

Mission Village **VOICE**

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It's Alive!
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The San Benito Seniors Connect newsletter is an initiative of the seniors council of Santa Cruz and San Benito Counties, made possible by federal, state, and local funding, including private grants and donations.

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A photograph of an elderly woman with short, curly grey hair, wearing a pearl necklace and a light-colored cardigan, smiling and looking towards a younger woman. The younger woman, with brown hair tied back, is wearing a brown top and has her hand on the older woman's shoulder. They are outdoors with trees in the background. The image is part of a flyer for the Del Mar Caregiver University Conference.

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A quote for our readers

“In every walk
with nature one
receives far more
than he seeks.”

— John Muir

On the cover

“Getting Handsy” - cover art created by Olga Lewska from Kazakhstan.



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#BOOKWORM

April has finally arrived

By Leanne Oliveira

"The books that the world calls immoral are the books that show the world its own shame." - Oscar Wilde

Folks, against all odds, we've made it to the most fabulous month of the year - and not just because it happens to be my birthday. This month has ALL the book holidays! See LITERARY HOLIDAYS below.

To kick things off right, the Friends (SBCFriends.org) are catering lunch to staff in Hollister for Library Workers Day, offering goodies in the Lobby the afternoon of 4/23 for National Library Week, AND hosting our monthly book sale 4/11 behind the Library 9-11:30 AM with plenty of sweet treats and books in beautiful used condition. Donations (and dogs) are always welcomed.

Congrats are also in order to Hill's Bookstore this month for Independent Bookstore Day (4/25) AND it's recent one year anniversary celebration! For those who haven't visited, consider this article a prescription to do so. Tons of book clubs, member incentives, fun events, a red room for



Leanne Oliveira

spicy books (my fave), and the best bookwormy chats in town! You don't even have to be a bookworm since they also sell candles and other goodies like flat pens. (I said what I said). Sign up for their newsletter and visit their events calendar at hillsbookstore.com.

To be fair, I'm not just shamelessly plugging the place because their recent book club pick was about my fellow librarians in Portugal ...although, ok, that certainly helps... but I've also found owners Kim and Adam Hill (plus their kids and parents) eager to collaborate with community partners and incredibly generous with their donations whenever needed.

Like all local bookshops, Hills Bookstore is for-profit and not a charity, but it never feels that way. The family pours every bit of themselves back into this community - they even fill up all our local Little Free Libraries! — and we are so grateful for (and empowered by) that thoughtfulness. So, thank you.

Speaking of which, huge shout out to Alex Stevens and Tricia Laliberte who help me



Wearing Wonderland costumes, the San Benito Stage Company performed to a packed house at a recent storytime at the Library in Hollister. The troupe is performing beloved bookish faves Alice in Wonderland (May) and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (July); buy tix at sanbenitostage.org.

place discarded books (that I've weeded from library and Friends book donations) into all the local Little Free Libraries and thus out of landfills. Love you two!

Curious about starting an LFL or donating or visiting one? Check out littlefreelibrary.org - and if you notice an LFL that isn't registered, please urge its owners to do so

to ensure that everyone can find it.

BOOKISH CHOCOLATE TIN

Longtime #Bookworm reader Jennifer Coile clearly knows me far too well and recently gifted me the coolest little metal tin in the shape of a book that held an assortment of fancypants Italian chocolate! (Since the sweets lasted 3.8 seconds before hop-

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Leanne's mama Alice Oliveira at a bookstore in Naples late-March. There are over 500 Mondadori (mondadoristore.it) stores across Italy!

ping into my mouth, the tin now hosts a handful of travel tea bags.) Ostara or Easter gift, anyone? Visit us.venchi.com.

COUNTY LIBRARY (HOLLISTER)

Now hiring! April is full of goodies including a reading program that gets you In & Out burgers, senior chair yoga, and blood pressure kits courtesy of a rural health connections grant. The Library has also received a grant to purchase a useful "family workstation;" more info to follow. For more events including future health and wellness-focused programming and a collaboration with the Youth Alliance, visit SBCFL.org.

DREAMWEAVER BOOKS

The Gilroy location offers a great selection of new and used books, a Banned Book Club facilitated by my buddy Alex of Books & Botany (IG: @books.and.botany), and its owners share a close collaboration with The Clove Complex next door. More on IG @dreamweaverbooks_95020.

LIBRARY IN ANTARCTICA

McMurdo Station has a main volunteer-run library and there are also a variety of smaller libraries and LFLs in the area. (Hey, Tom Walerius. Did you find any of those on your recent trip?)

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LITERARY HOLIDAYS

Happy School Library Month, International Children's Book Day 4/2, Right to Read Day 4/20, National Library Week 4/19-4/25, Library Worker's Day 4/8, Drop Everything and Read Day 4/12, Newspaper Columnist's Day 4/18, National Tell-A-Story Day 4/27, and Independent Bookstore Day 4/25. Birthday Babies: Anne McCaffrey 4/1, Hans Christian Andersen 4/2, Beverly Cleary 4/12, Shakespeare 4/23, and Harper Lee 4/28.

NEW RELEASES

Visit tinyurl.com/APR26bookworm for #allthenewthings.

SACRAMENTO BOOK FESTIVAL

April 19th! IG: @sacbookfest ■

Leanne Oliveira (MLIS, MA History) is a Reference Librarian at the Watsonville Library and is on the Friends of the SBC Library Board. Contact: oldfashionedolive@gmail.com. Leanne is also an alumni of San Benito Leadership Institute, which is always recruiting at <https://linktr.ee/sbleadership>.

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ROAMING AROUND

How to spend the perfect day in Tres Pinos

Celebrate the local cuisine, rich history, and community of one of San Benito County's most unique cities

By Brea Spencer

While San Juan Bautista and Hollister get flaunted for their proximity to everything—San Jose, Monterey, Santa Cruz—there is just one problem with that proximity which seems to get worse with every passing moment: the traffic.

If you have lived in San Juan for any stretch of time in the past few years, you have seen the back up of traffic from 156 West to 101 South get worse as families all pile in the car and head the same direction on the weekend. What was once a 40-minute drive to the ocean can now be upwards of an hour, and that's just to get there.

What is there to do? Well, consider driving the opposite direction and getting off the

beaten path to explore a small, historic city local to our county: Tres Pinos. While most people might just see a drive through town to get to and from Panoche and the Pinnacles, Tres Pinos has a thriving and lively culture of restaurants, bars, and shops that could capture the interest of anyone for a whole weekend or longer.

So how does one spend a day in Tres Pinos? Well, from breakfast to dinner to drinks there is a way to relax in the country slowness of this city from sunrise to after dark. "Well, it's an incredibly historic town," says the owner and manager of Flapjack's, Naomi Arias. Arias is happy to discuss the history of her business and the building that calls it home. "These were all buildings that were established in the mid to late 1800s, and it was a pretty hopping place, from my understanding, back in the day."

Flapjacks is a classic American diner breakfast experience that is frequented by Tres Pinos locals, hikers, and bikers passing through the town. Arias says there has been a shift in clientele as the surrounding towns grow and invite new community members. "There's a lot of new clients from out of town who are moving to the community, and it's a wonderful thing. Hopefully, we can do what we do at our best, and people will return."



If you're looking to keep up the caffeine after a breakfast at Flapjacks, the Coffee Hitch has it covered. Housed in a converted horse trailer that strikes at the heart of the ranching culture of Tres Pinos, the cafe offers a wide selection of specialty coffee drinks and a rotating seasonal menu that keeps customers coming back to try it all.

After breakfast, exploring this conventionally-walkable city is about checking out the local vendors. Kneaded Comfort Farm Stand offers the opportunity to buy hand-made treats and locally sourced goods from an honor-system based stall right at the beginning of town.

From there, check out The Farm Stand,

across from the Inn at Tres Pinos. Founded by a local San Benito resident, The Farm Stand offers a variety of locally produced goods from candles to spices and more. Each product comes with a story that is worth bringing home to share.

For folks looking to spend more than just one weekend in Tres Pinos and who would like to get involved in the community, there is a local nonprofit that provides horse therapy to children with specialty needs. Nichole Nijmeh of "Coopers Calling" says the nonprofit is always looking for volunteers to get

involved in the work and give back to the community. The nonprofit also hosts an annual chili cookoff that acts as a fundraiser and community event. It's held every year in October, and it is worth the stop.

And after a full day of shopping and site-seeing you're looking for drinks or dinner, there is no better selection than Tres Pinos. From Mexican, to Italian-inspired, and American barbecue, there are options for all.

"We would like to say it's blue jeans to black tie," says the manager of the Inn at Tres Pinos, Morgan Puck, on their average clientele.

"We have prom, hikers, bikers—we get it
See TRES PINOS, next page



Conserve Water – Save Money!

The Water Resources Association of San Benito County, founded in 1999, helps residents conserve water through a variety of home-based programs. These services are available only to homeowners who receive water from Sunnyslope, the City of San Juan Bautista, or the City of Hollister.

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VOICES OF ASJUSD: IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Ruby Peza

Aromas-San Juan Unified School District is a unique district serving more than 1,000 students.

As a small district, we are able to know every student by name and need. Each month, we proudly introduce you to a member of our ASJUSD family. This month, please meet our district School Psychologist, Ruby Peza.

Where did you grow up and what inspired you to become a school psychologist?

I grew up in the Salinas Valley, specifically Salinas and Soledad. I originally planned to become a teacher, but during college I worked in a multicultural research lab that sparked my interest in psychology and bicultural identity. Growing up in a bilingual household — speaking English with my father and Spanish with my mother — also shaped my understanding of how language and culture influence learning.

Where did you receive your training and education?

I completed my undergraduate and graduate training at Cal State Los Angeles.

What other related jobs have you had?
While living in Los Angeles, I worked as an



early intervention specialist serving children ages 0–3 with developmental delays. I also volunteered in a Los Angeles County Sheriff's youth program supporting at-risk teens.

What brought you to ASJUSD?

I returned to the Central Coast when my family moved to San Juan Bautista and found my professional home in the Aromas-San Juan Unified School District.

What do you do each day and what do you love about it?

I conduct student assessments, observe classrooms, consult with teachers and counselors, and write reports.

I really enjoy analyzing information to better understand students' needs and help teams develop strategies that support their success.

Who do you work with to support students' mental and emotional health?

I collaborate with gen ed teachers, special education teachers, counselors, administrators, behavior specialists and the district social worker.

Any student stories that stay with you?

One memorable experience I had involved a high school student with autism and ADHD who learned to understand his learning differences and advocate for himself.

What's special about this community?

The best part is the small-town feel. "It feels like coming home," she said. "People genuinely care about one another." ■

Tres Pinos

Continued

all and you're never underdressed, and you're never over dressed."

Walking into the Inn at Tres Pinos transports you through its many layers of history, all kept through memorabilia and stories from long-time regulars. There are photo albums, paintings, and a collection of fishing supplies that tell the unique story of the once-brothel-turned-restaurant.

The Inn is one of the longest running restaurants in San Benito County, and they've served a similar cuisine of interna-



tional flavors and Italian emphasis throughout their whole run. "Our mission is to keep it fresh, keep it simple across the board," says Puck.

But the Inn isn't the only place in town with a rich history. A few doors down, the 19th Hole offers a real saloon experience with a steak that could make any cattle rancher proud. If the night is still young after dinner, The Barn is the place to be. This bar speaks for itself; with the presence of a hay barn, it invites any cowboy and cowgirl to enjoy themselves with some drinks and line dancing. Even just chatting on the patio next to a fire pit under the stars is the perfect way to take in all that Tres Pinos has to offer. ■



DEARLY DENOTED

William Garner Sutherland, founder of cranial osteopathy

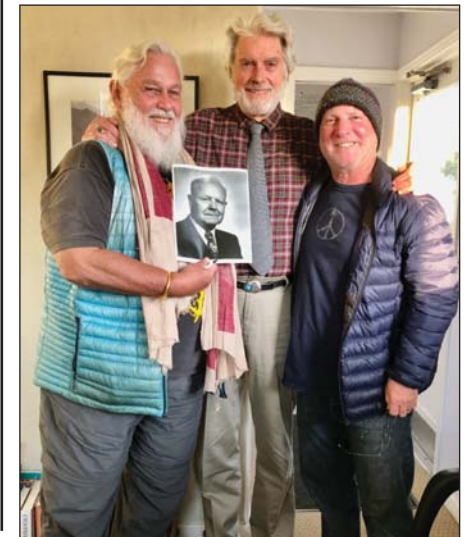
William Garner Sutherland (1873–1954) was an American osteopathic physician best known as the founder of cranial osteopathy. He is buried at El Carmelo Cemetery in Pacific Grove.

Quietly among the headstones lies William Garner Sutherland, pioneer of cranial osteopathy. After locating the gravesite, Carmel acupuncturist David Cushing Fuess gathered a few colleagues in the healing arts for a small tribute gathering.

Submitted by David Cushing Fuess, (Carmel acupuncturist), with Ed Jarvis (bag-piper and Pacific Grove chiropractor); Glenn Freider (San Diego chiropractor); Michael Nilmeier (osteopath, head of Urgent Care, Seaside); and Susan Nilmeier (chiropractor specializing in craniosacral treatment for babies and children). ■



Above: L-R Michael Nilmeier, Susan Nilmeier, Ed Jarvis and David Cushing Fuess. Below: David Cushing Fuess holding photo of William Garner Sutherland, Ed Jarvis and Glenn Freider.



CELESTIAL EVENTS

April 2 - Full Moon in Libra. The Moon will be located on the opposite side of the Earth as the Sun and its face will be fully illuminated. This phase occurs at 02:13 UTC. This full moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Pink Moon because it marked the appearance of the moss pink, or wild ground phlox, which is one of the first spring flowers. This moon has also been known as the Sprouting Grass Moon, the Growing Moon, and the Egg Moon. Many coastal tribes called it the Fish Moon because this was the time that the shad swam upstream to spawn.

April 3 - Mercury at Greatest Western Elongation. The planet Mercury reaches greatest western elongation of 27.8 degrees from the Sun. This is the best time to view Mercury since it will be at its highest point above the horizon in the morning sky. Look for the planet low in the eastern sky just before sunrise.

April 17 - New Moon in Aries. The Moon will located on the same side of the Earth as the Sun and will not be visible in the night sky. This phase occurs at 11:54 UTC. This is the best time of the month to observe faint objects such as galaxies and star clusters because there is no moonlight to interfere.

April 22, 23 - Lyrids Meteor Shower. The Lyrids is an average shower, usually producing about 20 meteors per hour at its peak. It is produced by dust particles left behind by comet C/1861 G1 Thatcher, which was discovered in 1861. The shower runs annually from April 16-25. It peaks this year on the night of the night of the 22nd and morning of the 23rd. These meteors can sometimes produce bright dust trails that last for several seconds. The first quarter moon will set shortly after midnight leaving dark skies for what should be a great show. Best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Lyra, but can appear anywhere in the sky. ■



WILL COOK FOR WINE

Chili Relleno Casserole

By Chef Liz

Brunch — Easter brunch, spring tea, after-church brunch, or the “woke up too late for breakfast” kind — they’re all good. Elevate any of them with this easy, nutritious, and deeply satisfying chile relleno casserole. Packed with tender roasted chiles, melty cheese, and a light, fluffy egg custard, it’s comfort food with a fresh, slightly spicy twist that feels right for spring. Serve it alongside a bright fresh fruit salad and a pot of strong coffee or herbal tea for a balanced, colorful spread. Make it ahead and reheat, or bake just before guests arrive for a bubbly, golden top — either way, it’s an effortless centerpiece that will have everyone asking for seconds.



Ingredients

- 6-8 large Poblano peppers
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 6 large eggs
- 1/2 cup whole milk
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
- 6 ounces grated Monterey Jack cheese
- 6 ounces grated Cheddar cheese

Garnish

Avocado, salsa, sour cream, if desired.



Method

Preheat oven to 425°F. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil. Wash and dry the peppers. Place them on the baking sheet and spritz or rub all over with olive oil.

Roast the peppers for about 30 minutes, turning about halfway through. The skins should blister and blacken.

While the peppers cook, combine the eggs and milk. Whisk well. Combine the flour, salt, baking powder and onion powder. Gradually whisk in the dry ingredients into the egg and milk mixture. Set aside.

Combine both cheeses and set aside. You can also use a Mexican blend of grated cheese.

When the peppers come out of the oven, place them in a gallon size Ziploc bag and let them cool enough to handle. Peel off the skins and discard. Remove the stems, seeds and membranes. Lower the oven to 350°F.

Line the bottom of a 9 x 13” pan with a layer of the peppers. Spread half the cheese mixture on top, another layer of peppers and the rest of the cheese. Pour the egg mixture on top.

Bake for 30 minutes until the top is golden brown and the center is set. Remove from oven and serve. ■



Green Business Tips

Saving money by saving the environment: sustainability that works for business

By Saburi Sai

For many small businesses, sustainability isn’t just about protecting the environment — it’s also about improving the bottom line. Across San Benito County, businesses are discovering that energy efficiency, waste reduction, and smart resource management can significantly cut operating costs. This Earth Month, we spoke with a long-time Certified Business to learn what the process was really like - and how achievable it can be for other businesses in the community.

Nick Winkler, General Manager at Jardines’ in San Juan Bautista, shared that their motivation was simple: “We wanted to do what we can to help the environment - make the planet a better place to live for our children.” Like many business owners, however, he initially expected the process to be both difficult and expensive. “I thought it would be hard,” he said. “But it was actually easy - and recertification is even easier.”

A key part of getting certified was the hands-on support they received. “The Green



Nick Winkler, General Manager at Jardines

Business coordinators were great, they really hold your hand,” Nick said. “They come out, walk through your business, identify opportunities, and provide recommendations.” This kind of guidance simplifies the process and helps businesses identify practical upgrades that improve efficiency.

Jardines’ experience highlights an important takeaway: sustainability doesn’t have to be overwhelming or costly. With the right support and a willingness to take small steps, businesses can reduce expenses, operate more efficiently, and contribute to a healthier community - all at the same time.

To learn more about how your business can get certified, contact Jakki Castorena-Davila at jcastorena@environmentalin.com. ■

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SNIPPETS FROM THE MILLIKEN FILES

Don't rope the grizzly

Submitted by Joe Claus & John Grafton

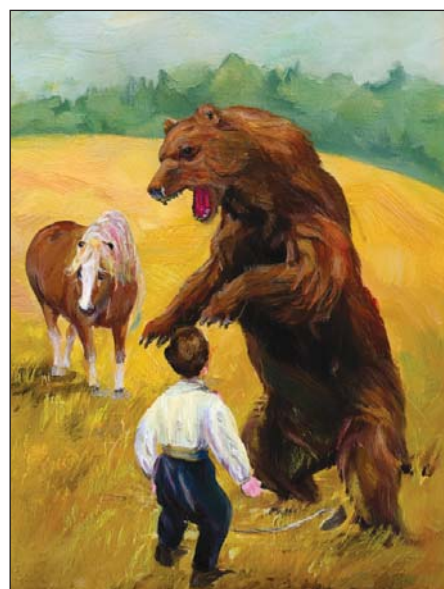
The following text is courtesy of the Milliken Museum Society, located in Los Banos, CA.

Justo, Manuel Larios' kid brother, gets in trouble after roping a big grizzly bear. From Estolano Larios' "Vida y Aventuras" de mi padre Don Manuel Larios. (Translation from Spanish by J. Grafton)

One day coming from Llano de la Panoche by a place by this side, called la Cuesta de la Azufrado, where the previous day they had killed six beefs, they came upon a party of bears so numerous that they couldn't count them – they had come to eat the six dead cows.

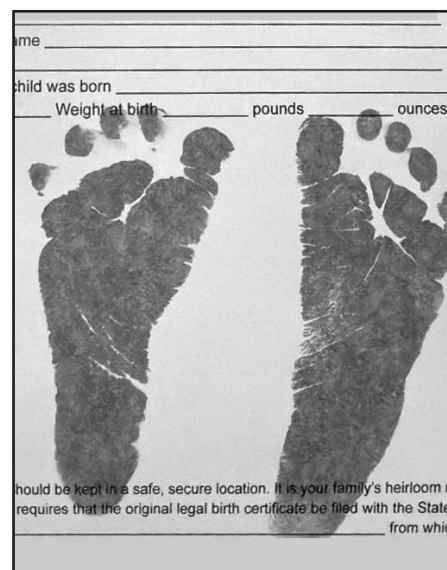
Don Manuel and his brother went by the side to pass their majesties without interrupting them at all. They came to the foot of a slope and there they came to honor the king of the bears: a true monster, so big and heavy that he could hardly walk. They went to look at him and Don Justo threw his reata and managed to lasso him.

But the bear gave him such a strong yank that he threw him down, altogether with his



horse. Seeing this, Don Manuel with his reata came up and put it on the bear in such a manner to lift off the reata of his brother who was left on the ground, so the bear was now set loose. He gave Don Justo back his reata and said that it was better to leave the bear alone since nothing could be done with the reatas, the (bear) was too big and strong for just the two of them.

To be continued ... ■



BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT

It's a boy!

Katie James and Richard Farley welcomed their baby boy, RJ, on February 1, 2026. Born late morning on a beautiful, sunny day in Santa Cruz, he is a welcome blessing to them and all who meet him.



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FINANCIAL FOCUS

How outdated beneficiary choices can derail your plans

When you open a retirement account or buy a life insurance policy, you're asked to name a beneficiary. It might seem like just another form to fill out, but this simple step can affect your family's future.

Many people don't give beneficiary designations much thought after signing the initial paperwork. It may have been years ago, and life has moved on. But this might surprise you: These designations can override what's in your will or living trust. That means your retirement accounts and insurance proceeds could end up going to someone you didn't intend, creating what professionals call an accidental inheritance.

Life changes quickly. You might get married, divorced or remarried. You might have children or stepchildren. A loved one might pass away. You may decide to give to your favorite charity. Any of these events could mean it's time to update your beneficiaries.

The rules can get complicated. For example, after a divorce, some (but not all) states have laws that automatically revoke your beneficiary designations for IRAs, bank accounts and insurance policies. But no matter where

you live in the U.S., the designations for 401(k) plans and pensions stay in place until you change them. In community property states, couples must split 50-50 the assets they acquired during marriage, adding another layer of complexity.

There are other considerations, too. It's a good idea to name a primary and a contingent beneficiary. If your primary beneficiary dies before you do, the contingent beneficiary receives your assets. Without this backup plan, your carefully considered wishes could go awry.

Naming minor children as direct beneficiaries isn't usually a good idea. Children can't legally receive and control assets until they become adults, so a court would have to get involved and appoint a guardian for managing the money. Instead, you might set up a trust or name a custodian to oversee the funds until your children are mature enough to handle them responsibly.

For family members with special needs, you'll want to be especially careful as about choosing your beneficiary. Some choices may jeopardize their eligibility to receive government benefits such as government disability payments or Medicaid. An estate attorney

can help you make important beneficiary decisions.

One major benefit of proper beneficiary designations is that they can help your loved ones avoid probate, a time-consuming and potentially expensive legal process.

For these reasons and others, it's important to review your beneficiary designations regularly, especially after major life events. Contact your retirement account administrator or insurance company to update any outdated information.

A financial advisor can help you understand how your beneficiary choices fit into your financial strategy and ensure your assets go where you want them to go. It may also make sense to work with a legal professional who can help you ensure your beneficiary designations align with your plans for transferring your estate assets.

Don't leave these important decisions to chance. Taking time now to review and update your beneficiaries can help give you a sense of security and protect the people you love.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor, Alexis Winder. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

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Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

MISSION VILLAGE VOICE Q&A

Keith Severson on 30 Years of Rock-Solid Service at Graniterock

By Anne Caetano

If you've spent time at a community event in Aromas, Hollister, San Juan Bautista or anywhere in Graniterock country, chances are you've run into Keith Severson. Maybe he was leading a quarry tour, chatting with a school group, or standing beside one of Graniterock's beloved vintage trucks with his trademark smile. Over the years, Keith became far more than Director of Marketing and Community Involvement—he's been a storyteller, historian, goodwill ambassador, and a familiar face at the small-town events that stitch our communities together.

Keith joined Graniterock in September 1996 and now steps into retirement just shy of 30 years later. During that time, he watched the company evolve through major technological change, environmental innovation, and the rapid rise of the digital world—all while staying grounded in what matters most to him: people, place, and community.

MVV: You're retiring just shy of 30 years with Graniterock. How does that feel?

Keith Severson: Pretty amazing. I started in September of 1996, so I'm perfectly happy to round up. It's hard to believe, really. A lot has changed — at Graniterock, in the industry, and in the world.

Why now?

Well, I turn 70 in May, and at some point, you start looking at things a little differently. I've been lucky to work for such a wonderful company for so long that I didn't have to rush into any decision. But this felt like the right time to make a shift. That said, I'm not planning on disappearing. This is not a rocking-chair-on-the-porch kind of retirement.

You really have become the face of Graniterock in the community. Did you always imagine yourself in this kind of role?

Not at all. I never would have guessed I'd end up here. Before Graniterock, I was in the pizza business. I had a chain of pizza delivery stores. Bruce Woolpert and I connected through benchmarking — he was looking at on-time delivery of a perishable product, and somehow

that conversation turned into a career opportunity. That random connection truly changed my life.

And that's something I always tell young people: keep your umbrella open. Keep your network alive. You just never know which conversation is going to change everything.

Bruce Woolpert clearly had a huge impact on you.

He absolutely did. Bruce was the one who brought me in, and he really laid the foundation for this modern generation of Graniterock. He was visionary, brilliant, and deeply committed to learning. I've often said he was the most brilliant man I ever met. His passing was a huge change for the company, but his influence still runs through everything here.

What are some of the biggest changes you've seen since 1996?

The most obvious is the digital world. When I started, there was no Graniterock website. I got to be part of launching that first website, and since then we've gone through multiple generations of it.

Search engine optimization has changed dramatically too. In the beginning, it was basically keyword stuffing. Then it evolved into more



refined key phrases and image associations. And now, with AI-driven search, it's become much bigger. Search engines are not just looking at your website anymore. They're looking at what people say about you in the digital world — your reputation, your community presence, your history, your body of work. In a strange way, all the good work a company has done over time can now help reinforce its digital identity.

That's fascinating to me.

You sound genuinely energized by AI, not intimidated by it.

I am fascinated by it. I think it's incredibly powerful. Like any powerful tool, it can be used well or badly. Humanity will misuse it in some ways, because humanity misuses just about everything eventually. But I also think it holds enormous promise.

For marketing and communications, it can be a very useful analytical tool. You can feed it your goals, your strategy, your audience, and test whether something really aligns with your plan. That's powerful. At the same time, you have to understand its limitations. It can become an echo chamber. It can get things wrong. So, you still have to think, and check, and use your own judgment.

Your career bridges old-school relationships and new technology.

That's true, and I think that's part of what has made the work so interesting. Marketing and communications have really mashed together

over the years. You hear the phrase "Marcom" now — marketing and communications rolled into one. That's very much the world we're in.

But underneath all the technology, the basics are still the basics. Know your audience. Know your message. Know your medium. Those things haven't changed. The tools have changed. The speed has changed. The platforms have changed. But the human part still matters.

What changes have you seen in the industry itself?

The technology in the industry is remarkable. If you look at the computers in today's equipment — mixer trucks, graders, control systems — it's incredible. There's so much precision, so much automation, so much innovation.

And then there's the environmental side. We're much more aware now of stewardship and sustainability. These are finite natural materials. You want to use them wisely. So, you see more recycling, more diversion from landfill, more cold-in-place street recycling, more use of recycled content in asphalt and concrete. Those are meaningful advances.

You've often said you have the best job in the company. Why?

Because it fed both sides of me. The creative side of my brain was fully engaged through marketing, storytelling, history, events, and projects. And the people side of me was nourished through community relationships. I really got to live in

both worlds, and that's a gift.

I got to go to a lot of events — sometimes ones we were putting on, sometimes just showing up to support others. That community piece has meant the world to me.

Graniterock's community involvement is substantial. What are some of the efforts that stand out to you?

Rock & Run is a big one. In 2025, it raised \$43,000 in one day for San Juan and Aromas elementary schools. That's not a small thing. That kind of support makes a real difference.

Then there's the River Run, Quail Hollow, support for local schools, local fairs, the Bruce W. Woolpert Algebra Academy, the Aromas Community Park, Aromas Grange and all kinds of community partnerships across the region. We like to do what I jokingly call a thinly veiled open house — invite people in, show them what we do, and pair that with a worthy beneficiary so the whole thing becomes useful and meaningful.

Your quarry tours have become a local favorite. What is it about the quarry that captures people's interest?

It's just an extraordinary place. Even after hundreds of visits, I still enjoy it every single time. There's scale, power, geology, history, machinery, and sheer visual drama. It changes people's perspective. They come away realizing this industry is much more sophisticated, much more essential, and much more interesting than they ever imagined.

And the audiences are great. We've had everybody from neighbors and retirees to school people, politicians, interested residents, and families. All ages. All kinds.

The quarry really does feel almost otherworldly. Has anything especially unusual happened out there?

There have been some pretty wild moments. Years ago, when the little Mars rover was being developed, they brought it out to part of the restoration area because it looked sort of moonscape-ish. They actually bounced signals off Mars and back to make it move. That was one of those moments where you stop and think, "Wait a minute — this is happening here?"

We've also had geological work with the U.S. Geological Survey because of the quarry's proximity to

the fault line. So yes, it's an industrial place, but it also intersects with science and history in some very interesting ways.

Graniterock material has ended up in some remarkable places.

It has. Some of our rock went by shipping container to the Marshall Islands for satellite launching pads. Our stone has been used in an installation at the Brooklyn Jewish Holocaust Museum. Then, closer to home, there are the runways at SFO, San Jose, Monterey, and many other airports in the region. Stanford Linear Accelerator is another standout — all the concrete in there came from us.

There are a lot of places where, once you know, you start seeing Graniterock everywhere.

You've also helped tell Graniterock's story over the years.

That has been one of the really enjoyable parts. For the company's 100th anniversary, we created a history book. I like to call myself the executive producer of that project — finding the writers, helping shape it, coordinating design and interviews. Then for the 125th anniversary, we created an award-winning film. So, in one chapter we wrote the book, and in another we made the movie.

Graniterock has such a rich history and helping preserve that has been meaningful to me.

You seem genuinely attached not just to



The Mars Rover was brought out to part of the Graniterock restoration area because it looked moonscape-ish.

the company, but to the communities around it — especially Aromas.

Very much so. I love all our little communities. Aromas in particular has a special charm. The Aromas Grange is one of my favorite places — a little slice of Americana. That warm wood interior, that history, that feeling. You look at the floor and think about how many boots have danced across it over the decades.

Graniterock has had a long relationship with places like the Grange, the Aromas Community Park, local schools, and community groups. Those relationships matter. They're not just side projects. They're part of the heartbeat.

What are you going to miss most?

The people. No question. I've made some very dear friends here, and I'll miss seeing them regularly. Graniterock has a very loyal culture. People stay. People care. There's a reason for that.

And I'll miss the quarry. I really will. There's just something about it. I've seen it countless times and it still gives me a little thrill.

And yes, I'll miss the community side too — the events, the faces, the chance encounters, the fun of showing up and being part of things.

What does the next chapter look like?

A little golf—though not serious golf. Hit-and-giggle golf. I'm looking forward to taking some art classes, especially printmaking, which I never got to take in college. I'd like to paint more too and see where that leads. And my wife and I are planning on traveling.

I'll continue my volunteer work. I'm committed to the Bruce W. Woolpert Algebra Academy, the Monterey County Economic Development Committee, and the Neighbors Helping Neighbors food giveaway at the Aromas Grange, which is a wonderful little group.

And I'll likely still do some consulting with Graniterock and continue leading some tours. That makes me happy.

Slowing down, maybe, leaving the quarry, no.

That's fair. I'm not disappearing. You will not find me motionless on the front porch. I still want to stay engaged, stay curious, and stay useful.

After nearly 30 years, what stays with you most?

Gratitude, really. I've loved this company. I've loved the people. I've loved being part of these communities. There's a lot to love about Graniterock, and I've been lucky to spend so many years in a role that let me connect all of those things. ■



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MISSIONVILLAGEVOICE Community Bulletin Board

Court seeks volunteers

The Superior Court of San Benito County is seeking volunteers to serve on the 2026–27 Civil Grand Jury. This 19-member panel is made up of San Benito residents who volunteer their time to act as an independent investigatory watchdog, ensuring that San Benito County's local government is serving the best interests of its citizens. Find out more info and apply at: www.sanbenito.courts.ca.gov/applycgj

Valley Health Associates unveils Mobile Unit

A custom mobile unit was unveiled by Valley Health Associates (VHA), a non-profit organization specializing in substance use disorder care and recovery. VHA is a Wellness Center designed to serve clients in Monterey and San Benito County with a whole-person approach.

This Mobile Unit is unique in its design. Services are starting now with clients in the Monterey Bay Peninsula (Marina and Seaside), and a second Mobile Unit will be completed in May to serve South Monterey County and San Benito County.

"The Mobile Unit will provide most of the programs offered at the main office in Salinas, like medication-assisted treatment, counseling, and peer support," said La Tonya Glover, executive director.



The fully staffed Mobile Unit will meet patients/clients where they are at - eliminating the transportation challenge that many of them face.

Valley Health Associates is located at 913 Blanco Circle, Salinas, CA. To inquire about services, call 831-424-6655 or visit www.valleyhealthassociates.com.

Law Day Essay Scholarship offered

High school and college students are invited to apply. Essays are due April 10.

Law Day will be celebrated on May 1 at the San Benito County Courthouse, where winners will receive their awards. This year's theme: The Rule of Law and the American Dream.

Submissions may be mailed to:
San Benito County Courthouse – Resource Team
RE: Law Day
450 Fourth Street, Hollister
Or emailed to: resourceteam@sanbenitocourt.org. ■

MISSION VILLAGE VOICE Q&A

Camilla Gibson and Jacob Morris-Knower, owners of 'It's Alive Sourdough'

Out on the historic Baumgartner Family Ranch in San Juan Bautista—where Jacob's great-grandparents once lived and where the land is still held and loved by the family—something quietly alive is taking shape. Inside a converted tack room of the barn, Camilla and Jacob bake sourdough, tend wild ferments, and make small-batch goods—the slow way.

You'll find sourdough bread, made from whole grains grown and stone milled in California, vegetables harvested from fields on the ranch, Morris Grassfed Beef (from Jacob's uncle, Joe Morris), and even beeswax and honey sourced just down the road. If you have the time; you could walk there.

After Los Angeles and a stint at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, the two landed in San Juan Bautista, drawn by the land, the roots, and a different way to live.

With a nod (and blessing) from Jacob's grandmother "Bummie," they're doing exactly that.

Find them at Vertigo in San Juan Bautista on Saturdays and at the Carmel Valley Farmer's Market on Sundays. Visit: www.itsalivesourdough.com, Instagram: @itsalivesourdough, Email: itsalivesourdough@gmail.com

Q: How did your passion for sourdough and fermented vegetables start?

Jacob: Each of these passions has a different timeline, but they all connect through a commitment to local food systems. I've been baking my whole life, starting with pancakes as a kid, teaching myself yeasted breads from cookbooks, and eventually getting into sourdough in college.

A turning point was reading Michael Pollan's *Cooked*. That led me down a rabbit hole of sourcing stone milled flour, which eventually became a huge part of what we do.

Q: Was bread the beginning?

Jacob: Definitely. I became interested in making bread with the highest quality ingredients—specifically freshly stone milled, whole grain flour from local farms. When I moved from central New York State to Los Angeles, I realized how hard that was to find.

Q: And how did the two of you meet?

Jacob: Through yoga, and then fermentation. Camilla was baking stone milled whole grain sourdough, and obviously I became her customer.

Camilla: I had a small business in Venice Beach called Camilla's Sourdough. It started as a pop-up and then became a café. I eventually posted that I was looking for help, and Jacob applied.

Jacob: I was teaching math at the time. I ended up doing sourdough in the mornings and teaching in the afternoons for about six months.

Q: When did this become a full-time



path?

Camilla: I invited him to become full-time, and he accepted. Around that time, he also taught me a lot about vegetable fermentation.

Jacob: I had been interested in wild fermented vegetables—sauerkraut, kimchi, things like that. We started leaning into that more and experimenting with different vegetables we would find at the farmer's market.

Q: Where did that passion come from?

Jacob: Someone once asked me what I would do if money didn't matter. My answer was: go to farmer's markets, find the best vegetables I could ferment with, and build relationships with growers—and eaters.

That idea stuck—and it ties back to my family, too. My uncle Joe's ranch and his grassfed



Camilla Gibson, Jacob Morris-Knower and Joe Morris at their pop-up at Vertigo Coffee. Jacob and Camilla source all their stone-milled, whole grains from California farms.

beef really shaped how I think about food—transparency, quality, knowing exactly where it comes from.

Q: How did Big Sur enter the story?

Camilla: I got burnt out running a full-time café in Venice. I scaled back to pop-ups and then went to Big Sur to work at the Esalen Institute.

Jacob: We were still just friends then. On our drive up, we stopped in San Juan Bautista to rest because it was en route. I showed her my family's ranch.

Camilla: Years earlier we had joked about having a bakery there. It seemed like a passing dream that would probably never happen—but here we are.

Q: Was that the turning point?

Camilla: Yes. We had spent so much time working together, but that trip was different. We realized there might be something more there.

Jacob: Eventually I quit my job—again—and joined her in Big Sur.

Q: And what brought you from Big Sur to San Juan Bautista?

Camilla: We started visiting more and more. It was only a couple hours away, and every time we came, it just felt peaceful and right.

Jacob: It kept pulling us back. We moved here in September.

Q: And you built the business from the ranch?

Jacob: Yes. We converted the tack room of the barn into a licensed kitchen. It took a lot—upgrading the electrical and plumbing, deep cleaning, sourcing equipment—but it all came together.

Q: What are you offering now?

Camilla: The core is sourdough bread. We also offer wild fermented vegetables, hot sauces, tonics, beef tallow balms, Uncle Joe's

Morris Grassfed Beef, and naturally dyed natural fiber clothing.

Q: What's your top seller?

Camilla: The breads—especially the ancient grain porridge loaf.

Q: What makes that loaf special?

Camilla: It has a fermented porridge folded into it—steel-cut oats, chia, teff, amaranth, flax—so the inside is super moist and chewy, almost like mochi, with a crisp crust.

Jacob: And like all our breads, it's high hydration, long fermented, and made from local California-grown grains, freshly stone milled and always unshifted. All these factors contribute to flavor and digestibility.

Q: How long does the bread take to make?

Jacob: Three days. We start on Wednesday for Saturday. That long fermentation is everything.

Q: Where are your ingredients coming from?

Camilla: From local farms, especially Lute Organic Farms here in San Juan Bautista, run by Maria Ana Reyes and her daughters, Yesenia and Angelica.

Jacob: Our flour is stone milled to order by Capay Mills from CA-grown organic wheat and rye, our grassfed butter is from Petaluma, honey from Aromas—everything is as local as possible.

Q: How has the response been so far?

Camilla: Really encouraging. We spent months wondering if this would work, and now people are showing up and loving it.

Jacob: It feels like we're actually doing it.

Q: What does your weekly rhythm look like?

Camilla: Wednesday through Friday are prep days—baking, fermenting, organizing. Weekends are markets. Monday and Tuesday

are supposed to be days off.

Jacob: "Supposed to be."

Q: What do you love most about living here?

Camilla: Being in nature, walking the fields with the farmers, witnessing the magic of the wild creatures all around.

Jacob: Seeing the food grow, harvesting it, then alchemizing it—that's the best part.

Q: And beyond the food, you're also making art and clothing?

Camilla: Yes—all my clothes are one-of-a-kind, natural fibers, hand-dyed with indigo, embroidered, upcycled. It's all connected to the same philosophy. Jacob plays guitar and writes poetry—he serenades me while I work on visual art.

Q: Final question—what do you hope people take away from what you're doing?

Jacob: A connection—to the land, to the



farmers, to their food.

Camilla: We want a shift in the culture. We want to see this region flourish with healthy and beautiful landscapes, waterways, creatures, and people. We want to be part of a movement, keeping heritage seeds and stories alive, nourishing bodies and the living soil that sustain us. ■



id-i-om

'Metsä vastaa niin kuin sinne huudetaan'

"The forest answers the way you shout into it." (Finnish)

Meaning: Nature, and life, responds to how you treat it. Respect the environment and it sustains you; abuse it and the consequences echo back. ■

UPCOMING

Local organic farms open their gates

This April, local nonprofit Tera Farm is opening the gates to a series of small, organic farms in and around San Juan Bautista, inviting the community to reconnect with where their food comes from.

Over seven days - April 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 18, and 19 - guests can take guided farm tours showcasing a diverse range of crops, from seasonal vegetables and citrus to apples, flowers, and plants for home gardens. Tours begin at 10 a.m. on weekends, with additional 4 p.m. options offered on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Each visit lasts about one to one-and-a-half hours and offers a behind-the-scenes look at small-scale, sustainable farming. Depending on what's in season, guests may enjoy samples or U-pick opportunities, including strawberries, mandarins, and flowers.



There's no cost to attend, though visitors are encouraged to support the farmers directly by purchasing plants or produce on-site. Expect healthy, organic offerings and unique varieties grown with care and expertise.

Space is limited for each tour, and advance registration is required.

It's a simple idea with a meaningful impact: meet your farmers, see the land, and take a little of it home with you. Register at <https://www.terafarm.org/nextfarmvisit> ■

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BEEN THERE, DONE THAT



San Benito Arts Poet Amanda Chiado winner of the 2026 Press 53 Award for Poetry in Baltimore.



San Benito Leadership Institute Program Day. L-R: Brenda Weatherly, Judge Omar Rodriguez, Elvira Robinson, Tom Breen, Corinne Enni and Dr. Kathleen Rose.



SBALT volunteers working on Rancho Larios trail maintenance. L-R: Ray Trabucco, Alan Robertson, Teresa Harnois, & Kris Hernandez.



L-R: Bert Cutino (Sardine Factory owner), Efrain Villa-Valdez (Drummond Culinary Academy student), and Benjamin Brandt (Sardine Factory executive chef) at Rancho Cielo's 16th Annual Culinary Round Up, Portola Hotel & Spa, Monterey.



Newest SJB Native Daughter's of the Golden West of San Benito County - Olga Hernandez, Tami Avilas, Monica Sandavol Rivera & Cynthia Balesteros.

BEEN THERE, DONE THAT



Forest & Jackson Willson with Mel Ruiz, fully committed at the Hollister SDES Portuguese Lodge Crab Cioppino Feed.



San Benito Arts Council founders Kent Child, Jane Rekedal, Jennifer Laine & Cesar Flores at Vertigo in SJB.



Joe Claus The memorial bench builder!



SBC Integrated Waste Management FREE monthly compost workshops with Master Composter Otis Johnson at SBC Historic Park.



Joe Cousins (center) with his sons L-R Joshua, Jacob, Joe, Jarrod & Joseph, remembering Jerry Cousins.



The Tranquility Rooms are expected to deliver measurable benefits, such as improved resident comfort and dignity.

HEALTH

Mabie Skilled Nursing Facilities debut new Tranquility Rooms for patients

Therapeutic spaces designed to support residents with cognitive impairment and mental health conditions

The Mabie Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNFs) at Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital (HHMH) have unveiled two newly designed Tranquility Rooms—one at



Jaylee McGary explaining room features

each facility—offering a therapeutic environment dedicated to residents living with dementia, Alzheimer's disease, and other cognitive or mental health conditions.

These innovative spaces are designed to provide comprehensive sensory therapy aimed at reducing anxiety, minimizing agitation, and improving overall quality of life. Nearly half of the 95 residents across both facilities experience cognitive impairment, depression, anxiety, or related conditions, reflecting a growing need for specialized care environments both locally and nationwide.

"Tranquility Rooms represent our commitment to dignified, person-centered care," said Jaylee McGary, Interim Director of Nursing. "By creating a calming, supportive environment, we can better meet the emo-

terventions.

The project was made possible through a \$100,000 grant from the Fred Matteson Family Fund administered through the Community Foundation of San Benito County and the Hazel Hawkins Hospital Foundation. Funding supported the installation of therapeutic furniture and sensory elements such as Thera-Glide chairs, bubble walls, fiber optic lighting, musical instruments for music therapy, digital picture frames, and local San Benito County artwork. Additional investments include aromatherapy systems, adjustable lighting, and comprehensive staff training programs.

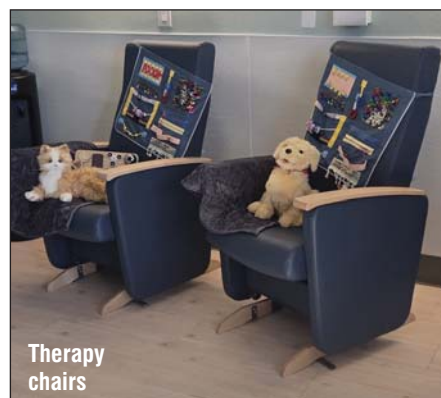
These evidence-based features are designed to engage multiple senses—visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory—through calming sounds, weighted blankets, therapeutic scents, and customizable lighting.

With Alzheimer's disease affecting someone new every 65 seconds nationwide, Hazel Hawkins' initiative positions San Benito County as a leader in innovative memory care. The Tranquility Rooms also serve as a model for families and caregivers seeking to create supportive environments at home.

"At the center of everything we do is one unwavering principle: the dignity of each person we serve," added Mary Casillas, HHMH CEO. "These rooms provide a peaceful sanctuary where residents can feel safe, reconnect with loved ones, and receive compassionate care in a low-stimulation setting."

About Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital

Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital is a full-service, public agency hospital delivering modern medicine and compassionate care to the growing San Benito County community. HHMH offers hundreds of health services across multiple locations, including top-tier specialists, a modern Emergency Department, and a state-of-the-art Women's Center. To learn more about Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital and the Hazel Hawkins Hospital Foundation, please visit www.hazelhawkins.com. ■



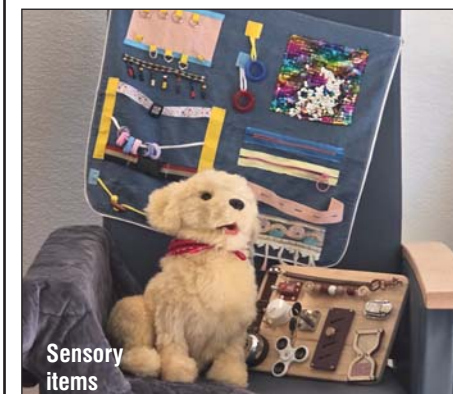
Therapy chairs

tional and psychological needs of our residents while enhancing their daily experiences."

The Tranquility Rooms are expected to deliver measurable benefits, including:

- Improved resident comfort and dignity
- Reduced reliance on psychotropic medications
- Fewer behavioral episodes requiring intervention
- Enhanced family visit experiences
- Increased staff efficiency in managing complex behaviors

In addition to sensory therapy, the rooms will serve multiple purposes, including quiet spaces for residents, psychology sessions, family visits, and one-on-one therapeutic in-



Sensory items

The Tranquility Rooms also serve as a model for families and caregivers seeking to create supportive environments at home.

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City of San Juan Bautista Recreation Department

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City Hall: April 1-May 29, Monday-Friday, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM | Community Center: April 8, 5:00 PM-7:00 PM
City Hall: 311 Second Street, San Juan Bautista | Community Center: 10 San Jose Street, San Juan Bautista
League starts mid-June | Ages 5-18

For questions, please contact:

City of San Juan Bautista
(831) 636-6311 | recreation@san-juan-bautista.ca.us
Not affiliated with ASIUSD

68-88



This space provided as a community service by Graniterock to highlight nonprofit agencies or individuals who serve our community. To be considered for this spot please contact Anne Caetano at annecaetano@aol.com.

Attention:
Updated date for
San Juan Bautista

Environmental Day

Three Free Services for San Benito County Residents!



2026 EVENTS FROM 9AM – 1PM

WHEN: **MAY 2**

WHERE: Brigantino Park
2100 San Juan Hollister Rd, Hollister

WHEN: **MAY 16**

WHERE: San Juan School
100 Nyland Dr., San Juan Bautista

WHAT:



Electronic Waste Recycling (E-waste)

Drop off unwanted e-waste including televisions, computers and accessories, cell phones, laptops, game consoles, radios, stereos, and small electronics with cords. *No large household appliances (stoves, refrigerators, washers, dryers, etc.) will be accepted.*



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Bring up to five full banker boxes (legal size; 24 x 12 x 10) of documents to be confidentially and securely shredded on-site. Paperclips and staples do not need to be removed.

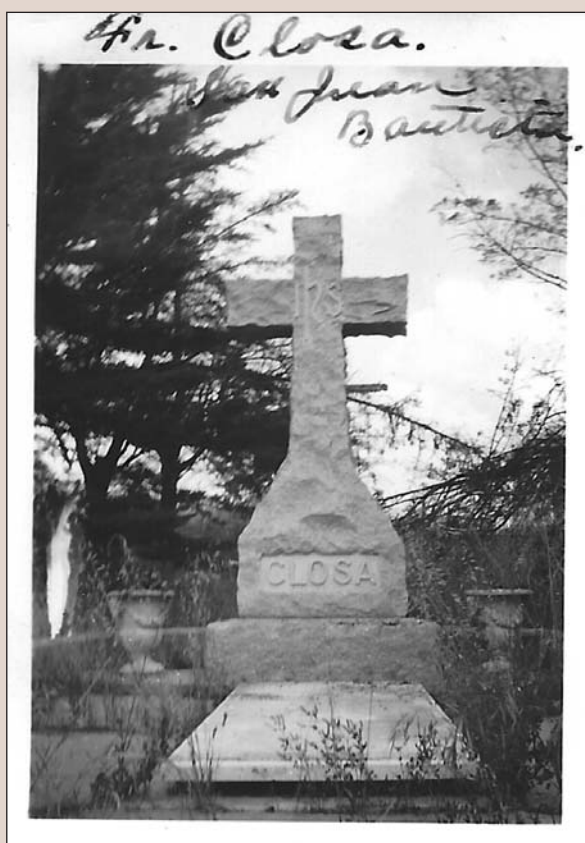


Compost Giveaway

Residents may take up to 32 gallons of compost to use as a soil amendment for gardens and landscaping projects. This compost is from local participation in Recology's Organics program. Please bring your own shovel and container. Limited supply available.

No assistance will be provided. Bring your own shovel, gloves and container for loading compost.

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Above left: THEN Fr. Closa sculpted headstone at SJB Cemetery PC. V. Mossop, courtesy Mayo Hayes O'Donnell Library. Above right: NOW Fr. Closa headstone, pre-cast concrete with beveled edges.

Then... and Now: Fr. Closa Cross at San Juan Cemetery

By Wanda Guibert, San Juan Bautista Historical Society

While some people find graveyards spooky and others treat them as hallowed, sacred spaces, many regard them as historical portals that reveal a town's beginnings and its founders. Sitting atop a hill overlooking San Juan Bautista, the city cemetery hosts many old headstones and spectacular views of the area and is alive with activity throughout the week.



Fr. Closa funeral. Pallbearers include Steve Lavagnino and then Sheriff Jere Croxon. San Juan Mission News Vacation Issue 14 August 1964.



In this rural setting, people often visit to tend the graves of loved ones. Additionally, the hills are a popular spot for locals to get a cardio workout and accrue their daily steps or take their dogs for a leisurely stroll. Either way, one can't help but notice some of the more intriguing memorial markers, such as the large concrete cross at the top of the hill bearing the initials IHS at the top and the name CLOSA at the bottom. IHS is a Christian symbol representing Jesus Christ, and CLOSA represents Valentin Closa (1841-1916),

L. A. Mourns Death of Aged Father Valentine Closa

News of the death of Rev. Valentine Closa, venerable priest of the San Juan Bautista mission in San Benito county, has been received with sorrow by the thousands of friends of the aged Catholic father in Los Angeles. Requiem mass will be solemnized Monday morning.

Father Closa was a native of Catalonia, Spain, and was 74 years old. For years he was assistant priest at St. Vibiana's.

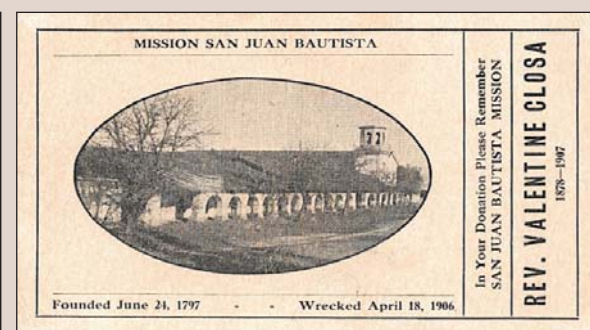
Funeral Is Held for Father Closa

By Pacific News Service

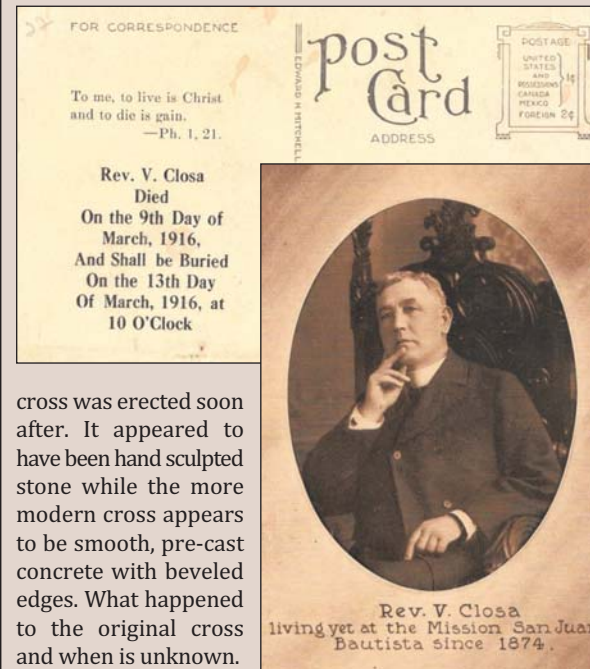
SAN JUAN, Cal., March 14.—The funeral of Father Valentin Closa, one of the best known priests in California, was held here yesterday. Nineteen priests from all sections of the state joined in the funeral chant. Monsignor Fischer of Santa Cruz conducted the high mass. "Movie" men secured pictures of the funeral.

an early Mission San Juan Bautista pastor and "one of the best known priests in California," per the 14 March 1916 Los Angeles Herald.

Closely comparing the Then and Now photos, notice that the large crosses are not the same; however, the original base may remain. Fr. Closa died in 1916, and presumably his



Fr. Closa small card. Below: a Fr. Closa postcard, back and front.



cross was erected soon after. It appeared to have been hand sculpted stone while the more modern cross appears to be smooth, pre-cast concrete with beveled edges. What happened to the original cross and when is unknown.

Born at Vic, Catalonia, Spain, Father Closa was the son of poor parents and destined to be a poor shepherd like his father. Determined to become a priest, he was self-educated and made his way to the U.S. at the age of 30, where he was stationed for a few months at the Old Plaza Church in Los Angeles. He then spent his remaining years at Mission San Juan Bautista.

In his Early Days in San Juan Bautista, pioneer Isaac Mylar recalls, "Father Valentin was almost my spiritual advisor...Closa was a fine Christian gentleman, and many good talks I had with him. He would advise me not to lose my temper, and I have always been thankful for the counsel that he gave me." By all accounts, Fr. Closa seems to have been beloved not only by the clergy but also by local businessmen, the Sheriff, the community.

An article about Closa's passing titled "A Life of Faithful Service Has Closed" appeared in the 11 March 1916 issue of the San Jose Mercury-News stating, "Since coming to the Mission, he used every effort to preserve the church and buildings and add to the collection of historical and religious relics. Thanks to his zeal and labors, the collection of relics is said to be the most valuable in any mission in the United States."

In his book, Mission San Juan Bautista: A School of Church Music, Father Zephyrin Engelhardt – the "Father of Mission History" – writes floridly, "Beloved rector of San Juan Bautista laid to rest Monday, March 13, 1916. The Angel of Death last Thursday morning, March 9, called to his eternal

See FR. CLOSA, next page

VOICING SOME THOUGHTS

Outta Sight Outer Space!

By Halina Kleinsmith

When looking up to scan the night sky, I'm witness to the same celestial phenomena our predecessors once observed.

This caused me to ponder the origin of an ancient word used to describe the cosmos, wondering who was first to refer to that dominion beyond earth as...space.

The term space stems from spatium, a medieval Latin word describing earth bound spatial aspects. Spatium sidereate then further denotes an expansive canopy which is enclosing our star studded realm.

An effort to relay this concept of the heavens as physically distinct, is initially proffered in the Bible's Genesis creation account, showing sky, and space, as separate atmospheric layers.

Yet another definitive reference appears during Moses' lifetime, surfacing in the book of Deuteronomy in 1,400 bce. Heaven is described in three layers, namely the atmosphere; outer space where stars are; and the divine abode.

Approximately three millennia later, the realization of that which is beyond earth was similarly described in John Milton's epic poem 'Paradise Lost'. Published in 1667, his universe view is also arranged with heaven at the top, earth hanging below it, and hell at the bottom, all separated by vast chaotic space.

Space had often been defined as an area



beyond human comprehension, when our calculations and equipment were not yet at the level of our current colossal scientific view.

Milton's poem prophetically served to encompass a cosmic expansive narrative, contemplating the probable existence of other planets, and even life, beyond outer space.

As earthlings residing in the present galactic realm, our era of space exploration and substantiation of newly located star systems is apparent.

We have achieved formidable numbers, showing the actual summation of distances travelled are impressively in tandem with the sum total of earth's quantifying, fact collecting space missions. ■



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Fr. Closa, continued

home one of the oldest priests of the Diocese of Monterey and Los Angeles, Father Valentin Closa, who for forty-two years had ministered to the spiritual needs of the people of the Mission San Juan Bautista, first as assistant priest, and then as rector. He had been ill for some years, and almost blind, having suffered several strokes of paralysis. Then days before his death he had another stroke, and gradually grew weaker until the end came."

Fr. Engelhardt closes his commentary on Fr. Closa with, "All San Juan Bautista and the surrounding county mourned when...the remains of the beloved priest were laid away at the foot of the Cross in the cemetery overlooking the Mission and the beautiful San Juan Valley."

In 1864, Manuel Larios, one of the original Spanish Castilian "Dons," deeded 10 acres of his Rancho San Antonio to the people of San Juan for the development of a town cemetery. Pioneers of varied nationalities are buried here with a wide variety of funerary



Closa cross at center of heart. Courtesy Miguel Villareal Mendonca.

art dating from the 1800s. This cemetery is a major historic and cultural resource for the community.

As ever, thanks to the California Digital Newspaper Collection (<https://cdnc.ucr.edu>), a repository of historical California newspapers published from 1846-present. The CDNC faced significant disruption to its funding over the first half of 2025 but has been successfully sustained by generous donors. ■

MISSION VILLAGE VOICE | APRIL 2026

Calendar

TUESDAY MARCH 30

HAZEL HAWKINS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL CELEBRATES NATIONAL DOCTORS DAY

FRIDAY APRIL 3

FIRST FRIDAY NIGHT MARKET @ VERTIGO SAN JUAN BAUTISTA 5-9pm. Artists/Vendors, Vinyl DJ. 4-8pm Hapa Bros Food Truck. Vertigocoffee.com

SATURDAY APRIL 4

LIVING HISTORY DAYS 11am-4pm. SJB State Historic Park. 1st Saturday

RICK RAMIREZ LIVE @ THE HIDEAWAY @THE-HIDEAWAY SJB San Juan Bautista

WHARF WALKS - AZOREAN FISHERMAN WHAILING AND THE PORTUGUESE LEGACY IN THE MONTEREY BAY Montereywharf.com

SUNDAY APRIL 5

EASTER SUNDAY BRUNCH @ 36 NORTH SAN JUAN OAKS 10am-2pm SanJuanOaks.com

RANCH DAYS / HIKES ON NYLAND & RANCHO LARIOS PROTECTED LANDS IN SAN JUAN BAUTISTA 9am-12pm. Families welcome! sanbenitolandtrust.org 1st Sunday

FIGURE DRAWING COLLECTIVE 2-5pm. Sunday Curacontemporary.com Morgan Hill. 1st Sunday.

SBALT RANCH DAY AND NATURE HUNT 9am-12pm. Families welcome! sanbenitolandtrust.org 1st Sunday

MONDAY APRIL 6

OPEN STUDIOS PREVIEW EXHIBITION OPENS Sanbenitoarts.org

THURSDAY APRIL 9

MINUTE EXPO & BUSINESS MIXER Demo your products/services to fellow business owners. 2nd & 4th Thursdays. Expocon.co

ART IN BLOOM: ARTS SHOWCASE 4-7pm. Student visual & performing arts from across SBC. Veterans Hall, Hollister.

FRIDAY APRIL 10

OPEN MIC @ THE HIDEAWAY @THEHIDEAWAY SJB San Juan Bautista

SATURDAY APRIL 11

MEET THE RANCHER - JOE MORRIS @ MUDSTONE RANCH 9am-1pm. 1 mile guided hike with Joe Morris as he reveals how the cattle grazing program bal-



Saturday and Sunday, April 11 and 12

WHALEFEST IN MONTEREY is a 2-day event from 10 am to 5 pm set around Monterey's Old Fisherman's Wharf and the adjacent Custom House Plaza, designed to be enjoyed by attendees of all ages. Whalefest features exhibits from dozens of local and national non-profit organizations related to marine science, sustainability of land and sea, and the environment. Whalefest Monterey features a Symposium at Historic Stanton Center at Custom House Plaza where world-renowned scientists from local marine science research institutions share their latest research findings. Whalefest.org. Photo: Robin Gwen Agarwal via Flickr (CC 2.0)

ances recreational opportunities and fuel reduction while enhancing natural plant communities. FREE Hollister.Hills@parks.ca.gov / 831.636.2065

FRIENDS OF THE SBC LIBRARY MONTHLY USED BOOK SALE 9-11:30am. Behind the SBC Library. Every 2nd Saturday.

OPERA CONCERT - ALLIANA LILI YANG 7-8:30pm. Curacontemporary.com Morgan Hill

RED TAIL BAND LIVE @ THE HIDEAWAY @THE-HIDEAWAY SJB San Juan Bautista

SAT. APRIL 11 -SUNDAY APRIL 12

WHALEFEST MONTEREY Whalefest.org

SUNDAY APRIL 12

SAN JUAN BAUTISTA VFW FLEA MARKET 8am-3pm. 58 Monterey St. Contact Augie 408.603.6055

WILD FLOWER HIKE @ HOLLISTER HILLS SVRA 10-11am. FREE Hollister.Hills@parks.ca.gov

MONDAY APRIL 13

PERFORMERS CIRCLE - AROMAS GRANGE 7-9pm. Aromasgrange.org 2nd Monday @ Month

TUESDAY APRIL 14

SAN BENITO COUNTY CHAMBER MIXER @ SAN JUAN OAKS 5:30-7pm. RSVP required sanbenitocountychamber.com

FRIDAY APRIL 17

EMERSON LAKE & PALMER Goldenstatetheatre.com

Monterey

NDGW MONTHLY PEDRO CARD PARTY 1pm. \$10. NDGW Adobe, 203 4th street SJB. 2nd Friday

SATURDAY APRIL 18

CAREGIVER UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE -HOLLISTER Join us for education, support and community. FREE admission. Info. Delmarcaregiver.org or 800.624.8304 visit www.delmarcaregiver.org/conference.

THE SLY COYOTE - JR. RANGER PROGRAM 10-11am. FREE Hollister.Hills@parks.ca.gov

TURKEY VULTURE-THE JANITOR OF THE PARK 6-7pm. FREE Hollister.Hills@parks.ca.gov

STENCIL PRINTING WORKSHOP WITH CARRIE ANN PLANK 12-4pm. Curacontemporary.com Morgan Hill

MONTHLY HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION EVENT 9am-12pm. John Smith Landfill, Hollister. Up to 15 gallons or 125 lbs of hazardous waste. Sanbenitocountyca.gov/HHW. 3rd Saturday

RICK RAMIREZ LIVE @ THE HIDEAWAY @THE-HIDEAWAY SJB San Juan Bautista

SUNDAY APRIL 19

SPLIT 6'S GOLF TOURNAMENT @ SAN JUAN OAKS 10am. SanJuanOaks.com

BANNED BOOK CLUB WITH BOOKS & BOTANY 1-3pm @ The Clove Art Complex, Gilroy.

Continued on next page



Sunday, April 12

WILDFLOWER HIKE at HOLLISTER HILLS SVRA 10-11am. FREE Hollister.Hills@parks.ca.gov

THURSDAY APRIL 23

MINUTE EXPO & BUSINESS MIXER Demo your products/services to fellow business owners. 2nd & 4th Thursdays. Expocon.co

FRIDAY APRIL 24

OPEN MIC @ THE HIDEAWAY @THEHIDEAWAY SJB San Juan Bautista

NDGW MONTHLY PEDRO CARD PARTY 1pm. \$10. NDGW Adobe, 203 4th street SJB. 4th Friday

SATURDAY APRIL 25

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SCAT! JR. RANGER PROGRAM 10-11am. FREE Hollister.Hills@parks.ca.gov

MINT JULEPS & MAYHEM: A MURDER MYSTERY NIGHT 6-9pm. Thegardenshoppeandbar.com Hollister

SOUTH VALLEY FLEURS GARDEN CLUB PLANT & CRAFT SALE 9am-3pm. Morgan Hill Cultural Community Center, 1700 Monterey St.

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION! STATE HISTORIC PARK SAN JUAN BAUTISTA 11am-2pm. Booths, games, art, performances, free recycling programs, art poster contest winner announced! State Historic Park, San Juan Bautista. Sanbenitocountyca.gov/iwm 831.636.4110

MENDING CIRCLE - STATE HISTORIC PARK SAN JUAN BAUTISTA EARTH DAY CELEBRATION! 11am-2pm. Learn techniques or share your own methods. Bring something to mend. Supplies provided.

MOON DANCE LIVE @ THE HIDEAWAY @THE-HIDEAWAY SJB San Juan Bautista



Saturday, April 25

SOUTH VALLEY FLEURS GARDEN CLUB PLANT & CRAFT SALE 9am-3pm. Morgan Hill Cultural Community Center, 1700 Monterey St. This is a Garden Club which funds garden projects in schools in San Benito, Gilroy & Morgan Hill Districts. They also fund and maintain Nordstrom Park Butterfly Garden, Hollister Fire Safe Garden, Gilroy Senior Center & Morgan Hill downtown planters.

SPRING WATERCOLOR SKETCHING WITH SUMA CM 10am-1:30pm. Curacontemporary.com Morgan Hill

THE WALLFLOWERS Goldenstatetheatre.com Monterey

ILYA YAKUSHEV PIANO Sunsetcenter.org Carmel

SUNDAY APRIL 26

EL TEATRO FAMILY DAY FUNDRAISER! 12-4pm. Food, Surprises, Family Fun, Raffles, Teatro, Games, Entertainment! El Teatro Playhouse, San Juan Bautista. Elteatrocampesino.com

THE SLY COYOTE - JR. RANGER PROGRAM 10-11am. FREE Hollister.Hills@parks.ca.gov

WEDNESDAY APRIL 29

WINEMAKER'S DINNER @ 36 NORTH SAN JUAN OAKS 6pm. Sanjuanoaks.com

Every Week

TUESDAYS

OFF THE CHAIN BIKES - 22 MI RIDE 6pm. Offthechainbikes.com Hollister

WEDNESDAYS

HOLLISTER CERTIFIED FARMERS MARKET BEGINS 3-7pm Wednesdays April 15 - October 21st. market@downtownhollister.org

GEEKS WHO DRINK - RUNNING ROOSTER TRIVIA NIGHT 6:30pm. Runningrooster.com Hollister

MARY VELASCO SELLEN SENIOR CENTER LUNCH, CHAIR YOGA & BINGO 11am Call 831.262.3484 maryedge@sbcglobal.net. San Juan Bautista VFW.

THURSDAYS

TRIVIA NIGHT WITH MIGUEL SILVA @ VERTIGO 6:30-8:30pm. El Guapo Food Truck. San Juan Bautista

VINYL NIGHT @ VERTIGO 6-9pm rotating DJ's, Hapa Bros Food Truck. San Juan Bautista

OFF THE CHAIN BIKES - 33 MI RIDE 6pm. Offthechainbikes.com Hollister

SATURDAYS

OFF THE CHAIN BIKES - 22 MI RIDE 8am. Offthechainbikes.com Hollister

LIVE MUSIC @ DAISY'S SALOON 9pm-12am. daisyssaloon.com San Juan Bautista

IT'S ALIVE POP-UP @ VERTIGO 9am-1pm. It-salivesourdough.com

Save the Date

FRIDAY MAY 1

BRILLIANCE IN EIGHT - FROM TANGO TO TRIUMPH 7pm. 8 celebrated musicians ignite the stage with tango fueled fire & romantic imagination. Sand-boxsandcity.com

SATURDAY MAY 2

RECOLOGY SAN BENITO ENVIRONMENTAL DAY HOLLISTER 9am-1pm. Brigantino Park, 2100 San



Saturday, April 25

EARTH DAY CELEBRATION! STATE HISTORIC PARK SAN JUAN BAUTISTA 11am-2pm. Booths, games, art, performances, free recycling programs, art poster contest winner announced! State Historic Park, San Juan Bautista. Sanbenitocountyca.gov/iwm 831.636.4110

Juan Hollister Rd., Hollister. Drop off unwanted e-waste, secure document shredding, compost giveaway. Visit Recology.com

FRIDAY MAY 8 - SATURDAY MAY 9

GILROY ASSISTANCE LEAGUE HOME + GARDEN TOUR GilroyAssistanceLeague.org

FRIDAY MAY 8 - SUNDAY MAY 10

THE GREAT SAN JUAN BAUTISTA RIB COOK Williamsltd.com

SATURDAY MAY 9

AROMAS COUNTRY GARDEN TOUR Tickets available

day of event at Aromas Grange. AromasHillsArtisans.org

SUNDAY MAY 10

MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH WITH LIVE MUSIC! 11am-2pm. Thegardenshoppeandbar.com Hollister

SATURDAY MAY 16

RECOLOGY SAN BENITO ENVIRONMENTAL DAY SAN JUAN BAUTISTA 9am-1pm. San Juan School, 100 Nyland Dr., San Juan Bautista. Drop off unwanted e-waste, secure document shredding, compost giveaway. Visit Recology.com



Saturday, April 25

THE WALLFLOWERS Goldenstatetheatre.com Monterey

MISSION VILLAGE VOICE Q&A

Concrete proof

Anzar students took it from classroom to job site at Willis Construction

By Anne Caetano

Right across the street from Anzar High School, students are stepping out of the classroom and onto a real job site—thanks to a hands-on partnership with Willis Construction. What started as an idea has grown into a full-scale, student-built project, complete with concrete benches that will outlast them all.

We caught up with **Larry Willis**, founder of Willis Construction, and Anzar High Career Technical Education teacher and 9th-grade advisor **David Founds** to talk about how it came together—and why it matters.

Q: What would you call this program?

Founds: It's not quite an internship. It's more of a real-world, hands-on project tied directly to what they're learning in class.

Q: How did this come together?

Founds: Larry really had the idea. I just looked at it and thought, "This is great—how do we make it happen?"

And honestly, having Larry right across the street is a godsend. He's willing to take a group of teenagers over there and show them how to do everything—walk them through a real project. It's a valuable experience.

Q: How did the students gear up before starting at Willis Construction?

Founds: A couple months of prep. They learned how concrete works—mixing, forms, calculations, even strength testing. They built molds and practiced on smaller projects before scaling up.

Q: What was it like once they got on-site?

Willis: Kids are kids—you just guide them. It's a little like herding kittens with power tools.

Q: What made this different from a typical class?

Founds: Access. That's the big one. This kind of opportunity is rare—liability, logistics, all of it usually gets in the way. But being able to walk them across the street into a working yard changes everything.

Willis: They're not just watching—they're doing the work. That's the difference.

Q: What did the students actually build?

Founds: Six concrete benches—from molds to pouring to finishing.

Willis: And they installed them too.

Q: Did this shift how students think about careers?



Larry Willis (left) and David Founds



Founds: Absolutely. We've got students working on resumes now. One is already aiming toward construction management.

There's growing interest in the trades. The gap between college and trades is getting smaller, and for some students, especially those who need to start working right away, this is a real opportunity. It gives them something tangible to put on a resume. They can say, "I did this."

Willis: And that matters—being able to point to something real you've built.

Q: There was also a former student working at Willis?

Willis: Yes, Will. He graduated from Anzar and works with us now.

Founds: That was a big moment. Students saw someone they remember—now running equipment, driving a forklift, working confidently. That bridge makes the next step feel real.

Q: What did it take for students to actually get onto the job site?

Willis: We figured out they can go through the hiring process—apply, interview, get a

work permit, even do drug screening and a physical. It's a real experience before they even get the job.

In Will's case, he's working and going to school for civil engineering, and we're helping him along the way.

Q: What are students learning beyond construction?

Founds: Responsibility. Precision. You measure correctly or you don't work.

Every day starts with a check-in. I'm handing them power tools—I need to know they're focused, ready, and present. That matters.

Q: Are you planning to continue this?

Founds: Yes. Next year's project is outdoor concrete ping pong tables, another real build, another step forward.

Q: Final thoughts?

Willis: A lot of kids just haven't had the chance to work with their hands. This gives them that.

Founds: And it gets them out of their desks and into something real. That's the goal. ■



THOMELLIER

Drink better: Why wine still belongs in modern California life

By Thomas Brenner

Modern California life is fast, expensive, and constantly demanding more of us. Between work, family, and the cost of simply existing, small pleasures matter more than ever. Wine remains one of the few that delivers, both immediately and over time.

Think I'm crazy? A paid agent of the wine industry? Hear me out.

We are in wine's true golden era. Even as demand slows, quality has never been higher. Farming is sharper, winemaking more precise, and access across California and beyond is unmatched. What used to require deep pockets or insider access is now sitting on shelves at prices that make sense.

Understanding how to spend on wine is where most people get it wrong. Think of it less as a splurge and more as a tiered tool for living well. The everyday bottle should live around twenty dollars, give or take a few, and should reliably elevate a simple meal at home. When you are hosting or bringing wine to friends, move into the thirty to fifty dollar range, where wines begin to show more depth, structure, and a

sense of place. Above that, purchases should be intentional. These are wines tied to celebrations, milestones, or bottles worth slowing down for, not just opening out of habit.

Where you buy matters, just not always in the way people assume. Big box retailers can absolutely deliver strong value and sharp pricing. Local wine shops offer something different. They support the community, strengthen the wine ecosystem, and often introduce bottles you would never come across otherwise. The choice is not one or the other but in knowing when to use each.

Wine simplifies life in a way cocktails try to replicate. A great cocktail is built on balance, sweetness from simple syrup, acidity from citrus, alcohol for structure, with botanicals, herbs, or spice layered in, often gin-driven when

herbaceous notes take the lead. Think of the spectrum. Bright and citrus driven drinks with freshness and zip. Tropical rum cocktails full of fruit and ease. Or deep, brooding old fashioned with weight, spice, and contemplation. Wine delivers that same range, only it does it naturally, from one ingredient, the grape. From vibrant, zippy whites and playful rosé to aromatic varieties like Gewürztraminer, from plush, fruit driven reds to the richness of Port, the spectrum is all there. Wine is, in many ways, the original ready-to-drink beverage. Complete, balanced, and expressive of time and place without needing to be built. Skip the premixed can. The bottle already has everything you are looking for.

Unlike most indulgences, wine does not have to disappear the moment you buy it. It can be cellared, tracked, revisited. A small, thoughtful collection is more rewarding than many disposable habits. In some cases, it even holds or gains value.

Wine is also cultural. It teaches geography, history, and agriculture. It creates conversation. It turns a meal into an experience.

In a busy household, wine gives us permission to pause. One glass at the end of the day. One bottle shared. One moment reclaimed.

And here is the simplest part. If every one of us had just one more glass of wine per month, the entire wine industry would shift. Not just stabilize, but surge. That small change would ripple outward, supporting farmers, winemakers, distributors, restaurants, and communities, and in doing so, fuel a renewed golden era of culture, art, history, tradition, togetherness, and the overall enjoyment of life.

Drink better, not more. You are what you eat, and you get what you buy.

Questions or recommendations? Find me at @vitiswineifera. ■



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION Grant rounds return for local non-profits

The Community Foundation for San Benito County is thrilled to announce the return of our Annual Grant Rounds and this year, we're aiming to award more than \$100,000 to nonprofits serving San Benito County.

After a pause last year, we heard clearly how much this funding matters. We've also been reviewing your



Community
Foundation
FOR SAN BENITO COUNTY

survey responses, and in response, we're bringing this opportunity back with renewed intention. Your organizations are on the front lines every day supporting families and seniors, expanding opportunities for youth, advancing health and wellness, protecting our environment, and enriching community life.

Now, we're bringing the grant round back with momentum.

A generous donor has pledged a \$50,000 matching gift to help make this possible. If we raise \$50,000 by May 1, the full match



will be unlocked, doubling community impact and allowing us to distribute more than \$100,000 in local grants.

We invite you to help rally the community. Share this match opportunity with your boards, volunteers, and supporters. When your networks give, they're strengthening the entire nonprofit ecosystem of San Benito County.

Grant guidelines and application details will be announced soon on our website. We can't wait to see the bold, impactful work you bring forward with this opportunity.

Let's work together to unlock this match and make this our most collaborative and energizing grant round yet! ■

ARTS

San Benito County celebrates 'Arts, Culture and Creativity Month'

The San Benito County Arts Council joins California for the Arts to celebrate the eighth annual Arts, Culture & Creativity Month (ACCM) throughout the state starting April 1. Locally, the Arts Council will be on hand to receive a Proclamation from the County Board of Supervisors at their April 14th meeting, recognizing ACCM and the power of arts and culture to inspire joy, unite communities, spark creativity in education, beautify spaces and serve as key economic drivers throughout the region.

"We are fortunate to live in a region that is rich with artists and cultural resources, including El Teatro Campesino and The Luna Gallery in San Juan Bautista, Aromas Hills Artisans, San Benito Stage Company, Oriana Chorale, countless emerging and established visual artists and many other creatives. These artists deserve to be celebrated and recognized not just for their talent, but for the real tangible economic and community ben-



efit that they bring to San Benito County," said Jennifer Laine, Executive Director of the San Benito County Arts Council.

California leads the nation in arts employment, with a creative economy valued at approximately \$289 billion—yet arts funding has remained stagnant since 2018. Arts advocates are calling the California Arts Council's 50th anniversary a landmark moment to renew California's national leadership and

make a meaningful commitment to the communities and workers who sustain it by increasing the agency's budget to \$50m.

This month, the SBC Arts Council will join advocates statewide in celebrating the arts and urging the Governor and Legislature to prioritize policies and investments that

support California's creative workforce, cultural communities and the broader creative economy. Increasing funding for the California Arts Council to \$50 million would represent a historic commitment to the state's future, as well as reinvestment in the Performing Arts Equitable Payroll Fund (PAEPF) and California Cultural Districts Program.

For resources and information about Arts, Culture, & Creativity Month 2026, visit: www.caforthearts.org/accm-2026

For resources and information about the San Benito County Arts Council, please visit www.sanbenitoarts.org. ■





VUE A LA LOO

The toilet that plants a tree

The Arborloo is one of the simplest and most hopeful sanitation ideas ever invented. The toilet sits above a shallow

pit. When the pit fills, the small toilet hut is moved to a new pit and a fruit tree is planted in the old one, where the composted nutrients help it grow.

Instead of becoming waste, human by-products literally help grow food and shade. Used widely in parts of Africa and ecological sanitation projects, it turns sanitation into a cycle of renewal. ■

GOING POSTAL Lowriders

With this new issuance, USPS celebrates lowrider car culture, rooted in working-class Mexican American/Chicano communities throughout the American Southwest.

"A lowrider is a masterpiece of engineering and artistry, a rolling canvas of art. They are often painted with murals that tell stories of family, faith and history," said Gary Barksdale, the Postal Service's chief postal inspector, who served as the dedicating official. "The lowrider culture is about creating a space to celebrate pride, a sense of belonging and building a community that is always there for each other."

Eager to show different lowrider styles, vintages and colors on these stamps, Antonio Alcalá, an art director for USPS, found that photography would best capture the essence of lowrider culture. "Photography helps honor the hard work that goes into the creation of each car," he explained. "Using illustrations would possibly be more about the artist's imagination than about actual lowriders."

These stamps feature photographs by Philip Gordon of "Let the Good Times Roll/Soy Como Soy," a blue 1946 Chevrolet Fleetline, and "Pocket Change," a green 1987 Oldsmobile Cutlass Supreme; and photographs by Humberto "Beto" Mendoza of



"Eight Figures," a blue 1958 Chevrolet Impala, "The Golden Rose," an orange 1964 Chevrolet Impala, and "El Rey," a red 1963 Chevrolet Impala.

To show the cars in as much detail as possible, Alcalá made these stamps one-third wider than the usual commemorative size. Other design elements pay further tribute to lowrider culture: The Gothic-style typography suggests the shiny chrome lettering found on many cars to show their affiliation with a particular club. Danny Alvarado's custom pinstriping in the corner of each stamp and on the selva evokes the detailed decoration on the most celebrated lowriders.

Lowriders stamps will be issued in panes of 15. As Forever stamps, they will always be equal in value to the current First-Class Mail 1-ounce price. The stamps are available at Post Office locations nationwide and online at usps.com/shopstamps. ■



By conserving San Antonio Ranch, we can ensure it continues to serve as a bridge between other protected lands.

SBALT NEWS

Close the gap: protect San Antonio Ranch

By Lynn Overtree,
Executive Director

If acquired, San Antonio Ranch would contribute to a 4,245-acre protected



The local, Indigenous-led nonprofit Amah Mutsun Land Trust (AMLT) intends to hold a cultural easement on the San Antonio Ranch. AMLT and

wildlife corridor by filling a key gap and connecting three permanently protected properties (Rocks Ranch, Rancho Larios, and Nyland Property) located adjacent to Caltrans' San Benito Wildlife Crossing over US Highway 101. Without permanent protection, the property is highly vulnerable to subdivision into ranchettes, which would irreversibly compromise wildlife movement.

As an essential pathway connecting the Gabilan Range to the Santa Cruz Mountains, deer and bobcats, among others, rely on these rangelands to move safely. If the ranching tradition here were lost to development, that corridor would place pressure on wildlife movement, even as regional partners work toward solutions like the San Benito Wildlife Crossing.

Stewardship plays a vital role in keeping this land healthy and functional. Working ranches provide healthy protein, open space, maintain habitat, and support biodiversity in ways that benefit both people and wildlife. By conserving San Antonio Ranch, we can ensure it continues to serve as a bridge between other protected lands.

SBALT have demonstrated their compatibility through the Indigenous Cultural Conservation and Access Easement that AMLT has on SBALT's Nyland property. As a region that values history, we are learning more about the time before the missions and are enriched by the descendants of those who lived here for thousands of years.

Last fall, a few of you joined us for our annual Post-Thanksgiving Day hike at San Antonio Ranch and experienced firsthand the beauty of this working landscape. From the panoramic vista to the signs of wildlife, the day offered a glimpse of why this property matters so deeply to the future of conservation in our region. Join us for one of two guided San Antonio Ranch Discovery Hikes: Saturday, April 18, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., or our May Ranch Day, Sunday, May 3, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. These hikes offer a chance to walk the land, learn about its role in the regional wildlife corridor, and see why ranching, land stewardship, and conservation matter. We can't let this one get away! For more information, visit us at www.sanbenitolandtrust.org. ■

THE GOLDEN AGE

Free event for caregivers!

By Leanne Oliveira

"It's important to have a twinkle in your wrinkle." - Unknown

Happy Spring! There is a new urgent care facility in Hollister (890 Sunset Drive B-2) and all are welcome to visit their Open House on April 16 at 5:00 PM. More at www.hollisterurgentcare.com.

The Alzheimer's Association's virtual April classes include "Supporting Independence" and "10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's." For a full class list and languages, visit www.ALZ.org/CRF. You can also swing by the ADRC (300 West Street, Hollister) for helpful Alz materials including "courtesy cards" which notify folks that a loved one has dementia. Handy to keep in wallets to pass out at appointments and social situations!

The Mary Velasco Sellen Senior Center (MVSSC) in SJB is hoppin' like an Easter bunny Tuesdays with exercise classes at the Community Center (10 San Jose St) from 11 AM-12 PM. Wednesday Activities at the VFW (58 Monterey St) include Chair Yoga at 11 AM, lunch at noon, and Bingo at 1 PM.

MVSSC also hosts two senior-focused non-profit agencies (who also have multiple programs in Hollister) out of its Windmill Plaza offices at 301 The Alameda Suite B: Senior Network Services' Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program (HICAP/831-200-



Seniors Council Board President Tami Aviles assists walk-ins at a recent Tech-Help session at the Library in Hollister. Bring your device(s) on 4/21 and the tech team can help! Call 831-636-4107.

3257) assists Fridays from 9:30 AM-1:30 PM with free Medicare counseling and Del Mar Caregiver Resource Center assists 9 AM-3 PM every second and fourth Monday.

Note that Del Mar has a popular well-established Caregiver Support Group in Hollister and is seeking to build a group in SJB. Please reach out ASAP (800-624-8304) so they don't cancel due to lack of interest! Del Mar is also hosting its annual Caregiver University in Hollister on 4/18 which includes lunch, breakout sessions, and many vendors with goodies to assist your wellness. Caregivers of all levels are invited! Free tickets at www.HPCN.org. ■

Leanne Oliveira (MLIS, MA History) co-coordinates the Aging & Disability Resource Connection program for Seniors Council at the Community Center in Hollister and writes #Bookworm for the MVV. Contact LeanneO@SeniorsCouncil.org or visit www.SanBenitoADRC.org.



CLEAN AIR INCENTIVES

MONTEREY, SAN BENITO & SANTA CRUZ COUNTIES

LANDSCAPE EQUIPMENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Incentives for replacement of old, working, polluting lawn and garden equipment with zero-emission, battery-electric equipment (e.g. lawn mowers or leaf blowers).



MAKE THE SWITCH FOR CLEANER AIR



WOOD STOVE CHANGE-OUT PROGRAM

Incentives are available to replace non-EPA certified wood stoves, fireplace inserts, or open-hearth fireplaces with a low smoke emitting, certified wood or pellet stove, fireplace insert, electric stove/insert, or heat pump. This program is only available to low-income qualified applicants and applicants in low-income or disadvantaged communities.

MBARD.ORG | 831.647.9411



Caring for someone with Alzheimer's isn't always easy.
Cuidar a alguien con Alzheimer no siempre es fácil.



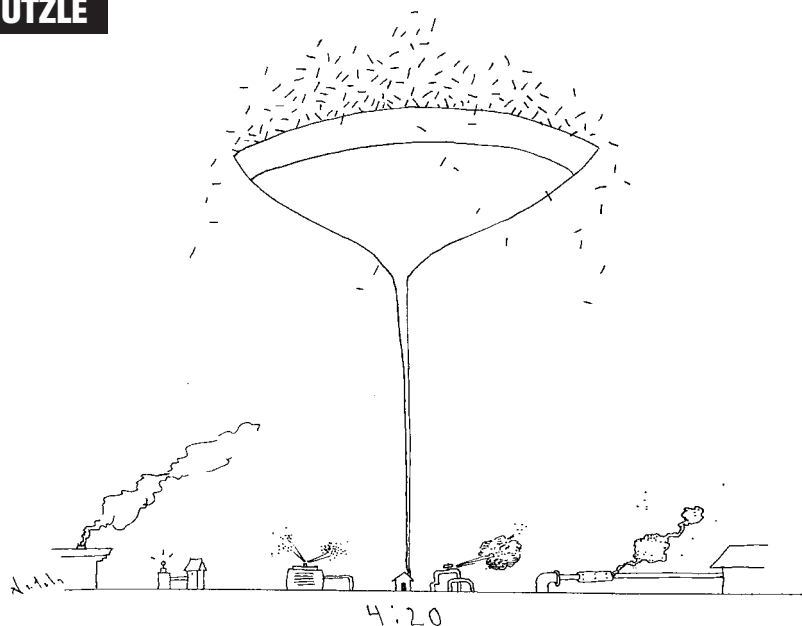
We are here for you. All day. All night.
Estamos aquí para ti.
Todo el día. Toda la noche.

24/7 HELPLINE
800.272.3900 | alz.org

24/7 LÍNEA DE AYUDA
800.272.3900 | alz.org/español

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION®

NUTZLE



Mission Village **VOICE** PASTIMES



CROSSWORD By Carlinka

- Across**
- 1. Final letter of the Greek alphabet
 - 6. Automated computer program
 - 9. Courtroom entreaties
 - 14. Kitchen peeling tool
 - 15. Japanese sash worn with kimono
 - 16. Follower of major Indian religion
 - 17. Digitally manipulate images
 - 19. Military unit or group of scouts
 - 20. Advanced in years
 - 21. Deserve or worth
 - 22. Female objective pronoun
 - 23. Playground equipment that tilts up and down
 - 25. Carbonated beverage
 - 27. Married woman's title
 - 30. Scottish Gaelic language
 - 31. Abrasive cleaning pad made of metal fibers
 - 33. Biological classification rank above species
 - 36. Famous Italian tenor Enrico
 - 37. Opening in a sponge
 - 40. Collection of related data
 - 41. Go through text again
 - 42. Caps of mushrooms
 - 43. French-style restaurant or brewery
 - 45. Walked upon
 - 49. Collection or group
 - 50. Russian emperor
 - 51. Be inherent or innate
 - 53. Sense of self-importance
 - 55. Tropical flowering plant
 - 57. State of matter or fuel

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14						15				16				
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43						44				45	46	47	48	
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62						63				64				
65						66				67				

- 58. Leave quickly or urgent reactor shut-down command
- 60. Without life
- 62. Sharp mountain ridge
- 63. Exclamation of discovery
- 64. Courage in the face of danger
- 65. Fermented fruit drink, variant spelling
- 66. Local computer network
- 67. Apply force or effort

Down

- 1. Resist or stand against
- 2. Austrian composer Gustav
- 3. Wears away gradually

- 4. Obtain or understand
- 5. Pleasant smell
- 6. Danish physicist Niels
- 7. Reed instrument players
- 8. Walk quietly on one's toes
- 9. Chemical plasticizer compound
- 10. Former Italian currency
- 11. Extremely large
- 12. Fuss or trouble
- 13. Dine or take supper
- 18. Stitch with needle and thread
- 24. Smooth transitions

- 26. Adhesive decoration or transfer
- 28. Thorny flowering plant
- 29. Narrow opening
- 31. Total or amount
- 32. Ghost or specter
- 34. Elastic polymer material
- 35. Unclothed figures in art
- 37. Spheres or celestial bodies
- 38. Dried up or withered
- 39. Marked with impact depressions
- 40. Cease living or singular cube for gaming
- 42. Carnivorous South American fish
- 44. Relating to ethnic

- groups
- 46. Entertain lavishly
- 47. Skilled public speaker
- 48. Arid region or abandon
- 51. Small hotel or lodging house
- 52. Innocent and inexperienced

- 54. Hinged barrier or entrance
- 56. Indian flatbread
- 58. Pouch-like structure
- 59. Weep or shout
- 61. Maximum or highest point

March Solution

P	T	A			E	F	F	U	S	E		F	L	O	C
E	A	R	S		A	R	O	U	S	E		L	I	R	A
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C	Y	S	T		T	R	E	A	T			O	P	T	

NOW HEAR THIS

Atlas Obscura



The Atlas Obscura podcast is a short, daily show that explores strange, surprising, and little-known places around the world, blending travel, history, and human stories. Each episode takes listeners on a quick audio journey—usually under 15 minutes—highlighting the people and narratives that make these locations extraordinary.

dinary.

Future Ecologies



Future Ecologies is a documentary-style podcast that explores the relationships between humans, ecosystems, and the natural world through storytelling, science, and immersive sound design. Its episodes combine expert interviews, music, and narrative experimentation to help listeners see environmental issues—and possible futures—in a deeper, more interconnected way.

APP-SOLUTELY

Seek by iNaturalist



Seek is a mobile app that uses image recognition to instantly identify plants, animals, and fungi by pointing your camera at them, helping users learn about nature in real time. It's designed to be kid-safe and gamified, letting users earn badges and explore biodiversity without sharing personal data or creating an account.

Too Good To Go: End Food Waste



Too Good To Go is an app that connects users with restaurants and stores selling surplus, unsold food at discounted prices to prevent it from being thrown away. By purchasing "surprise bags" of leftover food, users save money while helping reduce global food waste and its environmental impact.



THE LAST WORD

No joke – JUNIOR GIANTS registration starts April 1

2026 season runs from June 8–August 1

JUNIOR GIANTS is a FREE baseball youth summer league that teaches confidence, integrity, leadership, and teamwork. It returns to San Juan Bautista. Have your kids and their friends

sign up early.

We start building teams April 1. Our goal is 15 kids per team; late registration forces us to plug kids into built teams, resulting in teams with 20+ kids.

New this year: if we get enough kids ages 14–18, we will have a Seniors team.

Sign up online at GOJR-giants.org. Need help with registration? Come to the SJB Community Center, 10 San Jose Street, April 8th, 5:00 pm–7:00 pm.

GO JUNIOR GIANTS! ■

Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital Celebrates

NATIONAL DOCTORS DAY

March 30, 2026

We are proud to recognize our Medical Staff for their dedication and commitment to providing quality, compassionate healthcare in San Benito County. We honor your profession and thank you for choosing to practice at Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital.

MEDICAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:



Michael Bogey, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Chair,
Emergency Department



Ralph Armstrong, DO
Chief of Staff



Richard Rupp, MD
Vice Chief of Staff
Chair,
Radiology Department



Natalie LaCorte, MD
Chair,
Medicine Department



Russell Dedini, MD
Chair,
Surgery Department



Arminda Tolentino, MD
Medical Director
Rural Health Clinics



Zarin Amin, DO
Chair,
Perinatal Department

Bilal Ahmed, MD - Endocrinology
Holly Aguilar, MD - Pediatric Hospitalist
Mohammad Al-Hasan, MD - Internal Medicine
Zarin Amin, DO - OB/GYN
Aytac Apaydin, MD - Urology
Maria Arambulo, MD - Endocrinology
Ralph Armstrong, DO - OB/GYN
M. Aslam Barra, MD - OB/GYN
Scott Benninghoven, MD - General Surgery
Michael Bogey, MD - Emergency Medicine
Letitia Bradford, MD - Orthopedic Surgery
Martin Bress, MD - Internal Medicine
Lynn Bui, MD - Hematology/Oncology
Benedict Carota, MD - Family Practice
Cristian Carrillo, DO - Hospitalist
Dina Casparro, DPM - Podiatry
Joaquin Charles, MD - Hospitalist
Tracy Chen, MD - Radiology
Margaret Cooper-Vaughn, DO - OB/GYN
Avace Dani, MD - Anesthesiologist
Russell Dedini, MD - Orthopedics
Joshua Deutsch, MD - Hospitalist
Piyush Dhanuka, MD - Gastroenterology
Joseph Fabry, DO - General Surgery
Taynet Febles, MD - Infectious Disease
Easa Ghoreishi, MD - Emergency Medicine
Jerry Ginsburg, MD - Cardiology
M. Claudette Grageda, MD - Family Practice
Maria Granthom, MD - OB/GYN

Lourdes Grayson, MD - Psychiatry
Michael Gynn, MD - General Surgery
Claire Hartung, MD - Family Practice
Jaspal Hothi, MD - Pediatric Hospitalist
Guiqing Huang, MD - Pediatrics
Waleed Hussein, MD - Emergency Medicine
Vivek Jain, MD - Neurology
John Jameson, MD - Pathology
Joseph Jiang, MD - Cardiology
Kenneth Jiang, MD - Internal Medicine
Rikin Kadakia, MD - Interventional Cardiology
Joseph Klapper, MD - Tele-Cardiology
Stefan Klein, MD - Orthopedic Surgery
Edward Kody, MD - Pediatric Hospitalist
Natalie LaCorte, MD - Family Practice
Elaine Lee, MD - Breast Surgery
James Lilja, MD - OB/GYN
Hongguang Liu, MD - Gastroenterology
Sarathy Mandayam, MD - Gastroenterology
Roderick McBride, DDS - Oral/Maxillofacial Surgery
Michael McGinnis, MD - Pathology
Carol Mei, MD - Oncology/Hematology
Iqbal Mirza, MD - Anesthesiology
Ghulam Moheyuddin, MD - General Surgery
Thomas Mustoe, MD - Cardiology
B. Nicholas Namihas, MD - Gastroenterology
Jullian Nguyen, MD - Family Practice
Hue Nguyen-Ngo, DO - Pediatrics
Scott Nichols, MD - Pediatric Hospitalist

Evbusogie Ogbeide, MD - Pediatric Hospitalist
Bob Peng, MD - OB/GYN
Paul Percival, MD - Family Practice
Gia-Cat Pham, DPM - Podiatry
An Phan, MD - Anesthesiology
Dennis Phan, MD - Nephrology
Barbara Rever, MD - Nephrology
Richard Rupp, MD - Radiology
Mostafa Sadek, MD - General Surgery
Mohammad Daoud Sahar, MD - Internal Medicine
Edwin Savay, MD - Emergency Medicine
Michael Sepulveda, MD - Hospitalist
Saiham Shahabuddin, MD - Internal Medicine/Hospitalist
Rajesh Sharangpani, MD - Anesthesiology
Deepal Sidhu, MD - Anesthesiology
Jiwu Sun, MD - Internal Medicine/Hospitalist
Lorilee Sutter, MD - Rheumatology
Hiral Tank, MD - General Surgery
Arminda Tolentino, MD - Family Practice
Anita Tolentino-Macaraeg, MD - Pediatrics
Christopher Verioti, DO - Orthopedics
Steven Vetter, MD - ENT/Otolaryngology
Katherine Volpe, MD - Urogynecology
Shane Walker, MD - Family Practice
Daniel Wang, MD - Family Practice
Eileen Wang, MD - Anesthesiology
John Wang, DO - Pediatric Hospitalist
John Wiemann, MD - Orthopedic Surgery

The Medical Executive Committee (MEC) is the primary governance for the independent members of the Medical Staff; Physicians and Surgeons. The MEC makes essential decisions related to Medical Staff policies, procedures, and protocols, always with an emphasis on clinical quality and patient safety.



Hazel Hawkins
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

911 Sunset Drive, Hollister • (831) 637-5711

www.hazelhawkins.com

San Benito County Integrated Waste Management Presents:



SATURDAY
APRIL 25, 2026
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

State Historic Park
19 Franklin St. San Juan Bautista, CA 95045



BOOTHS • GAMES • ART • PERFORMANCES
FREE RECYCLING PROGRAMS
ART POSTER CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED



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