

## District 2 candidate Begonia says council should wait until after election to hire city manager

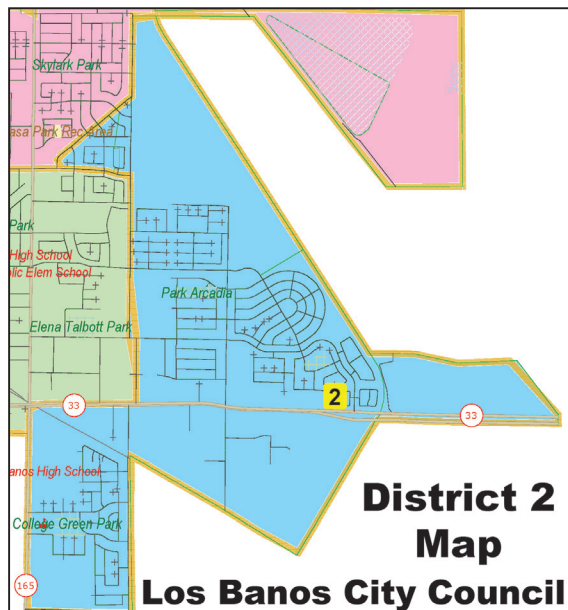
By Allen D. Payton

Los Banos City Council District 2 candidate Doug Begonia, Jr. spoke out, this week about the city manager controversy, saying the current city council should wait until after the election to fill the position, permanently. His sentiments echo what the

only candidate for mayor, Paul Llanez has said previously, as well as Mayor Pro Tem Kenneth Lambert and Councilman Brett Jones, with whom Begonia will serve if he's able to unseat appointed incumbent Refugio LLamas.

Asked if they should wait Begonia responded, "absolutely. I would like to wait whether I win or my opponent wins, until after Election Day and voters decide who is going to represent District 2."

"Paul is going to get in there, he's going to be the mayor so he should definitely have a say," he continued. "That's because it's so close. If this was a year ago or even six months ago that would be different. The election is only a couple months from now. We should have a say in who the new city manager is going to be."



Los Banos City Council District 2 candidate Doug Begonia, Jr.

Obviously, they're trying to get their guy in there because they don't know what is going to happen on election day," he added.

Begonia offered more about himself and why he's running by

[See Begonia p.4](#)

## 2022 Los Banos Farmer of the Year: Patrick Gallichio

A title well deserved; to be honored at annual Farm to Table event

By Alexis Abbott, Correspondent

An exciting time has come about for Los Banos, as the Farmer of the Year has been chosen: Mr. Patrick "Pat" Gallichio. This honored title does not come easily. A list of qualifications must be present for anyone nominated for this position to honor outstanding achievements of individuals and families making a significant contribution to agriculture.

Not only must a nominee be of great service to the community through volunteering, getting involved in community events, providing financial support to the community, and acting as a role model by mentoring young people who are interested in agriculture, but they must also be of help to the community by hiring employees locally

[See Farmer p.5](#)



2022 Los Banos Farmer of the Year Patrick Gallichio.

## Los Banos Sportsmen's Association continues community service after 88 years

Organization still committed to "Conservation, Propagation, Law Enforcement, Education"

By Alexis Abbott, Correspondent

A community is only as strong as its members and organizations. Fortunately, for Los Banos, there are many organizations that keep the local heartbeat strong and community thriving. The Los Banos Sportsmen's Association (LBSA) is one of those organizations.

Formed in 1934 and incorporated in 1946, the LBSA's original purpose was to aid in the enforcement of fish and game laws and the propagation of local fish and wildlife. Now, it is one of the community's largest organizations by membership and provides scholarships, community support, and hosts monthly events in its spacious hall, complete with kitchen and bar facilities. LBSA even donates the use of their facilities to The Tiger Trap Team, a competitive clay pigeon shooting


team for youth.

Considering the association's long history of community involvement, education, and support it's no wonder their original motto still stands today: "Conservation, Propagation, Law

[See Sportmen's p.5](#)



Clay trap shooting at Los Banos Sportsmen's Association. Photo by The Tiger Trap Team



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# Valadao announces campaign receives endorsement of Los Banos Teachers Association one day later

By Allen D. Payton

In a post on her Facebook page on September 1, candidate for the Los Banos School Board Trustee Area 7, Dayna Valadao announced her campaign writing, "I have decided to run for a seat on the Los Banos School Board. Education has always been something I hold dear to my heart. I believe it is essential for a school board to perform as a cohesive unit alongside district staff and community members. Effective communication is needed to establish and maintain trust and a common focus. Providing a quality education to all children within our community will continue to be my priority."

Then on Sept. 2 the Los Banos Teachers Association shared on their Facebook page the retired teacher's post and announced their endorsement of her writing, "LBTA proudly endorses Dayna! Her passion for our community, schools, and children is unmatched! Vote Valadao for LBUSD School Board!"

Asked if she had been interviewed for the endorsement and if she had any comment about receiving the teachers' union support, Valadao responded, "Yes, I am being endorsed by LBTA. I was contacted, and they set up a time to interview me in front of a panel of five members. The interview panel had several questions that I was to answer on the spot. I feel honored to be endorsed by LBTA. As a member for most of my career, they continue to work for the betterment of our teaching staff in a fair and cooperative manner."

"My goal is to run on my own merits," she added.

Her opponent, incumbent Area 7 Trustee Ray Martinez, was also asked if he had been interviewed by the local teachers' union prior to their

endorsement of Valadao. He said he was invited but declined to be interviewed citing previous candidates with various troubles that the union had endorsed and saying the association doesn't share his values.

"Regarding my campaign and various invites from different organizations to interview with, I will share my thoughts," Martinez responded. "For me, my time, efforts, and logistics to my campaign are precious and priceless. The energy, contacts, collaboration is very valuable to my continued success."

"To answer your questions, I was

**Incumbent declines to be interviewed, cites union's previous endorsements of controversial candidates**

*"Why would I even consider an endorsement from such an organization that doesn't align itself with values that I hold dearly?" – Trustee Martinez*

contacted by LBTA to interview," he shared. "I have been on the board for six years and have only been contacted by LBTA two times for these types of interviews. Even when I served as President of the Board, LBTA never contacted me."

"In past experience, LBTA has indicated that the union would find a candidate to remove me from the board," Martinez continued. "This same LBTA, in the past, endorsed Dominic Falasco, well known for his addictions, lawsuits, arrests, etc. LBTA endorsed Dennis Areias, convicted of dumping almost 400,000 gallons of toxic waste, potentially endangering, contaminating our water system."

"Why would I subject myself to an interview with the LBTA, knowing that my opponent was recruited to remove me from office?" he asked. "Why would I even consider an endorsement from such an organization that doesn't align itself with values that I hold dearly?"

"I was never sent a questionnaire by LBTA. The LBTA can endorse whomever

they want. I wish my opponent the best. Competition tends to bring out the best in candidates," Martinez added.

**LBTA President Jennifer Wilkin, who is a teacher at R.M. Miano Elementary, was asked** about their endorsement and the process. She was asked if her union held candidate interviews of both candidates prior to issuing their endorsement. Wilkin was also asked if so, when and where the interviews were held, who from the union participated, were the candidates asked the same questions, or were they each sent a questionnaire they had to complete. She was also asked to share more on why they endorsed Valadao over Martinez.

Wilkin was also asked to verify what Martinez shared about the LBTA's past endorsements of the two candidates, if she or someone from the LBTA indicated they would find a candidate to run against him and if Wilkin or someone from her organization recruited Valadao to run against Martinez, this year.

Valadao was also then asked if she



Candidate for the Los Banos School Board Trustee Area 7, Dayna Valadao

was recruited by the LBTA or any of its members to run, this year. Valadao responded, "No one recruited me to run for school board. This is something I have always wanted to do after I retired. I feel I have something to offer as a school board member, and I believe in giving back."

Wilkin did not respond prior to publication time.

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## Central Valley Honor Flight takes Los Banos Korean War veteran to Washington, D.C.

**90-year-old Miguel Castro to visit the war memorials**

*By Alexis Abbott, Correspondent*

As the nation honors the 20th anniversary of 9/11, we remember those who were lost during the terror attacks and, along with them, the wars that have come before and the thousands of men and women throughout America's history who have served.

One such man, Los Banos resident Miguel Castro, was invited along with 66 other area veterans by the Central Valley Honor Flight organization to visit the war memorials in Washington, D.C.

Castro earned his U.S. citizenship by serving in the Air Force during the Korean War where he worked as part of the foreign training unit to translate for and help teach foreigners who were learning support jobs such as radar, communications, etc. His ability to translate and communicate as well as to teach was a great aid. Those skills have gone on to support him throughout his life.

Castro is very community oriented, having dedicated over 42 years to teaching Portuguese ESL students, announcing on the radio in Portuguese since 1961 and now transmitting a radio program through radioportugalusa.com, and dedicating countless hours advertising for and working with the Portuguese community in Los Banos. He is definitely one of the heartbeats that keep Los Banos strong and



Miguel Castro reading a letter from home during the Korean War. Photo courtesy of Luis Castro.

around the table is just one part of the love for community that Miguel Castro lives and breathes by.

At 90 years old, 91 on November 14, it is truly an honor that Mr. Castro is among us to tell the story of those soldiers lost to the war and to time along with the 66 other veterans who have been chosen to visit such a sacred and honorable place.

The Central Valley Honor Flight took their first trip in 2013 and has been leading the effort to

honor local World War II, Korean and Vietnam veterans by flying them to see their memorials in the nation's capital ever since. Their website can be found at CVHonorFlight.org and, to date, the nonprofit has raised over \$2 million to fund 16 flights and has organized 32 send-off and welcome home events. In total, CVHF has transported 706 World War II veterans, 330 Korean War veterans and 27 Vietnam War



Honoree Miguel Castro (left), Paul Loeffler of CVHF and Luis Castro, Miguel's son. Photo by CVHF

thriving.

Having grown up with strangers approaching him to say that his father helped to teach them throughout community college, Miguel's son, Luis Castro, when asked about his father, responded, "I've been pretty lucky. I've been pretty blessed."

Some of his favorite memories with his father include waterskiing at the San Luis Reservoir and enjoying traditional two- and three-course meals consisting of Portuguese dishes, usually including cod fish as a family staple, lovingly cooked by his mother. The family time spent eating those home cooked meals and sharing laughter

veterans to D.C.

Now, Miguel Castro will join those numbers as he travels with 66 of his fellow veterans aged 65-98 on September 12, 2022, to see the war memorials. This trip honors and remembers their service as they visit the WWII Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, the Vietnam War Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery where they will witness the exchanging of the guard at The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier among other viewing events.

You can be among the many who will welcome back home these honored veterans when they return to Fresno Yosemite International Airport on September 14th.

## Los Banos Chamber of Commerce to hold Downtown Fall Street Faire Sept. 17

**Rain or Shine Event**

*By Michelle Sandoval, Executive Director, LB Chamber of Commerce*

Our Fall Street Faire is happening on September 17th from 8:30-3:00! Tons of Vendors, Food & Entertainment. Complete with

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# Panthers go 1-1, Tigers 1-2 to start off season in non-league games

By Michael Cosenza, Sports Reporter

To start off the year, the Pacheco Panthers lost one and won one game during non-league competition. They lost by just one point to Golden Valley, 19-18 on September 9th. Pacheco ran their whole offense through junior running back, Abel Bravo, who had over 200 yards from scrimmage and a touchdown to carry the offensive load for the Panthers. Their second running back, Abraham Fernandez, added a touchdown as well. Unfortunately, this wasn't enough to beat Central Valley. With only four passes completed, having that strong offensive line and running game can be a strong way to keep them competitive.

On a better note, our Panthers beat Seaside, 29-26 on September 2nd. Bravo had an insane performance for 26 carries, 230 yards (8.8 yards

per carry), and added three touchdowns. Another running back, Daniel Scott, added a touchdown, as well. The Panthers only had one completed pass. Pacheco looks to advance their record behind their strong running game and sure-fire all-leaguer Bravo.

For our Tigers, they got stung by some Yellowjackets as Los Banos fell to Hilmar, 21-7 on September 9th. They started off scoring, with an incredible punt block scoop and touchdown by number 3, Jamison Braniff. He was probably their best player on the field that night, having a few solid grabs plus that amazing, blocked punt, doing it on both sides for the Tigers.

That was unfortunately the only touchdown for the Tigers, although they came close to scoring a second time with Ayden Barcellos having a great touchdown snag, but the referee disallowed it.

Credit to the defense for holding their own, although Hilmar QB Hudson Azevedo did have two rushing touchdowns. The Tigers defense allowed a lot on the ground that night, which was different from the previous week against



LBHS Tigers vs. Orestimba Warriors on Sept. 2, 2022. Photos by Michael Cosenza

Dos Palos in which their defense shined.



Tigers taking on the Hilmar Yellowjackets Aug. 26, 2022.

For the offense, they didn't score one point. Backup Quarterback Wyatt McBride came in for the Tigers with about five minutes left to go in the 4th quarter, hoping to get something going passing wise, as the Hilmar defense seemed to have starter David Herrera figured out. McBride had a nice hookup with Barcellos for a gain of 38 yards, but then proceeded to fumble on two straight

drives, pretty much finishing up the game.

For the JV, Hilmar ran all over them to win the game, 47-6. Only touchdown scored by Los Banos was by number 5, Owen Baffunno, on a last second grab in the 4th quarter.

Varsity Tigers dropped a second in a row to Orestimba, 34-26 on Friday night Sept. 2nd. Los Banos took the early lead with a jet sweep touchdown to number 6, Izaiah Medina, putting the Tigers in the driver's seat. Orestimba did not let up though, as they drove right back down the field with another touchdown. Jamison Braniff, who had an incredible night, caught his first of 3 touchdowns on a pass from Herrera to strike back. From there it was a back-and-forth affair, 19-13 score at halftime. Fast forward to the 4th quarter, the Tigers needed a score, and they drove down to the redzone. Herrera attempted a pass to Braniff for a big play down the sideline, but a great play by the Orestimba corner caused the interception, and ultimately ended the game.

The regular season begins for both teams September 16th.

## Begonia from p.1

sharing his candidate's statement:

"It is with great honor I announce my candidacy for the city of Los Banos Councilmember – district 2. I believe deeply that our city is far from the potential it could reach, and that the citizens of Los Banos deserve much better. My hope is to be part of the team that leads Los Banos into a brighter future. Transparency between this city and its residents will be a great place to start. Making sure our city feels safe, providing our youth with opportunities, and attracting companies that provide career jobs are all vitally important to the future of our city.

I have been a resident of Los Banos since the age of two. I graduated from CSU Stanislaus with a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in finance. While I was a college student, I

began working for the Merced County Office of Education as a para-educator. I now have 13 years of experience working inside special education classrooms and have been a full-time teacher with MCOE for the past six years."

In a September 6th post on his campaign Facebook page, Begonia further shared his reasons for running by writing: "As a Special Education Teacher here in Los Banos, I believe in our future. I plan to help move this city closer to its full potential. We need more businesses for our city, jobs for our residents, and better opportunities for our youth. I support our first responders and keeping this city safe."

To follow and learn more information about Begonia and his campaign visit his Facebook page entitled Douglas Begonia Los Banos City Council Candidate - District 2.

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## The Restaurant Whisperer

Andy English



Co-researched with Lesley Castro, Los Banos High School student

Bubble tea, or boba tea as it is currently better known here in the US, is the island of Taiwan's most beloved beverage. It started with a combination of cold tea, milk, and brown-sugared tapioca balls named 'bubbles' by the local Taiwanese children in the 1970's or so and has since been the popular choice of refreshment for many generations of



Los Banos Quickly storefront on Grand Opening day, August 30, 2022. Photos by Andy English

# Bubble Tea to Boba, the cross-generational Quickly offers refreshing beverage

ice-cold tea drinkers around the world. Los Banos currently has up to six locations where boba tea is served but they are mostly at our donut and ice cream shops. That changed when Gherlie Arias decided to open her second Quickly boba shop and restaurant in Los Banos in early September after the initial and recent success of her first shop in Atwater.

It should be noted that Quickly was not literally named after the speed of delivery of its specialty iced Asian drinks or tasty food. It is the business name for the now world-famous bubble tea and fried chicken shop that was started by Nancy Yang in Taiwan in 1981 under the trading name Kuai Ke Li, which phonetically translates to 'Quickly'. The business took off and became very popular in Asian tropical islands like the Philippines, for example

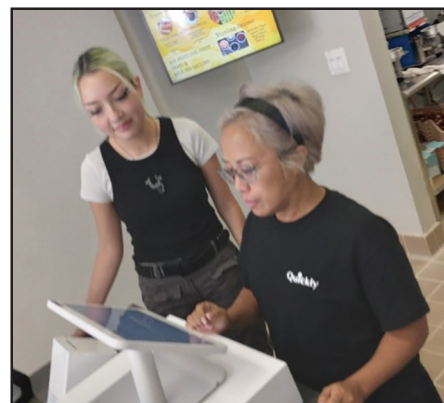
Gherlie, an American Filipina, followed her desire to refresh the parched hard-working people of the California Central Valley and at the same time introduce them to some popular and more globally appreciated Asian food.

I first frequented Quickly during its very recent Grand Opening in Los Banos

on a hot summer's day, August 30th. The order lines were literally 'out the door' and the waiting time was forty-five minutes or more. But boba fans are very patient and are quite willing to wait up to twenty-five minutes or more for their favorite drink and snack.

The menu has an amazing array of Asian milk teas along with the signature popcorn chicken and my favorite, the Filipino pork lumpia rolls and sweet chili sauce. If you are really lucky, you will find a special and almost hidden menu item, a fried banana dish that is currently not on the Atwater menu and sells out quickly in Los Banos.

After waiting in line and ordering your drink and food, the orders are sent to the back, each beverage is hand-mixed and the food made to order. This allows time for people to socialize in the shop,



Los Banos Quickly owner Gherlie Arias (right) trains a new employee.

develop a thirst, and drink the boba 'quickly' upon receipt. My favorite is the Thai milk tea. Each transparent boba cup is sealed with a straw-pierceable plastic film and the straws are large diameter to accommodate the boba. The popcorn chicken is smaller chunks of white

breast meat coated with a crunchy batter and served with your favorite sauce. Other signature menu items include generous portions of pot stickers and sweet potato fries, and many are hoping the Spam Musubi, an Atwater favorite, will also be added to the Los Banos menu in the future.

Thanks to Gherlie and her team, we now have one more globally recognized beverage and cuisine shop in our Central Valley city.

The Quickly Los Banos is located in the Canal Farm Shopping Center at 1325 E. Pacheco Blvd. Enjoy!



A dinner event held at the Los Banos Sportsmen's Association on April 11, 2022. Photo by Kimberly Helms Lewis.

## Sportmen's from p.1

Enforcement, Education."

As hinted at, this community gem isn't just here for their good looks. Hosting a special dinner once a month on the first Wednesday, the organization truly focuses on building the local community and creating a space for merriment and conversation. Bringing in other local groups to act as chef for the month and hosting the event at their facility, they also hold a raffle with prizes that were donated by the community.

Events are held at their facility at 13989 S. Mercey Springs Road in Los Banos.

Want to know more about becoming a member of the LBSA? Here are the facts: Membership costs \$50 per year and once a member you become privy to discounts, the monthly newsletter, and an invitation to the Food, Fun, and Guns event held annually in January.

For more information, be sure to reach out to the Los Banos Sportsmen's Association at (209) 827-3278 or visit their Facebook page.

## Farmer from p.1

and manage their operations in a safe and conscientious manner. Nominees are submitted anonymously by members of the community to the Los Banos Downtown Business Association and, as you can see, it is no small matter to be nominated in the first place, nevertheless, be chosen. Congratulations, Mr. Gallichio.

Pat is partner and General Manager of the Pentagon Company, dba Delta Farms. Along with his Sansoni family partners, they farm 2,500 acres of diversified farmland, including tomatoes, cotton, alfalfa,

corn and almonds. More details to come upon celebrating his accolades as this year's honored leader.

The Farmer of the Year is honored at the Farm to Table event in Los Banos held in Henry Miller Plaza at 600 H Street. It will be held on Thursday, September 22nd and due to its popularity is sold out.

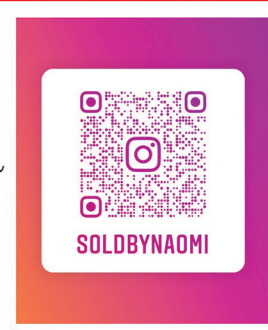
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# Merced County Farm Bureau endorses Pazin in Assembly District 27

By Breanne Vandenberg

The Merced County Farm Bureau (MCFB) met with candidates vying to represent Merced County in State Assembly Districts 27 during the August Board of Directors Meeting and former Merced County Sheriff Mark Pazin received the board's endorsement.

This newly formed district will represent the majority of Merced County including all of Los Banos, and parts of Madera and Fresno counties. Following his time as sheriff, Pazin was appointed as law enforcement chief for the California Office of Emergency Services.

Pazin recognizes the regulatory burden for businesses to operate in California is far too high. In addition, he understands the need to invest in long overdue infrastructure to ensure a stable water supply.

When informed of the endorsement, Pazin responded, "Thank you to the Merced County Farm Bureau President and Board of Directors for your endorsement and confidence in me, to not only represent agriculture interests, but the entire district."

"For years we have only witnessed legislative meetings and empty promises to increase water storage, yet not one project started even though financing is available," he continued. "It will take someone with determination and focus to ensure a handful of people do not continually stop these important water storage projects and I am that person."

Following the endorsement, MCFB President Joe Sansoni was satisfied with the direction taken by the board. Sansoni stated, "In reviewing each of the candidates' backgrounds and platforms, we found these candidates aligned the most with the needs of Merced County agriculture."

"We look forward in continuing discussions with them on issues relevant to our membership through the November election," Sansoni added.

For more information about Pazin and his campaign visit [www.markpazin.com](http://www.markpazin.com).

The MCFB will interview candidates for endorsement in State Senate District 14 and Congressional District 13 at their September meeting.



## About MCFB

Founded in 1917, Merced County Farm Bureau is a non-profit, non-governmental, grassroots organization that advocates for approximately 1,000 farmers, ranchers

and dairy families who live and/or work in Merced County. For more information visit [www.merced-farmbureau.org](http://www.merced-farmbureau.org).

*Allen D. Payton contributed to this report.*

## 8th Los Banos Police Sergeant sworn in



New Los Banos Police Sergeant Ramon McDonald with his wife Stacy standing beside him, is given his oath of office by Commander Ray Reyna on Tuesday, August 23, 2022. Photo by LBPd. New LBPd Sgt. Ray McDonald. Photo by Andy English

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Justin Collins, News Reporter - [news@losbanosenterprise.com](mailto:news@losbanosenterprise.com)  
Michael Cosenza, Sports Reporter - [sports@losbanosenterprise.com](mailto:sports@losbanosenterprise.com)  
Alexis E. Abbott, Correspondent · Markus Machado, Production Artist  
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**Have a flag placed at your home or business on eight holidays throughout the year**

*By Alexis Abbott, Correspondent*

It can be easily proven that part of being an American is having a healthy dose of patriot pride and a big part of having patriot pride is honoring the American Flag. Throughout every American battle, war, election and celebration the flag has flown high with those red, white and blue colors standing proud and strong!

Show your patriotism by joining the Flag Program run by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2487 and the American Legion Post 166 wherein, for a yearly fee, an American flag will be placed at your residence or business on the following Flag Service Schedule:

- **President's Day – February**
- **Memorial Day – May**
- **Flag Day – June 14**
- **Independence Day – July 4**
- **Labor Day – September**
- **Patriots Day – September 11**
- **Veterans Day – November 11**

• **Pearl Harbor Day – December 7**

Flags will be placed at approximately 6:30 am and will be picked up at approximately 4:30 pm. The fee is \$80 for the first year, which includes the flagpole and the drilling of the hole, and a payment of \$30 every year after. A form, which can be found on their website

[www.losbanosveterans.org/community-service/flag-program/](http://www.losbanosveterans.org/community-service/flag-program/) must be completed and mailed in order to sign up for the program.



Now, a bit about the organizations:

The American Legion Post 166 was established in Los Banos in 1920 and the VFW Post 2487 was established in 1932. Usually, these two groups run and operate separately. The Los Banos community is special because the two organizations have joined together in a combined effort to serve veterans and the local community, sponsoring several community programs and activities including their Flag Service Program and Annual Veterans Day Parade.

Not only are they a big part of the local community, but they are also the only ATLAS Care Center in California. ATLAS is an innovative program that provides telehealth services in order to reduce the need for long travel times to VA facilities.

Be sure to check out this phenomenal organization at [losbanosveterans.org](http://losbanosveterans.org) and help support their efforts by donating.

They can be contacted via email at [losbanosveterans@gmail.com](mailto:losbanosveterans@gmail.com) and are located at 615 E Street.

## Remember This Day Forever

*By Alexis E. Abbott*

Remember 9/11

my father said to me  
six years old sitting in the  
Land of the Free.

“Remember this moment  
because this moment will live long.”

So, I took a snapshot picture  
of the buildings who stood high and on  
fire as they burned and people jumped.

While the country held their breaths  
and as adrenaline pumped  
through the veins of The People  
who were American and Free  
watching as the buildings crumbled  
into a dry and dusty sea.

The nation came together that day  
instead of falling apart.

United in spite of terror and flaming hot sparks.

People helping people  
sort through the mess

of 2,977 people who were lost

and to 343 of those being firefighter deaths.

Those brave firemen were rushing into an unimaginable scene.

9/11 lives on in the memories of those old, young, and keen.

So, take time today to stop

and remember the buildings that once stood.

Remember the thousands of people doing what they should.

Remember as the nation stood hand in hand.

Remember that it made America a stronger land.

Remember 9/11.



## Resident suggests Sutter expand healthcare in Los Banos instead of a Kaiser

**Dear Editor:**

I'm very glad Los Banos has a local newspaper.

I moved here almost two-and-a-half years ago, during the height of the pandemic from the Bay Area. I had been looking for a home in the Central Valley for three years, before realizing Los Banos was perfect for me.

Golden Valley Health and Sutter are the medical providers

that I found, here. Neither is a major medical provider such as Kaiser or Dignity Health Care in Merced; however, patients are assessed quickly and transferred by ambulance or helicopter to larger hospitals when needed. I appreciate that smaller providers can provide good medical care to patients. Kaiser wouldn't serve everyone, so it makes more sense to see if Sutter could expand.

I hope Los Banos doesn't try to emulate Silicon Valley too much, because I moved here knowing agriculture still exists and you can see the stars at night.

Thanks,  
Marilyn Hyland  
Los Banos

*Submit your Letter to the Editor of up to 300 words, include your name and phone number so we can verify you sent it to [editor@losbanosenterprise.com](mailto:editor@losbanosenterprise.com).*

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