

Sun

AT THE MOVIES



The Equalizer 2:
Denzel's deliverance [29]



Cat mapping

California scientists ramp up efforts to determine mountain lion populations [10]

BY SPENCER COLE



NTMA
NEW TIMES MUSIC AWARDS
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NEWS County shifts to trauma-informed care [7]

ARTS Local photographer explores the Central Coast [26]

EATS The Obon Festival was a tasteful celebration [31]



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LIKE HERDING CATS: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is employing new methods to track mountain lions, a particularly difficult species to assess across wide expanses of wilderness like the Los Padres National Forest.

One of the largest predators that roam the wilderness of the Central Coast is the mountain lion. According to state scientists, apex predators provide valuable insight into overall ecological health, but mountain lions are notoriously hard to track. For this week's cover story, Spencer Cole spoke with scientists on the trail of the large cats, including some who catch and tag the ferocious felines locally [10].

Also this week, Santa Barbara County hosts a summit to shift services toward trauma-informed care [7], a Nipomo-based songwriter has a new album he and his band will perform at an upcoming concert [23], a local photographer explores the Central Coast through her lens [26], a poet and musician team up for a program in Solvang [28], and the Obon Festival in Santa Maria was a celebration of authentic Japanese cuisine [31].

Joe Payne,
Managing Editor

Photo courtesy of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife > Cover design by Alex Zuniga

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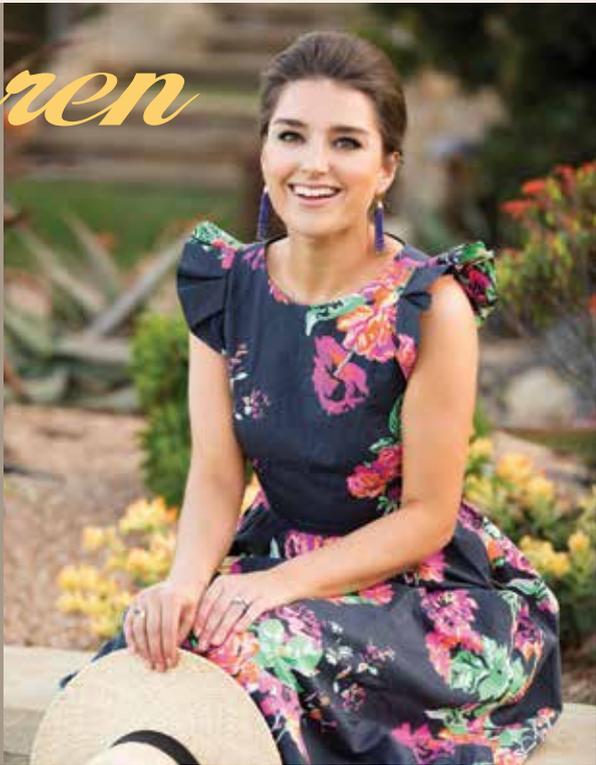
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FILE PHOTO BY SPENCER COLE

Political Watch

• Sen. **Dianne Feinstein** (D-California) issued a statement on July 19 on the rates of Covered California, which a release from her office said “will be 8.7 percent higher, on average, with 3.5 percent due to the repeal of the individual mandate.” “Republican efforts to sabotage health care will hit middle-class families the hardest,” Feinstein stated. “Families that don’t receive federal financial help toward their insurance will pay the full increase, including the 3.5 percent Republican surcharge.” Last year, Feinstein introduced a bill to the Senate, the Affordable Health Insurance for the Middle Class Act, which would change the cut-off for tax credit subsidies so individuals and families wouldn’t pay more than 9.69 percent of monthly income toward health insurance premiums.

• Sen. **Kamala Harris** (D-California) joined other Democratic senators in introducing legislation on July 19, the Rent Relief Act, which would “create a new, refundable tax credit to put more money in the pockets of families at a time when renters’ wages have remained stagnant and housing costs have increased rapidly,” according to a release from Harris’ office. “America’s affordable housing crisis has left too many families behind who struggle each month to keep a roof over their head,” Harris said in the statement. “This bill will ensure no family is priced out of the basic security of a place to live. Bolstering the economic security of working families would strengthen our country and increase opportunity.” Harris introduced the legislation with Sen. **Dianne Feinstein** (D-California), **Richard Blumenthal** (D-Connecticut), and **Maggie Hassan** (D-New Hampshire). Harris’ release shared stats from California’s Department of Housing and Community Development, which found that one third of California renters (3 million households) are rent burdened, and more than 1.5 million are severely rent burdened. The Rent Relief Act would make a refundable tax credit available to those who live in rental housing and pay more than 30 percent of their gross income for the taxable year on rent including utilities.

• Rep. **Salud Carbajal** (D-Santa Barbara) spoke from the floor of the House of Representatives on July 19 in opposition of language in the FY 2019 Financial Services appropriation package that passed the House that prohibits the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) from implementing new requirements regarding the reporting and disclosure of political contributions from corporations. Carbajal and **Michael Capuano** (D-Massachusetts) offered an amendment to strike the policy from the bill, but it was denied by a 224-190 vote. “The Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision opened the floodgates by allowing corporations to spend unlimited amounts of money on election advertising and political activities without having to disclose their expenditures,” Carbajal said. “A corporation’s goal is to make a profit, not to improve the quality of life for all Americans, and they shouldn’t have a say in our elections without their shareholders and the public knowing about it. We cannot allow the voices of the American people to be drowned out by millions of dollars by secret, special interests advertising from corporations.” Carbajal had previously introduced legislation earlier this year, the Corporate Political Disclosure Act of 2018, which would require publicly traded corporations to disclose political expenditures through the SEC.

• After the U.S. House of Representatives voted to agree on House Resolution 990, “Supporting the officers and personnel who carry out the important mission of the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE),” with a roll call vote of 244 yeas, 35 nays, and 133 present votes, 24th Congressional District candidate **Justin Fareed** issued a statement on July 18 criticizing Rep. **Salud Carbajal** (D-Santa Barbara) for his “present” vote. “Taking a stand to support Immigration and Customs Enforcement requires more than saying you’re in the room,” Fareed statement. “It requires an affirmation on the record. Members of law enforcement deserve our full-throated, indelible support.” ○

Santa Barbara County Ag report says most crops increasing in value

The 2017 Santa Barbara County Crop Report released this month said most commodities were rising in value, with strawberries leading the pack and broccoli replacing wine grapes as the years’ second most valuable.

“Agriculture is the No. 1 contributor to the county’s economy and through the multiplier effect, contributes approximately \$2.8 billion to the local economy and provides 25,370 jobs,” Ag Commissioner Cathleen Fisher stated following the report’s release.

In total, Santa Barbara County’s agricultural commodities grossed nearly \$1.6 billion for 2017, an increase of more than \$163 million from the previous year.

“It is always important to note that the figures provided in the annual crop report are gross values and do not represent or reflect net profit or loss experienced by individual growers or by the industry as a whole,” Fisher explained. “Growers do not have control over most input costs, such as fuel, fertilizers, and packaging, nor can they significantly affect market prices.”

All crops in the county increased in value except for wine grapes, dairy, and apiary (or bee) products. The top valued crops were strawberries, broccoli, and wine grapes with values of \$457 million, \$259 million, and \$145 million, respectively. Rounding out the top five were nursery products (\$100 million) and cauliflower (\$94 million).

Santa Barbara County farmers ship their products all around the world. According to the report, Canada received the most shipments of goods from the area with more than 3,500. The next closest for shipments were Mexico (606) and Japan (496). Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Taiwan all took in more than 90 shipments, while China received 61.

The total number of registered organic operations in both California and Santa Barbara County continues to grow, the report said. Organic agriculture in California topped \$2.9 billion in value in 2017, accounting for more than 40 percent of all organic production in the country. From 2010 to 2017, the total number of operations in California increased by 34 percent, with 459 new organic registrants in California in 2017.

It was a rough year for agricultural losses in some parts of the county, largely due to natural disasters like December’s Thomas Fire. That blaze—the largest in recorded state history—impacted 40 farms with resulting damages totaling more than \$11.7 million.

“Damage varied greatly from one ranch to another,” the report said. “[Avocado, citrus, and cherimoya] groves that may have not experienced direct damage to their trees lost their entire crop due to the smoke, which caused the fruit to prematurely ripen and drop to the ground.

“It will take months of careful monitoring to determine which trees that appear charred and lifeless will bounce back, and which will have to be replaced.”

The report’s authors noted it may take up to five years for replacement trees to be available from the nurseries and another three to five years for them to produce a crop.

—Spencer Cole



CASH CROPS: Strawberries were again king when it comes to crop valuation in Santa Barbara County, according to the 2017 Crop Report, followed closely by broccoli and then wine grapes.

U.S. Forest Service releases proposal for new trail east of Santa Maria

A new U.S. Forest Service project aims to convert miles of damaged dirt road into non-motorized trail in the Los Padres National Forest.

Forest Service officials released an environmental assessment for the La Brea Restoration Project on July 23. The work would involve repairing a road destroyed by major flooding about a decade ago along the edge of the San Rafael Wilderness.

Environmentalists say the project would also improve federally protected “critical habitat” for endangered California red-legged frogs and southern steelhead in La Brea Creek, a tributary to the Sisquoc River.

The targeted area took heavy damage during the 2009 La Brea Fire, which scorched much of the canyon bearing the same name southeast of Highway 166. In the years following the fire, floods wreaked havoc on La Brea Canyon Road—a rugged, remote, dirt byway—and a nearby motorcycle trail. This past year, the Forest Service proposed a restoration project to convert the road and trail to non-motorized trails open to hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking.

The agency’s proposal to convert the roads to non-motorized use will improve habitat for threatened and sensitive animals, as well as water quality, according to environmental groups.

“We support the Forest Service’s efforts to convert heavily damaged roads near the San Rafael Wilderness to non-motorized trails,” ForestWatch conservation director Bryant Baker stated. “This project also comes at a time when the agency has a road maintenance backlog of \$117 million and continued budget cuts, so it would help move the agency toward a more sustainable road system over the long term.”

Los Padres Forest Public Information Officer Andrew Madsen told the *Sun* the Forest Service simply didn’t have the financial resources to go back and restore the area to its former state and would need help from nonprofits, environmentalists,

and recreation groups to fund the projects.

The draft environmental assessment has four proposed alternative trail projects, including one 6-mile dirtbike and ATV route along a ridgeline through the middle of the Horseshoe Springs Roadless Area. The area is currently protected with a “semi-primitive non-motorized” land use zoning classification and would require an “immense amount of environmental documentation and a complex amendment” to the Los Padres National Forest Land Management Plan, according to Baker.

“Developing a new off-road vehicle trail through the area would contradict the Forest Service’s plans to restore the area that supports several threatened and sensitive animals as well as an important tributary to the wild and scenic Sisquoc River,” he added.

Madsen said the projects had interest from multiple groups, including motorcyclists, and

NEWS continued page 6

Weekend Weather

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Dave Hovde
KSBY Chief Meteorologist

Thursday

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Saturday

COASTAL > High 74 Low 57
INLAND > High 91 Low 57

Sunday

COASTAL > High 74 Low 57
INLAND > High 91 Low 57

The extremely hot inland weather starts to break. At the coast there is enough marine layer to keep things generally mild into the weekend.

NEWS from page 5
that the Forest Service was attempting to reach an agreement beneficial to all parties.

“We are trying to find that balance, that medium between the interest of both of those groups to come up with a solution that obviously isn’t going to make everyone happy, but we want to get some kind of balance in there,” he said.

The public has until Aug. 20 to submit comment on the project. More information and one way to submit public comments online can be found at lpfw.org/brea. Written comments may be mailed to the Santa Lucia Ranger District, Attn: Melody Fountain, 1616 Carlotti Drive, Santa Maria, CA, 93454; or hand delivered to the Santa Lucia Ranger District office located at the address above during business hours (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). Electronic comments may be submitted using the “Comment on Project” link on the right-hand side of the project’s webpage.

The Forest Service will consider the public’s comments before making a final decision sometime later this year.

—Spencer Cole

Santa Maria awarded nearly \$300,000 for bicycle and pedestrian pathway project

Several bicycle and pedestrian pathway improvement projects are coming soon to Santa Maria. But first, the city needs to make a list.

On May 11, the city was awarded a \$296,700

Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant through the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), according to a city staff report, which will go toward the beginning stages of Santa Maria’s Active Transportation Plan.

The \$296,700 grant—and the city’s 14 percent local match of \$48,300—will facilitate the design of a connected bicycle and pedestrian network that city officials say will provide safe, affordable, and accessible transportation alternatives to Santa Maria residents. But Rodger Olds, a principal civil engineer with the city, said city officials first hope to develop a list of projects prioritized based on community need and want.

“Everybody has an opinion,” Olds told the *Sun*. “We’re trying to see what the most prevalent opinion is. I think most people just want to feel safe on their bikes. They want a place to ride their bikes and they want a safe place to walk.”

The grant, Olds said, will give Santa Maria enough funding to hire a consultant, schedule community workshops, analyze suggested routes to school, look at new and old walking and biking paths, update the city’s Bikeway Masterplan, and consider the city’s Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility. Olds said all the collected information will then be included in one master document, listing priority projects that should be completed first.

Olds said the city won’t be able to start using the grant until Oct. 1, the beginning of the new fiscal year, and after its start, city officials expect it will take nearly a year to develop the Active Transportation Plan.



FILE PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLOM

INFAMOUS ROADS: Santa Maria’s roads in general are notoriously dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists. The California Office of Traffic Safety ranked Santa Maria as the 14th worst of 57 California cities its size for cyclist collisions. Thirty-four cyclists were killed or injured by vehicles in 2015, the most recent data available, according to data compiled by the Office of Traffic Safety. Thirty-eight pedestrians were killed or injured by vehicles that same year.

But the city could begin physical work on some of the most needed projects as early as next summer, Olds said, and some other bike and pedestrian safety projects are getting the city’s attention now.

An engineer is currently analyzing roads like Depot Street and College Drive, where bike lanes exist in some stretches and don’t in others, to find out which existing bike lanes could most easily be connected. Those connections, Olds said, will be made in conjunction with upcoming chip sealing projects.

The breadth of bike and pedestrian work needed in Santa Maria will be done only after

the city completes its Active Transportation Plan, which is still in its early stages.

The Santa Maria City Council adopted a resolution on July 17 authorizing director of the Public Works Department to enter into a grant agreement with Caltrans. Olds said once the agreement is laid out and signed, the city will send out a request for proposals and work to hire a consultant.

The process will be extensive, Olds said, but it will be worth it.

“We’re really excited to move forward on this,” he said. ○

—Kasey Bubnash

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Getting 'trauma-informed'

County works to better address childhood trauma and the factors that cause it

BY KASEY BUBNASH

Santa Barbara County is home to nearly 450,000 Californians, 60,000 of whom are living at or below the federal poverty level. An estimated 28 percent of those living in poverty are children, according to the county's yet-to-be-released 2017 Children's Scorecard.

Economic hardship is just one of the many common factors that can put families and children under stress, according to Barbara Finch, Children and Adult Network director with the Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services.

Finch, who presented some of the key topics included in the 2017 Children's Scorecard at the South Coast Youth Safety and Wellness Summit in Santa Barbara on July 16, said constant stress without remediation can be especially harmful to children.

"So many of the problems that we have are rooted in this toxic stress," Finch told the *Sun*, adding that when children constantly produce stress hormones it actually changes the architecture of their brains. "When the architecture of the brain is changed, then that is what makes it difficult to learn, and it makes it difficult to be present, and it makes it difficult to control impulses."

Those challenges can lead to behavioral and mental health issues, Finch said, which are often left untreated or misdiagnosed and can worsen with age.

But Finch and other county officials are hoping to make "trauma-informed care" the norm on the Central Coast.

Trauma, she said, can stem from any life event—poverty, natural disasters, health issues, abuse—and adversely impacts individuals in all socioeconomic levels.

"So I think our community has become a lot more aware of trauma because of the

disasters in South County, the violence that's happening in North County, and there has been a lot of awareness about community and how communities are impacted by these kinds of traumatic events," Finch said. "So if we understand the impacts that has on people, including children, then we can shift how we're doing things to better meet the needs of those kids."

Children under 17 who experience four or more traumatic or stressful events, also called Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), are more likely to have lower educational attainment and earnings as adults, and to experience unemployment or incarceration, according to the 2017 Children's Scorecard.

And a retrospective study of Santa Barbara County adults released in 2014 showed that about 57 percent had experienced at least one ACE while growing up, and more than 13 percent had four or more ACEs, according to the Children's Scorecard.

The scorecard, which the KIDS Network of Santa Barbara County plans to officially release and present to the Board of Supervisors within a few weeks, is the first report of its kind on the well-being of local children since the last scorecard was published in 2010. Finch said the scorecard, which brings together youth-related data and narratives from various county departments, is really the first step in becoming a trauma-informed community.

With all the county's youth and family-related data laid out in one cohesive report, Finch said county officials of every sector will be able to pinpoint which stress factors are most deeply impacting locals, and then find better ways to help.

One of those common denominators, she said, is poverty. Most of the county's economic base is driven by low-paying jobs in the agriculture and hospitality industries, Finch

said. That, paired with the area's high cost of housing, has given Santa Barbara County the highest child poverty rate in the state.

And although Finch said many families living in poverty are doing perfectly well raising children, economic hardship often puts added stress on families; parents are often working multiple jobs and have little time to attend to their children, nutritious food can be scarce, and housing is crowded.

Those issues are all too familiar to Cristal Robles, a sophomore at Allan Hancock College and intern at the Community Action Commission of Santa Barbara County, a private nonprofit that hosted the South Coast Youth Safety and Wellness Summit on July 16 through its South Coast Task Force on Youth Safety.

At the summit, which addressed various topics concerning youth safety, Robles and several other local kids discussed issues they face and possible solutions they'd like to see implemented throughout the county.

Robles said a lot of kids like her, who are living in low-income households, grow up fast. She and her siblings would go to work with their parents every summer in an attempt to help out financially, Robles said, and her sister, older by only three years, essentially raised her.

"She's like a second mother to me," Robles told the *Sun*.

Robles, now 21, is doing the same for her two younger brothers and her sister's three young kids, who she said are all under the age of 12.

It can be difficult attending college and working while also caring for five children, Robles said, and she often has to leave class or work early to pick the kids up from school. Summer is worse—child care is totally unaffordable, and many of the area's summer sports programs are too.

"It's tough to manage all the things," Robles said, adding that she sometimes thinks about everything her older sister had to do to raise her at a younger age. "At the moment it didn't feel



YOUTH TALK: Roughly 150 county officials and community members, including members of Santa Maria's Mayor's Task Force on Youth Safety, attended the South Coast Youth Safety and Wellness Summit at the Carrillo Recreation Center in Santa Barbara on July 16.

like anything, but looking back, and having to experience what she experienced, she basically gave up her childhood."

Aside from raising siblings, Robles said many local kids act as English translators for their foreign parents and are constantly asked to help parents navigate complex governmental and education systems in the U.S. And Robles said her house, like many of her peers' houses, is overcrowded, and finding a quiet place to study has always been a challenge.

But all these adverse experiences have inspired Robles to help. She said she one day hopes to start a nonprofit for youth, one that would give them a quiet place to study at all hours of the day and night, provide job and internship opportunities, counseling, and affordable or free extra curricular activities.

Robles said she hopes the county provides similar services.

"Regarding the summit, it was nice to have a presence of youth voice there because so many times youth are denied that," Robles said. "So having them want to listen to the voice of the youth is very empowering because these are things that affect us. I encourage the county to listen to these stories but also to effect change." ○

Staff Writer Kasey Bubnash can be reached at kbubnash@santamariasun.com.

Spotlight on: Rancho Bowl and Lounge Ashlee Carranza, owner

BY SPENCER COLE

It's been almost 60 years since Rancho Bowl first opened its doors in Santa Maria. A lot can change in that time, but not the family that owns it.

Ashlee Carranza found her way into the bowling business when she married her partner, Luke, whose family has owned the establishment since the beginning.

"We have two employees that have worked here for 32 years, so they remember my husband growing up here," she told the *Sun*.

Back then the alley had a day care, but the smoke that filled building may not have been up to snuff by modern standards for kids. Rancho Bowl has undergone many remodels since, the most recent in 2012 and 2014, when the Carranzas replaced the bar and the bowling system and all of its 32 lanes. The new lanes offer means for users to share their scores, photos, and post on social media.

There's also the revamped arcade, which now hosts 35 new games, up from the previous 12. The newest additions include popular console games like *Mario Kart*. Business is good,

according to Carranza, and she said she hoped the arcade remodel attracts more customers.

In the meantime, Rancho Bowl is currently offering free bowling to all kids age 15 and under. "That's two free games, every day during the summer," she added.

The deal ends once school starts back up.

For the older crowd and those interested in a little nightlife action, Rancho Bowl hosts live DJs six nights a week. The music usually lasts until midnight or close, Carranza said. Meanwhile, the in-house restaurant stays open until 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and closes at 11 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. The bar is open until 2 a.m. every night.

Thus far, Ashlee said, the alleys have not been graced with the Big Lebowski or "The Dude" impersonators, but she wasn't ruling out a themed event in the future.

"I never thought I would own a bowling alley, but it's been a great experience," she said. "It's a fun industry: My husband and I travel all over the country to different seminars and expos. We've met a lot of cool people. I don't know that I would change it, it's been a fun industry and every day we come in to work and people are having fun."

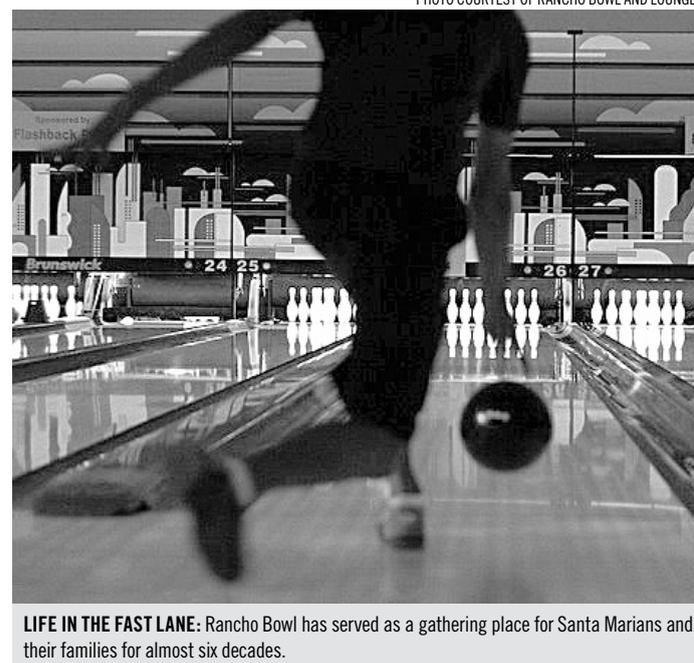
Highlights:

- Santa Maria's Recreation and Parks Department will host a rededication and reopening of Buena Vista Park at 800 S. Pine

St. on Aug. 11 at 11:30 a.m. Free food and drinks will be offered from noon to 2 p.m. while supplies last. Buena Vista Park is the city's first community park, according to city officials. It was dedicated in 1906 with the help of the Ladies Literary Society, now known as the Minerva Club. The park was last renovated in 1994 with modest improvements only to "keep the park functional for the neighborhood." The current renovations began in September 2016 and focused on a "modern design while honoring the park's historical significance."

- At least two commercial cannabis licenses were granted in Lompoc between July 13 and July 16, according to a city spokesperson. Both businesses, once opened, will allow on-site consumption.

- The Lompoc Valley Historical Society will host an open house on July 28 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Admission is free but donations are



LIFE IN THE FAST LANE: Rancho Bowl has served as a gathering place for Santa Marians and their families for almost six decades.

welcome. The historical society is located at 207 N. L St. Visit lompochistory.org for more information. ○

Staff Writer Spencer Cole wrote this week's *Biz Spotlight*. Information should be sent to the *Sun* via fax, mail, or email at spotlight@santamariasun.com.

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Mid-Summer melange

BY HELEN ANN
THOMAS

It was Monday, July 2, at 4 p.m. There were tempting appetizers from Moxie Café, respectable wines for imbibing, and a group of groovy guests, not to mention an awesome venue—the Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum.

Yet this was my saddest hobnobbing experience ever. About 100 folks gathered to bid farewell to one of the Central Coast's treasures. This was the last official appearance of **Chris Slaughter**, the museum's executive director and guiding light for the past several years.

Chris and her husband, oral surgeon **Dr. Joe Slaughter**, were on their way to Atlanta, Georgia, for a new life. Not that the old one was so bad, but a dental practice in the South made Joe an offer he couldn't refuse.

Discovery Museum board member **Diane Adam** dubbed the event "New Beginnings." **Nancy Gastelum** will assume the mantle of executive director, truly a new beginning for the museum and for the Slaughters.

The local nonprofit world was represented by **Kim Colby**, **Terri Lee Coleman**, **Judy Frost**, and from Allan Hancock College, president **Kevin Walthers** and **Susan Houghton**. The *Sun's* general manager **Kim Rosa** and her trusty sidekick **Colleen Garcia** made an appearance, as did **Jeff Barnes**, city librarian **Mary Housel**, and **Ken Parker**.

Discovery Museum Board president **Michelle Tabisola** was there along with board members **Roy Reed**, **Bill Thompson**, and **Dave Wright**.

Chris had been instrumental in getting the Orcutt Children's Art Foundation off and running. She was also a Santa Barbara Foundation trustee, and for several years, had been the PR person for Café X.

There was more than one case of teary eyes as Chris, herself teared up, made her parting remarks.

Atlanta: our loss, your gain. Lucky, lucky you.

Fairpark fun

On a happier note, there were no tears at an annual event at the Santa Maria Fairpark. A pre-fair reception took place on Tuesday, July 10, at the Fairpark's very pleasant and attractive Fountain Pavilion.

The first person I saw, after check-in, was night time Altrusa's **Anna Sorenson**, who was one of several volunteers who helped the evening run smoothly.

Shortly after that, I met up with Megan, a talented 15-year-old macaw, who made her rounds of room on the arm of her handler, an employee



Hobnobbing
with Helen

of an animal show vendor from San Diego. Megan was accompanied by Gertrude, an African pygmy hedgehog. These girls, who did not stay for the whole party, were very well behaved.

This was an ag event, so it was expected that there would be cowboy hats and boots all over the place—sort of like the set of a John Wayne Western.

Mayor **Alice Patino** and Santa Maria City Councilmembers **Etta Waterfield** and **Mike Cordero**, along with City Manager **Jason Stilwell** were among the attendees.

I shared a table with **Karen Cordary**, **Jim Byrne**, and the *Sun's* woman for all seasons, General Manager **Kim Rosa**.

At this annual event, the Agricultural Award Program honors persons important to the local economy. This year's honorees were **Jim Glines**, **Frank Machado**, **Manny Silva, Jr.**, and **Jim and Tracy Acquistapace**.

John Glines accepted the award for his father, who was vacationing in Montana, and on his way to the cattle stampede in Calgary, Canada. I want to hear all about that!

I spotted **Kathy Kromer**, **John Burke**, and the effervescent **Leigh Collier**.

Clemmons Catering (from the Swiss restaurant) was responsible for the perfectly barbecued tri-tip, excellent mashed potatoes, pinto beans, and salad. There was a hosted bar (my favorite kind) and a dessert table set with cupcakes and cookies.

The planning crew for this event deserves mention for their always well-coordinated decorations.

Classical gas

Location, location, location. Its importance in real estate is frequently touted. But it seems that location is also a big deal in the world of classical music. The right venue assures a full house.

The Santa Maria Philharmonic Society put on a fundraiser program on Saturday, July 14, at 7 p.m., at Trilogy's classy Monarch Dunes clubhouse in Nipomo. About 140 filled the ballroom.

A number of Santa Marians traveled north for the musicale, open, of course, to Trilogy residents.

The Philharmonic's general manager, **Janet Hillson**, had a smile that said it all—this evening was a success! Tickets were a very reasonable \$20.

Michael Novak, the Philharmonic's maestro, was among the musicians we enjoyed, as was local **Lynne Garrett**.

Bo and **Dennis Prescott**, **Dr. Lynda Gantt**, **Jerry Stinn**, and **Hardy** and **Judy Hearn** graced the group with their presence.

This was an exceptional evening. Hope they do it again. ○

If you want to hobnob with Helen, you can reach her at column151@gmail.com.



GOODBYE, SANTA MARIA: Dr. Joe and Chris Slaughter on July 2 at a farewell reception for the Slaughters at the Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum before they move away to Atlanta, Georgia.



SO LONG TO A FRIEND: Pictured left to right: Roy Reed, Dr. Joe Slaughter, and Doug Coleman on July 2 at the farewell party at the Discovery Museum. Reed is a board member of the museum and Coleman is a civic activist.



AG FANS: Pictured left to right: Randy Jones, Ann Glines, and John Glines at the Santa Maria Fairpark's pre-fair reception on July 10. Jones is president of the 37th District Agriculture board of directors, and Ann and John are the sister and son, respectively, of Jim Glines, who was honored at the event.



QUARTET AT TRILOGY: Pictured left to right: Jerr Stinn, Dr. Lynda Gantt, and Hardy and Judy Hearn at the Santa Maria Philharmonic Society fundraiser program on July 14 at Trilogy's Monarch Dunes in Nipomo.



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Following footprints



CAT SCRATCH FEVER: Since 1991, it has been illegal to hunt mountain lions in California, with the sole exception being depredation permits issued by the state in cases when they kill livestock or an endangered species like the bighorn sheep. San Luis Obispo County has one of the highest numbers of permits issued annually.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

State scientists aim to map mountain lion numbers and species health **BY SPENCER COLE**

You probably should've died," the husky, walrus-mustached U.S. Forest Service worker told me that balmy July evening.

It was 2015, the height of the last so-called drought that never really ended on California's Central Coast. And the animals, myself included, were restless. One long summer after another, interrupted by brief winters that brought only sputters of rain and drizzle for the state's mountains, valleys, rivers, and reservoirs, had cooked us in that kiln known as the Central Valley.

It was hot, dry, and everyone from the highest levels of society down to the lowliest ant were sick of it. Which is why that day I'd cut out of the office early and sped past my house with its broken swamp cooler and halls filled with cats and stale air and made a beeline for the mountains on the North Fork of the Tule River in the Sequoia National Forest. I drove like a madman on winding roads for about 40 minutes and then hit a trail along a canyon I'd hiked more times than I could count.

The plan was to break camp at about 7,000 feet, where the thin mountain air would drop to as low as 48 degrees that night, an almost alien-like difference to the 112-degree oven down in the valley below.

When I saw her, I thought I'd stepped into a dream.

A mountain lion, a mature female, was staring right at me, no more than 50 feet away.

We were separated merely by a trail and few large spruce trees.

It didn't take her long to size all 5-feet-10 of me up before she quickly dissolved into the brush.

Now, I may be stupid enough to hike by myself at dusk, but I wasn't about to stay in the woods all night after seeing a cat that big, that close.

I turned back.

The lion slipped from my mind. I stopped to take a few photos and readjust my pack.

Then I saw her again.

This time she was on the trail, farther away, but staring right at me. Blocking my exit. For some reason, I screamed. Not because you are supposed to make noise when you see a cougar, either. No, this was a "holy shit, I think I'm about to die," holler.

I guess she got the point. In an instant, she vanished again.

The rest of the hike went without incident. Then I ran into my forester friend, who called me an idiot, patted me on the back, and handed me a beer.

"The only cougars you should be worrying about at your age are at the country club," he said, his pot belly jiggling as he laughed. "That's why you don't hike when it's dark, Cole."

I remember asking him how many were up there.

His answer, even to this day, still rings in my mind, "Aw, hell, I don't know. No one does."

What he said that night was true, and to this day the state's exact mountain lion population remains a mystery. But methods are improving, and becoming more refined, such as a new project by California's Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) that aims to map the state's mountain lion populations by regions.

It is both an endeavor to accurately account for how many of the creatures still roam California while determining the health of their gene pool. The effort is also an avid attempt by state scientists to learn as much as possible about one of the continent's fiercest predators.

"Mountain lions are a signal animal for similar processes that are going on with other animals down the food chain," said Winston Vickers, an associate veterinarian at the Wildlife Health Center at UC Davis. He's also the co-principal investigator for the Southern California Mountain Lion Project.

"Their survival as a species is not threatened in California, in my own view, but local populations are under threat and that threat is probably increasing," he said.

"You can change whole wildlife communities when you remove a top regulator of an ecosystem."

The hunter

"They can all be kind of unique and hairy I guess, there's not really a rule book," Justin

Dellinger, a mountain lion and wolf researcher for CDFW, told me casually as he explained how he hunted mountain lions with a CO₂-powered tranquilizer rifle.

I heard about Dellinger through another news publication. I remember the story came out right after a hiker stumbled upon a deer carcass a lion had cached for the winter in the Irish Hills to the west of San Luis Obispo last winter.

Like most mountain lion sightings, the incident was widely reported by local outlets and speculated on wildly by the public. But aside from closing a few trails, no one paid much attention to the cats found to be living in that small chunk of coastal mountain land.

That is, except for Dellinger, who went up into the hills with a team of hounds and found one of the animals, eventually tranquilizing the lion and fitting it with a tracking collar.

"Basically any fresh lion sign is what we're looking for," he explained, "it's gotta be fresh or else the dogs can't do much with it."

It's hard work. The team of two men (Dellinger and his houndsman) wake up well before sunrise, as early as 2 a.m., and head out into rough country for most of the day.

"If we don't catch anything, we are usually back by around 2 [p.m.] or 3 p.m.," he said. "If we find one, well, that is just kind of dependent on the situation."

Once Dellinger and his team of hounds are on the trail of a lion, they can typically lead it to an area where it's either backed against a cliff or forced up a tree. Then the cats are tranquilized with a dart from a CO₂ rifle before Dellinger

climbs up the tree and lowers the animal down with a belay and pulley system.

After the cat is sedated, Dellinger and his houndsman take a variety of swabs with Q-Tips—ranging from blood, to saliva, to fecal matter. The samples help scientists figure out an animal's diet and trace its genetic history.

The latter is particularly important when it comes to figuring out how isolated a mountain lion population is. Since the new project began, CDFW has identified 10 groups of wild cougars statewide with slightly different genetic variations or varieties.

The predators are largely divided by human-erected barriers, such as highways, rail lines, and urban and agricultural development. It is those “walls” that scientists worry are boxing in the lions, forcing them to mate with relatives, weakening the gene pool, and increasing risk for genetic mutation and stagnation.

For example, one male mountain lion found in the wildlands north of LA was cornered by highways and development, so he carved out a small territory near where he had already mated. The result was the lion ended up procreating with his daughter multiple times and on one occasion his granddaughter.

“That’s exactly what we are seeing, and naturally most people would think right off the bat, ‘Well, that’s probably not good,’” Vickers, with the state lion project, said.

In other words, the lions are cut off in some areas from populations that in the past were within reach. And the isolation could spell doom for certain groups, such as the ones dotting Southern California and parts of the Los Padres National Forest.

“In terms of California, I can imagine in long time frames worst-case scenarios of just a disappearance of mountain lions in the coastal mountains,” Vickers said.

Scientific census

Measuring wildlife populations has never been an exact science. Most biologists in the field will tell you that state and federal governments do a variety of head counts when it comes to animals, including large mammals like mountain lions and their primary prey, deer.

This process, in most cases, involves agents sent out into the field and literally counting the fauna they see. They then create population estimates based on those tallies along with supplemental data such as harvest numbers and meat locker records.

Essentially, they count the bodies, how many of the animals were killed in a particular hunting zone, and when. It can tell a scientist a lot about the population, especially when they can examine its DNA and look for signs of inbreeding that, if left unchecked, weakens the gene pool.

California’s Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) currently employs these practices to monitor its deer population. And, by all accounts, it works pretty well, although department employees will tell you it could be far more precise with better funding.

But those methods can’t really be applied to mountain lions, an elusive predator that is illegal to hunt since the state passed a moratorium in the early ’90s. For years, DFW has just told the public the lion population in California was somewhere between 3,000 and 5,000.

At best, scientists say, the current method is problematic when it comes to measuring populations and ascertaining their overall health. One of the main reasons is that the estimation number given to the public is solely based off potential habitat for lions and then extrapolated based on the available land.

“The state is so big that a statewide estimate doesn’t have as much use as regional estimates that make up the statewide numbers,” Dellinger said. “You could give an estimate of say 3,000 animals statewide, but that’s going to mean different things to someone in Modoc County versus the southern, more urban part, like Santa Barbara.”

The broad generalization also does very little for providing the proverbial “snapshot in time” that outdoor enthusiasts are looking for

to get to the state for information on mountain lions.

“Probably the most common question DFW gets, and we get, is, ‘How many are there?’ It’s something the general public is interested in—having at least a framework to put mountain lions into and a sense of how common they are in the landscape,” Vickers said.

Kevin Cooper, a biologist with the Los Padres National Forest told the *Sun* in October 2017 the mountain lion populations were “really difficult to get a handle on. I mean, they are right here under our noses all the time and almost no one ever sees them.”

“If we are trying to manage them, that’s a problem.”

Limitations of sightings

Cooper was talking about verified sightings, not just reports from the public that they’ve seen a mountain lion. It seemed like a very arbitrary way of adding up encounters with the predator when I first had the process described to me. But it’s an important distinction for scientists like Cooper and Dellinger, who argue that the public doesn’t always know what to look for or what they are seeing.

“I find all the time when I get emails from the public, emailing me pictures of things, tracks and things like that, it’s very rare that it is a lion they’ve encountered,” Dellinger said. “Unless the sightings are verified by game cameras or security cameras, it’s hard to really quantify whether there’s been an actual increase in people seeing them.”

That’s why the state and most wildlife organizations tend not to map mountain lion sightings due to the potential unreliability of the reporter and what Dellinger calls “the story sharing phenomenon” practiced by the public, hunters, and exacerbated by social media.

“If I see a lion and I encounter a lion, I tell you, then you adopt that story as your own or whatever, and then it grows from there,” he explained.

In reality, people more often than not misidentify the animal. One California-backed study in the late ’90s suggested that as many as 95 percent of public mountain lion sightings were inaccurate, according to Dellinger.

However, that’s not to say all reports from locals, hikers, and hunters are inaccurate. “When you do have game or security cameras outside of homes, that’s obviously easily verified,” Dellinger said.

Jeff Landers, vice president of the Santa Maria Valley Sportsmen’s Association and a board member on Santa Barbara County’s Fish and Game Commission, said the signs of large mountain lion populations on the Central Coast, and the state in general, were hard to ignore.

“Years ago, lions were very elusive, but now they’re being seen more and more and more,” he added, before explaining that almost every monthly Sportsmen’s meeting had at least one comment from a hunter remarking on sighting a lion, its tracks, or a nearby deer kill. “It’s noticeable for somebody that goes out and actually hunts and tracks game. There’s just way too many of ’em.”

Hunters like Landers believe the reason mountain lions are exploding in certain areas of the state is due to the moratorium on hunting them, a law sportsmen have opposed since it

was implemented. In 1990, Californians passed Proposition 117, designating lions as a “specially protected species” and illegal to hunt.

But despite the law, lions are still hunted and killed statewide (a little more than 100 each year on average) but can only be done so if a depredation permit is issued to kill a “specific lion killing livestock or pets; to preserve public safety; or to protect listed bighorn sheep.”

While the latter is not an issue for the Central Coast, San Luis Obispo sits near the top of all counties in terms of issued permits and “takes,” or when a lion is killed.

In 2015, 24 permits were issued within the county, with 11 mountain lions taken. The next two years, the numbers dropped significantly, with just six permits issued and three cats killed in 2016, and only seven issued in 2017, which resulted in five dead cougars.

According to wildlife experts, 2015 is a particularly interesting year, considering the number of cats “taken” in SLO County accounted for roughly 10 percent of all killed statewide under depredation permits.

However, it’s hard to infer much about the mountain lions’ regional population when looking at granted depredation permits because the state has to give them to landowners if livestock have been slain. And those landowners aren’t always equipped to track, let alone “take,” a mountain lion. It’s also hard to judge how cats killed with authorization affect the overall population when scientists can’t say what the numbers are.

It’s a situation that has hunters, conservationists, and wildlife biologists stuck between a rock and a hard place when it comes

other animals,” he said. “When you’re getting depredation tags, you can more adequately understand what the removal of that animal is doing to a population and what it could mean for the area in general, given that lions do sort of sit on the top of the food chain, so to speak.”

Dellinger noted that more than 90 percent of mountain lions taken in the state were due to livestock being killed. So maybe, he added, a lot of the run-ins with people and lions can be prevented. But that’s a tall order for counties on the Central Coast, which have seen significant population growth during considerable climatic swings.

“San Luis Obispo is really unique between its development over the last decade and the drought,” he added. “There’s a lot of things that suggest there is potential for conflict and for lions and people to encounter each other more often or to be at odds with one another.

“I don’t know exactly what the solution is ... but there’s not a silver bullet.”

As the sun set that evening, I trudged up a short section of a trail by Johnson Ranch. At the top of the hill, I could see Highway 101, a snake of a landmark winding through the coastal mountains. From there, San Luis Obispo is visible, bleeding into the Edna Valley.

I wondered about when the last time a lion sat at this same spot. And if that male or female in search of a safe piece of land to breed and live had looked at the highway and balked as car after car carelessly sped by.

The corridor already claimed one male lion earlier this year. He had tried to cross just north of the Los



ELUSIVE PREDATOR: A new research effort by California’s Department of Fish and Wildlife aims to accurately estimate how many mountain lions roam the state. Pictured: a mountain lion obscured by brush with natural camouflage.

to managing California’s wildlife.

“We don’t have good game management out here on the Central Coast,” Landers said. “Nobody wants anything to be extinct—a perfect balance in nature is good—but I don’t think we have that perfect balance.”

Endgame

Driving back from Modoc County after a long day of hunting one afternoon, Dellinger told me over the phone that he hoped this newest DFW-led accounting effort would alleviate the public and hunters’ concerns, while also helping scientists find ways to better study and manage mountain lions.

“It gives greater insight on how you go about looking at conflict between them, humans, and

Osos Valley Road exit before being hit by a car.

I turned and headed back down the hill.

There were no lions on the trail that day, at least any I could see, just like it is most days. But I couldn’t help but wonder when the next one would be sighted and how the public would catch a glimpse.

Would it be some hunter spotting a track out in public lands? Or a local couple on their morning hike? Maybe one will pop up on a game camera. Or maybe we’ll just see it like we do all too often, in a grainy cellphone photo or video from the side of the road, bruised and lifeless, along the border of civilization. ○

Contact Staff Writer Spencer Cole at scole@santamariasun.com.

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FILE PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLOM



DREAM CENTER DREAMS: The Allan Hancock College campus in Santa Maria has hosted several recent construction projects over the past several years. The construction of a Dream Center could be next.

**Hancock moves forward with
Dream Center project**

BY KASEY BUBNASH

When Jessica Zarate moved to the U.S. from Mexico as a child, she was so young that the memory didn't stick, and she grew up thinking she was born and raised an American.

It wasn't until high school, when Zarate's mom first brought up college, that Zarate found out she wasn't a documented U.S. citizen, and that getting a higher education here wouldn't be easy.

But she said her mom helped her apply for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, a President Obama-era policy that protects undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children. The program currently protects about 800,000 undocumented immigrants from deportation while they work and attend school.

That includes Zarate—now a sophomore at Allan Hancock College and president of the Dream Club, a student-led organization working to support local undocumented students—who said she was blessed to have help while searching for financial aid options and support services prior to college.

Not all students are so lucky, and Zarate said she and other Dream Club members are hoping to make it easier for undocumented students to navigate the higher education system by establishing a dedicated resource center. The proposed Dream Center, she said, would provide a safe space on Hancock's campus for undocumented students to get pro bono legal services, look into financial aid options, find career and internship opportunities, attend workshops, and get counseling.

"It's a space where students could go in and feel safe," Zarate told the *Sun*, adding that while Hancock does provide various resources for its undocumented population, incoming students often don't know about them or where to find them.

Zarate wants to change that. "Whether it's outreach or getting a Dream Center on campus, I'm going to do whatever I can to make that happen," she said.

The Dream Center was first proposed by students in the fall of 2017, shortly after an internal survey of Hancock's student body found that roughly 440 undocumented immigrants were enrolled at the time. Associate Superintendent and Vice President of Student Services Nohemy Ornelas said that because many students are afraid to come forward as undocumented, that number could actually be higher.

"So it's important for our community to know we're supportive of our undocumented students," Ornelas told the *Sun*.

Hancock already provides various support services to undocumented students through the Advance Innovate Maintain (AIM) Center, an online resource funded by a U.S. Department

of Education Hispanic-Serving Institutions Title V grant. Ornelas said AIM would be integrated into and expanded at the Dream Center, giving its services a central location that currently doesn't exist.

While details are still being decided and a project timeline has yet to be determined, the Dream Center proposal has gained support from several student, staff, and faculty-led campus councils, Ornelas said. A small task force, the Dream Center Task Force, is currently working to find adequate funding and space on campus for the center.

Although Ornelas said Hancock officials were informed this month that they were not awarded a \$125,000 grant, students and staff are determined to make the project work—and Ornelas said she's confident that Hancock's campus will be home to a Dream Center soon.

Frankie Maldonado, a sophomore and president of Hancock's Associated Student Body Government (ASBG), said ASBG recently passed a resolution supporting the Dream Center efforts.

Maldonado said undocumented students face so many challenges others don't—without a Social Security number, they can't get jobs, he said, and without jobs, they can't pay for college—and resources can be difficult to find.

"So having a place for undocumented students that supports them would be so great," Maldonado said. ○

Staff Writer Kasey Bubnash writes *School Scene* each week. Information can be sent to the *Sun* via mail, fax, or email at mail@santamariasun.com.

ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREW MASUDA



Haleigh Batty

Allan Hancock College track and field star Haleigh Batty is a record-breaker.

During her freshman year at Hancock, she set new records in both the women's long and high jumps. And after taking first place in seven of her first eight meets of the season, Batty won a Western State Conference long jump title, and she later placed third at the California Community College Athletic Association State Championships. She was the first Hancock woman to earn all-American status in track and field in nine seasons.

Batty, who plans to pursue a bachelor's degree in either nursing or sports medicine, officially committed last week to Westmont College, where she will continue her track and field career on a scholarship. ○

—Kasey Bubnash



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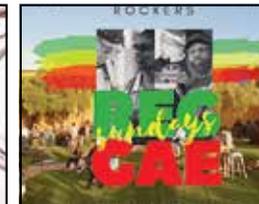
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Morro Bay Wine Seller



**The
McNaughtstys**
FRIDAY, AUGUST 31
Tooth & Nail Winery



**Jody
Mulgrew**
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1
Sculptera Winery



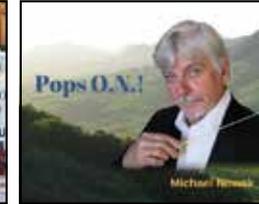
**HWY 46W
Harvest Block Party**
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1
Highway 46 West Wineries



**1st Annual Harvest Kick-off
Winemakers Dinner**
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1
Tooth & Nail Winery



**2018 Tour & Taste
of the Valley**
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1
Orcutt Union Plaza



**4th Annual
Pops ON!**
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2
PAC, SLO



**Eye Will Survive
Disco Benefit**
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8
Avila Bay Athletic Club



**Catch of the
Central Coast**
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8
Avila Bay Athletic Club



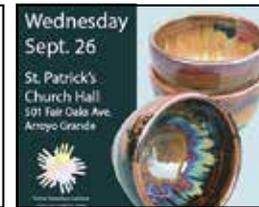
**Tribute to
Jimmy Buffet**
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11
Morro Bay Wine Seller



**Poncho
Sanchez**
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16
CPAC, Cuesta College



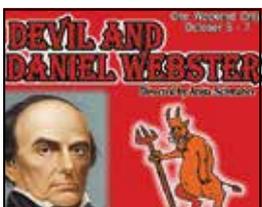
**Avila Apple Festival
Gala Dinner**
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22
Avila Beach Community Center



**7th Annual Empty Bowls
Luncheon for 5CHC**
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26
St. Patrick's Church Hall



**A Concert
for Hope**
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29
Presqu'ile Winery



The Devil & Daniel Webster
FRI-SUN, OCTOBER 5-7
By the Sea
Productions



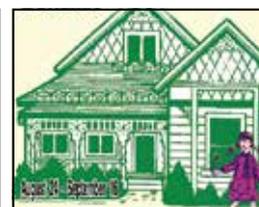
**The
Cimo Brothers**
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21
Old Santa Rosa Chapel



**Halloween Harvest
Costume Ball**
FRI & SAT, OCTOBER 26 & 27
California Mid-State Fairgrounds



**10th Annual
New Times Music Awards**
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER, 2
The Fremont Theater



Anne of Green Gables
NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 16
By The Sea
Productions



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Online Poll

Should Santa Barbara County allow ExxonMobil to truck crude oil from its offshore platforms through the county?

48% No.
39% Yes.
13% Not sure.

32 Votes

Vote online at www.santamariasun.com.

Sun

Northern Santa Barbara County's
News & Entertainment Weekly
2540 Skyway Drive, Suite A
Santa Maria, CA 93455

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Newspaper
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Library and Friends should come together

A friend recently contacted me with news that there is a disagreement brewing between the Friends of the Santa Maria Public Library and the city librarian, Mary Housel, about the city's requirement for a lease for use of the Library Shop in the Library ("Library Shop to close after tiff with Library," July 5). The subsequent decision of the Friends too close the Library Shop along with their decision not to sign a memorandum of understanding with the city, outlining the mutual roles of the city and the Friends, seem to be making many people very unhappy and has spread into a very public airing of this long simmering situation.

I recently moved from Santa Maria after residing there for 43 years. I was fortunate to be a trustee of the library for several years before I moved. I have a great love for libraries and especially this one, and have many friends who are now embroiled in this situation. I am writing to offer my support for the city librarian. I know how dedicated she is and that she has a wonderful, forward-thinking vision for bringing new and exciting projects to the citizens of Santa Maria. That being said, I also have a deep respect for the years of work by the volunteers of the Friends group. I worked with them on projects and know they all love the library and its mission to educate and inform all citizens.

I feel that in the emotions of this recent situation, some of the Friends are making things personal. They are forgetting the librarian has specific rules and regulations that she has to follow as a public employee, and that the Friends group, as a nonprofit, also has some rules they have to abide by. I am hoping that cooler heads will prevail and they will sit down and leave rhetoric outside the room and find common ground to solve this problem.

Jackie MacNeil
Ephrata, Washington

Trump won, get over it

I must write on the continued letter craziness of some here, in particular those addressing President Donald Trump and Republicans. Two letters stood out in the July 12 issue: "The new GOP," by Sean Mac Aodha and "Supreme Court nomination," by Kim Pendleton.

On "The new GOP," I can't stop chuckling long enough to know if Sean is serious. The diatribe is lockstep with the "tolerant" liberals of today. Sean uses terms to describe Trump (and by proxy us) including "angry, racist ... and utterly vicious to its political enemies." These words are always thrown out, yet liberals can never point to one thing to back up their arguments. They'll say "racist" because Trump wants to block people from six of the over 50 Muslim countries in the world from coming here. So Trump is only "racist" to 1/10th of Muslims?

Sean declares "angry," no doubt on issues like illegal immigration, because Trump wants to vet people entering our country. Wow, another novel concept also proposed by Clinton and Obama and Bush. As to being "vicious to political enemies"—are you new to politics? Obama did this for eight years; see also other political figures. Facts are—it was Trump supporters who got attacked by left-wing goons during the election; it's Trump supporters who continued to be attacked by lunatics on the left; it's racist Democrats who excoriate minorities who have come to the Republican party. It's the Dems who are acting to shut down free speech

and expression with help from the fascists at Antifa; see riots at Berkeley and elsewhere. And let's not forget our favorite windbag, Maxine Waters, a Dem who encouraged her followers to attack those on the right. Sean needs to turn off MSNBC, CNN, NBC, ABC, and other windbags on TV (no longer recognized as journalists).

On "Supreme Court Nomination," Kim makes the faulty argument for Merrick Garland by stating: "Garland would be a superior nominee," and, "let's promote this nominee that was never dealt with before we consider any nominee that President Trump advances." So he's only "superior" because the liberals like him? And Garland's nomination was stopped by both parties. Kim, sorry to tell you, but Trump won. So remember—"To the victors go the spoils!" And we can all be thankful that Hillary is not making these decisions.

Bruce Connolly
Orcutt

Response to Scott Fina

Scott Fina's commentary regarding the cave rescue in Thailand ("Cave rescue in Thailand was no 'miracle,'" July 19) was a brilliant piece of persuasive writing. Using a relevant example, he was able to express and show us how universal ideals are practical and useful. Who can make a legitimate argument against these values?

Yet, many voices and actions today do undermine human decency. What has happened to a sense of purpose beyond our own selfishness? If we each care only about our own advantage, we are doomed. Today's political landscape has taken advantage of this selfish approach. The nation is not divided so much by intellectual argument as it is by those who are out only for themselves versus those who care about the common good.

Fortunately, many diverse groups are coming together in common cause such as the students from the Parkland massacre joining with the African-Americans in Chicago to protest gun

Justin Ruhge
Lompoc

violence. In the past, I didn't see groups like these working alongside, but instead considering each other competitors for attention to their specific circumstances. May we do more of this.

Carole Zink
Orcutt

County fair experience

Here we were, senior citizens doing our volunteer duty, sitting the first session of the Santa Maria Republican Club booth at the recent county fair as we have for the past 10 years. All around us were other booths for the NRA, wheel chairs, books and puffy dolls, jewelry, cosmetics, bonsai plants, the CHP, etc.

People were flowing around these, talking, looking, buying, and everything was cool. The NRA was really busy selling chances on their collection of guns. Dozens of couples came through with baby buggies and kids in hand. The Republican booth, with its poster of President Trump, was signing up voters, new and old.

But, way over on the other side of the building, almost out of sight, was the Democratic Party booth. At some point, a senior female member of that booth was motivated to come over and see "what was going on and get acquainted." Well, after the hello, fuming comments about the person in the poster began flowing. But a nice retort could not suffice, so a reminder of the foibles of the past president for eight years sent the person quickly mumbling away back across the foggy hall.

The nasty comments are another example of the deranged mentality of the liberal left. Some of those appeared in your last opinion pages by Scott Fina ("Cave rescue in Thailand was no 'miracle,'" July 19) and Libby Breen ("We knew about Trump," July 19) and Tom Tomorrow's cartoon about Judge Kavanaugh's confirmation. Fina had a good article about the Thai rescue until the last paragraph.

MAYFIELD

ATTENTION LOCAL BANDS, MUSICIANS, SINGERS, AND SONGWRITERS!

TIME TO ENTER THE 10TH ANNUAL NEW TIMES MUSIC AWARDS

Win amazing prizes including a Newtie (the official, custom NTMA trophy), a chance to be included on the 2018 NTMA CD, recording time at The Sauce Pot studios, AND a spot performing at the winners showcase at the Fremont Theater, on Friday, November 2nd, 2018.



ENTER CONTEST ONLINE OR WITH ENTRY FORM BELOW
 ENTRY PERIOD IS THURS., JULY 26 - MON., AUG. 20, 2018 BY 5PM
 ENTER ONLINE AT www.NewTimesSLO.com

ENTER UP TO 13 SONGS & 1 ALBUM

ONLINE ENTRIES ARE PREFERRED, however, you may fill out the following form to enter songs into this year's competition. Be sure to check ONE box to indicate the genre of the song. 10 original songs max for the genre categories, 3 original songs max for the songwriters category, and 1 entry for album category total.

Name(s) of songwriter(s) _____
 Address _____
 Phone # _____ Email _____
 Instagram _____

SONG ENTRY BY GENRE (please check one box per song title to indicate song genre)

Song Title #1 _____
 Name of performing artist(s) EXACTLY as it should appear on CD _____
 (band name, stage name, etc.)
 Rock/Alternative Country/Americana/Folk R&B/Blues Hip-Hop/Rap Open Youth

Song Title #2 _____
 Name of performing artist(s) EXACTLY as it should appear on CD _____
 Rock/Alternative Country/Americana/Folk R&B/Blues Hip-Hop/Rap Open Youth

Song Title #3 _____
 Name of performing artist(s) EXACTLY as it should appear on CD _____
 Rock/Alternative Country/Americana/Folk R&B/Blues Hip-Hop/Rap Open Youth

Song Title #4 _____
 Name of performing artist(s) EXACTLY as it should appear on CD _____
 Rock/Alternative Country/Americana/Folk R&B/Blues Hip-Hop/Rap Open Youth

Song Title #5 _____
 Name of performing artist(s) EXACTLY as it should appear on CD _____
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Song Title #8 _____
 Name of performing artist(s) EXACTLY as it should appear on CD _____
 Rock/Alternative Country/Americana/Folk R&B/Blues Hip-Hop/Rap Open Youth

Song Title #9 _____
 Name of performing artist(s) EXACTLY as it should appear on CD _____
 Rock/Alternative Country/Americana/Folk R&B/Blues Hip-Hop/Rap Open Youth

Song Title #10 _____
 Name of performing artist(s) EXACTLY as it should appear on CD _____
 Rock/Alternative Country/Americana/Folk R&B/Blues Hip-Hop/Rap Open Youth

SONGWRITER CATEGORY ENTRY

Song Title #1 _____
 Song Title #2 _____
 Song Title #3 _____

BEST ALBUM ENTRY

(only 1 total)
 Album Title _____

TOTAL NUMBER OF ENTRIES _____ x \$10= _____ PAYMENT ENCLOSED _____

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

Signature _____ Date _____

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

LOCAL LEGEND AWARD NOMINEE

The Local Legend Award recognizes an individual or group who has contributed to help enrich, support, and further music's reach in our community; someone whose ideas, inspiration, and dedication to this art scene have helped nurture and grow the music scene—whether it's bringing new sounds to the area or giving people the tools they need to create their own. We would love your input! Please use this space to nominate an individual, group, or organization, you feel should be considered for this award:

NEW TIMES: 1010 MARSH STREET, SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA 93401 • SUN: 2540 SKYWAY DRIVE, SUITE A, SANTA MARIA CA 93445

GENERAL RULES

- All entries must be received by 5pm on Monday, August 20, 2018, to be considered for the 2018 New Times Music Awards (NTMAs).
- Entries are \$10 for each song and for the Best Album award.
- Participants may enter a maximum of 13 songs (10 genre category, 3 songwriting category) and 1 album.
- ONLINE ENTRIES ARE PREFERRED. Please fill out the entry form, upload songs, and pay for your entries with a credit card at www.NewTimesSLO.com.
- If you wish to pay with cash or check, you may drop off your entries at either the New Times or Sun offices (addresses listed below). Bring your music entries on a CD or USB drive along with your completed entry form. Checks should be made payable to "New Times."
- All entrants must reside primarily in San Luis Obispo County or Northern Santa Barbara County.
- All entrants must be able to play at the showcase event on **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2018**.
- All entrants under 18 years of age must select the Youth category and must have a parent or guardian sign the entry form.
- By entering the contest, all entrants give permission to New Times Media Group to reproduce submissions on compact disc and on the web. All entries remain the property of performers.
- New Times Music Awards is not responsible for lost, damaged, incomplete, or late entries.
- The top 3 songs in each category need to provide high-quality versions of their songs (16 Bit, 44.1 Sample Rate).

- Songs may have multiple co-writers, but please designate one contact name only on entry form.
- Winners will be chosen by a select panel of judges.
- Songs will be judged on overall performance.
- Live performers will share the 'Back Line'.
- Check NewTimesSLO.com or contact NTMA@NewTimesSLO.com for more information.

GENRE CATEGORIES

- The Youth category is for anyone entering music who is under the age of 18.
- The Open genre includes reggae, world beat, jazz, classical, new age, electronic, etc.
- Each song submission must have a genre selected. If nothing is selected, the song will go into the Open genre.
- If judges determine a song to be a better fit with a different genre category than what was originally submitted, they reserve the right to recategorize it.

SONGWRITER CATEGORY

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

ALBUM CATEGORY

- Albums must have been released between July 1, 2017 and August 20, 2018 to be eligible. Please deliver a hard copy to either the New Times or Sun office along with a completed entry form by 5pm on Monday, August 20, 2018 for consideration. The entire presentation will be judged, including quality of songs, sound, and packaging.
- Only 1 album per entrant total.



Tour & Taste of the Valley

Wine Country Ride, Run & Tasting Event



Saturday, September 1

Orcutt Union Plaza

235 S Broadway, Old Town Orcutt

Beer, Wine, & Food Tasting
Booths, Live Music, and Artisans Market

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tourandtasteofthevalley.org



RIDES START: 100k 7am | 50k 7:30am
RUNS START: 10k 10am | 5k 10:30am
TASTE: 11am-2pm **The Taste is a 21+ Event**



Must be nice

Another year, another crop report from Santa Barbara County (see page 5), and this one is (Borat voice), *berry nice!*



THE CANARY

Sorry, I couldn't resist—the county's strawberry farmers raked in an astounding \$457 million during 2017!

Local broccoli farmers got a significant boost as well, surpassing wine grapes as the second most earning crop from 2016 to 2017. I'm sure 4th District Supervisor Peter Adam is happy about that; he grows a lot of broccoli in the county. Is that how he also grows such an illustrious mustache, a diet rich in greens?

The cut flower industry bloomed a bit brighter than last year as well, to the tune of about \$10 million, but that was after losing nearly \$30 million between 2015 and 2016. Still, \$85 million across 2017 for cut flowers is impressive, especially considering that's all done on less than 1,000 acres, mostly in the Lompoc Valley.

I guess the ongoing labor shortage hasn't been that dire, or at least local farmers found enough workers to help grow the county's agricultural gross by \$163 million from 2016 to 2017. Perhaps the federal H-2A farmworker housing program helped, despite some local cries to limit the amount of it in Santa Maria.

Agriculture is a billion-dollar industry in this county alone, and it accounts for more than 25,000 jobs. That's why I always get my feathers ruffled when I hear locals complain about "illegals" and resources that help undocumented workers or their kids. Farmworkers are the lowest rung on the proverbial ag industry ladder, and make the least amount of money for their backbreaking labor, yet it's on their backs that this county garners so much of its wealth.

That's why I commend efforts by students and staff at Allan Hancock College who want to set up a Dream Center at the school to help DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) or other undocumented students, often called Dreamers, and connect them to much-needed resources (see page 12).

The undocumented community contributes plenty to our local economy, even if it often leaves them behind. The staggering crop numbers are just one illustration of that.

Santa Barbara County has plenty of wealth, but it also has plenty of poverty. Of the nearly half a million people living across the county, 60,000 are living at or below the federal poverty level (see page 7), and a lot of those are children. That's not just undocumented folks, it could be anyone who doesn't have a high-wage job.

Or it could be anyone who doesn't own property, which fewer and fewer county residents are able to afford. Rents are only rising while wages stagnate, a problem across the state and the country. It must be nice to be able to own a house or a piece of farmland, to rake in the stacks of rental or ag income from the county's working class.

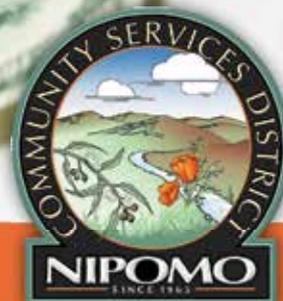
That's why it's frustrating to see the city of Santa Maria drag its feet on making the city safer for cyclists and pedestrians (see page 6). It's an issue the Sun has reported on for years as so many residents who walk or bike are hit and killed by cars in this traffic-congested city.

How many of those Santa Marians killed by vehicles do you think had enough money in the bank so their family wasn't scrambling to pay for mortuary and funeral costs? ○

The Canary can at least afford a basket of strawberries. Send your thoughts to canary@santamariasun.com.

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HOT STUFF

JULY 26 - AUG. 2
2018



BICYCLE! BICYCLE! BICYCLE!

The Healthy Lompoc Coalition presents Lompoc Open Streets 2018 on Aug. 3 from 4 to 8 p.m. in Old Town Lompoc. Attendees are encouraged to use active transportation during this car-free event. Guests can enjoy health and wellness activities, various vendors, and plenty of space to bike, scooter, or skate. More info: healthylompoc.org.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HEALTHY LOMPOC COALITION

more structured form such as a bowl, tray, or dish. **July 28**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. \$45; \$10 material fee. 805-686-8315. wildlingmuseum.org. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

BALLROOM, LATIN, AND SWING LESSONS Marie King and Kings of Swing offer dance lessons for all ages and skill levels. Couples and singles welcome. Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m. \$36 for 4-week session. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-928-7799.

BEADING WORKSHOP Thursdays, noon oasiorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-928-7799.

COUNTRY TWO STEP DANCE LESSONS From the basics to a variety of patterns. Dancers of all skill levels welcome. Thursdays, 6:15-7 p.m. \$8. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-928-7799.

EVERYBODY CAN DANCE Ballet workout classes for teens and adults. Tuesdays, 6 p.m. everybodycandance.webs.com. Everybody Can Dance, 628 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-937-6753.

INTRODUCTORY BALLET 1 Tuesdays, 5 p.m. everybodycandance.webs.com. Everybody Can Dance, 628 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-937-6753.

INTRODUCTORY BALLET 2 Wednesdays, 6 p.m. and Fridays everybodycandance.webs.com. Everybody Can Dance, 628 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-937-6753.

INTRODUCTORY BALLET 3 Wednesdays, 6 p.m. everybodycandance.webs.com. Everybody Can Dance, 628 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-937-6753.

LATIN DANCE CLASS: SALSA, BACHATA, AND MORE Instructors and styles vary from week to week. Thursdays, 8-10 p.m. \$10. facebook.com/dancingamor. Everybody Can Dance, 628 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-937-6753.

SALSA DANCE CLASS No partner or experience needed. Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m. Free. 805-937-1574. CentralCoastSwingDance.com. Old Town Brew, 338 W. Tefft St. Nipomo.

UKULELE CLASS Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-928-7799.

ARTS continued page 18

SPECIAL EVENTS

LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

LOMPOC MURAL WALK The Central Coast Beach Boardwalkers Walking Club hosts this group walk to view the various murals in Lompoc. Includes a 5K and a 10K to choose from. **July 28**, 8-11 a.m. Free; \$3 per walker for AVA credit. 805-714-1552. beachboardwalkers.org. Southside Coffee, 105 S. H Street, Lompoc.

LOMPOC OPEN STREETS 2018 Attendees are encouraged to use active transportation (walk/bike/scooter/skate) to navigate all the car-free activities. This event includes health and wellness activities, vendors, plenty of room to safely walk and bike, and more. **Aug. 3**, 4-8 p.m. healthylompoc.org. Lompoc Old Town Market, 100 South H St, Lompoc.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

14TH ANNUAL AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS POKER RUN Hosted by the American Legion Riders Orcutt Chapter 534, District 16. Ticket includes lunch. **July 28**, 8:15 a.m.-2 p.m. \$10-\$25. 805-937-0651. American Legion Post 534, 145 W. Clark Ave, Orcutt.

5TH ANNUAL FREE MOVIES IN THE PARK Featured films include *Back to the Future*, *Grease*, *Black Panther*, and more. Venues include Sierra Vista Park, Preisker Park, Rotary Centennial Park, and more. Saturdays, through Aug. 18 Free. 805-925-0951 ext.2260. Rotary Centennial Park, 2625 South College Dr., Santa Maria.

NATURE TALK: 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WILDERNESS ACT Featuring guest speaker Jeff Kuyper of Los Padres ForestWatch. Refreshments will be available. **July 29**, 1-2 p.m. Free. The Santa Maria Natural History Museum, 412 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-614-0806, smnature.org.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

51ST ANNUAL RAINBOW OF GEMS SHOW This event features art demonstrations, kids activities, food, and more. Presented by the Orcutt Mineral Society. **Aug. 3-4**, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and **Aug. 5**, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. omsinc.org. Nipomo High School, 525 N Thompson Ave, Nipomo.

SLO BUDDHIST CHURCH OBON FESTIVAL

Features martial arts and bonsai demonstrations, taiko drumming, Japanese folk dancing, crafts, food, and more. **Aug. 4**, 12-8 p.m. Free. St. Patrick's School, 900 W. Branch St., Arroyo Grande.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

BRUNCH BY THE LAKE Enjoy food trucks, coffee, live music, a boat parade, and more. First Saturday of every month, 9 a.m.-noon through Aug. 4 Free. Laguna Lake Park, 504 Madonna Rd., San Luis Obispo.

CENTRAL COAST SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL Features *As You Like It* and *The Three Musketeers*. Enjoy food and wine available onsite or pack a picnic. No outside alcohol allowed. Thursdays-Saturdays, 7:30-9:30 p.m. **through Aug. 4** \$12-\$20. 805-441-1136. centralcoastshakespeare.org/. Filippini Ranch, 1850 Calle Joaquin, San Luis Obispo.

WALKING BEER TOUR Enjoy award-winning local brews while a personal beer guide explains the history, brewing process, and highlights of each destination. **July 26**, 12-4 p.m. \$50. 855-554-6766. hoponbeertours.com/walking-beer-tour/. Central Coast Brewing, 1422 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

FUNDRAISERS

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

ANNUAL RUMMAGE SALE Features donated new and gently used items including clothes, games, toys, tools, electronics, household items, collectibles, and more. **Aug. 4**, 8 a.m.-1 p.m. 805-264-2128. Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, 877 Francine Ln., Santa Maria, odox.org.

The Sun and New Times now share their community listings for a complete Central Coast calendar running from northern Santa Barbara County through SLO County.

Submit events online by following the link on the calendar widget at santamariasun.com. Submissions require logging in with your Google, Facebook, or Twitter account. You can also email calendar@santamariasun.com. Deadline is one week before the issue date. Submissions are subject to editing and approval. Contact Calendar Editor Caleb Wiseblood directly at cwiseblood@newtimeslo.com.

MURDER AT CAFE NOIR: INTERACTIVE MYSTERY DINNER THEATER FUNDRAISER

Enjoy this comic tribute to the Humphrey Bogart movies of the '40s set in a nightclub on a Caribbean island. Features a gourmet dinner and a no-host bar. Presented by Orcutt Community Theater. **Through July 29**, 6-9 p.m. \$65 (reservations only). 805-937-3738. OrcuttCommunityTheater.com. Moxie Cafe, 1317 W. McCoy Ln., Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

MASQUERADE GALA Proceeds benefit the 5Cities Homeless Coalition and Nipomo Food Basket. Live entertainment provided by Sound Investment. Guests can enjoy silent and live auctions, dancing, and more. Cocktail attire and masks encouraged. **July 28**, 6-11 p.m. \$75. 805-574-1638. The Monarch Club at Trilogy Monarch Dunes, 1645 Trilogy Parkway, Nipomo.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

WELL WORTH IT DRIVE THRU BARBECUE Proceeds go toward building wells in developing countries. Dinner includes tri-tip, beans, bread, and salad. **July 31**, 4-6 p.m. \$45. 805 544 7407. cannoncorp.us/drive-thru-bbq/. CannonCorp, 1050 Southwood Dr., San Luis Obispo.

ARTS

CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

RANDOM WEAVE BASKET CLASS WITH KATHY BADRAK AND KAREN OSLAND Participants will learn the basketry technique of random weave using rattan reed and vines. This weave allows the weaver to create a free-form basket, sculpture, or a

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SUBMIT
YOUR
EVENTS

WEST COAST SWING CLASS No partner or experience needed. Mondays, 7-9 p.m. Free. 805-937-1574. CentralCoastSwingDance.com. Old Town Brew, 338 W. Tefft St, Nipomo.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

ART AND WINE ACRYLIC POURING BASICS

This class includes a glass of wine to enjoy. **July 30**, 6-8 p.m. \$40 for 1; \$65 for 2. 805-550-9963. theartgalanipomo.com. Gala De Arte Plaza, 136 N Thompson Ave. B, Nipomo.

ART AND WINE JELLYFISH CANVAS All supplies and wine included. **July 31**, 6-8 p.m. \$45 for 1; \$65 for 2. 805-550-9963. theartgalanipomo.com/events/jellyfish-canvas-art-and-wine/. Gala De Arte Plaza, 136 N Thompson Ave. B, Nipomo.

ART AND WINE: PEONIES AND ANTLERS All supplies and a glass of wine provided. **July 26**, 6-8 p.m. \$40 for 1; \$65 for 2. 805-550-9963. theartgalanipomo.com/events/peonies-and-antlers-art-and-wine/. Gala De Arte Plaza, 136 N Thompson Ave. B, Nipomo.

ART AND WINE: SEAHORSE NAIL ART All supplies and wine included. **July 27**, 6-8 p.m. \$45

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE SANTA MARIA NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM



ACT NATURALLY

The Santa Maria Natural History Museum hosts guest speaker Jeff Kuyper of Los Padres ForestWatch on July 29 from 1 to 2 p.m. The topic of this nature talk is the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Admission is free. Refreshments will be available. The museum is located at 412 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria. More info: smnature.org.

for 1; \$65 for 2. 805-550-9963. com/events. Gala De Arte Plaza, 136 N Thompson Ave. B, Nipomo.

COOKING CLASS: MEDITERRANEAN APPETIZERS

Prepare spanakopita and pita with hummus while learning the history and culture of the meal. Please bring an apron, knife, and cutting board. **July 27**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. \$45. 805-773-7063. pismobeach.org/recreation. Pismo Veterans Memorial Hall, 780 Bello St., Pismo Beach.

OPEN STUDIO Come paint, draw, play, explore, and more. All supplies are provided. **July 27**, 2-4:30 p.m. and **July 30**, 2-4:30 p.m. \$20. 805-668-2125. LiIA Creative Community, 1147 East Grand Ave. Suite 101, Arroyo Grande, lila.community.

WATERCOLOR AND PRINTMAKING

Explore the use of color, pattern, and texture in watercolors and printmaking. After carving their own foam "plate", participants will experiment with various colors for their backgrounds. Guests will take home several prints. **July 26**, 2-4:30 p.m. \$45. 805-668-2125. LiIA Creative Community, 1147 East Grand Ave. Suite 101, Arroyo Grande, lila.community.

WISHING STICK All materials are provided, but guests are free to bring their own sticks or small items that have personal meaning. Decorative materials include acrylic paint, yarn, thread, wire, beads, and more. **July 31**, 2-4:30 p.m. and **Aug. 2**, 2-4:30 p.m. \$18. 805-668-2125. LiIA Creative Community, 1147 East Grand Ave. Suite 101, Arroyo Grande, lila.community.

SPECIAL ART EVENTS

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

10TH ANNIVERSARY PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

The theme of this year's competition is "Nature Regenerated." This year's guest judge will be Bill Dewey, whose extensively photographed the tri-counties through its many cycles of fire and regeneration. **Aug. 4-Nov. 5** Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082, wildlingmuseum.org.

DIALOGUE WITH THE ARTIST: NANCY YAKI

Artist Nancy Yaki will be discussing how she



chooses composition and imagery and which specific techniques set her apart from other artists. There will be a social hour following the discussion with beverages and snacks. **July 28**, 4-5 p.m. Free. 805-686-1211. elverhoj.org. Elverhoj Museum of History and Art, 1624 Elverhoj Way, Solvang.

POETRY WITH MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT

Poetry by Allen Koehn with musical accompaniment by Teresa McNeil MacLean. **July 29**, 3-4 p.m. 805-686-8315. wildlingmuseum.org. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

BOOK TO FILM BINGE WATCH FOR TEENS

Read the books, then come to the library and watch the movies. Featured adaptations include *Hidden Figures* at 11 a.m., *The Book Thief* at 1:30 p.m., and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* at 4 p.m. **July 30**, 11 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

FIRST FRIDAY ARTIST RECEPTIONS

Valley Art Gallery features 12 artists each year. Enjoy art, wine, and food at these opening receptions. First Friday of every month, 5-7 p.m. Free. 805-937-2278. valleygallery.org. Valley Art Gallery, 125 W. Clark Ave., Orcutt.

EXHIBITS

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

THE BEAUTY OF LIGHT This exhibit features landscapes by local artists Sheryl Knight and Linda Mutti. **Through July 31**, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. 805-688-7517. gallerylosolivos.com/. Gallery Los Olivos, 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos.

BIRDS OF THE TRI-COUNTY REGION Three artists share their perspectives of bird species that can be found in the tri-county region (Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo). In the Valley Oak Gallery. **Through July 30** Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang, 805-688-1082, wildlingmuseum.org.

ARTS continued page 20

80's Night
FEATURING
THE MOLLY RINGWALD PROJECT
ULTIMATE 80'S BAND

SATURDAY, AUG 18TH
GATES OPEN AT 5:30 SHOW STARTS AT 7PM
GENERAL ADMISSION TICKETS ARE \$15
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* NO COOLERS OR LARGE BAGS

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GUADALUPE CULTURAL ARTS & EDUCATION CENTER

The Guadalupe Cultural Arts and Education Center provides the history of Guadalupe, and the surrounding areas. This Center holds educational cultural awareness of diverse community groups and ethnic arts, presentations and educational classes.

We invite schools, clubs and social groups to tour our facility. Artist and presenters are welcome to schedule exhibits.

Guadalupe Cultural Arts & Education Center
Open to the public: Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 4pm

For all questions please contact Karen Evangelista at 805-478-8502
Email: karen@guadalupeculturalcenter.com

1055 Guadalupe St., Guadalupe CA
www.GuadalupeCulturalCenter.com

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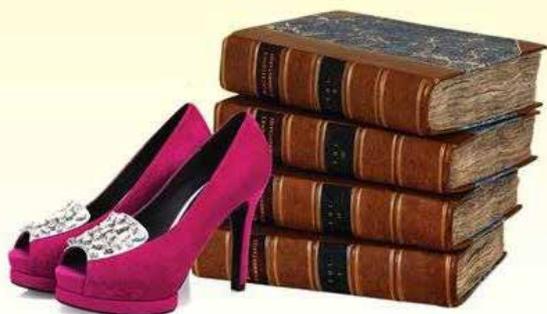
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Directed by Kyle Hawkins

AUGUST 10-26

6TH ANNUAL

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Show Your Dog**

Reservations: SHOW & DINNER
(Choice of Top Sirloin, Veg or Hot Dog)

\$45 per person - \$20 per person for 16 years and under

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Maria Martino at: 805-714-8749 or
email her at Poohesq1@mac.com

Sun

Please make checks payable to: Altrusa
International Santa Maria Inc. PO Box
5184, Santa Maria, CA 93456-5184

NATURE IMAGINED This exhibit celebrates nature through art by Cheryl Medow, Ellen Jewett, and Hilary Brace. These artists used diverse materials and methods to create their works. Mondays, Wednesdays-Sundays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. **through Jan. 21** \$5. 805-686-8315. wildlingmuseum.org. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang.

NATURE REGENERATED Photographers were encouraged to capture examples of nature's ability to regenerate and thrive. This exhibit showcases winning entries in the Adult and Junior categories. **Aug. 4**, 3-5 p.m. and ongoing Free. 805-686-8315. wildlingmuseum.org/photography-competition/. Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang.

PAVLOV GALLERY: FEATURED ARTISTS Showcasing new collections on a weekly basis. Featured artists include Chris Pavlov, Iris Pavlov, Robert Hildebrand, Doug Picotte, and more. ongoing, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. 805-686-1080. pavlogallery.com. Pavlov Art Gallery, 1608 Copenhagen Dr., Ste C, Solvang.

THE ROADSIDE SERIES: ATTRACTIONS AND DISTRACTIONS Featuring the work of artist Nancy Yaki, who began her Roadside Series as a study of landscapes while driving to and from work. This series also includes special presentations, panel discussions, film screenings, and workshops. **Through Aug. 5** Elverhoj Museum of History and Art, 1624 Elverhoj Way, Solvang, 805-686-1211, elverhoj.org.

SUMMER BLOOM A collection of plein air and studio paintings by pastel artists Deborah Breedon and Kris Buck. ongoing Gallery Los Olivos, 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos.

VALLEY VISTAS This landscapes exhibit features works by Dave DeMatteo, Dirk Foslien, Joe Mancuso, Sheryl Knight, Nancy Phelps, Barron Postmus, Merv Corning, and Eyvind Earle. **Through Aug. 1** solvangantiques.com. Solvang Antiques, 1693 Copenhagen Dr., Solvang.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

COLOR AND MOTION: AN ARTISTS PERSPECTIVE See the work of local artist Kathy Badrak on display at the Terry Dworaczyk office of Ameriprise Financial. This exhibit is one of a continuing series of shows to spotlight local art and artists. ongoing 805-938-9724. amfp.com. Ameriprise Financial, 2605 S Miller St., Suite 104, Santa Maria.

HATTIE STODDARD AT VALLEY ART GALLERY Stoddard is the gallery's featured artist for the month of August. **Aug. 1-Sept. 1** Free. Valley Art Gallery, 125 W. Clark Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-2278, valleygallery.org.

HEIDI GRUETZEMACHER AT VALLEY ART GALLERY Gruetzemacher is the gallery's featured artist for the month of July. **Through Aug. 1** Free. Valley Art Gallery, 125 W. Clark Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-2278, valleygallery.org.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

ART BY SLOPE AT DANA ADOBE A collection that culminates art and history to educate the community. Fridays. **through Sept. 30** 805-929-5679. danaadobe.org. DANA Adobe Cultural Center, 671 S. Oakglen Ave., Nipomo.

FROM ARTISTS, FOR ARTISTS, BY ARTISTS Featuring fine art oils and pastels from Corynn Wolf, acrylics from Ryan Adams, and works from various mediums by Marc Wolf ongoing Free. 805-773-6563. Puffers of Pismo, 781 Price St., Pismo Beach, puffersofpismo.com/.

SHE SANG ME A GOOD LUCK SONG A statewide traveling exhibit featuring the California Indian photographs of Dugan Aguilar. ongoing 415-525-1553. exhibitenvoy.org. DANA Adobe Cultural Center, 671 S. Oakglen Ave., Nipomo, 805-929-5679.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

ART AFTER DARK SLO Unites visual, literary, and performing artists with the community and participating venues. Visit site for full list of programs and events. First Friday of every month, 6-9 p.m. 805-544-9251. artsobispo.org. SLO County, Countywide, San Luis Obispo.

COLOR RHYTHM: INGRID BRINK AND SUSAN MALMGREN Brink and Malmgren are two Los Osos artists that use watercolor, acrylic, and collage. **Through Aug. 29**, 6-9 p.m. 805-542-9000. sloart.com. Frame Works, 339 Marsh St, San Luis Obispo.

FLIGHTS AND FANCIES Featuring works by artist

Spanish-speaking artists. Sixth Thursday of every month, 6-7 p.m. Free. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-925-0994.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

POINT SLO LIGHTHOUSE TOURS Docents lead guests on a one-hour tour of the historic site, the buildings, and up to the Lighthouse tower. Please arrive 15 minutes early. All proceeds go directly toward the site's restoration. Wednesdays, 12 & 1 p.m. and Saturdays, 12, 1 & 2 p.m. \$17-\$22. 805-540-5771. pointsanluislighthouse.org. Point San Luis Lighthouse, 1 Lighthouse Rd., Avila Beach.

CLUBS & MEETINGS

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

BOLT: BOARD OF LIBRARY TEENS BOLT meets once a month to decide on upcoming teen programs and help select library materials. **Aug. 4**, 10-10:45 a.m. Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

COFFEE AND CONVERSATION Tuesdays, 1 p.m. 805-928-7799. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

HI-WAY DRIVE-IN SWAP MEET Come to the Hi-Way Drive-In for the Sunday Swap Meet. Sellers: \$20; Produce sellers: \$25; Buyers: \$2 car load. Sundays, 4:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. 805-934-1582. Hi-Way Drive-In, 3170 Santa Maria Way, Santa Maria.

RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT: MAH JONGG Wednesdays, 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. 805-922-2993. Elwin Mussell Senior Center, 510 Park Ave., Santa Maria.

SANTA MARIA TOASTMASTERS WEEKLY MEETING Toastmasters International is a worldwide nonprofit educational organization that empowers individuals to become more effective communicators and leaders. Tuesdays, 6:30-8 p.m. 805-264-6722. santamaria.toastmastersclubs.org/. Toyota of Santa Maria, 700 E Beteravia Rd., Santa Maria.

TRI CITY SOUND CHORUS OF SWEET ADELINES INTERNATIONAL Welcomes all women who are interested in learning about barbershop-style music singing and performing. Thursdays, 6:45-9:30 p.m. 805-736-7572. Lutheran Church of Our Savior, 4725 S. Bradley Road, Orcutt.

TRIVIA NIGHT Wednesdays, 7 p.m. Free. naughtyoak.com. Naughty Oak Brewing Co., 165 S Broadway St Ste 102, Orcutt, 805-287-9663.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

HOMESHARESLO COFFEE CHAT Learn about homesharing, share your housing stories, and network with others. First Wednesday of every month, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Free. 805-215-5474. homeshareslo.org. Coffee Bean, 354 Five Cities Dr., Pismo Beach.

NIPOMO SENIOR CENTER The center is open five days a week; closed on weekends and holidays. Mondays-Fridays, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. 805-929-1615. Nipomo Senior Center, 200 E. Dana St., Nipomo.

FLORA AND FAUNA: BETH VAN HOESEN PRINTS A collection of prints and rare paintings by artist Beth Van Hoese. Mondays-Sundays. **through Aug. 19** Free. 805-543-8562. sloma.org/exhibits/. San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

INTRODUCING PASTELS: WELCOMING THE CENTRAL COAST PASTEL SOCIETY An exhibition of pastel artists from the newly formed Central Coast Pastel Society. **Through July 31** Free. 805-747-4200. artcentralartsupply.com/introducing-pastels.php. Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

SELECTIONS: BAY AREA Ruta Saliklis, curator and director of exhibitions at SLOMA, is showcasing oil paintings by Anne Subercaseaux and a metal sculpture by Flora Davis. Mondays-Sundays. **through Aug. 19** Free. 805-543-8562. sloma.org/exhibits/. San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

CALLS FOR ARTISTS

SAN LUIS OBISPO

CALL FOR ENTRIES: SLO PART-TIME PLAYERS 10-MINUTE PLAYS Accepting submissions of 10-minute plays with 5 or fewer characters (1-3 preferred), few or no props, simple staging, and an emphasis on the text. Writers should have theater experience (please include brief description). Email submissions to celestegoyer@gmail.com. ongoing Free. Mission Plaza, 989 Chorro St, San Luis Obispo.

STAGE

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

MAMMA MIA! AT SOLVANG FESTIVAL THEATER Music and lyrics by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus. Book by Catherine Johnson. Presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International. **July 27-Aug. 26** Solvang Festival Theater, 420 2nd St., Solvang, 805-928-7731.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

GOLD FEVER AT THE ROUGH AND READY A spoof of traditional melodramas by Neil LaVine. Wednesdays-Sundays, 7-9:30 p.m. **through Sept. 16** \$21-\$28. 805-489-2499. americanmelodrama.com. Great American Melodrama, 1863 Front St., Oceano.

THE MIX TAPE An original musical comedy set in the late '90s. **Through Sept. 15** 805-489-2499. americanmelodrama.com. Great American Melodrama, 1863 Front St., Oceano.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

IMPROV AT BANG THE DRUM Presented by Central Coast Comedy Theater. **July 26**, 7-9 p.m. Bang The Drum Brewery, 950 Orcutt Road, San Luis Obispo, 242-8372, bangthedrumbrewery.com/.

IMPROV COMEDY SHOW Fast-paced improv comedy shows performed by the ensemble of Central Coast Comedy Theater. All shows are based on audience suggestions making every show unique. Saturdays, 8-10 p.m. \$5. centralcoastcomedytheater.com. Kreuzberg Coffee Company, 685 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, 805-430-0260.

STAGED READING: BUILDING THE WALL Part of SLO REP's Ubu's Other Shoe Staged Reading series. **July 27-28**, 7-9 p.m. and **July 28**, 2-4 p.m. \$15. 805-786-2440. slorep.org/shows/building-the-wall/. San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre, 888 Morro St., San Luis Obispo.

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

LECTURES & LEARNING

LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

COMMUNITY FOOD CENTER The center is a food pantry offering nutritional classes. Wednesdays, 3-5 p.m. Free. 805-967-5741, Ext. 107. El Camino Community Center, W. Laurel Avenue and N. I Street, Lompoc.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

BI-LINGO Informal conversation to practice Spanish language skills for anyone with basic

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

TRUAMA INFORMED PARENTING GROUP A foster parent class presented by Calm. Tuesdays 805-965-2376. calm4kids.org. Church For Life, 3130 Skyway Dr., Suite 501, Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

GENERAL GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP (SOUTH COUNTY) Hospice SLO County is offering this support group for those grieving the death of a loved one. Held in the Church Care Center. Drop-ins welcome. Tuesdays, 10-11:30 a.m. Free. 805-544-2266. hospiceslo.org. New Life Pismo, 990 James Way, Pismo Beach.

SPOUSE AND PARTNER LOSS SUPPORT GROUP (SOUTH COUNTY) A Hospice SLO support group for those grieving the loss of a partner or spouse. This group provides the opportunity to connect with individuals in a similar situation. Held in Room 16. Drop-ins welcome. Thursdays, 5-6:30 p.m. Free. 805-544-2266. hospiceslo.org. New Life Pismo, 990 James Way, Pismo Beach.

CREATE & LEARN

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

CARD MAKING Tuesdays, 9 a.m. 805-928-7799. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

KNITTING AND CROCHETING Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. 805-928-7799. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

SEWING CAFE CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS Sewing Cafe offers various classes and workshop. Call for full schedule. ongoing Sewing Cafe, 541 Five Cities Dr., Pismo Beach, 805-295-6585.

MIND & BODY

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

CANDLELIGHT RESTORATIVE YOGA Release and open your body with breath, props, and meditation. Mondays, 7-8 p.m. yogaformankind.com. Yoga for Mankind, 130 N Broadway, Suite B, Orcutt.

DANCES OF UNIVERSAL PEACE Simple, meditative, and joyous circle dances using music, mantras and movements from a variety of cultures and spiritual traditions. First Sunday of every month, 2-4 p.m. \$8 · \$10 donation. 805-717-1933. Unity Chapel of Light Church, 1165 Stubblefield Rd., Orcutt, unitysantamaria.net/.

GENTLE YOGA Tuesdays, Thursdays, 8:30 a.m. 805-928-7799. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

REFLEXOLOGY AT OASIS Tuesdays, 9 a.m. 805-928-7799. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center,

CULTURE & LIFESTYLE

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FILE PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLOM



ART WALK

The Central Coast Beach Boardwalkers Walking Club hosts a group walk to view the various murals in Lompoc on July 28 from 8 to 11 a.m. The walk starts at Southside Coffee, located at 105 S. H St., Lompoc. Participants can choose between a 5K or a 10K walk. More info: (805) 714-1552 or beachboardwalkers.org.

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FRIDAY

**JULY
27**

8 PM



DIVA 2 DIVA

FRIDAY

**AUG
3**

8 PM



**THUNDER FROM
DOWN UNDER:
GIRLS' NIGHT OUTBACK**

FRIDAY

**AUG
10**

8 PM



**EL COYOTE
WITH FIDEL RUEDA**

FRIDAY

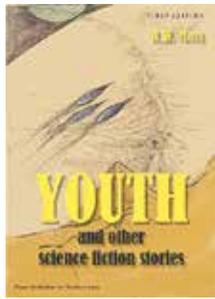
**AUG
17**

8 PM



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THURSDAY HER DAY THURSDAY
• BUY THE LADY A DRINK & GET A 15MIN. \$100 PRIVATE DANCE

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SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

COMPLIMENTARY YOGA Free for resort guests and locals alike. Sundays, 8:30-9:30 a.m. through Oct. 28 Free. 805-773-5003. thedolphinbay.com. The Spa at Dolphin Bay, 2727 Shell Beach Rd., Pismo Beach.

KUNDALINI YOGA Gentle yoga classes with a focus on meditation and chanting in the Kundalini Yoga (as taught by Yogi Bhajan). All levels of experience welcome. Thursdays, 6:30-7:45 p.m. through Dec. 31 \$12 per class; \$40 for 4 classes. 626-864-4810. branchmillorganics.com/classes-offered/. Branch Mill Organic Farm & Retreat Center, 2815 Branch Mill Rd., Arroyo Grande.

SENIOR BODY FITNESS Please bring your own weights and bands. Mondays, 11 a.m.-noon \$1 per class. 805-598-7108. Cortina Apartments, 241 Courtland St., Arroyo Grande.

SILVER SNEAKERS ZUMBA Appropriate for all ages and fitness levels. An easy-to-follow dance fitness class. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 9-10 a.m. Free for members; \$6 to drop-in. 805-441-7932. Oceano Community Center, 1425 19th St., Oceano, adulted.luciamarschools.org.

WATER EXERCISE FOR ALL AGES These classes help relieve joint pain, enhance your breathing, and increase your range of motion. Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m. 805-481-6399. 5 Cities Swim School, 425 Traffic Way, Arroyo Grande, 5cityesswimschool.com.

OUTDOORS

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

SLO COUNTY PUGS ON THE BEACH Socially friendly dogs and their humans are invited to run (leash free) in the surf sand at Olde Port Beach (Avila Dog Beach or Fisherman's Beach). Last Sunday of every month, 2-3 p.m. Free. aggbchamber.com. Olde Port Beach, 6520 Avila Beach Dr., Avila Beach.

SPORTS

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

NFL FLAG FOOTBALL Presented by Rise and Achieve. For boys and girls ages 5 to 17. First game takes place July 7. 10 games guaranteed. ongoing 805-868-3633. riseandachieve.com. Ernest Righetti High School, 941 E. Foster Rd., Orcutt, 805-937-3738.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

2018 JUNIOR VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENTS Presented by the City of Pismo Beach and the California Beach Volleyball Association. **July 28**, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. \$55 per team online; \$60 per team on site (\$25 CBVA Annual Membership fee). 805-773-7063. cbva.com/. Pismo Beach Volleyball Courts, End of Wadsworth Ave, Pismo Beach.

LADIES GOLF NIGHT Offering swing and putting instruction from 5 to 6:30 p.m. and live music and refreshments to enjoy from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursdays, 5-8:30 p.m. through Aug. 30 \$10. 805-481-5215. Pismo Beach Golf Course, 25 West Grand Avenue, Grover Beach, pismobeachgolf.com.

STRIDE WITH THE TIDE 5K Registration for this 5K takes place the day of from 7:15 to 8:15 a.m. Race starts at 8:30 a.m. **Aug. 4**, 7:15 a.m.-noon \$15 for race only; \$25 for race plus a shirt or cap. 805-773-7063. pismoeach.org/recreation. Pismo Beach Pier, West end of Pomeroy, Pismo Beach.

KIDS & FAMILY

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

BILINGUAL STORY TIME: HORA DE CUENTOS This story time features stories, songs, and rhymes in both Spanish and English. Saturdays, 11-11:30 a.m. through July 28 Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

DISCOVERY ART CAMP Jill Iversen, the Discovery Museum's artist in residence, will lead campers in daily art projects inspired by the ocean and all sea life. For ages 8 to 14. Through July 27, 9 a.m.-noon \$100-\$150. 805-928-8414. smvdiscoverymuseum.org.

HARRY POTTER POTIONS Celebrate J.K. Rowling's birthday with a special Harry Potter themed potions class. For kids ages 8 to 12. **July 31**, 4-5:30 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

LET'S BLOW OFF SOME STEAM This special storytime is for preschoolers (ages 3 to 5) and their caregivers. Thursdays, 4-5 p.m. through July 26 Free. 805-925-0994. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

MINI MAKERS CAMP 7-30 to 8-3 Campers will have VIP access to the Discovery Museum's new makerspace. Enjoy tinkering with electronics, robotics, and textiles. Camp concludes with a special Mini Maker fair. **July 30-Aug. 3**, 9 a.m.-noon \$100 to \$150. 805-928-8414. smvdiscoverymuseum.org. Santa Maria Valley Discovery Museum, 705 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

MOMMY AND ME CLASSES Brief gymnastics classes for ages 1 to 3 (as soon as they can start walking on their own). Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 9:30-10 & 10:15-10:45 a.m. \$35-\$55. KT's All Star Gymnastics, 237 Town Center E, Santa Maria, 805-349-7575.

READALOUD The Buellton Library presents ReadAloud, a play-reading group for adults, teens and children 9 and up. Fridays, 4-5 p.m. Free. 805-688-3115. Buellton Library, 140 W. Highway 246, Buellton.

READING BUDDIES Kids attending this program will partner with a teen and read aloud to them. Mondays-Thursdays, 3-5 p.m. through Aug. 2 Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY RAILWAY HISTORICAL MUSEUM The Santa Maria Valley Railway Historical Museum features a locomotive, boxcar, cabooses, railroad artifacts, and diorama. Second and fourth Saturday of every month. 12-4 p.m. ongoing 805-714-4927. Santa Maria Transit Center, Miller and Boone St., Santa Maria.

SUMMER MAKERSPACE Kids can enjoy creating, building, and using their imagination during these Library Maker Events in the library's Learning Center. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. through Aug. 25 Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

SUMMER READING PROGRAM Kids can earn prizes for reading. Visit any Santa Maria branch library for details. Mondays-Saturdays, through July 28 Free. 805-925-0994. cityofsantamaria.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

TEEN GAMING FRIDAYS An afternoon of Wii U gaming and/or tabletop gaming. **July 27**, 4-5:30 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. engagedpatrons.org. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

CAMP BROADWAY: ALICE IN WONDERLAND JR. For grades K-8. This camp concludes with a performance of the production. Mondays-Fridays, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. through Aug. 3 \$625. 805-489-1210. stpschoolag.com. St. Patrick Catholic School, 900 W. Branch St., Arroyo Grande.

KIDS SEWING CAMP Includes projects for ages 8 and up. Four sessions will be offered. Call for more info. Through Aug. 1 Sewing Cafe, 541 Five Cities Dr., Pismo Beach, 805-295-6585.

LEGO CLUB Legos are supplied. Registration required. For ages 6 to 10. **July 28**, 2-3 p.m. Free. 805-473-7163. Arroyo Grande Library, 800 W. Branch, Arroyo Grande, slolibrary.org.

MINDFUL KINDFUL YOUTH ENRICHMENT (AGES 7 TO 11) Weekly youth program to help promote social, emotional, and physical well-being. Visit site for complete class description and registration. Mondays, 3:45-4:45 p.m. through July 31 805-270-5523. mindfulkindfulyouniversity.com/dragonfly-circles/. Spyglass Park, Spyglass Dr., Pismo Beach.

OCEANO DUNES VISITOR CENTER Enjoy exhibits of dune and lagoon plant and animal species. End your visit with a stroll behind the center to the fresh-water lagoon. Thursdays, 12-4 p.m., Fridays, 12-4 p.m., Saturdays, 12-4 p.m. and Sundays, 12-4 p.m. through Dec. 30 Free. 805-474-2667. Oceano Dunes Visitor Center, 555 Pier Ave, Oceano.



WEAVING AT THE WILDLING

The Wildling Museum of Art and Nature in Solvang hosts a weaving class on July 28 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Participants will learn the basketry technique of random weave using rattan reed and vines. Admission is \$45, plus a \$10 material fee. More info: (805) 688-1082 or wildlingmuseum.org.

PAWS TO READ Children are invited to practice reading with Nella the therapy dog. All ages welcome. **July 26**, 3:30-4 p.m. Free. 805-473-7163. Arroyo Grande Library, 800 W. Branch, Arroyo Grande, slolibrary.org.

SPIRITUAL

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH SERVICES Join Hope Community Church for Sunday morning and Wednesday night services. Children care provided for infants and children under 4. Sundays, 10:30 a.m. and Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m. Free. 805-922-2043. hopesm.com. Hope Community Church, 3010 Skyway Dr. Suite F, Santa Maria.

INTUITIVE GUIDANCE Sessions may include but are not limited to mediumship, psychic awareness, light journey work, and aura cleansings. Thursdays, 12-2 p.m. \$20 for 15 minutes. 937-271-5646. CovenTree: Books and Gifts, 722 E Main St., Santa Maria.

MEDITATION CLASS: A STUDY OF TRADITION AND PRACTICE With AnnKathleen, who has been meditating since 1992 when she was introduced to Transcendental Meditation from teacher Sri John Karuna. Wednesdays, 6:30-7:45 p.m. \$10-\$15. 805-598-1509. divining.weebly.com. Art of Alchemy, E. Orange St, Santa Maria.

WISDOM READINGS AnnKathleen uses tarot and oracle cards to guide participants to solutions that bring peace, happiness, and positive thinking. Fridays-Sundays, 1-5 p.m. \$60-\$100. 805-598-1509. Art of Alchemy, E. Orange St, Santa Maria, divining.weebly.com.

WISDOM READINGS AT COVENTREE AnnKathleen, the Mistress of Alchemy, uses tarot and oracle cards to guide participants to solutions that bring peace, happiness, and positive thinking. Every other Friday, 1-5 p.m. \$60-\$100. 805-598-1509. divining.weebly.com. CovenTree: Books and Gifts, 722 E Main St., Santa Maria.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

CHANNELING DEVELOPMENT With Julie Johnson. Fourth Friday of every month, 6:30-8 p.m. 805-489-2432. Halcyon Store Post Office, 936 S. Halcyon Rd., Arroyo Grande.

MEDIUMSHIP DEVELOPMENT Learn the basics of communicating with spirit in a safe environment with Mike Smith. Tuesdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m. \$15. 805-480-2432. Halcyon Store Post Office, 936 S. Halcyon Rd., Arroyo Grande.

SUNDAY FOR SPIRIT PSYCHIC READINGS Features an assortment of psychic readers. Sundays, 1-5 p.m. Vaires. 805-489-2432. Halcyon Store Post Office, 936 S. Halcyon Rd., Arroyo Grande.

YOUTH SERVICES The City Church Central Coast holds youth services for junior high school students. Mondays, 6:30 p.m. Free. 805-929-8990. thecitycc.org. Faith Life Community Church, 726 W Tefft St, Nipomo.

VOLUNTEERS

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

AMPSURF LEARN TO SURF CLINIC Volunteers and participants needed for these Learn to Surf clinics for those living with disabilities. Volunteers don't need to know how to surf. **Aug. 4**, 6:30 a.m.-1 p.m. and **Aug. 5**, 6:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Free. ampsurf.org. AmpSurf, 340 Pomeroy St., Pismo Beach, 805-773-0302.

FOOD & DRINK

FARMERS MARKETS

LOMPOC/VANDEMBERG

LOMPOC FARMERS MARKET Features fresh fruit and vegetables, flowers, entertainment, and activities for the whole family. Fridays, 2-6 p.m. Lompoc Farmers Market, Ocean Avenue and I Street, Lompoc.

LOMPOC'S OLD TOWN MARKET Features live entertainment, a farmers market, food booths, vendors, free kids activities, and more. Presented by the Lompoc Valley Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau. Fridays, 5-8 p.m. through Aug. 10 Free. explorelompop.com. Lompoc Old Town Market, 100 South H St, Lompoc.

VANDEMBERG VILLAGE FARMERS MARKET Locally grown produce and food stuffs are available year round. Sundays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. through Sept. 30 Vandenberg Village Farmers' Market, 120 Burton Mesa Blvd., Lompoc.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

ORCUTT FARMERS MARKET Presents local farmers and small businesses. Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Orcutt Farmers Market, Bradley Road, Orcutt.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

ARROYO GRANDE FARMERS MARKET Includes produce, artists and musicians. Saturdays, 12-2:25 p.m. Arroyo Grande Farmers Market, Olohan Alley, Arroyo Grande.

NIPOMO FARMERS MARKET Includes a large variety of locally grown produce. Open year round Sundays, 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. nipomofarmersmarket.com/. Nipomo Farmers Market, Via Concha Road, Nipomo.

EVENTS

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

WINE TASTING WITH THE SUMMER PASS Taste at your own pace from 14 Santa Ynez Valley tasting rooms. Each tasting consists of 4 to 5 wines. No blackout dates. Reservations are not required. Through Aug. 31 \$50. 800-563-3183. santaynezwinecountry.com. Participating Wine Tasting Rooms, Santa Ynez Valley, Santa Ynez, Buellton, Los Olivos, Solvang. ☪



Live Music

SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

2018 FIRESTONE SUMMER CONCERT SERIES Guests can enjoy food, wine, and live music. Big Tom's Backyard tri-tip sandwiches will be available for purchase. No outside alcohol allowed. First Friday of every month, 6-9 p.m. and Last Friday of every month, 6-9 p.m. through Sept. 28 Firestone Vineyard, 5017 Zaca Station Rd., Los Olivos, 805-688-3940, firestonewine.com.

THE AJM BAND LIVE Part of the 2018 Firestone Summer Concert Series. **Aug. 3**, 6-9 p.m. Firestone Vineyard, 5017 Zaca Station Rd., Los Olivos, 805-688-3940, firestonewine.com.

THE BRANDING FIRE CONCERT SERIES: DAVE STAMEY Enjoy live music from singer/songwriter Dave Stamey. **July 26**, 5:30-10 p.m. \$50. 805-693-4208. Alisal Guest Ranch and Resort, 1054 Alisal Rd., Solvang.

CADILLAC ANGELS LIVE No outside food or beverages allowed. **July 29**, 4:30-7:30 p.m. Free. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

CHRIS AYER LIVE This performance is part of Crafted, Bottlest's ongoing live music series. **Aug. 2**, 7:30-10 p.m. Bottlest Winery, Bar & Bistro, 35 Industrial Way, Buellton, 805-686-4742, bottlest.com.

CRAFTED: LIVE MUSIC SERIES Features artists from all genres of music. Thursdays, 6 p.m. and Fridays, Saturdays, 8 p.m. 805-686-4742. bottlest.com. Bottlest Winery, Bar & Bistro, 35 Industrial Way, Buellton.

DO NO HARM LIVE No outside food or beverages allowed. **July 27**, 6-9 p.m. Free. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

THE DYLAN ORTEGA BAND As part of KRAZY Country Honky-Tonk Thursday. Thursdays, 7 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

FIRST FRIDAY '80S NIGHT Featuring the Molly Ringwald Project. First Friday of every month, 8:30-11:30 p.m. \$10 after 8 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

GRASS MOUNTAIN LIVE No outside food or beverages allowed. **Aug. 3**, 6-9 p.m. Free. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

JINEANNE CODERRE LIVE This performance is part of Crafted, Bottlest's ongoing live music series. **July 27**, 7:30-10 p.m. Bottlest Winery, Bar & Bistro, 35 Industrial Way, Buellton, 805-686-4742, bottlest.com.

KATHLEEN SIECK AND THE PARADISE ROAD WITH JARED DECK Doors open at 7 p.m. **July 28**, 7:30 p.m. \$12-\$17. standingsunwines.com. Standing Sun Wines, 92 2nd St., Buellton, 805-691-9413.

MOONRIDGE LIVE **July 28**, 8-11 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

NATALY LOLA LIVE This performance is part of Crafted, Bottlest's ongoing live music series. **July 26**, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Bottlest Winery, Bar & Bistro, 35

Rockin' in the vines

The AJM Band brings classic rock sound and new album to Firestone Vineyards

BY JOE PAYNE

It all begins with a riff, electrified with more than just amplifiers, but also a lifetime of love for the rock 'n' roll of the 1970s and into the '80s.

The title track off The AJM Band's new album, *The Hard Way*, will sound familiar to anyone who grew up listening to bands like the Rolling Stones, Van Halen, AC/DC, Aerosmith, or the Black Crowes. But this isn't the work of a classic rock cover band (though they do perform beloved cover songs), but rather a group that's putting out originals in a style they're riffing to keep alive.

"Got bumps on my bruises/Lumps on my chin/Round two baby/Just say when," the voice of Andrew Jay Magnuson, the group's lead guitarist, vocalist, and songwriter sings in his attitude-infused tenor. "Doing it the hard way."

The brainchild of Magnuson (AJM is his initials), the band's new album is the latest from the group since its last record, *Boys Will Be Boys*, released in 2014. Since then, the group has added another guitarist, which has shifted the band from a power trio to a solid four-piece rock group.

"It's kind of changed the flavor," Magnuson said. "We've kind of gone a more [Rolling] Stonesh direction, or Black Crowes, or something like that. It's a different feel now, but I like it. I like where it's going."

Based out of Nipomo, Magnuson did most of the recording, mixing, and mastering for *The Hard Way* after several sessions with his bandmates: bassist Darrell Sisco, drummer Frank Alsing, and new guitarist and backup vocalist Bill Serritslev.

The group will bring its electrified throwback sound to Firestone Vineyard's concert series on Aug. 3, where they'll perform the new album along with a wider repertoire.

The AJM Band has come a long way since it began in 2001, Magnuson explained. When the group started it was "a pure blues band," he said.

"My first CD I ever did was nothing but blues," he said. "And it just keeps changing, but honestly, you can't help it, the rock influence is creeping in on me."

"I think it's because I don't like to get pigeonholed into playing one, four, five, so you start expanding, adding harmonies in there, and it doesn't sound like blues anymore," he added.

Certain songs on the new album definitely call back to Magnuson's bluesy background. The third track, "Out of Reach," reminds listeners of the slow yet fiery blues style of Buddy Guy.

Magnuson really struts his stuff as a lead guitarist on that track, but he takes it a step further

in the following track, "Lil' Bo Peep," where he has dual electric leads, reminiscent of bands like Queen. Magnuson said he always has an electric guitar and amp handy at his Nipomo home. That readiness to play and practice is evident, as his lead style is seasoned and polished.

His love for electric guitar definitely informs his songwriting, and vice versa, Magnuson said.

"It goes both ways. Sometimes, like 'The Hard Way,' it started with a riff and I wrote around it," he said. "But several of the songs started with just a melody in my head, and I sat down and started writing lyrics, and then I went back and thought, 'What can I do with that?'"

The songwriting on *The Hard Way*, much like his last album *Boys Will Be Boys*, exudes a boyish bravado along with a tongue-in-cheek playfulness. Ever since the album dropped in June, and The AJM Band began performing the cuts live, some of his regular listeners have given some feedback on their favorites.

One of those songs is "Pretend Girlfriend," which Magnuson said has become a requested track among fans. Played with a bit of a country twang, the song asks: "Would you be my pretend girlfriend?/Go to the movies, hang out with old friends/Get in the car and drive around town/Be the envy of every couple around."

"It's just a silly, fun little song, but I've had a whole lot of people say, 'I really like that,'" he said. "That's my personality coming through. I definitely have that tongue-in-cheek sense of humor. It's something that I picked up that I loved from AC/DC, because Bon Scott had that sense of humor. If you listen to his lyrics, he's always got something funny slipped in there."

Live in wine country

The AJM Band performs a live show on Aug. 3 from 6 to 9 p.m. at Firestone Vineyards, 5017 Zaca Station Road, Los Olivos. More information is available at firestonewine.com or (805) 688-3940.

You can learn more about The AJM Band or buy their music at ajmband.com or ajmband.bandcamp.com.

LOCAL NOTES continued page 24

PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREW JAY MAGNUSON



READY TO RIFF: The AJM Band is led by lead guitarist, vocalist, and songwriter Andrew Jay Magnuson (pictured center, right) along with drummer Frank Alsing (center, left), rhythm guitar and backup vocalist Bill Serritslev (right), and bassist Darrell Sisco. The group will perform at Firestone Vineyards as part of the winery's concert series on Aug. 3.

MUSIC LISTINGS continued page 24

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MUSIC

LOCAL NOTES from page 23

Another song in the same vein is "Pictures of You," about someone so self-obsessed and infatuated they can't stop sending or posting photos.

"My inbox done exploded/My phone is overloaded/All of pics from the selfie queen," he sings. "If your sanity/Was half of your vanity/ And I wasn't stuck somewhere in between."

Beyond the party songs and playful tunes, other tracks explore feelings that anyone who grew up playing music in a group can relate to. Magnuson played in a hard rock band back in the 1980s that performed at famous LA venues like the Viper Room and The Troubadour, but it wasn't until later in his life that he began his own project.

The title track of the album, "The Hard Way," explores those ideas, and talks about determination and never giving up in a pursuit. Songs like that inform why he's motivated to write and perform music he sometimes tags as "retro rock."

"That's all related to the music business, for me, personally, because it's always an uphill battle to get to the next level, keep pushing, try to get bigger, try to be better," Magnuson said. "I'm going to write music no matter what. That's my outlet, that's the way I express myself."

"It's something I have to do," he added. "It's my way of emotional release, to write and play and rock, absolutely." ○

Managing Editor Joe Payne is ready to rock. Contact him at jpayne@santamariasun.com.

MUSIC LISTINGS from page 23

Industrial Way, Buellton, 805-686-4742, bottlest.com.

THE NOMBRES LIVE No outside food or beverages allowed. **July 28**, 6-9 p.m. Free. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

REDFISH LIVE **July 27**, 8-11 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

RINCON LIVE Part of the 2018 Firestone Summer Concert Series. **July 27**, 6-9 p.m. Firestone Vineyard, 5017 Zaca Station Rd., Los Olivos, 805-688-3940, firestonewine.com.

SALT MARTIANS LIVE No outside food or beverages allowed. **July 28**, 1-4 p.m. Free. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

SOLVANG SUMMER CONCERT SERIES Featured acts include The Soul Cats, Cuesta Ridge, Bear Market Riot, Grass Mountain, LiveWire, Rock Cats Rock, Low Down Dudes, Unfinished Business, and more. Wednesdays, 5-8 p.m. and **July 27**, 5-8 p.m. through Aug. 22 Free. facebook.com/solvang3rdwednesday. Solvang Park, Mission Dr. and First St., Solvang.

LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

SIP MUSIC CLUB Pairing music and local wine with 4 seasonal releases each calendar year. Price includes 3 VIP access tickets to each SipMusic event, and 1 album and 1 bottle of premium wine every 3 months. ongoing \$40. Lompoc Wine Factory, 321 N. D St., Lompoc, 805-243-8398, lompocwinefactory.com.

SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

15TH ANNUAL FREE CONCERTS IN THE PARK SERIES Enjoy live music in the park. Picnics welcome. Featured acts include Unfinished Business, Drive-In Romeos, The Band August, and more. Sundays, 1-3 p.m. through Sept. 9 Free. 805-925-0951 ext.2260. Rotary Centennial Park, 2625 South College Dr., Santa Maria.

ABOUT TIME LIVE This duo performs folk, blues, and country originals and covers. **July 27**, 4-6 p.m. Complimentary. Presqu'ile Winery, 5391 Presqu'ile Dr., Santa Maria, 805-937-8110, presquilewine.com.

JOELLE CASTILLO LIVE **July 28**, 5-8 p.m. Free. Moxie Cafe, 1317 W. McCoy Ln., Santa Maria, 805-361-2900, moxiecafe.com.

MOXIE CAFE PRESENTS THE MOLLY RINGWALD PROJECT Guests can enjoy live music, dancing, food, and more at this outdoor concert (the first of a new series hosted by Moxie). No pets or outside food/beverages allowed. Doors open at 3 p.m. **Aug. 4**, 4-8 p.m. \$15 presale; \$20 at the gate; free for ages 14 and under. 805-361-2900. moxiecafe.com. Moxie Cafe, 1317 W. McCoy Ln., Santa Maria.

PETRELLA: FIRST LADY OF COUNTRY SOUL Enjoy live country music from Petrella and Mixed Influence. **Aug. 3**, 5:30-6:45 p.m. Free. 805-361-0114. countrysoultrail.com. Santa Maria Town Center, 142 Town Center East, Santa Maria.

STEVE MEYERS LIVE **July 26**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Free. Moxie Cafe, 1317 W. McCoy Ln., Santa Maria, 805-361-2900, moxiecafe.com.

THE TEPUSQUET TORNADES LIVE The original Presqu'ile house band. Featuring Dieter Cronje, Madison Murphy, and Cameron Porter. **Aug. 3**, 5:30 p.m. Presqu'ile Winery, 5391 Presqu'ile Dr., Santa Maria, 805-937-8110, presquilewine.com.

SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

ALISA MOUNTS WITH GENERATION GAP Enjoy a selection of classic and contemporary rock covers. **July 27**, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Tips accepted. 805-489-9099. facebook.com/GeneratinGapCalifornia. Branch Street Deli, 203 E. Branch St., Arroyo Grande.

FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE MUSIC: GENERATION GAP **July 27**, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Free. 805-489-9099. branchstreetdeli.com. Branch Street Deli, 203 E. Branch St., Arroyo Grande.

THE SOUL CATS BAND LIVE This concert is sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Arroyo Grande Valley. Proceeds benefit the Central Coast Senior Center. **July 29**, 1 p.m. Free. 805-473-2250. agvillageconcerts.com. Heritage Square Park, 201 Nelson St., Arroyo Grande.

SWINGING JAZZ: '20S-'30S Featuring the Ulysses Jazz Band and The Topsy Gypsies. **July 29**, 1-4:30 p.m. \$5 members; \$10 non-members. 805-937-8402. pismojazz.com. Pismo Veterans Memorial Hall, 780 Bello St., Pismo Beach.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

BANJERDAN AT 7SISTERS BREWING CO. Enjoy live music from multi-instrumentalist BanjerDan (Dan Mazer). **July 27**, 6-8 p.m. Free. 805-868-7133. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo, 7SistersBrewing.com.

CAL POLY HONOR CHOIR FESTIVAL CONCERT High school singers from throughout the state will join Cal Poly performers for this collaborative concert. **Aug. 4**, 2:30 p.m. Free. 805-756-2406. music.calpoly.edu/calendar/choirs/. Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, 751 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo.

CONSCIOUS HIP HOP WITH J1 Part of the 2018 Libraries Rock Summer Reading Program. All ages welcome. **July 28**, 1-2 p.m. Free. 805-781-5991. San Luis Obispo Library, 995 Palm St., San Luis Obispo.

FESTIVAL MOZAIC CHAMBER SERIES: MOZART TO MODERNITY **July 27**, 7:30 p.m. \$35-\$75. 805-781-3009. festivalmozaic.com. Cuesta College Cultural and Performing Arts Center, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo.

FESTIVAL MOZAIC CHAMBER SERIES: SCOTT YOO AND FRIENDS **July 29**, 3 p.m. \$35-\$75. 805-781-3009. festivalmozaic.com. Cuesta College Cultural and Performing Arts Center, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo.

FESTIVAL MOZAIC NOTABLE ENCOUNTER BRUNCH: A JOYFUL NOISE Join the Festival Brass for a gourmet brunch. Featuring wines from Halter Ranch Vineyards. **July 29**, 10 a.m. \$115-\$125. 805-781-3009. festivalmozaic.com. Dallidet Adobe, 1185 Pacific Street, San Luis Obispo.

FESTIVAL MOZAIC NOTABLE ENCOUNTER INSIGHT: ON STAGE WITH BRUCH Music Director Scott Yoo and pianist John Novacek discuss German Romantic composer Max Bruch. **July 27**, 5 p.m. \$30-\$50. 805-781-3009. festivalmozaic.com. Cuesta College Cultural and Performing Arts Center, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo.

FESTIVAL MOZAIC ORCHESTRA SERIES: MUSIC WITHOUT BORDERS Scott Yoo leads the Festival Orchestra. Featuring works by Beethoven, Ginastera, and Stravinsky. **July 28**, 8 p.m. \$35-\$80. 805-781-3009. festivalmozaic.com. Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, 751 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo.

FESTIVAL MOZAIC UN-CLASSICAL SERIES: CHRISTOPHER O'RILEY PLAYS RADIOHEAD O'Riley performs his solo piano arrangements of songs by Radiohead. **July 26**, 7:30 p.m. \$35-\$75. 805-781-3009. festivalmozaic.com. Cuesta College Cultural and Performing Arts Center, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo.

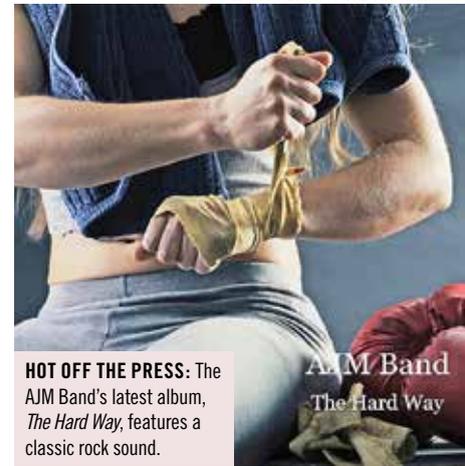
FESTIVAL MOZAIC: FREE CONCERT VIDEO SIMULCAST Scott Yoo leads the Festival Orchestra. Featuring works by Beethoven, Ginastera, and Stravinsky. **July 28**, 8 p.m. Free. 805-781-3009. festivalmozaic.com/free-community-events. Mission Plaza, 989 Chorro St., San Luis Obispo.

FESTIVAL MOZAIC: OPEN REHEARSAL Hear and watch Scott Yoo and the other Festival artists as they prepare music by Stravinsky, Ginastera, and Beethoven. **July 27**, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Free. 805-781-3009. festivalmozaic.com/free-community-events. Cuesta College Cultural and Performing Arts Center, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo.

FRESH PICKED CONCERT SERIES Featuring various musical acts during the Downtown SLO Farmers Market. First Thursday of every month, 6:30-8:30 p.m. through Oct. 4 Free. DowntownSLO.com. Union Bank, 995 Higuera St., San Luis Obispo. (805) 783-5140.

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Y&T LIVE **Aug. 4**, 7-11:30 p.m. \$25. 805-329-5729. fremontslo.com/. The Fremont Theater, 1035 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

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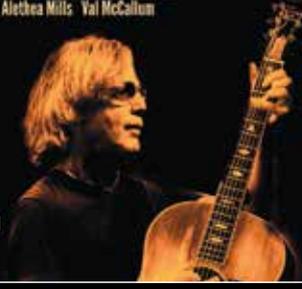
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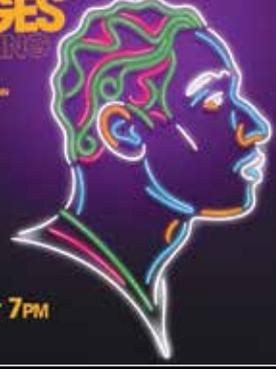
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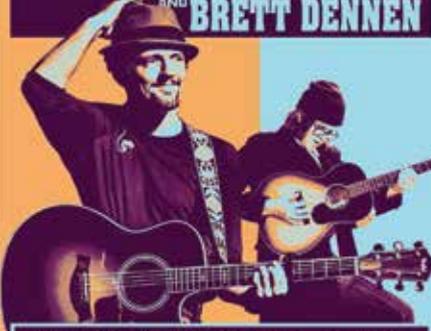
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Arts Briefs

Elverhoj holds last in series of events with local artist Nancy Yaki

The Elverhoj Museum of History and Art presents a discussion with artist Nancy Yaki on July 28 titled, *The Process is the Destination*. Yaki will discuss how she chooses composition, imagery, and then what specific techniques set her apart from other artists.

Yaki's exhibit, titled *The Roadside Series*, has been on display at the Elverhoj Museum since May and will run through Aug. 12. The discussion will be the final event in a series of talks and other programs, which also included an artist demo and a workshop.

The event starts at 4 p.m. and will feature a social hour following the discussion with beverages and light snacks available. Guests will be able to chat with Yaki and enjoy the museum and garden after hours. This event is open to the public and is free to attend.

The Elverhoj Museum is located at 1624 Elverhoy Way in Solvang. It was founded in 1988 after Solvang artists Viggo Brandt-Erichsen and his wife, Martha Mott, donated their home for the preservation and showcasing of Danish art and culture. More information is available at elverhoj.org.

PHOTO COURTESY ELVERHOJ MUSEUM



American Institute of Architects hosts awards reception

The Santa Barbara Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) recently announced the winners of its annual juried Design Awards Program, along with a reception to honor the winners in Santa Maria in August.

Entries were submitted in seven categories: small projects, unbuilt, interior architecture, residential, commercial, mixed use, multi family, historic preservation/renovation, and Santa Barbara architectural heritage projects. Three architects from outside Santa Barbara juried the entries and awarded three levels of recognition: Honorable Mention, the Merit Designation, and the Honor Award. There were 60 submissions to the competition, and the judges awarded three projects with Merit Designation and two projects with Honorable Mention.

The American Institute of Architects, Santa Barbara Design Awards exhibition is presented in collaboration with the Santa Barbara County Office of Arts and Culture and the Santa Barbara County Arts Commission.

In honor of the opening of the American Institute of Architects 2017 Santa Barbara Design Awards in the Betteravia Galleries, the organization will host a reception with pizza and conversation on Aug. 8 from noon to 1 p.m. President of the Santa Barbara Chapter of the American Institute of Architects Keith Rivera will discuss the exhibition and answer questions. The gallery is located at 511 E. Lakeside Parkway. More info: (805) 966-4198. ○

Arts Briefs is compiled by Arts and Lifestyle Writer Rebecca Rose. Send information to rose@santamariasun.com.

Shutterbug

Pat Stalter's photography blends whimsy with an eye for realism

BY REBECCA ROSE

Pat Stalter's two Cavalier King Charles spaniels are bored with her. By now, the dogs are so used to the Orcutt photographer using them as models for her images, they barely raise an eye when she wants to film them.

"If I aim the camera at them, I swear I hear them say, 'Oh not that again,'" Stalter said. "Dogs are beautiful models to work with."

A successful fine art photographer whose work hangs on display at places like Cottage Hospital in Santa Barbara and Valley Art Gallery in Orcutt among many others, Stalter has been fastidiously devoted to photography since 2001. It was then that the retired bookkeeper took a road trip with a group of girlfriends, who dubbed her the official documentarian of their vacation.

"I somehow got designated to be the trip photographer," she said. "I realized this was a lot of fun and I might want to do more of it. It seemed like it just stuck. I've been doing it ever since, teaching myself everything along the way."

Stalter is funny and succinct, a bright and energetic talker with a flair for joviality. A resident of Orcutt for the past 30 years, Stalter is a transplant from Alaska, where her parents moved when she was still a baby. After marrying her husband, the couple moved down to California, where she found work in the wine industry doing accounting.

Her knack for computer skills gave her an edge when she began to

pursue photography. Stalter said that with the advancements in computers and digital technology, it's almost a necessity for photographers to have strong computer skills for editing and other purposes.

"I was old-school and it was not easy at first, but I seemed to have an affinity for it," she said. "I never shot with film; I've always shot with digital. I just loved the instant gratification. Somehow I just picked up a digital camera and saw how it worked and it just clicked."

Stalter shoots on a Canon SLR, and like most photographers, she's a gearhead obsessed with lenses, tripods, and more. But she's far from the average hobbyist. Stalter's work is popular with fans who covet her images for their striking compositions and colorful depictions of landscapes, animals, buildings, and much more.

"There are very few things I don't like to photograph," she said.

"My favorite thing to do is trying to reach out and take a picture of something that tells a story. You don't start out knowing this instinctively. You have to teach that to yourself."

A few years ago Pacific Gas and Electric featured one of her images in its annual calendar; earlier this year, Corel used one of her images in its software's photo gallery.

She said little recognitions such as those make her feel proud, but she points to more personal interactions that drive her. Her image of the La Purisima Mission fountain in Lompoc is one of more than a dozen that hang in Santa Barbara's Cottage Hospital. Stalter said that one day she received a letter from a man whose wife was dying of breast cancer. While at the hospital, his family noticed something about the image on the wall near her room.

"They told him it was the same fountain where he and his wife had gotten married," Stalter said. "I cried. I sent him a copy of the photograph. These are the moments, without realizing, that you're working for." ○

Arts and Lifestyle Writer Rebecca Rose takes many pictures of her dog. Contact her at rose@santamariasun.com.

Point and shoot

For more information on Pat Stalter's work, visit patricia-stalter.pixels.com.



ROCK AROUND THE DOCK: Stalter's photography conveys a strong sense of realism while toying with elements of artistic embellishment. She said she loves experimenting with photo editing software such as Photoshop to enhance her images and create new work.



GOLDEN HOUR: Pat Stalter, an Orcutt-based photographer, has been a part of the Valley Art Gallery for almost 20 years. "We're trying to make it accessible to any artist that thinks they have the right stuff," she said. "We want to encourage these people to show their art."



MONKEY SEE MONKEY DO: Orcutt photographer Pat Stalter has a keen eye for catching subjects in just the right moment. She said the key is staying focused and letting the image tell a story to the viewer.

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ARTS

ART SCENE

A fine pair

Local artists team up for poetry reading at Wildling Museum

BY REBECCA ROSE

Allen Koehn never thought of himself as a poet. Koehn spent years as a Presbyterian pastor and later as a practicing therapist who trained as a Jungian analyst. But there was something about a certain style of poetry that drew him in. "I really liked the haiku model," he said. "A few years ago, I started writing 17-syllable haikus and putting them on Facebook. It got a nice response, so I started doing more."

Now Koehn, who still maintains a small private practice for counseling services, is an established poet and author of the book *Dancing at the Threshold*.

On July 29, Koehn will present a reading of his work accompanied by fellow poet and musician Teresa McNeil MacLean at the Wildling Museum of Art and Nature in Solvang. The reading is part of the museum's ongoing poetry series.

Koehn was raised in Hollywood and eventually went to Princeton Seminary to earn a Master of Divinity degree. He was drawn to counseling and returned to school at Fuller Seminary and earned a Doctor of Ministry in counseling. He trained as a Jungian Analyst and later served as the executive director of the C.G. Jung Institute of Los Angeles. He now serves as Emeritus Professor at Pacifica Graduate Institute in Santa Barbara, where he was a faculty member for many years.

"I always thought, 'I'm never going to write a book because I can only handle short things like T-shirt phrases or bumper stickers,'" Koehn said. "I like that you can get a lot into a small space but then it's up to the person who encounters it to unpack it."

The compact nature of haiku is one of Koehn's favorite aspects of the medium. Through his poetry, he strives for readers to channel his work into their own experience. "That is one of the things I like the best,"

he said. "Ultimately it's about a personal experience, but I don't want people to have my experience. I've already had it. I want it to be a bridge into their experiences."

The presentation at the Wildling Museum is meant to be a multimedia exploration into Koehn's poetry and photography, using two screens and projectors to show words and images from the book. Part of the reading will be silent, featuring only words and images, and other parts will incorporate Koehn's live reading.

Accompanying Koehn at the event is Teresa McNeil MacLean. MacLean, a self-taught guitarist who began writing songs 15 years ago, has taught poetry workshops in local elementary schools for 30 years through Arts Outreach and California Poets in the Schools. She said the idea for the reading came from an email from a mutual friend who suggested she could add music to a reading with Koehn.

"I love the creative process," MacLean said. "I do many different things in different art forms.

I especially love challenges." The challenge for MacLean is to create music that will pair well with Koehn's haiku. She said she used the idea of the three separate stanzas for haiku to develop the music for the event.

But she still plans

to improvise certain portions of the music program during his reading.

"I'm absolutely loving this kind of free rein to come up with this," MacLean said. "Allen is going to read, and I'm going to play lightly behind him. I like the idea of just watching and listening and being in the background but present and seeing what the words lead to."

Koehn said MacLean is inspiring to work with, in the spontaneity and accessibility of her music style. He said bringing music into something like a poetry reading helps present another element to the overall experience of art.

"It expands people's ideas of the connections," Koehn said. "So they don't just start isolating art, poetry, music as if they are all different. They are all creative expressions. They can connect, overlap, and they can inform and increase a different area of understanding." ○

Arts and Lifestyle Writer Rebecca Rose is never isolated. Contact her at rrose@santamariasun.com.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALLEN KOEHN



PICTURE PERFECT PAIR: Allen Koehn (right) and Teresa McNeil MacLean will present *Dancing At The Threshold*, part of the Wildling Museum of Art and Nature's ongoing poetry series, on July 29.

Film Reviews

Editor's note: Santa Maria 10 (805-347-1164) films and show times were unavailable at press time.

THE EQUALIZER 2

What's it rated? R
Where's it showing? Movies Lompoc, Parks Plaza
See Sun Screen.

HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA 3: SUMMER VACATION

What's it rated? PG
Where's it showing? Movies Lompoc, Parks Plaza
Join our favorite monster family as they embark on a vacation on a luxury monster cruise ship so Drac (voice of Adam Sandler) can take a summer vacation from providing everyone else's vacation at the hotel. It's smooth sailing for Drac's pack as the monsters indulge in all of the shipboard fun the cruise has to offer, from monster volleyball to exotic excursions, and catching up on their moon tans. But the dream vacation turns into a nightmare when Mavis (voice of Selena Gomez) realizes Drac has fallen for the mysterious captain of the ship, Ericka (voice of Kathryn Hahn), who hides a dangerous secret that could destroy all of monsterkind. (97 min.)
—Columbia Pictures/Sony Pictures Animation

MAMA MIA! HERE WE GO AGAIN

What's it rated? PG-13
What's it worth? Matinee
Where's it showing? Parks Plaza
PICK Ol Parker (*Now is Good*, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*) directs returning and new cast members in the sequel to the popular 2008 ABBA-centric musical-turned-movie *Mamma Mia!* In the first film, Sophie (Amanda Seyfried) is a bride-to-be who invites three of her mother, Donna's (Meryl Streep) old flames to her wedding in an attempt to discover who her real father is. The sequel switches off between a time before and after the original film, focusing on both Sophie's new life attempting to carry on her late mother's hotel business and her mother Donna's young life around the time of her pregnancy.
Most of Sophie's scenes are marked by her mother's absence, whose presence is missed just as much by the audience as by the characters. She is in the process of planning a grand opening party for the remodeled Greek hotel her mother began, but of course, the party plans go slightly awry. Her mother's friends Rosie (Julie Walters) and Tanya (Christine Baranski) visit for emotional support, and consistently provide the wittiest lines in the entire film.
Lily James plays the young version of Donna, and does so beautifully while a bit unrealistically. Few of Streep's

FILM REVIEWS continued page 20

SCORING

FULL PRICE...It's worth the price of an evening show
MATINEE.....Save a few bucks, catch an afternoon showing
RENTAL.....Rent it
STREAMING...Wait 'til Netflix has it
NOTHINGDon't waste your time

Justice warrior

Director Antoine Fuqua (*Training Day*, *Shooter*, *The Magnificent Seven* 2016) returns to helm this sequel written by Richard Wenk (*The Mechanic* 2011, *The Expendables 2*, *Jack Reacher: Never Go Back*) that's based on the TV series by Michael Sloan and Richard Lindheim. Denzel Washington stars as vigilante Robert McCall, an unassuming man—and retired CIA black ops master—who metes out justice whenever he sees someone being exploited or oppressed. When he learns his old friend Susan Plummer (Melissa Leo) has been murdered, he's determined to find out who did it and why, and bring them to account. (121 min.)

Glen: McCall is a great character, a deeply righteous man with the skill set to hold bad guys accountable—a man with a sense of moral outrage. He uses his military and CIA training to protect the vulnerable and the weak. No wonder Washington chose McCall and *The Equalizer 2* as the first sequel of his career. If my count is correct, this is also Washington's fourth go-around with director Antoine Fuqua. They're obviously comfortable working together. Like its predecessor, this film shows McCall kicking ass and saving those imperiled. It opens with McCall on a train bound for Istanbul, where he's after someone who kidnapped a little girl. McCall quietly confronts the kidnapper in the dining car. Close-quarter fighting ensues. It's a great opening set piece that quickly reminds us who McCall is—confident, determined, and unrelenting. It's that “looking out for the little guy” vibe that makes him so appealing. The bulk of the film revolves around him searching for the killers of his friend Susan, but there's also a side plot about Holocaust survivor Sam Rubinstein (Orson Bean) trying to get a stolen painting returned, a neighbor boy named Miles (Ashton Sanders) who's in danger of being recruited into a gang, and another neighbor—Fatima (Sakina Jaffrey)—whose garden and building are vandalized. Here's where McCall's character really shines and why he's so interesting—he's completely unassuming, wholly caring, but capable of mowing through anyone who stands in his way. Even though the film's been getting panned by critics, *The Equalizer 2* delivers exactly what fans of the

first film are looking for, meaning if you liked the first one, this is definitely worth a trip to the theater. Washington delivers!

Anna: You definitely have to take critics' harsh words with a grain of salt; not every movie is meant to be *Citizen Kane* after all. Watching Washington kick bad dude ass as McCall is fun, but the layers he adds to the character are what really shine. Instead of a cookie-cutter justice warrior, McCall is a flawed and complex do-gooder, one haunted by never-ending loss. Naturally self-isolating, there are not many people who truly know him, so when Susan is killed he's more alone than ever. He reaches out to his old partner Dave (Pedro Pascal) to help uncover the truth behind her murder, but things are not the same as they were before McCall's CIA “retirement.” Soon it's once again him against the world, fighting the good fight come hell or high water. I really enjoyed the reboot personally, and while I'd watch the first *Equalizer* film if I had to choose between them, I appreciate and welcome this addition to the storyline and character. It doesn't hurt that I will say yes to watching Washington anytime, most especially when he's in badass mode.

THE EQUALIZER 2

What's it rated? R
What's it worth, Anna? Matinee
What's it worth, Glen? Matinee
Where's it showing? Parks Plaza, Movies Lompoc

Glen: His old partner Dave is a wildcard character. Like McCall, he's a CIA operative, but as we get to know him, it's clear that he and McCall have different moral codes. Being a trained killer is obviously ethically ambiguous. It comes down to how you use your training. Money doesn't drive McCall, who's more interested in getting through his list of 100 must-read books than lining his pockets. There's something monk-like about him and his lifestyle, almost as if he's paying penance for his past. His interaction with Miles is especially complicated, and he tries to teach Miles what's important but also let the kid make his own decisions. Does Miles want to be a drug dealer slinging crack on the corner or will he better himself and use his artistic talents even though they probably won't lead to a lucrative career? The film leaves open the possibility of yet another installment, and since the whole premise is based on a TV show and there's never any shortage of bad guys out to exploit the vulnerable, more may be on the way. But the law of diminishing returns is already at play in this sequel. If you've never seen Washington and Fuqua's first



MENTOR: When he's not driving a Lyft or righting wrongs, McCall (Denzel Washington) guides neighbor kid Miles (Ashton Sanders) away from gang life.

collaboration, *Training Day*, definitely watch it. It's Fuqua's best film and one of Washington's rare appearances as a bad guy. *The Equalizer 2* doesn't hold a candle to it, but as a summer action flick, this one's better than most.
Anna: The team-up of Fuqua and Washington is a good one, and like you said, while it may not be cinematic genius, this installment carries its own, especially in the slog of summer releases. I'll take watching this over *Skyscraper* any day. (No, I haven't seen *Skyscraper*. Maybe it's great. Maybe not. I'm judging by the trailer that it isn't my jam.) The action in *The Equalizer 2* starts early and pumps throughout, but one thing I appreciate about this movie is the moments of quiet as well. We sit with McCall and get a sense for the mundane details of his life. He drives for Lyft, lives a sparse life—the guy has one drinking glass, for the love of Pete, and genuinely gives a damn about the people around him, few and far between as they are. My favorite piece of his complicated puzzle is his relationship and mentoring of Miles. He certainly doesn't want Miles to fall onto the easy path of dealing drugs, nor does he want him to follow in his bloody footprints. When he forcefully pulls Miles away from a group of thugs trying to groom him, he shows Miles what it really takes to kill a man and what that does to your life. While I didn't see the details of the inevitable plot twist before it happened, it was predictable enough to be called unclever, but luckily the film had enough gusto to gloss over that in my overall opinion of it. I think this one's totally worth an afternoon at the theater, or at the very least a watch when it makes it to video. ○

Sun Screen is written by New Times Senior Staff Writer Glen Starkey and his wife, Anna. Comment at gstarkey@newtimeslo.com.

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F I L M

FILM REVIEWS from page 29

mannerisms and only traces of her energy are adopted by James, making it hard to fully believe her as a young Donna. Despite this slight disconnect, James still proves a charismatic and free-spirited character who is easy to root for. Watching her meet Sophie's three potential dads is amusing and often more lighthearted than the present-day scenes.

Though the musical numbers are lively, they feel overproduced and a bit sanitized. The songs don't fit the scenes as snugly as they did in the original, bringing up the question of how many storylines can (or should) be developed from the music of one 1970s Swedish pop group. There was something especially disappointing about reused songs from the first film. These recycled tracks were some of the best in the sequel, but still fell short of their original performances.

Unfortunately, *Mama Mia! Here We Go Again!* does not re-create the original electricity of the first film, but rather provides a subtle warning for yet another largely nostalgia-driven, profit-seeking sequel. However, just because the film is unable to fully recapture the original magic does not mean it misses all the marks.

Even while the shortcomings are easily recognizable, this musical film still offers a fun watch and a worthy trip down memory lane for viewers. If you are a fan of the first, I wouldn't discourage you from attending a local screening sporting some denim and a boa. However, I also wouldn't advise you to walk in expecting to fall in love all over again. (114 min.)

—Ashley Ladin

NEW It seems to the Teens that all the major superheroes out there are starring in their own movies, everyone but the Teen Titans, that is! But de facto leader Robin (voice of Scott Menville) is determined to remedy the situation, and be seen as a star instead of a sidekick. With a few madcap ideas and a song in their hearts, the Teen Titans head to Tinsel Town, certain to pull off their dream. But when the group is radically misdirected by a seriously super villain and his maniacal plan to take over the Earth, things really go awry. The team finds their friendship and their fighting spirit failing, putting the very fate of the Teen Titans themselves on the line! (92 min.)

—Warner Bros. Pictures

TOP GUN

What's it rated? **PG**

Where's it showing? **Hi-Way Drive-In**

In this 1986 film, devil-may-care navy pilot Pete Mitchell (Tom Cruise) is sent to Miramar Naval Air Station for advanced training. Here he vies with Tom Kasansky (Val Kilmer) for the coveted "Top Gun" award. When not so occupied, Mitchell carries on a romance with civilian consultant Charlotte Blackwood (Kelly McGillis). Shaken up by the death of a friend, Mitchell loses the Top Gun honor to Kasansky. Worried that he may have lost his nerve, Mitchell is given a chance to redeem himself during a tense international crisis involving a crippled U.S. vessel and a flock of predatory enemy planes. (110 min.)

—Paramount Pictures

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE-FALLOUT

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

Where's it showing? **Parks Plaza, Movies Lompoc, Hi-Way Drive In**

NEW The best intentions often come back to haunt you. *Mission: Impossible-Fallout* finds Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise) and his IMF team (Alec Baldwin, Simon Pegg, and Ving Rhames) along with some familiar allies (Rebecca Ferguson, Michelle Monaghan) in a race against time after a mission gone wrong. Henry Cavill, Angela Bassett, and Vanessa Kirby also join the dynamic cast with filmmaker Christopher McQuarrie returning to the helm. (147 min.)

—Paramount Pictures

Sun movie reviews were compiled by *New Times* Arts Editor Ryah Cooley. You can contact her at rcooly@newtimeslo.com.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PARAMOUNT PICTURES



BEST-LAID PLANS: In *Mission: Impossible-Fallout*, Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise) and his team join forces with a CIA assassin to prevent a disaster of epic proportions.

TEEN TITANS GO TO THE MOVIES

What's it rated? **PG**

Where's it showing? **Parks Plaza**

THE MAGICIANS

When? **2015-Present**

What's it rated? **TV-MA**

Where's it available? **Streaming on**

Netflix, Syfy

If Narnia and Harry Potter had a magic fueled orgy, the Syfy network's fantastical show *The Magicians* (based on the best selling novels by Lev Grossman) would definitely be the baby of uncertain parentage that came out of it nine months later.

With three seasons out (but just the first two streaming on Netflix), the show follows a group of young adults as they discover their magical powers and are admitted to Brakebills (think Hogwarts, but for grad-school aged peeps) to learn their craft. We start with protagonist/loner Quentin Coldwater (Jason Ralph, *A Most Violent Year*) who is obsessed with the Fillory books (a blatant rip-off

of *Narnia*) and never quite let go of the idea of magic like his BFF/lifelong crush Julia (Stella Maeve, *Starlet*) has. When the two are tested for magical abilities, only Quentin is accepted into Brakebills, leaving Julia out in the cold, determined to find her way to another source of magic.

At Brakebills we meet sassy upperclassmen Elliot (Hale Appleman, *Private Romeo*) and Margo (Summer Bishil, *Towelhead*) who show Quentin the ropes. Then there's the surly duo of Penny (Arjun Gupta, *Nurse Jackie*) and Kady (Jade Taylor, *Murder in the First*) who each have a complicated past. And of course we can't forget Alice (Olivia Taylor Dudley, born and raised in SLO! Seen in 2015's *Paranormal Activity: The Ghost Dimension*) the bookish girl who comes from a family of powerful magicians who quickly catches Quentin's eye.

This group of magical misfits is

PHOTO COURTESY OF SYFY



MAGIC: Syfy's *The Magicians* follows a group of young people who become rulers of the magical kingdom of Fillory while living in a time loop and trying to prevent the destruction of both worlds.

BINGEABLE

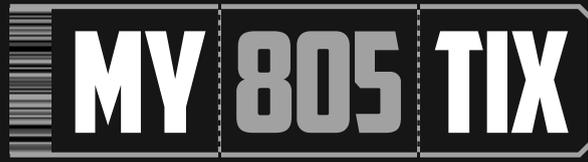
brought together because—surprise, surprise—Fillory is a real place that one can travel to through magical portals (hmm, like a wardrobe perhaps?) and it's being run by a tyrannical magical, who's draining all the magic from Fillory, threatening life as we know it in both worlds. Oh and all the magicians have met before, but don't remember it because they're in a time loop, repeating history until they get it right, naturally.

I give *The Magicians* a fair amount of shade, but it's a fun time, especially for fantasy loving nerds like myself. The key is you have to accept it for what it is. The dialogue can be lacking, they definitely steal material from our fantasy sources, and there is a lot of sex (but mostly before- and after-sex stuff, not full-on in the throes of climax HBO sex stuff). But as someone who's sadly aged out of Hogwarts it's fun to go along for the ride to Brakebills, and *The Magicians* also gets some points for tackling dark subjects like young children being sexually molested, rape, mental health, and child abandonment, something that other magical stories often gloss over or ignore completely.

While three seasons of *The Magicians* have been released since 2015, only two are streaming on Netflix. (But season three is available online on Syfy). Season four is expected to premiere in 2019, with season three becoming available on Netflix around the same time. (13, 43 to 52 min. episodes per season)

—Ryah Cooley

NEW TIMES INTRODUCES

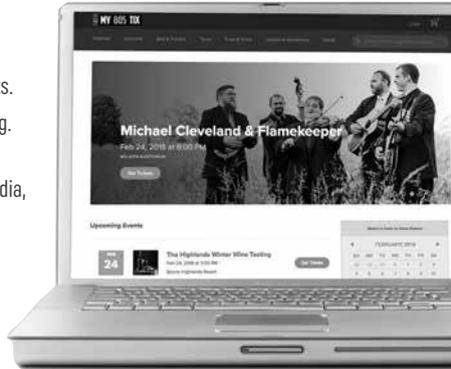


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Festival fare

Guadalupe Buddhist Church celebrates annual Obon Festival

BY REBECCA ROSE

Food is and always will be a reflection of our culture. What we put on the plate isn't just an expression of what we're hungry for, it's a window into where we come from. And there's no better time to get a look in the window of another culture's rich cuisine history than at the annual Obon Festival.

On July 22, festivalgoers flocked to the Veteran's Memorial Center in Santa Maria to celebrate the Obon Festival. Hundreds of people filled the space, watching martial arts demonstrations, admiring crafts, and, of course, sampling some delicious foods.

The festival takes its name from Bon Odori, a style of dance. Put on every year by the Guadalupe Buddhist Church, the Obon Festival is meant to be a time to honor friends, family members, and loved ones who have passed away recently. Many attendees wear traditional Japanese kimonos, happi coats, or yukata. In addition to the martial arts groups, dancers and taiko drummers also performed for the crowds.

It's a fun and important event that highlights the diversity in our community and gives participants an opportunity learn more about another culture.

I was there to sample and learn more about the food. A variety of traditional food options are offered every year, culminating in a teriyaki chicken dinner. In addition to that, visitors can sample sushi, wontons, kushiyaki, udon noodles, and desserts such as strawberry shortcake.

Kushiyaki refers to food on a skewer; kushi meaning skewers and yaki meaning grilled. You might be familiar with yakitori, a variety of kushiyaki, which features chicken as the skewered meat. Chicken breast is a popular meat choice for yakitori in some local restaurants. But just about any meat, including seafood or vegetable can be skewered and grilled to serve kushiyaki. (There's also kushiage, which is fried meat served on skewers.)

The beef kushiyaki served at Santa Maria's Obon Festival were prepared to order on the open pit grill. The meat is served tender yet nicely charred on the outside so as to preserve the flavors of the seasoning. Served with a sweet and salty teriyaki sauce, kushiyaki is a great

snack for a something like festival because you don't have to get your hands too dirty when you eat it, and it's super filling.

Attendees also slurped up big cups of udon noodles. Udon noodles are thick wheat noodles with a neutral flavor that suck up the flavor of the broth they are typically prepared with. Udon noodles can also be served cold for hot summer days, but they are mostly found in our parts in bowls of hot broth loaded with veggies and fresh ingredients. At the Obon Festival, they were served with bits of pork and fresh green scallions, in small portable cups.

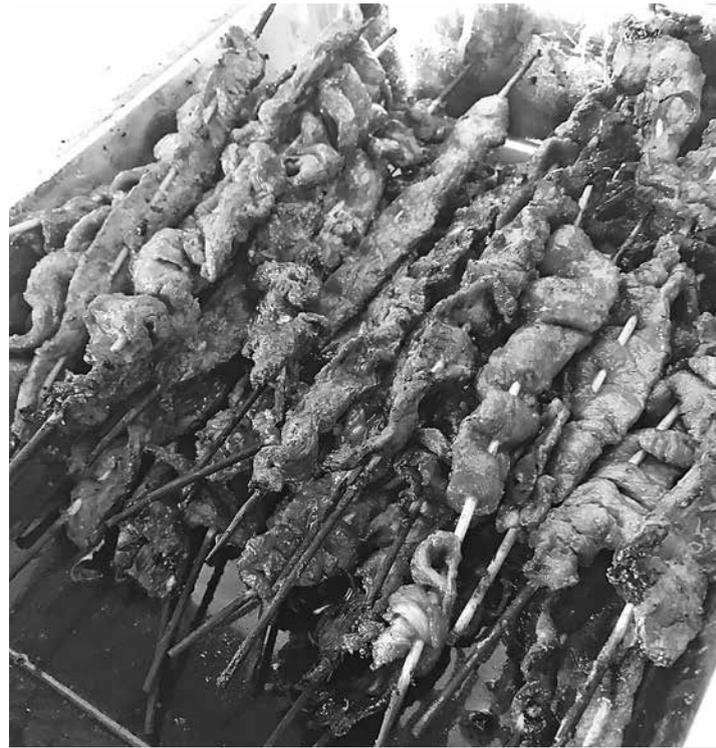
The festival also served sushi, including one of my favorites, inari. Inari are sushi rice balls stuffed fried bean curd paste pouches, and they are delicious. They were served alongside kanpyo, a type of dried calabash gourd, and egg maki. Maki is from the word maku meaning to roll, which is a dish wrapped in seaweed (called nori). The ginger served with sushi dishes at the Obon Festival is benishoga, slightly different that the gari shoga typically served at sushi restaurants, which is a bit sweeter in taste.

The absolute best part of the food at the event was the chargrilled teriyaki chicken dinner.

EATS continued page 32



MARRY THIS INARI: Inari, a bean curd paste pocket stuffed with sushi rice, was served alongside a maki roll with egg and kanpyo, a type of dried calabash gourd.



SKEWERED: Kushiyaki, (meaning grilled skewers), at the Obon Festival in Santa Maria featured beef marinated in teriyaki sauce and grilled over coals. It was one of several traditional dishes served during the day-long event.



UDON-T KNOW HOW GOOD THIS IS: Udon noodles, a thick wheat noodle with neutral flavor, were served during the Obon Festival in Santa Maria.

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Run with the Best!



EATS from page 31

The dish was served with rice balls topped with black sesame and an edamame and tomato salad (which looked colorful and was a simple and tasty side).

Teriyaki is a marinade made from soy sauce, sugar, ginger, and sake or mirin sauce. Mirin is a tangy and sweet rice vinegar sauce that can add a little sweetness to certain dishes. You can replace sake in just about any recipe when you don't want to use alcohol or you're looking for something a little sweeter.

This is also a great time to talk about edamame, one of my favorite go-to snacks. Typically served as a snack to accompany sushi, edamame are soybean pods prepared blanched and often served with salt. Shelled edamame can add a punch of protein and fiber to just about any dish. I like to add it

to salads or serve it tossed with corn, fresh herbs, diced onions, and red pepper and a dash of rice wine vinegar and make a nice succotash with it. Edamame is easy to prepare and keep on hand; you can buy cheap bags of frozen edamame and keep them in the freezer. Just always remember to buy them in the shell, never shelled, because I find they lose a lot of flavor out of the pods in the freezing process.

Food is meant to bring us together, to share our traditions and insight into ingredients and dishes. Thanks to the Obon Festival, Santa Marians get a good chance to do that and much more. So see you next year (and save me some more udon)! O

Arts and Lifestyle Writer Rebecca Rose is easily skewered. Contact her at rrose@santamariasun.com.

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• It's hot out there, so you're probably not in the mood for something warm like panini. But **Panino** in Santa Ynez has a light and fresh tuna salad sandwich that goes perfectly with a cold beer. Made with white albacore and mixed with tomato, cucumber, green pepper, and red onions, the sandwich is served with your choice of bread and honey mustard with a bed of greens for \$10.95. Get it at **3569 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez**.

• Wine Tasting with the **Summer Pass** is going on through Aug. 31. Fourteen tasting rooms throughout Santa Ynez, Buellton, Los Olivos, and Solvang are participating. Each tasting consists of four to five wines. For more

info on how to get the summer pass, call (800) 563-3183.

• Get your fancy on at the Masquerade Gala on July 28 from 6 to 11 p.m. at the **Monarch Club** at Trilogy Monarch Dunes. The event features live music and auctions to benefit the 5Cities Homeless Coalition and Nipomo Food Basket. Tickets are \$75. Cocktail attire and masks encouraged. More info: (805) 574-1638. The Monarch Club is located at **1645 Trilogy Parkway, Nipomo**.

• **Fiddlehead Cellars** presents Fiddle Fest 2.0 on July 28. The event is a fundraiser for the Women's Fund of Northern Santa Barbara County and features more than 30 wines open for tasting, a take-home commemorative etched Burgundy glass, barbecue lunch by 805 Chop House, vineyard tours, and more. Tickets are available at fiddleheadcellars.com.

• I would make my Austrian mother very disappointed if I forgot to mention that **Bell's** in Los Alamos is now serving Weingut Knoll wines, made from grapes grown in Austria's most prestigious wine country, the Wachau. Get them while they last at **406 Bell St., Los Alamos**. O

PHOTO BY REBECCA ROSE

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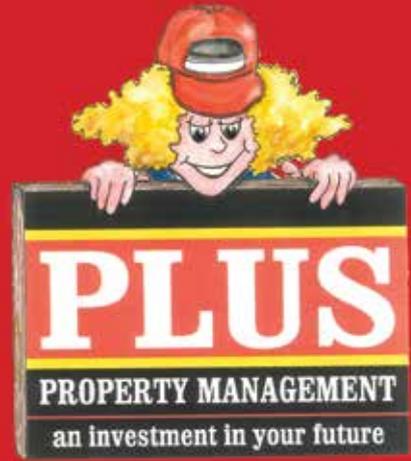
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\$1450 3420 Santa Maria Way #207C 2+1.5, Quail Mdws u/s condo w/easy 101 frwy access, open kit/nook has wd flrs, crpt in L/R, & bdrms, balcony w/sgrg, 1car alloc pkg, trash pd, pool privs incl, no pets

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\$2000 4195 Arcturus Avenue - 3 + 2, Immaculate in north VV, freshly painted, all newer laminate wd flrng thru-out except bdrms have newer crpt, F/P in frml L/R-Dining area, kitch w/refrig, cook top, microwave, brkfst bar, F/R-D/R, walking distance to schools, no pets.

\$2000 1229 Village Meadows - 3 + 2.5, Gorgeous Meadows 2stry hm w/unique upgrades, 2car att grg, d/s w/ wood flrng, tile in 3 bthrms, L/R w/gas F/P, kitch flrpln has center isln, opens to D/R, Indry rm w/w/d incl, backyd well maintained, pool, tennis courts, play ground access, no pets.

\$1900 309 Dove Lane - 4 + 2.5, Beautiful unique hm in Walnut Village, easy access to VAFB, Santa Barbara, walking dist to dwnwn Lompoc, 2 F/R, D/R, kit w/stainless steel appls, dogs allowed.

\$1600 1223 Riverside Drive - 3 + 2.5, 2stry in NE, L/R w/F/P, D/R exits to covrd patio, all applc inclng fridge, u/s has all 3 bdrms incl spacious mst ste attc to mstr ba, double car attch grg w/opener, close to schools & shopping.

\$1400 209 Village Circle - 2 + 2, Gated Twnhm w/unique flrpln, one level on second flr w/3 balconies, 1car grg, L/R is bright and open w/vaulted celing, F/P, lrg slider to balcony, kitch w/lots of cabnts, gas cooktop, pntry, Indry rm w/w/d hkups, pool access, no pets.

\$1350 835 E. Cypress - 2 + 1.5, spacious 2stry townhm, lots of storage, F/P in L/R, w/d in unit, sm enclosed yd, carport, wtr paid.

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