

# Sun

AT THE MOVIES



Avengers assemble! [29]



# All bark, no bite

*A new law intended to increase demand for shelter animals has been in place for months, but it's off to a rocky start [12]*

BY KASEY BUBNASH

**NEWS** Mobile home residents seek rent control [7]

**ARTS** Santa Maria artists showcase their talent [27]

**EATS** Brews and barbecues [31]

## The Sun in Northern Santa Barbara County is looking for its next staff writer, but we're not looking for just any article-pushing, source-wrangling, story-chasing someone.

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# Contents

MAY 2 - MAY 9, 2019 VOL. 20 NO. 9

A state law went into effect at the beginning of the year that attempts to decrease the demand for mass-bred animals and increase adoption rates for shelter animals. Some criticized the law's passage as overreach (it bans pet stores from selling dogs, cats, and rabbits purchased from breeders) that would make it more difficult to find pets that meet specific needs, while animal advocacy organizations lauded it as a step toward, stemming the animal abuse they say comes with the mass breeding industry. Shelters, though, have reported little change in adoption rates, and enforcing the law has been difficult. Staff Writer Kasey Bubnash speaks with local animal advocates, pet owners, and public officials about the law and its shortcomings for this week's cover story [12].

Also this week, Santa Maria mobile-home owners ask for help with the ever-increasing cost of renting land [7], the Santa Maria Arts Council gets ready to show off its grant winners [27], Righetti High School film teacher Robert Garcia (a legend!) heads into his final film festival [28], and Brews and 'Cues is a delicious walk in the park [31].

Camillia Lanham,  
editor

Cover photo by Jayson Mellom > Cover design by Alex Zuniga



**GUCCI POOCHIES:** Freshly groomed dogs walk about the lawn outside the Santa Maira Elks Lodge on April 26, where the Santa Maria Kennel Club was hosting agility trials. Kennel Club President Dave Swinson helped run the show that day, and took a break from his duties to discuss responsible breeding practices with the Sun.

## NEWS

News Briefs	4
Political Watch	4
Weather	4
Spotlight	8
School Scene	10
Athlete of the Week	10

## MUSIC

Music listings	22
----------------	----

## ARTS

Arts Briefs	27
-------------	----

## MOVIES

Reviews & Locations	29
---------------------	----

## EATS

Powell's Picks	33
----------------	----

## OPINION

Web Poll	15
Letters	15
Mayfield	15
Canary	16

## EVENTS CALENDAR

Hot Stuff	17
-----------	----

## CLASSIFIEDS, HOME, AND REAL ESTATE

34

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## Political Watch

• **U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal** (D-Santa Barbara) responded to the Trump administration's April 26 release of the draft supplement environmental impact statement on proposals for hydraulic fracturing (fracking) on California's public lands by calling for people to comment on the report. "The Central Coast is already facing grave impacts from climate change, including rising sea levels, drought, and a nearly year-round fire season. The administration's plan to open public lands to fracking and oil development is a step backward given the increasingly urgent warnings from our scientific community on the unchecked effects of climate change. The Central Coast has a long history of environmental stewardship, and we must continue speaking out to protect our clean air, open spaces, and wildlife habitat," Carbajal said in a press release. The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) plan identifies options for fracking on public and private land in eight counties in Central California, including San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura. The comment period for the report ends on June 10, and the BLM is holding a public meeting about the report on May 22 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Embassy Suites in San Luis Obispo.

• State **Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson's** (D-Santa Barbara) legislation to combat tobacco waste passed out of the Senate Environmental Quality Committee on April 24. Senate Bill 424 would ban the sale of single-use tobacco products and require multi-use tobacco products to be recyclable or be collected for take-back by tobacco product manufacturers. "Tobacco waste is the No. 1 source of ocean trash and leaks toxic chemicals that are harmful to our ecosystems and wildlife. It is time for the tobacco industry to take responsibility for the lifecycle of their products and do their part to reduce their environmental impacts," Jackson said in a press release. The release states that the cost borne by local and state agencies to deal with tobacco product waste is sizable, with San Francisco spending nearly \$10 million on cigarette butt cleanup in 2009. Two other pieces of legislation authored by Jackson also made headway in April. Senate Bill 135, which attempts to ensure that more employees who pay into the Paid Family Leave Program can use it without losing their jobs, passed out of the Senate Labor, Public Employment, and Retirement Committee on April 24. Senate Bill 182—which seeks to strengthen local planning requirements in high fire-hazard areas and encourage local governments to pursue more fire-resistant and home-hardening strategies in their communities—passed the Senate Housing Committee on April 23.

• The Assembly Housing and Community Development Committee voted to move forward with creating a renter protection package on April 25. California **Gov. Gavin Newsom** responded with a statement that the cost of housing is a quality-of-life concern for people across the state. "Families shouldn't be forced to live hours from where they work. Vulnerable residents—seniors, families with small children, and people on a fixed income—shouldn't have to live in constant fear of eviction. And people across the state shouldn't be forced to spend their whole paycheck to keep a roof overhead. But that's increasingly the case throughout California," Newsom said in a press release. "I am grateful that members of the Assembly voted today to continue moving forward on one piece of the housing affordability solution—creating a renter protection package." ○



**PROTECT YOUR GREENS:** Some Santa Barbara County lettuce farmers will soon have to adhere to a new set of food and safety standards that were recently adopted by the California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement.

## Some local growers face new regulations in wake of E. coli outbreaks

Several Santa Barbara County lettuce farmers will soon have to adhere to a new set of food and safety standards that were adopted in response to recent outbreaks of E. coli in romaine lettuce.

The California Leafy Greens Marketing Agreement (LGMA), a voluntary membership program that was formed to ensure the safety of California-grown leafy greens, announced on April 19 that its board voted to adopt a more stringent set of food safety guidelines that must be met by member farms.

"The LGMA and its members have an obligation to produce safe leafy greens," the LGMA wrote in a press release. "We are very aware of the tragic impacts a foodborne illness can have on consumers, our customers, and our entire industry."

While the LGMA has always required growers to pass water tests, the new requirements include additional safeguards. Farmers will have to categorize water sources, consider how and when water is applied to the crop, conduct

testing to ensure that water is safe for the intended use, sanitize water if necessary, and verify that all of the above precautions have been taken. Untreated surface water will also no longer be allowed for the overhead irrigation of leafy greens prior to harvest.

The new standards, according to the LGMA, were approved in direct response to last year's E. coli outbreaks involving romaine lettuce and subsequent U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) investigations that suggested irrigation water from sources such as canals and reservoirs could have been the cause.

One such outbreak, which caused 62 reported cases of illness and 25 hospitalizations across 17 states, was linked to Adam Brothers Farming Inc. in December 2018.

The Santa Maria farm voluntarily recalled all red- and green-leaf lettuce and cauliflower that was harvested from Nov. 27 to 30, 2018, in cooperation with an FDA investigation into the outbreak.

The recall was initiated after sediment from a reservoir near Adam Brothers Farming produce tested positive for E. coli O157:H7, the same strain that was first reported to be present in romaine lettuce a month earlier and has since impacted scores of individuals in multiple states.

While Adam Brothers stated in a press release that filtered and treated water from the reservoir may have come in contact with the farm's produce after it was harvested, none of the filtered water tested positive for E. coli.

The FDA later announced that it had exhausted all efforts to find other potential sources for the E. coli outbreak, but the particular strain wasn't found anywhere else in sampling done during the investigation in various California areas and counties that grow leafy greens.

In a report released on Feb. 13, the FDA concluded that the water from the on-farm water reservoir where the outbreak strain was found was most likely to have led to the contamination of some romaine lettuce consumed during the outbreak.

Adam Brothers is not an LGMA member, however, and will not have to adhere to the program's new restrictions. Several other local leafy green farms—including Santa Maria's Bonipak Produce, Babé Farms, and Agro Jal Farms—will have to comply. Other farms in Santa Barbara County will also be impacted, including Lompoc's Big E Produce and EpicVeg.

—Kasey Bubnash

## County probation receives national training to improve juvenile justice system

Santa Barbara County has been working for years to better aid at-risk youth and their families through its juvenile detention system. Now the Probation Department is getting help in that work—it recently announced that its staff were chosen to attend a national training dedicated to reimagining juvenile justice.

On April 17, the Santa Barbara County Probation Department announced that it's among 16 organizations from across the nation chosen to participate in this year's Reimagining Juvenile Justice program, a staff development initiative dedicated to improving America's juvenile correction system.

Historically, the U.S. juvenile justice system has been carried out in a punitive framework, according to Holly Benton, Santa Barbara County's deputy chief probation officer. That has led to the incarceration of troubled youth who may be struggling with mental health issues or family problems, she said, and often pushes young people deeper into the system and worsens their issues.

Santa Barbara County is no different, and Benton said the Probation Department recently launched an evaluation and overhaul of its practices in an effort to detain fewer kids and connect them with the services they really need.

The Reimagining Juvenile Justice program will give staff the tools and skills necessary to achieve that goal, Benton said.

"It fits in well with the approach we've been taking over the last one and a half to two years," Benton told the *Sun*.

In August 2017, the Probation Department launched an internal investigation into its juvenile justice system. The project included months of auditing juvenile cases, comparing county data, and researching possible policy and practice reforms, and the department found that Santa Barbara County kids were being detained and put under county supervision at disparately high rates.

While opportunities exist within the juvenile justice system for lower-level, less intensive behavioral correction options—the most restrictive being declared a ward of the courts—the department's research indicated that Santa Barbara County often failed to adequately utilize those less intensive options.

The department found that low-risk kids

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**Dave Hovde**  
KSBY Chief Meteorologist

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<p><b>Saturday</b></p> <p><b>COASTAL</b> &gt; High 67 Low 49 <b>INLAND</b> &gt; High 72 Low 46</p>	<p><b>Sunday</b></p> <p><b>COASTAL</b> &gt; High 69 Low 48 <b>INLAND</b> &gt; High 72 Low 46</p>

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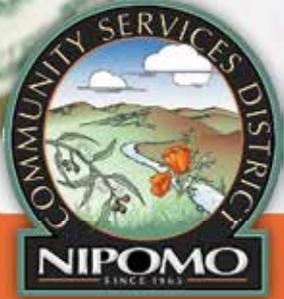


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# Fighting for control

*Residents of manufactured homes are pushing for rent control in Santa Maria*

BY ZAC EZZONE

During a statewide affordable housing shortage, the practical option of living in manufactured, or mobile, homes is becoming less affordable for many residents in Santa Maria.

Because of this, a group of residents living in manufactured home parks in Santa Maria is urging the city to implement a rent control ordinance to keep annual rent increases down for park residents. Santa Maria is one of the only cities in Santa Barbara County without such an ordinance in place.

These parks are often home to low-income families and residents who are retired or near retirement. Almost half of the 14 parks in the city are reserved for residents 55 years and older, with many residents living on fixed incomes, like Social Security, who are dependent on cost-of-living adjustments.

Gary Hall, president of the Rancho Buena Vista Mobile Estates' homeowners association, is a retiree living in one of the 55-and-older parks in Santa Maria. He is also one of the residents urging the city to implement a rent control ordinance.

"Manufactured home living is usually viewed

as affordable," Hall said. "If you can't keep up with that on a fixed income, you're going to have a hard time finding any place else that's affordable."

When rent increases outpace these cost-of-living adjustments, it presents a problem for retirees who have no way to earn additional income. According to the Social Security Administration, 21 percent of married and 44 percent of single retirees rely on Social Security for 90 percent or more of their income.

Hall said his rent at Rancho Buena Vista increases annually by the amount at which the consumer price index increases, or at a minimum of 3 percent. Increases to the index are also used to calculate Social Security cost-of-living adjustments—however, unlike Hall's rent, there's no minimum increase in place.

According to the Social Security Administration, the last time a cost-of-living adjustment exceeded 3 percent was in 2011, while every adjustment between 2012-17 was at or below 2 percent. This difference is difficult to make up for retired residents who are not working and have no way to supplement their fixed income, Hall said.

Over the five years he's lived in Santa Maria, Hall said his rent has increased at a

higher rate than cost-of-living adjustments to his fixed income.

"The reality of it is, rent increases have gone up while cost-of-living increases have not," Hall said.

Rancho Buena Vista isn't the only park where a minimum increase is built into the lease, and the park's HOA isn't the only group of residents urging the city of Santa Maria to implement rent control. Hall is on a subcommittee for the North Santa Barbara County Manufactured Homeowners Team (NSBMHT), made up of a number of HOAs from manufactured home parks in Santa Maria, Orcutt, Buellton, and Solvang.

Hall and other members from this organization first spoke with Santa Maria city staff and Santa Maria City Council about implementing rent control during a meeting in October 2018. Since that meeting, Hall and other members from NSBMHT have spoken during the public comment period of seven Santa Maria city council meetings between November 2018 and April 2019.

At the Dec. 4 City Council meeting, Susan Parmelee—who lives in Casa Del Rio Mobile Estates and is NSBMHT's outreach coordinator—said the unique situation of homeownership in mobile home parks makes it difficult for residents to leave troublesome lease agreements. In most parks, residents own their homes, but they rent the land those homes are located on.

"Our homes are not mobile," Parmelee said at the meeting. "We can't just pick up and leave as other renters do when rent increases."

Although mobile homes can be relocated,

it's often not practical. Hall said moving the structure can cost between \$15,000 to \$20,000.

The city of Santa Maria began holding meetings between residents, park owners, and city officials to figure out a way forward. Hall said the first meeting took place in January, a second meeting was held in March, and a third meeting is scheduled for early May.

City staff didn't return requests for comment before press time.

This isn't the first time manufactured home park residents in Santa Maria have urged the city to adopt a rent control ordinance. In 1999, the city held a series of meetings with residents and proposed a rent control ordinance that the City Council rejected, Hall said.

Instead of this ordinance, the city approved a model lease program, with the intention of keeping rent increases low. But because this program isn't an ordinance, it isn't enforceable, said Ron Faas, former legislative action team coordinator for NSBMHT.

A November 2017 email Faas received from former City Attorney Gilbert Trujillo describes the city's role in the program as being a facilitator that helps residents and manufactured home park owners agree on long-term leases.

"Over the years, city officials were comfortable saying they have this model lease program that took care of rent control, but then we found that it doesn't really take care of this," Faas said. ○

Staff Writer Zac Ezzone can be reached at [zezzone@santamariasun.com](mailto:zezzone@santamariasun.com).

NEWS from page 4

with misdemeanor offenses and behavioral problems rooted in untreated mental health issues, unaddressed abuse, and trauma—were often listed as wards. Once declared a ward of the court, the possibility of entering a detention facility is greatly increased, an experience that Benton said can cause children "serious harm."

Department officials wanted to reverse this potentially harmful trend, and by November of 2017, it had several policy change strategies outlined.

The Reimagining Juvenile Justice program is the latest in that effort, and Benton said she and one other staffer will attend a three-day, intensive training on the program's evidence-based curriculum. They'll then train other county employees for six months.

The training, Benton said, will allow the county to develop the ability to support, divert, and redirect youth to appropriate and fair justice options, including options that require a high degree of cross-department collaboration and coordination.

She said implementing those options will help move the local juvenile justice system to a more effective approach that addresses the multifaceted needs of youth and families, rewards kids for good behavior, helps them mature and improve family relations, and minimizes or avoids system involvement entirely.

"I'm very excited," Benton said. "It has so much potential to make a positive impact."

—Kasey Bubnash

## Plains All American fined \$3.3 million for 2015 oil spill

On April 25, Santa Barbara County Superior Court Judge James Herman ordered Plains All American Pipeline to pay \$3.3 million in fines for the 2015 pipeline rupture that spilled thousands of gallons of oil into the ocean and onto the shoreline of Refugio State Beach.

The fines were imposed following a

September 2018 trial where a jury found Plains All American guilty of one felony and eight misdemeanors. The oil spill is a felony, while the misdemeanor charges include six counts of killing marine mammals, sea birds, and other marine life; one count of failing to follow its own spill plan and notify emergency response agencies; and one count of violating a county ordinance prohibiting oil spills.

According to county District Attorney Joyce Dudley, the court found that Plains All American knew or should have known that the pipeline would rupture. Evidence presented at the trial demonstrated that more than 140,000 gallons of oil were released from the pipeline; more than 100,000 gallons of oil were never recovered, according to the DA's Office.

In her testimony at the sentencing hearing, Linda Krop, chief counsel of the Santa Barbara-based Environmental Defense Center, said the spill killed hundreds of animals and damaged beaches, dunes, and other habitats.

"The spill had a devastating impact on the environment and the lives of those who care about the health of our coastal and marine ecosystems," Krop said.

Blake Kopcho, an oceans campaigner with the Center for Biological Diversity, said that Plains All American deserved a more severe punishment.

"Plains' criminal negligence deserved a tougher sentence, but even more important is that the company doesn't deserve another chance to spill again," Kopcho said. "Santa Barbara officials shouldn't let Plains and ExxonMobil bring those decrepit platforms back online to thwart efforts to curb climate change and protect marine life."

In August 2017, Plains All American announced its plans to replace the pipeline, which has remained offline since the spill. The replacement pipeline would traverse 123 miles and three counties, including Santa Barbara County.

In an interview with the *Sun* earlier this year, Steve Greig, the director of governmental affairs for Plains All American, said the project would not result in any new oil production but would only resume previous production. He also said

the project would include a number of safety measures to prevent future oil spills.

"We understand the communities and the importance of the Pacific Ocean, and we agree that we want to protect the environment," Greig said.

—Zac Ezzone

## Tree removal to continue in Los Padres forest

The U.S. Forest Service is moving forward with its second forest-thinning project within the Los Padres National Forest in the last six months.

On April 26, the Forest Service announced its plans to remove trees near Tecuya Ridge, which follows its November 2018 plans to remove trees in Cuddy Valley. Both of these projects are located in the Mount Pinos Ranger District, which is east of the Santa Lucia Ranger District that borders Santa Maria.

According to the Forest Service's proposal for the Tecuya Ridge Shaded Fuelbreak Project from March 2018, the purpose of this effort is to remove from a 1,626-acre area trees that are dead or dying to reduce the risk of fires. According to a decision memo describing the Cuddy Valley forest health/fuels reduction project, the Forest Service will remove trees that are at risk of loss to insect and disease from a 1,200-acre area for prescribed fire management.

Los Padres ForestWatch, a Santa Barbara County group that focuses on protecting and restoring forests along the Central Coast, has pushed back on numerous aspects of both projects.

One of the groups's primary concerns is that the logging for the Tecuya Ridge project takes place near habitat space for California condors, which are an endangered species protected by federal law. In a statement, the organization said that according to data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, almost 50 sites that condors regularly settle are located within a half-mile of where trees will be cut and removed.

"There is simply no place for commercial logging in condor country," Bryant Baker, Los Padres ForestWatch Conservation Director, said in a statement.

Although environmental reviews were completed, Los Padres ForestWatch called out the Forest Service for moving forward with both of these projects without preparing environmental impact statements.

"With approval of this project, the Forest Service is setting a dangerous precedent for shirking environmental review and public input for logging projects that can have significant impacts on endangered species in the Los Padres National Forest," Baker said in the statement.

The Forest Service's memo on the Cuddy Valley project stated that the project is categorically excluded from an environmental impact review. According to the National Environmental Policy Act, projects can be categorically excluded if a federal agency has determined the project doesn't significantly affect the environment for humans. This exclusion designation is designed to reduce paperwork and save time and resources.

Los Padres ForestWatch is not the only organization pushing back on these projects. The John Muir Project, another California-based group that works to protect national forests, disagrees with aspects of the project as well. The organization doesn't believe widespread forest-thinning reduces wildfire risks.

"The science is telling us that commercial logging projects like these not only damage critical wildlife habitat, they also usually make wildland fires spread faster and burn hotter," Chad Hanson, a forest ecologist with the John Muir Project, said in a statement.

—Zac Ezzone

## Clarification

In the April 25 cover story, "Barred," the explanation of "public charge" was misstated in the "Eliminating fear" section. The sentence should read: The term "public charge" is used by U.S. immigration officials to classify immigrants who are denied entry due to their dependency on the government for subsistence ... ○

PHOTO COURTESY OF WORKFORCE AND LITERACY INITIATIVE

BY ZAC EZZONE

In 2012, the United Way of Northern Santa Barbara County embarked on a campaign to improve literacy skills in the region, while the Santa Maria-based nonprofit EconAlliance was working on a workforce development program. After noticing how connected the two issues are, the organizations combined their efforts to create the Workforce and Literacy Initiative (WALI).

# Spotlight on:

## WALI

### Eddie Taylor, Vicki Conner co-leaders

“People used to be able to obtain higher [job] positions without reading skills,” said Vicki Conner, EconAlliance initiatives director and WALI co-lead. “But the level of reading is actually increasing in all but the very most entry-level career positions. It is a basic foundation that you need for most careers.”

The organization held its spring forum at the Santa Maria Inn on April 23, where a panel of representatives from seven different business industries—including agriculture and manufacturing—answered questions about the types of entry-level jobs available and the types of education and skills needed for those jobs.

According to WALI, when the organization was formed in 2013, more than 60 percent of students entering Allan Hancock College read below a high-school level, while, on average 46 percent of fourth through 11th graders in

northern Santa Barbara County tested as proficient or above in reading.

When the organization was formed, it set five goals it wanted to help northern Santa Barbara County accomplish by 2020, most of which included an increase in the number of degrees or certificates awarded, as well improvements in reading scores. WALI identified these goals in 2013, and began actively pursuing them in 2014, said Eddie Taylor, United Way of Northern Santa Barbara County CEO and WALI co-lead.

WALI plans to meet its goals by partnering with other organizations with similar ambitions, including Hancock, and by aggregating and releasing data to chart the area’s progress. The organization also introduces educators and employers to each other at different events and forums that WALI holds throughout the year, Conner said.

Taylor said WALI has made significant progress on most of its 2020 goals, with the exception of improving literacy among adults. The primary reason for this, he said, is because most adults in the area are too busy working to improve their reading skills.

“Some families are carrying two or three jobs, and there is no time for education,” Taylor said. “Having literacy improvement programs in the workplace would help, but that would require employers setting aside time [for employees to learn].”



EXPERT PANEL: Seven professionals from different industries answered questions during the Workforce and Literacy Initiative’s spring forum.

### Highlights

- Santa Maria resident Mark Andersen lost both of his legs in a boating accident on Lake Nacimiento in 2000. And now, almost 20 years later, this lifelong Dodgers fan—with a new set of prosthetic legs—is set to throw the first pitch at the Dodgers game against the Atlanta Braves on May 6.

- Nominations are now open for the Santa Maria Valley Chamber’s annual awards gala, which recognizes local citizens, businesses, and organizations in the Santa Maria area.

The different categories include: citizen of the year, small businesses of the year, large business of the year, nonprofit of the year, and young professional of the year. Residents have until May 20 to submit their nominations. The winners will be revealed at the chamber’s gala on July 23. ○

Staff Writer Zac Ezzone wrote this week’s Biz Spotlight. Information should be sent to the Sun via fax, mail, or email at [spotlight@santamariasun.com](mailto:spotlight@santamariasun.com)

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**FUN IN THE SUN:** Kids enjoy the pool at the Santa Maria Valley YMCA's spring break camp.

## Spring break brings child care issues for working parents

BY KASEY BUBNASH

The week of April 22 to 26 was one of relaxation and fun for many of Santa Maria's kids, most of whom were on spring break. But for many working parents in the Santa Maria Valley, spring break—and school breaks in general—can bring on different emotions.

It's not always easy to get time off of work, child care is notoriously costly, and not all children are old enough to stay at home alone. For lower-income families and parents employed as farmworkers, these issues can be even more challenging.

Andrea Hubbard is a Santa Maria resident who works with Lideres Comesinas, an organization that provides farmworking women with the tools needed to better coordinate large-scale efforts to improve the lives of farmworkers. Hubbard, a mother of a 14-year-old, quit working in the fields to study English some time ago, so she was able to stay home with her daughter this spring break.

But in the past, Hubbard had to deal with the same difficult decisions that many local farmworking women still face in Santa Maria today. "It's very sad," she said, "because you need to work."

Spring and summer breaks in public schools come at an especially bad time for farmworkers, Hubbard said, when there are mass quantities of strawberries to harvest. The spring and summer months bring long hours, and Hubbard said farmworkers often work from 5 a.m. until 7 p.m. to get crops picked. It's difficult work, but she said it also comes with one of the heaviest cash flows of the year, and it's a time when many farmworkers are able to save up enough to survive during slower seasons.

It's not a good time to take a trip or stay at home with the kids, but because child care is so costly, Hubbard said that's what many mothers were forced to do this year. Others, she said, had their older children care for their younger siblings or left their kids with friends.

The Santa Maria-Bonita School District aligned its academic calendar with the Santa Maria Joint Union High School District's specifically so that older siblings in high school would be able to care for their younger siblings during breaks, according to Public Information Officer Maggie White.

Although Santa Maria-Bonita doesn't offer any programs or camps during spring breaks, White said it does offer summer and winter break programs. It also sends out information about various community organizations' programs offered during the break.

The city offered a two-day career camp and extra hours at the Abel Maldonado Community Youth Center.

The Boys and Girls Club of Santa Maria Valley offered a camp from early in the morning until late evening all through spring break, and the roughly 80 attendees played

games in the gym, and had art, Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM), and library sessions. That camp, according to office manager Brandi Garcia, cost \$30 for the week and included two meals. Families had to be members to enroll their children.

The Santa Maria Valley YMCA also hosted a spring break camp, which camp coordinator Alyssa Martinez said included daily swim sessions, art, and STEM activities. It ran from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, and while families did not need to have a YMCA membership to attend the camp, it did cost \$175, and full meals were not included. A majority of the roughly 25 children who attended, Martinez said, qualified for a 50 percent discount due to financial needs.

Still, she said it's important for kids to have a safe space to play and learn during breaks from school.

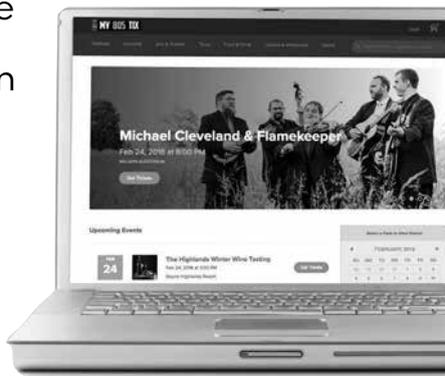
"There are a lot of things kids can get into while on break," Martinez said, "and having a safe and supportive environment they can come to is something we want to keep going." ○

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](mailto:mail@santamariasun.com).

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## ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSEPH DOMINGUES



### Joseph Domingues

Not everyone gets to attend their dream college, but last week, St. Joseph High School student and track athlete Joseph Domingues landed himself a guaranteed slot at his.

On April 24, Domingues signed his letter of intent with the U.S. Naval Academy, an event that was the culmination of nearly four years of hard work, a sharp mind, and speed.

"His work ethic is absolutely incredible," Pepe Villasenor, St. Joseph's assistant track coach, told the *Sun*.

With a course load filled with advanced and college courses, Villasenor said Domingues has long maintained a grade point average above 4.0. Outside of the classroom, Domingues is a track star. He runs the 800 and 1600, and competes in many of the biggest meets on the West Coast.

Despite a recent injury, Villasenor said Domingues has been running well and will likely set new school and personal records in coming competitions. At Navy, Domingues plans to continue his education and running career. ○

—Kasey Bubnash



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# Unleashing change

*New law aims to thwart use of 'puppy mills,' but loopholes have made for slower progress than animal advocates hoped for*

BY KASEY BUBNASH

A few quiet conversations halted as Commissioner Leslie Kraut re-entered the Grover Beach courtroom with a coffee mug in hand. It had been a long morning for the courthouse staff. Since 8 a.m. on April 26, they'd been intently listening to the contrasting allegations—some backed, others seemingly baseless—strewn about by a number of enraged Central Coast residents, all of whom represented themselves in small claims court that morning.

Self-representation in a typical trial is rare, but in small claims court, it's a requirement. The small claims system, by design, gives the general public an inexpensive opportunity to fight for whatever monetary justice they seek, so long as the reward they're hoping to receive is \$10,000 or less.

The same aspect that makes a small claims battle so affordable to fight, however, also leads to high-running emotions and generally "bad vibes," illustrated that day by a never-ending stream of eye-rolling, gasping, head shaking, and "can you believe this guy?" looks shot between members of the audience.

Kraut had patiently waded through it all that morning, and her next case would be no less charged. As she settled into her chair at the front of the wood-paneled, fluorescent lit room, she called up the representatives in the final case on her docket: Jen Toste vs. Micada Inc.—the company that owns Animal Kingdom Pet Shop, a chain of Central Coast pet stores that have recently been at the center of a controversy over animal rights and dog breeding.

Toste, an Arroyo Grande resident and former Animal Kingdom customer, is less than happy with the store's services.

It's been a little more than a year since Toste paid \$1,800 for a goldendoodle puppy she fell in love with at Animal Kingdom in July 2018.

At the time, Toste didn't know anything about so-called "puppy mills," responsible breeding practices, or the debate over commercially bred pets, but she'd soon be forced to learn.

The puppy, Lola, had only been home for a few weeks when employees at a three-week dog training class called to tell Toste they'd noticed Lola limping. On day 10 of the training camp, the limping had become so severe that Lola was removed from the class. When Toste took Lola to the vet, the dog was diagnosed with bilateral hip dysplasia, a hereditary disease in which the hip joints develop incorrectly, causing the bones to grind and wear.

The news only worsened when Toste's vet explained the severity of Lola's situation.

"He said, 'I've never seen it this bad in a dog this young,'" Toste said in court, "and I advise you to euthanize her. I don't feel you have any surgical options at this point." He said, "If you like, there's a specialty practice in town, or you can go down to Ventura, but you're looking at a lot of care for her."

Since then, Toste has spent more than \$10,000 on veterinary appointments, surgeries, and medications for Lola. Although Animal Kingdom's owners have paid Toste more than \$2,000 in medical reimbursement costs that are

required by law, Toste claims that because Lola's disease is preventable, she's owed more.

Toste blames irresponsible breeding—which can lead to higher rates of disease in animals—for her dog's health issues, and she claims that Animal Kingdom knowingly sells unhealthy pets to unwitting families solely to increase its profit margin.

Toste's claims against Animal Kingdom number among many other such allegations, and her situation is like that of countless customers who've purchased pets online or in pet stores, only to find that their beloved furry friends are riddled with preventable illnesses or chronic diseases that can often be linked to irresponsible breeding practices.

Hers is the very situation that a new state law—which requires pet stores to obtain all dogs, cats, and rabbits from animal shelters or rescue groups—is attempting to address. The law went into effect on Jan. 1, and is an effort to decrease the demand for mass-bred animals while increasing adoption rates for the millions of already available shelter animals.

While some criticized the law's passage as a government overreach that would make it more difficult for Californians to find pets that meet specific needs, animal advocacy organizations cheered it as a step toward dismantling the mass breeding industry, which they say is fraught with abuse.

In the few months since its launch, loopholes have been discovered, enforcement has proven difficult, and shelters have reported little change in adoption rates, leading animal advocates to wonder whether the law is strong enough to affect the kinds of dramatic changes they're hoping to see.

## Breeding 101

Dave Swinson bought his first ever Australian shepherd decades ago, after he saw a gorgeous Aussie and its owner walking past at a dog show.

Swinson, who is now president of the Santa Maria Kennel Club, was eventually led to another all-Aussie dog show, where he met a breeder he was interested in buying from. Swinson, who has spent his life around dogs and their breeders, knew what questions to ask:

- 1) Have the parent dogs been tested for genetic diseases?
- 2) What conditions are the puppies and parents being raised in?
- 3) Has this breeder been licensed, and is its operation listed on the American Kennel Club site?

This particular breeder checked off all the boxes, and after meeting the breeding dogs, checking out the breeder's property, and answering a number of questions himself, Swinson eventually purchased an Aussie. That was in the late '90s, and Swinson said he and that breeder are still friends.

Toste, on the other hand, hasn't been able to



**BIG CLAIMS IN SMALL CLAIMS:** From left to right: Animal Kingdom Pet Shop owners Michelle Crook, Adam Tipton, and disgruntled customer Jen Toste took their disagreements to small claims court on April 26. Toste filed a suit against Animal Kingdom for \$10,000 in punitive damages after she purchased a dog from the store that was later diagnosed with a hereditary disease.

get ahold of Lola's breeder over the phone. The breeder runs an operation in Missouri, and Toste claims she was only given information on Lola's birthplace after purchasing her.

That's not a good sign, according to Swinson. "When you get a dog from a responsible breeder," Swinson said, "they're your friend for the life of the dog."

He also added that Missouri, in the dog world, "is like puppy mill central." The state has had the highest rate of known operating puppy mills for the past six years, according to the Humane Society of the United States.

Potential buyers should always visit a breeder's home, Swinson said, to meet the parent dogs, see the conditions they're being raised in, and discuss at length what kinds of testing and research should be done into the parents' DNA and family lineage. And genetic testing must be done, he said.

Genetic and health pre-screenings are widely considered best practice by a number of animal organizations, including the American Kennel Club, an organization that works to advance the breeding and exhibiting of purebred dogs. The Kennel Club states on its website that genetic tests play a "huge role" in producing the healthiest possible puppies by alerting breeders to diseases lurking in a parent dog's DNA.

Nearly all reputable breeders screen their potential parent animals for hereditary diseases, Swinson said, and animals that test positive as carriers shouldn't be used in the breeding process.

While diseases like Lola's can be worsened by environmental factors, they can also be easily prevented through these careful breeding practices, according to the Kennel Club.

There are hundreds of screening options, but they can be costly, and Swinson said most mass breeders skimp on health care to max out profits.

The DNA tests Swinson runs on his dogs cost about \$60 each, and he said X-rays on hips and legs usually run for about \$300. Then there are the costs of spaying and neutering, eye checks, chip installments, etc. It's expensive to raise a dog right, and Swinson said most reputable breeders actually lose money on their sales.

"If you decide to breed a dog," he said, "you're not in it for the money. You're looking to better the breed."

Swinson said the Santa Maria Kennel Club's mission, like the American Kennel Club's, is to advance the purebred dog. That makes it a natural enemy of puppy mills.

Still, Swinson opposes California's new state law banning pet stores from selling commercially bred dogs. The Santa Maria Kennel Club hasn't taken a stance on the law,

but Swinson said that in his opinion, it's "just flat out wrong."

While he's all for shelter pets finding homes, those animals can be risky to adopt, and buyers can never be entirely sure what kind of temperament or behavioral tendencies they'll bring with them.

Plus, Swinson said he's not convinced the new law is succeeding, or that it ever will, in reducing the demand for puppy mill dogs. The sheer accessibility of commercially bred puppies combined with the massive profit puppy mills make, he said, make it a nearly impossible problem to fix. Anyone can search for any breed at any age on Google, and a number of breeders with those very puppies readily available will instantly pop up. They're on Craigslist, at swap meets, and in pet stores.

## Has anything changed?

On April 15, Animal Kingdom Pet Shop announced via Facebook that after selling two remaining dogs, it would no longer carry puppies in its stores, which are located in Santa Maria, Grover Beach, and Pismo Beach. In the post, the store cited California's new restrictions on pet store sourcing as the chief reason behind its decision.

"There is a very limited availability of pets who are an appropriate size and health condition to come into our stores," the post reads. "The supply of puppies has been up and down, which has been difficult."

Animal Kingdom's owners declined to comment further in a Facebook message to the *Sun* on April 23.

Dozens of Central Coast residents responded to the post, showing an outpouring of support for the store and its years of providing opportunities for locals to pick out their own puppies.

Kay Hawkins Shishido, an Arroyo Grande resident, wrote that she and her family have enjoyed stopping in at Animal Kingdom stores to visit the cuddly pups on display. Her daughter loved working there as a teen, Shishido wrote, and she and her son bought puppies there years ago, both of which she said are healthy dogs to this day.

San Luis Obispo resident Amanda Tanner, shared photos of her dog, Gizmo, which she purchased from the store five years ago. In the photo, Gizmo is wearing a birthday hat and almost looks to be smiling.

The announcement closely followed an explosive debate over the pet store chain's sourcing of puppies.

After the state's pet store regulations went into effect on Jan. 1, Vandenberg Village resident Christine Collier noticed that

Animal Kingdom was still selling puppies for upwards of \$1,500—shelter dogs usually go for a few hundred. Collier, founder of animal advocacy group No More Pet Store Puppies 805, looked into the store's sourcing shelter, "Bark Adoptions Rescue," and found that the organization is being investigated by counties across California.

In San Diego, stores that listed Bark Adoptions as a sourcing shelter were fined hundreds of dollars per pet after an investigation concluded that the "shelter" hadn't received nonprofit status and was likely a front for mass breeders hoping to get their animals into stores.

San Luis Obispo County Animal Services found similar issues with the dogs from Bark Adoptions available at Animal Kingdom, but Animal Services Manager Eric Anderson said the store was able to provide proof that Bark Adoptions has received 501c3 tax exemption status.

"Our determination is that Animal Kingdom is compliant with the letter of the law," Anderson said.

On March 5, animal rights groups Bailing out Benji and Animal Legal Defense Fund filed a lawsuit against Bark Adoptions and Animal Kingdom, claiming the businesses are circumventing the new state law by selling commercially purebred puppies labeled as rescues. Three days later, Toste filed her suit against Animal Kingdom in small claims court.

While Collier, Toste, and other animal advocates consider Animal Kingdom's decision to stop selling puppies a win, some say the true goal of the law is not being reached.

Sean Hawkins is the executive director of the Santa Maria Valley Humane Society, a nonprofit that takes in and adopts out pets that Santa Barbara County and other shelters don't have room for. Hawkins said 65 percent of the Humane Society's pets are transfers from other shelters, animals that would've otherwise been euthanized.

The Humane Society has a 98 percent "live release rate," meaning nearly all the animals that come into the shelter leave with new owners. It's a number that Hawkins and his staff are proud of, but it's not easy work.

About 1,400 animals come through the shelter each year, Hawkins said, and nearly 100

issues—Hawkins said he's seen it all.

Lola, however, is extremely lucky to have owners willing and able to pay for the treatment, he said. Most families can't afford it, and Hawkins said those pets end up in his shelter. The Humane Society then covers the costs of the animals' medical needs and faces the burden of adopting them out again.

It's a cycle that he said could be prevented by putting an end to commercial breeding entirely. While the new law is encouraging, he doesn't think it's enough.

"It's not working so far," Hawkins said.

Part of the law's intent is to encourage cooperative partnerships between shelters and pet stores. That's the kind of relationship the Humane Society has had with Petco for years, in which Petco makes space for a few of the shelter's adoptable pets, and customers walking through the store can visit and adopt. Shelter staff carry out the adoptions and the pets are only in the stores temporarily, Hawkins said.

Petco partners with thousands of local animal welfare groups across the country to host adoptions in its stores every day, according to a statement the store wrote to the *Sun*. The store helps to find homes for more than 400,000 adoptable animals each year.

The Humane Society has reached out to Animal Kingdom in an effort to establish a similar relationship, but Hawkins said the owners haven't responded.

"The offer is on the table," he said. "We would love to create a program where we could get our shelter pets adopted in a local retail store."

Animal Kingdom has not approached the county's shelters to put those available pets in its stores either, according to Stacy Silva, community outreach coordinator for Santa Barbara County Animal Services. Animal Services is charged with enforcing the new law and inspecting Animal Kingdom, and while Silva said her department is aware of alleged issues with Animal Kingdom's sourcing, various loopholes make it difficult to truly enforce the regulations.

She's heard of stores doing things like giving away a free rabbit with a rabbit starter kit, which usually includes a cage, food, and other items. In that case, Silva said the store isn't technically selling an animal—it's selling a rabbit starter kit—so the rabbit doesn't really have to come from a shelter.

Alleged fake shelters are becoming more common, too, and she said because stores are no longer required to disclose an animal's breeder information—just the source the store used to get the animal—"there's no real way" to confirm that those organizations are legitimate.

## A battle worth fighting

It wasn't necessarily looking good for Toste at her trial in small claims court on April 26.

Despite her heart-wrenching story about Lola—including a detailed description of the various surgeries the dog had been through and would still need, the thousands of dollars in medical bills, and the distress her dog and family had suffered through the treatment process—Animal Kingdom's owners appear to have the law on their side.

After Lola was diagnosed with hip dysplasia, Toste contacted Animal Kingdom owner Adam Tipton and his business associate and fiancée, Michelle Crook. They confirmed the diagnosis with their own vet, and immediately followed the guidelines outlined by California's health and safety code.

Under state law, if a pet is diagnosed with a congenital or hereditary disease within one year of its purchase, the dog is considered unfit for sale. The pet dealer must then allow the

buyer to choose one of the following: return the dog for a full refund of the purchase price and reimbursement for the dog's treatment fees in an amount not to exceed the original purchase price; exchange the dog for a dog of equivalent value and receive reimbursement for medical fees not to exceed the original purchase price; or, if the purchaser chooses to keep the unwell dog, provide reimbursement for reasonable medical fees for the dog in an amount not to exceed 150 percent of the original purchase price.

Toste chose the third option, and Tipton paid Toste a total of nearly \$3,000 in reimbursement for Lola's medical bills. Toste took the check, deposited it, and it cleared.

"She was given the option to return the dog before any additional medical bills were incurred," Tipton said, "and she elected to keep the dog and receive the 150 percent."

The commissioner repeatedly asked Toste why she thought Tipton and Animal Kingdom owed her more and asked for evidence that showed the store owners had done something that would require them to pay further punitive damages.

"What's your authority to then collect additional remedy?" The commissioner asked Toste in court. "Because these are your remedies outlined by statute. And I think everybody understands the anguish that you've gone through. So are you alleging pain and suffering?"

Are you alleging fraud? Duress, in terms of purchasing this dog?"

Toste answered with, "all of the above."

When the commissioner again asked for evidence, Toste alleged that Tipton and Crook have purposely purchased puppies, including Lola, from poor breeders, then knowingly passed off unhealthy dogs to families for profit.

Toste claims she wasn't able to see Lola's breeder information until after she had already purchased the dog, and what she found was shocking. Lola was bred by Kathy Brown, who runs a breeding operation called Peaceful Acres Kennel in Missouri. Toste said in court that through a quick online search, she found a Missouri Department of Agriculture inspection from 2011 that listed a number of code violations found at Brown's kennel.

The inspection report states that Brown had 230 adult and 116 young dogs on site during that inspection, and that portions of dog houses were chewed up, facilities were dirty and dilapidated, outdoor pens were filled with standing water, feeders were caked with wet dog food, and some pens housed three dogs each, where they were not able to sit or stand in a normal position.

When Toste brought her findings up with Crook, Toste said in court that Crook brushed it off as internet misinformation. Later, Toste filed a Public Records Act request with the state of Missouri, and received that same inspection report from 2011, confirming its findings, and several others.

She claims the owners should, and probably did, know the breeder was unethical, and that those practices can lead to unhealthy dogs like Lola.

But Crook said she always researches the breeders Animal Kingdom uses, and since that 2011 inspection, Peaceful Acres has had a clean bill of health.

That's true, according to Missouri Department of Agriculture inspection reports.



**PUPPY PROBLEMS:** Like many puppies on display at Animal Kingdom's Santa Maria location in the Town Center mall, this Havanese/cocker spaniel blend was being sold for more than \$1,500 and was acquired from Bark Adoptions Rescue, according to the information posted in the upper right corner of the window.

Although in 2018 the kennel still had 179 adult dogs on site, it hasn't incurred a single violation since it corrected the issues found in 2011.

Crook said those inspection reports are important to Animal Kingdom because as an operation based in California, "we can't physically go check out any breeder that we would potentially be buying a puppy from."

"The [U.S. Department of Agriculture] does have standards as far as cleanliness and care and housing and that type of stuff," Crook told the commissioner. "So her being 100 percent clear on those for four years seemed like a clear indicator that she was obviously above board."

Crook also said that before Lola was sold, she was checked out by three separate vets as part of routine new-puppy checkups Animal Kingdom does, and they didn't notice any issues at the time. And despite the year warranty on all pets sold at Animal Kingdom, Crook said she doesn't have many customers coming back with complaints like Toste's.

Dogs from Lola's breeder have never had problems with hip dysplasia before, she said.

"We weren't seeing any issues, so there was no reason for us to believe that we were sending out a puppy that would have any issues," Crook said. "We were quite shocked when we got the phone call."

After the hearing, as Tipton and Crook dartered for the exit, Toste and a few supporters gathered outside the courthouse to discuss the case. Toste was relieved the whole thing would be over soon—she'll know in about a month whether she won—and said that even if Tipton and Crook win, she's glad she tried.

Like many potential pet owners, she was completely naive when she bought Lola and didn't have any of the facts she has now. Win or lose, Toste said Animal Kingdom can't take that important information away from her, and she plans to continue spreading it.

"I've learned a valuable lesson," Toste said, "I've raised awareness in my community, and I've put a neon light on what they've been doing." ○

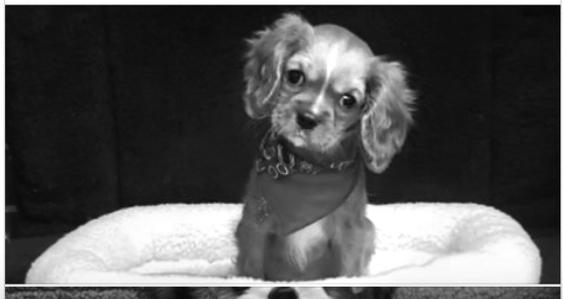
Contact Staff Writer Kasey Bubnash at [kbubnash@santamariasun.com](mailto:kbubnash@santamariasun.com).

SCREENSHOT FROM FACEBOOK



Animal Kingdom Pet Shop Grover Beach  
April 15 at 1:29 PM · 🌐

These two little puppies are our last 2 puppies that we have available. Starting 2019 the California law that pet stores can only source pets through a rescue organization or shelter has been in effect. There is a very limited availability of pets who are an appropriate size and health condition to come into our stores. The supply of puppies has been up and down which has been difficult. When these 2 puppies find new families, we will no longer be carrying puppies. Come down and get one before they are gone. Please call 805-773-4264 for more information. Red bandanna is a female Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and the Yellow bow is a female Lhasa Apso.



**THE END OF AN ERA:** Animal Kingdom Pet Shop announced on April 15 that it would no longer be selling puppies. While local animal rights activists celebrated the decision, several other Central Coast residents took to Facebook to mourn the end of the store's puppy sales.

are adopted out every month. Those numbers haven't changed since the new state law was signed in October 2017 or since it became effective in January. The circumstances haven't changed either.

Many of the Humane Society's pets are animals like Lola, Hawkins said, purchased at Animal Kingdom or from backyard breeders for thousands of dollars and plagued with health issues. Bone deformities, eye problems, skin infections, respiratory problems, hearing

# ENTRY PERIOD IS MAY 2—MAY 20 BY 5 P.M.

# Winning Images

## IT'S TIME FOR OUR 24TH ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST!

CATEGORIES: ANIMALS · ARCHITECTURE · FLORA · LAND/SEASCAPES · PEOPLE · TRAVEL · OPEN · YOUTH

Winners will be published in our annual *Winning Images* issues on June 20, and will be featured in a photo exhibit at SLOMA that runs from June 19–23!

### THE RULES:

Entry divisions are either **ADULT** or **YOUTH** (18 & under)

#### ADULT

- Categories are: **Animals, Architecture, Flora, Land/Seascapes, People, Travel, Open, and Youth**
- Prints may be between 5x7 and 11x14 and **MUST** be mounted on a thick 11x14 black or white board without a mat. Images may be color or b/w. No slides are allowed.
- Photos submitted in previous years are ineligible.
- Each submission must be accompanied by a \$5 check, cash, or money order made out to *New Times*. Multiple entries may be paid for with one check or money order.
- *New Times* is not responsible for damage or loss of entry.
- Submissions are due in the *New Times* office (1010 Marsh Street, SLO, 93401) or the *Sun* office (2540 Skyway Drive, Santa Maria, 93455) **by 5 p.m. on Monday, May 20, 2019.**
- A completed entry form **MUST** be attached to the back of each mounted entry.
- All photos must be the original, creative work of the submitting photographer.
- All photographs must be taken within the boundaries of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties – except submissions to the Travel and Open categories – for which photos may be taken anywhere else.
- Photos can't be returned, but may be picked up at the *New Times* or *Sun* offices between July 1 and 31, 2019.
- Entry in the contest constitutes permission to use the photo in the paper, online, and for display.
- All entrants are asked to submit a high-quality digital file of their image (jpeg format, at least 300 dpi) to [photocontest@newtimeslo.com](mailto:photocontest@newtimeslo.com) or on any portable storage device (e.g.: flash drive or CD). Multiple entries may be put onto the same portable storage device. Winners will be *required* to provide their photo electronically. Please include photographer's name and entry name with each digital submission
- Judges have the right to reassign categories for mislabeled or misfiled photos at their discretion.

#### YOUTH (18 & UNDER)

- This is an **Open** category. Photographs can be of any subject of the entrant's choosing, but must have been taken within the boundaries of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties.
- Entrants must be 18 or younger as of May 31 and enrolled in any school (including a home school) that's not a college. A winner's legal guardian will be required to sign a release form.
- All other rules from the adult categories apply.

All entry money goes toward prizes. Winners will be contacted prior to the opening of the photo exhibit at the SLO Museum of Art on Wednesday, June 19, 2019, where winners will be announced and prizes awarded. SLOMA is located at 1010 Broad Street in SLO. The exhibit runs through June 23, 2019. Winning images will be published in the Thursday, June 20 issues of *New Times* and the *Sun*; and in an online gallery.

Brought to you by:



Kathleen Gerber, 2018



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Entry name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Evening: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Instagram: @ \_\_\_\_\_

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## Online Poll

### How has the surging debate over immigration impacted your life?

- 50% Immigration is a crisis and I'm prepared to support a border wall in whatever way possible.
- 27% I've seen an increase in fear, hatred, and polarization in my community.
- 18% I lost my job/home/neighborhood to illegal immigrants.
- 5% A family member and/or close friend or mine was deported.

22 Votes

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# The befuddled triad

## Without a sales tax increase, Lompoc will continue down a troubled road

**BY JUSTIN RUHGE**

Former Lompoc City Councilmember Jenelle Osborn was elected mayor in the November 2018 election. She has been supporting sound financial budgets for years. However, now the city of Lompoc is floating into financial oblivion with Jim Mosby, Dirk Starbuck, and Victor Vega as Lompoc City Council members. The triad has done untold damage to the future of Lompoc. The problem the city faces is the CalPERS financial disaster that's facing cities all over California. Lompoc's "bill" for CalPERS is more than \$70 million and growing.

Two years ago, in presenting the 2017 city budget, then City Manager Patrick Wiemiller pointed out the city's problems in graphic details. Mosby, Starbuck, and Vega did not grasp the finality of the situation. Then Councilmember Osborne—now mayor—"got it."

The city's choice is to temporarily raise the sales taxes by 1 percent to pay for the \$70 million debt over 10 years, or not raise taxes and put the city into possible bankruptcy. The bill is not going away; we have to pay for it one way or another. You taxpayers may say, "I do not want to pay for someone's retirement," but you will now and in the future whether you like it or not. Your option is to raise the sales tax or eliminate all city services. Before the city was given the CalPERS bill, it was on firm financial ground and had a surplus. Now, that surplus is being spent on paying the interest on that bill.

Councilmember Mosby and his two befuddled followers, Starbuck and Vega, won't listen to city staff. The result is cutting everything—police, fire, parks, the library, and administrative staff. In the meantime, we still have to pay the bill with interest.

Mosby is a volunteer, an amateur who does not know anything about city finances, but he will not listen to the experts employed by the city who are way above his pay grade. He even thinks the staff are overpaid.

From where does Mosby get his budget info? Maybe ex-mayor John Linn. Mosby sits there flailing around with the budget book acting like he knows something and clearly shows he is not willing to deal with the big bill but looks for small cures. We need millions; he looks for thousands. And we need millions right now, not in the distant future. There is no downside to placing a sales tax increase on the ballot. Why is the triad opposing it so deliberately?

In the last budget, the triad cut the police budget drastically while promoting an open-door policy on the sale of dope in Lompoc. Who profits from this weak police policy? The drug dealers and the chaos they bring. One cannot help but wonder whether the triad is being "paid off" by the drug czars.

The Mosby triad's disdain for the city employees—they make "too much" money—led to many experienced employees leaving, including Wiemiller, the city manager who brought up the CalPERS issue and promoted a sales tax. The past police chief submitted his resignation and got a good job elsewhere.

However, a new city manager, Jim Throop, was hired.

A budget review presented on March 9 by the new city manager and Mayor Osborne shows a financial deficit that cannot be solved by cuts. The triad demanded that the city investigate a budget that includes additional cuts of 8.7 percent across

the board. The results of this study were presented to the council on April 17. Again, the results are disastrous for the city services and safety. All the savings are going into the yearly interest that needs to be paid on the CalPERS. Again, more cuts were suggested, and the city manager was sent away to look into more cuts to be presented at a future City Council meeting. The actions of this triad have endangered all citizens.

A sales tax needs to be approved by voters to solve this problem. The triad stopped it in 2017. The next chance is in March 2020. The voters must take action then or suffer the consequences of a bankrupt, collapsed Lompoc from which there will be no return.

The general fund sales tax could generate about \$5 million per year in new funds for the city with which to pay the CalPERS debt and support the city fire and police. It needs a 50 percent plus 1 vote to pass. The five members of the council need to vote to place it on the ballot to save the hundreds of thousands of dollars that it would cost to wait for the November election. The cost to the average citizen will be \$10 per month.

Cities and counties around Lompoc have passed such sales taxes for the same reasons with the active support of their councils. There is no reason why the Lompoc ballot measure would not succeed. The council must work together proactively to make this happen. There is no other option. The citizens of Lompoc should be given a chance to review their options and make a decision on these issues at the ballot box. Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, Guadalupe, and the county have made this decision, why not Lompoc? ○

Justin M. Ruhge is a 25-year resident of Lompoc. Send your thoughts through the editor at [clanham@santamariasun.com](mailto:clanham@santamariasun.com) or write a letter for publication and email it to [letters@santamariasun.com](mailto:letters@santamariasun.com).

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## LETTERS

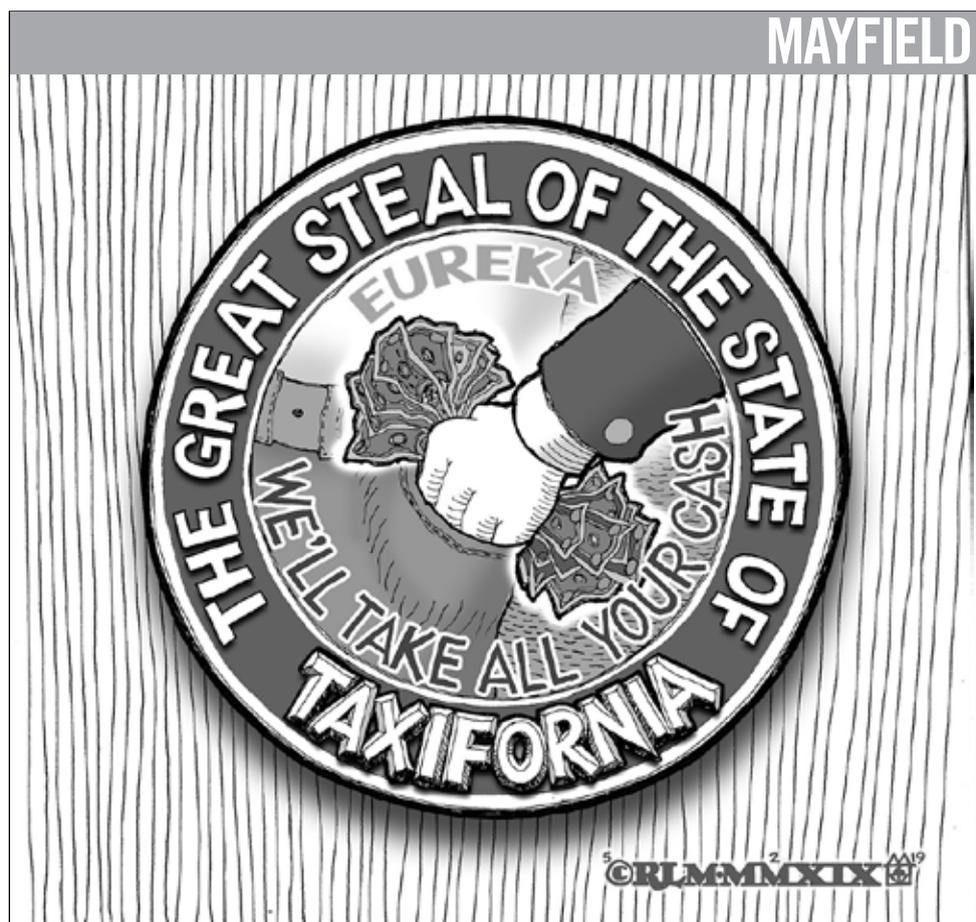
### Earth Day urgency

When will the Central Coast really get going on protecting our climate? Some folks are doing everything they can. Most of us, though, are either picking at climate solutions or pretty much ignoring this catastrophic and looming problem.

We are still burning fossil fuel like it is going out of style. With our mega pickups and SUVs, we are digging our children's environmental graves. We heat and cool our houses with gas and eat tons of meat, thus ensuring a desolate and desperate future for our descendants. Politically, some of our local governments try to push climate-healthy policies such as banning oil well drilling in the Oxnard plain, limiting dangerous oil extraction projects over the Santa Maria groundwater basin, and joining safe energy cooperatives in SLO and Morro Bay cities.

Overwhelmingly, the scientific community urges us to take much more dramatic and persistent action to avoid the worst effects of the growing climate crisis. Local and national solutions abound. We just choose to dither and scoff at these remedies. The Green New Deal stagnates in our Congress as we focus on our comfort and saving money.

Can we sacrifice our current comforts for our community's future? Greta Thunberg, a Swedish teen climate activist who initiated the school strike for climate, said it best in challenging our generation: "Our house is on fire." "I want you to panic." "I want you to feel the fear I feel every day."

Larry Bishop  
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# Spinning and spinning

The puppy-powered drama centering around the **Animal Kingdom Pet Shop** finally maneuvered its way in small claims court. Like a tension-filled episode of *Judge Judy*, **Animal Kingdom** owner **Adam Tipton** and his fiancée **Michelle Crook** faced off against **disgruntled puppy purchaser Jen Toste** over \$10,000 in a Grover Beach courtroom presided over by **Commissioner Leslie Kraut**—who is, by all accounts, much nicer than the daytime television judge.

Funny thing is, it actually could have been an episode of *Judge Judy*, which extended an invite to Toste, who declined to televise the little lawsuit over beloved **Lola**, a puppy Toste purchased from **Animal Kingdom** that ended up with thousands in medical bills over hip dysplasia. But I don't blame you, **Judy**. This is a whopper, complete with puppy advocate activists in an ongoing war with a local pet shop. With just the right jabs from the television star, it could have spun out of control! Cute!

Toste sued the pet shop over claims of irresponsible breeding (or irresponsible sourcing). In the midst of defending itself, the pet kingdom decided it was done selling puppies! Thank god. If I have to listen to anymore drama over those pet fiefdoms, I'm probably just going to lose it.

Meanwhile, we've got **Los Padres ForestWatch** sounding the alarm over what it calls "commercial logging" operations happening in **Los Padres National Forest**. Nevermind the fact that the whole forest is basically a fire hazard and the state allocated millions of dollars to reduce that risk because there has been so much loss due to fires in the last two years. And that loss is more than just property damages. Hundreds of people have died.

The recently announced projects are intended to protect the mountain communities with the highest risk to future fires.

I'm all for a lively discussion about forest health and what projects are "good," but keep the spin out of it. That's what got us into this stupid mess in the first place. I'm pretty sure that the state calling out the Trump administration for talking about fracking on California's public lands isn't going to allow the federal government to clear cut its forests for monetary gain.

It's more beneficial to everyone if you just tell it like it is. This argument simply comes down to this: **ForestWatch** doesn't believe cutting down dead and dying trees in the national forest is going to reduce fire risk and **Cal Fire** does.

I don't know about you guys, but I'm going to have to go with the agency that fights fires.



*The Canary is a spin doctor. Send comments to canary@santamariasun.com.*

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## RADIO STARS

Orcutt Community Theater's production of *Vintage Hitchcock: A Live Radio Play* runs through May 5, at Klein Dance Arts Studio. Performances take place at 7 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. on Sundays. Tickets are \$15. Klein Dance Arts Studio is located at 3546 Skyway Drive, Santa Maria. Call (805) 973-7264 or visit [orcuttcommunitytheater.com](http://orcuttcommunitytheater.com) for more information.

—Caleb Wiseblood

# HOT STUFF

MAY 2 - MAY 9  
2019

PHOTO COURTESY OF ORCUTT COMMUNITY THEATER

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

**BUELLTON BREW FEST** Features beer and food vendors, entertainment, and more. **May 4**, 12-11 p.m. 805-688-7829. [buelltonbrewfest.com](http://buelltonbrewfest.com). River View Park, 151 Sycamore Dr., Buellton.

### SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**37TH ANNUAL SB VINTNERS FESTIVAL** Call or visit site for tickets and more information. **May 4**, 1-4 p.m. 805-688-0881. [sbvintnersweekend.com](http://sbvintnersweekend.com). Rancho Sisquoc Winery, 6600 Foxen Canyon Rd., Santa Maria.

**CASA GRANDE SPRING CRAFT FAIR AND BAKE SALE** Features crafts of every shape and variety with gifts, home décor, and edible delights all created by residents. **May 4**, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Casa Grande, 519 W Taylor St., Santa Maria, 805-868-2119.

**COMMUNITY CLEAN UP DAY** This free event is open to Orcutt and unincorporated Santa Maria Valley residents only. No appointment necessary. Proof of address required with a matching billing notice. **May 4**, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. 805-922-2121. Waste Management Yard, 1850 West Betteravia Road, Santa Maria.

**HAWAIIAN STYLE SENIOR PROM** The Santa Maria Valley Sr. Club and Recreation and Parks present this event with live music from Riptide Big Band. Co-sponsored by Orcutt Academy. Funding by Community Foundation of San Luis Obispo County. **May 5**, 1:30-4 p.m. Free. 805-925-0951 ext 2260. [RiptideBB.com](http://RiptideBB.com). Elwin Mussell Senior Center, 510 Park Ave., Santa Maria.

**SANTA MARIA COIN AND COLLECTIBLES SHOW** Show will have coins, currency, casino chips, beanies, and sports cards. New collectors, experienced collectors, and junior collectors are all invited. Bring coins for free appraisals. **May 4**, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. 805-937-1250. [santamariacoinclub.com](http://santamariacoinclub.com). Elwin Mussell Senior Center, 510 Park Ave., Santa Maria.

**TENNIS FIESTA** A free tennis clinic in memory of Richard "Pancho" Gonzalez for kids ages 6 to 9 (9 to 10:30 a.m.) and 10 to 12 (10:30 a.m. to noon). Racquets provided. **May 4**, 9 a.m.-noon [panchofoundation.org](http://panchofoundation.org). Atkinson Park, 1000 N. Railroad Ave., Santa Maria.

**THIRD ANNUAL COMMUNITY TOWN HALL MEETING** Teens, parents, counselors, experts, and community members will provide a Q&A to discuss current substance use trends and provide tips. **May 8**, 5:30-8 p.m. Free. 805-925-8860. [cadasb.org/townhall/](http://cadasb.org/townhall/). The Boys and Girls Clubs of Santa Maria

Valley, 901 N. Railroad Ave., Santa Maria.

### SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**CINCO DE MAYO** Enjoy a Cinco de Mayo celebration at Rancho Nipomo BBQ and Gold Rush Cantina. Features live dance music from August. **May 5**, 11:30 a.m.-7 p.m. \$15. [my805tix.com](http://my805tix.com). Rancho Nipomo BBQ, 108 Cuyama Ln., Nipomo, 805-925-3500.

**CRAFT PSYCHIC FAIRE** The largest gathering of professional psychics in SLO County under one roof. **May 4**, 2-6 p.m. and **May 5**, 2-6 p.m. 805-489-2432. Halcyon Store Post Office, 936 S. Halcyon Rd., Arroyo Grande.

**MARCH FOR SCIENCE: SLO** A learning fair with educational opportunities hosted by community groups. Guest speakers include Mayor Heidi Harmon and Cal Poly's Dr. Ben Ruttenberg. **May 4**, 12-3 p.m. Free. [marchforscienceslo.weebly.com](http://marchforscienceslo.weebly.com). Emerson Park, 1341 Nipomo St., Nipomo.

## FUNDRAISERS

### SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**STAND STRONG AND CELEBRATE** 40th anniversary fundraiser in '80s style. Features arcade games, music by Brass Mash and the Molly Ringwald Project, Talley wine, food, auctions and more. **May 4**, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. \$100. 805-781-6401. [standstrongnow.org/events/](http://standstrongnow.org/events/). Talley Vineyards, 3031 Lopez Dr., Arroyo Grande.

### SAN LUIS OBISPO

**MASQUERADE FASHION SHOW** Enjoy appetizers and a lively evening supporting San Luis Obispo High School's FCCLA Chapter. See this season's latest fashions from the boutiques of downtown SLO. **May 11**, 5-7 p.m. \$15 advance; \$20 at the door. King David's Masonic Lodge, 859 Marsh St., San Luis Obispo, 805-545-5681.

**SUBMIT YOUR EVENTS**

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

## ARTS

### CLASSES & WORKSHOPS

#### 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, 6:30-8:30 p.m. \$36 for 4-week session. 805-928-7799. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

#### BASIC WATERCOLOR

No experience required. Tuesdays, 1-3 p.m. \$8. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

#### BEADING WORKSHOP

Thursdays, noon oasiorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

#### 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. 805-680-5695. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt.

#### CREATIVE ART TUESDAYS

Meet other artists and support and critique others' works. Tuesdays, 1-4 p.m. \$1. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

#### EVERYBODY CAN DANCE

Ballet workout classes for teens and adults. Tuesdays, 6 p.m. [everybodycandance.webs.com](http://everybodycandance.webs.com). Everybody Can Dance, 628 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria, 805-937-6753.

#### INDIVIDUAL PAINTERS

No instructor. Fridays, 9 a.m.-noon \$1. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

### SAN LUIS OBISPO

#### GOING SOLAR WORKSHOP WITH SUNWORK.ORG

Homeowners can learn about the basics of rooftop solar energy in this free seminar. **May 4**, 12:30-2 p.m.

## INDEX

Special Events .....	[17]
Arts .....	[17]
Culture & Lifestyle.....	[20]
Food & Drink.....	[20]
Music .....	[22]

Free. 805-229-1250. [sunwork.org/events.html](http://sunwork.org/events.html). French Hospital Copeland Health Education Pavilion, 3rd Floor, 1911 Johnson Ave, San Luis Obispo.

#### PAINTING IN WATERCOLOR WITH STRONG VALUES

Learn how to create relationships with strong values. No prior experience is necessary. Paper is supplied. Students supply their own paint and brushes. **May 9**, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. and **May 11**, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. \$45 per session; \$150 for 5 consecutive classes. 805-688-9977. [artcentralslo.wordpress.com/workshops-events/](http://artcentralslo.wordpress.com/workshops-events/). Art Central, 1329 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo.

#### VOLUNTEER SOLAR INSTALLER ORIENTATION WITH SUNWORK.ORG

Learn the basics of installing rooftop solar energy systems by volunteering with SunWork. **May 4**, 9 a.m.-noon Free. 805-229-1250. [sunwork.org/events.html](http://sunwork.org/events.html). French Hospital Copeland Health Education Pavilion, 3rd Floor, 1911 Johnson Ave, San Luis Obispo.

## SPECIAL ART EVENTS

### SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**ARTIST RECEPTION: JERI YOUNG** Young's art will be on display at the office through June 27. Attendees of this reception can meet Young and find out about her process and artistic vision. **May 2**, 4-6 p.m. Ameriprise Financial, 2605 S Miller St., Suite 104, 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](http://valleygallery.org). Valley Art Gallery, 125 W. Clark Ave., Orcutt.

**POETRY NIGHT AT CORE WINERY** Monthly poetry group with two featured poets and open readings. Check CORE Winery Facebook page for details or schedule changes. Second Saturday of every month, 7:30 p.m. Free. 805-937-1600. [corewine.com](http://corewine.com). CORE Winery, 105 W Clark Ave., Orcutt.

### SAN LUIS OBISPO

**TOUR THE NORTON SIMON MUSEUM** Join SLOMA for a day trip to the Norton Simon Museum. **May 4** \$115-\$130. 805-543-8562. [sloma.org/events/trips/](http://sloma.org/events/trips/). San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

## EXHIBITS

### SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

ART EXHIBIT AND ARTIST RECEPTION: ANIMAL

ARTS continued page 18



# DISCOVER Our Ocean's WONDERS at the Sea Center!

Touch sharks, rays, sea stars, and anemones. Encounter mesmerizing jellies and an entrancing octopus! Get hands-on with scientific equipment to sample sea life from our Wet Deck.



Open Daily 10:00 AM–5:00 PM  
211 Stearns Wharf  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
805-962-2526 [sbnature.org/seacenter](http://sbnature.org/seacenter)

ARTS from page 17

**KINGDOM** Mondays-Sundays, 2-4 p.m. through May 31 Free. 805-688-7517. [GalleryLosOlivos.com](http://GalleryLosOlivos.com). Gallery Los Olivos, 2920 Grand Ave., Los Olivos.

**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. \$5. 805-686-8315. [wildlingmuseum.org](http://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 includes an artist reception. ongoing Ameriprise Financial, 2605 S Miller St., Suite 104, Santa Maria.

**SANTA BARBARA PRINTMAKERS JURIED EXHIBITION** ongoing [smartsouncil.org](http://smartsouncil.org). Betteravia Gallery, 511 E. Lakeside Parkway, Santa Maria.

## SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**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/](http://puffersofpismo.com/).

**NANCY HAGLUND PHOTO EXHIBITION** Through May 5, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. \$5 per person.. 805-929-5679.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EXPLORE LOMPOC



### SHEEP THRILLS

*Sheep Shear Mission Life Day takes place at La Purisima Mission in Lompoc on May 4, at 11 a.m. Guests of all ages can watch the mission sheep get their annual shearing and take part in wool production activities. Admission is \$6. Call (805) 733-3713 or visit [lapurisimamission.org](http://lapurisimamission.org) for more information.*

—C.W.

entries in the Adult and Junior categories. ongoing Free. 805-686-8315. [wildlingmuseum.org/photography-competition/](http://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. [pavlovgallery.com](http://pavlovgallery.com). Pavlov Art Gallery, 1608 Copenhagen Dr., Ste C, Solvang.

**RAY STRONG: A COLLECTOR'S PASSION** One collector, David Parker, is sharing his Ray Strong paintings as well as his stories of how he built his collection of over thirty pieces. Mondays, Wednesdays-Sundays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. through July 8 \$5. 805-686-8315. [wildlingmuseum.org/news/ray-strong-2019-art-exhibit](http://wildlingmuseum.org/news/ray-strong-2019-art-exhibit). Wildling Museum of Art and Nature, 1511-B Mission Dr., Solvang.

**THE SANTA YNEZ VALLEY ARTS ASSOCIATION: SECOND SATURDAY ARTISANS** Applications to be a featured artist will be accepted throughout the series. Second Saturday of every month, 12-5 p.m. Free. 805-688-7338. [santaynezvalleyarts.org](http://santaynezvalleyarts.org). Santa Ynez Valley Grange Hall, 2374 Alamo Pintado, Los Olivos.

DanaAdobe.org. DANA Adobe Cultural Center, 671 S. Oakglen Ave., Nipomo.

## CALLS FOR ARTISTS

### SAN LUIS OBISPO

**CALL FOR ARTISTS: BRUSHSTROKES 2019** A non-themed state-wide juried exhibition at SLOMA. Juror: Jerry McLaughlin. Visit site for details. Mondays-Sundays. through May 15 \$35 for up to two paintings. 805-543-8562. [sloma.org](http://sloma.org). San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

**CALL FOR ARTISTS: AWAKEN SLO COUNTY STUDENTS** A year-long program celebrating art and community expressed through the imaginative creations of our county's students. Three student exhibitions will be displayed at SLOMA throughout the year. Through May 12 Free. 805-543-8562. [sloma.org](http://sloma.org). San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, 1010 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.



## STAGE

### SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**ALLAN HANCOCK FINE ARTS STUDENT SHOW** The gallery is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 7:45 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Through May 30 Ann Foxworthy Gallery, 800 S. College Dr., Santa Maria, 805-922-6966, Ext. 3252, [hancockcollege.edu/gallery/](http://hancockcollege.edu/gallery/).

**FEATURED ARTISTS: MAY, JUNE, JULY, AUGUST** The featured artists at the gallery during the months of May, June, July, and August are TBA. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. and Tuesdays-Fridays, 12-6 p.m. through Sept. 1 Valley Art Gallery, 125 W. Clark Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-2278, [valleygallery.org](http://valleygallery.org).

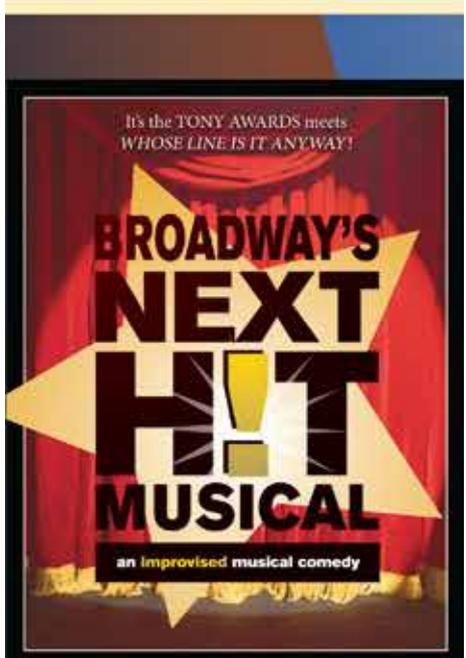
**JERI YOUNG: FEATURED ARTIST** This exhibit is part of an ongoing series of shows to spotlight local art and artists. Through June 27 Ameriprise Financial, 2605 S Miller St., Suite 104, Santa Maria.

**LOCAL ART AND ARTISTS: CONTINUING SERIES** An ongoing series of shows, facilitated by advisor Terry Dworaczyk, to spotlight local art and artists. Each

**VINTAGE HITCHCOCK: A LIVE RADIO PLAY** The story centers on a live broadcast in 1946 honoring 3 Alfred Hitchcock films: *The Lodger*, *Sabotage*, and *The 39 Steps*. Actors perform multiple roles. **May 3**, 7-9:30 p.m., **May 4**, 7-9:30 p.m. and **May 5**, 1:30-3:30 p.m. \$15. 805-937-3738. [orcuttcommunitytheater.com](http://orcuttcommunitytheater.com). It's 1946 and a live production is being broadcast from WBF Radio in Manhattan honoring three classic films by Alfred Hitchcock. Actors all perform multiple roles, with live music and sound effects. **May 3**, 7-9:30 p.m., **May 4**, 7-9:30 p.m. and **May 5**, 2-4:30 p.m. \$15. 805-973-7264. [orcuttcommunitytheater.com](http://orcuttcommunitytheater.com). Orcutt Community Theater (Klein Dance Arts), 3546 Skyway Dr, Bldg. 1, Suite A, Orcutt.

**MARIAN THEATRE: A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO LOVE AND MURDER** Book and lyrics by Robert L. Freedman. Music and lyrics by Steven Lutvak. Through May 12 Marian Theatre, 800 S. College Dr., Santa Maria, 805-928-7731, [pcpa.org](http://pcpa.org).

ARTS continued page 20



Sat, May 4  
at 7:30pm

Best of The  
San Francisco  
Stand-Up  
Comedy  
Competition



Sat, May 11  
at 7:30pm

\*This Show May Contain Adult Content\*

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MAY  
10

8 PM

FRIDAY

MAY  
17

8 PM



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GOLDEN BOYS  
STARRING: FRANKIE AVALON,  
FABIAN & BOBBY RYDELL

THU & FRI

MAY  
23 & 24

8 PM



REGINE VELASQUEZ-  
ALCASID AND OGIE  
ALCASID

FRIDAY

JUNE  
7

8 PM



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## SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**BROADWAY'S NEXT HIT MUSICAL** An unscripted theatrical awards show and stage musical with a cast of experienced improv comedians and musicians. **May 4**, 7:30-9:30 p.m. \$39-\$48. 805-489-9444. clarkcenter.org. Clark Center for the Performing Arts, 487 Fair Oaks Ave., Arroyo Grande.

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

### CLUBS & MEETINGS

## SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**ANIME CLUB FOR TEENS** Meet once a month to watch anime, discuss manga, try Japanese snacks, or do an activity. **May 10**, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**BOARD OF LIBRARY TEENS (BOLT)** Teens have the opportunity to plan upcoming teen events and make changes in the teen zone. **May 6**, 5-6 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**COFFEE AND CONVERSATION** Tuesdays, 1 p.m. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave.,

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. 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. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

**KNITTING AND CROCHETING** Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. oasisorcutt.org. Oasis Senior Center, 420 Soares Ave., Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

### MIND & BODY

## SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**ADULT COLORING PROGRAM** All materials will be provided. **May 8**, 1-2:30 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**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/.

**FIT CLUB** A club to energize both body and soul. Pre and post workout drinks will be available. Mondays-Fridays, 9 a.m. Balance Nutrition, 1975 S. Broadway, Ste. E, Santa Maria.

**MEDITATION GROUP** Features a 20 minute meditation followed by a brief discussion. Meetings take place in the sanctuary. All are welcome. Thursdays, 11 a.m.-noon. Free. 805-937-3025. Unity Chapel of Light Church, 1165 Stubblefield Rd., Orcutt, unitysantamaria.net/.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHUMASH CASINO RESORT



### GREATEST VICE

Comedian, actor, and fashion guru *Vice Ganda* will perform a variety show at the Chumash Casino Resort in Santa Ynez on May 3, at 8 p.m. Tickets range from \$69 to \$99. The show takes place in the casino's Samala Showroom. Call (800) 248-6274 or visit [chumashecasino.com](http://chumashecasino.com) for tickets or more information.

—C.W.

Orcutt, 805-937-9750.

**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.

### SUPPORT GROUPS

## SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**TRAUMA 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

**WISDOM READINGS** AnnKathleen is available every day by appointment for Wisdom Readings with Tarot and Oracle cards. Gift certificates available. ongoing \$95-\$160. 805-598-1509. divining.weebly.com. Divine Inspiration, 947 E Orange St, Santa Maria.

### OUTDOORS

## SAN LUIS OBISPO

**AUDUBON BIRD WALK** This engaging walk through the SLO Botanical Garden and the surrounding environs will get guests acquainted with the wide variety of feathered friends found in SLO County. People of any birding skill level are welcome. **May 4**, 9-11 a.m. \$5-\$10. 805-541-1400. slobg.org. San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, 3450 Dairy Creek Rd., San Luis Obispo.

**SECOND ANNUAL SEAS TO TREES DAY** Features 8 volunteer projects all throughout SLO County from Cambria to Grover Beach. **May 4**, 9 a.m.-noon. Free. 805-544-1777. bit.ly/seastotrees2. SLO County, Countywide, San Luis Obispo.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BUELLTON BREW FEST

### MAY THE FOURTH BE WITH BREW

The eighth annual Buellton Brew Fest takes place at River View Park on May 4, from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The festival features more than 50 breweries and wineries, food trucks, games, and live entertainment. General admission is \$45 and includes all tastings. Visit [discoverbuellton.com](http://discoverbuellton.com) for more information.

—C.W.

### SPORTS

## SAN LUIS OBISPO

**CAL POLY BASEBALL VS. HAWAII** **May 3**, 6 p.m. gopoly.com/. **May 4**, 4 p.m. gopoly.com/. For Youth Day, all kids ages 13 and under get free admission and can run the bases and get autographs from the Mustangs after the game. **May 5**, 1 p.m. gopoly.com/. Baggett Stadium, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

**CAL POLY BASEBALL VS. PEPPERDINE** **May 7**, 6 p.m. \$5. gopoly.com/. Baggett Stadium, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

**CAL POLY SOFTBALL VS. UCSB** The first 100 attendees to this Senior Day game will get a free Cal Poly visor. **May 11**, 1 p.m. Free. Bob Janssen Field, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

**CAL POLY SOFTBALL VS. UCSB (DH)** The Mustangs take on UCSB in a doubleheader. **May 10**, 3 p.m. Free. Bob Janssen Field, 1 Grand Ave., San Luis Obispo, 805-756-7297.

### KIDS & FAMILY

## SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**FREE COMIC BOOK DAY/STAR WARS DAY** Special comic themed activities offered throughout the event. Guests can choose up to two free comics to take home for your own collection (while supplies last). **May 4**, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. 805-925-0994. Santa Maria Public Library, 421 S. McClelland St., Santa Maria.

**KTS ALL STAR GYMNASTICS: NINJA WARRIOR CLASSES** Bring out your inner warrior with kids parkour classes in a safe setting. For ages 5 and up. Wednesdays, Fridays, 5:30 & 6:30 p.m. 805-349-7575. Santa Maria Town Center, 142 Town Center East, 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.

### SPIRITUAL

## SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**FREE WOMEN'S EXERCISE CLASS** Open to all women regardless of denomination. Class includes stretching, aerobics, and floor exercises while listening to uplifting, spiritual music. Free childcare offered on site. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 9-10 a.m. Free. 805-922-1919. cornerstonesm.org. Cornerstone Church, 1026 E Sierra Madre Ave., Santa Maria.

**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. ChurnTree: Books and Gifts, 722 E Main St., Santa Maria.



### VOLUNTEERS

## SAN LUIS OBISPO

**FELINE NETWORK OF THE CENTRAL COAST** Seeking volunteers to provide foster homes for foster kittens or cats with special needs. The Feline Network pays for food, litter, and any medications needed. Volunteers also needed to help with humanely trapping and transporting feral cats for spay/neuter. ongoing 805-549-9228. felinenetwork.org. San Luis Obispo, Citywide, SLO.

#### HOSPICE SLO COUNTY VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Preregistration required. In-Home Volunteers assist individuals with a life-limiting illness and their families by providing caregiver respite, practical assistance, emotional support, companionship, and comfort. Thursdays, 1-6 p.m. Free. 805-544-2266. hospiceslo.org/workshops. Hospice SLO County, 1304 Pacific St., San Luis Obispo.

**MEALS ON WHEELS** Meals on Wheels, San Luis Obispo, needs noon time drivers. Must have own car to deliver prepared meals. Mondays-Fridays, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. 805-235-8870. San Luis Obispo, Citywide, SLO.

**SLO REP SEEKING VOLUNTEER BARTENDERS** Must be 21 or over. All volunteers receive complimentary tickets. Email [volunteer@slorep.org](mailto:volunteer@slorep.org) for more info. ongoing slorep.org. San Luis Obispo Repertory Theatre, 888 Morro St., San Luis Obispo, 805-786-2440.

## NORTH COAST SLO COUNTY

**ART CENTER MORRO BAY** Seeking volunteers to be docents and/or organize art programs. Mondays-Sundays, 12-4 p.m. Free. 805-772-2504. artcentermorrobay.org. Art Center Morro Bay, 835 Main St., Morro Bay.

## FOOD & DRINK

### FARMERS MARKETS

## LOMPOC/VANDENBERG

**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.

## SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**GROWING GROUNDS FARM STAND** Produce, flowers, and other plants from the nursery are available for purchase. Second Saturday of every month, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. 805-934-2182. Growing Grounds Farm, 820 W. Foster Rd., Santa Maria, t-mha.org.

**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, 12:25 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,

FOOD &amp; DRINK continued page 21

11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. nipomofarmersmarket.com/. Nipomo Farmers Market, Via Concha Road, Nipomo.

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

**FARMERS MARKET** Farmers Market in SLO is the largest Farmers Market in California. Thursdays, 6:10-9 p.m. Downtown SLO, Higuera St., San Luis Obispo.

**SLO FARMERS MARKET** Hosts over 60 vendors. Saturdays, 8-10:45 a.m. World Market Parking Lot, 2650 Main St., San Luis Obispo.

**SLO GUILD TUESDAY FARMERS' MARKET** Tuesdays, 2-5 p.m. through Dec. 31 Free. 805-762-4688. facebook.com/TuesdayFarmersMarketSLOGuildHall/. SLO Guild Hall, 2880 Broad St., San Luis Obispo.

**FESTIVALS**

**NORTH SLO COUNTY**

**SEVENTH ANNUAL TEMPLETON WINE FESTIVAL** Some of the Central Coast's best wineries, breweries, distilleries, and cider producers will be pouring unlimited tastes. Features live music, food, and more. **May 11**, 1-5 p.m. \$35. 805-434-1789. templetonwinefestival.com. Templeton Park, 550 Crocker St., Templeton.

**EVENTS**

**SANTA YNEZ VALLEY**

**ROBLAR WINE TASTINGS** Potting Shed and Barrel Room available to members. ongoing, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. 805-686-2603. roblarwinery.com. Roblar Winery, 3010 Roblar Ave., Santa Ynez.

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

**WINE TASTING AT KALYRA** Offering varietals from all over the world. Saturdays, Sundays, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Mondays-Fridays, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. 805-693-8864. kalyrawinery.com. Kalyra Winery, 343 N. Refugio Road, Santa Ynez.

**LOMPOC/VANDENBERG**

**LOMPOC WINE FACTORY TASTINGS** This tasting room highlights community-based winemaking. Features

various member winemakers. Mondays, Wednesdays-Saturdays, 12-4 p.m. 805-243-8398. lompocwinefactory.com. Lompoc Wine Factory, 321 N. D St., Lompoc.

**TASTING AT MONTEMAR WINES** Offering handcrafted wines, charcuterie, and cheeses. Fridays-Sundays, 12-5 p.m. 805-735-5000. facebook.com/montemarwines. Montemar Wines, 1501 E. Chestnut Ave., Lompoc.

**WINE TASTING AT FLYING GOAT CELLARS** This winery specializes in Pinot Noir and sparkling wine. Mondays, Thursdays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. 805-736-9032. flyinggoatcellars.com. Flying Goat Cellars, 1520 Chestnut Court, Lompoc.

**SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS**

**END OF ERA: AU BON CLIMAT-VERDAD-LINDQUIST FAMILY WINERY OPEN HOUSE** Features more than 60 wines to taste from. Includes hot luncheon and commemorative glass. No reservations needed. 21 years or over only. **May 5**, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Varies. 805-937-9801. aubonclimat.com/About-Us/Events/Open-House. Clendenen Lindquist Vintners, 4665 Santa Maria Mesa Road, Santa Maria.

**SOUTH COAST SLO COUNTY**

**MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH** Features fine breakfast foods, drinks, live music, and a tour of the historic site. **May 11**, 11 a.m.-2:45 p.m. \$27-\$54. my805tix.com. Point San Luis Lighthouse, 1 Lighthouse Rd., Avila Beach.

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

**THE BLACK GLASS CHALLENGE AT CROMA VERA** Test your blind tasting skills. Winners get their names listed on the front board and posted to social media. Fridays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. \$12. 805-946-1685. cromavera.com/events/. Croma Vera Wines, 3592 Broad St., Ste. 106, San Luis Obispo.

**FRIDAY NIGHT PINT NIGHT** Buy logo glass for \$8 and bring it in every Friday for \$2 off refills. Wine offered at happy hour pricing. Fridays, 4-10 p.m. Free. 805-868-7133. 7sistersbrewing.com/events-page. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo.

**GEEKS WHO DRINK PUB QUIZ** 8 rounds of audio, visual, and live hosted trivia with prizes. Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Free. 805-868-7133. 7SistersBrewing.com. 7Sisters Brewing Company, 181 Tank Farm Rd. Suite 110, San Luis Obispo.

**MONTHLY PANCAKE BREAKFAST** Enjoy pancakes, eggs, bacon, and juice and meet new and old friends.



**MANGA MANIA**

Local manga illustrator Irene Flores hosts a drawing demonstration for teens at the Santa Maria Public Library on May 3, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Flores will share tips on sketching manga characters and becoming a professional artist. Admission is free. Call (805) 925-0994 or email libraryyouth@cityofsantamaria.org for more info.

—C.W.

Proceeds support local non-profits like Edna4H, RISE SLO, and the hall's Raise the Solar Roof project. First Sunday of every month, 8-11 a.m. through Dec. 2 \$7. 805-543-0639. SLO Guild Hall, 2880 Broad St., San Luis Obispo, sloguildhall.com.

**SLO PRODUCE EXCHANGE** Gathering twice a month for neighbors to exchange excess fruit, veggies, baked goods, plants, crafts, etc. First Saturday of every month, 10-10:30 a.m. Free. 818-489-7085. Natural Food Co-op, 2494 Victoria Ave., San Luis Obispo.

**TASTE OF SLO: WALKING FOOD TOUR** Visit five different destinations in downtown SLO per tour. All food and drinks are included. Mondays, Saturdays,

1-4 p.m. through Sept. 5 \$85. 320-420-9853. tasteofslowalkingfoodtour.com. Downtown SLO, Higuera St., San Luis Obispo.

**TRIVIA** Hosted by Brain Stew Trivia. German food from Beda's Biergarten available 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesdays, 7-9 p.m. Bang The Drum Brewery, 950 Orcutt Road, San Luis Obispo, 242-8372, bangthedrumbrewery.com/.

**WINE TASTING AT CROMA VERA** Wines also available by the glass and bottle. Club members enjoy special pricing and exclusive benefits. Mondays, Fridays-Sundays, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. \$14. 805-946-1685. cromavera.com/tastingroom/. Croma Vera Wines, 3592 Broad St., Ste. 106, San Luis Obispo. ○

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PHOTO COURTESY OF BETH ARMSHEIMER

## Live Music

## SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

**THE ALASTAIR GREENE BAND LIVE** Food and drinks available for purchase. No outside food or drinks allowed. **May 5**, 4:30 p.m. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

**BACK POCKET LIVE** Food and drinks available for purchase. No outside food or drinks allowed. **May 4**, 5-8 p.m. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

**BEAR REDELL LIVE** **May 4**, 1-5 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

**CHEYENNE SKYE LIVE** Soulful music inspired by Patsy Cline and others. Food and drinks available for purchase. No outside food or drinks allowed. **May 10**, 6-9 p.m. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

**GREEN FLAG SUMMER LIVE** Food and drinks available for purchase. No outside food or drinks allowed. **May 4**, 1-4 p.m. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

**THE JIMI NELSON BAND LIVE** **May 11**, 8-11 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

**THE JUST DAVE BAND LIVE** **May 4**, 8 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

**LIV WATERS LIVE** **May 5**, 1-5 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

**THE MAC TALLEY TRIP LIVE** Food and drinks available for purchase. No outside food or drinks allowed. **May 11**, 5-8 p.m. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

**MELISSA REID AND MOONRIDGE LIVE** **May 11**, 8-11 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

**NATE LATTA LIVE** **May 12**, 1-5 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, mavericksaloon.org.

**ODDLY STRAIGHT LIVE** Food and drinks available for purchase. No outside food or drinks allowed. **May 3**, 6 p.m. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

**THE SALT MARTIANS LIVE** A bluegrass group. Food and drinks available for purchase. No outside food or drinks allowed. **May 11**, 1-4 p.m. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html.

**TALES FROM THE TAVERN: MARSHALL CRENSHAW AND TOM FREUND LIVE** **May 8**, 7 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa

## Sound advice

Pop, soul, and jazz artist Jineanne Coderre celebrates first EP at Presqu'ile Winery

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

Overcoming self-doubt is an obstacle local singer/songwriter **Jineanne Coderre** explores in her first EP *Listen*, which becomes available on iTunes, Spotify, Amazon Music, Google Play, and other digital outlets on **Friday, May 3**. Coderre performs a show the same day at Presqu'ile Winery in Santa Maria to celebrate the long-awaited release. And in a way, she's also celebrating the defeat of her own self-doubt.

It's a problem that hasn't always been at the forefront of her life, more like an occasional rain cloud or shadow subtly following her around. During high school, Coderre first started performing in local cover bands. During this time, the young singer also auditioned for a few television shows here and there, specifically of the singing competition and talent show varieties. The rejections disappointed her, but Coderre remained determined to keep trying, even if it meant performing at a slower pace to make room for a more "promising" career.

Flash forward to the present: Coderre works full-time as a dental hygienist but still finds ample time to perform often, usually playing at Central Coast wineries by herself or with others. For the past year and a half, Coderre has been slowly crafting the aforementioned EP, recording each of its six songs in a professional studio with help from local producer



**LISTEN CAREFULLY:** Local singer/songwriter Jineanne Coderre performs in celebration of her first EP at Presqu'ile Winery on Friday, May 3.

Damon Castillo. The songs themselves, full of lyrics embracing self-love over discouragement, had been stored away in Coderre's mind for quite some time, she explained.

"I've probably had these songs in my back pocket for about three or four years and finally just got around to recording it," Coderre told the *Sun*. "It took a while because I originally tried to do a home studio and figure out everything on my own."

Things sped up for Coderre after she enlisted Castillo, who she met through a mutual friend and fellow performer. Castillo also helped Coderre put together a music video for one of the EP's songs, "Cool," which can be viewed on YouTube. A musician as well as a producer, Castillo will also be opening for Coderre at the May 3 performance, with his group **The Damon Castillo Band**.

Still, in terms of other musicians aspiring to record their own material, Coderre realizes there is a vast amount of routes to choose from, and not all of them include the full studio experience.

"There are so many avenues to go about recording and putting out your music. I see so many local musicians killing it out there," Coderre said. "I don't really think there is a wrong way. Just do what you love to do, and the rest will fall into place."

The Presqu'ile Winery show starts at 5 p.m. with a mingle hour. Castillo's band takes the stage at 6 p.m., followed by Coderre at 7 p.m. Food from First and Oak will be available for purchase. Admission to the show is free, and all ages are welcome. Visit [jineannesmusic.com](http://jineannesmusic.com) for more information.

## Go big or go home

Don't you just wish you could go back? Everyone's got a favorite era, right? For me, it's a tie between the one I was born into and one nobody was born into—the 1990s and the Cretaceous period, respectively. If your favorite—at least in terms of music preference—happens to be between 1930 and 1980 though, just know you don't always need a time machine to get your kicks. So why not save some gas, leave the DeLorean in the garage, and hoverboard on over to the Elwin Mussell Senior Center in Santa Maria for the **Riptide Big Band's** performance on **Sunday, May 5**, from 1:30 to 4 p.m.

Riptide is made up of trumpeters, trombonists, saxophonists, and other musicians from all over the Central Coast and is best known for covering



**DOWN TO THE RIPTIDE:** The Riptide Big Band performs at the Elwin Mussell Senior Center on Sunday, May 5.



**STRAIGHT UP:** Classic rock and Americana duo Oddly Straight performs at the Cold Spring Tavern on Friday, May 3.

MUSIC LISTINGS continued page 24

LOCAL NOTES continued page 24

# 55 Fiction

## Enter Our Annual 55 Fiction Contest!

A brief story, fifty-five words or less,  
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Entries are due by 5pm on Monday, June 10, 2019.

Winners will be published in our July 11, 2019 publications.

*New Times*

For more details: [bit.ly/55Fiction](http://bit.ly/55Fiction)

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**Studio Performances**  
FRIDAY-SUNDAY, MAY 3-5  
Ballet Theatre, SLO



**Flavors of SLO**  
SATURDAY, MAY 4  
Mission Plaza



**Cinco de Mayo**  
SUNDAY, MAY 5  
Rancho Nipomo  
BBQ & Gold Rush Cantina



**Happy To Make Your Acquaintance**  
FRIDAY & SATURDAY, MAY 3 & 4  
Cambria Center for the Arts Theatre



**Silent Sky**  
MAY 3-26  
By the Sea Productions



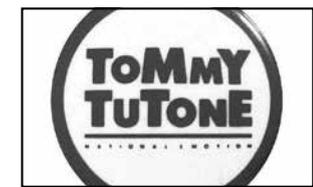
**May Brewasana**  
SUNDAY, MAY 5  
7Sisters Brewing Co.



**Sugar Daddy Swing Kings**  
FRIDAY, MAY 10  
SLO Veterans Hall



**Pop-Up Dinner: Sally Loo's and Danior Kitchen, Spanish Tapas**  
FRIDAY, MAY 10  
Sally Loo's



**Tommy TuTone**  
FRIDAY, MAY 10  
Maverick Saloon



**HERBS 101 Workshop**  
FRIDAY, MAY 10  
Studios on the Park



**Mother's Day Brunch at the Lighthouse**  
SATURDAY, MAY 11  
Point San Luis Lighthouse



**Mother's Day Weaving Workshop**  
SATURDAY, MAY 11  
Talley Vineyards



**Tyler Blanton Group**  
SATURDAY, MAY 11  
Unity Concert Hall



**Summer Concerts at Peter Strauss Ranch Season Tickets**  
MAY 12-SEP 14 2019  
Presented by Tiny Porch Concerts



**Leftover Cuties with Honey Whiskey Trio**  
SUNDAY, MAY 12  
Tiny Porch Concerts



**Tribute to Judy Collins**  
TUESDAY, MAY 14  
Morro Bay Wine Seller



**Teen Monologues**  
TUESDAY, MAY 14  
SLO Repertory Theatre

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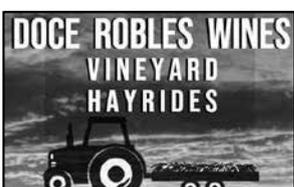
Get your tickets online or at **Boo Boo Records**, the official Box Office for My805Tix events!  
Boo Boo's is located at 978 Monterey Street in SLO.  
Call them at 805-541-0657.



**LED ZEP AGAIN**  
THURSDAY, MAY 16  
Maverick Saloon



**Vocal Flight - Central Coast Youth Chorus**  
SAT & SUN, MAY 18-19  
United Methodist Church



**Doce Robles Wines Vineyard Hayrides**  
SATURDAY, MAY 18  
Doce Robles Winery & Vineyard



**Sunset Winos All-Star Band**  
SATURDAY, MAY 18  
Rava Wines + Events



**Australia's Adam Miller in Concert**  
SATURDAY, MAY 18  
Morro Bay Wine Seller



**Beer Yoga**  
SUNDAY, MAY 19  
Naughty Oak Brewing Co.



**Wine Down Vinyasa Flow**  
SUNDAY, MAY 19  
Rava Wines + Events



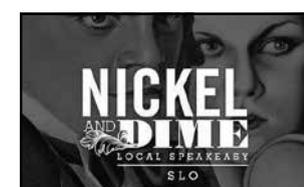
**Planet Lucha Presents: Lucha Alpha**  
SUNDAY, MAY 19  
Santa Maria Fairpark Convention Center



**SLO Blues Baseball Opening Day**  
FRIDAY, MAY 24  
Sinsheimer Stadium



**Brief Encounters: A Weekend of One-Acts**  
FRIDAY, MAY 24  
Cambria Center for the Arts Theatre



**Nickel & DIME Pop-up Speakeasy**  
SUNDAY, MAY 26  
7Sisters Brewing Co.



**Metallica Cover Band "Masters of Puppet"**  
SUNDAY, MAY 26  
Maverick Saloon



**Fire & Grace & Ash**  
SUNDAY, MAY 26  
Old Santa Rosa Chapel



**CUBS + CRAFTS**  
THURSDAY, MAY 30  
Zest it Up Studio



**A Celebration of Song**  
MAY 30-JUNE 1  
Monarch Club at Trilogy



**Block Printing Workshop**  
FRIDAY, MAY 31  
Studios on the Park



**CC Aquarium Summer Camp**  
SELECT WEEKS IN JUNE, JULY & AUGUST  
CC Aquarium, Avila Beach



**Charcuterie 101 Workshop**  
SATURDAY, JUNE 1  
Buttonwood Farm Winery & Vineyard



**Zoo to You Luau**  
SATURDAY, JUNE 1  
Wineries of 46 East



**KIDS AND CHEESE: Tour of Stepladder Creamery**  
SATURDAY, JUNE 1  
Cambria Scarecrow Festival

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## MUSIC

### LOCAL NOTES from page 22

soft rock songs from the '60s and '70s as well as big band standards of the '30s and '40s.

The show is a part of the Senior Center's Hawaiian Style Senior Prom. Guests can expect to enjoy hula lessons in addition to the live entertainment. Admission to the event is free. Call (775) 813-5186 or visit [riptidebb.com](http://riptidebb.com) to find out more.

### More music

Vino et Amicis Wine Bar in Orcutt presents acoustic Americana artist **Cyrus Clarke** on **Friday, May 3**, from 7 to 9 p.m. One of Clarke's biggest influences is The Grateful Dead, especially in terms of improvisational style. According to press materials, not a single week has gone by since 1972 that Clarke hasn't performed a gig. He's performing solo at the Orcutt show, but some music buffs might know him as a founding member of several acts including The Cache Valley Drifters, The Acousticats, and The Expedition.

Also in Orcutt, reggae cover group **Elevation** performs at Naughty Oak Brewing Company on **Friday, May 3**, from 7 to 10 p.m. Admission to the show is free, and food from Lido's will

be available for purchase starting at 5:30 p.m.

Classic rock and Americana duo **Oddy Straight** performs at the Cold Spring Tavern off Highway 154 on **Friday, May 3**, from 6 to 9 p.m. The Tavern's complimentary weekend lineup continues on **Saturday, May 4** with rock and reggae act **Green Flag Summer** from 1 to 4 p.m., and **The Robert Thomas Band** from 5 to 8 p.m. Blues and rags duo **Tom Ball and Kenny Sultan** perform their weekly gig on **Sunday, May 5**, from 1:15 to 4 p.m., and the blues and soul act **Alastair Greene Band** wraps things up the same day from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Southern rock, country, and blues group **Tex Pistols** performs at the Maverick Saloon in Santa Ynez on **Friday, May 3**, at 8 p.m. Self-described seasoned veterans of the industry, the band is best known for covering traditional country favorites as well as more modern, hard edged "alt-country."



**ELEVATE GOOD TIMES:** Reggae cover group Elevation performs at Naughty Oak Brewing Company on Friday, May 3.

Pop artist **Bear Redell** takes the saloon's stage on **Saturday, May 4**, at 1 p.m. Although currently based in Los Angeles, Redell is more locally known for winning Teen Star Santa Barbara in 2011. One-man-show **The Just Dave Band**, featuring singer, guitarist, and harmonica Dave Bernaul, follows Redell at 8 p.m. ○

Arts Editor **Caleb Wiseblood** wrote this week's Local Notes. Contact him at [cwiseblood@newtimesslo.com](mailto:cwiseblood@newtimesslo.com).

### MUSIC LISTINGS from page 22

Ynez, 805-686-4785, [mavericksaloon.org](http://mavericksaloon.org).

#### TERESA RUSSELL AND COCOBILLI LIVE

A blues/rock trio. Food and drinks available for purchase. No outside food or drinks allowed. **May 12**, 4:30 p.m. Cold Spring Tavern, 5995 Stagecoach Rd., Santa Barbara, 805-967-0066, [coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html](http://coldspringtavern.com/entertainment.html).

**TEX PISTOLS LIVE May 3**, 1-5 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, [mavericksaloon.org](http://mavericksaloon.org).

**TOMMY TUTONE LIVE May 10**, 8 p.m. Maverick Saloon, 3687 Sagunto St., Santa Ynez, 805-686-4785, [mavericksaloon.org](http://mavericksaloon.org).

#### 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](http://lompocwinefactory.com).

**SPRING 2019 CONCERT: CELEBRATE AMERICA** Presented by the Lompoc Valley Master Chorale. **May 10**, 7:30 p.m. \$5-\$20. [lvmasterchorale.org](http://lvmasterchorale.org). First United Methodist Church, 925 North F St., Lompoc.

#### SANTA MARIA VALLEY/LOS ALAMOS

**BENDER AND JACK LIVE May 10**, 6-9 p.m. Vino et Amicis, 156 S. Broadway, Orcutt, 805-631-0496, [vinoetamicis.com](http://vinoetamicis.com).

**CYRUS LAKE LIVE May 3**, 7-9 p.m. Vino et Amicis, 156 S. Broadway, Orcutt, 805-631-0496, [vinoetamicis.com](http://vinoetamicis.com).

**FOXEN SECOND SUNDAYS: LIVE MUSIC AND FOOD TRUCK** Every second Sunday of every month, we will have live music and a food truck on property. Second Sunday of every month, 12:30-3:30 p.m. through Feb. 10 Free. 805-937-4251. [kazzit.com/event/foxen-second-sundays-live-music-and-food-truck.html](http://kazzit.com/event/foxen-second-sundays-live-music-and-food-truck.html). Foxen Winery & Vineyard, 7600 Foxen Canyon Rd., Santa Maria.

**JINEANNE CODERRE: EP RELEASE SHOW** Damon Castillo Band will open. Wine will be available for purchase. **May 3**, 5-8 p.m. Presqu'ile Winery, 5391 Presqu'ile Dr., Santa Maria, 805-937-8110, [presquilewine.com](http://presquilewine.com).

**KEITH T. COX LIVE May 11**, 7-10 p.m. Vino et Amicis, 156 S. Broadway, Orcutt, 805-631-0496, [vinoetamicis.com](http://vinoetamicis.com).

**LIVE MUSIC AT NAUGHTY OAK** Enjoy a different musical act and food vendor every Friday evening. Fridays, 5:30 p.m. Free admission. Naughty Oak Brewing Co., 165 S Broadway St Ste 102, Orcutt, 805-287-9663, [naughtyoak.com](http://naughtyoak.com).

**SUMMER CONCERT SERIES** Live acts include Back Bay Betty, The Jill Knight Band, Crisptones, Drive-In Romeos, Unfinished Business, and Sound Investment. **May 3-Oct. 4** Trilogy at Monarch Dunes, 1640 Trilogy Pkwy, Nipomo, (805) 621-7838.

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JOSH GROBAN	..... SEP 05
MAGGIE ROGERS	..... SEP 17
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## Arts Briefs

### AHC youth dancers present annual show and recital

Performers from College for Kids, an Allan Hancock College Community Education program, will tell the story of Aladdin through music and dance during the annual Magical Moments and Spring Recital at the Ethel Pope Auditorium, on May 4 and 5, at 7 and 2 p.m. respectively. The Aladdin portion of the show features 65 dancers. Three graduating seniors from local high schools will play the main characters: St. Joseph High School senior Ian Perea as Aladdin; Ernest Righetti High School senior Madison Correa as Jasmine; and St. Joseph High School senior and valedictorian Sarah Yamaichi as the Genie.

The Aladdin segment will be followed by the program's annual dance recital, which features approximately 200 children from ages 3 to 18 performing a variety of dance styles including ballet, jazz hip-hop, contemporary, tap, and folklórico.

"From our littlest dancers to our graduating seniors, it is such a thrilling opportunity to demonstrate how they've grown in their respective fields of dance," Courtney Grimes, the program's youth dance director, said in a release. "Everyone has worked so hard in preparation for this enchanting weekend of dance, and [we] wish to share it with family, friends, and the community."

Tickets to the show are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. The Ethel Pope Auditorium is located at Santa Maria High School, 901 S. Broadway, Santa Maria.

For more info about College For Kids and other AHC Community Education programs, visit [hancockcollege.edu/community\\_education](http://hancockcollege.edu/community_education).

### Book sale benefits Friends of the Library

The Friends of the Santa Maria Public Library is hosting a bargain sale of used books, CDs, and DVDs for adults and children at the Santa Maria Town Center, from May 6 through 11. The sale takes place on the second floor of the mall and will be open daily from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Prices of books will range from \$1 to \$4. A daily special of \$5 for a bag of books will also be offered. Proceeds of the book sale will support the mission of the Friends of the Santa Maria Public Library, a nonprofit group made up of volunteers who strive to promote local libraries and reading in general.

For more information, call (805) 925-7166.

### Rancho Bowl holds mural contest

Rancho Bowl in Santa Maria invites artists to enter its mural contest, which will be accepting submissions through June 1. Applicants are encouraged to create art that illustrates aspects of Santa Maria and the city's history. Artists will not be responsible for the execution of the mural and are only required to submit artwork proposals.

The winning piece will be selected through a public voting process during Rancho Bowl's 60th anniversary celebration, which takes place June 13 through 16. The chosen winner will be announced on June 20.

Visit [ranchobowl.com/60th-anniversary-mural](http://ranchobowl.com/60th-anniversary-mural) to apply. ○

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

## Body and soul

Winners of the Individual Grants in the Arts Competition share their inspirations

### BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

Since 1972, more than \$300,000 in grants has been awarded to local artists, dancers, actors, and musicians through the Individual Grants in the Arts Competition. What each recipient has in common—besides talent, obviously—is they've all survived the audition stage, or "Judgement Day" as Marti Fast, co-chair of the grants committee, warmly calls it.

"I love hearing the performers warm up before the auditions, and seeing the focus on the faces of the artists," Fast said. "We work for six months each year to pull this all together, and the reward is the proud smiles on the faces of the parents and mentors of each recipient."

Each year, the Santa Maria Arts Council chooses three judges to not only select the competition's award recipients but offer constructive guidance to every auditionee. For this year's first place in Dance winner, Charlotte Baldiviez, the fear of performing in front of the "Judgement Day" board was only equal to the fear of performing in front of anyone else.

"Doing pieces that mean so much to me can often be risky because I have to share a part of myself that I maybe wouldn't share otherwise," Baldiviez told the *Sun*. "I mean, I don't exactly walk around telling people that at 24 I already can't dance the way I used to."

For the audition, Baldiviez chose to perform a dance centered on the theme of our own bodies betraying us, she explained, set to "Prayer" from the musical *Ghost Quartet*. The song's lyrics express a longing for self-forgiveness.

"While I know that it is important for me to be forgiving with my body, I can't help but feel absolutely betrayed," Baldiviez said. "As a dancer, I am learning—faster than I'd like—that my body just simply cannot do the same things it could 10 years ago. My mind knows what my body is supposed to do, it hears me tell it what to do, but my body is struggling to keep up."

But Baldiviez's exploration of the theme is also inspired by a far more devastating betrayal of the body, the dancer said, as someone dear to her is currently battling cancer.

"That is a betrayal of the body that is infuriating to even observe, so I can only imagine how they feel—or rather, I can't," Baldiviez said. "This idea of what happens after our bodies, our real homes, start to become unrecognizable in big and small ways is striking to me. How do we feel? How are we supposed to feel? I don't know. But I do dance about it."

Like Baldiviez, first place in Visual Arts winner Donna Olivera tackled a subject close to her heart. For consideration in the competition, Olivera

PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTIAN ZUMBADO



**ACT NATURALLY:** PCPA student Brooke Johnson won first place in Drama for performing a monologue from *Othello* and a song from *The King and I*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KEVIN BOLAND



**ODE TO ANCESTRY:** *Para mis Antepasados/Those I Carry With Me* was one of the ceramic pieces artist Donna Olivera, who won first place in Visual Arts, submitted to the competition for consideration.



**BETRAYAL:** First place in Dance winner Charlotte Baldiviez explores the theme of our own bodies betraying us, during her dance set to *Ghost Quartet*'s "Prayer."

submitted several pieces of ceramic art, including *Para mis Antepasados/Those I Carry With Me*. She first envisioned creating the porcelain vase during a course at Allan Hancock College taught by Amiko Matsuo, whom Olivera considers a mentor.

"She [Matsuo] helped us map our personal relationships with our ceramic art," Olivera said. "So I began developing a piece that I wanted to honor my antepasados [ancestors] with, specifically the people who I have lost in my lifetime and have chosen to carry with me."

During Santa Maria's Día de los Muertos Festival last October, Olivera placed the vase at the event's altar in Veterans' Memorial Park. One of her favorite parts of the experience was discussing the piece and its relationship to the sacred holiday with others.

"I was able to converse with the community about our traditions, such as mole, altars, and our connections with clayware," Olivera said. "I haven't considered myself an artist until fairly recently, and now I proudly consider myself a community artist. I hope to engage my community through clay."

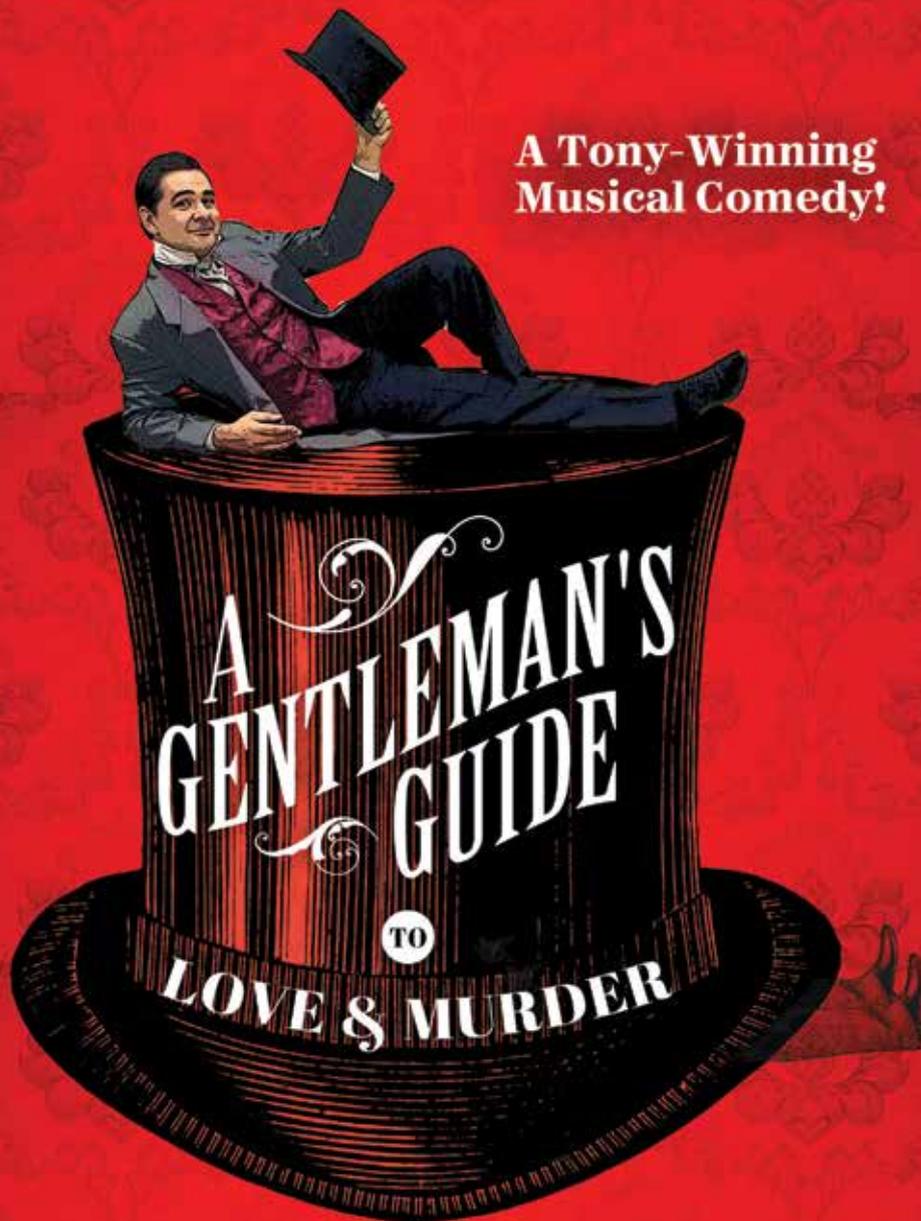
The vase and other ceramic works by Olivera will be on display at the competition's awards presentation on May 6. Baldiviez will be performing during the showcase, which will also include performances from first place in Music winner Kevin Park and first place in Drama winner Brooke Johnson.

"I felt an overwhelming sense of relief when I found out I was chosen as a winner for the grant," Johnson told the *Sun*. "I'm honored for the opportunity and that such a great program was made available to me and my peers in the first place."

For her audition, Johnson chose to perform Desdemona's monologue from *Othello* and the song "Hello Young Lovers" from *The King and I*. As a second-year PCPA student, the actor described her time with the program as "truly irreplaceable" and responsible for bringing a unique philosophy to her attention, one she plans to hold onto wherever her career leads.

"I think this program has not only developed my point of view toward acting, but also my point of view on being a functioning and compassionate human being," Johnson said. "My teachers always push the idea that acting is just learning to be human and being able to reflect that humanity to an audience." ○

Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood would love to receive a grant at [cwiseblood@newtimeslo.com](mailto:cwiseblood@newtimeslo.com).



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# Endgame

Righetti High School  
film teacher Robert Garcia  
retires after 24 years

BY CALEB WISEBLOOD

I vividly remember walking into the Righetti High School film room for the first time. Most of my recollection of that first day of freshman year is a blur—or I prefer it remain that way at least.

Repressed memories aside, I'm glad that heading into fifth period after lunch is not one of them.

I had been instantly drawn to the walls, decked with movie posters as well as photos of students throughout the years. Some of them were holding what appeared to be Oscar trophies, which switched to award plaques as the years progressed. Who were these young Spielbergs? Past winners of the Righetti High School Film Festival—an annual tradition that originated with the man who stood at the front of class explaining the syllabus, film and broadcasting teacher Robert Garcia.

The idea for the film fest sprung early on, only two years after Garcia took the instructor position in the 1994-95 school year. He knew his students' films deserved a public outlet.

"I started thinking that the students were

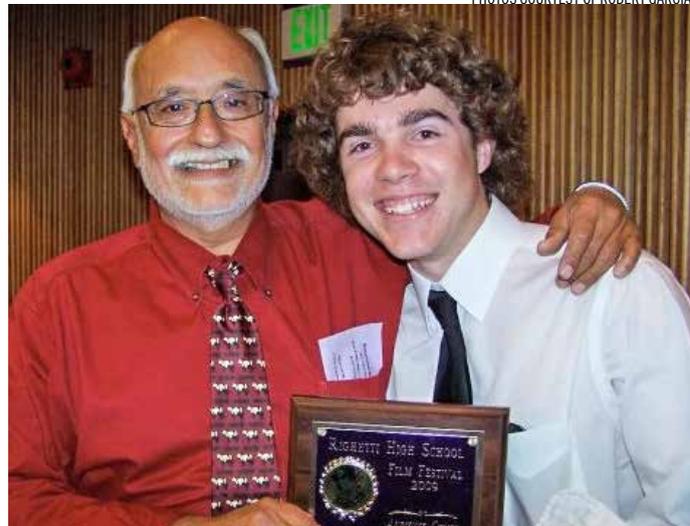
asking when the next one was coming, and here we are today, about to do our 22nd."

This year's event, which takes place on May 10 and 11 in the Righetti gym, will be the last festival Garcia manages as film instructor. After 24 years of teaching, he's retiring, making the 2018-19 school year his last. Looking back on his career, Garcia is still surprised that life led him to teaching.

"Teaching was never on my list—if I made lists that is, which I don't," Garcia said. "I was a terrible high school student, why would I want to face a younger version of me every day?"

At the time, Garcia had just left his job at KCOY to work as a freelance photographer and videographer. He said that someone suggested he try substitute teaching between assignments

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROBERT GARCIA



AND THE AWARD GOES TO: Righetti High School film instructor Robert Garcia poses with award-winning student Bradford Smith at the 2009 RHS Film Festival.

for extra money. After passing the CBEST, Garcia found himself subbing his first class.

"The day was over before I knew it. I loved it," Garcia said. "When I got home, I called the district to find out how to become a teacher, and they directed me to Chapman University. And I was off to become a teacher."

The rest, as they say, is history.

Guests at this year's festival can expect to enjoy student films, live music from the RHS Jazz Band, food, and raffle giveaways. To celebrate Garcia's final festival, a few films from years past will be screened, along with three student remakes of *Gasoline Rainbows*—one of Garcia's own short films.

But the last thing he wants is the fact that he's retiring to steal the show, he explained.

"I want to make sure that the festival isn't about me," Garcia said. "I want it to be about the students' work. It's their night, so let's celebrate their accomplishments. I'll say goodbye, but it is about them." ○

Arts Editor Caleb Wiseblood is a proud Righetti film alumnus. Reach him at

## Roll out the red carpet

The 22nd annual Righetti High School (RHS) Film Festival takes place on May 10 and 11, at 7 p.m. both nights. Live music will be provided by the RHS Jazz Band. Tickets are \$5 for students and \$8 for adults. Contact Robert Garcia at rgarcia@smjuhsd.org for more information.



FAMILY REUNION: Several of Robert Garcia's former students reunited to attend the 20th annual RHS Film Festival in 2017.

making these films, and the only ones that saw them were the students in the class," Garcia said in mid April, more than two decades later. "That year, I asked Hancock [College] if we could use their little theater for our showing, and they gave the OK."

The single screening soon evolved into a two-night event complete with an awards ceremony. And what began as a showcase exclusive to Righetti students became open to young filmmakers from other high schools as well.

"I thought if we invited the other schools, the kids could see what others were doing and that would encourage them to work a little harder," Garcia said. "It worked. Soon people started

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### Film Reviews

#### AVENGERS: ENDGAME

What's it rated? **PG-13**  
 What's it worth? **Full price**  
 Where's it showing? **Hi-Way Drive-In, Movies Lompoc, Parks Plaza, Santa Maria 14**

**PICK** See Sun Screen.

#### THE CURSE OF LA LLORONA

What's it rated? **R**  
 What's it worth? **Rental**  
 Where's it showing? **Parks Plaza**  
 First-time director Michael Chaves helms this horror thriller about a social worker, Anna Tate-Garcia (Linda Cardellini), and her small children, Chris (Roman Christou) and Samantha (Jaynee-Lynne Kinchen), haunted by a supernatural entity. The evil spirit is none other than Mexican folklore's La Llorona (Marisol Ramirez), the ghost of a woman who drowned her children in a moment of blind rage. After multiple ghastly encounters, Anna enlists help from Father Perez (Tony Amendola) and occult specialist Rafael Olvera (Raymond Cruz) to stop the spirit from harming her family.

Although marketed as a standalone film, I was surprised to realize *The Curse of La Llorona* is part of The Conjuring Universe, basically the closest thing we have to a Marvel Cinematic Universe of horror movies. For those unfamiliar with the franchise, it started with 2013's *The Conjuring*, and each film since has been either a prequel, a sequel, a spin-off, or even all three simultaneously. The connection in this case is barely one at all, however. Amendola reprises his Father Perez role from 2014's *Annabelle*, but that's about it (unless I missed any other Easter eggs).

After Anna shows Perez the strange injuries on her arm, he's already confident in exactly who the culprit is. If there's one thing I really appreciate about *The Curse of La Llorona*, it's that it does its best to not waste any time. I was expecting half of the movie boiling down to the children trying to convince their mother of La Llorona's existence, but nope! Anna sees the ghost herself pretty soon after the kids do, and that scene really works for me because it doesn't cut away quickly. There's a good 20 seconds of Anna just staring at this frightening figure in her living room, who she assumes is just an intruder at first. She's ready to fight, too, although I don't remember her weapon of choice—either a baseball bat or another blunt object.

The nightmare doesn't end there, though, as the apparition reappears throughout the week, always leaving strange burns and bruises on the wrists or arms of Anna and her children. The performances are solid, and I was genuinely scared a lot of the time, but for me, *The Curse of La Llorona* isn't as memorable as several other recent horror movies. But in its defense, there's so much to compete with these days. We're basically living in the "Disney Renaissance" of horror films, and I, for one, hope it never ends. (93 min.)

—Caleb Wiseblood

FILM REVIEWS continued page 30

#### SCORING

**FULL PRICE** ... It's worth the full price of an evening showing  
**MATINEE** ..... Save a few bucks, catch an afternoon showing  
**RENT IT** ..... It's worth a rental  
**STREAM IT** ..... Wait 'til Netflix has it  
**NOTHING** ..... Don't waste your time

# Avengers assemble!

**A**nthony and Joe Russo (*Captain America: Civil War*) co-direct this follow-up to their 2018 film, *Avengers: Infinity War*, which resulted in Thanos turning half the universe's population into dust. The remaining Avengers reassemble and work to undo Thanos' destructive act and restore the universe. It's the 11th film in the connected *Marvel Universe* series. (181 min.)

**Glen:** This direct sequel to the events of *Infinity War* opens with Clint Barton (Jeremy Renner), aka Hawkeye, enjoying a picnic with his family on their rural property. He helps his daughter with her archery skills, and as he turns back from responding to his wife's call of lunchtime, the girl is gone ... vanished. When he turns back to his wife and sons, they, too, have disappeared. It's an emotionally resonant reminder of the stunning loss that the survivors of Thanos' act experienced. This scene is followed by other scenes introducing the various main characters and reminding viewers of their loss. This turns out to be both the film's strength and weakness. It's got surprising emotional heft for a superhero flick, but it's also overlong and repetitive as we explore in detail the dozens of characters, their relationships and connections, their losses and reaction to those losses, and their eventual reunification and renewed fight to reverse what Thanos wrought. As I wrote in my review of *Infinity War*, Thanos' act felt like a stunt. Too many of the characters who disappeared had already scheduled films and sequels coming up. It didn't feel final, and of course it wasn't because ... wait for it ... time travel! If that's a spoiler to you, you're obviously not a fan of the Marvel Universe because those who are know that Thanos' destructive act cannot stand. Luckily for everybody, Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.), aka Iron Man, is wicked smart and figures out how to go back in time. The film unfolds as Steve Rogers (Chris Evans), aka Captain America; Bruce Banner (Mark Ruffalo), aka The Hulk; Thor (Chris Hemsworth); Natasha Romanoff (Scarlett Johansson), aka Black Widow; Rocket (voiced by Bradley Cooper); and Scott Lang (Paul Rudd), aka Ant Man, all team up to get the Infinity



**TEAMWORK:** (left to right) Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner), War Machine (Don Cheadle), Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.), Captain America (Chris Evans), Nebula (Karen Gillan), Rocket (voiced by Bradley Cooper), Ant Man (Paul Rudd), and Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson) join forces to restore the universe.

Stones before Thanos has time to wipe out half the universe with them. Even though I think the filmmakers could have cut 30 minutes and had a better film, this is still kick-ass!

**Anna:** I skipped *Infinity War*. Frankly, these bigger-than-life comic book movies usually aren't my thing, especially when they take themselves too seriously. I went in to *Endgame* with little hope of actual enjoyment but walked out pleasantly surprised. It's an ass-numbing three-hour saga, and I agree that it could have lost a bit of repetition and ended up with the same effect at a more reasonable length, but there is a lot going on here and a lot of superheroes to cover. There are some actually potent emotional moments from the start, and some pretty funny bits too. Thor is perfectly positioned to bring the laughs in. The God of Thunder has hidden himself away from the world, traded his god bod for a dad bod, and wastes his days guzzling beer and playing video games. He's a bumbling drunk who spends the movie unsuccessfully putting his life back together. But in the end, he snaps back into superhero mode with ease. The God of Thunder still has some tricks up his sleeve, beer belly or not. Putting this many superheroes together is a pretty daunting

feat; the storyline tends to get sacrificed so everyone can have a chance to be a star. *Endgame* suffers this fate a bit, though for the amount of superpower up on screen, I think they stayed mostly on track. **Glen:** Historically, the comic book realm has always been a boys' world. In the past, even the female superheroes seemed more designed to appeal to boys rather than girls—have you noticed, for instance, that most female superheroes dress like a PG-13-rated pole dancer or dominatrix? However, both Marvel and DC seem to be trying to evolve, not just on gender issues but on other social issues. For instance, when Rogers attends a survivors group therapy

session, one of the male members casually mentions his gay relationship and nothing's made of it. It's accepted as normal. During the pitched final battle, it's a group of female superheroes who convene to take a stand while their male co-heroes wage individual battles. Carol Danvers (Brie Larson), aka Captain Marvel, is the desperately needed tiebreaker in the final fight to the death. These moments are signs that the times they are a-changin', and it's a welcome change. That said, don't leave reading this review with the idea that everything's going to turn out perfectly for our heroes. The film has the good sense to make at least some of its stakes real, so prepare yourself for some losses. Also, keep in mind, prequels are a thing, so I have no doubt that if your favorite hero meets her or his final demise, Marvel will find a way toward resurrection.

**Anna:** Yep, it's got some real stakes, and the filmmakers were smart to make them count. Usually this type of big, action-packed flick doesn't carry a whole lot of emotional resonance, but here there are some touching moments, starting at the very beginning with Hawkeye's family disappearing. The Avengers' plan has them traveling in teams back to three different eras and places to retrieve the stones before Thanos can, one of which sends Thor back to Asgard the day of his mother's death. He's a mess over it and is torn between his mission and his mother's life. The past/present/future setup could easily get confusing, but the filmmakers kept it simple enough to follow. It's a wild ride every which way, and I for one appreciate that even though good triumphs over evil, there is still loss and inevitable sacrifice. All the kick-ass ladies on screen were a win for me—the turn to female heroes as of late is so awesome. We're more than just mini skirts and eyeliner, and the superhero industry has heard the call for strong, radical women to take over and save the world. Keep it coming! ○

*Sun Screen* is written by *New Times* Senior Staff Writer Glen Starkey and his wife, Anna. Comment at [gstarkey@newtimeslo.com](mailto:gstarkey@newtimeslo.com).

#### AVENGERS: ENDGAME

What's it rated? **PG-13**  
 What's it worth, Anna? **Full price**  
 What's it worth, Glen? **Full price**  
 Where's it showing? **Hi-Way Drive-In, Movies Lompoc, Parks Plaza**

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FILM REVIEWS from page 29

PHOTO COURTESY OF SCREEN GEMS



**HERE'S CHARLIE!:** Dennis Quaid stars as Charlie Peck, a man who sells his property to a new couple but then refuses to leave them and his former property alone, in *The Intruder*.

**THE INTRUDER**

What's it rated? **PG-13**  
Where's it showing? **Movies Lompoc**

**NEW** Deon Taylor (*The Hustle*, *Chain Letter*, *Traffik*) directs this thriller about a young couple—Annie (Meagan Good) and Scott Russell (Michael Ealy)—who buy a house with acreage from Charlie Peck (Dennis Quaid), only to discover he refuses to leave them and his former property alone. (102 min.)

—Glen Starkey

PHOTO COURTESY OF STX ENTERTAINMENT



**BE YOURSELF:** Kelly Clarkson voices Moxy, a free-spirited doll who struggles with being different and her desire for affection and self-acceptance, in *UglyDolls*.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DENVER AND DELILAH PRODUCTIONS



**BEAUTY AND THE ... FLARSKY?:** Frumpy journalist Fred Flarsky (Seth Rogen, right) reunites with his first crush—beautiful, ambitious, but lonely presidential hopeful Charlotte Field (Charlize Theron)—who hires him as her speechwriter, in *Long Shot*.

**LONG SHOT**

What's it rated? **R**  
Where's it showing? **Movies Lompoc**

**NEW** Jonathan Levine (*The Night Before*, *Warm Bodies*, *The Wackness*) directs this rom-com about frumpy journalist Fred Flarsky (Seth Rogen), who reunites with his first crush: the beautiful, ambitious, but lonely presidential hopeful, Charlotte Field (Charlize Theron). Fred's down-to-earth charm leads Charlotte to hire him as her speechwriter, and sparks fly, but can this mismatched couple really make a go of it? (125 min.)

—Glen

**UGLYDOLLS**

What's it rated? **PG**  
Where's it showing? **Parks Plaza**

**NEW** Kelly Asbury (*Shrek 2*, *Gnomeo & Juliet*) directs this animated adventure comedy about a group of free-spirited UglyDolls, who struggle with being different, their desire for affection, and self-acceptance. (87 min.) ○

—Glen

*Sun* movie reviews are compiled by *New Times* Senior Staff Writer Glen Starkey. Contact him at [gstarkey@newtimeslo.com](mailto:gstarkey@newtimeslo.com).

**HANNA**

When? **2019-**  
What's it rated? **TV-MA**  
Where? **Amazon Prime**

**B**ased on the 2011 film of the same name, *Hanna* tells the coming-of-age story of a young woman (Esme Creed-Miles), who was part of a secret government super soldier experiment run by Marissa Wiegler (Mireille Enos). Taken from the program as an infant by Erik Heller (Joel Kinnaman), a rogue CIA operative who disagreed with the experiment, Hanna is raised in an isolated Polish forest where

PHOTO COURTESY OF AMAZON STUDIOS



**DEADLY:** Hanna (Esme Creed-Miles, left) was raised in the woods and trained as an assassin by her "father" Erik (Joel Kinnaman), in a new action series based on the 2011 film, *Hanna*.

Erik, who she believes is her father, trains her as the ultimate assassin.

Now 15 years old, Hanna begins to stray farther from their forest redoubt and soon encounters the first person she's ever met aside from Erik. The chance meeting with a young logger quickly puts Wiegler on Hanna's scent. She's been searching for the girl for 15 years—the last living member of the disbanded program. What follows over eight episodes is Hanna and Erik's return to Europe, where Hanna hopes to kill Wiegler, and Erik tries to expose her unethical experiment.

**BINGEABLE** <sup>1f</sup>

you've seen the film upon which this is based, a lot of the story will be familiar. The series creator and co-writer, David Farr, is the co-writer of the 2011 film along with Seth Lochhead, who shares co-writing credit on episode 1 of the TV series. Like in the film, after Hanna is captured, Wiegler sends a stand-in to question her; when Hanna escapes, she's given a ride by a vacationing family in an RV and befriends the rebellious daughter, Sophie (Rhianna Barreto), with whom she shares a first kiss.

The big difference between the film and TV series is the time the series has to develop the characters and side plots. For instance, we learn that the disbanded super soldier experiment has been reconstituted under Jerome Sawyer (Khalid Abdalla), who quickly assumes the chief antagonist mantle from Wiegler. The new program and its discovery by Hanna and Erik set up a second season of the series, which otherwise would have quickly run out of plot.

Hand-to-hand combat, gunfights, and some amazing stunts are speckled throughout the series, which is half sci-fi thriller and half coming-of-age drama as Hanna learns about her past and Erik's real relationship to her. The only missing element from the original film is Isaacs (Tom Hollander), the preppie whistling assassin sent by Wiegler to capture Hanna. He and his two skinhead henchmen were a lot of fun, and that touch of whimsy is missing here. Despite that loss, *Hanna* the TV series is still an easy-to-watch, action-packed drama with compelling leads. When the next season pops up, I'll definitely watch it. (Eight 60-min. episodes) ○

—Glen Starkey

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**FAMILY TRADITION:** Pitmaster Matt Dockstader started barbecuing with his grandpa. Now he's teaching his kids the technique that Whisky Bent BBQ used to win the Gerald "Ike" Simas Best Overall Award this year, adding to their table of trophies.

**DIPPED IN GOLD:** The Crowd, a car club based out of Santa Maria, won the people's choice award for best barbecue, thanks in part to what member Pete Maratas called "the baptism," his butter-dipped sandwich bread.

# For the love of meat

## Kiwanis Club throws third annual Brews and 'Cues Santa Maria Barbecue Festival

BY NICK POWELL

It was April 20, but the cloud of smoke that hung over Pioneer Park wasn't coming from some hippie's reefer bong. It emanated from the smoldering embers of a dozen pitmasters locked in a technically bloody but actually quite friendly battle to prove definitively who really knew how to handle the meat.

The Kiwanis Club of Santa Maria rallied 20 regional craft beer brewers, three wineries, seven amateur backyard teams, and four professional food vendors to highlight the pure

and simple style of barbecuing that made the Santa Maria region famous: quality cuts dry-seasoned, slow roasted over red hot oak coals, and served with a little salsa. There's not much there for a food writer to wax poetic about—no marmalade reductions or hints of saffron—just juicy, smoked meat at its unrepentant best.

I didn't really know what to expect from the event. In fact, I didn't really expect anything at all. I stumbled accidentally into this barbecue nirvana like Mr. Magoo from those old cartoons. The day after I'd been

offered the chance to write this column and the very day before the event took place, I was thinking I'd find some new restaurant to cover, when suddenly my boss at my regular construction job offered me a pair of tickets out of the blue. And not just any tickets. He was one of the sponsors, so those bad boys were all-access, baby!

My wife and I dropped all of our other stupid plans immediately. The next day, we plopped those hot tickets on a table, and a nice lady handed us some lanyards, wrist bands, and tiny beer mugs that gave us unlimited dominion over all the roasted meat and bubbling beer samples we could handle.

The festival was divided into two parts: a strolling loop with tents for each of the amateur groups to hand out small samples to anyone wearing one of those magical lanyards and a wide-open area with a stage on one end, picnic tables and

games in the middle, and professional vendors lining the perimeter selling full plates of food for cash. Beer and wine tents were interspersed throughout both areas, which was nice ... obviously.

The general public would vote to decide the best amateur pitmaster, while a panel of judges would ultimately determine which professional would take home the first ever Gerald "Ike" Simas Best Overall Award, in honor of the late, great Santa Maria-style barbecue pioneer.

By the time my wife and I had completed one loop through the amateur area, I'd sampled six varieties of tri-tip and four beers (small,

little cute ones—don't judge me) including an imperial double bock collaboration between Stone and Alesmith, two of the biggest names in craft brewing working together like the Avengers of suds. It was poured out of one of those fancy beer

### Meat me next year

If you missed this year's annual Brews and 'Cues Santa Maria festival of all things barbecue, mark your calendar for April 2020 and visit [santamariavalley.com](http://santamariavalley.com) for details. Get your tickets early!

EATS continued page 33

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	<input type="radio"/> Yes—many residents are retired and on a fixed income.	
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	<input type="radio"/> The city should implement rent control for all residents.	
	<input type="radio"/> Rent control isn't fair to park owners.	

PHOTO BY NICK POWELL



**POUR SOME SUGAR ON ME:** Coastal Craving's shave ice was soft, airy, and drenched in extra syrup, especially because I had Jennifer Stuart pose for several shots while pouring. Delicious!

**EATS** from page 31

bottles you see in the stores for like \$30, and you think, "How good could a beer possibly be to cost that much?" But then you try it at a festival and suddenly it all makes sense.

Then my wife said the sexiest thing I've ever heard come out of her lips: "You want to go up that hill to where they're cooking ribs?"

Oh, did I. Atop the hill, we found a nice oak-shaded mini amphitheater with bench seats, smoked ribs, more tri-tip, more beer, and a DJ spinning funk jams. This gave us our first chance to really look around and people watch. Everyone looked happy. They were excited for the food, for the music, for being outside on a cool, pleasant day. There's something primal and joy-inducing about watching meat cook over an open flame, smelling the smoke and flesh. It's our most ancient celebration. When the hunt's over and the meat's cooking, you feel in the back of your animal brain that everything's going to be alright, for now at least.

After that, we walked to the other area, where our lanyards were powerless, and bought a refreshing shave ice before doing another loop through the sample section, talking to some of the pitmasters, and dropping our votes for the people's choice award before hitting the ol' dusty trail.

It was such a fantastic, indulgent event that I was hesitant to look up how much my all-access tickets would have cost me had I not lucked into them. I was sure that this kind of affair was reserved for business owners, oil tycoons, and trust-fund degenerates. But it was only \$35 in advance and \$50 at the door for an entire afternoon of great food, unlimited beer/wine, and live music!

According to the Kiwanis' lead organizer Jaime Flores, all the profits will help fund programs for local youth, seniors, and veterans, so it's money extra well spent.

"We're really satisfied with the results," Flores said. "The event was bigger than last

year and just keeps growing. If you're thinking about coming next year, my advice is get your tickets early." ○

*Contributing writer Nick Powell is always on the prowl for new food ideas. Send hot tips through the editor at [clanham@santamariasun.com](mailto:clanham@santamariasun.com).*

**POWELL'S PICKS**

- If you've suddenly got an appetite for great community beer festivals but can't travel back in time to attend the one described in the feature, just wait a few days and go to the **eighth annual Buellton Brew Fest** at River View Park on May 4 from 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There will be more than 50 breweries and wineries offering samples, live music, fun games, and several food trucks. Tickets are \$45 for general admission and \$55 for VIP early access to special brews not offered at the general event. Visit [buelltonbrewfest.com](http://buelltonbrewfest.com) for more information.

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*Contributing writer Nick Powell is totally judging you for not being into beer. Send food and drink tips, picks, and nibbles through the editor at [clanham@santamariasun.com](mailto:clanham@santamariasun.com).*

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