnino Plaza outside of the Santa Maria Public Library.

"In lieu of the big barbecue that we generally have at Pioneer Park, we are having a free, COVID vaccine clinic. ... There's still a need, and why don't we meet the needs of the community?" Lyons-Pruitt said. "I'm sure there will be other events that will come up, but we are limited because of COVID."

The Lavagnino Plaza event is typically an opportunity to educate the community through actors portraying different important historical figures throughout Black history, but Lyons-Pruitt said she still needs to work out the details.

"It's important that we honor, that we celebrate, and naturally, we will remember because it inspires. By remembering, we do not allow history to repeat itself," she said.

Lyons-Pruitt said there are plenty of ways people can take the time to educate themselves, like watching

documentaries—as opposed to movies, which can be edited for dramatization—reading Black history, and attending online Black history events happening throughout the county, she said.

"It's OK for people to do their own research, [and] to ask questions if they don't understand. There's nothing wrong with that," Lyons-Pruitt said.

The NAACP likes to highlight historical events like the Emancipation Proclamation and the civil rights movement, and provide information about slavery to keep the community informed, she said.

"There are a whole lot of Black people that have contributed and made significant contributions to American history, and their story needs to be told," she said.

Growing up in rural Mississippi, Lyons-Pruitt said she never saw her own history in her school experiences, and sees that reoccurring with states making decisions on what should be removed from history books. She said she's hopeful that will change.

"There's a lot of people who've made a significant difference in American history, but people don't know about them," Lyons-Pruitt said. "We need to make sure we put it in the history books. It's important to us because it's our history. It's American history."

The COVID-19 vaccine clinic will be on Feb. 11 at Lompoc's Dick DeWees Center Community and Senior Center from 4 to 7 p.m. The outdoor Santa Maria Public Library event is on Feb. 19 at 3 p.m. Direct questions to info@santamarialompcnaacp.com.

### Highlight

• The Santa Maria Recreation and Parks Department is offering a Valentine's Make and Take Craft class. People can create a custom Valentine's Day Door Hanger to complete the holiday look for their home or office. Participants can register for the class at cityofsantamaria.org/register. The craft costs \$13 per participant and it includes all the supplies to make the door hanger. The class is on Thursday, Feb. 10, from 10 a.m. to noon at the Elwin Mussell Senior Center—510 East Park Ave. Participants who prefer to complete the project at home may pick up the craft supplies and written instructions at the center. Call Recreation and Parks Department for more information at (805) 925-0951, Ext. 2260. ○

Reach Staff Writer Taylor O'Connor at toconnor@santamariasun.com.

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- 53%** It's great for our environment and a step in the right direction.
- 40%** It's a waste of taxpayer money, and we shouldn't have bought the bus in the first place.
- 7%** It's smart, but not enough people use public transportation for it to make an impact.
- 0%** It's a worthwhile county investment! I plan on using the bus to get to my job.

15 Votes

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# A solvable issue?

*There are no easy answers to the problem of providing housing for the homeless*

BY RON FINK

Recently the county Board of Supervisors declined \$17.9 million in grant funding and then later reinstated part of a request by the Housing Authority of Santa Barbara to purchase an old motel in Santa Maria and operate it as housing for the homeless. In the process, they reserved the right to deny the project at a later date.

Why would they do this, you ask, when so many homeless folks are scattered all over the Santa Maria and Lompoc valleys?

A local news report indicated that Supervisor Larry Lavagnino said that Santa Maria city officials raised some legitimate concerns, noting a couple of Housing Authority projects in the city are “not performing as we envisioned they would perform” (*Santa Maria Times*, Jan. 25). Santa Maria Mayor Alice Patino said that crime increases in Housing Authority-managed low-income projects are a significant issue, and some residents of those projects have expressed concern for their safety.

The article also indicated that several elected officials in Santa Maria objected to the project because the Housing Authority had not brought the project to the City Council first to get local input and support.

As a former Lompoc planning commissioner, I attended several meetings where the Housing Authority presented its plans for new low-income projects in our city. The impression I got was, “We are doing you a favor by offering this presentation, but you can’t stop us anyway.” And they were right; when the City Council tried to stop one project because the city had been saturated with these low-income projects that were creating crime problems, the state intervened and the developer built the project anyway.

The news report went on to add: Lavagnino also said, “But the problem I see on all of these homeless issues—and we’re going to run into this as we move forward with them—is there is no solution, there is no easy answer.”

The news report indicated that Board Chair Joan Hartmann said, “It’s not an easy issue. It’s probably the most complex issue we face because it’s got so many different aspects of it. . . . Unless we take this positive view and embrace this while we have funds to do it—which we’ve never had before—we’re just going to have a festering problem.”

She is 100 percent correct; many of us have been saying the same thing for years. Trying to come up with the perfect solution is impossible—when one area is cleaned up and the residents moved to “temporary housing,” another one springs up with a new crop of homeless camps. But just continuing to throw money at it won’t solve it either; the perfect example is President Lyndon Jonson’s “war on poverty”—how did that go?

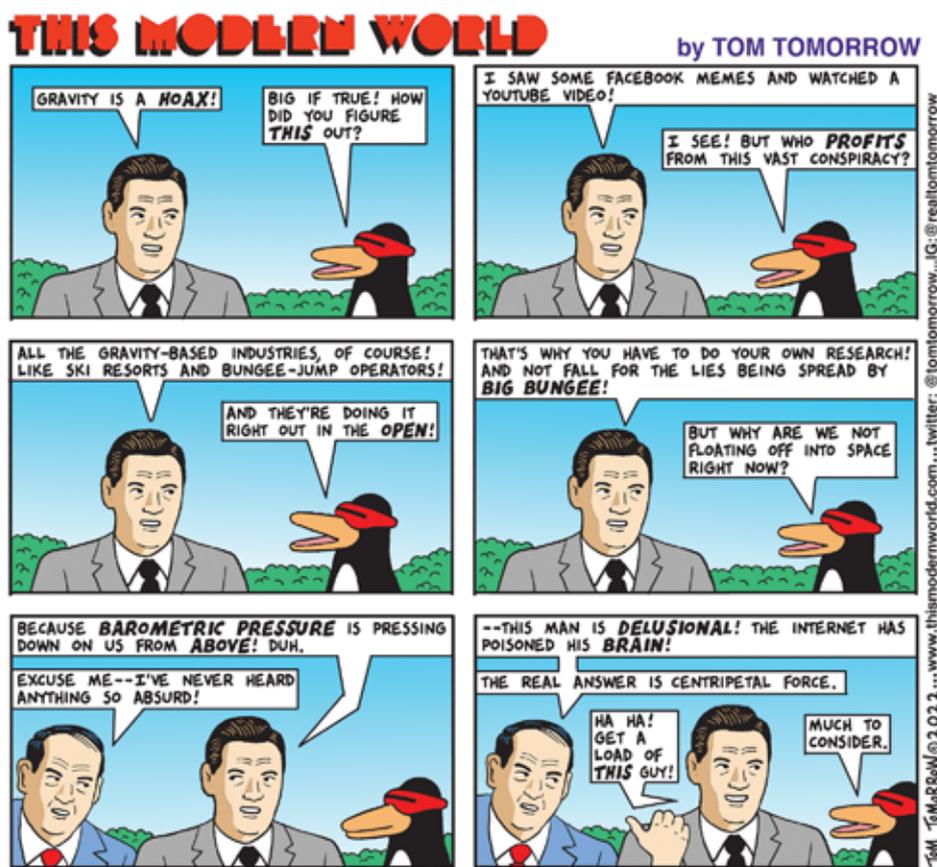
The big elephant in the room was Lavagnino’s statement that shelters were “not performing as we envisioned they would perform.” Is it because the nonprofits hired by local government to run these places don’t have the skills necessary to do it, or is it because the residents, who have lived without any rules for so long, simply refuse to accept the rules of the house?

Maybe the press or the grand jury needs to investigate how the shelters are managed and let the public know how their money is being used. Millions of dollars have been thrown at the homeless problem, and even though there are some success stories, apparently the Board of Supervisors is aware of issues that were serious enough for the majority to initially deny funding for the latest Housing Authority project.

Homeless people have cluttered the landscape for generations. Some are temporarily between homes and moving to a different locale to find work; others are simply societal dropouts addicted to a

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variety of intoxicating substances; and still others are mentally ill and need both physical and mental health treatment.

We should pull out all the stops to help those who need physical and mental health treatment. Most don’t have the means to acquire needed treatment even if it was readily available. Others are veterans traumatized by what they saw in recent political wars who need help coping with life and the physical injuries they suffered.

To his credit, the governor recently committed more than a billion dollars to try and address the treatment issue; we’ll have to see if it works. However, if it doesn’t include treatment/rehabilitation as the primary goal of the program and instead only temporarily houses those folks with mental illness, will it help?

Simply providing beds won’t fix the problem; what’s needed is a coordinated approach that produces a population that has been rehabilitated through programs designed to educate the homeless on how to survive in real life, how to become employable in the community, how to locate housing and mental/physical health services, and how to become productive citizens in a world full of opportunities.

It seems that the only thing government can do is create “plans” and hold meetings to express concern while the problem continues to grow. While some nonprofit groups have good intentions, many are clearly unable to handle the task they are paid to do. These well-meaning people aren’t equipped to deal with folks who have literally lived without a structured environment for several years prior to arriving at their shelters.

Clearly something needs to be done, but so far, the great thinkers of today, just like those in the Lyndon Johnson “war on poverty” era, have come up empty. ○

Ron Fink writes to the Sun from Lompoc. Send a letter for publication to [letters@santamariasun.com](mailto:letters@santamariasun.com).

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## LETTERS

### Big energy fights solar

The Santa Barbara Planning Commission recently voted to deny ExxonMobil’s proposal to restart offshore drilling and truck oil to Kern County on the dangerous and windy route 166; in March the final decision will be voted on by the Board of Supervisors.

Meanwhile, we face another threat to California’s goal of 100 percent clean energy by 2045. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) plans to vote in the next few weeks to add a monthly solar penalty fee to ratepayer bills and drastically reduce the credit that solar consumers receive for selling excess power back to the grid.

This would make solar too costly for many people, other than the rich. It’s a result of intense lobbying by big utilities—e.g., PG&E and Southern California Edison—fighting to maintain their profits rather than allow citizens to use free, clean energy.

Sound crazy? Sure is. Solar saves money and lessens air pollution and greenhouse gases. More than 2,000 schools, 1,000 farms, 300 apartment buildings and more than a million homes are powered directly by the sun.

Visit [solarrights.org/savecaliforniasolar](http://solarrights.org/savecaliforniasolar) to sign the petition to Gov. Newsom asking him to deny the CPUC’s proposal.

Rachel Altman  
Santa Barbara

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## OPINION

### Political quagmire

Sheds. Homeowners can't live with 'em and they can't live without 'em. And in Solvang, regulators seem to be having a hard time with the unintended consequences of a shed regulation situation caused by shed-stirrer and Skytt Mesa resident **Kristin Kellner**

She complained about a neighbor's shed not following city code guidelines, which eventually put a bunch of other noncompliant shed users under the city's microscope and now sheds all over her neighborhood are in danger and homeowners are up Shed Creek with only the city's proposed new shed code changes as a paddle.

And even those aren't good enough! The suggested changes still leave half of the Skytt Mesa homeowners with shed violations—as well as imperil the shed of a Solvang planning commissioner. Oh no!

Can't we just approve these things on a case-by-case basis, Skytt Mesa resident Chris Horn asked commissioners. And then he proceeded to throw sheds all over the city under the bus, claiming that it would be unfair to target Skytt Mesa's shed-using homeowners, when hundreds of sheds across the city aren't up to snuff.

Does that mean hundreds of sheds would need to go before the Planning Commission and possibly the City Council if an approved shed decision gets appealed? Sounds like a quality use of public resources.

"What about the common sense proposals?"

**Solvang Planning Commissioner Justin Rodriguez** asked fellow commissioners during a Feb. 7 meeting, criticizing city staff's proposed shed rule changes as "pretty cookie cutter."

Yeah. What this world needs is common sense solutions to shed issues—the most important problem facing Solvang residents, apparently. They're complicated, too, and need more than a standard one-size-fits-all solution, apparently. This "problem" has gotten so much public meeting time in the last year that I'm starting to wonder if Solvang has any real issues.

Rodriguez supported the case-by-case suggestion, but the jig is up! All his comments really came down to was the fact that if the Planning Commission passed the changes, Rodriguez was going to have to "fix" his own backyard shed situation.

"It doesn't seem like a burden to the community to do so on a case-by-case basis, to see which ones are within compliance and which ones are without," he said.

Oh? It doesn't? This conversation is a burden to the community, but hundreds of individuals pleading their individual shed cases to city staff isn't? Why are we even talking about this?

Shed politics are intense! What we need here is shed freedom. Liberate the sheds from government tyranny and nosy neighbors!

This is ridiculous. Almost as ridiculous as the **Santa Barbara County grand jury's** report on state-funded programs that created more housing during the pandemic. Projects Roomkey and Homekey provided an influx of funding across the state to create "quick" solutions to homelessness, such as turning hotels and motels into housing units. And it was a success!

High fives all around, the report said.

However, it turns out, if the county wants to see similar successes in the future, it needs to find permanent funding sources. Thank you, **Captain Obvious**. Any suggestions on where that funding might come from? No? Great. ☺

The canary is full of snark and snot. Send suggestions to [canary@santamariasun.com](mailto:canary@santamariasun.com).



# Get Outside

The Central Coast Guide to Everything Outside

## New Times Media Group is pleased to present the inaugural issue of *Get Outside* magazine in March of 2022

*Get Outside* magazine is focused on everything outdoors on California's Central Coast. Stories will be about people, places, events, organizations, gear, food, and anything that has to do with the outdoors!

This full-color, glossy magazine has a distribution of 25,000 print and 25,000 digital copies and will be available for pick up throughout Northern Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties.

If your business has anything to do with the outdoors you'll want to be a part of this magazine - and if you enjoy getting outside on the Central Coast, you'll want to pick up a copy in March.

We can't wait to show you what we've been working on.

The first publication goes to press soon. Contact us today to see if you can still get in!

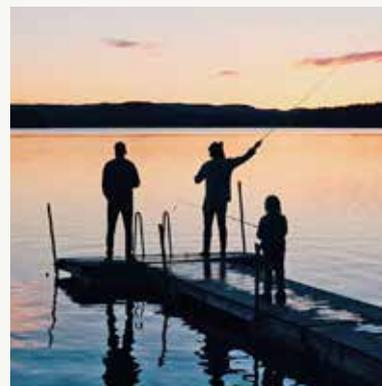
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# HOT STUFF

FEB. 10 – FEB. 17  
2022

**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!**



## SHAKE IT OFF

The Pacific Conservatory Theatre (PCPA) presents its upcoming production of William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, which is scheduled to open on Thursday, Feb. 17, and run through Sunday, March 6, at the Marian Theatre. Before entry, audience members over age 18 will be required to show proof of a full COVID-19 vaccination or a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours of the performance date. For more info, call (805) 922-8313 or visit [pcpa.org](http://pcpa.org). The Marian Theatre is located at 800 S. College Drive, Santa Maria.

—Caleb Wiseblood

COURTESY PHOTO BY LUIS ESCOBAR REFLECTIONS PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO

## ARTS

### SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

**FABLES, FOIBLES, AND FAIRYTALES BY ARTIST SUSAN READ CRONIN** Bronze sculptures with humorous and allegorical themes by local artist Susan Read Cronin. Mondays, Thursdays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. through April 17 Free. 805-686-1211. [elverhoj.org](http://elverhoj.org). Elverhoj Museum of History and Art, 1624 Elverhoj Way, Solvang.

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

### LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

**COCKTAILS, KISSES, AND CABARET** Come join us for a Valentine's show that you won't soon forget. Cocktails, kisses, and cabaret is an AIDS/LifeCycle Fundraiser featuring live performances in song, dance, and comedy. Feb. 12, 8-10:30 p.m. \$30. 805-588-5863. Johnny's Bar and Grill, 321 W. Ocean Ave., Lompoc.

### SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**2022 POETRY OUT LOUD FINALS** Join us for the annual Poetry Out Loud competition. Accepting registration through Feb. 4 for students to submit a recorded poem from the Poetry Out Loud anthology. Finalists will recite their poems on Feb. 10. Feb. 10, 7-8 p.m. Free. 209-312-8653. [tinyurl.com/SBPOLfinals22](http://tinyurl.com/SBPOLfinals22). Corazon del Pueblo, 124 W. Main Street, Santa Maria.

**FUNDRAISER WORKSHOP FOR STEVIE WISZ** Wisz recently underwent her fifth open heart surgery. To help offset medical bills and travel related expenses, the studio will be donating 50 percent of revenue generated from this workshop to Stevie and her family. Feb. 12, 6-9 p.m. [boardandbrush.com/orcutt](http://boardandbrush.com/orcutt). Board and Brush, 117 E. Clark Ave., Orcutt, 805-332-3348.

**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.

**ORIGAMI VALENTINE WORKSHOP** Join Library staff for a Valentine's Day-themed origami workshop. Learn

how to make origami hearts, heart shaped envelopes, and heart shaped boxes. Registration required. Feb. 12, 12-12:30 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. [cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library](http://cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library). Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

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

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

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

### SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

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

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

**PERCUSSIVE DANCE CLASSES** Come and dance with us. Clogging is a similar to tap dancing and it's fun and easy to learn. Have fun dancing to all sorts of music, meet people, and get great exercise! No partners required. Adults and kids ages 8 and over. Thursdays, 10-midnight, \$20/month. 805-975-6601. Heritage Square Park, 201 Nelson St., Arroyo Grande.

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

### SAN LUIS OBISPO

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

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

**CERAMIC HEART BOWLS** Make a heart shaped ceramic bowl and pick out a glaze color. A great gift/activity for the lovely holiday. Email to save your spot. Feb. 11, 1-2 p.m. \$45. [sломakerspace.com](http://sломakerspace.com). SLO MakerSpace, 81 Higuera St., Ste. 160 and 180, San Luis Obispo, 242-1285.

**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. 805-835-5893. [hmcruceceramics.com/](http://hmcruceceramics.com/). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**FAIG AHMED: COLLISION** SLOMA is pleased to present a solo exhibition of prolific contemporary artist Faig Ahmed. From his studio in Baku, Azerbaijan, Ahmed creates textile works that transcend and transform the history of carpet making in the region. Feb. 12-May 15, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. 805-543-8562. San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo, [sloma.org/](http://sloma.org/).

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

**IN THE MOMENT** An exhibition featuring members of The Painters Group. These paintings represent specific moments that at first glance appear mundane but in actuality reflect profound realities of the artist's lives. Reception held during Art and About, on Feb. 4. Through March 27 Free. 805-543-8562. [sloma.org/exhibition/tpg-2022/](http://sloma.org/exhibition/tpg-2022/). San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

**LASER CUT VALENTINES JEWELRY** Enjoy staining pre-cut earrings or necklace pendants while the laser engraves a personal message for your valentine on a holder for your jewelry piece. Feb. 11, 4-5 p.m. \$45. 805-242-1285. [sломakerspace.com](http://sломakerspace.com). SLO MakerSpace, 81 Higuera St., Ste. 160 and 180, San Luis Obispo.

**LEARN TO WEAVE MONDAYS** An opportunity to learn how a four-shaft loom works. You will get acquainted as a new weaver or as a refresher with lots of tips and tricks. This class includes getting to know a loom, how to prepare/dress a loom, and much much more. Mondays, 1-4 p.m. \$75 monthly. 805-441-8257. Patricia Martin: [Whispering Vista Studios, 224 Squire Canyon Rd, San Luis Obispo, patriciamartinartist.com](http://WhisperingVistaStudios.com).

**LEARN TO WEAVE WEEKEND** A weaving weekend-long series with lots of tips and tricks. This class includes getting to know a loom, how to prepare/dress a loom, understand the terminology, and weave a scarf. Feb. 19 and Feb. 20 \$225. 805-441-8257. Patricia Martin: [Whispering Vista Studios, 224 Squire Canyon Rd, San Luis Obispo, patriciamartinartist.com](http://WhisperingVistaStudios.com).

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

**NEW ARTISTS AT SLO GALLERY** SLO Gallery welcomes new painters, photographers, crafters and sculptors to the gallery, now under new management by the Central Coast Artists Collective. Thursdays-Sundays, 12-4 p.m. through Feb. 27 [centralcoastartistscollective.org](http://centralcoastartistscollective.org). SLO Gallery, 1019 Broad Street, San Luis Obispo, 805-926-5050.

**NOBLES AMONG US: MATERIAL THOUGHTS ON A POETIC ECOLOGY** A solo exhibition of artwork by Sommer Roman, whose work aims to evoke a sense of wonder about life and our relationship to "other," and furthermore, recalls the essential mutuality between plant, animal, and human that is core to our aliveness. Mondays-Fridays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. through April 1. 805-546-3202. [cuesta.edu/student/campuslife/artgallery/](http://cuesta.edu/student/campuslife/artgallery/). Harold J. Miossi Gallery, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo.

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

SUBMIT YOUR EVENTS

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FEBRUARY 25 & 26TH

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Monday – Friday

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**PICKET PAINTING PARTY** Decorative picket purchasing opportunities are available to show your support and help fund maintenance and educational programs in the Children's Garden. Second Saturday of every month, 1-4 p.m. \$75 per picket or 2 for \$100. 805-541-1400. [slobg.org](http://slobg.org). San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd., San Luis Obispo.

**ROTARY DE TOLOSA BENEFIT: PAULA POUNDSTONE** Paula Poundstone is a humorist, author and comedian known for her clever, observational humor. Her television appearances include various late night talk shows and HBO specials. **Feb. 12**, 8-10 p.m. \$30-\$80. 805-756-7556. [pacslo.org](http://pacslo.org). Performing Arts Center, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo.

**SECOND SATURDAYS FREE ART EVENT** SLOMA's Second Saturdays program features art-making activities that complement the Museum's current exhibitions. It's completely free and open to the public, on the lawn outside SLOMA's Mission Plaza double doors. Second Saturday of every month, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. through Dec. 10 Free. 805-543-8562. [sloma.org/events/second-saturdays/](http://sloma.org/events/second-saturdays/). San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

FILE PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CHUMASH CASINO RESORT



**CASINO COMEDIAN**

*Prolific comedian and actor David Spade will perform at the Chumash Casino Resort in Santa Ynez on Thursday, Feb. 24, at 8 p.m. This Saturday Night Live alumnus is widely known for his roles in Tommy Boy, The Emperor's New Groove, Grown Ups, and other films. Admission ranges from \$39 to \$69. Visit [chumashcasino.com](http://chumashcasino.com) for tickets and more info. The Chumash Casino Resort is located at 3400 E. Highway 246, Santa Ynez.*

—C.W.

**SLO CAMERA CLUB** Online Zoom meetings and competitions. Everyone is welcome. Visit site for meeting links. Second Thursday of every month Free to guest. [slocameraclub.org](http://slocameraclub.org). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

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

**VALENTINE'S DAY GIVE-AWAY** Send a picture of your most creative Valentine's Day card art for a chance to win a \$25 gift certificate to Art Central. All ages welcome. **Feb. 13** 805-747-4200. [artcentralslo.com/about/](http://artcentralslo.com/about/). Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

**WALT WHITMAN GAY MEN'S BOOK CLUB** Walt Whitman Gay Men's Book Club meets virtually via zoom. This club reads, studies and discusses books chosen by the group which relate to their lives as gay men. All are welcome. Second Monday of every month, 7-9:30 p.m. Free. [galacc.org/events/](http://galacc.org/events/). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

NORTH SLO COUNTY

**ART SHOW BY LOCAL ARTIST MICHELLE LEIGH WATSON** Specs by Kyla in downtown Atascadero will be hosting an art show with local artist, Michelle Leigh Watson, for the month of February. The artist and show will also be highlighted at Atascadero Chamber of Commerce's Art and Wine Walk. **Feb. 11**, 5:30-8:30 p.m. \$25. 805-460-7575. Specs by Kyla, 5808 Traffic Way, Atascadero, [specsbykyla.com](http://specsbykyla.com).

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

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

**SUCCULENT HEART WREATH** Get festive and create a beautiful heart succulent wreath while sipping delicious wine. Make it a fun Valentine's date or invite your friends and family. Ticket price includes: all workshop materials, small food bites and 2 drink tickets. Preregistration required. **Feb. 13**, 10 a.m.-noon \$95. 805-226-2600. [CreativeMeTime.com](http://CreativeMeTime.com). Riboli Family of San Antonio Winery, 1917 Wisteria Lane, Paso Robles.

NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

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

**ART AND ABOUT LOS OSOS** Join us for Art and About Los Osos, a self-guided art walk that gives the community an opportunity to experience visual, literary, and performing art in galleries and other venues throughout Los Osos. Events will not occur on major holidays. Second Saturday of every month, 1-4 p.m. Free. 805-544-9251. [artsobispo.org/art-and-about](http://artsobispo.org/art-and-about). Los Osos, Townwide, Los Osos.

**COLLAGE TRANSFER TECHNIQUES** Create inspirational art by delving into the many collage transfer techniques. Instructor will demo some of her favorite techniques, including some of the fussy applications. Transfers can enhance your work with wonderful depth and transparency. **Feb. 19**, 1-4 p.m. \$75 Members; \$85 Non-Members. 805-772-2504. [artcentermorrobay.org/index.php/shop/](http://artcentermorrobay.org/index.php/shop/). Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

**COSTA GALLERY: ART AND ABOUT LOS OSOS** Costa Gallery is now featuring a private collection of encaustic artwork by Los Osos artists Margaret Bertrand and Bob Dodge. Second Saturday of every month costagallery.com. Costa Gallery, 2087 10th Street, Los Osos, 559-799-9632.

**FEATURED CRAFT ARTIST DEBBIE GEDAYLOO** Debbie Gedayloo is a self-taught fiber artist. Her primary medium is wool but she also incorporates various other fibers into her art. Come see her felted tactile artwork. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. through Feb. 27 Free. 805-772-1068. [galleryatmarinasquare.com](http://galleryatmarinasquare.com). Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

Morro Bay.

**FOR THE BIRDS EXHIBIT** During this exhibit, you'll find bird related fine art paintings, photography and three dimensional art to include pottery, sculpture, jewelry, glass, and more. Don't miss this exciting exhibit and artist reception featuring live birds. This event is free and open to the public. Through Feb. 21, 12-4 p.m. Free. 805-772-2504. [artcentermorrobay.org](http://artcentermorrobay.org). Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

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

**GALLERY AT MARINA SQUARE: FINE ART PAINTING BY JEFF ODELL** Jeff Odell is a Morro Bay plein air artist. He can be seen with his plein air easel and paints walking all over Morro Bay's seaside and town looking for a new location to capture the beauty of the Central Coast through paint. Mondays, Wednesdays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. through Feb. 14 Free. 805-772-1068. [galleryatmarinasquare.com](http://galleryatmarinasquare.com). Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

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

**ROAD TO MASTERY DRAWING CLASS** With Marie Ramey. Six session class. This is a foundational beginning drawing class designed to teach basic drawing skills and on which more advanced skills can be developed. Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. through Feb. 18 \$130 per member and \$140 per non-member. 805-772-2504. artcentermorrobay.org. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

**SECOND SATURDAY: FEATURED ARTISTS OPENING RECEPTION** Come by and see the Featured Artists Shows, find gifts for your loved ones, surprises for yourself, and meet the artists featured in the incredible gallery. Second Saturday of every month, 5-7 p.m. Free. 805-772-1068. galleryatmarinasquare.com. Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

**STEVIE CHUN: FINE ART WATERCOLORS** Stevie is a self-taught artist who found her love for watercolor while exploring different mediums. Her work has been displayed in group shows around Southern California. Mondays, Wednesdays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. through Feb. 27 Free. 805-772-1068. galleryatmarinasquare.com. Gallery at Marina Square, 601 Embarcadero suite 10, Morro Bay.

**VALENTINES COMEDY NIGHT AT THE SIREN: WITH HEADLINER ELLIS RODRIGUEZ** Ellis Rodriguez is a stand-up comedian from Northern California, most recently featured on Kevin Hart's Comedy Central show, "Hart of the City." Feb. 14 \$20-\$25. 805-225-1312. eventbrite.com/e/valentines-comedy-night-at-the-siren-featuring-ellis-rodriguez-tickets-251729438527. The Siren, 900 Main St., Morro Bay.

**WATERCOLORS AND PASTELS OF BOBBYE WEST-THOMPSON** Bobbye West-Thompson's vibrant pastels and pure pigment watercolors are up at Cambria Library. Tuesdays-Saturdays. through Feb. 24 Free. 805-927-4336. slolibrary.org. Cambria Library, 1043 Main St., Cambria.

## CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

### SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

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

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH CELEBRATION** The NAACP of Santa Maria and Lompoc are partnering with the Santa Maria Public Library to celebrate Black History Month. Join us in celebration with speeches, dance, poetry, and much more. Feb. 19, 3-4:30 p.m. 805-925-0994. cityofsantamaria.org/city-government/departments/library. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**COMMUNITY HIKE AT POINT SAL TRAILHEAD** A hike to the ridge overlooking Point Sal. Beautiful wildlife, flora, and stunning views of the northern Santa Barbara coastline await those that attend. This will be a dog-friendly hike. Hosted by the Dunes Center. Feb. 13, 9 a.m.-noon my805tix.com. Point Sal State Beach, Brown Road, Guadalupe.

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

SMVGS MEETINGS Visitors welcome. Contact smvgs.org for program and location info. Third Thursday of every month, 2:15-4 p.m. smvgs.org. Santa Maria Valley Genealogical Society, 908 Sierra Madre, Santa Maria.

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

COURTESY PHOTO BY RYAN C. LOYD, RYLO MEDIA DESIGN



### FAB FOUR

*The San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre (SLO Rep) presents its latest production, The Marvelous Wonderettes, which premiered at the beginning of February and is scheduled to run through Sunday, March 6. The plot of this jukebox musical centers on four friends during their high school prom and follows them to their high school reunion 10 years later. For more info on the show, including its COVID-19 safety protocols and admission requirements, visit slorep.org. SLO Rep is located at 888 Morro St., San Luis Obispo.*

—C.W.

### SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**POINT SAN LUIS LIGHTHOUSE TOURS** Tours will give you a glimpse into the lives of Lighthouse Keepers and their families, while helping keep our jewel of the Central Coast preserved and protected. In-person and virtual tours offered. Check website for more details. Wednesdays, Saturdays pointsanluislighthouse.org/. Point San Luis Lighthouse, 1 Lighthouse Rd., Avila Beach.

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

### SAN LUIS OBISPO

**250 YEARS OF HISTORY** Early California life on display including Mission and Bell Tower tours, music and dancers, food sampling, crafts and demonstrations; fun for the whole family. Feb. 20, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. 805-234-4457. Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, 751 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, missionsanluisobispo.org/.

**BENEDICT'S DHARMA: BUDDHISTS REFLECT ON THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT** A spiritual conversation and book discussion on Zoom. Tuesdays, 10:15-11:45 a.m. through March 1 Free. 805-528-0654. stbenslososos.org. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**BEYOND MINDFULNESS** Realize your potential through individualized meditation instruction with an experienced teacher via Zoom. This class is for those who wish to begin a practice or seek to deepen an existing one. Flexible days and times. Certified with IMTA. Email or text for information. Mondays-Sundays, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Sliding scale. 559-905-9274. theartofsilence.net. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**BIRD (AND BOTANY!) WALK** The Garden is excited to present a monthly bird walk series which explores the intersection of birds and botany. Allow for a two-hour exploration on mostly flat terrain. Third Thursday of

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE continued page 22

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every month, 8-10 a.m. through Feb. 24 \$10/members, \$20/public. 805-541-1400. [slobg.org/calendar](http://slobg.org/calendar). San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd., San Luis Obispo.

**CAL HOPE SLO GROUPS AT TMHA** Visit website for full list of weekly Zoom groups available. Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays [calhopecoconnect.org](http://calhopecoconnect.org). Transitions Mental Health Warehouse, 784 High Street, San Luis Obispo, 805-270-3346.

**CAL POLY BASKETBALL VS. CSUN** Come watch the Mustangs take on CSUN in a Big West Conference game. **Feb. 10**, 7-9 p.m. [gopoly.com/](http://gopoly.com/). Mott Athletics Center, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

**CAL POLY BASKETBALL VS. UCSB** In celebrating Black History Month, this will be a Blackout Game; wear black to match the team and be one the first 1,500 fans to get a black rally towel. **Feb. 12**, 7-9 p.m. [gopoly.com/](http://gopoly.com/). Mott Athletics Center, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

**CAL POLY WOMEN'S BASKETBALL VS. UC DAVIS** Cheer on the Mustangs against UC Davis. **Feb. 17**, 7-9 p.m. [gopoly.com](http://gopoly.com/). Mott Athletics Center, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

**CAL POLY WOMEN'S BASKETBALL VS. UC RIVERSIDE** It's the annual Play4Kay game; raising money for the fight against women's cancers. Wear pink to the game, make a donation, or participate in the raffle to raise money for the Kay Yow Cancer Fund. **Feb. 19**, 2-4 p.m. [gopoly.com](http://gopoly.com/). Mott Athletics Center, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

**CAL POLY WRESTLING VS AIR FORCE AND CSU BAKERSFIELD** A Cal Poly Wrestling doubleheader as the Mustangs battle Air Force and CSU Bakersfield. **Feb. 13**, 2-6 p.m. [gopoly.com/](http://gopoly.com/). Mott Athletics Center, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

**CENTRAL COAST POLYAMORY (VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM)**  
Hosting a discussion group featuring different topics relating to ethical non-monogamy every month. Virtually meet via Zoom. Third Wednesday of every month, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Free. [galacc.org/events/](http://galacc.org/events/). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

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

**DANCE CLUB: DANCE FITNESS CLASS WITH CHRISTIANA** A mood-elevating, dance-centric dance fitness class that enables you to live out your back-up dancer dreams. The choreography is curated to a culturally diverse playlist that is equal parts sassy and empowering. Tuesdays, 7:15-8:15 p.m. through Feb. 15 \$15 per class (discounted multi-class package available). 805-305-5609. [DanceClubSLO,3422.Miguelito.Ct.Studio3](http://DanceClubSLO,3422.Miguelito.Ct.Studio3), San Luis Obispo, ChristianaEnriquez.Zumba.com.

**FREE DAY AT THE GARDEN** Join the SLOBG for this free admission day. **Feb. 12**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd., San Luis Obispo.

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

**LGBTQ+ FED THERAPIST LEAD SUPPORT GROUP (VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM)** A pro-recovery

group offering space to those seeking peer support, all stages of ED recovery. We understand recovery isn't linear and judgment-free support is crucial. Share, listen, and be part of a community building up each other. Third Wednesday of every month, 7-8 p.m. Free. [galacc.org/events/](http://galacc.org/events/). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

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

**OUTDOOR YOGA CLASSES** Hotel San Luis Obispo, Piazza Hospitality's first property on California's scenic Central Coast, offers outdoor yoga classes on its rooftop terrace. Thursdays, Saturdays, Sundays \$10-\$15; complimentary for hotel guests. 805-235-0700. [hotelslo.com](http://hotelslo.com). Hotel San Luis Obispo, 877 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo.

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

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

**SLO TABLE TENNIS** This local table tennis club is open to anyone. Many tables available and new players welcome. Games for all ability levels. Sundays, 4-7 p.m., Tuesdays, 7-10 p.m. and Thursdays, 7-10 p.m. Free. 805-540-0470. Ludwick Community Center, 864 Santa Rosa, 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 [aaappgroup@gmail.com](mailto:aaappgroup@gmail.com) for password access. Sundays, 7-8 p.m. No fee. [galacc.org/events/](http://galacc.org/events/). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**SUPPORT GROUP FOR CAREGIVERS OF PERSONS WITH FTD (FRONTOTEMPORAL DEMENTIA)** A welcoming meeting providing information and support for caregivers of people with Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD). FTD is a dementia that affects younger people and is very difficult for families. This is an open group. Caregivers can drop in for information, supportive discussion, and caregiving tips. Second Saturday of every month, 2:30-4 p.m. through Jan. 14 805-471-8102. [calpoly.zoom.us/j/83141446835](http://calpoly.zoom.us/j/83141446835). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.



**FANCIFUL FUSIONS**

*Studios on the Park in Paso Robles presents its latest group exhibition, Sweet and Sour, through Monday, Feb. 28. This collaborative show features a variety of paintings, photos, and mixed media pieces from several participating artists and artisans, including Richard Mortensen, whose fused-glass work is pictured. Call (805) 238-9800 or visit [studiosonthepark.org](http://studiosonthepark.org) for more info on the exhibit. The gallery is located at 1130 Pine St., Paso Robles.*

—C.W.

**TOASTMASTERS ANNUAL AREA SPEECH CONTEST: REACH FOR THE GOLD** Watch Toastmasters contestants compete for their Area Gold over Zoom. Contestants span the beautiful California Central Coast from Paso Robles to Lompoc. **Feb. 12**, 9 a.m.-noon Free. [toastmastersdivisiond.wordpress.com/](http://toastmastersdivisiond.wordpress.com/). 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](mailto: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.

**WRITE TO FIND YOUR INNER AHA!** Reach your own inner truth and wisdom through a writing practice. Talk through the process of journaling to tap into your personal power. A Zoom series of three small-group sessions. Email to join: [leanjacobsen@gmail.com](mailto:leanjacobsen@gmail.com). **Feb. 13**, 3-4 p.m. and **Feb. 20**, 3-4 p.m. \$55. 515-707-1557. [leanjacobsen.com](http://leanjacobsen.com). Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

**WWII HISTORY OF BLACK COAST ARTILLERY REGIMENT IN SLO COUNTY** Historian Erik Brun and friends present They Faced the Rising Sun: The 54th Coast Artillery Regiment on the Central Coast in WWII, the story of Black soldiers deployed here with two batteries of heavy artillery to defend against Japanese attacks. Also available on Zoom. **Feb. 18**, 2-3:30 p.m. Free. 805-550-7713. [southcoasthistory.org/](http://southcoasthistory.org/). San Luis Obispo Library Community Room, 995 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo.

**THE DIVINE FEMININE: SACRED ANATOMY** With Allison Lorne, Certified Nurse Midwife, RN. Allison will be guiding you through these Divine aspects: Yoni 101, Maiden, Mother, Crone, and Wisdom of the Womb. **Feb. 12**, 9-11 a.m. \$44. 805-464-2838. [oracleatascaderoca.com](http://oracleatascaderoca.com). Oracle, 6280 Palma Ave., Atascadero.

**EARTH SHINE AT THE RIVER WALK** A monthly cleanup event at the River Walk in Paso Robles. Join our volunteers as we continue our efforts to help this scenic habitat/trail be as healthy and beautiful as possible. Free pizza after the event. Third Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.-noon through March 19 Free. 805-591-4691. [EarthShineOrg.com](http://EarthShineOrg.com). Paso Robles River Walk, 141 Niblick Road, #417, Paso Robles.

**EARTH SHINE IN ATASCADERO** Earth Shine hosts a Community Cleanup event. Grabbers, safety vests, gloves, and bags provided. Wear long pants and closed-toed shoes to stay safe and water to stay hydrated. **Feb. 12**, 10 a.m.-noon 805-591-4691. Sunken Gardens, 6505 El Camino Real, Atascadero.

**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](http://kalyrawinery.com). Kalyra Winery, 343 N. Refugio Rd., Santa Ynez.

**STANDING SUN: CELLAR CLUB** Visit site for Cellar Club details and more info. Mondays-Thursdays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. 805-691-9413. [standingsunwines.com](http://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/](http://ongoing.presquilewine.com/club/). Presqu'ile Winery, 5391 Presqu'ile Dr., Santa Maria, 805-937-8110.

**SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY**

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

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

**THAT'S AMORE: A TAKE-AWAY DINNER FOR TWO FOR VALENTINE'S DAY** Dinner includes two generous helpings of lasagna from Giuseppe's restaurant, a choice of red or white wine, a loaf of crusty ciabatta bread, an antipasto salad in a mason jar, and imported dark roasted coffee. **Feb. 14**, 4-6 p.m. \$100. 805-242-1076. [themondayclubslo.org](http://themondayclubslo.org). The Monday Club, 1815 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

FOOD & DRINK continued page 23



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**TWIRL AND SWIRL VIRTUAL VALENTINE WINE TASTING EVENT** A music and wine virtual pairing in honor of Valentine's Day. Sarah Farley, will be teaming up with Kala Maxym from Five Senses Tastings to curate wine and music pairings and artisanal chocolates. **Feb. 12**, 3-4 p.m. \$59; or \$89 for 2. 805-434-5607. onxwines.com. Online, See website, San Luis Obispo.

# MUSIC

## SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

**ABOUT TIME LIVE Feb. 13**, noon Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

**CARMEN AND THE RENEGADE VIGILANTES LIVE Feb. 18**, 8:30 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

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

**PULL THE TRIGGER LIVE Feb. 12**, 8:30 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

**THE RONDALES LIVE Feb. 12**, 1 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

**TEDDY SPANKE: LIVE ON THE PORCH Feb. 20**, noon Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

**TEX PISTOLS LIVE Feb. 19**, 8:30 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

**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

**VALENTINE'S DANCE** Santa Maria Recreation and Parks and the Santa Maria Valley Senior Club presents this Valentine's Dance, featuring Riptide Big Band with vocalist Bob Nations. Funded by the Community Foundation of San Luis Obispo County. **Feb. 13**, 1:30-4 p.m. Free. 775-813-5186. RiptideBB.com. Elwin Mussell Senior Center, 510 Park Ave., Santa Maria.

## SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**AMERICA'S DIAMOND: STARRING JAY WHITE** Presented by the Clark Center. Exclusively Sponsored by Nan's Pre-Owned Books. Rescheduled from 2020. Jay White is Neil Diamond in this tribute which captures the heart and soul of one of America's most popular songwriters. **Feb. 19**, 7:30-9:30 p.m. \$45-\$58. 805-489-9444. clarkcenter.org/shows/americas-diamond-starring-jay-white/. Clark Center for the Performing Arts, 487 Fair Oaks Ave., Arroyo Grande.

**DJ DRUMS** Fridays, 9-10 p.m. Mongo's Saloon, 359 W. Grand Ave., Grover Beach, 805-489-3639.

**THE KINGSTON TRIO** Presented by Long Man Productions. In celebration of their nationwide 65th anniversary tour, the iconic folk group performs their best-loved songs. **Feb. 12**, 7:30-9:30 p.m. \$22-\$56. 805-489-9444. clarkcenter.org/shows/kingston-trio/. Clark Center for the Performing Arts, 487 Fair Oaks Ave., Arroyo Grande.

**A WHOLE LOT OF NONSENSE: PRESENTED BY THE CENTRAL COAST FOLLIES** An annual fundraising event to benefit Parkinson's Disease research. Central Coast Follies has donated nearly \$400,000 since their first performances in 2003. This volunteer group is made up of dedicated dancers and singers. **Feb. 20** \$20-\$45. 805-489-9444. clarkcenter.org/shows/a-whole-lot-of-nonsense/. Clark Center for the Performing Arts, 487 Fair Oaks Ave., Arroyo Grande.

## SAN LUIS OBISPO

**MOTHER HIPS LIVE Feb. 12**, 7:30 p.m. SLO Brew Rock, 855 Aerovista Pl., San Luis Obispo, 805-543-1843, slobrew.com.

**ROCK 'N ROLL SWEETHEART VALENTINE DANCE** With Unfinished Business. **Feb. 12**, 7-10 p.m. my805tix.com. SLO Guild Hall, 2880 Broad St., San Luis Obispo, 805-543-0639.

**THE SACRED SOULS LIVE Feb. 10**, 7 p.m. SLO Brew Rock, 855 Aerovista Pl., San Luis Obispo, 805-543-1843, slobrew.com. ☺

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## Arts Briefs

### Local rock group Ghost/Monster performs concert in Buellton

FILE PHOTO COURTESY OF NATALY LOLA



The Brick Barn Wine Estate in Buellton presents Ghost/Monster live in concert on Sunday, Feb. 13, from 1 to 5 p.m. Reservations to this outdoor event are recommended but not required. Wine will be available for purchase throughout the show.

Led by musician and singer Nataly Lola (pictured, right), Ghost/Monster is a local pop and rock group widely known for performing at public venues and private events throughout Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties. The band's name was inspired by Lola and band co-founder Jaxon Camaero's (pictured, left) love of horror and the paranormal.

For more info on the concert and other upcoming musical acts hosted by the Brick Barn Wine Estate, call (805) 686-1208 or visit [brickbarnwineestate.com](http://brickbarnwineestate.com). The winery is located at 795 W. Highway 246, Buellton.

### SMCT postpones *The Full Monty* to mid February

The Santa Maria Civic Theatre's (SMCT) production of *The Full Monty: The Musical* was originally scheduled to run in January, but it's been rescheduled to debut on Friday, Feb. 18, and run through Saturday, March 5. Admission to the show ranges from \$15 to \$20, and tickets are available online and in advance at [my805tix.com](http://my805tix.com).

This theatrical adaptation of the popular 1997 film follows a group of unemployed men who decide to become male strippers to make some quick cash. In press materials, the show is described as an upbeat comedy full of honest affection and engaging melodies. SMCT's ensemble cast for this production includes 20 performers.

For more info on *The Full Monty* and other upcoming shows scheduled in SMCT's 2022 season, call (805) 922-4442, email [smctheatre@gmail.com](mailto:smctheatre@gmail.com), or visit [smct.org](http://smct.org). SMCT is located at 1660 N. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

### Santa Maria Valley Senior Club holds Valentine's Dance with live music

PHOTO COURTESY OF JUDY LINDQUIST



The Santa Maria Valley Senior Club presents its Valentine's Dance, featuring live music from the Riptide Big Band, at the Elwin Mussell Senior Center in Santa Maria on Sunday, Feb. 13, from 1:30 to 4 p.m. The band will be accompanied by guest vocalist Bob Nations. Admission to the dance is free, thanks to funding from the Community Foundation of SLO County.

Call (805) 925-0951 or visit [riptidebb.com](http://riptidebb.com) for more info on the dance and other upcoming events hosted by the Santa Maria Valley Senior Club. The Elwin Mussell Senior Center is located at 510 Park Ave., Santa Maria. ○

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

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE GREAT AMERICAN MELODRAMA



### Showtime!

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**CAN YOU REEL THE LOVE?** During the Great American Melodrama's production of *Muskie Love*, an unlikely romance blossoms between Green Bay locals Bea (Meggie Siegrist, left) and Ben (Ben Abbott, right), based on Beatrice and Benedick, respectively, from William Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*.

## Hooked on a feeling

*Muskie Love* is a must-see at the Great American Melodrama

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

Filmmaker Baz Luhrmann traded swords for guns when he gave *Romeo + Juliet* a contemporary setting. But you won't find either of those in playwright Dave Hudson's *Muskie Love*, another modern retelling of a Shakespeare classic.

"Mine is bigger than yours!" one character exclaims to his rival as they brandish fishing rods during a lightsaber-esque duel.

Set in 1990s Wisconsin, *Muskie Love*—playing at the Great American Melodrama in Oceano through March 12—centers on a quirky fishing community off the shores of Lake Michigan. It's a story where nearly every character has some kind of cheeky scheme up their sleeves—one of which leads to an unlikely romance, much like its 17th century counterpart, *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Most of the action takes place outside Roy's Bait Shop, where fisherman Claude (Henry Fisher) rekindles a friendship with a childhood pal, Sarah (Madison Davis), and faces undeserved scrutiny from a park ranger, DNR Doug (Toby Tropper)—whose title, abbreviated from the Department of Natural Resources, often becomes the punchline of do-not-resuscitate jokes.

DNR Doug has an unreciprocated crush on

Sarah, who quickly falls in love with Claude, even despite her oath to save herself for celebrity footballer Brett Farve, her favorite Green Bay Packer who she daydreams of marrying someday. After Sarah and Claude hit it off, the two lovebirds hatch a plan with Roy (Billy Breed), owner of the bait shop, to strike a romantic match between two hardheaded fellow fishers they mutually know.

Claude's fishing buddy, Ben (Ben Abbott), and Roy's niece, Bea (Meggie Siegrist), become the trio's targets, both of whom proudly voice their contempt for one another for the whole marina to hear on a daily basis. But their insult slinging gradually subsides once they begin eavesdropping on certain conversations in town. This carefully curated gossip leads each of the pair to believe the other has fallen head over heels for them but will never admit it.

Meanwhile, DNR Doug becomes hell-bent on issuing Claude as many pesky citations



**DUEL OF THE BAITS:** Claude (Henry Fisher, left) engages in a fishing rod duel with DNR Doug (Toby Tropper, right), a park ranger whose title, abbreviated from the Department of Natural Resources, often becomes the punchline of do-not-resuscitate jokes.



**FROM PARIS WITH LOVE:** The entire ensemble cast of *Muskie Love* returns to the stage for the Melodrama's vaudeville revue during a sketch that takes place at a French bistro in present-day Paris.



**WHEN IN ROME:** One skit during the Melodrama's latest vaudeville revue, *City Lights*, transports audience members to ancient Rome during the assassination of Julius Caesar.

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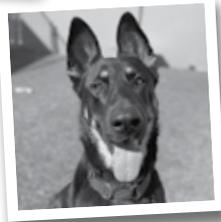
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## Fail!

**C**o-writer/director Roland Emmerich helms this disaster flick about Earth's moon falling out of its orbit and threatening to destroy our planet. Conspiracy theorist and amateur "megastructuralist" K.C. Houseman (John Bradley) discovers what's happening but can't get NASA to listen, so he seeks out disgraced former astronaut Brian Harper (Patrick Wilson), who on a space mission a decade ago lost a crew member to what he described as a black swarm. His fellow astronaut Jocinda "Jo" Fowler (Halle Berry) was knocked unconscious during the mission and couldn't back up his account, but now to save the planet and their respective family members, the two estranged former colleagues must set aside their differences, launch into space, and with Houseman's help, find a way to get the moon back in its orbit. (130 min.)

**Glen:** It's official! This is the worst movie I've ever sat all the way through. If we weren't reviewing it, I would have walked out and never given it another thought. Instead, I sat through more than two hours of eye-rolling bad dialogue, a preposterous plot even by sci-fi standards, alternately wooden or desperately overacted performances, and silly CGI. And it's not even like I went in with high expectations! I know what a hack Emmerich is. Sure, *Independence Day* (1996) was campy fun, *The Patriot* (2000) was stirring melodrama, and *Stargate* (1994) was clever sci-fi, but *The Day After Tomorrow*

(2004), *2012* (2009), and just about any of his other movies are bombastic brain cell killers. *Moonfall* is Emmerich's dumbest film yet. If I told you the film's big reveal, you'd understand just how terrible this waste of time is. Like a lot of his disaster flicks, there's a desperate but failed attempt to up the emotional ante. Fowler and Harper both have kids and estranged spouses who end up traveling together to get to a military installation, encountering dangers at every turn. As the moon gets closer to Earth, tsunamis strike, gravity goes bonkers, and the atmosphere is sucked away. It's all meant to be very dramatic, and I kept hoping the film might achieve "so bad it's good" status, but nope. This movie stinks. **Anna:** Hollywood is such a mystery to me sometimes. How this script and film got greenlit is absolute insanity to me—I feel like I lost two-plus hours of my life. I can't imagine how much time (and frankly, life spirit) was lost to those involved in making this monstrosity. It's supposed to feel big and bold; instead, it's garish and boring. These aren't bad actors either, so watching them play out this drivel is painful. Berry won a Razzie for worst actress in 2005 for her role in the notoriously terrible *Catwoman*, but at least that film gave us something to laugh at. This is taking itself so seriously, clunkily trying to pull out emotions from the audience for characters we've been given absolutely no reason to care about. Sure, I wanted the kids to survive—I'm no monster—but even their storyline is hard to care about. There are three writers listed on IMDB for this film, and honestly, I'm flabbergasted by that. The painfully bad dialogue feels like what happens when you have 18 people badly writing and revising a project that should have been scrapped from the

### MOONFALL

What's it rated? **PG-14**  
 What's it worth, Anna? **Don't bother**  
 What's it worth, Glen? **Don't bother**  
 Where's it showing? **Regal Edwards Santa Maria & RPX, Movies Lompoc**

get-go. I literally organized my purse while watching this in the dark theater—sorting through old gum wrappers and receipts felt like a much better use of my time. **Glen:** You actually can't blame Hollywood for this one. Shot in Montreal, the film's budget was between \$138 million to \$146 million, making it one of the most expensive independently produced films of all time. Those independent producers—there are 16 listed on [imdb.com](http://imdb.com)—must be wringing their hands right now. So far, the film's only grossed a scant \$3.4 million. What really blows me away is that audiences have sort of liked it. It's got a 68 percent audience score! Who are these people? I'm actually surprised the critics score is as high as it is at 40 percent! I love a B movie, but this steaming pile of excrement has no redeeming qualities. What a waste of talent! Michael Peña plays car salesman Tom Lopez, who's now married to Harper's ex-wife, Brenda (Carolina Bartczak). He's supposed to be a shallow jerk, a butt of some of the film's lackluster attempt at humor, but his character arc is to become a hero. It's all so clunky. The great Donald Sutherland is in this, given nothing



**TOO THE MOON, ALICE!** K.C. Houseman (John Bradley, left), Brian Harper (Patrick Wilson, center), and Jocinda "Jo" Fowler (Halle Berry, right) launch into space to stop the moon from falling on Earth, in *Moonfall*, a disaster of a disaster movie.

to do. These actors deserve better, but I cringed watching them gamely deliver the most trite, faux-emotional dialogue ever set on paper. The movie's intellectually offensive. Steer clear. **Anna:** I really like Peña, and Sutherland is an absolute treasure—both are totally wasted here. Why waste the money and talent if you aren't going to give these people something interesting to do or say? It's maddening. They truly just threw the whole pot of spaghetti at the wall in hopes that something would stick, but it didn't. Save your money and your time on this one. ○

*New Times Senior Staff Writer Glen Starkey and freelancer Anna Starkey write Sun Screen. Glen compiles streaming listings. Comment at [gstarkey@newtimeslo.com](http://gstarkey@newtimeslo.com).*

## TV & Film Reviews

### THE WOMAN IN THE HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE GIRL IN THE WINDOW

What's it rated? **TV-MA**  
 When? **2022**  
 Where's it showing? **Netflix**

**BINGEABLE**

Kristen Bell gives it her best deadpan humor in this first season of Netflix's new series. We soon learn that Anna's life is far from perfect. Her husband is now an ex, and her daughter died at the age of 9 following a tragic encounter with a dangerous man. When new neighbor and seemingly single dad Neil (Tom Riley) and his daughter, Emma (Samsara Yett), move in across the street, Anna begins to obsessively watch them from her living room window with a mix of wine and pills that lead to delusions and false memories—or so she's told. When Anna finds out that Neil actually has a girlfriend named Lisa (Shelley Hennig), a flight attendant who seems to suspect Anna's friendship with her beau is less than pure, Anna's obsession with watching them deepens. One night Anna witnesses Lisa in the window, bleeding to death from a stab wound in her neck. She frantically calls the police, but when they show up there seems to be nothing amiss. Soon Anna is



PHOTO COURTESY OF GLORIA SANCHEZ PRODUCTIONS

the pariah of the neighborhood, called crazy and delusional by everyone around her except her best friend, Sloane (Mary Holland), and Detective Lane (Christina Anthony), who starts to realize that Anna may be on to something. It's twist driven and meant to string along a mystery, and while it may not land as the next big hit, I had a great time binging this series. Any fan of Bell is going to appreciate what she has been given in this role and how she lets us get to know the perfectly imperfect character that Anna is. (eight 22- to 30-min. episodes)

—Anna

### THE SHOOTING

What's it rated? **G**  
 When? **1966**  
 Where's it showing? **HBO Max**



This largely forgotten gem from 1966 recently found its way to HBO Max, and for any serious cinephile, it's essential viewing—an existentialist Western with a minimalist style filmed in the Utah desert in 1965 by director Monte Hellman at the same time as *Ride the Whirlwind*, which shared stars Jack Nicholson and Millie Perkins.

The story, written by Carole Eastman under the nom de plume Adrien Joyce, revolves around Willet Gashade (Warren Oates), a former bounty hunter trying his hand at gold mining. After some time away from his mine, he returns to find one of his mining partners, Coley (Will Hutchin), in a panic. It seems their other two partners came back from a night on the town and in their drunkenness trampled "a little person." One was shot in camp by an unseen sharpshooter, and the other had run off.

A while later, they hear a gunshot, and soon a woman (Perkins) walks into camp saying her horse broke its leg, so she shot it. She hires Gashade to help her across the desert to a far town, and he agrees as long as Coley comes along. It



PHOTO COURTESY OF PROTEUS FILMS AND SANTA CLARA PRODUCTIONS

soon becomes clear they're being tailed by a mysterious figure (Nicholson), and that he and the woman have some kind of plan hatched, perhaps to catch their mining partner and punish him for trampling what may have been a child.

Psychologically tense, the film is a slow build to a perplexing yet provocative conclusion. Hellman went on to direct other classics like *Two-Lane Blacktop* (1971) and *Cockfighter* (1974), both featuring Oates, and though this film never saw a theatrical release, as Nicholson's star grew brighter, it was saved from obscurity. (82 min.) ○

—Glen

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PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GARAGISTE WINE FESTIVAL



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GARAGISTE WINE FESTIVAL



**EXCLUSIVE ENGAGEMENT:** “We limit our ticket sales so that it’s based on a ratio of how many wineries are pouring, how many people are in the room, so that you actually have the chance to talk to the winemakers and they to you, that’s a big part of what we do,” Garagiste Wine Festival co-founder Douglas Minnick said. “The winemakers always tell us it’s their favorite crowd to pour for.”

**POUR PARTY:** For the first time since 2019, the Garagiste Wine Festival is returning to Solvang’s historic Veterans’ Memorial Hall, where more than 30 small production wineries from throughout the Central Coast and other California regions will be pouring their libations.

principle is: small. It’s just that you have to be small. And what that means is we have the widest range of grapes and wines,” Minnick said. “We’ve done 26 of these festivals, and I am still learning about grapes that I have never heard of before. It is the absolute best place to discover new wines, new winemakers, new varieties—the range is huge.”

the spring of 2020. Obviously, that didn’t happen.

Now for the first time since 2019, the Garagiste Wine Festival is returning to Solvang’s historic Veterans’ Memorial Hall, where more than 30 small production wineries from throughout the Central Coast and other California regions will be showcased.

The California-based festival is held annually in Solvang, Los Angeles, Sonoma, and Paso Robles, where it originated more than a decade ago.

The list of featured vintners include Ann Albert Wines, Bolt To Wines, Camins 2 Dreams,

**EATS** continued page 28

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GARAGISTE WINE FESTIVAL

“We wanted to shine a spotlight on all these micro wineries that were popping up all around Paso and Santa Barbara ... but most of them didn’t have tasting rooms. They were hard to find,” Minnick said. “Tin City [in Paso Robles] is now kind of the permanent installation of the Garagiste Festival, in a way, in that 75 or 80 percent of the wineries in Tin City started by pouring at the Garagiste Fest when they didn’t have a tasting room.”



**FUN FOR ALL:** Garagiste Wine Festival organizers say the event is lively and relaxed for guests and winemakers alike, thanks to its unofficial “no snobs allowed” policy.

Before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the last festival to be held in Solvang was scheduled for

# Small tales

### February fest

For more info on the Garagiste Wine Festival, visit [garagistefestival.com](http://garagistefestival.com). Tickets to this year’s Solvang event are available at [my805six.com](http://my805six.com). The festival will be held on Feb. 25 and 26 at the Solvang Veterans’ Memorial Hall, located at 1745 Mission Drive, Solvang.

*The Garagiste Wine Festival shines a spotlight on small production wineries throughout Santa Barbara County and beyond*

### BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

Even while bringing more than 150 wine tasting options under one roof, the organizers behind the Garagiste Wine Festival are more interested in quality over quantity. Luckily for them, finding rare and unadulterated wines comes easy with showcasing micro-production wineries, festival co-founder Douglas Minnick said.

“Wineries at this level of production are not making wines for supermarkets, right? No distributor is interested in repping a winery that makes such a small amount of wine because they

just don’t have enough to satisfy their demand. Well, there’s freedom in that,” Minnick explained. “Since you’re not going into supermarkets, you don’t have to make what supermarkets want to put on their shelves. You can do whatever you want, and just find your audience for that.”

Honing in on small wineries specifically gives the Garagiste Wine Festival a unique edge over other wine tasting conventions, added Minnick, who co-founded the multi-city event with Stewart McLennan in 2011.

“Most other wine festivals are either based around a variety or a region. Our organizing



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**EATS**

**EATS** from page 27

Crazy Woman Cellars, Demeter Family Cellars, Dreamcote Wine Co., Lions Peak Winery, Purple Dragon Cellars, Sweetzer Cellars, and more.

Solvang's iteration of the festival has tasting events scheduled for Friday, Feb. 25, and Saturday, Feb. 26.

Minnick described the atmosphere of the festival as lively, fun, and relaxed, thanks to the event's unofficial "no snobs allowed" policy, he explained.

"Winemakers are the least snobby people in the world. There's none of that sommelier kind of attitude amongst the winemakers themselves," Minnick said. "We wanted to make sure that people got that sense of it, that it's really informal and fun."

In an effort to promote a more open flow and ample room for social distancing within the Solvang event's indoor venue, some of the event's usual yearly programming has been altered or omitted, including the festival's VIP seminar, which will not be held this year.

FILE PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIT ZOTOVICH



**CALIFORNIA DREAMIN':** The list of featured vintners in the Garagiste Wine Festival includes Dreamcote Wine Co. (whose wine is pictured), Lions Peak Winery, Montemar Wines, Purple Dragon Cellars, Sweetzer Cellars, and more than 20 more.

While the festival sells out every year, Minnick said there's a capacity limit put in place not only due to pandemic protocols, but also to ensure an intimate one-on-one experience between visitors and the featured winemakers, who pour their own wines themselves during the tastings.

"It's busy but not overcrowded. Don't get me wrong, it's a busy room. It's busy and fun and loud and so forth. But it's not overcrowded, and it's not uncomfortable in any way," Minnick said. "We limit our ticket sales so that it's based on a ratio of how many wineries are pouring, how many people are in the room, so that you actually have the chance to talk to the winemakers and they to you, that's a big part of what we do. "The winemakers always tell us it's their favorite crowd to pour for." ○

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