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Quest for Airline Service, Planes of Fame and a Customs Office New Airport Manager Talks Future Plans



"I have always enjoyed the Central Coast, and when the chance to manage the Santa Maria Airport was offered by the board of directors, I was looking forward to the opportunity. I love Orcutt; there are so many things going on here, in the community and at the airport." - Martin Pehl

Martin Pehl formally accepted the position of manager for the Santa Maria Public Airport District during the first week in February replacing Chris Hastert who left to manage the Santa Barbara Airport. Pehl comes to Santa Maria after serving five years managing the Merced Regional Airport.

Before that, he worked at the Napa Airport for 11 years and as assistant manager at San Luis Regional Airport for six years.

Pehl was interviewed by the Orcutt Pioneer and discussed his perspective on opportunities and challenges at SMX.

OP: Santa Marians are concerned about airline service. Can you give us an update?

Pehl: The thing I hear most from folks is about a need for increased airline service. This is understandable; that's the immediate benefit of a local airport, and it's one subject that is going to be a challenge the next couple of years. The airline industry is struggling

with pilot and air traffic controller shortages. A couple of months ago, United States Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg asked airlines to reduce service until the shortages can be filled. It's hard to attract new airline service when there are challenges like this nationwide.

OP: Any idea how long the reduction in air traffic, pilot, and supporting service providers will last?

Pehl: It's probably going to be 2025 before we have a chance to increase local airline commercial service.

OP: What airlines have you approached about coming to Santa Maria?

Pehl: Not long ago I was in Dallas, Texas. We talked to Southwest Airlines and Breeze Airways, a low budget airline. We are not going to get Southwest, but we will keep trying. Airlines see data that shows that passengers are coming from Santa Maria, and we need them to know that we are the best option for expansion of service.

OP: If there is an overflow at San Luis Obispo Regional, will airlines look at Santa Maria?

Pehl: San Luis Obispo is not going to grow geographically, and I understand that San Luis Obispo Regional is looking at closing a runway; it has 6000 feet of runway. The Santa Barbara Airport has 800 acres, half of which is wetlands and is federally restricted. Santa Maria is 2500 acres; 8000 feet of runway. We offer a huge opportunity for airlines.

OP: Earlier this year, the Planes of Fame Aviation Museum, with more than 160 vintage aircrafts, announced that it is expanding from Chino, California, to the Santa Maria Airport and will be located on 23 acres adjacent to the Radisson hotel. How will Planes of Fame affect the Santa

Maria Airport and the Orcutt/Santa Maria community?

Pehl: I'm giddy about it! I'm a fan, and will be able to see World War II Warbirds. Planes of Fame plans to break ground right after the mid-October Santa Maria AirFest with plans to open in January 2025. This will be great for tourism and includes a non-profit educational institute so that youngsters with interests in aviation will be able to see antique aircraft and talk to maintainers and operators. Planes of Fame will be a terrific tie-in to the community.

OP: I notice construction on a portion of runway?

Pehl: Right now we are changing the angle of two of our connecting taxiways. The FAA does not want acute angles connecting taxiways anymore, so the connections will be at a 90 degree angle. The cost is 9 million dollars, 90 percent funded by the FAA.

OP: I understand that the airport is working on establishing a general aviation customs office on site.

Pehl: Yes, this is not a customs office processing passengers on commercial flights. By the end of the year, we will rehabilitate a building near the fire station that will be staffed four days a week. This will be helpful for local businesses with international connections so they will not have to go to Los Angeles or San Francisco to clear customs for their products. General aviation only; not for commercial airline service.

OP: Any parting words about being in Orcutt?

Pehl: Enjoying it thoroughly. There is so much to do here and with our supportive community, I am looking forward to great things.

Steve Southwick reporting

American Legion Post Asking for Help to Purchase Building



American Legion Post 534 in Old Town Orcutt, serving veterans and their families since 1980, is on a quest to secure funds to pay off a \$154,000 loan that became due in 2018. Commander Steve Mainville says the balloon payment was due five years ago "and for some reason was not made by those serving the Post at that time. The payment was missed."

The initial loan was made in 2008 with the balloon due after ten years. "We have been making payments on the loan faithfully, but we were notified recently the trustees need the \$154,000 by July 31st."

Once the balloon is cleared, the building will be owned by the Post.

Pledged donations by club members and others have already raised \$83,000 and a GoFundMe account entitled "American Legion Post 534 Building Fund" has been created. All donations are tax deductible.

"We are grateful for those who have already donated and would appreciate any help locals could give to the Post," explains Mainville. Go to [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com), search American Legion Post 534 to donate.

The motto of the approximately 500 member post is "Serving Veterans, Serving the Community" and is known as "the friendliest post on the coast."

Steve Southwick reporting

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Orcutt Once a Stop on the Pacific Coast Railway



A monument to the Pacific Coast Railroad stands at Clark Avenue and Marcum Street and displays two narrow gauge rails and an original railroad spike.

The faraway whistle of an approaching train brought Orcutt kids running to watch the "Iron Horse" chug into town in the late 1800's. Passengers disembarked from as far north as San Luis Obispo or, if arriving from the south, Los Olivos.

The Pacific Coast Railway was developed as a narrow gauge railroad starting in 1873 at Port Hartford (Pismo Beach) and gathered steam when the rails were extended to Arroyo Grande in 1881, then onto Santa Maria in 1883. In 1887, the line reached as far as Los Olivos.

Sleepy little Orcutt saw the need for a depot and soon one was erected at the corner of Clark Avenue and Marcum Street.

Sundays were big days for an afternoon of train travel. Passengers, dressed in their Sunday best, took day trips to Los Alamos, or better yet, San Luis Obispo. Train cars were often filled to capacity with local travelers, but the train was also important to the economy, hauling much needed farm products to the areas along the train route. Farmers needing to transport produce or homemade goods could hail down the train by holding up a milk or cream can. The train would stop and load up. Hobos, if penniless, could hitch a ride also, as long they were leaving town.

The Pacific Coast Railway in the 1920's was slowly being replaced by cars and trucks but continued to show profits until the Depression in 1929. By 1940, the railroad discontinued operations altogether and the tracks were pulled up and used for scrap metal for World War II.

It was officially the end of the line. Today a monument stands as a reminder of what was once a busy part of town.

The Pacific Coast Railway, once a vital link between Orcutt and other little towns, is long gone now, along with the shrill screams of a train whistle, and great billows of steam. Just a part of the pages on the history of Orcutt. Val Prancivic reporting her "train" of thought



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Best Filmmaking Award Goes to Righetti Students



Brady Daniels, Colin Sherfield, Jacob Gustafson, Isabella Sherfield, Erolen Alvarez

A group of Righetti High School students won the Best Filmmaking Award for an original film during the 4th Annual Central Coast Film Society Film & Media Arts Competition. The contest was for students in Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Monterey counties. The winning film, "Just Another Teen Rom Com", was made by Warriors including Isabella Sherfield, Colin Sherfield, Michaela Leedom, Brady Daniels, Saige Merrill, Haily Liles and Susie Castellanos.

Students also had other work nominated for awards in several categories such as best film, photography, and screenplay. The film "Guns, Cards, and More Guns" was created

by Asher Dedek, Cassidy Colli, Zephyr Delute and Brandon Yazzie. Nominated in photography was "Spotlight" created by Sophia Laurel and in screenplay, Erolen Alvarez's "It's Time To Drive".

"I'm very proud of my students. They have been doing fantastic work this year, and I'm very happy to see them get recognition outside my classroom by a professional organization. It's not easy to get into this festival, many of my students submitted, but only these students were nominated. They apply themselves, learn and grow throughout the year, and it's a joy to see, said teacher Jacob R. Gustafson.

Dog of the Month

Princess is a six year old American Bulldog mix, who is a very calm and gentle soul. She loves human companionship and doesn't mind other dogs. She enjoys walks in the park, lounging with humans and loves snacks like cheese and peanut butter! To meet Princess, call the Foster Road Animal Shelter at 805-934-6119 and mention her number A514760.



Letter to the Editor

Who are the Richards Ranch developers?

I wonder if we have been asking the wrong questions regarding Richards Ranch LLC and their application to annex County keystone 26 into the City of Santa Maria.

The two questions we might consider: 1) who are the members of the Richards Ranch LLC, and 2) what is their goal?

Over a year ago, I did ask who the members of the LLC were. Because the City of Santa Maria had provided Michael Stoltey with my personal information it seemed reasonable that I be given the same information of the members. I sent an email to Michael Stoltey which went unanswered. I sent letters to Michael Stoltey at both the street and P.O. box addresses on record with the Secretary of State. One came back to me "unclaimed" and the other "attempted/not known".

Last month's meeting presented by Michael Stoltey, managing member of Richards Ranch LLC, confused most by focusing on "conceptual" design plans that have not been submitted to the City of Santa Maria

for review. The only thing submitted for review is an application for annexation and pre-zoning.

This annexation process is overwhelmingly complicated. But, to simplify: Richards Ranch's annexation application triggered the need for an EIR (environmental impact report). The draft stage of the EIR will be completed September after the comments we submitted are addressed. From there the request for annexation (with completed EIR) goes to the City Planning Commission, then City Council, and finally City Council submits the annexation application to LAFCO.

This process, up to the LAFCO review, is entirely within the City of Santa Maria's discretion/purview NOT the County. If annexed, the property will remain surrounded by County/Orcutt residents who will have no voice for how it is developed and managed.

This brings us back to Richards Ranch LLC. Who are the members directing this annexation and why would they choose this path rather than striving for one of mutual regional cooperation?

Susan Bryant, Orcutt resident

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The Orcutt Union School District continues to enroll new students for the 2023-2024 school year

Important notes re-enrollment:

- **Transitional Kindergarten** now will be offered at all elementary sites. Students who turn five anytime between September 2, 2023, and April 2, 2024, are eligible to be enrolled in TK.
- The district continues to operate **Full-Day Kindergarten** at its elementary sites. Students who turn five prior to September 2, 2023 are eligible to be enrolled in kindergarten.
- **Before- and after-school childcare** is available through the Campus Connection Program.

To start the enrollment process, go to the district's enrollment web page at www.orcuttschools.net/enroll/.

For more information, phone our Enrollment Office at 805-938-8946.

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Richards Ranch Annexation Decision Expected in 2024

Santa Maria City Planning Department, in conjunction with an environmental consultant, is reviewing hundreds of comments regarding the draft environmental impact report (EIR) for the Richards Ranch project proposed for Highway 135 and Union Valley Parkway (UVP). Dana Eady, Planning Division Manager, says that the draft EIR review should be completed later this year. If, after the EIR review is complete, the applicant, Michael Stoltey, submits development plans, the City Planning Commission and City Council will begin hearings. If the annexation issue is approved by the Council, the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) will consider the annexation proposal. Eady says LAFCO could receive the application late next year.

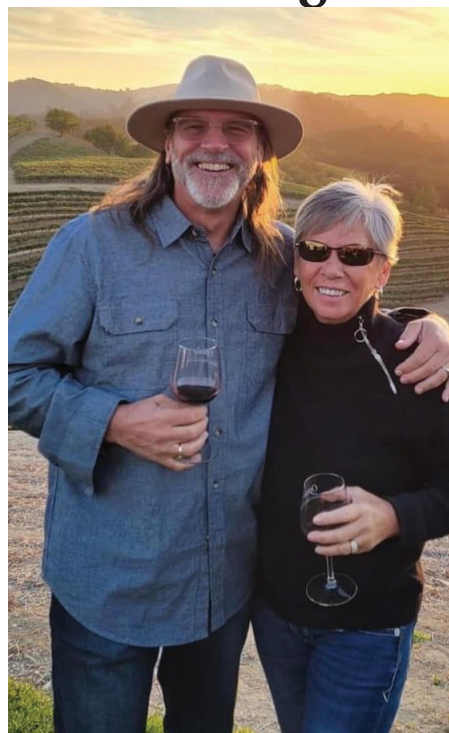
The developer hopes to gain approval for approximately 500 housing units plus a commercial development on the east side of Highway 135 and Union Valley Parkway.

Steve LeBard, who has organized opposition to the annexation, says that about 150 "We Love Orcutt" signs have been purchased by Orcutt residents and are popping up in front lawns throughout Orcutt neighborhoods. The signs are available at Steller Home, 255 S. Union, Old Town Orcutt. A "We Love Orcutt" Facebook group has over 600 members.

Developer Stoltey says the annexation effort was only to secure water, which he says is not available in northern Santa Barbara County.

Steve Southwick reporting

Creative Beginnings Preschool Founder Retiring



Sally Smith, retiring Creative Beginnings director, with her husband, Ron.

In 1992, Sally Smith, whose family immigrated from Scotland when she was 9 years old, began working at a preschool in Los Angeles, and soon realized how much she loved being a new United States citizen and working with children. When her husband's job required the family to move to Santa Maria, she decided to start her own preschool, Creative Beginnings, which

allowed her to be with her four children before they entered school, and generated some extra income for the family. After four years at a property in Santa Maria, she had saved enough to purchase the current location on Pinal Avenue in Orcutt where the school currently operates. Fast forward to 2023; after 30 years, Sally has decided it's time to retire.

"I don't think she will ever fully retire," said Sarah Moore. Moore works at the preschool and will be taking over as director. "We have been in operation long enough that we are seeing the third generation of families attending the school." Moore added that the secret to the school's success is her mother's profound love for children, and her creation of a family environment by engaging the parents and the students. The school is Christian-based, and Sally sees that lots of love and acceptance is integrated with quality instruction, Moore noted. Sally has a big heart too, evidenced by helping a number of families on hard times over the years by waiving fees, or sometimes holding fundraisers on their behalf.

"The COVID pandemic was the biggest challenge the school faced over the years,"

said Moore. Although she said that they have not seen a long-term impact on the students, managing a preschool during a pandemic was challenging. The state requires a 12 to 1 student to teacher ratio and with staff becoming ill, and keeping up with all the CDC requirements, it was tough. They were able to acquire some new "hands free" equipment for handling hygiene and other tasks which helped, but it was challenging.

Creative Beginnings serves about 60 children every year, and often has a waiting list for enrollment. Best of luck in your retirement, Sally!

Juliann Hemphill reporting

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Orcutt Schools Update

Looking Back on a Successful School Year

Dr. Holly Edds, Superintendent, OUSD

For its work throughout the year to safely transport students to and from school, and for mobilizing at a moment's notice in some emergency situations, the Orcutt Union School District Transportation Department was selected to receive the district's inaugural "We Are Orcutt" Award. The award will be given periodically to employees or teams whose work embodies the district's tagline, "Where a Dedicated Staff Means Kids Come First."

"Everyone felt honored to be recognized," says Transportation Coordinator Jana Graham, one of 22 employees on the department who were treated to a special luncheon on May 31. "It was a special moment for us."

The "We Are Orcutt" honor is but one of a host of substantial accomplishments from the 2023-2023 school year:

Facilities progress. The Los Alamos campus enjoyed classroom modernization and an expansive new play structure funded by Measure G, the bond measure that OUSD voters approved in 2016. Also, a large, Measure

G-funded multi-use building for the Orcutt Academy High School (OAHS) campus is being constructed; when completed sometime during the 2023-2024 school year, the building will have a gymnasium for athletic events that can double as a performing arts venue.

Mathematics. Math achievement has been a focus for our district, and we have provided training and support for our teachers to improve classroom math instruction. Happily, district benchmark testing is showing results, as elementary and junior high school students made notable growth from 2021-2022.

Childcare. The district's Campus Connection Childcare Program was able to continue to provide services for virtually all fee-paying families while meeting state requirements to provide free childcare to low-income students, English Learners, foster youth, and students experiencing homelessness. Campus Connection remains an important part of our elementary schools.

Orcutt Children's Arts Foundation. OCAF regained momentum lost during

COVID-19. In late September, OCAF organized its first Chalk Festival since 2019; in February, OCAF held its first Gala fund-raiser since 2020; this winter and spring, OCAF took over the district's spring play for elementary and junior high school students and supported performances in March of the one-act comedy "Goldilocks on Trial".

Community partnerships. The district continued to invite community engagement and to seek out community partners. In November, the district hosted an Arts Showcase for community members. During the school year, two meetings of the Santa Maria Breakfast Rotary were held at OUSD schools to highlight the district's progress with literacy and career readiness. Continued community involvement is planned in 2023-2024.

CTE. OAHS continued to make significant progress with offerings in Career and Technical Education (CTE). Its pathway in information communication and technologies (networking) added a capstone course in Cybersecurity. The school's theatre arts courses -- Drama, Advanced Drama

Production, and Technical Theatre -- have become a CTE pathway in arts, media, and entertainment (performing arts). Coupled with this, CTE students from OAHS now are participating in SkillsUSA competitions as part of Allan Hancock College's team.

Early college for OAHS students. Our high school's Early College Cadre partnership with Allan Hancock College is off to a strong start, as the first group of students will have completed 13 college units by the start of their sophomore year of high school. The second group is ready to launch this summer. And Hancock continues to work with OAHS on concurrent enrollment courses that provide both high school and college credit at the same time.

Thanks to everyone associated with our school district -- students, parents, staff, and community -- for a wonderful 2022-2023 school year. Here's wishing all of you a happy and restful summer.

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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Local Choir Coastal Voices Develops Talent & Friendships



Kimberly Klug, Larry Los, Elisha Ramirez and Elise Cassel prepare for a Coastal Voices performance.

In May, Coastal Voices gave an energetic concert of Beatles and Beach Boys tunes accompanied by pianist Leslie Sullivan and local surf band, the Tsunamis. Refrains of "Here Comes The Sun," and "Well, she took her daddy's car and she cruised to

the hamburger stand now," brought back memories of hot rods and guys and girls having fun in the sun. Past concerts included a variety of music from Broadway and the silver screen, Veteran's Day patriotic music, the great American song book, and

musical celebrations of Christmas with performances of the Messiah.

According to Juliann Hemphill, current director, the choir lost momentum in past years, mostly due to COVID. But, she says, the choir is growing and is committed to providing a venue for much needed live music for the community. Hemphill has sung with Coastal Voices for 13 years and has a depth of background with the group and its dynamics. "I want this to be fun for our singers and audiences." We cast a wide net. Some people travel from Arroyo Grande, Solvang and even Templeton to sing with us," she says.

It's not just about music though. "We have fun in Coastal Voices. It's a social connector and a great place to develop long-term friendships." Choir members are looking forward to the annual retreat in August at an old barn in Arroyo Grande where they introduce new music, enjoy good food and plan for upcoming concerts.

Currently Coastal Voices boasts 37 singers, some of whom are soloists and others participate in small group singing in addition to lending their voices to the whole. Soloists like Vince and Ellen Pillow add variety to the choir's sound. One small group is called the Songbirds; they sing soulful or upbeat songs with an ever-present sense of humor. Above all, the choir sings with a lot of heartfelt emotion whether they are singing Beach Boys tunes, patriotic songs, or classical arias.

Coastal Voices began over 20 years ago with then Director Dolores Duran at the podium. The Santa Maria Master Chorale

had just disbanded, and Duran offered her church, St. Andrew's Methodist, as a place for the newly formed group to practice and perform. After Duran's unfortunate passing in 2007, choir member and choral conductor Margaret Nelson stepped up temporarily. However, not finding anyone else to permanently take over the reins, she assumed directorship of the choir for the next 12 years. Under Nelson's leadership the choir expanded its repertoire, grew in number, and performed in many venues on the Central Coast. Juliann Hemphill, then the assistant director, took over in 2019.

According to Hemphill, singing with a group like Coastal Voices offers many benefits. "In fact," she continues, "There are several studies that show people who sing have better long-term mental and physical health. Singing with people is social, great for mental acuity, builds up lungs, and is great for the body and mind."

Joining the choir is easy; show up on Monday night at St. Andrew's Methodist Church from 6:30 to 8:30PM. Reading music is not necessary; you'll learn at rehearsals, says Hemphill smiling. Whether you know how to sing, are interested in learning, or just want to listen, Coastal Voices has much to offer.

For more information, visit www.coastalvoices.info.

John Chamberlain reporting



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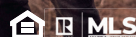
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SPECIAL EVENTS

FREE LUNCHES FOR SENIORS AT OASIS CENTER beginning June 21, 11:30-12:30 provided by the Central Coast Commission for Senior Citizens and will be served four days a week. RSVP by calling (805) 925-9554, option 1 or e-mail meals@CentralCoastSeniors.org. 3.

MONTHLY OR WEEKLY EVENTS

CENTRAL COAST SAMS RV GROUP meets the 3rd Tuesday of each month for a 3 day "campout". We enjoy planned tours, good food and fellowship at local campgrounds within 100 miles of the Central Coast. We welcome new members. Contact Faye Cardoza 805-481-1047.

CENTRAL COAST SUDOKU CLUB – Ready to take your SUDOKU solving skills to the next level? Monthly "step-by-step" solutions to "Tough" puzzles in a "Skype" game format. Email BobG at stepbystepsudoku@verizon.net for more information. For examples, search YouTube for SUBINGDOKU.

COASTAL VALLEYS MARINE CORPS LEAGUE 1340 monthly meeting on the fourth Tuesday of the month held at Veteran's Memorial Bldg at 313 W Tunnell in Santa Maria at 7PM.

COASTAL VOICES is looking for singers to join us! Rehearsals are held Mondays, 6:30PM, at St. Andrew United Methodist Church, 3945 S. Bradley Rd., Santa Maria. All participants must be fully vaccinated against

COVID. A love of singing and the willingness to work hard and learn beautiful music is the only requirement. Check our website at <http://www.coastalvoices.info/>. Singers can contact us at coastalvoices@gmail.com or call 937-5827 for additional information.

CRESTWOOD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP (Non-Denominational) 1265 W. McCoy Lane, Ste A, Santa Maria, CA 93455, 925-7500. An All Volunteer Church concentrating on teaching the word of God and using our resources to help the poor in love thru service. Come find out what it is like to "Do Church Differently."

CRIBBAGE ANYONE? The Santa Maria Chibbage Club is looking for new members. We meet every Saturday@IHOP@2PM. We play 9 games against different opponents. If you love cribbage, please join us. Contact: Debbie @ (805)598-1867

CUB SCOUT PACK 91 welcomes boys and girls, grades K-5 to join us. Scouting teaches children about their community, citizenship, service to others, and outdoor adventure. To learn more about us visit www.pack91orcutt.org or call us at 253-CUBS.

DEMOCRATIC CLUB OF SM VALLEY meets every 3rd Thursday at IHOP, 202 Nicholson Ave, Santa Maria. Social at 6:00 PM, guest speakers at 7:00. Business meeting for members follows. Call 805-349-2708 or visit www.santamariademocrats.info for more information.

EVANGELISTIC SERVICE 105 S. Broadway, Santa Maria, CA 93455 (Old Orcutt), Sundays at 6:30PM, Worship with us. Pastor Jesse Pinheiro (805)937-6536.

EXCITING BIBLE STUDY at Revival Tabernacle, 105 S. Broadway, Santa Maria,

CA 93455 (Old Orcutt) Wednesdays at 7PM Join us as we explore God's word. Pastor Jesse Pinheiro

FREE EXERCISE GROUP 9AM Saturday mornings throughout June and July. Emphasis on walking and/or running the 1/4-mile-long Harbor Church Trail at 751 E. Foster Road. Ages 4 - 94 welcome. Questions? David Dantzer at (805) 937-0213.

FAMILY FUN NIGHT 6-8PM. Last Friday of the month @ Unity Church, 1165 Stubblefield, Orcutt. Bring games and food to share. (805) 937-3025.

FOUR-PARK BARBERSHOP HARMONY FOR WOMEN who love to sing. For additional information, call 805-736-7572. We love to sing for special occasions. Rehearsals on Thursday nights, 6:45PM, Lutheran Church of Our Savior, 4725 S. Bradley Rd.

Classified Ads

Sell items for free. Free ads can only be accepted via email to info@orcuttpioneer.com with "classified" in the subject line. 25 word limit. All ads must be received by the second Thursday of the month and will appear on the fourth Thursday of the month. Business ads only \$25/25 words. Mail payments for business ads to Orcutt Pioneer, PO Box 2545, Orcutt CA 93457.

Lawn Care. Liability insured, bi-monthly residential & commercial, one-time cleanup, miscellaneous jobs, weed clearing, free estimates. Jim Reid 805-938-1402 Lic #36524

Wanted: Model A Ford Cars, Parts, Projects. Let me help clean out your garage. Jay McCord 805-598-8133
Shadowsfund, Senior and Pit Bull Rescue in Lompoc is looking for volunteers and dog walkers. Shadowsfund@gmail.com

Monthly SUDOKU puzzles (either Tough, Challenging or Advanced) on YouTube - Search SUBINGDOKU for videos that also include Step-by-Step puzzle solutions
F1b Cavapoo Puppies - 10 weeks, 2 Males, 1 Cream and 1 Red. \$1,800. Text or call 209-380-4511

All in excellent condition: Egyptian and boat large oil paintings, microwave, portable air conditioner, large mirror. Will text pictures 818-935-3507 Marie.

Wingback chair. Asking \$30 obo. Cash only. pickup only. contact me through email @ parker-brass@hotmail.com

Labradoodle puppies ready for their new homes...text 8058787806 for more info...

Day bed-\$35; Men's Electra Townie peddle bike- \$50; Queen Mattress Frame-\$10; Skeet thrower-=\$15; 805-332-3027

"Shadow", a playful 5 Year Old Maltese male seeks loving home. This little guy is happiest with someone who's home all the time and loves to sit on your lap, go for walks, and "Shadow" you everywhere you go. Call 805-878-1739 for details.

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