

Postal Customer

Breaking Bread Together

By Alexis E. Abbott, Correspondent

As the holiday season is rapidly approaching, appointed family cooks everywhere will be turning

to family favorite recipes in order to bring back that childhood nostalgia that we all know and love. Seasons may come and go, and relationships

Transcendental Language

By Alexis E. Abbott, Correspondent

"I don't speak your language."

Is very hard to hear
when every word you say
goes in and out their ears
"I don't want to understand you."

Is really what is meant.
"Your viewpoint is not my own,
you're too different."

This message cycles through
us time and time again.
It's a deep-rooted belief
that it must always be
US versus THEM
and while we may all speak
different languages
and therefore, can reach a divide
there's another language that
connects us all inside
there is one language that
is always the very same
the language of Love is binding
and transcends every other
language by its very name

Love, Amor, Tresne, Liebe

This floating and funny concept
that's ever hard to describe.

A language so powerful it
transcends "enemy" and "tribe"
that warm fuzzy feeling to
help your fellow man.

Rounding up the next dollar
or donating an extra can.

Family, Familia, Rodina, Gezin.

These are all ties that we grew
to know deep within.

So, with the holidays approaching,
and the time to "Gather 'round,"
try to listen in a language that
transcends those leaps and bounds
that very language that vibrates
through every fiber of the human state.

The language of Love and
Understanding throughout the
human Family takes the cake.

may rise and fall, but what will always be the center of everything in human culture is food. Learning to farm food is what allowed us to go from nomadic to established civilizations. Learning to make food that was high in fat allowed us to reach a point of food security. Now, learning recipes from those who came before will allow us to not only thrive physically, but within our very souls as well.

Andrea Brent, State Farm Insurance Agent and Los Banos native, recently responded to a Los Banos Enterprise Facebook post asking readers for their input. "What about a family recipe column? A story about the family and a multi-generational recipe or even your most popular one. We have some great cooks in town, and I'd love to hear about the recipes from old and new residents with all kinds of traditions and cultures."

Andrea then went on to say, "Our family recipes are entwined with memories and traditions and should

be cherished and shared. I think these types of stories would bring a community feel to the paper and would be something I would tune in to read every edition."

Luckily for us, she had a recipe in mind, "For example, my family makes Swedish pancakes. My great grandma was from Sweden. She taught my grandmother, who passed it down to my mom and my aunt and then to my cousins and me. My aunt taught the St. John's parish who makes them for their annual Swedish dinner and fundraiser. A newer recipe would be my margarita one which we've updated over the last 30 years. It's my most requested recipe and was present at almost every family events."

When talking more about the importance of Swedish pancakes to her family, Andrea shared,

"Mom made this for me four times a year and there was nothing better. She saved it for special occasions and just the thought of them makes me smile. My mom passed away 12 years ago and making these recipes always

Hurnblad Family Swedish Pancakes

In a blender combine:

6 Eggs

2.5 C Milk

1.5 C Flour

4 Tablespoons sugar

Consistency should be similar to ranch dressing and not thick like a regular pancake mix. If it's too thick, add a little extra milk. If it's too thin, add an extra bit of flour. Heat a large nonstick pan. Melt a small pat of butter and then wipe out most of it.

Pour some batter in the pan and swirl to coat the entire bottom of the pan with a thin layer. Flip and cook opposite side when bubbles start to form, and the pan releases it. Using a fork to pull up the edges may help you flip with a spatula. Baste with melted butter and sprinkle with sugar. Roll with a fork. You can skip the sugar filling if you'd like a syrup topping. Enjoy.

Batter should hold in the refrigerator for a day or two, but whip the batter and pull out of refrigerator about 20 minutes before cooking.

Side note: the first pancake is normally a flop and gets tossed in the garbage. It gets better with practice. I enjoy adding a teaspoon of good vanilla to the recipe and a touch of cinnamon. My cousin, Lori Satre, likes to add 1/4 cup melted butter and a 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg to her batter.

Another family recipe isn't quite as old. About 30 years ago my parents received a margarita recipe and cactus shaped margarita glasses from our family friend, retired National League umpire Jim Quick and his wife Sandy. It was really tasty, and we made it according to the original recipe, which included a beer, but over the past 30



Andrea Brandt, her husband Ron, and her parents Cathie and Greg Hostetler enjoy one final Mother's Day shortly before her mother's passing. The margarita recipe was enjoyed here! Photo provided by Andrea Brandt



The women who inspired Andrea's cooking. her aunt Claire Satre, nana Edythe Smith, and mother Cathie Hostetler Photo provided by Andrea Brandt

make me think of her and those special family times."

As the holiday season progresses, the Los Banos Enterprise looks forward to sharing the Swedish pancake recipe, as well as many others, with the community. Once you break bread with someone, they are no longer a stranger, so let's all get a little closer this holiday season.

years we've changed and tweaked it.

Once this recipe entered our life, I can't recall a single-family event we hosted that didn't include this frozen and delicious cocktail and the responsibility of making them fell to me. The challenge was getting enough made before the party, so you didn't have to man the blender all night. Then again, playing bartender is always fun and you eventually talk with everyone.

Margarita

In a blender combine:

6-8 oz of your favorite gold tequila

(Jose Cuervo or Patron)

6 oz of frozen Minute Maid Limeaid

3 oz Triple sec

A shot of Cointreau

Ice to fill the blender

Blend until smooth and serve with or without a salted rim

My husband Ron prefers the full-strength original version. I like to add a peeled mandarin in the pitcher before blending. My mom loved to add 2-3 slices of canned peaches and then blend. She felt it smoothed it out and tempered the citrus. With this as your base, there no limit to the variations you can create. Cheers!

Local Kiwanis Club continues their positive impact on community through the holiday season

By Tisha Blackwood-Freitas

The local Kiwanis Club is one of many organizations that continues to positively impact our community through small gestures of giving back and ensuring the needs of many are not forgotten. According to their international website, "Kiwanis International is a global community of clubs, members and partners dedicated to improving the lives of children one community at a time. Today, we stand with more than 550,000 members from K-Kids to Key Club to Kiwanis and many ages in between in 80 countries and geographic areas. Each community has different needs, and Kiwanis empowers members to pursue creative ways to serve the needs of children, such as fighting hunger, improving literacy and offering guidance."

Our local club raises money for high

school scholarships through annual fundraisers and provides a Christmas meal for those in most need. They want to reach as many people as they can, with a goal that no one in the community goes hungry on Christmas. On Friday, November 18th, volunteers distributed 168 pies as part of their pie fundraising effort. This is the 2nd annual pie fundraiser. It is held twice a year: once during Valentine's Day and again during Thanksgiving.

Their upcoming annual Christmas meal will be held Christmas Eve at Firehouse 1 on 7th Street. Deliveries start at approximately 10:30am and sit-down feeding starts at approximately 11am.

Traditionally, they have served 950 people in the community, including deliveries to those shut-in their homes. This is the 38th annual dinner.

Donations for the Christmas Eve



Kiwanis's volunteers distributing pies for fundraiser Photo by Tisha Freitas

meal are greatly appreciated. Call Isabel Mendoca 209 261-2279 If you know of anyone shut-in their homes and need a meal on Christmas Eve, please call Isabel and she will put them on a list.

Editor's note: I had the pleasure of spending some time with a few Kiwanis volunteers while picking up my pies. The joy and spirit of service that lives within this group is magnetic. They inspired me to really take notice and remember how the

slightest gesture and contribution of even one person can impact our society as a whole. I was honored to spend this time with them and look forward to learning more about Kiwanis and other organizations that serve our community. Please email me at editor@losbanosenterprise.com with community organizations, clubs, people, etc. that you think we can highlight in our publications.

Salvation Army Holiday Season Efforts

By Alexis E. Abbott, Correspondent

Every year the Salvation Army makes their presents known (pun intended) through their programs and volunteer efforts. There's no doubt their actions make a huge impact on the communities they serve. Here in Los Banos, it goes without saying. The Salvation Army is a staple organization that continuously gives back through their missionary efforts:

The Salvation Army finished distributing the turkeys and food boxes for their Thanksgiving program the week of November 7th. Their annual Thanksgiving and Christmas upcoming free meals are always open to the homeless and other members of the community:

LOCATION

Both meals will be located at SA 1235 4th Street.

THANKSGIVING

The Thanksgiving meal will be held Tuesday, November 22nd from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon

CHRISTMAS

The Christmas meal will be held on

Tuesday December 20th from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon.

Please note that all are welcome. This is for the whole community.

VOLUNTEERS

If you would like to volunteer, bell ringers are needed through December 23rd so bring your Christmas cheer. Shifts run from 9 am to 9 pm. For anyone who may be interested, please note that shifts are normally 2 or more hours. Please contact Margie Cotta: (559) 974-9970 to volunteer.

Sites for bell ringers will be available at:

Walgreens
Save Mart
Food 4 Less
Grocery Outlet
Big Lots
Hobby Lobby
Walmart
and the Post Office

On a final note, every year the Salvation Army has what are known as Angel Trees. Angel Trees are Christmas trees that can be found within select stores/location and are decorated with tags that contain information for a specific requested donation for a child or family for the Christmas season. To participate, simply select a tag and stop by the Salvation

Army to donate the gift with the tag included on the wrapping. Gifts will then be distributed to families for Christmas morning.

This year there are three Angel Trees. They are located at:

Sorenson's

M&M Restaurant
and Walmart

"Tis the season to help others in our community. God Bless." - Sandy Lemas, Salvation Army Volunteer

A mixer of Dream Vacations

By Brooke Lopez, Reporter

On the evening of November 17th, the Los Banos Chamber of Commerce held their monthly mixer at Gomes Travel Planners Dream Vacations, located at 848 Sixth Street, in our very own downtown. According to owner Margaret Gomes, "Gomes Travel is an independently owned Dream Vacations franchise that was established in 2001." It was a holiday themed, fun evening of networking, delicious food, raffles - and lots of great information on traveling. LB Chamber members commented on the importance of networking and supporting each other through these social events. An ongoing highlight of the Chamber mixers is always the three raffles. In a speech from Gomes, she gratefully thanked everyone for coming to the mixer, gave a little history on her business and introduced Maria Fagundes Bettis (of Modesto), who works hard to ensure every customer gets their "dream vacation". To learn more about joining the LB Chamber of Commerce



Owner, Margaret Gomes with Maria Fagundes Bettis and LB Chamber Executive Director, Michelle Sandoval Photo by Brooke Lopez

please contact them at: 209-826-2495, visit them at 932 Sixth Street or you can visit their website at www.losbanos.com.

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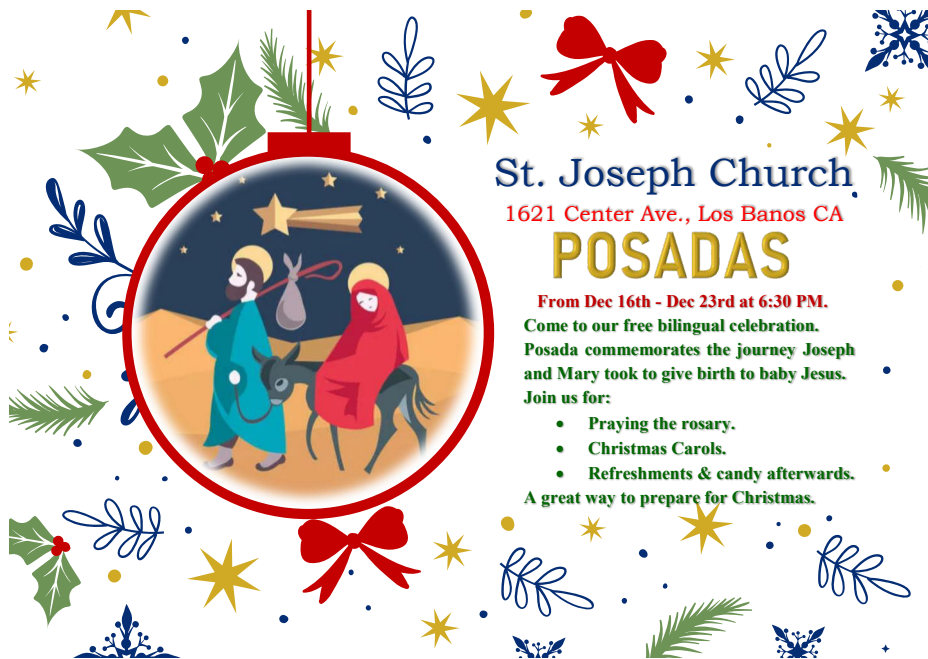
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St. Joseph's sponsors Posadas Dec.16-Dec. 23

Joseph Catholic Church is sponsoring Posadas during the month of December. It's an eight-day bilingual event in both English and Spanish. All of the community is cordially invited to attend.

Posadas commemorates the journey Joseph and Mary made to Bethlehem to find safe refuge for Mary to give birth to the baby Jesus.

The event will take place at 6:30 PM from Friday, December 16th through Friday, December 23rd in

the church. They'll be praying the rosary and singing Christmas carols. Afterwards, refreshments will be served, and there will be candy for the children.

This is a great way for the entire family to prepare for Christmas and to celebrate the birthday of Jesus. Each night is being sponsored by a different group in the parish. To learn more about this activity, please contact the St. Joseph parish office at 1 (209) 826-4246.

Los Banos Chamber of Commerce to hold annual Christmas parade on a Saturday this year

By Brooke Lopez, Reporter

Grab your jackets, mittens and loved ones - the Los Banos Chamber of Commerce's Annual Christmas Parade will be held on Saturday, December 3, 2022 at 6pm - and you don't want to miss out! This year's theme is "Christmas Lights, Winter Nights"

According to the LB Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Michelle Sandoval, "This year the Los Banos

Chamber of Commerce would like to see the whole community be able to attend the Annual Christmas Parade. The Chamber Christmas Parade has been held year after year on a Friday, but that made it very difficult for the whole community to attend this event. So this year - with numerous requests - the Chamber has decided to move the annual Christmas parade to a Saturday. We are hoping that this will help the commuters who make up a very large population of the Los Banos community to attend and give everyone a wonderful weekend family event."

Sandoval added, "The Christmas parade will still be held on the first weekend of December at 6pm, and the route will stay the same as well. There will be a \$10.00 entry fee, and we are welcoming all Info and Arts & Craft Vendors as well in the Plaza."

After the Christmas parade, please join the LB Chamber as they will be gathering at the Henry Miller Plaza for their annual tradition of lighting of the Christmas tree.

For parade entries or more information please contact the Los Banos Chamber of Commerce at 209-826-2495 or visit them at 932 Sixth (Main) Street in Los Banos.

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Pickle Ball from p.1

everyone's pocketbook. This truly is a sport that engages a diverse group of people across our community.

Health Benefits

Pickleball is a great sport because people can achieve their fitness and social goals. The workout individuals get on a pickleball court is not the typical grind of going to a gym to work on a machine. This gentle impact sport is a great workout. Experts say it provides opportunities for well-rounded movement patterns because players are moving their bodies in different directions. Plus, pickleball contributes to improving agility, muscular endurance and hand-eye coordination.

For citizens in Los Banos, there are solid reasons to try the sport. Perhaps for our city, the best part of pickleball is the fostering of wellness and community that results. Cities that invest in courts create a space where everyone can enter a game with paddles and a wiffle ball, meet new people, benefit physically and mentally, -- and find joy! Who doesn't want to live in that kind of place?

What members are saying:

"It's a great group of people to start your day with every morning. It gets me out of the house and gets me going early." – Anthony Parreira

"They say that laughter is the best medicine. Playing pickleball with all the wonderful people I've met or reconnected with makes me laugh every day and has made all the difference."

--Lane Windecker

"Pickleball has been a wonderful activity in my life. I am a mother of two young children and a wife of a first responder. Being able to play a genuinely fun sport with such a fun group of people has really been so uplifting. I appreciate the friendliness of all the fellow players and the ease of learning the game. I love being able to get physical activity and talking with my newfound friends. The game is so joyful! I am so glad pickleball has come into my life."

– Kat Young

"As a young person who works from home and has limited social interaction, pickleball has been a friendly, accepting, and fun community that has made me love coming to play and socialize every week. It would have been very easy for the members to tell me it's a retired only club, but they welcomed me with open arms. It is a wonderful sport, and I'm very happy to be a part of the pickleball family!" – Kayla Davis

"I am newly retired. I felt isolated at first.

Most of my close friends are still working. Now I have a new family and I no longer feel isolated" – Kim Parreira

The Pickleball community sticks together and lifts one another up over the love of the game, spreading the good word of the sport, and developing relationships with fellow players.

"On the pickleball courts, strangers become competitors; competitors become friends; friends become family." -Rene Erratchu

"This is the best thing that's happened to me for a long time. It's a heck of a workout and I enjoy the fellowship." – Lonny Teeter

"My greatest joy has been running/walking! Now having pickleball is a second joy! I've learned a new game with friendship and I can play here in LB. Thank you LB and thank you Balattis for bringing pickleball to LB!" – Patty Lewis

"It's a fun way to get your exercise. And while playing, you don't even know you're exercising! With the pandemic and my recent retirement, playing pickleball gives me social connections." -Arlene Salha

"Since retiring, I began playing pickleball as a recreational sport. From a health standpoint, I have lowered my blood pressure, weight, and cholesterol. Socially I have made many new, close friends of all ages. I have improved enough that I now represent Los Banos on a competitive level throughout California. This is truly a sport that is growing exponentially. I am happy that the City of Los Banos has recognized its popularity amongst all ages and has taken a po-active stance in promoting the sport by planning new facilities." – Bill Rapp, DDS.

"It's made me younger, gotten me into shape. My doctor said: Whatever you are doing, keep it up!"

If you are interested in learning to play pickleball, please contact:

Laurie Balatti (209) 829 9788 or Dayna Valadao (209) 587 2432

We will give new players important safety tips, show you how to hit and score, and you can participate in play quickly, even if it's your first time on the court.



Tom Balatti (founding member), Bill Rapp, Bob Zavala, Greg Gerstenberg enjoying a match with Kat Young on adjacent court. Photo by Tisha Blackwood-Frietas

Los Banos and Pacheco High graduates receive FFA American Degree at 95th National Convention

By Brooke Lopez, Reporter

Los Banos High School graduate Katherine Rasey and Pacheco High School graduates Kristopher Jimenez and Joshua Simas received the FFA American Degree Award at the 95th National FFA Convention & Expo in Indianapolis, Indiana on Saturday, October 29, 2022.

According to the FFA website, "As the highest degree achievable in the National FFA Organization, the American FFA Degree shows an FFA member's

dedication to his or her chapter and state FFA association. It demonstrates the effort FFA members apply toward their supervised agricultural experience and the outstanding leadership abilities and community involvement they exhibited through their FFA career."

It goes on to say that, "American FFA Degree recipients show promise for the future



FFA American Degree recipients, Joshua Simas and Katherine Rasey. Photo provided by Kathleen Simas.

and have gone above and beyond to achieve excellence. The requirements to earn the American FFA Degree are set forth in the National FFA Constitution. To be eligible

to receive the American FFA Degree, members must meet qualifications such as receiving a State FFA Degree, holding active membership for the past three years, completing secondary

instruction in an agricultural education program and operating an outstanding supervised agricultural experience program. Community service, leadership abilities and outstanding scholastic achievement are also required. All applications are submitted to the National FFA Organization after approval of a member's state association. After review by national staff, the National FFA Board of Directors approve qualified candidates to receive the American FFA Degree at the National FFA Convention & Expo."

Recipients Jimenez, Rasey and Simas received "a certificate and the American FFA Degree key in honor of their accomplishments and dedication to FFA", according to the FFA website.

Congratulations to Joshua, Katherine and Kristopher. What a great honor and example of the amazing youth of Los Banos.



FFA American Degree recipient, Kristopher Jimenez. Source: Maria Cozens

A local legend celebrates his 90th birthday

By Brooke Lopez, Reporter

On Saturday, November 5th, a 90th birthday celebration was held for James "Heavy" Evans Sr.

It was a celebration with fun, friends, family, delicious food, great music - and tons of love!

When speaking with Heavy, he told me that he is a founding member, and helped start the Soul Brothers Motorcycle Club (MC) in East Palo Alto (EPA) in 1967.

According to the President of the Los Banos Chapter "Frog", there are now chapters all over California, and in states such as: Arizona, Arkansas, Texas and Washington. "Helping the homeless is something we are honored to do. And we love giving back to our community," he added.

Many loved ones and MC members from all over came to celebrate this joyous day with Heavy.

While enjoying his delicious meal, and sitting next to his beautiful wife Brenda, the live band filled the decorated hall with great music. Displayed in front of Heavy's table was his motorcycle "Droopy". It was also the main spot where endless hugs, love and pictures were taken and shared with him.

When asked how it felt to make it to the prestigious age of 90, Heavy joyfully replied, "It feels great - I never thought I'd make it this far!"

Many kind words were also shared about Heavy from loved ones, and his daughter Velma sang a beautiful rendition of "Happy Birthday" to him.

A message from Heavy and his family, "On behalf of Heavy and the Evans Family. We would like to thank everyone who took out the time to come and celebrate Heavy's 90th birthday party. Thank you to everyone who helped donate, decorate, cook, serve, and clean up. With everyone's help we were able to have such an amazing party for Heavy that served over 200 plus bikers. The smile Heavy had on his face from beginning to end will forever be a part of the Evans family memories. Cheers to many more years, Heavy. Our forever SOUL BROTHER."



Heavy with his wife Brenda and children Joshu, James, Mary and Velma

The Soul Brothers Los Banos Chapter, along with L.F.T Bros LB will be holding their second annual Community Christmas Dinner & Essentials Event on Saturday, December 17, 2022 from 11AM to 2PM at New Canaan Missionary Baptist Church located at 424 N. Mercey Springs Rd. in Los Banos.

According to the event flyer, "we welcome everyone to come out and join us that's in need of a warm meal, or would like a warm meal, and some essentials, clothing, coats, socks, toiletries..."

For more information or to donate please call: (650)630-4515 or (209)752-2202.

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As Long As You Remember

By Alexis E. Abbott, Correspondent

A rainbow bridge.
A river stream.
A staircase ascending,
towards that unseen.
Harps and trumpets.
Halos and wings.
Soft murmured voices
about past things.
Those who are gone
are never far away.
In never-ending light
is where they go to stay.
Smiling down on those
they left behind.
Knowing that soon
in love they'll entwine
arms to wrap
around and hold close
those that they
missed the most.
Though they're gone
from this plane
does not mean

they won't be seen again.
So, remember your father.
Remember your dame.

Remember your grandparents
and those for whom
you have no name.

Remember their voices.
Remember their smiles.

Remember they might be gone
but only for a little while.

Soon you'll laugh and speak again.
Our loved ones are never gone
as long as they are held within.



Kellan Eric Brehm holding a picture of his uncle Eric Brehm who passed away on March 4, 1997.

Photo by Brehm family

In Memoriam: Long-time Los Banos mail carrier Todd Rolichcheck passes at 61

Todd Duane Rolichcheck
April 24, 1961 – November 4, 2022

Todd was born in Los Banos, California. He attended and graduated from Los Banos High School. He attended Cupertino College in Santa Cruz. Todd began his career as a mail carrier for the Los Banos Postal Service where he retired in April of 2015 serving 32 years to his community.

Todd is preceded in death by his father Roger Rolichcheck and his Aunt Lil Hass. He leaves behind his daughter Cassiana Rolichcheck, his son Dylan Rolichcheck, his mother Nancy Rolichcheck, siblings Cindy Perry, Criss Rolichcheck, Lawrence "Buzz" Rolichcheck, and his cuz Duke Hass along with many nieces, nephews, cousins, friends and many customers who all loved him dearly.

Todd was a committed loving husband, father, son, friend and mail carrier. He loved NASCAR, Drag Racing, camping with his family in Pine Crest and family gathering.



Todd was an active volunteer throughout his community. He was always a happy go lucky guy and would do anything for anyone.

Todd will be greatly missed but always remembered and held deep in our hearts.

Celebration of life for Todd Rolichcheck will be held on Saturday, December 17, 2022, at the DES Hall in Los Banos beginning at 12 PM

In Memoriam: Los Banos native Anthony Talbott passes at 55



Anthony Artadi Talbott

March 14, 1967 –
November 12, 2022

Anthony Artadi Talbott left us on November 12, 2022. He was the fourth child of Jim and Marlene Talbott of Los Banos, California, where he was born on March 14, 1967. He graduated from Los Banos High School and attended college in Santa Cruz and San Luis Obispo. He danced for many years in the Los Banos Basque Group and regularly attended Basque picnics all over California and Nevada. Anthony spent his time as a hospitality coordinator for the Highlands Inn in Carmel, California, and the Monterey Beach Hotel where he worked for both for over 30 years.

Anthony was a stranger to no one and found great purpose sharing the success, joys and challenges of all around him. He was authentically and wholeheartedly there for those in his life, which includes his mother, Marlene Talbott of Los Banos, a brother, Jim Talbott of Fort Churchill, Nevada, his sister Rayna Knepper of Milwaukee, Oregon and his sister, Ann Erreca of Oceano, California, an uncle and aunts, numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and many cherished friends, and will be deeply and sincerely missed by all.

Anthony brought life to the party. Anthony's antics were legendary and those who knew him each have their own stories to tell. He would do anything for a laugh, and always enjoyed making the moment special. He would make you laugh even when you were mad at him. Everybody who knew Anthony felt his big heart and giving nature and would recognize his infectious laugh across a crowded room.

"You never said, 'I'm leaving,' you never said, 'goodbye.' You were gone before we knew it, and only God knew why. A million times we needed you, a million times we cried. If love alone could have saved you, you never would have died. In life we loved you dearly, in death we love you still. In our hearts you hold a place that no one could ever fill. It broke our hearts to lose you, but you didn't go alone. For part of us went with you, the day God took you home."

Viewing was held at San Jose Funeral Service on November 20th and a celebration of life with Basque mass was held November 23rd at Saint Joseph's Catholic Church in Los Banos.

2022 Candle Lighting In Memory of Children Everywhere



The Candle Lighting is held every year in memory of children who have passed away. It is a worldwide event held on the second Sunday in December. In memory of all children: sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins and friends who left this earth too soon. Everyone is welcome to come out and show their love and support.

There will be a power point presentation, if you are interested in having a child's photo as part of the presentation take it to Stacy at OSE, 1017 "I" Street, no later than December 5, 2022. Pictures must be re-submitted or called to request them to stay in the slide show each year. There will also be a table set up to display pictures for those who would like to bring a framed picture of their loved one.

**Join us at Pacheco Park on
December 11th at 6:45 PM.
Candles will be provided.**

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Charleston Elementary celebrates our Veterans

Provided by Lou Ruiz, Principal

Thursday November 10th Charleston Elementary had their Veterans Day Ceremony. To start off this wonderful morning we had two of our fourth graders say the pledge of the allegiance as they raised our flag. Then our principal Mr. Ruiz introduced both of our special guests two of our Veterans! After Mr. Ruiz introduced us to our Veterans, we had our very own fourth graders do a performance for the Veterans and our school they did amazing up there! Next, we welcomed our kindergartners to do their performance of Red, White, and Blue they were the cutest up

there dancing and singing! Finally, to end it all our principal Mr. Ruiz gave us a speech about the Veterans and all the amazing things they had done for us and our country. It was a beautiful morning to honor our Veterans for our national holiday.



Charleston Elementary students celebrating our Veterans

Raises from p.1

employees who will receive smaller bonuses.

The side letters were with the Public Employees' Union Local One/AFSCME Public Works Unit (LBPW), Los Banos Police Dispatchers/Community Services Officers Association (LBPDCSOA), Los Banos Fire Fighters Association (LBFFA), Los Banos Police Officers Association (LPOA), Los Banos Police Sergeants Association (LPSA), and the full-time Unrepresented/Miscellaneous, and part-time employees.

According to the City Finance Department, the total cost to the budget for the pay increases and bonuses will be \$1,999,630 over the term of the agreement. City staff will continue to further analyze the fiscal impact and prepare a budget adjustment at a later date, when needed. (See Council meeting agenda Consent Items 7, F-K.)

"We are pleased to announce this salary increase. Not only does the staff deserve the bump, but it will provide a much-needed boost to recruiting and retention for our City," said Gregory Wellman, Interim City Manager. "Since the Great Recession, the

City has taken a conservative approach to salaries, but this significant increase is needed to face the unprecedented challenges for our City employees, particularly police officers, which has resulted in numerous vacancies and a sparse pool of qualified applicants. Our goal is to attract the talent, knowledge and experience the City is looking for."

Over the last few years, the City of Los Banos has experienced a budgetary surplus due mostly to a confluence of increased tax revenue and budgetary savings. As a result of surplus funds this year, including funds from the American Rescue Plan Act, the City Council determined that salaries must be addressed in order to recruit and retain municipal workers, and to maintain critical City services for residents.

In addition, the City plans to use the surplus funds to add new City positions to manage housing issues which include: the Housing Program Manager, who will assist with low- and moderate-income people to secure and maintain quality, affordable housing through a range of programs; and the Homeless Outreach Coordinator, who will act as an advocate for individuals experiencing homelessness and will assist clients with navigating additional systems of care.

Council from p.1

Homeless Outreach Coordinator

Under the direction of the Housing Program Manager, the Homeless Outreach Coordinator will act as an advocate for individuals experiencing homelessness in Los Banos. The Homeless Outreach Coordinator will assist clients with navigating additional systems of care, including housing, homeless certification, connections to various service providers, and access to the Family Reunification Program.

The Homeless Outreach Coordinator will work in partnership with behavioral health providers, social service agencies, the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT), and various levels law enforcement.

The Homeless Outreach Coordinator will assist and provide clients with the resources, guides, and information about accessing services and other benefits unique to the homeless population through Street Case Management & Housing Navigation.

LLamas' Farewell Remarks

LLamas offered farewell comments thanking city staff, mentioning his actions and pointing out his regrets about the council not doing more on the homelessness issue.

"It's been a fantastic life, a fantastic privilege to sit here and serve alongside with you, serve our residents in this capacity. It's been a fantastic opportunity. I thank God for it," he stated. "I thank the council members who voted me in. I tried to do my duty as I saw fit according to the information...to... my sworn duty to the Constitution.

"I tried to follow precedents. I tried to follow the law," he continued. "Again, I made decisions not based on political expediency, or if they were going to be favorable, but based on what my understanding of the information at the time it was given to me."

Community celebrates our Veterans

(Source: Los Banos Veterans Parade Facebook. Be sure to follow them for updates and ways you can support our Veterans)

"2022 Los Banos Veterans Parade 'Most Patriotic School' contest winners received their perpetual trophy at the City Council meeting and also received a Certificate from City Council.

Congratulations to: Mercey Springs Elementary, Los Banos Junior High and to Pacheco High School."



OLF's annual Veteran's Day Celebration salutes our Veterans

CONGRATULATIONS 2022 Most Patriotic School WINNERS

1. **Mercey Springs Elementary**
2. **Los Banos Junior High**
3. **Pacheco High School**



**7th Annual
Los Banos Veterans Parade**

attract future law enforcement professionals to Los Banos."

"I know I speak for the entire LBP family, when I say that we are honored to represent our great community and we are committed to serving you with pride and integrity for years to come," the chief added.

Those interested in joining the City of Los Banos team, can find more information at <https://losbanos.org/city-government/departments/hr/>.

Police Chief Gary Brizzee was very pleased with the council's actions.

"The pay increases represent a considerable moment in time for our department and this community," he shared. "It is a well-deserved recognition of the hard work and effort to the men and women of this department, and it is undoubtedly going to make a positive impact on our recruitment and employee retention efforts; and that benefits our community."

"As a chief, it is rare to find an organization with so much positive momentum happening simultaneously," Brizzee continued. "Thanks to the City Council's efforts; the salary increases and the construction of a new home that will serve this community for decades to come, has created a fantastic energy that is going to

LLamas spoke at length about the homeless issue, suggesting tiny homes as a possible solution and better than a hotel and asked for financial assistance for the Chamber of Commerce from ARPA (federal) funds.

He also congratulated his opponent in the recent election saying, "I'd like to congratulate Mr. Begonia. I don't know him. But I met him once. He seems to be a nice man. I think his intentions are good. I look forward to him being seated. I look forward to him being successful because his success is our success. And I hope that people will give him the opportunity to be accustomed to familiarize himself with the position because there is a lot to learn. Please give him your same patience that you gave me because he's going to need it to make good decisions. Again, I congratulate him."

He finished by thanking Interim City Manager Greg Wellman and his work on water issues, then offering his help on next year's Veterans Parade.

Merced County Multi-Jurisdictional Housing Element

In other council action they approved

participation in the Merced County Multi-Jurisdictional Housing Element.

According to the city staff report on the item, California Housing Element law requires every jurisdiction to prepare and adopt a Housing Element as part of its General Plan. Staff from the cities of Los Banos, Merced, Atwater, Livingston, Gustine and Dos Palos, as well as Merced County, are discussing embarking on the region's first Multi-Jurisdictional Housing Element (MJHE) for the sixth round of Housing Element updates.

The approach is currently being done in other Metropolitan Planning Offices (MPO) regions in the San Joaquin Valley. The coordinated effort is expected to provide a savings in the increased costs since the fifth round of Housing Element updates.

Holiday Open House at City Hall Dec. 7

Mayor Pro Tem Ken Lambert announced the City Council invites all to a Holiday Open House Dec. 7, 2022, at City Hall. "There will be refreshments," he added. The meeting was then adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

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