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Gas Station/Mini-Mart Approved For Corner of Lakeview and Hwy 135



On May 3, the County Supervisors approved a gas station and convenience market at this empty lot at Lakeview Road and Hwy 135.

A gas station and mini market at the corner of Lakeview Road and Highway 135 was unanimously approved by the County Board of Supervisors on May 3rd. Fourth District Supervisor Bob Nelson said he believes Orcutt residents will be better served, "with an additional gas station at Lakeview and Highway 135, and I hope the gas station will encourage more business in the Evergreen Shopping Center."

The gas station will offer four gas dispensers and a 5000 square foot convenience store on a parcel that has been vacant for decades.

It has taken four years for the project to gain final approval from the County. Most of the discussion at the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisor meetings has centered on traffic issues at that intersection.

The late Planning Commissioner Dan Blough, who passed away earlier this year, once commented that the corner "is the worst intersection he has ever had to deal with."

The intersection will be reconfigured to only allow right hand turns from Orcutt Road between the hours of 7AM to 9AM and 4PM to 6PM. Drivers will not be able to drive straight through the intersection.

Supervisor Nelson said he understands the safety issues. "I attended Lakeview Junior High School, and I am the father of three drivers. I am committed to continue working with the City of Santa Maria and CalTrans to make the intersection as safe as possible."

Last year, the Planning Commission approved the gas station project but the owners of the Evergreen Shopping Center and Far Western Liquor Store, a tenant in the shopping center, appealed to the Supervisors arguing that traffic mitigations imposed by the County would affect their businesses and that the project did not comply with the Orcutt Community Plan.

Third District Supervisor Joan Hartmann joined her colleagues in supporting the project. "It doesn't seem fair to deny the project based on a transportation problem that has existed for a long time."

Steve Southwick reporting

Divided Board of Supervisors Approve Development Near Clark & Hwy 101



Development south of Sunny Hills modular homes approved by the Board of Supervisors May 10. The 119 homes surround a previously approved apartment complex of 160 "affordable" units.

In a three-two vote on May 10th, with north county Supervisors Bob Nelson and Steve Lavagnino dissenting, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors approved a 119 single family housing development on what is known as Key Site 3 south of Clark Avenue and about one quarter mile south of the Sunny Hills modular home park adjacent to Highway 101.

The two- and three-bedroom homes with lot sizes between 3000 to 13000 square feet were approved to be built on the mesa behind the

Sunny Hills Park.

Sixty-five percent of the 138-acre development site would be public open space; another 15 percent will be private open space.

About twelve years ago, the Board of Supervisors approved, under state legislation entitled the "Housing Accountability Act, 160 townhomes in what is known as MR-O zoning. These apartments will be built surrounded by the 119 homes approved May 10. At build-out, 289

continued on page 3

BRIAN WILLIAMS GOPHER GUY

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Homeowners in Cimarron Estates Appeal County Approval of Dispensary at Stillwell and Clark Avenue



The land use permit granted to cannabis dispensary Dr. Greenthumb has been appealed to the County by Cimarron Estates homeowners. The dispensary hopes to locate at 1604 Bradley Road.

On April 26, the Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department approved a land use permit, pending a ten-day appeal period, to a cannabis dispensary named Dr. Greenthumb, to be located in the Orcutt Hills Shopping Plaza on the corner of

East Clark Avenue and Stilwell Road.

The land use permit has been appealed by several residents identified as "Interested Cimarron Estates Homeowners." The eighteen homeowners who signed the appeal live within 1000 feet of the proposed site at 1604 East Clark, Suite 101.

The original name of the dispensary was Cookies805. Its owner competed with five other applicants for the right to submit plans for the only retail cannabis land use permit available in the Orcutt area. Using a "criteria-based application" process, Cookies 805 scored highest of the five applicants and was invited to apply for the land use permit.

The name Cookies805 raised public opposition. Several Orcutt residents argued that the name would attract children to the dispensary, so the applicant changed the name to Dr. Greenthumb.

The Cimarron homeowners argue that Cookies805 and Dr. Greenthumb are two different business entities. According to the appeal, "Green Thumb Industries, Inc., is a publicly-traded company separate and distinct from Cookies805...and the County granted the applicant permission to proceed with a change in the name (DBA-doing business as) without vetting the new entity

known as Dr. Greenthumb."

The homeowners also contend that the land use permit was granted without a requirement to update the County on the difference of operations.

The appeal states that the County moved ahead with the approval of Dr. Greenthumb and found that no impact reports were necessary to approve the land use permit. The decision to allow such projects was based on a determination by a 2017 ad-hoc committee consisting of two county supervisors who determined that a "Statement of Overriding Consideration" would apply on such projects. This process, that loosened the EIR guidelines, "subsequently became the subject of a County Grand Jury investigation," according to the appeal.

The Cimarron homeowners also state that there are mistakes with entrance and exit locations in county documents.

The Planning Commission will consider the appeal. If the appeal by the homeowners is granted, the second ranked applicant in the County "criteria-based" process, Strategic Golden, doing business as Unique Farms, at 155 East Clark Avenue in Old Town Orcutt, will be allowed to apply for the land use permit.

Steve Southwick reporting



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Key Site 3

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homes would occupy the site.

Most of the discussion centered around the selection of a secondary access road. The Orcutt Community Plan, passed in the 1990's, designated Oakbrook Lane for Key Site 3. Nelson favored this for secondary access which is a bit closer, however there is no easement in place to allow the designation. The other option is Chancellor Street where developer Mike Mansi says there is a viable easement.

In the final motion, Chancellor Street remains the secondary access, but with the condition the developer make every effort to convince Oakbrook Lane property owners to agree to allow purchase of an easement.

Chairperson Joan Hartmann and Supervisors Gregg Hart and Das Williams were in favor of the project.

Nelson said he could not support the project. "I am not against development," he insisted. "But I am against a project that does not work. My job is to protect the community. Two hundred eighty-six clustered units brings in the same population count as Los Alamos. This is the wrong spot for this density."

He said input from the Orcutt community was overwhelmingly against the project.

Speaking in favor of the project was real estate developer Gary Crabtree, who argued that Orcutt desperately needs more affordable housing. "I checked this morning and the number of homes for sale in Orcutt priced between \$550,000 and \$750,000 was five. "There is an extreme shortage of affordable homes in Orcutt," he argued.

Fifth District Supervisor Lavagnino said the MR-0 project of 160 apartments should never have been approved. "Too many lots for that space."

He added there are not enough jobs in Orcutt for those who would purchase the homes. "Owners will end up driving Highway 101 to the south coast adding traffic and pollution."

When asked the status of the MR-0 development of 160 apartments on the eight acres in the center of the current development, County planner Shannon Reese said the developer is waiting on a decision involving Key Site 3

Steve Southwick reporting

An American Dream Story:

Houth & Charlie of Golden Donut



Houth Hak, owner of Golden Donut

"Own your own business. You won't get fired. Work hard. Get successful," Houth Hak's father advised. So she and her brothers bought Golden Donut, 4580 S Bradley, in 1989. As a line out the door on a Saturday morning shows, the business is going strong.

Baking starts at 2:30 AM and Houth, pronounced "Who", is there from 4 AM-4:30 PM, 7 days a week. "She usually takes a break between 10:30 to 3:00," says her nephew Brandon, who also works there, "For 33 years, with only Christmas and New Year's Day off!" It's a family affair. One by one the siblings branched off to their own donut shops, 7 in all. Now Houth, with her husband Sen (friends call him Charlie); sister-in-law, Mary; nephew, Brandon; and two bakers, work the shop. Charlie rules behind the baking and frying, while Houth controls the front counter.

Regulars, many retired, hang out at the tables, some every day. They argue over politics and history and tease each other. One thing they agree on is they love the laughing, smiling Houth. One Orcutt regular, Jimmy Zepeda (Uncle Jimmy to the many kids he has coached over the years), comes 2-3 times a week to construct the donut take-out boxes from flat cardboard in exchange for free coffee and family time. "I love their kids Nicky and Tommy," he says fondly.

Regulars tell the stories of Houth's life, which she verifies between serving customers. As a teenager the family of nine siblings and parents escaped Cambodia on their second attempt. It was 1979 during the perilous time of the killing fields when over 2 million Cambodians died. After 2 years

living in refugee camps in Thailand and the Philippines, the family was sponsored to Rhode Island in 1981. "Way too cold in Rhode Island," says Houth, with a shiver. From the East Coast they moved to Van Nuys. The kids went to school not knowing a word of English, and times were challenging. One brother became a manager of Winchell's Donuts, and a family donut dynasty was born. In 1989, Houth and Charlie moved to Orcutt and bought Golden Donut.

Three large posters of the Ankorwat temple above the counter remind Houth and Charlie of their first home.

Another Cambodian tradition that has influenced Houth's life is an arranged marriage. Her mother worried when she wasn't married by the "ripe old age of 27" and sent the word out. A cousin in Cambodia showed Houth's photo to a neighbor and several weeks later Sen Lay, aka Charlie by

his friends, came to the United States. Now, 29 years later, the arranged marriage seems to be working. "A good match, the regulars tease Houth. "Charlie is mellow and shy and she is crazy. She does all the talking." Of her 2 grown children and marriage Houth, who describes the USA as "heaven", says, "They can find any color they like. This is America!"

The regulars agree that it is Houth's bubbly, always positive character and Charlie's yummy donuts that makes the place hum. Another customer adds that the prices help. "You can get a coffee for \$1.75 and a donut hole for 15 cents and where can you get an apple fritter for \$1.75?" Apple fritters are the top seller at the store, usually selling out by 9AM.

Bob Piers, retired businessman, who comes in twice a day, says, "She has the best public relations skills of anyone I've ever known in my life. She knows how to handle people; she has a great personality."

"She puts up with you, so she must be good," chips in another regular, Roland Inn, and they all have a good laugh.

Katy Jacobson, reporting

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Laughter on the 23rd Floor presented by Orcutt Community Theater



Todd Buranen and Craig Scott in the production, "Laughter on the 23rd Floor", by Neil Simon running June 3-19.

Orcutt Community Theater is presenting *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*, a comedy by Neil Simon, opening Friday, June 3rd and running through Sunday, June 19th.

Inspired by Neil Simon's youthful experience as a staff writer on Sid Caesar's 1950's *Your Show of Shows*, the play offers, according to the press release, "all the

attendant comic drama of a harried writing staff frantically scrambling with wacky antics to top each other with gags while competing for the attention of the star madman "Max Prince."

Alan Butterfield directs with a cast that includes Orcutt Community theater veterans, Todd Buranen, Craig Scott, Dave Campbell, Dan Bullard, Stephanie Gray and Rachell Mello. New to OCT are Gary Prober, together with Chris Scott and Jude Walker, both graduates of Santa Maria based Pacific Conservatory of Performing Arts (PCPA).

Orcutt Community Theater performs at the KDA Studios, 3558 Skyway Drive, Studio 1. The production runs Fridays and Saturdays at 8PM and Sundays at 1:30PM, June 3rd through June 19th. Tickets are \$15 and are available online at My805Tix.com and at the box office 30 minutes before performances.

Steve Southwick reporting

Unity Church A Venue for Local Musical Talent

Unity Church will host singer-songwriter duo Alice Wallace and Caitlin Cannon touring as *Side Pony* on June 12 at 6:30pm. *Side Pony* will perform songs from its debut album "Lucky Break." Local Donna Phillips will be the opening performer. Both Wallace and Cannon have toured individually and have been praised by the likes of Rolling Stone Country, American Songwriter, and Billboard, with Cannon receiving a spot on the list of Essential Albums of 2020 by Saving Country Music. They have a country pop vibe, great harmonies, and funny banter. Their website is sideponyband.com. Tickets are \$20 at my805tix.com/e/sidepony.

The concert is presented by production company Songwriters At Play, owned by Steve Key and Bonnie Nelson-Key. Steve says "I'm a performer myself, and I know how hard it is to find a place where your

music can be appreciated by a listening audience, so I try to create those venues. I love introducing people to musicians who may become their new favorites." Steve and Bonnie can be reached at songwritersatplay.com.



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Quilt Shop Participates in Tour



Stacy Murray, co-owner of Old Town Quilt Shop prepares for quilt shop tour.

Nine quilt shops from Ventura to Paso Robles, including Old Town Quilt Shop in Orcutt, are hosting the 19th annual quilt shop tour on the weekend of June 3-5.

Designed to be a weekend exploration of the Central Coast and quilting, Old Town Quilt Shop, 165A W. Clark, lands roughly mid-way.

"It draws many people, so helpful for the community," says co-owner Stacy Murray. "It's fun even for non-quilters." The tour's theme is "party," and each shop represent a different fete. The Orcutt theme is "picnic". "About 600-700 people generally come over the 3 days," describes Stacy, who has been preparing for the event since January.

Upon entering each shop, each visitor receives a passport and shop badge. With all 9 badges you become eligible for a grand prize drawing, a \$1500 gift certificate to use at any or all of the shops, as well as 20 other gifts. There's also a daily drawing at each shop. No purchase necessary.

Premium passports, 40 per shop, \$10 each, quickly sold out. They included a colorful tote with a pin specific to each shop. The Orcutt pin is a replica of the quilt

shop's Orcutt cow, seen outside the shop. The totes and pins will be available to buy separately.

Stacy hopes that people tour the nine shops at an enjoyable pace, making a weekend out of it. Shop employees are planning "to suggest wine tastings, galleries, spas, museums, restaurants, casinos, beaches and more," according to the advertising brochure.

"It's a lot of fun, a fun atmosphere, crazy busy, people cutting and taping, seeing a lot of new work, new samples, new things to look at," says Stacy, obviously excited. "I like to call it a tour, not a hop. I encourage people to explore our area, have lunch at Kay's, shop at Deja Vu, and wine taste."

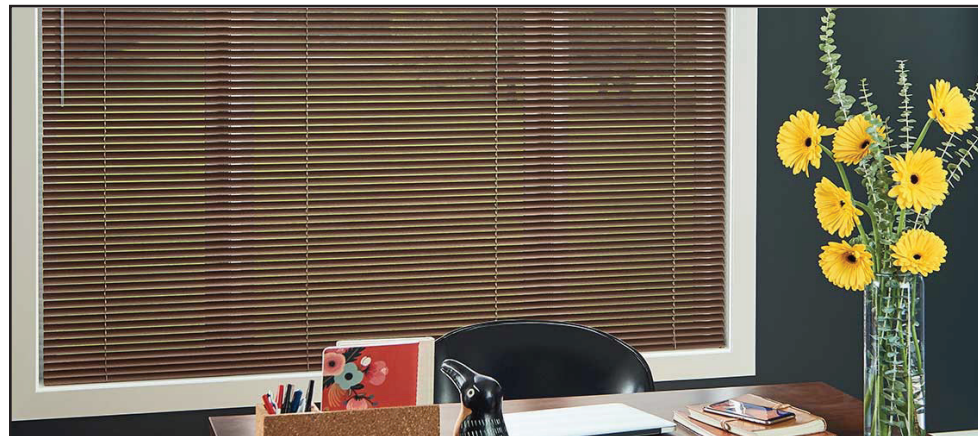
The Old Town Quilt Shop is known for not only traditional designs but a wide variety of contemporary prints and ideas. The building next door is their 1300 sq ft classroom/clubhouse. Orcutt's 2 quilting guilds, who meet there, will sell tickets for charities with winners receiving quilts, mini

quilts, and other items. A game, PLINKO, will be ongoing, as well as cookies. A daily "15 and under basket" will be awarded and picnic themed items will be for sale.

The Old Town Quilt Shop opened in 2005. Co-owner, Orcutt resident Michelle Strunka, started as an employee and eventually took over. Her daughter, Orcutt resident Stacy, joined her in 2016. With a background in retail, this is her "favorite retail job." She and Michelle like interacting with the customers. "Quilters are some of the nicest people you'll meet. They're doing what they love. It's a happy place for them, whether it's to make their first quilt for a grandchild or some other milestone, It's for life's special moments."

The shops will be open Friday and Saturday from 9-6 and Sunday from 10-4. For more information, go to www.quiltshopsofthecentralcoast.com

Katy Jacobson reporting



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Orcutt Schools Update Well Deserved Awards and Honors for Several OUSD Employees

Dr. Holly Edds, Superintendent, OUSD

We have hundreds of dedicated, hard working employees in the Orcutt Union School District. So it warmed the heart this past month to have nine members of our staff receive validation from their peers, our county, even our state.

We begin with our district's vehicle and equipment mechanic, **Tim Romine**, named Classified Employee of the Year in the skilled trades category for both Santa Barbara County and the state of California. Romine, who was honored in Sacramento at a luncheon hosted by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond on May 19, does exceptional work keeping the district's buses and vehicle fleet operating at a high level. He also has initiated several grants to provide funding for new school buses, including the district's first electric school bus.

"I enjoy my job, but I also take it very seriously because of who we're transporting every day," says Romine. "I take pride in making sure our students stay safe."

Santa Barbara County Education Office deaf/hard of hearing teacher **Joanna Hendrix**, who works at Ralph Dunlap School and is very much part of the school community there, has been named County Teacher of the Year. Hendrix was recognized for her work to build meaningful relationships with her students and their families.

"I work with an incredible team of educational professionals from SBCEO and the Orcutt Union School District," says Hendrix. "The positive partnership among OUSD and SBCEO staff is highlighted in the inclusive nature of our school. All students feel supported, diversity is celebrated, and everyone is welcomed as a contributing

member."

Our district's own Teacher of the Year is **Kazan Westhoff**, a Special Education teacher at Joe Nightingale School. Westhoff, who collaborates with general education teachers to provide an inclusion program for students with disabilities in grades 2-4, was commended for her esteeming, inspiring approach to her students.

"All the teachers around me are so good that anything I can do is because of the work and collaboration we do together," says Westhoff. "This (award) is a reflection of the entire team."

Four more classified employees earned county honors in their categories, giving Orcutt five of the seven County Classified Employees of the Year.

Kim Domingues, longtime administrative assistant at Orcutt Academy High School, was acknowledged in the clerical/administrative category. Domingues, who is retiring in June, was with the high school at its inception and has earned widespread praise for the support she provides students, families, and staff.

Jane Gallet, instructional assistant at Joe Nightingale School, was selected in the paraprofessional category. Gallet consistently models empathy and kindness and is an integral part of her Special Education classroom.

Jana Graham, our transportation coordinator, is being honored in the transportation category. Graham skillfully handles duties ranging from recruiting and training bus drivers to identifying

and scheduling bus stops to working on transportation for special needs students.

Ernesto Vela, site custodian at Olga Reed School and Orcutt Academy K-8 in Los Alamos, earned the award in the custodial/maintenance category. Vela is incredibly reliable and responsive in meeting the needs of students and staff on his campus.

Finally, we have two school administrators who received validation from their peers. On May 6 our region of the Association of California School Administrators honored Ralph Dunlap School Principal **Joe Schmidt** as Elementary Principal of the Year and District Director of Maintenance, Operations, and Transportation **Brad Gitchell** as Classified Leader of the Year. Both men are known for their work ethic and service mindset.

"We all can be proud of these employees," says Mark Steller, current president of Orcutt's board of trustees. "It is admirable that, even with all of the challenges that our employees have faced I the past year, several of them are being recognized county- and state-wide."

The people mentioned here are representative of our district's abundance of dedicated staff. Here's thanking our teachers, classified employees, and administrators for all they do!

Superintendent Dr. Holly Edds can be contacted by phone at 938-8900 or by e-mail at hedds@orcutt-schools.net. She can be followed on Twitter at @hce101.

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