







# CUSTOMER APPRECIATION Day

**November 1<sup>st</sup>**

Complimentary  
Muffins & Coffee

Drawings

9:00, 9:30, 10:00

farmers' market t-shirts

market bags

produce baskets

Gottschalks gift certificates







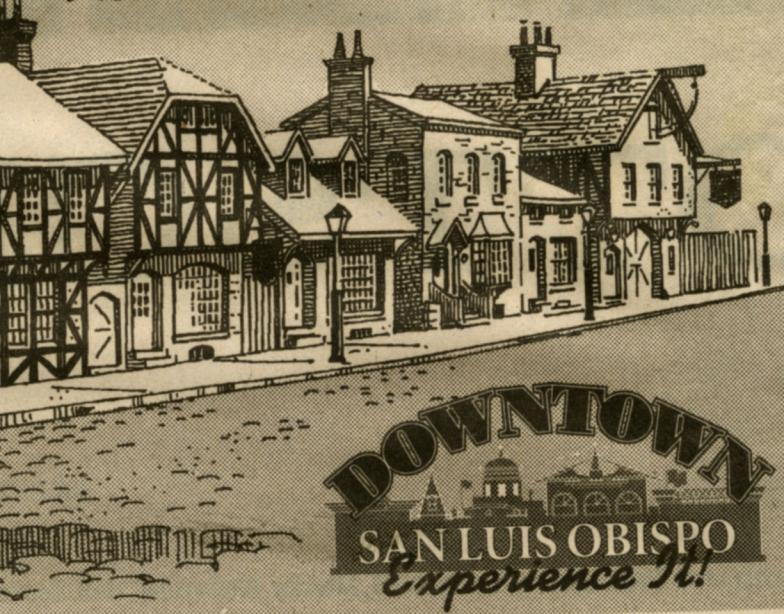


ARROYO GRANDE  
NOV. 1, 1997



Downtown San Luis Obispo's  
**Thursday Night Farmers' Market**  
has moved to  
**Friday, November 28**  
(After Thanksgiving)  
**6:00-9:00 p.m.**  
**on Higuera Street**

Visit Santa In Mission Plaza



**DOWNTOWN**  
SAN LUIS OBISPO  
*Experience It!*

MORRO BAY

DEC. 18, 1997





Downtown San Luis Obispo's  
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**DOWNTOWN**  
SAN LUIS OBISPO  
*Experience It!*

13th ANNUAL SAN LUIS OBISPO

# RIB COOK-OFF

★ Thursday, March 5, 1998 ★

6:00 p.m. at Farmers' Market

Judging Panel begins at 6:30 p.m.

People's Choice Ballots collected at 7:30 p.m.

Winners Announced at 8:30 p.m.

No Tickets Necessary • Every Rib-Eater Gets to Vote!

In the event of rain: Thursday, March 12

CELLULAR ONE  
of San Luis Obispo



FM 98.1  
Today's Country  
JUG COUNTRY

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY  
Telegram-Tribune

*m*  
Mission Office Products

*Party Plus*  
TAYLOR RENTAL



**Farmers' Markets**  
Strawberries  
Artichokes  
Oranges  
& more...

**Oak Park Plaza**  
Morro Bay  
SLO City  
SLO County  
Arroyo Grande

**Hwy 101 & Oak Park**  
Young's Giant Food  
Higuera Street  
Gottschalk's lot  
City Hall lot

**Wed. 9-11:30**  
**Thurs. 3-5**  
**Thurs. 6:30-9**  
**Sat. 8-10:30**  
**Sat. 11:45-2:30**

Thursday, April 9

■ At San Luis Obispo's Farmers Market, kids between 3 and 8 can hunt for eggs in Mission Plaza. The annual Easter Egg Hunt is free, and sponsored by the Downtown Business Improvement Association and the city Parks and Recreation Department.

The plastic eggs will be filled with candy or prizes donated by local businesses. The hunt is actually two hunts: 2 to 5-year-olds hunt from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., and 6 to 8-year-olds hunt from 6:15 to 6:45 p.m. To start it all off, the Easter Bunny will arrive to supervise at 5 p.m. For details, call the Parks and Recreation Department at 781-7305.

Thursday, May 28, 1998

where to be and what to see on the Central Coast

### Garfield at Farmers Market

Garfield will be on hand to help Downtown Brown celebrate his 11th birthday at Farmers Market in San Luis Obispo. Garfield will arrive by fire engine at Chorro and Higuera at 6:30 p.m. and walk over to the corner of Garden and Higuera streets. At 7 p.m., he'll help with a "Happy Birthday" sing-along for Downtown Brown. Other furry friends on hand include Smoky Bear, the SLO High School Tiger and Musty Mustang from Cal Poly.

Downtown Brown's birthday will include children's activities and treats from 6 to 8.

After the sing-along, Garfield will donate \$10,000 to the San Luis Obispo YMCA for summer programs. He is making the donation on behalf of Tenet Health System's new children's health and safety education program. The famed cat will offer "paw-to-graphs" to those who want autographs and will also pose for photos.



Let's Go Bowling brings its music to the Forum at Marsh and Garden streets during Farmer's Market tonight.

Tuesday, June 2, 1998

### Farmers Market celebrates 15 years

■ SAN LUIS OBISPO — The Downtown Association of San Luis Obispo will celebrate the Farmers Market's 15th Anniversary on June 11 with a special night of food and activities. There will be music on every corner, as well as the usual barbecued ribs, tri-tip, chicken, pasta, ethnic food and desserts, in addition to fresh produce, flowers and farm products.

"We are looking forward to working with the hospitality industry to bring more guests to town and offer them a wonderful experience," Downtown Association administrator Deborah Holley said. "Our 15th year celebration will include top entertainment giveaways, and as always, great food, produce and merchandise. It's our goal to bring visitors to the area and show off our 'world famous' Farmers Market to thousands of guests."

# SLO street fest turns 15

## SAN LUIS OBISPO

By Jamie Hurly  
Telegram-Tribune

San Luis Obispo's Thursday Night Farmers Market might be the quintessential California market but its roots are in Grafton, N.D.

No particular hoopla is planned Thursday for the 15th anniversary of the event that for many is integral to San Luis Obispo's identity.

The weekly gathering began as an effort to resuscitate Thursday night shopping. Although stores stayed open later, shoppers were sparse. Teen-agers who cruised Higuera Street had been shut down in 1980 when the Business Improvement Association and city officials agreed to barricade the street. The novelty of a car-free promenade soon wore off and stores began to close early.

Frank DuFault, the manager of Ross Jewelers, in what's now Fanny Wrappers, stood in the doorway on a slow Thursday evening and wondered what could be done to keep the downtown from dying.

"When I thought of what to do downtown, when I looked upon it, it really was a stage," DuFault said. "All it needed was activities upon it."

DuFault, the eighth child of a blacksmith and charwoman in Grafton, remembered the Saturday Market Day in his childhood hometown. Farmers brought the gleanings from their crops to sell from back of their trucks. The draw proved irresistible to the shrewd women of the community and soon the Ladies Aid Society and other groups were selling homemade pies and other goods. A community event was born.

DuFault saw the attraction of San Luis Obispo's quaint downtown and approached Kathy Silva, president of the BIA about boosting Thursday's profile. She created a Thursday Night Activities Committee under the promotion's umbrella, DuFault said.

Joining committee chairman DuFault were original committee members Linnea Phillips of Linnea's, Dick Cleeves of The Greenery, Mike Alamo of the San Luis Obispo Parks and Recreation Department and Dick Mason of radio station US 98.

They settled on a volleyball tournament sponsored by the Recreation Department.

"That drew 100 or 150 people," DuFault said.

Next up was a show for sporting goods ranging from fishing gear and canoes to boats and recreational vehicles. Bruce Breault of



Jayson Mellom/Telegram-Tribune

**STREET SCENE:** Frank DuFault played a major role in starting the San Luis Obispo Farmers Market started 15 years ago today.

McLintocks and Tom Mason of the Wine Street Inn agreed to barbecue hamburgers and hotdogs. It was a success and the demand for food grew with a subsequent car show.

Committee members seeking an annual event debated the merits of a chili cookoff before deciding to go with ribs.

The July 1983 rib cookoff was promoted locally and organizers expected 700 to 800 people to join the rib tasting. With only 100 tickets left the night of the competition, the organizers were reduced to initializing paper plates and selling them to hundreds more, DuFault said. Luckily, the competitors were able to meet the demand.

One special guest had been invit-

ed to judge the cookoff. A city parks staff member had a relative who worked for Sunset magazine. The invitation resulted in an article and national attention for the cookoff.

The success of the car show and cookoff turned the tables for the Thursday nights. Rather than soliciting activities, the committee members now had groups approaching them, DuFault said.

One of the groups interested in Thursday nights were farmers who sold produce at markets around the county. Uncertain about the prospects, the groups agreed to a month's trial run, DuFault said.

"From there, it's just gotten better and better."



Jayson Mellom/Telegram-Tribune

**OPEN FOR BUSINESS:** Tomato vendor Justin Lingar, left, makes a sale Wednesday in Arroyo Grande at that city's Farmers Market. Pismo patrons buying the tomatoes, at right, are Jerry Wilson, wife Bertie Wilson and their daughter Danelle Wilson. A special market will be held Saturday in San Luis Obispo, marking two decades of open-air marketing in the county.

# 20 years of growing

*Farmers Markets sprouted in county two decades ago*

**SLO COUNTY** — Twenty years ago, taking advantage of the state's new direct marketing laws for farmers, San Luis Obispo County's first Farmers Market was held in the parking lot of Youngs Giant Food on Broad Street in San Luis Obispo. The store was later Williams Bros., then Vons, and is now empty.

The San Luis Obispo County Farmers' Market Association will commemorate the 20th anniversary Saturday from 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. during its weekly market in the parking lot of Gottschalks department store.

Two years after the county's first Farmers Market in 1978, Arroyo Grande started its Farmers Market; four years later, Morro Bay got on board. In 1983, San Luis Obispo opened a market downtown, joining with the Downtown Business Improvement Association to create the Thursday festivities that have evolved into one of the best-known Farmers Markets in the state.

The Oak Park Farmers Market opened in 1986, and Pismo Beach started a seasonal market in 1992.

Annual revenue from the events has grown exponentially from the inaugural years, when it was pegged at about \$34,000. The county's six farmers markets under the Farmers' Market Association exceeded \$1.8 million in revenues for 1997, says association Administrator Peter Jankay.

**farming**



**& ranching**



**IN THE MARKET:** Lois Cliff, in blue hat, and Barbara Bush, right, strike a deal for vegetables Wednesday with seller Maria Perez. The six Farmers Markets in the county exceeded \$1.8 million in revenue for 1997.

## NORTH COUNTY PLUS

# 20 years of growing

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**IN THE MARKET:** Lois Cliff, in blue hat, and Barbara Bush, right, strike a deal for vegetables last Wednesday with seller Maria Perez. The six Farmers Markets in the county exceeded \$1.8 million in revenue for 1997.









# FOOD

August 19, 1998



Jayson Mellom/Telegram-Tribune

**ORGANIC SHOPPER'S BOUNTY:** Marscell Rodin at the SLO mall farmers market with some of his veggie friends.

# WOWies juice up Farmers Market

*Those wacky students decked in bed sheets and fresh fruit are just the latest crop at Cal Poly*

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

**By Matt Lazier**  
Telegram-Tribune

There aren't many places where you can eat tasty barbecue, listen to ethnic music and watch an armada of chanting college students with watermelons jammed on their noggins.

Thank goodness for Farmers Market during Cal Poly's Week of Welcome.

Groups of 10 to 15 Cal Poly freshmen descended upon the weekly street festival Thursday as part of their orientation week.

*I had heard about it, but I never expected it to be this big. ... It seems like you can get anything here.'*

**- Faith Songco,**  
first time at  
Farmers Market

South American melodies, ate barbecued ribs with his wife, Kathy, and watched the melonhead brigade advance.

"It's kind of neat," said Sallia, who comes to Farmers Market once a month but has never been on hand during WOW week. "We've got food and all kinds of music. Some people just walked by in luau gear. I told my wife that coming down here, we've got dinner and a dinner



**Robert Dyer/Telegram-Tribune**

**CAL POLY PRIDE:** Materials engineering major Pablo Paster lurks beneath a watermelon carved to resemble a Trojan warrior helmet as he and fellow WOWies marched through Farmers Market.

show."

For the incoming Cal Poly students, Thursday night was their introduction to San Luis Obispo's signature celebration.

"I had heard about it, but I never expected it to be this big," said Faith Songco, 17, from New Jersey. "If you're hungry or if you want to decorate your room, it seems like you can get anything here. I've seen smaller versions of this kind of thing, but never this big and never a weekly thing."

Songco, in her Burger King crown, surveyed Farmers Market with WOW Group 83. Her group leader, Cal Poly senior Tim Naughton, said Thursday was an opportunity for WOW counselors to show freshmen who are new to San Luis Obispo what the Farmers Market tradition is all about.



**JUICY HEADGEAR:** Justin Hanzel-Durbin, center, leads a mob of melonheads through the Higuera Street throngs Thursday night in San Luis Obispo.

**September 18, 1998**

## Beaver on a mission makes stop at Farmers Market

### *Inflatable mascot on campaign trail for anti-trapping proposition*

**SAN LUIS OBISPO** — As if people wearing fruit on their heads weren't silly enough, Farmers Market patrons also had to contend Thursday night with a 20-foot inflatable beaver.

Betsy the Beaver bobbed forward and back with the breeze as hundreds of San Luis Obispo residents and new Cal Poly freshmen wandered around Higuera Street. The beaver balloon was on hand courtesy of the Protect Pets and Wildlife group, which is campaigning for the passage of Proposition 4 in November.

Betsy has been used in campaigns against steel-jawed leg traps since the early 1980s. The traps will be outlawed if Proposition 4 passes. The beaver arrived in San Luis Obispo as part of a monthlong trek up and down the California coast by Karl Eckhart, a coordinator with the Humane Society of the United States.

"We're hitting some of the bigger cities between San Diego and San Francisco," Eckhart said. "The tour is to make people aware of the proposition, which is aimed at cruel and indiscriminate trapping."

Proposition 4 would ban trappers from using "body-gripping" traps on fur-bearing animals, and

from selling fur obtained in such traps. In addition, trappers would no longer be allowed to use sodium fluoroacetate, also known as Compound 1080, or sodium cyanide, to poison animals.

Proponents of the proposition say the number of nontarget animals trapped in snares and steel-jawed traps every year is double the number of animals that are meant to be caught. They also point to allowances in the proposition that allow for animal trappings to protect human health and safety, property, endangered wildlife and crops and livestock.

But opponents say the proposition is badly written and will force trappers to use snares that kill animals instead of those that simply capture predators.

Animal Emancipation Inc. of San Luis Obispo, which has a booth at Farmers Market every week, brought Eckhart and Betsy to town. The beaver spent about an hour parked in front of the County Government Center Thursday afternoon before moving to Higuera Street.

"We're getting a good response from it so far," Eckhart said. "At market nights like this, or county fairs, people will see the beaver and chuckle and then come on over. It's really helping to get our word out."

Eckhart and Betsy travel to Santa Maria today, and then to San Francisco. Eckhart began his tour Sept. 1, and plans to keep going until the end of the month.

— Matt Lazier



Robert Dyer/Telegram-Tribune

**MASCOT:** Karl Eckhart of Washington, D.C., mans the Betsy the Beaver balloon as part of a campaign to pass legislation banning steel-jawed leg traps in California.

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Robert Dyer/Telegram-Tribune

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Thursday, October 29, 1998

### Halloween at Farmers Market

Halloween activities take place during Farmers Market night in downtown San Luis Obispo. Downtown merchants will hand out candy to trick-or-treaters from 5:30 p.m. The costume contest for ages infant to 10 starts at 6:15 p.m. near Chorro and Higuera streets. Watch the "Great Pumpkin" from 6-9 p.m. on Garden Street. The carnival in Mission Plaza is set for 5:30 p.m. Call 541-0286.

Thursday December 31, 1998

San Luis Obispo County Telegram-Tribune

### Farmers' Market on Friday night

A huge success last year, Farmers' Market on Friday Night is planned for November 27. After a day of turkey, television and talking, it'll be great to get out for some ribs, live entertainment and walking! Bring your out-of-town guests, and add a new twist to your holiday plans. The hours will be 6 to 9 p.m. There is no parking after 5:30 p.m. in the market area. Tell Fido you'll bring him a rib - dogs are loved but not allowed. Entertainment includes: Ned Landin (Nipomo Street), Mathias Clark (Broad Street), Guy Budd (Garden Street), Markausi (Chorro Street, music from the Andes) and Glyn Lockwood (Morro St.).



Downtown San Luis Obispo's  
Thursday Night Farmers' Market

# New Year's Eve

There will be  
FOOD, ENTERTAINMENT  
& LOTS OF FESTIVITIES  
For the Whole Family

December 31, 1998  
6:00-9:00 p.m.  
on Higuera Street

DOWNTOWN  
**SAN LUIS OBISPO**  
ASSOCIATION

Wednesday, February 3, 1999

## Farmers market icon George Hellyer dies

*Former Poly professor  
pioneered changes in law*

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

By Teresa Letizia  
Telegram-Tribune

Retired Cal Poly professor George Hellyer, known as the "father of farmers markets" in California, died Thursday in Ketchum, Idaho.

Hellyer, a resident of San Luis Obispo, was instrumental in changes to California

law that allowed farmers to sell directly to consumers, making way for the rise of farmers markets in the state.

He was selected in 1978 by then-Gov. Jerry Brown to champion the cause to help the small farmer.

In an article by Hellyer for the San Luis Obispo Farmers Market Newsletter almost 11 years ago, he wrote that previous requirements for farmers to process uniform-sized produce through a packing shed "cost many times more than the produce in it was worth" and thus "inhibited most small and medium-sized farmers from turning to the farmers market as a sales outlet."

Peter Jankay, Farmers Market Association administrator, called Hellyer "a big player, the responsible person ... to win over the concepts of direct marketing."

In describing farmers markets he said, "some (agriculture industries) would like to see us out but to the small farmer it is very important."

Hellyer's influence, however, expanded into other areas of agriculture and a campaign to "internationalize" Cal Poly.

A professor in the agribusiness department from 1980 to 1995, returning part-time last fall, Hellyer was coordinator of

Please see **HELLYER**, Back Page

### **HELLYER** from Page One

the university's international agriculture programs.

In 1984, he wrote a grant seeking \$500,000 from the U.S. Agency for International Development. The grant was to pay for various projects and seminars for teachers — from all disciplines — interested in working to help Third World countries.

Hellyer, a former Peace Corps volunteer in Brazil and later a consultant for the organization in Iran, foresaw the need to involve, for example, political scientists, historians and philosophers to end world hunger.

"Agronomists think the whole answer is raising more food," he said in 1984, "but the whole issue involves more than that."

Cal Poly professor George Suckhand, a co-member with Hellyer on the International Food and Agriculture Committee, remembers him "as an extremely nice person," who "recognized the importance of Cal Poly being open to international diversity."

Le Roy Davis, a Cal Poly agribusiness professor, said Hellyer's primary interest was "ag labor relations," as well as aiding in the understanding of minorities and different cultures.

Hellyer's work also included conducting an International Development graduate program as part of the Agribusiness Department at Cal Poly. Davis said Hellyer motivated students to bring multi-cultural



Telegram-Tribune

**'FATHER OF FARMERS MARKETS':** George Hellyer is pictured at the SLO Farmers Market in a photo from February 1988.

ism to the workforce "and was very good at it."

His success was due, in part, to the practical experience Hellyer brought to teaching. Early in his career, he ran Standard Oil's 250,000-acre land management program and worked as a staff consultant to the governor for small farms during the Brown administration.

Cal Poly colleague Doug Genereux, who taught ag labor classes with Hellyer, said that Hellyer was "a fan of team teaching" and other innovative concepts in facilitating information.

He was one of the first professors, Genereux said, to teach a class

by television to Cal Poly's Swanton Pacific Ranch in Northern California, where students intern in areas such as forestry, livestock and crop production.

Genereux said that Hellyer believed those students, while doing hands-on work, should also benefit from additional classes.

"He had a tone about him that made you want to believe him ... honest, sincere, and I believe that came across to the students," Genereux said.

A memorial service for Hellyer will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday at First Church of Christ Scientist in San Luis Obispo.

# SLOWING DOWN IN SLO

**FAMILY TIME AT A LEISURELY PACE**

BY COLLEEN DUNN BATES  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY SCOTT DAHLQUIST



Thursday night's farmers' market showcases the region's best produce and flowers.

## Downtown SLO rated one of the best

*Judges impressed by vitality of Farmers Market, streetscapes and promotions*

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

BY MIKE STOVER  
TELEGRAM-TRIBUNE

The city's thriving downtown will receive national recognition today when the National Trust for Historic Preservation presents San Luis Obispo with a Great American Main Street Award.

Mayor Allen Settle and Downtown Association Administrator Deborah Holley are among a large contingent in San Diego to

accept the prize.

"We have probably one of the most successful main streets in the western United States," Settle said. People such as Holley and the owners of the Downtown Centre, Jim and Tom Copeland, make it possible for something like this to happen, he added.

"We're absolutely thrilled," said Holley. "It's beyond our wildest dreams." The Downtown Association submitted the winning application.

Two years ago both San Luis



SEE DOWNTOWN, BACK PAGE

### DOWNTOWN from Page One

Obispo and Paso Robles were among the 20 semi-finalists for the award. San Luis Obispo's selection this year is the first for a California city since Pasadena won in 1995.

The award brings new national recognition to the city and should assist with tourism promotion and efforts to attract new businesses.

"This is a boost for us, a boost for the whole city," Holley said. "I think we need it."

Judges noted that San Luis Obispo began developing downtown design guidelines in 1975 and that its downtown successful-

ly fought off competition from an outlying mall. They also were impressed with the weekly downtown Farmers Market.

"The San Luis Obispo program has become a showcase for downtown revitalization, with exciting promotions, beautiful streetscapes and storefronts, and a strong economic base — the largest tax revenue district in the city," the trust said in a statement announcing the five winners.

San Luis Obispo will join Cordell, Okla., Lafayette, Ind., Bay City, Mich., and Denton, Texas in receiving \$5,000 checks to further

their efforts. They will also receive a bronze plaque, a set of road signs and a certificate.

The winners were selected by a panel of 10 experts in community revitalization, economic development and historic preservation. The awards are being presented as part of the "National Town Meeting on Main Street," a convention sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Center.

The San Luis Obispo Downtown Association plans to celebrate the award April 29 at Farmers Market.

2-22-99

Thursday, March 4, 1999

14th ANNUAL SAN LUIS OBISPO  
**RIB**  
**COOK-OFF**

\* Farmers' Market Tonight \*

**TASTY CHOICE**



Jayson Mellom/Telegram-Tribune

**RIB COOK-OFF:** Donna James of KKJG Radio samples ribs with her daughter, Sierra, 14, Thursday night at the SLO Farmers Market during the annual barbecued ribs cook-off. The pair was among a panel of celebrity judges. Earning honors were: Nothing But the Best (Judge's Beef Award); Mo's Smokehouse (Judge's Pork Award); and F. McLintocks (People's Choice Beef Award).

# Thursday night crime: Bottle brings out the worst

Incidents common, but Market still called safe

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

BY DAVID SNEED  
TELEGRAM-TRIBUNE

Last October, a fight at the Downtown Centre after San Luis Obispo's Farmers Market nearly sparked a riot when a police officer was punched in the face and other officers had to disperse a hostile crowd, police said.

Less than a month later, Cal Poly student Rachel Newhouse disappeared on a Thursday night after an evening of drinking downtown. She hasn't been found.

Such incidents worry city officials and merchants alike, who note that the increasing popularity of both Farmers Market and the city's downtown is causing more law-enforcement problems.

Most of them occur after Farmers Market, when the downtown bars fill up with patrons who drink and then spill into the streets, said San Luis Obispo Police Chief Jim Gardiner.

He attributed almost all of the prob-

PLEASE SEE THURSDAY, BACK PAGE

## THURSDAY from Page One

lems to alcohol.

A Telegram-Tribune analysis of police statistics from Thursday evening to early Friday morning from June to December 1998 and 1997 underscore the concern.

Although the review showed that Farmers Market is safe, it found that most of the arrests made and crimes reported between 7 p.m. and 2 a.m. were related to alcohol and drugs. Specifically the review found that:

- The bulk of the arrests — 38 percent for 1998 and 50 percent for 1997 — were strictly for alcohol and drug offenses such as public intoxication and narcotics possession.

- Many of the other arrests and crimes reported are associated with drugs and alcohol. The most common were assaults stemming from bar fights, vandalism, trespassing and urinating in public.

When these crimes are factored in, the percentage of crime attributed to alcohol goes up to 74 percent for 1997 and 63 percent for 1998.

"It's not a critical situation," said Deborah Holley, administrator for San Luis Obispo's Downtown Association. "I think the police care about the downtown. We just need more of them."

Gardiner plans to ask the City Council to increase the department's budget to hire new officers who would be assigned solely to the downtown. His plan got a boost last month when the council named public safety as one of its highest priorities.

*I'd have to say it's extremely safe. The problems that occur that don't involve alcohol tend to be resolved immediately.'*

— Greg Dillman, Farmers Market volunteer

Crime statistics show that downtown accounts for 20 percent of all the crime reported in the city, but only one officer of the 42 in the department is assigned full-time to that area.

Council members said they are sympathetic to Gardiner's request but are waiting to see a specific proposal.

"The money should follow the priority; that's the way it should work," said Councilwoman Jan Marx.

Gardiner has not decided how many additional officers he will request or how much that might cost. But Officer Tim Hedges, who just finished his third year as the department's only full-time downtown officer, thinks at least two more are needed.

Hedges said he wants enough officers to considerably augment the force during the time of greatest need — Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m.

Problems directly associated with Farmers Market tend to be so minor that they are unlikely to show up on any police log.

They tend to fall into three areas: Skateboarders, people with dogs, and squatters — people who set up booths or other dis-

plays without the proper permits.

The decision to prohibit dogs and other animals was made several years ago when a girl was attacked by a dog while she was eating a rib.

"Food and animals don't mix," Hedges said.

Having officers assigned to the downtown area for long periods of time provides continuity, Hedges said. They get to know merchants and can identify habitual troublemakers, like drunks and petty criminals, and find ways to either help them so they don't commit more crimes or at least keep them away from downtown.

In addition to increased law enforcement in the downtown area, City Council members are thinking about some creative solutions to deal with alcohol-related crime. Marx said additional restrooms to reduce public urination and installation of surveillance cameras are all worthy of consideration.

Mayor Allen Settle believes bar proprietors should take a more proactive role in preventing alcohol-related crimes.

"What happened in the case of Ms. Newhouse was disturbing to me," he said. "When you have an inebriated patron, do you just

## Patrolling downtown's busiest night

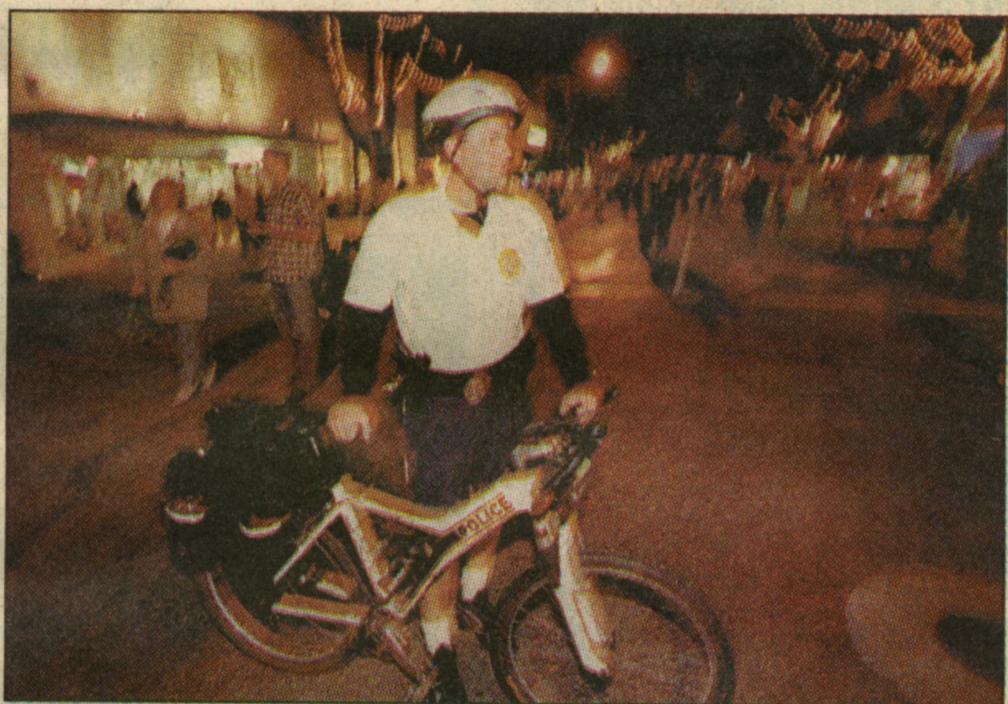
**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

BY DAVID SNEED  
TELEGRAM-TRIBUNE

Officer Bill Proll puts his mettle to the pedal as he covers the night in downtown San Luis Obispo.

As the San Luis Obispo Police Department's main man in the downtown area, and its sole officer assigned full time to that beat, Proll is highly mobile on his high-tech mountain bike, a two-wheeled ride he uses to ferret out scofflaws and also help law-abiding citizens.

A typical Thursday evening begins with officers clearing



Robert Dyer/Telegram-Tribune

**DOWNTOWN BEAT:** Officer Bill Proll keeps watch over Farmers Market with the help of a high-tech mountain bike.

Higuera Street of cars so that Farmers Market vendors can set up their booths. Sometimes the cars have to be towed.

"We're down to one a week," Proll said. "It used to be three or four a week."

Soon the market is in full swing. People crowd the street buying produce, eating barbecue or snacks and listening to street performers.

send them out the door?"

Elias Nimeh, owner of Tortilla Flats, the bar where Rachel Newhouse was drinking before she disappeared, said he agrees with Settle. He too is upset by the young woman's disappearance but was not at the bar that particular night.

"I don't know what happened with that," he said. "It's really hard to know."

Doormen and bartenders at Tortilla Flats are trained to spot drunken people, Nimeh said. But sometimes it is difficult to know if someone is intoxicated or not, he said.

Nimeh's policy is to keep intoxicated people in the bar until they sober up or find a friend to take them home. Sometimes employees even drive people who have had too much to drink back to their homes.

"We do everything possible not to let intoxicated people out or not to let them get intoxicated in the first place," he said.

Despite Newhouse's disappearance and the alcohol-related problems police must deal with on Thursday nights, most citizens said they continue to feel safe at Farmers Market.

Greg Dillman of San Luis Obispo has been attending and doing volunteer work at Farmers Market since its inception 15 years ago.

"I'd have to say it's extremely safe," he said. "The problems that occur that don't involve alcohol tend to be resolved immediately."

Tuesday, April 6, 1999

## COUNTY BRIEFS

Activities will include a puppet show, gymnastics performances, a basketball toss, a marine "touch tank," a petting zoo, educational book displays and booths offering child-related information.

Kids Night will run from 6 to 9 p.m. and is sponsored by the San Luis Obispo Downtown Association. For more information, call 541-0286.

On Saturday, the annual "Children's Day in the Plaza" will take place in Mission Plaza from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The free event will feature information booths, creative activities, games, face painting, pony rides, a petting zoo, bounce houses, entertainment from Zoo To You, dances and magic shows.

If it rains, Children's Day will be postponed a week.

The fun is sponsored by the San Luis Obispo County Commission on Children and Youth, Barnes & Noble, Vandenberg Federal Credit Union, First State Bank and the San Luis Obispo Police Officers' Association.

For details, call 782-0226.

## Kids Night at Farmers Market

**SAN LUIS OBISPO** — Two special events for children will be held in town this week.

It will be Kids Night this Thursday at the downtown Farmers Market.

FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 1999

## SLO FARMERS MARKET: IN SUPPORT OF CHILDREN

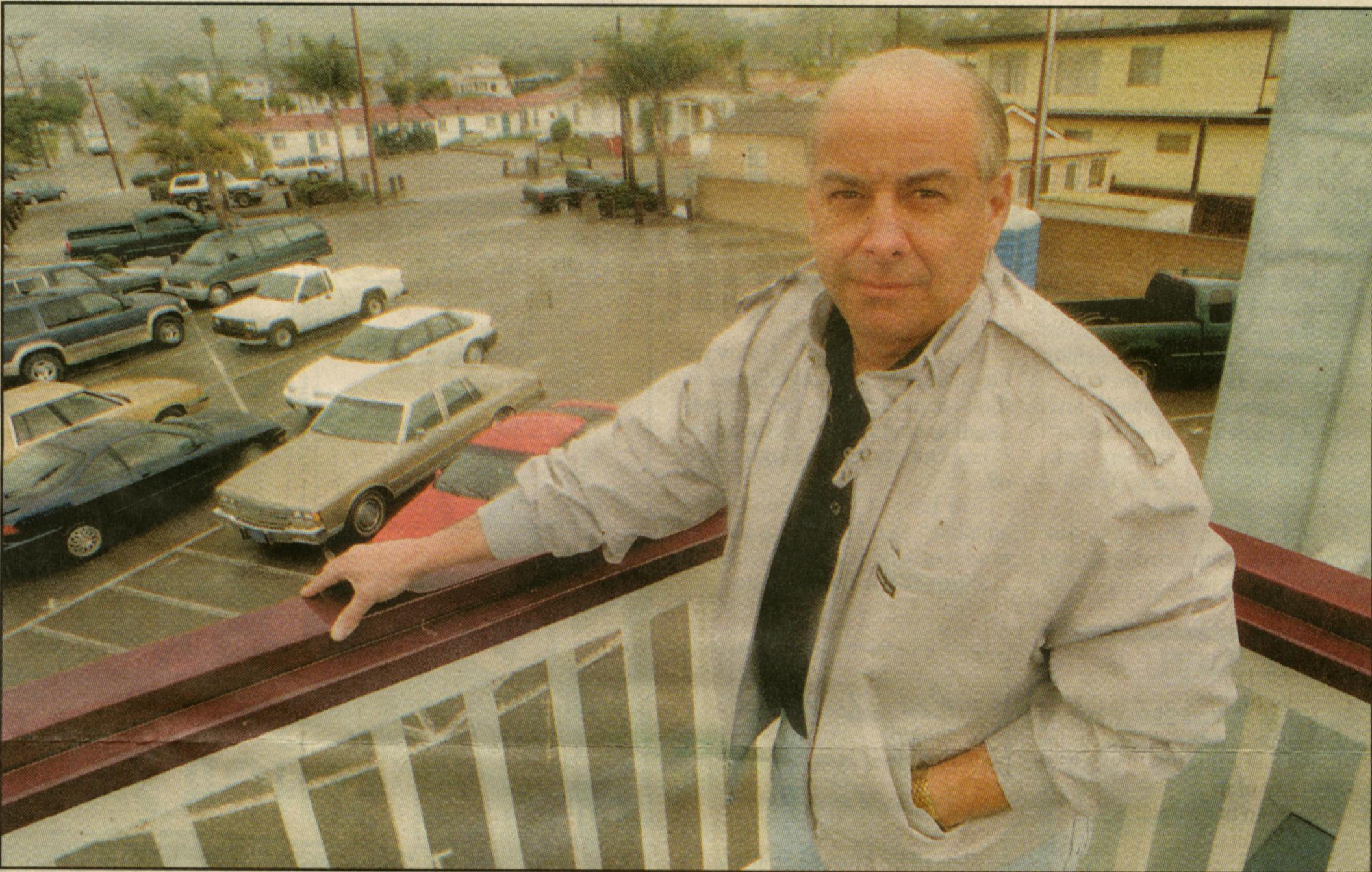


TRIBUNE PHOTO BY DAVID MIDDLECAMP

A group of about 50 people walk through San Luis Obispo Farmers Market Thursday in observance of Child Abuse Prevention Month. Participants in the event titled 'Give the Light of Hope to a Child' carried candles or flashlights in an effort to strengthen the community's resolve to prevent abuse and neglect for children living in the county.

PISMO'S OUTLET FOR FARMERS THREATENED

# Clock ticking on market



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLON

**Tony Spinelli, overlooking the city-owned parking lots, is among the merchants who are concerned that the Farmers Market is robbing merchants of valued parking spaces. 'It wouldn't be a loss to anybody if it closes,' Spinelli said.**

## PISMO BEACH

By JERRY BUNIN  
THE TRIBUNE

The city's 7-year-old Farmers Market has been given one year to find a new home, a move market sponsors suspect could prove fatal.

The City Council Tuesday unanimously agreed to let the market continue using two city parking lots downtown, but said it had to move next year because it was taking up too much of Pismo's limited downtown parking.

The Farmers Market, which was brought to town by the Pismo Beach Business Improvement Group, sells fresh produce on Tuesdays in the city's only two

## PISMO COUNCIL RESPONDS TO MERCHANTS' CONCERN OVER LOST DOWNTOWN PARKING SPACES

downtown public parking lots on Dolliver and Main streets.

Downtown merchants have been lobbying the council for about six months to change the agreement with the market because they felt it hurt their businesses.

Rick Turton, improvement group vice president, said every other location that could hold the market has been examined and rejected.

He predicted the market will

die when the new contract expires, but noted that the improvement group will make a decision Tuesday at its weekly meeting starting at 8:30 a.m. at Marie Callendars on Shell Beach Road.

If the market closes, Pismo's citizens will have to drive to farmers markets in Arroyo Grande and San Luis Obispo to buy fresh produce directly from the growers, he said.

Councilwoman Marian Mellow

said the council supports the Farmers Market, but felt that the two city parking lots on Main and Dolliver streets were not the best location.

"Many, many businesses ... opposed having it continue at that location," she said.

The license agreement the council approved with the improvement group on Tuesday would allow the farmers to use the lots for 15 weeks, from June 1 to Sept. 7.

The last contract let the market operate for 25 weeks, from the second week in May to the last week in October.

The improvement group pays the city \$600 annually to operate

APRIL 9, 1999

THURSDAY, MAY 6, 1999

SELLING/MARKETING

# Produce sales threatened



TRIBUNE PHOTO

The Thursday night Farmers Market in SLO has become an institution, but may be threatened because of legislation that would charge higher fees to participants. Kevin Menton, left, buys an avocado from Mike Cirone in this 1997 file photo.

## FARMERS MARKETS AROUND STATE CAUGHT IN TUSSLE OVER REGULATION

By JENNIFER KERR  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**SACRAMENTO** — Harry and Jane Dewey smile as a man in bicycle shorts and helmet peers into small bins of flavored pistachios at their farmers' market stand in a downtown park.

"Would you like to taste a fresh pistachio?" Harry Dewey, 72, inquires. His knows they're fresh because he and his wife grow them on their 30 acres in Yolo County.

The Deweys rely on certified farmers' markets for a big share of their income. Like other growers who sell their products directly to consumers at the markets, they fear they will be forced out of business if lawmakers let their exemption from many state produce-handling rules expire.

The markets could end or change dramatically next year unless the Legislature passes a proposal to extend the program and raise fees that the markets and farmers pay the state to certify them.

There are about 300 certified farmers' markets in 49 counties under the program that started in 1977 and has been extended several times since.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Jane Dewey measures a pound of pistachios Wednesday in Sacramento at a certified farmers market. The law authorizing such markets must be extended before January.**

There are 11 farmers' markets in San Luis Obispo County, run by three organizations.

The weekly market where the Deweys were selling pistachios opened for the season Wednesday at Cesar Chavez Plaza Park two blocks from the Capitol.

"As a small farmer, we're doing this because it's mostly our only alternative," says Harry Dewey, who sells at five markets a week in Sacramento, Davis and the San Francisco Bay area.

If the Deweys had to sell their pistachios to a distributor, they would likely make little or no profit, he says.

The markets are certified by county agricultural officers, who make sure the produce is being sold by the farmers who grew it.

The farmer-sellers don't have to follow grading, sizing, labeling and packaging regulations that other produce sellers must follow.

The law authorizing the certified farmers' markets expires Jan. 1.

A bill (AB 593) by Assemblywoman Virginia Strom-Martin, D-Duncans Mills, would extend the law indefinitely and raise fees the markets pay to up to \$1 per booth for each market day. That maximum fee level would bring in about \$400,000 a year.

The bill will be considered next Wednesday by the Assembly Agricultural Committee.

Each market location current

Please see MARKET, D2

## SLO market more than just money

By LARRY MAUTER  
THE TRIBUNE

**Loss of the Thursday night Farmers Market would be a body blow to downtown San Luis Obispo, something that business officials hope can be avoided.**

"It would certainly be a tragedy for San Luis Obispo if the Farmers Market closed, not just from an economic point of view but from a social, cultural point of view," said Dave Garth, president and CEO of the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce. "I hope that our local legislators won't let that happen."

Garth said the chamber has met with both Sen. Jack O'Connell, D-San Luis Obispo, and Assemblyman Abel Maldonado, R-Santa Maria, on the issue.

Among other things, the nearly 16-year old market has been a big plus for tourism. "It's allowed us to build a four-day weekend for a lot of people," Garth said.

It has become "an identifiable hallmark of our community," said Deborah Holley, administrator of the Downtown Association, the group that coordinates the entertainment and activities on Thurs-

Please see MARKET, D2

## SLO

From Page D1

days.

The economic benefit to the community of the Farmers market is huge, said Holley, adding the Downtown Association "very much supports" the current legislation that would extend direct sales by farmers.

The six farmers' markets under the San Luis Obispo Farmers' Market Association exceeded \$1.8 million in revenues in 1998, according to Peter Jankay, association administrator.

Jankay said his organization is lobbying heavy at the state and local levels for the passage of AB 593. "We feel that if the legislation doesn't get passed, our farmers' markets will suffer greatly," Jankay said.

"Our farmers' markets are ... a very important means of income for our 117 association members, all of whom sell only products from their family-operated farms," said Jankay and the associations' board in a January letter to John Donahue, director of the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

The fees that are part of the legislation, he said, amount to a user fee that has not been collected in the past.

Jankay said that O'Connell has indicated strong support for the pending legislation.

EDITORIAL

## Bill would bear fruit

If there is one event that captures the spirit of downtown San Luis Obispo, it is the Thursday night Farmers Market. It has become the gathering place for the county, full of myriad sights, sounds and tastes, an outdoor banquet for the senses.

SLO's Farmers Market has been so successful that 10 of its offspring are thriving in the county, from Paso to Pismo, Cambria to Arroyo Grande. Likewise, there are hundreds of farmers markets throughout the state, bustling places where people buy produce direct from the farmers who grew it.

All that will change unless our state lawmakers pass Assembly Bill 593.

**The issue:**  
Assembly bill affects farmers markets

**Our view:**  
It preserves exemptions for sellers of produce

The farmers markets we enjoy today came about in 1977, when the state started a program that exempted growers from grading, sizing, labeling and packaging rules, allowing them to sell their products direct to the consumer. These farmers are certified by county ag commissioners, who make sure the produce is being sold by the farmers who grew it.

The program has been especially beneficial to small farmers. And it has been a boon to consumers, who can buy farm-fresh produce.

But the law that launched the program provided little money to carry out its mandates. Now the state Department of Food and Agriculture says it doesn't have the money to continue the certification program, and will end it this year. The department's role is crucial, for it sets standards and makes sure all counties abide by those standards.

Enter Assembly member Virginia Strom-Martin, D-Duncan Mills, who in February introduced a bill to continue the program for five years, and levy a modest fee to pay for certification. Farmers would pay 50 cents per market for each day they are selling produce. The state would use the money to continue monitoring the counties' certification efforts.

Representatives of local farmers markets and the California Federation of Certified Farmers' Markets support Assembly Bill 593. So does The Tribune.

The bill goes before the Assembly's Agriculture Committee on Wednesday. Assemblyman Abel Maldonado is vice chair of that committee and we encourage his support of AB 593, and the support of state Sen. Jack O'Connell.

I'LL PROBABLY BE A VEGETABLE  
THE REST OF MY LIFE: So what's all this noise about SLO County's farmers

markets maybe having to close? The teevee news has been blabbing about it day after day, and SLO Town's Downtown Association is talking about "the devastating effect the market's closure would have on the entire community." Close? Devastation? Huh?

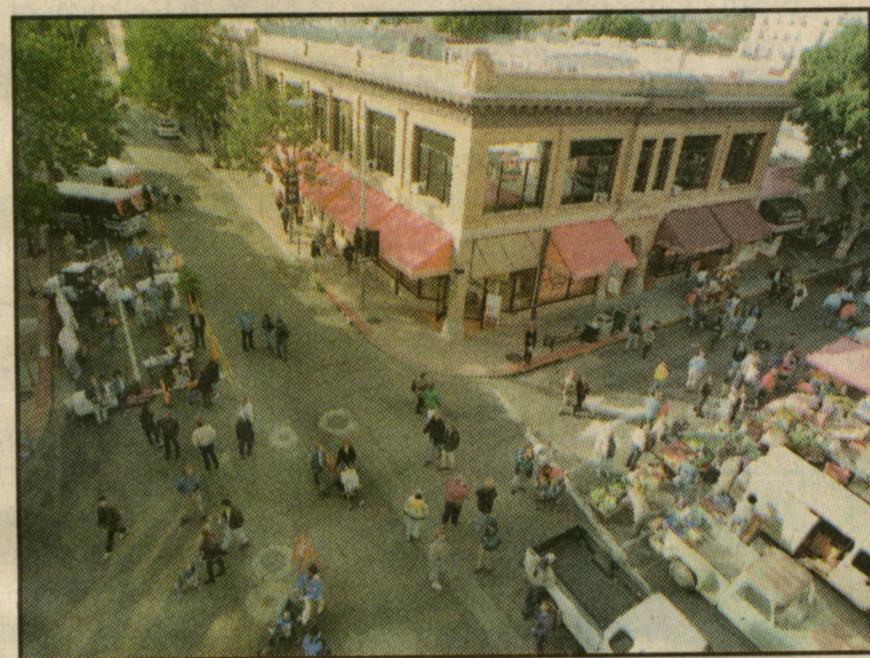
What they're talking about is that the legislation governing California's 200-plus state-regulated farmers markets is scheduled to expire next year. So that means it's got to be renewed. And that's what's happening right now.

Assembly Bill 593 was recently introduced to amend the state's Food and Ag Code so that fresh veggies will not be in peril as the new millennium begins. In fact, our state assemblyman, **Abel Maldonado**, is a member of the appropriations committee that voted 8-0 in favor of renewing the law.

I called his office and talked to one of his aides. Does anyone oppose AB 593? Not that she knew of. I wondered who might be against it. Safeway or Lucky or Albertson's? Anyone? Not that she knew of. So what was the problem here? No problem. Renewing the law was routine. Every county in the state has outdoor markets, and they're wildly popular. She sounded kinda bored.

I was relieved. Besides talking to my favorite hand puppet, SLO Town's weekly market is my only social outlet, so I was happy to learn I'll still be able to try getting my beans buttered every Thursday night. And that I'll definitely still be able to buy some vegetables.  $\Delta$

## PIGEON VIEW: FARMERS MARKET FROM ABOVE



A cherry picker provided by the SLO Public Works and Utilities Department gives a different view Thursday of Farmers Market in San Luis Obispo. It was part of National Public Works Week.



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY DAVID MIDDLECAMP

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 2, 1999

PISMO BEACH

**New season starts for  
Pismo Street Faire**

A new season started Tuesday for the Pismo Beach Street Faire, Beach Party and Farmers Market.

The event will continue all summer through Sept. 7 starting at 4 p.m. on Tuesday evenings.

Each week, in addition to offering fresh produce, the market will include booths for a dozen or more local businesses, a community interest attraction and a headline act that will occupy a main stage at the corner of Main and Dolliver streets.

More activities will be added during the summer, including near the beach and on satellite stages at the Cypress Landing courtyard and the Pismo Beach Hotel's new patio and breezeway.

Graphic artists are invited to submit designs for a new logo for the street fair and farmers market. The Pismo Business Improvement Group, which sponsors the event, will give a basket of prizes to the winning entry.

Entries can be submitted to Competition, c/o B.I.G., Post Office Box 125, Pismo Beach, 93448.

—Jerry Bunin

FRIDAY, JULY 16, 1999

SACRAMENTO

**Farmers' market bill  
clears Senate hurdle**

A bill that will protect farmers' markets in California from the possibility of having to close at the end of the year cleared the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday on a 6-1 vote.

The bill creates a fee on market vendors that will be used by the Department of Food and Agriculture to supervise the state's 300-plus certified farmers' markets. Unless the bill passes, the department has threatened to hobble the markets on Jan. 1 by revoking exemptions vendors receive to standard packing and grading requirements.

AB 593 was co-sponsored by Sen. Jack O'Connell and Assemblyman Abel Maldonado. It cleared the Assembly 69-10 on June 4.

Current fees don't provide the state with enough money to pay for even a single inspector. AB 593 is expected to raise at least \$135,000 by charging markets 50 cents per vendor per day the market is open.

"I am pleased to see that my colleagues in the Senate Judiciary Committee agreed with me that farmers and consumers alike benefit from this program and it must be preserved," O'Connell said in a written statement.

TUESDAY, JULY 27, 1999

PISMO BEACH

**Karaoke party featured  
at farmers market**

A '50's theme karaoke party will be the featured entertainment today at the Pismo Beach farmers market at the corner of Main and Dolliver streets.

Roger DJ, whose music ranges from '40's specialty sounds to popular songs from the '50s through '70s, will bring nine years of karaoke experience to the party.

To add to the festivities, people are being encouraged to dress in '50's costumes with bouffant hairstyles.

In addition to the music, face-painter Teresa Schmidt and balloon sculptor Dr. Pops will provide entertainment at the market.

Farmers market, beach party and street fair runs from 4 to 6:30 p.m. every Tuesday during the summer. The event is sponsored by the Pismo Beach Business Improvement Group.

—Jerry Bunin

SATURDAY, JULY 31, 1999

PISMO BEACH

**Walsh to be featured at  
Tuesday's Street Faire**

Singer, songwriter and musician Reed Walsh will be the featured performer at a free concert Tuesday at the Pismo Beach Street Faire, Beach Party and Farmers' Market.

A second-generation professional musician who plays guitar, bass and keyboards, Walsh's musical tastes include jazz, bebop and rock.

The free concert begins at 4 p.m. at the corner of Main and Dolliver streets in downtown Pismo Beach.

—Jerry Bunin

Rose Harrison on sprout-borne diseases: "In 25 years of growing and eating sprouts I have never had a problem."

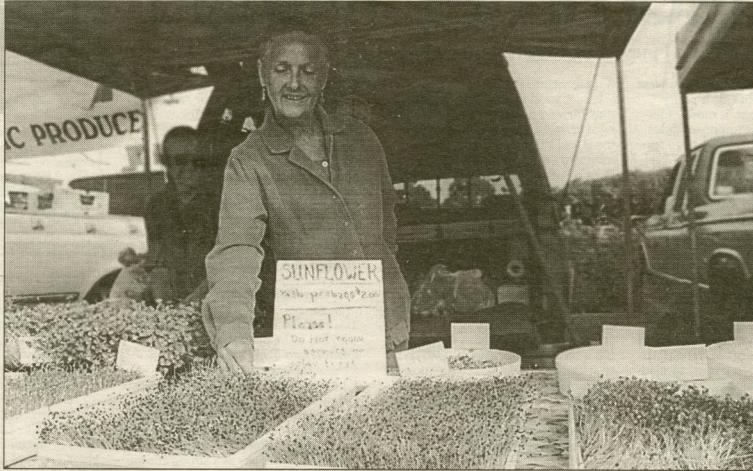


Photo by Pam Woolway

# Selling Sprouts

Rose Harrison Brings Her Love of Sprouts to Farmers Markets

**D**elicate ribbons of sweet peas reach for the warmth of the sun. Sparkling white bowls contain a swirl of colorful bean sprouts. Trays laden with living greens grow before the eyes of the consumer. Every purchase is harvested to order.

Walking through the Saturday morning SLO Farmers Market at Central Coast Mall, you see dozens of growers displaying colorful vegetables. But one table stands apart in its youthful green simplicity. Lined neatly in bright white containers, uncut living crops are on display. Rose Harrison, of Light Sky sprouts growers, stands behind a virtual lawn of green tendrils, gently lifting the sprouts from their felt-lined beds.

One would think that sprouts are as clean as it gets where organic produce is concerned. Soaked in water and then grown in the warmth of the sun, the tiny seeds are the sum of nature's two simple gifts, sun and water. That may be changing soon.

Outbreaks of *E. coli* bacteria have infected some mass-produced crops of alfalfa sprouts, and both the Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency

are planning to impose stringent methods of sanitizing seeds.

"In 25 years of growing and eating sprouts, I have never had a problem," says Harrison. The veteran sprout grower nurtures her crops single-handedly and with absolutely no help from machinery.

"But our government panders to business, so I don't know if the new regulations will put me out of business," she laments. "One of my seed suppliers is demanding I sign an agreement to soak my seeds in chlorine before sprouting them to ensure that they are bacteria-free."

"I don't feel good about doing that. I buy organic wherever and whenever I can and I do all the work myself so I have total control of the quality."

On this sunny Saturday morning at the SLO Farmers Market near Gottschalk's there are people of all ages gathering around for samples of her buckwheat sprouts, broccoli sprouts, and bean sprouts. There are even a few courageous children grazing from the trays on the table and enjoying the healthy snack.

As seeds sprout they attain higher levels of protein, sugar, enzymes, and vitamins A, B, C, and E as well as increase in amino acid content, says Rodale's natural foods cookbook. The New Whole Foods Encyclopedia says that people who have a hard time digesting beans can easily digest bean sprouts. Furthermore, sprouts are very low in carbohydrates. Consequently, a cup of mung bean sprouts or alfalfa

sprouts has about 37 calories.

"All nutrition is magnified at this level of growth," says Harrison. "Just like every baby thing, sprouts have tremendous energy."

The living harvest that lies before her is not only her livelihood, but it is also

## A Sprinkling of Sprouts

Generally, Rose Harrison has up to 14 varieties of sprouts. Listed here are just a few, with recommended usage:

**Sunflowers** are easiest to eat for the uninitiated but most difficult to grow. The sunflower grows on a long, slender strand of white stem with two bright-green leaflets at the end. Used in sandwiches and salads.

**Clover** is a nice substitute for alfalfa sprouts, which are the most marketed of sprouts. They have a stronger flavor than alfalfa and more texture. "They are the Cadillac of sandwich sprouts," says Harrison. Clover is an excellent palette cleanser for a spicy Thai curry.

**Garlic sprouts** are a nutty, hot sprout with a mild garlic flavor. This is Harrison's most popular sprout next to the sunflower. Use it to float on top of creamy squash soup or to garnish pasta. A nice alternative to using garlic cloves because of its subtle taste.

**Onion sprouts** are hotter than garlic and a great way to spice up an ordinary egg salad sandwich or a light and crisp complement to a barbecued beef sandwich. Another alternative is to garnish a summer pasta with this delicate beauty.

**Cilantro sprouts** were pioneered by Harrison. "No one was sprouting cilantro seeds," she exclaims. This is a very aromatic and floral addition to a bitter leaf salad.

her daily menu. Harrison, a confirmed raw-foodist, eats only uncooked food. She sells exclusively through the farmers markets. Look for her booth on Saturdays in San Luis Obispo and Arroyo Grande Village and Mondays in Baywood Park [see the Farmers Markets section of New Times Events Calendar for details].

If growing your own sprouts is a temptation, Harrison assures that it is a simple process. No pesticides, fertilizers, or storage space are required. The only acreage you need is the confines of a glass jar.

Sprouting seeds and grains are potent with energy, nutrition, and flavor. Simply storing a variety of seeds to sprout can satisfy many Y2K food needs—any concerns you have about fresh produce can be answered by the addition of water. Dry seeds require little storage room. Sealed in a jar and kept cool they will remain alive for up to 60 years.

Sprouting is ideal for emergency food stockpiles. One and a half tablespoons of clover will yield four cups of sprouts. No matter the season, seeds can be converted into fresh, succulent vegetables in a few days and can be grown as needed. They are economical and nutritious and possess diversified flavor and texture.

Sprouting seeds for food is an ancient method of food preparation. The first recorded mention of sprouting seeds was in 2939 B.C. by the emperor of China. Treat yourself like royalty and explore the world of sprouts. If turning your kitchen into a nursery isn't a temptation, then visit Harrison at a farmers market. A

Pam Woolway covers food for New Times.

**Fenugreek** is a natural estrogen. Mildly spicy and bitter, the sprouts are commonly served in salad much the same way arugula is used. The sprouts are rich with vitamin A and the seeds are 29 percent protein. A simple salad of avocado, red onion, and fenugreek make a winning combination.

**Dalkon** is the hottest of the sprouts Harrison grows. A piquant addition to a sweet jicama salad, or use to brighten a tuna fish sandwich.

**Pea sprouts** are long, delicate threads of green and taste very much the same as a fresh pea. The strands are good in stir-fried dishes with other vegetables or on their own as a side dish with a splash of rice vinegar.

**Radish sprouts** have a pale pink root and small green top. They are hot and quite flavorful. Radish sprouts add some zip to bland foods and color to soups and salads. Make a Reuben sandwich with them in place of sauerkraut. Radish sprouts are touted as good for the respiratory system.

**Buckwheat** is a long, slender sprout that adds elegance to a common green salad. It has a lemony flavor and is loaded with calcium.

**Broccoli sprouts** are buttery and spicy. They contain sulforaphane, the compound that gives broccoli its cancer-fighting ability. The sprouts can contain up to 50 times more sulforaphane than mature broccoli, according to Paul Talalay, the cancer researcher who developed broccoli sprouts. △

## Buckwheat 'Noodles' With Herbs for Two

### Ingredients

1/2 lb. buckwheat sprouts  
1/2 teaspoon canola oil  
2 teaspoons rice vinegar  
2 teaspoons tamari  
2 teaspoons water  
2 teaspoons dill weed  
2 teaspoons basil  
1/4 teaspoon garlic powder  
3 minced green onions (optional)

### Procedure

Gently toss buckwheat sprouts in oil with two forks. Add dill, basil, and garlic powder and toss carefully. Add vinegar, tamari, water, and the green onion and gently toss again. Serve as a side dish with salmon. △

**'I don't think anyone would deny the farmers from making a living. Is (moving farmers market) going to be a death blow to the downtown businesses? No. Would it have been nice (to keep it there)? Yes.'**

— Matt Masia, president of Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce

# Farmers expect to move Friday night market

PLANNERS WERE TO HAVE OK'D MOVE TO WAL-MART LOT

BY RAVEN J. RAILEY  
NORTH COUNTY TRIBUNE

Paso Robles planners were expected to approve a request from the North County Farmers Market Association to hold its Friday evening Farmers Market in the Wal-Mart parking lot on Niblick Road.

City planners heard the request Tuesday. No decision was reached before press time.

Farmers sought the move from 12th Street along the Downtown City Park because of decreased profits and reduced parking that stem in part from downtown revitalization, said Bill Spencer, president of Paso Robles Farmers Market.

"In the summer peak months, we've dropped from \$10,000 to \$12,000, down to less than \$5,000 average gross over the last three years."

Bill Spencer,  
president of Paso  
Robles Farmers  
Market

*'In the summer peak months, we've dropped from \$10,000 to \$12,000, down to less than \$5,000 average gross over the last three years.'*



Crowds jam downtown San Luis Obispo streets where vendors like Ed Cisneros of Fresno set up produce stands. Paso Robles Farmers Market is likely relocating to the Wal-Mart parking lot from downtown early next month. Some business leaders eyed SLO's market as a role model for success.

NORTH COUNTY TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

5,000 and 7,000 people a day pass through the super store.

Bob Lata, the city's director of community development, said that no concerns had been raised to the Planning Commission. As a result, on the eve of the meeting he expected the required conditional use permit to be approved.

"While the market will displace parking, there is more than adequate parking to meet the code even with the displacement," said Lata.

Once the green light is given, farmers will begin selling their crops in front of Wal-Mart on Aug. 6 from 3:30 to 7 p.m., said Spencer.

Spencer points to a similar move in Atascadero to support farmers' decision. When that city's farmers market moved from Sunken Gardens to the Rite Aid parking lot, the gross intake doubled, he said.

Matt Masia, Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce president, said that while he under-

stands the motivation behind the move, he was "very disappointed."

The Friday night Farmers Market added a festive atmosphere to the downtown business core that attracted more people to dine and window shop at nearby businesses.

"I don't think anyone would deny the farmers from making a living," he said. "Is it going to be a death blow to the downtown businesses? No. Would it have been nice (to keep it there)? Yes."

## Paso wants to imitate SLO's market

Paso Robles business leaders had their sights on the popular San Luis Obispo Farmers Market.

Matt Masia, Paso Robles Chamber of Commerce president, said officials had hopes of turning Paso Robles' evening Farmers Market held Fridays at Downtown City Park into something similar to the Thursday night event held on Higuera Street in San Luis Obispo.

But those hopes may have been dashed this week.

On Tuesday, city planners were expected to approve Paso Robles Farmers Market's request to relocate the market from City Park to the Wal-Mart parking lot on Niblick Road. No action was taken in press time.

Still, San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles share several similarities that gave hope to using the SLO event as a model. Both towns have historic downtowns that have attracted popular eateries and movie theaters.

Some say that is not enough to repeat SLO's success.

"Paso Robles never had quite that potential," said Bill Spencer, president of Paso Robles Farmers Market, citing the town's lack of a university and the popularity of Friday night Bearcats football as limiting factors.

Downtown has evolved from a focus on mercantile trade to restaurant trade, he said. Most people come there for dinner and a movie, he said.

"You don't buy 20 pounds of produce and haul it into the theater, or put it next to you at dinner."

The Tuesday morning farmers market will remain downtown, said Spencer. But there is discussion about changing it to an afternoon market next spring.

"We are very concerned with how the community feels about the changes," he said, encouraging public input.

According to Spencer, between

PROFILE

## Evelyn Fernamburg

*The Dahlia Lady*

by Dorothy Pier

Evelyn Fernamburg plants nuggets and harvests gold. If you attend local farmers' markets, you may have seen her crop—dahlias bright as the sun, round and wide as butter plates.

She laughs when she recalls how gold lured her great grandparents to California from Germany. Her grandfather, Charles Fink, opened a hostelry near the mission in San Luis Obispo in 1873. When her father, Carl Fink, married Sarah Holmes, Sarah's mother sold him 65 acres outside of Arroyo Grande.

Evelyn has lived on that land since her birth 84 years ago. Oak covered hills protect the property. The stucco house with a red tile roof looks across the road to the six acre walnut orchard her father planted in 1929.

While staying overnight with a girl friend, Evelyn caught the eye of a young man named Fritz. Despite the depression, they married in 1933. Evelyn gathered walnuts to pay ten dollars for her wedding ring. The couple had three children: Betty Lou Kocsi, who lives in Temple City; Frederick, a resident of Santa Margarita and Mary Ann Bathe, Evelyn's next door neighbor. Evelyn's brother, Francis, lives on the other side. Fritz died two years ago, but an active life keeps Evelyn in good health.

In the early years, parents had no way to deliver their children to school, so Evelyn transported them in a specially outfitted pickup truck. She also boarded school teachers in her home. For 17 years she served on the San Luis Obispo County Board of Education, for 12 years on the San Luis Obispo County Farmers' Market Board, and for 51 years she has led 4-H groups.

Thirty-six years ago, when a friend gave her the tuber for a white dahlia, Evelyn became hooked on the large species. She calls every flower by its name, but if one slips her mind she can look on a written list she keeps in the house. Once she decided to count her plants.

"When I reached 500 I quit," she says.

She began selling at the Farmers Markets in 1979. Nowadays she, with help from her son-in-law Douglas or grandson, David, works at the Baywood Park market on Monday; Arroyo Grande, Wednesday;



Nick Pier Photo  
Morro Bay, Thursday; San Luis Obispo,  
Thursday night and Saturday.

Displaying flowers at her stall, Evelyn makes dahlia growing appear like a leisure time activity, but as she walks between the raised beds she describes how she must line the holes for her most precious tubers with chicken wire to defeat gophers, and water the gravel-filled soil constantly. Every morning she breaks off side buds to produce long, strong stems and a single large blossom.

"If I wait until the buds start to open, I feel like I'm drowning kittens," she says.

She picks her flowers at the peak of perfection, neither too young nor too old. She concentrates her efforts on varieties that sell well and stand up long after they're picked. If sold at the proper time, a bouquet should last four to five days.

Friends have given her most of her tubers. For that reason she refers customers back to the original grower rather than sell tubers herself. She also abides by one more condition.

"I promise I won't take my flowers to the fair," she says, "if they won't sell at my farmers' markets."

She makes up her bouquets with a mixture of baby's breath, bachelors buttons, chrysanthemums, coral bells, coreopsis, cosmos, daisies, feverfew, gillardia, gladiola, iris, lion's tail, roses, statice, sweet peas, yarrow and zinnias. Customers can still buy the white blooms of her first tuber.

In 1979, Fritz bought her a gold Cadillac which had belonged to Mary Anne's music teacher. It had 5000 miles on the odometer and cost \$4000.

"It won't fit in the garage. We can't afford it. What will people think?" she chastised him.

Nowadays she fills the trunk with flowers, and drives off to the market, proving the adage, gold is where you find it.

# Farmers' Market opens in Pismo

By STEVE FAIRCHILD

*TPR staff writer*

PISMO BEACH — Outdoor activities, three stages for bands, and more merchant involvement was on tap for the new and improved Pismo Beach Farmers Market, which opened last night for a new season.

Congresswoman Lois Caps gave the official grand opening announcement for the outdoor market. It was held in the same parking lots on Dolliver Street and Main Street as last year, except this year the vendors and city merchants swapped parking lots.

"It's a bigger parking lot, but it's our first day so we'll see how it comes out," said Jon Perez, a strawberry and vegetable vendor.

The new Farmers Market will be more of an event, according to organizer Bruce Murphy. Outside vendors will not be allowed so "local vendors will get the sales," he said.

A permanent location for the market has not been confirmed, but it will move closer to downtown by summer, according to Murphy.

Other highlights of Tuesday's opening included members of the Pismo Beach Fire Department showing off their Hurst spreader (also known as Jaws of Life) and other pieces of equipment to locals and tourists who bundled up to fight off the cold, foggy conditions.

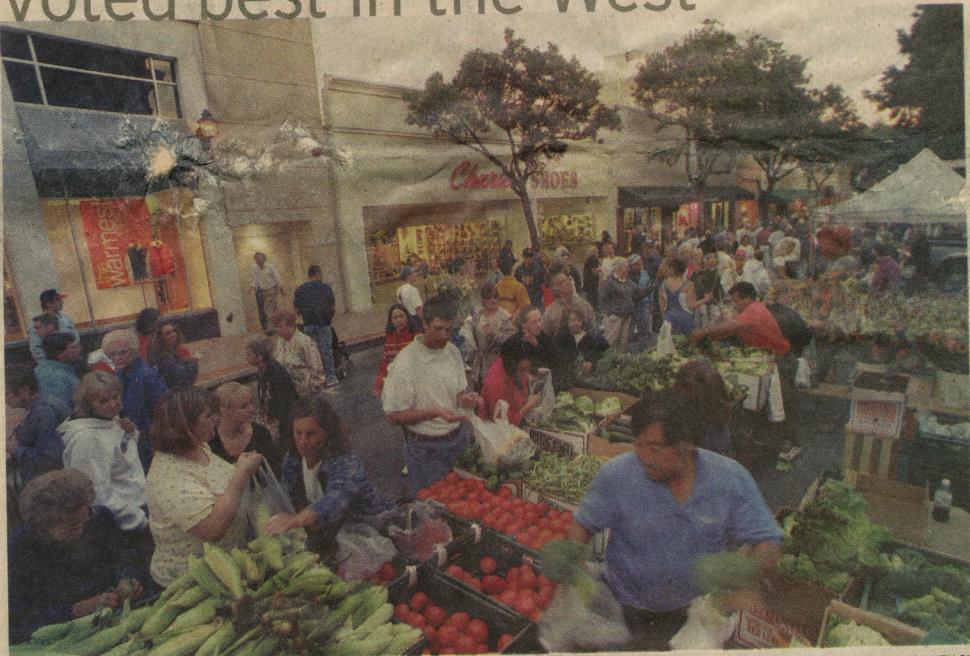
Also on hand was Tiffany Jeffcoach, Miss Teen Pismo Beach who will be running for the state title in three weeks.



TPR/David Ciaffardini

**MARKET OPENS** — Maria Wright was one of the vendors at the opening of the Pismo Beach Farmers' Market. The market is open every Tuesday from 4 to 6:30 p.m. on Dolliver and Main streets.

## Voted best in the West



Tribune photo by Jayson Mellom

Arroyo Grande grower Robert Hayashi, lower right, works his vegetable stand Thursday night at Farmers Market. The weekly street fair was a key factor in San Luis Obispo's 'Best Downtown' honor.

## Sunset crowns SLO downtown

**WASHINGTON, ARIZONA  
CITIES NO MATCH FOR  
CENTRAL COAST GEM**

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**

BY JUNE RICH  
THE TRIBUNE

From the sidewalk, caramel apples, chocolate-covered bananas, and squares, tubes and trapezoids of chocolate sit neatly in a window, flooded with golden light.

"You see, I mean look at this," says Ron Richardson, pointing at the chocolates from the darkening sidewalk on Higuera Street. Richardson, a 46-year-old artist from Arroyo Grande, is trying to pinpoint

the elusive quality that sets San Luis Obispo's downtown apart.

"It's like something from the '40s, very quaint," Richardson says, turning from the shop window to the pleasant tumult of the weekly Farmers Market. Richardson holds a small box filled with McLintocks ribs, barbecue tang wafting up from the meat. "It's got a lot of charm. A great mix of people. Everyone's happy."

Locals aren't the only ones who admire the heart of San Luis Obispo.

Sunset magazine just crowned the center of this humble town the best in the West.

### 'Best Downtown'

**From:** Sunset Magazine

**The competition:** 13 states southwest of Montana

**How the award was decided:** Via a 400-person reader poll and interviews with urban planners and architects

San Luis Obispo won "Best Downtown" in a 13-state contest, everywhere southwest of Montana. The award derives from a 400-person reader poll, and from interviews with urban planners and architects.

Only cities with populations under 600,000 people qualified. San Luis Obispo crushed two close contenders — Spokane, Wash., and Glendale, Ariz., — based on criteria such as architecture, historic preservation and zoning.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1999



FARMER'S BARBEQUE  
OCTOBER 17, 1999















Tribune photo by David Middlecamp

**Paul Rys** arranges some of his home-grown pumpkins on his truck at his home outside San Luis Obispo. The monster pumpkin (300 lbs.) was grown by Mary and Werner Christmann of Templeton. Rys will be taking the pumpkins to Farmers Market today in San Luis Obispo.

**A HOWLING GOOD TIME: SPIRIT OF HALLOWEEN**

Tribune photo by Jayson Mellom

**Mike Davis**, at left, holds son Ian who is dressed as the grim reaper at San Luis Obispo's Farmers Market. A host of other events was held for children in anticipation of Halloween at Mission Plaza.

## This Peter Piper Has the Pick of Peppers

**C**hances are you have seen him at one of the local farmers markets. You may not know his name. But when friends mention him, you immediately recognize who they mean: that pepper guy.

Ralph Johnson has the largest selection of peppers at any of the farmers markets. Boxed in behind an awningless table, Johnson is surrounded by a rainbow of color. True, he does have an assortment of greens, onions, and tomatoes. But by

far, what stands out the most this time of year is his selection of sweet and hot peppers, which we can expect to enjoy until a month after our first frost.

"It's supposed to warm up this week," Johnson says one early November day. "So I am very happy."

Last year the county's first frost came in October. "Frost melts everything to the ground. If frost is in the forecast I gotta strip all the plants of their fruit," Johnson explains.

A hot climate makes for a hot pepper. Of the 10 varieties Johnson grows, eight of them have heat. The chemical that produces a chili's fiery flavor is capsaicin. Most of the heat is in the seeds and membranes, so removing these for cooking tones down the spiciness. Capsaicin is not water-soluble. If your meal is too hot, quell the fire with milk. Water, beer, or wine will do nothing to douse the flames.

Many of the peppers listed here are suitable for drying. A ristra, or string of peppers, can be purchased from Johnson or you can do it yourself. Fully mature chilies are most suitable for drying. Use a yarn needle and heavy cotton thread to string the chilies. Puncture just below the stem, the same way you would string popcorn for a Christmas tree. Hang the ristra in a well-ventilated, warm place. With the prevailing warm weather the peppers should dry in about a week.

When using whole dried chilies, cover with boiling water, soak for 20 minutes, and then remove the seeds and stem. A string of dried peppers is not only a beautiful addition of color to a kitchen, but it is also a totally edible accessory.

Use the following list as a guide to help integrate more flavor into winter fare.

**Antohi Romanian Sweet Pepper:** This yellow and red chili pepper is milder than a bell pepper and is the sweetest of Johnson's peppers. The antohi is also his biggest seller, boasting an average of 20 to 30 pounds at each farmers market.

**Apple Pepper:** This is a bright-red beauty of the pimento variety and bursting with flavor. "Think apple and it does taste like an apple," says Johnson. There are about a half-dozen varieties of large pimentos, which are also known as lipstick peppers.

to the Sonora. Although they are both kin of New Mexico, they are used for different styles of cooking. The Joe Parker is often mistaken for a Big Jim, another excellent roasting pepper. "The Joe Parker is more adapted to this climate," says Johnson. "I sell 20-pound bags all the time to folks who are into roasting their own peppers."

**Pasilla Bajio:** Sweet, mild, and fruity, this pepper can be stuffed, sliced, or added to sauces. "This is your true pasilla," says Johnson. "The pasilla is a spice pepper used for seasoning sauces." Commonly used in a mole sauce, this pepper is a forest green when picked and turns to a chocolate brown. Most people are familiar with the ancho variety, which is a heart-shaped pepper. Dried, a pasilla is called chili negro. Further adding to the confusion, peppers have regional names, and the names can change according to where the fruit is in its maturity.

**Cayenne:** A tubular, fire-engine-red pepper, this one is used primarily for heat more than flavor. Dried, cayenne is the pepper you find in a glass container on the table of a pizza parlor. It is conducive to drying because of its thin meat and thin skin. Cayenne varieties are generally only used in their dry state and are useful in sauces and stews.

**Charleston Cayenne:** This chili is somewhere between a cayenne and a habanero in heat. In appearance they are similar to the cayenne, only the colors range from yellow to orange.

**Jalepeno:** Perhaps the most widely used of the chili peppers due to their combination of both heat and flavor, this versatile pepper can be eaten raw in salsa, pickled, or used as a topping. Johnson's jalepenos are not a hybrid, so one can expect a lot of heat. Hybrids often have the heat bred out of them. One trick to testing the heat of a pepper is to bite the tip. The closer you get to the seeds, the hotter it gets in most cases—one exception being the habanero.

**Red Habanero:** In Spanish, the word "Habanero" means "Havana-like," referring to Havana, Cuba, as a possible origin for the pod.

It's the hottest of Johnson's peppers this year, although not the hottest in existence, he assures me. "I have cus-

**'If you want endorphins to run freely in your body, this is the pepper.'**

**Sonora:** Mildly spicy, this New Mexican chili pepper ranges from green to red. A good candidate for stews and stir-fry, this is not a roasting pepper. "You would be mad at me if I mistakenly gave you this one to roast," laughs Johnson. "It looks like a roasting pepper, but the skin won't peel."

**Joe Parker:** This is practically a twin

tomers who want them even hotter," Johnson says. "If you want endorphins to run freely in your body, this is the pepper." Laughing, he continues, "I guess this could be considered a natural high!"  $\Delta$

The recently wed Pam Woolway still covers food for New Times.



Photo by Jeff Greene

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1999

Downtown San Luis Obispo's  
**Thursday Night Farmers' Market**  
has moved to  
**Friday, December 26**  
(After Thanksgiving)  
**6:00-9:00 p.m.**  
**on Higuera Street**  
Visit Santa in the Mission Plaza



15

DOWNTOWN HOLI

**PICK A COLOR:** Visit Farmers' Market in Downtown SLO on the Friday after Thanksgiving. It will run the same hours as the regular market - 6 to 9 p.m. - on Friday, November 26. Thursday, December 23 will feature regular market hours with the usual vendors and entertainment.

SAN LUIS OBISPO  
**Snowy Farmers Market**  
**scheduled Thursday**

Snow is coming to Farmers Market on Thursday.

A pile of snow will be placed at the corner of Higuera and Chorro streets at about 6 p.m. This annual event is sponsored by the Downtown Business Association and the city Parks and Recreation Department.

There is no charge and children of all ages are welcome.

— Mike Stover

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16, 2000

## WINTER WONDERLAND: SNOW COMES TO FARMERS MARKET



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLON

**Hayley Lawless, 5,** tosses a snowball at her mother, Kimberly Lawless, Thursday night at Farmers Market in downtown San Luis Obispo. Kids lined up all down the street for their chance to play in the snow. One news reporter even got snowballed by the youngsters as she and her crew filmed the kids playing.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, 2000

'(It is a place) where farmers don't need a deal with a broker or a relationship with a supermarket to sell ... produce.'

Richard Greek,  
Ag commissioner

## New state law may bear fruit for farmers markets

By KATHE TANNER  
THE TRIBUNE

A new state bill regulating farmers markets is designed to assure that consumers are "dealing with people who practice the agricultural arts," said Richard Greek, the county's ag commissioner.

In the process, Assembly Bill 593 has many of those agriculturalists trying to figure out exactly what the

legislation means.

To help wade through the legislative muddle, Greek and Cambria Farmers Market managers Jack and Jane Gibson took a quick trip to the

state capital earlier this month to get some answers from the legislators.

Because the measure is so new — it was approved in December and took effect Jan. 1 — and because the

implementers are "computer glitched," Jane Gibson said, the trio left the state capital without some of the hard-and-fast definitions they sought.

"But we did learn a lot," she said. The following Sunday, Jan. 16, at an annual meeting in Cambria that serves as a review of the past year

and a forecast for upcoming months, Greek and the Gibsons discussed their information with about 40 of the market's vendors and representatives from other county venues.

MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 2000

# Crowd takes back Thursday night

FEW SCARED OFF  
BY LAST WEEK'S  
DRIVING RAMPAGE

## SAN LUIS OBISPO

By JUNE RICH  
THE TRIBUNE

Tiny barefoot girls in black leotards cartwheeled along mats on Garden Street on Thursday night, where just last week a stolen sport utility vehicle tore through Farmers Market crowds.

The crowds were as thick as ever this week, with rib eaters, knots of teenagers draped in black, and women and men with armfuls of flowers and fruit.

No one expressed concern about a repeat of the bizarre episode that left four people injured last Thursday.

"What are the chances of something like that happening twice?" said Barbara Stember, 53, of Morro Bay, as she finished off a noodle bowl from Mabuhay, a Philippine food booth. "We know things happen at the market occasionally, but it never seems to overshadow the overall family atmosphere."

"We're naive," chimed in Stember's husband, Robert.

According to police reports, the incident began around 8:50 p.m. last Thursday, when a 16-year-old boy broke into British Sports Car Service on Marsh Street. Casey Henderson, a high school sophomore from Avila Beach, is suspected of stealing a Range Rover from the shop, then tearing through downtown streets, leaving behind four in-



Tribune photo by JAYSON MELLON

Officers Eric Lincoln, left, Bill Proll and Ian Parkinson of the San Luis Obispo Police Department patrol Higuera Street on Thursday night during Farmers Market.

jured people and a sheared-off fire hydrant. Henderson was captured after police said he rolled the vehicle on Highway 101 near the Osos Street exit.

"I wish I'd seen it," said Kim Burt, a 39-year-old social worker. Burt held a fat bouquet of miniature roses. She laughed, adding,

"I'm a rubber-neck, but I wouldn't have wanted to watch people get hurt."

"It seemed so out of context, so absurd," said Burt's friend, Laura Milburn.

One downtown police officer who witnessed the incident agreed.

"This was the wildest thing I've seen in 15 years," Bill Proll said.

Those who supervise the event every week said last week's incident was such a freak occurrence that they have not considered additional safety precautions.

"We're confident that we've got the best measures already," said

Christine Bragg, who coordinates the market for the Downtown Association. "I think that it's apparent by their response time, it couldn't have been much better, other than by getting a tip ahead of time."

See FARMERS, Back Page

## Farmers

From Page A1

Bragg said the Downtown Association already campaigned successfully to increase the number of police officers assigned to patrol downtown on bicycles from one to three. They start their patrol on Thursday nights around 5. Two additional uniformed officers walk the market's main drag, so the bicycles can cruise the perimeter.

"We rarely see someone walking down the middle of the market drinking a beer, committing a crime," said Proll. "It's on the outskirts that we get more of the minor-type crimes. Drinking, sometimes you'll have groups of teens gathering in certain places to

fight, so we make our presence known."

The police department also occasionally sends out its Situation Oriented Response Team, a plain-clothes unit that follows up any rumors of potential trouble, and gathers intelligence at the event.

Teams of probation officers also frequent the market, for several reasons.

"They have a relationship with their clients if they see them there," said John Lum, chief probation officer for the county. "They can intervene if anything inappropriate is going on. And sometimes, especially for our juvenile clientele, it's very hard for them to say 'no' to their peers. So if someone says 'Let's do some craziness,' it helps them say, 'No, probation is going to be there

and I'll get arrested.' We become their excuse."

The fire department also tours the market regularly to make sure that fire lanes are clear and extinguishers hang near all of the food booths.

Bob Neumann, the fire chief, said those clear fire lanes were essential in the only incident in the farmer's market's 16-year history that caused chaos on a par with last week's accident.

It was 1989, and an arson fire engulfed two downtown shops. That fire broke out at the height of Farmers Market activities, and at least 100 firefighters from nine different fire departments helped defeat the blaze. Et Cetera and the Party Exchange, on Higuera Street, were completely destroyed.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2000

## Rampage should not mar 'Farmers'

**L**ife is full of the unexpected and the bizarre. The latest example was the rampage by a teen suspect who seized a Range Rover from a service garage on Marsh Street during Farmers Market last Thursday night and mowed down several people. As serious and startling as the incident was, it could have been a lot worse. A collision between the vehicle and a fire hydrant was a fortunate happenstance.

Not to be overlooked is the fact that police were quick to respond and make an arrest before the young driver could inflict more injuries and damage, or make a getaway.

Thanks also are in order for the performance by members of the emergency services who came to the aid of the injured.

Farmers Market long has been a weekly highlight in downtown San Luis Obispo. It always has been free of worry for the thousands who stroll about buying produce, enjoying camaraderie or both.

The weird incident last week should not deter anyone from continuing to enjoy the market.

FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 2000

### PISMO BEACH

#### Free concerts spice up Tuesday Pismo market

There will be two free downtown concerts Tuesday as part of the weekly Pismo Beach Summer Concert Series and Farmers Market.

The event, sponsored by the Pismo Beach Business Improvement Group, runs from 4 to 6:30 p.m. on Cypress Street between Hinds and Pomeroy avenues.

Valerie Johnson and The Blues Doctors will play in the Pismo Beach Hotel courtyard and Black Cat Bone will play at the Pierside at the foot of Pomeroy.

In addition to buying fresh produce, people can enjoy Don the Puppeteer, balloon artists Dr. Pops and Mark Basamian, face painter Teresa Schmidt and a karate demonstration by Bill Mailman.

There is free parking off Cypress in the Benson lot south of Pomeroy, at Cypress Landing off Stimson and in the city lot at the corner of Main and Dolliver.

—Jerry Bunin

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2000

### SAN LUIS OBISPO

#### Students to give away trees at Farmers Market

Students in a special education class at Laguna Middle School will be giving away free oak trees Thursday at Farmers Market in downtown San Luis Obispo.

Under the guidance of teacher Scott Schoeck and his assistant Nancy Goodman, the students have raised 300 Live Oak trees from local seed, provided by the SLO Tree Group, an informal group of volunteers under the auspices of The Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo. They will be offering these trees free to the public to beautify the Central Coast and to create wildlife habitats.

The students' booth will be located in front of The Network between 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Lionel Johnston, of the SLO Tree Group, said members planted 2,400 trees last year and hope to plant 5,000 trees this year, in cooperation with the California Conservation Corps and the Native Plant Society. For further information, contact Lionel Johnston at 772-1701 or ECOSLO at 544-1777.

—Jeff Ballinger

TUESDAY, AUGUST 22, 2000

### PISMO BEACH

#### Farmers market features music

Three musical groups will play between 4 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. at tonight's Pismo Beach Summer Concert Series and Farmers Market.

Ragg will play alternative rock at the Pismo Beach Hotel. Huckabuck will play funk, rock and jazz at the Pierside at the foot of Dolliver, and Shameless will play Christian music on Cypress Street.

There will also be wine tasting with Edna Valley Vineyards in the Cypress Landing courtyard.

Also in the courtyard, blues singer Valerie Johnson will audition children to perform at the October Clam Festival.

—Jerry Bunin

## Spotlight: A fresh approach to produce shopping

# The good, the bad and the ugly of FARMERS MARKET

To get the best deals,  
become an informed buyer

By DICK ROGERS  
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

**F**armers markets are in full swing throughout the county. And although they are considered an enjoyable evening outing, I feel it's time to clear the air.

As a seller at three area markets, I was surprised to discover how uninformed many buyers were about what they should expect from a farmers market. My hope is for everyone to become better shoppers while supporting local growers in the process.

**Expectation: We will meet farmers at the market.**

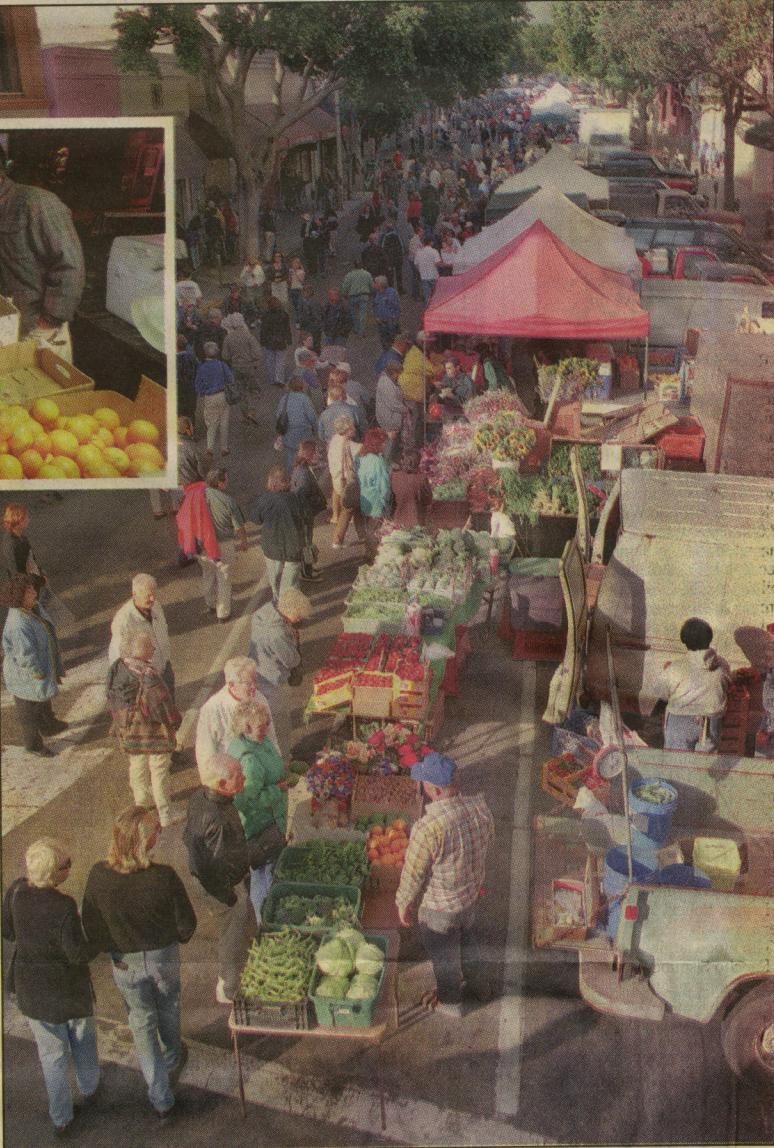
Well, you can meet farmers, but it will take a little work to make the connection. In some instances, the "farmer" is a paid employee who sells the product. To make the connection, you have to ask a few questions: "Do you grow these crops?" "Where are they grown?" "How big is your farm?" Some bigger growers have found it profitable to send out fleets of pickup trucks with produce generally grown for supermarkets and use the atmosphere of the farmers markets to hawk their wares. That's the bad side. The ugly side is there have been isolated instances where vendors actually go to packing houses in the Valley, buy sub-standard supermarket produce (culls) and sell it cheaply at farmers markets. Recently, Joey Martinez, North County Farmers Market general manager, banned a seller after she observed him removing packing house stickers from fruit. Knowing who grows the produce and where it is grown sets you up as a smart buyer.



**Market Tips**

Here are a few tips to help you negotiate the market and feel good about the experience:

- Tour the market before purchasing. You might find lemon cucumbers that don't look like yellow tennis balls (They should be whitish in appearance and smaller).
- Talk to the sellers (hopefully they are the farmers) about what they are selling and where it is grown.
- If you have had a bad experience, let the seller and the market manager know.
- While walking the market, notice how the sellers treat their products. Is the fruit dumped from boxes or carefully placed? Ask when the produce was picked. Soon, you will be able to tell yourself by looking at the stem end of tomatoes and squash.



TRIBUNE FILE PHOTOS  
You can find bargains at the downtown San Luis Obispo farmers market, above, but keep in mind that the tastiest produce and the organically grown items will often come at a higher price.

**Expectation: These are high quality fruits and vegetables.**

To bring a tomato to its peak in taste and sweetness requires summer heat. To put it simply, a tomato grown in a coastal region can't hold a candle (taste-wise) to one grown where temperatures frequently exceed 100 degrees in the summer. Also, there are a couple thousand varieties of tomatoes, each with a distinctive taste and texture. The same is true for cantaloupe. Growers who grow cantaloupe for wholesale markets (and who also send hired vendors to hawk their produce at area farmers markets) most likely grow melons that answer the critical two questions their industry requires: "How well do the melons ship?" and "What is their shelf life?" The matter of taste trails a distant third. Local farmers, on the other hand, select varieties that offer incredible taste. You do not see these varieties in supermarkets because they wouldn't last a day with the squeezing, dropping and general mauling produce takes in big markets.

There was a time when, if you bought a cantaloupe, it tasted sweet and delicious. But the need for these melons to be picked early (unripe), shipped in bulk to distribution warehouses, trucked to God knows where, unloaded, stocked and manhandled, requires a melon that has the outer consistency of a hardball. That's the bad and ugly in one shot. The good is you can find great tasting cantaloupe at a farmers market as long as you know who is selling the cantaloupe and ask them about the specific variety. When someone tells you they don't know the variety of the cantaloupe they're selling, buy from a farmer who does.

When I suggest you get to know the farmer, I mean get down and dirty with him. Ask him about his farm. Where is it? What does he grow? Does he guarantee his produce? Ask to see his hands. (If he is a farmer,

his hands will show it.)

**Expectation: Everything is going to be cheap.**

You can find bargains at area farmers markets, but don't be put off by seemingly "pricey" items. Many of the tastier produce varieties mean higher seed prices and generally more difficulty in growing. The yield is also lower. Anyone who goes to the market specifically looking for a price is looking for trouble. If you want great tomatoes, look for the highest price, the same for stone fruit. The idea that farmers markets have bargain-basement prices is not entirely

true. The prices can be lower than what you see in the supermarket, but not always. Farmers growing highly specialized produce need to be supported, especially if you want to see them back next year. And, if you are looking for organically grown produce, support the incredible effort it takes to produce these crops. One of the most frustrating conversations I have with buyers is, "Is this tomato organically grown?" When I respond yes, and they are told the price, they walk on.

Finally, a word about peaches. It's fruit that when it's on it is hard to beat. But many times it's off. You buy a five-pound bag

(not cheap) and you let it sit on the counter for a few days to soften. Sometimes you get softening of the worst kind — brown rot. Growers know when their peaches have rot, at least those who eat their own fruit do.

The dilemma growers face when they know their peaches have brown rot is whether to hawk the fruit at the market, all the while aware that a good portion will go into the garbage, or let buyers know some of the fruit will be good and some bad and balance the price on it. I suggest buying from local growers who pick their fruit when it's ready to eat and who only sell fruit that passes their inspection.

Avoid fruit bearing stickers, a clear signal to you that fruit is coming from a large grower and has been picked early. Those sticky tags are what you see in the supermarkets, but now we're seeing them at farmers markets!

The next time you visit a farmers market, enjoy the atmosphere, but don't let it go to your head. Evaluate what you see, ask questions and get to know the farmers you buy from. Visit them each week and support them if you are happy with your purchases.

*Dick Rogers is a free-lance writer.*

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2000

**FARMERS' MARKETS**

## Bill OK'd to sell wine on streets

BY MIKE DUNNE  
SCRIPPS-MCLATCHY WESTERN SERVICE

SACRAMENTO — There will be no squeezing of the fruit — that's already been done — and no samples to taste, but starting early next year shoppers at California's certified farmers markets likely will be able to buy wine along with tomatoes, peaches, basil and okra.

A measure adopted by the Legislature last week and en route to Gov. Gray Davis would allow the state's winemakers to set up tables, hang banners and start selling their wines to browsers working their way through bins of bell peppers and melons.

"For the first time, wineries can sell direct to consumers outside their tasting rooms," said Paul Kronenberg, executive director of the Family Winemakers of California, which lobbied for the legislation.

The measure, introduced by Assemblywoman Helen Thomson, a

Davis Democrat, is meant principally to help small wineries sell limited-production wines that traditionally have had difficulty getting shelf space in supermarkets.

"There is just so much space in a supermarket, so this will give a lot of obscure wineries an outlet," said Dan Best, coordinator of the certified farmers markets in Sacramento County.

Brothers Mike and Dave Phillips of Phillips Vineyards in Lodi likely will be among the first winemakers to sell wines at farmers markets.

The Phillips family grows a diversity of other produce, and in recent weeks has been showcasing but not selling bottles of wine at its booth at the Sunday farmers market in Sacramento.

"We've been displaying the wine just to promote our label and to explain the bill," said Mike Phillips on Tuesday. "This (legislation) will help sales and it will help us get brand recognition, but

we don't expect it to be a major volume mover."

The Phillips family, however, won't be the first winemakers to sell wine at a farmers market.

For the past 15 years, Sterling Chaykin of Satiety Winery in Yolo County has been selling his wines at the Saturday farmers market in Davis.

He's been doing it under a little-known provision of the state's alcoholic-beverage regulations whereby wineries can get a duplicate retail license to sell wine at a location other than their tasting room, explained John Peirce, counsel for the State Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC).

Most winemakers use their duplicate license for a satellite brick-and-mortar tasting room, but Chaykin chose to use his at the Davis farmers market.

"Other wineries could do the same thing, if they get local approval as well," Peirce said.

Downtown Pismo

# Farmers make a move

CONNIE BAKER

Staff Writer

PISMO BEACH - The sights, scents, and sounds of the new downtown Pismo Farmers' Market was akin to a colorful and cultural street festival Tuesday as dozens of farmers, vendors, and information booths moved from the old Dolliver Street parking lot to the hub of downtown Pismo for a welcomed change of venue.

"We're looking for growth for Farmers' Market," said Maggie Wright, coordinator for the new scene and member of the market's sponsor - the Pismo Beach Business Improvement Group. "This change will bring in more business for our local businesses and that's our whole mission. We want to bring in as many new faces to downtown as we can."

Children of all ages lined the market's thoroughfare - which now fills the courtyard of the newly renovated Pismo Beach Hotel on Pomeroy Street and spills out onto the center of Cypress - shopping and bopping to the sounds of live reggae bands set up on two separate

See MARKET, PAGE 5



TPR/ Glenn Bolivar

**OUTDOOR COMMERCE** - The new location of the Pismo Farmers' Market opened on Tuesday afternoon, centered near Cypress Street and Wadsworth Avenue. Two bands and dozens of businesses attracted tourists and locals. Pictured is tourist Clarita Mojica of Lompoc purchasing vegetables from Justin Remick.

# Market: Pismo Beach farmers' event makes a move

## MARKET, FROM PAGE 1

stages. Longtime vendors have returned to the market, such as the "Olive Man," the almond growers, plant stands and food galore. Upbeat music floats through the air as visitors enjoyed balloon sculpting, face-painting, and the glass blower's artwork.

"We're confident the new location will draw a much bigger crowd and generate more business and exposure to the downtown area," said Bruce

Murphy, another BIG coordinator and manager of the Cypress Landing complex. "It's going to be much, much larger than in the past - especially with the addition of the live bands."

Murphy explained the new Farmers' Market is officially dubbed The Pismo Beach Summer Concert Series and Farmers' Market. Local bands providing a variety of sounds will be showcased every Tuesday for the next 12 weeks from 4 to 6:30 p.m. In addition to the main band in the middle of

Cypress Street, another stage has been constructed closer to the pier where Pomeroy meets the beach access.

Popular bands Shival Experience and Resination entertained Tuesday and more talented groups are being booked daily, Murphy said.

"It's amazing. We've had more than a dozen bands call and volunteer stage time since we announced the move. It helps us in our efforts and it gives the bands great exposure. Everyone's having a great

time."

Murphy explained the move from the old Dolliver lot was in response to a request by the City Council last year after it approved the continuation of the market.

"It took us about a year of surveying to put together this new venue," Murphy said.

With safety and space primary factors, the BIG considered five different sites before settling on the Pismo Hotel/Cypress Street spot.

"We sent out a survey to local business owners asking three questions basically," Murphy said. "The first was, 'Would you support the Farmers' Market?' Of the 80 surveyed, 78 said yes, one said no, and one was undecided. We also asked about preferred locations and it was clear the majority leaned toward our new choice and finally we

asked for financial support. We've already received \$2,000 in pledges from (mainly) downtown business owners. We've had tremendous support all the way around."

Murphy said the BIG will match every pledge up to \$2,500.

Along with the current booths, the newcomers and the traditional rows of colorful fruit and vegetable stands, BIG is working on creating the "Taste of Pismo Beach" booth, a concession that will be manned by local restaurateurs selling and giving samples of their cuisine as well as the creation of a wine-tasting booth.

Wright added in addition to the live music there will be a lot for the children to do. The market plans to have the Look-Alike Super Hero and the Look-Alike Super Stars roam the street fest entertaining visi-

tors. Giveaways and discounts to local businesses are also planned.

"It's going to be a great summer," Wright said enthusiastically. "If I can make a difference in enhancing downtown, well then that's why I'm here. I'm really grateful to just be a part of this whole experience. We just put our heads together, asked the local business owners to look into their hearts and do the right thing for Pismo and, boom, here we are. It's a win-win situation for everybody."

Members of the BIG pointed out the importance of those who were key in bringing the new market to fruition and would like to thank the dozens of volunteers, the City of Pismo Beach, the Pismo Beach City Council, John Garrett of the Public Works Department and Chief of Police Dan Boon.

Gazette Weekend • October 11, 2000

## Hear flamenco for the 21st century at Thursday's Farmers Market

Track through the 11 original instrumentals on Emilio Castillo's first release, *The Midnight Dance* (Strum Records), and the flamenco guitarist's spirited infusion of flamenco, South American rhythms and modern sounds will impress and mesmerize you.

Released just over a year ago, it has sold over 9,000 copies, mostly at performances and through word of mouth. (It's locally available at Finders Keepers and Luma Rustica, a SLO furniture store that goes through "dozens and dozens a month," according to Castillo's manager, Marc Grauer.)

Now in production is Castillo's second studio release, which he expects will turn the musical mainstream and whole new generation onto flamenco. His plan? To incorporate Euro, rave and hip hop backgrounds into the mix. That CD should be available within the next few months.

Castillo describes his sound as funkier than the Gypsy Kings and not nearly as mellow as Ottmar Liebert. He explains, "I inject the fire and sexual tension that flamenco music is known for. [The music]



EMILIO CASTILLO, perhaps the "next big thing" in flamenco, hopes to revolutionize the music for a new generation. Hear him this Thursday at Broad and Higuera Streets, beginning just after 6 p.m., during the SLO Farmers Market.

can go from a dinner table to a dance club because it's exciting, fiery and upbeat."

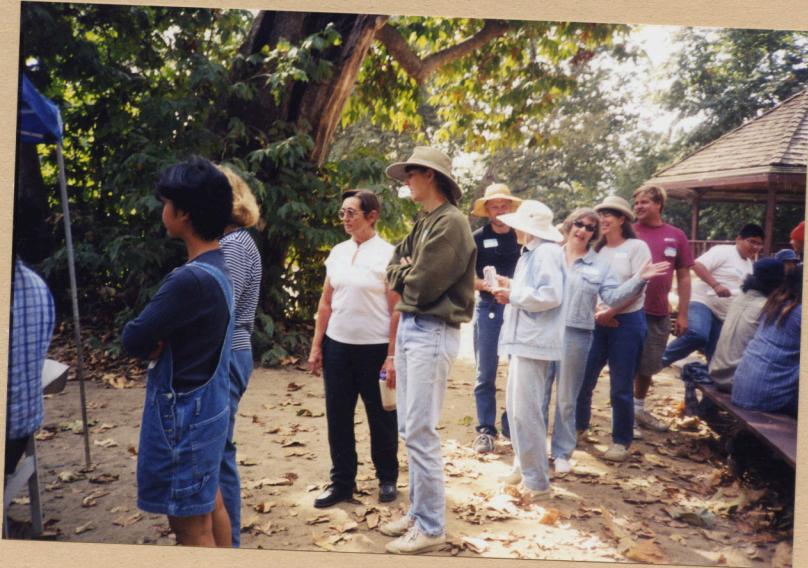
For local bookings, call Grauer, at 549-0700.



FARMER'S BARBECUE  
OCTOBER 15, 2000













## FRIGHTFUL SIGHT: HALLOWEEN HAPPENINGS



Tribune photo by Jayson Mellom

**Mark Haumont and Trisha Smith** hand out fliers at the Farmers Market Thursday in San Luis Obispo announcing the 26th Annual Haunted House and Kiddie Karnival at the Grover Beach Community Center, Oct. 27-31. For a complete listing of ghoulish activities for children and adults in the county, see Page B4.

## RETAIL

# Wine coming to farmers markets

## BUT LOCAL CITIES MUST MAKE DECISION TO SELL OR NOT TO SELL

By RAVEN J. RAILEY  
THE TRIBUNE

A new law backed by the Family Winemakers of California will allow estate wineries to peddle their vintages at more than 300 certified farmers' markets statewide.

The farmers' market permit — available from the Alcoholic Beverage Control Department starting Jan. 1 — will provide a whole new sales outlet for small, off-the-beaten-path wineries limited through traditional channels. But don't expect to see winemakers lined up along Higuera

Street on Thursday night, said Peter Jankay, administrator of the San Luis Obispo County Farmers' Market Association.

"I don't think that's the proper venue," Jankay said. "You have so many young people down there and a whole spectrum of activities going on. How long does it take people to crack open that bottle and have everybody sharing it? It's inviting potential problems."

The association's nine-member board has not yet decided whether it would allow winemak-

ers to sell at any of its five weekly events, Jankay said.

However, he believes that if wine sales are permitted at all, they are better restricted to morning and early afternoon markets, where the primary purpose is shopping for produce.

There are 11 farmers markets countywide operated by four groups, Jankay said. Each entity must decide whether to allow alcohol sales at its own event.

Under the new law, wineries need approval from event orga-

nizers and local law officers to obtain a permit. Each \$40 annual permit would be valid once a week for a particular location.

Tasting is prohibited. Only vintners selling wines made from their own grapes qualify.

Dennis Cassidy, Paso Robles' police chief, said he would approve of wineries wanting to sell at the two markets in that city.

"I have not had an opportunity to research the legislation," he

Please see WINES, D2

## Wines

From Page D1

said. "Conceptually, it didn't sound like it was anything that would create real problems for our department. Our markets are smaller and easier to manage."

It would be similar to buying wine in a liquor store, he said. The same laws and ordinances regarding drinking in public would apply.

San Luis Obispo Police Chief Jim Gardiner echoed Cassidy's comments. He would not oppose wine sales even at the Thursday

night market, he said, assuming the appropriate controls were in place.

But local winemakers had mixed responses to the new law.

Norm Benson, owner of Dark Star Cellars in Paso Robles, is skeptical about the restrictions on tasting.

"Any movement forward to legitimize wine is a good thing. (But) if you can't pour wine, it immediately makes it unworkable," said Benson, whose winery would not qualify under the new law because he purchases grapes from local growers.

"It's highly unlikely that any-

body's going to buy your wine without tasting it first," he said. "The whole thing is absurd."

But Dave King, owner of Vista del Rey Vineyards near Paso Robles, said the special permit would give his tiny winery an opportunity for more exposure.

Because of its size, the 4-year-old winery has difficulty attracting the attention of national distributors, he said. Even if it did, with only 700 cases produced a year, Vista del Rey would be hard pressed to deliver enough bottles to make it worth a distributor's time.

King relies on special events, wine club customers and foot traf-

fic to keep his business afloat.

But tasting-room traffic doesn't amount to much, he said. Located off San Marcos Road northwest of Paso Robles, Vista del Rey draws only about six customers in an average week.

"If people aren't familiar with the label, they might be reluctant to buy it without tasting it," King said. "But it's worth exploring to see where it goes."

# FARMERS MARKET

*Come to the Special Holiday Edition*



Photo by Tim Olson

After stuffing your face with turkey and pie, get out and stretch those legs by taking in Farmers Market on Friday, November 24! Fresh produce, yummy barbecue, shopping and entertainment are all on tap for your enjoyment, starting at 6 p.m. Your out-of-town guests will be truly impressed and you won't have any dishes to clean up. Stores are open, too, to get you going on your gift lists. Come enjoy Thursday Night on Friday!

Thursday, November 23, 2000

**SAN LUIS OBISPO**  
**Special Farmers**  
**Market set for Friday**

**A** special Friday night edition of the downtown Farmers Market will take place this week. The event is being pushed back a day due to Thanksgiving.

Friday will also mark the arrival of Santa Claus in Mission Plaza. He takes up residence in his red-and-white house at 10 a.m. The SLO County Band and the South County Children's Choir will be on hand to welcome St. Nick. Santa will be taking present requests daily through Christmas Eve.

—Richard Jackoway

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2000

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5, 2001

# Organic has new meaning



Tribune photo by Jayson Mellom

Templeton farmers Bob and Thea Haussler, seen here at the Atascadero farmers market, have been growing crops organically for nine years on their 43-acre ranch. New federal regulations set up the first national standards for organic food.

By LESLIE E. STEVENS  
THE TRIBUNE

**C**onsumers and farmers will soon have a new, clearly defined tool to determine what food is grown organically.

After a decade of public and industry input and review, the United States Department of Agriculture issued the first national standards for certifying organic produce in December.

Prompted by industry demands for consistency, the USDA deemed the new program a marketing tool to inform American consumers and foreign importers what U.S. organic produce standards are.

"It means there is an impartial third party that is certifying that a farmer or processing plant has set up organic production systems without synthetic chemicals, using as much as possible naturally occurring organisms, crop rotation, water quality management, and farming in an environmentally friendly manner," said Ray Green, organic program manager for the California Department of Food and Agriculture.

Green said consumers also should be aware what the new standards do not mean. "To make the statement that organic food is better or safer for you is a false statement," he said. "Food safety and food nutritional quality are the same whether you are growing in an organic or non-

## USDA SEEKS STANDARDS AS MARKETING TOOL FOR CONSUMERS, GROWERS

ganic manner.

"Generally, when you vote with your organic dollar, you are voting for a safer, cleaner environment," Green said.

Driven largely by the environmental movement, organic farming has really taken off in the last decade. Green said the state's organic industry has been growing at least 20 percent annually for the past seven years. But it still has a ways to go. Green said currently only about 2 percent of California's farms are organic.

San Luis Obispo County has about 60 organic growers, or 2.5 percent of all growers, registered with the county's Department of Agriculture, said Robert Lilley, assistant agricultural commissioner. Lilley said the county agricultural department does not certify growers, but oversees the independent certifying groups.

Templeton farmers Bob and Thea Haussler have been growing crops organically for nine years on their 43-acre ranch. "We wanted to get away from all the pesticides and herbicides," Bob Haussler said. "We observed what they do to farm animals and rodents. The thought of ingesting those same poisons was something we wanted to get away from."

## Organic standards

According to the USDA, the new organic standards do the following:

- offers a national definition for the term 'organic'
- details the methods, practices and substances that can be used in producing and handling organic crops and livestock, as well as processed products
- establishes clear labeling criteria
- specifically prohibits the use of genetic engineering methods, ionizing radiation (method similar to an X-ray, used to sterilize produce), and sewage sludge for fertilization.

Web sites provide more detailed information:

USDA at [www.ams.usda.gov/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop)

Organic Trade Assoc. at [www.ota.com](http://www.ota.com)

California Dept. of Food and Agriculture at [www.cdfa.ca.gov](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov)

California Certified Organic Farmers at [www.ccof.org](http://www.ccof.org)

## FARMERS' MARKETS

# New law will allow wineries to sell at markets statewide

**SELLING WINE INVITING POTENTIAL PROBLEMS,  
ADMINISTRATORS SAY**

By RAVEN J. RAILEY  
NORTH COUNTY TRIBUNE

A new law backed by the Family Winemakers of California will allow estate wineries to peddle their vintages at more than 300 certified farmers' markets statewide.

The farmers' market permit — available from the Alcoholic Beverage Control Department starting Jan. 1 — will provide a whole new sales outlet for small, off-the-beaten-path wineries limited through traditional channels.

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Kevin Merton, left, purchases an avocado from Mike Cirone at the Thursday night Farmers Market in San Luis Obispo. The event creates a carnival atmosphere, with live music and street vendors.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14, 2001

SAN LUIS OBISPO  
Let it snow

Snow is falling at Farmers Market in downtown San Luis Obispo from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday. More than seven tons of snow will fill Chorro Street between Higuera and Marsh streets. Thanks to the City of San Luis Obispo Parks and Recreation Department and the Downtown Association, kids 10 years of age and under get to play in a winter wonderland. Don't forget to dress warmly with gloves, jackets and hats.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2001

**GNAW, GNAW: COOK-OFF JUDGES GET DOWN TO BUSINESS**



FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 2001

TRIBUNE PHOTOS BY DAVID MIDDLECAMP

**BLUE RIBBON  
BEEF AND PORK  
RIBS**

Judge Stanley Perez of Cellular One digs into a beef rib at San Luis Obispo's 16th Annual Rib Cook-Off held Thursday at Farmers Market. At right, judges Sierra James, 6, and her mom, Donna of KJUG, sample a rib. Close to 1,000 people voted in one of three competitions. Old Country Deli and F. McLintocks won people's choice honors. Nothing But The Best and Mo's Smokehouse earned Judges' Choice Awards.



## Community

SAN LUIS OBISPO



EWS.COM

Thursday night's Farmers Market draws families, students and business people alike to downtown San Luis Obispo, where they can find fresh fruits and vegetables in abundance, tri-tip and chicken on the grill and community spirit in the air.

Tribune photo by Jayson Mellom

PISMO BEACH

TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 2001

### Farmers market will feature Resination

Resination — a band that plays reggae, blues and jazz — will play today at the Pismo Beach Summer Concert Series and Farmers Market.

The free performance and event will run from 4 to 6:30 p.m. on the Pierside stage at the foot of Pomeroy in downtown Pismo. The concert series runs every Tuesday all summer.

The farmers market will feature fresh local fruits, nuts, flowers and plants. The summer fair will also feature face painter Heather Roy and balloon artists Dr. Pops and Mark Barsamian.

During the event, Cypress Street will be closed between near the entrance of the Pismo Beach Hotel to the courtyard at Cypress Landing.

Features returning from last year include a wine tasting starting July 3 and samples from local restaurants called A Taste of Pismo Beach beginning July 10.

In addition, new attractions will be added, including the kickoff for the Very 13th Annual International World's Worst Poetry Contest, Tattoo Appreciation Day Aug. 14, Grandkid Photo Show Day July 17, Service Club Thank You Day Aug. 7 and Red, White and Blue Costume Day for July 3.

More information is available by calling 773-0101.

— Jerry Bunin

PISMO BEACH

### Farmers Market hosts variety of musical acts

Four musical acts will add to the festivities at today's latest in the Pismo Beach Downtown Concert Series and Farmers' Market from 4 to 6:30 p.m.

In addition to a dozen farmers selling fresh produce, people can hear Clear Water Soul sing the blues at the Pierside Stage and enjoy D.C. Karaoke at the Pismo Beach Hotel. Valerie Johnson and Al V. Blue will play the blues, and Whitney Joy Elliott, 15, will offer a wide range of tunes at the Cypress Landing.

The Farmers Market is near the intersection of Hinds and Cypress avenues.

— Jerry Bunin

## Farmers' Market

Saturday 8:00-10:30 Gottschalks, SLO

Saturday 12:00-2:30 City Hall parking lot, Arroyo Grande

Tuesday 4:00-6:30 Hinds & Cypress, Pismo Beach

Wednesday 9:00-11:30 Kmart lot, Arroyo Grande

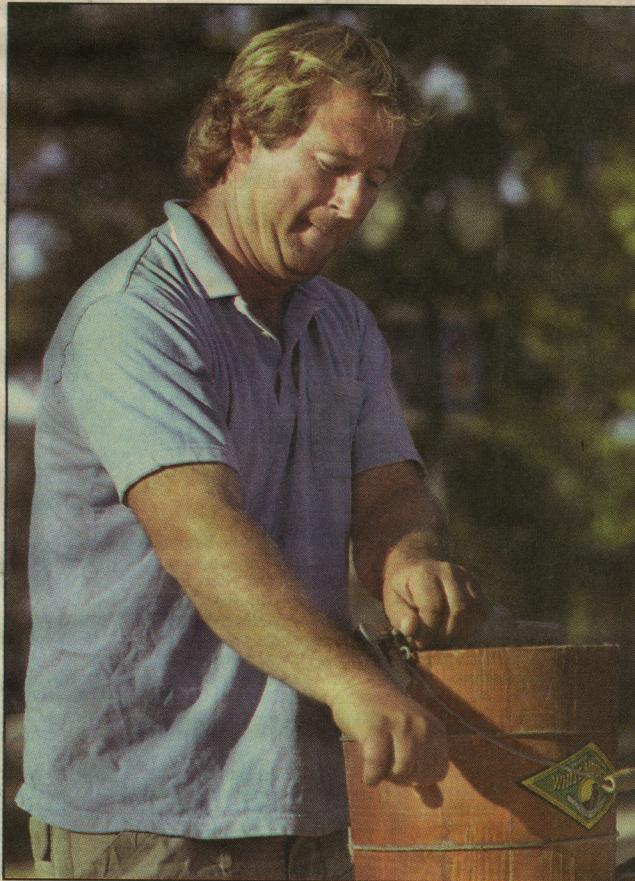
Thursday 3:00-5:00 Spencer's Fresh Markets, Morro Bay

**\$2.00 Off**

Good at any Grower's Stand  
at any of the above Farmers' Markets

Expires 8/30/01

## ICE CREAM CREATIONS: CRANKING OUT GOOD TIMES IN PASO



TRIBUNE PHOTOS BY JOE JOHNSTON

**John Queen of Templeton** grates Hershey bars for what he calls 'chocolate chocolate-chip' ice cream.

**Mike Lillo of San Miguel** cranks the French vanilla ice cream he and his partner, Megan Hall, whipped up using real vanilla beans. Their ice cream creation was part of Tuesday's Farmers Market Crank Fest and Ice Cream Contest in Paso Robles. The family-oriented event was sponsored by North County Farmers Market, The Cook's Loft, Main Street Program of Paso Robles, Templeton Feed and Grain and Paso Robles Ice Company.



**The vegetables, flowers and herbs** Jerry Rutiz harvests from his 18-acre farm in Arroyo Grande supply all of his income, which he earns from sales at local farmers markets. He says you've got to love what you're doing to live this lifestyle.

# Banking on Farmers

STORY BY BRYAN CHIN • PHOTOS BY JAYSON MELLON



**T**here was a time when farmer Jerry Rutiz wouldn't have considered selling at a farmers market.

"When I first started, I tried to farm for wholesale with more farms," said Rutiz, who graduated from Cal Poly in 1978 with a degree in crop science. "It didn't work out. My mother, who volunteered at markets in L.A., suggested I start selling down at the Santa Monica Farmers Market. I guess I never looked back from there."

Rutiz now relies on farmers markets for 100 percent of his income. His 18-acre farm in Arroyo Grande grows vegetables, flowers and herbs that sell at weekly markets in Santa Monica and locally in downtown San Luis Obispo.

"We do pretty well," Rutiz said. "We don't have to wear shoes with holes in them or anything."

Rutiz has leased his farm from the Mormon Church since 1983, when it was a project farm with apple orchards. He started growing primarily vegetables but found there was more money in flowers. Now he is one of the three main flower growers at the SLO market.

"We all live near each other," he said. "It just kind of evolved that way. We were all vegetable growers initially and we all expanded out to flowers when vegetables weren't as profitable as they used to be."

"You have to love what you're doing out here," Rutiz said. "Otherwise, I don't think any farmer would be doing it."

Julianne Rutiz, 11, displays carrots grown on her father's farm at the San Luis Obispo Farmers Market.

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## STEP 1: Picking the goods



A typical workday starts at 7 a.m. for Rutiz (pictured), who runs errands and manages his employees. "I get to do a little bit of everything from playing welder to mechanic to irrigator to selling bouquets of flowers," he said. Herbs such as parsley, cilantro and basil grow alongside rows of carrots, leeks, potatoes, squash and tomatoes on the 18-acre farm.

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## STEP 2: Loading the truck



**Jesus Cuevas (left)** helps **Rutiz** load the truck around 4 p.m. on Thursday afternoons to take to the San Luis Obispo Farmers Market. "Mostly everything that we'll be selling tonight was picked this morning," said Rutiz. He employs several members of the Cuevas family, who live in homes on the farmland property. "They work very hard — five and a half days a week," Rutiz said. He commutes daily from his home near downtown Arroyo Grande.

Please see FARMERS MARKET, H7

## Spotlight: Farmers market

### Jerry Rutiz's seven insider tips for shopping the farmers market

1. Talk to the farmers. It's what differentiates farmers' markets from grocery stores.
2. If you don't know how to select produce, ask the farmer for advice.
3. Ask questions about the history of what you're buying, including how it was grown and when it was picked.
4. Ask for a sample.
5. Ask about how to prepare what you're buying, how to use it and the best way to store it.
6. Buy things when they're in season.
7. Buy everything from Jerry Rutiz.

### Produce tips

Here are some easy, practical tips for handling fresh produce and reducing the risk of food-borne illnesses:

- **Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged.** If buying fresh-cut produce, be sure it is refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- **At home, chill and refrigerate foods.** Put produce that needs refrigeration away promptly. Fresh produce should be refrigerated within two hours of peeling or cutting.
- **Wash hands often** with hot, soapy water before and after handling fresh produce.
- **Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables** with cool tap water immediately before eating. Don't use soap or detergents. Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush. Cut away any bruised or damaged areas before eating.
- **Wash surfaces often.** Cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and countertops should be washed with hot, soapy water and sanitized after coming in contact with fresh produce. Sanitize after use with a solution of 1 teaspoon chlorine bleach in 1 quart of water.
- **Don't cross-contaminate.** If possible, use one clean cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.
- **Use a cooler** with ice or ice gel packs when transporting or storing fresh fruits and vegetables outdoors.

— U.S. Food and Drug Administration

### STEP 3: Pricing for sale



**Rutiz relies on the farmers markets** for all of his income. He says he does pretty well considering bigger farms in the Midwest and Fresno hardly make a profit. "Out here, I know that I'm going to be able to sell 90 percent of what I grow at a reasonable profit," he said. "Many other farmers may be farming a thousand acres, but 950 of those acres they're not making a dime on."

### STEP 4: Sell, sell, sell



**A never-ending flow of people** keeps Rutiz and his daughter busy until 9 p.m., when the market closes. "Everybody has cruised up and down looking at everybody else's stuff, and they decide to come back," Rutiz said about the crowds at 7:30 p.m. At the sound of the closing whistle, the Rutizes pack up and head home to prepare for the following week's market.

#### If you go ...

Farmers markets are held year-round throughout San Luis Obispo County.

**Arroyo Grande** — Wednesdays, 9 to 11:30 a.m., in the Kmart parking lot, Oak Park and Highway 101; Saturdays, noon to 2:30 p.m., by City Hall parking lot. 544-9570.

**Atascadero** — Wednesdays, 3 to 6 p.m., in the Rite Aid parking lot at El Camino and Highway 41. Craftspeople and fresh produce. 239-6535.

**Baywood Park** — Mondays, 2 to 4:30 p.m., on Santa Maria Street between Second and Third streets. Fresh produce, craftspeople and music. 239-6535.

**Cambrria** — Fridays, 2:30 to 5 p.m., winter; 2:30 to 5:30 p.m., summer; at the Veterans Memorial Building parking lot on Main Street. 927-4715.

**Morro Bay** — Thursdays, 3 to 5 p.m., at Spencer's Market, 2650 Main St. 544-9570. Saturdays, 4 to 7 p.m. at Morro Bay Fishermen & Farmers Market. 800 block, Main Street. 772-4467.

**Nipomo** — 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Sundays at the Nipomo Recreation Center, 170 S. Frontage Road. 929-1583.

**Paso Robles** — Tuesdays, 4 to 8 p.m., on 10th Street in front of Paso Robles library. Fridays, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., in Wal-Mart shopping center parking lot. Craftspeople and fresh produce. 239-6535.

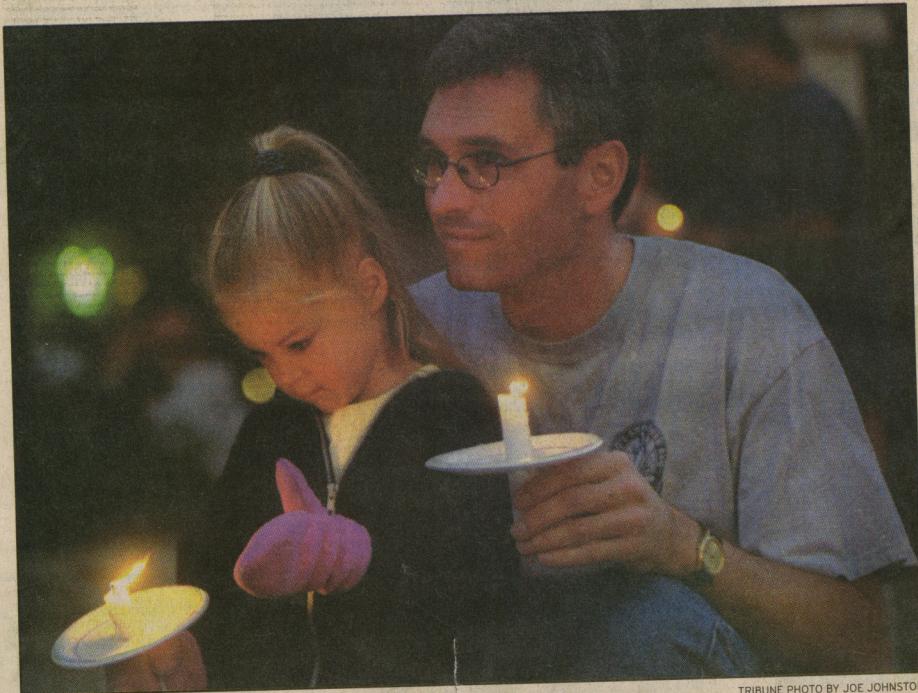
**San Luis Obispo** — Thursdays, 6 to 9 p.m., downtown on Higuera Street. 544-9570 or 541-0286. Saturdays, 8 to 10:30 a.m., in the Gottschalks' parking lot. 544-9570.

**Templeton** — Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at the park on Crocker and Sixth streets. Craftspeople and fresh produce. 239-6535.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2001

## REMEMBERING AMERICA'S TRAGEDY

After a month of living in the shadow of terrorism, 400 community members gather in San Luis Obispo to honor those who died Sept. 11



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY JOE JOHNSTON

Mark Turner and his daughter, Allician, 3, of San Luis Obispo were among the few hundred people who took part in the candlelight walk in downtown San Luis Obispo on Thursday evening.

## Walkers' silence speaks loudly

By LEILA W. KNOX  
THE TRIBUNE

A show of support for victims of the Sept. 11 terrorist attack was strong enough to part the usually impenetrable Farmers Market crowd.

More than 400 people gathered at Mission Plaza in San Luis Obispo Thursday evening to join in a silent walk down Higuera Street. As they moved slowly along the street, revelers paused for a moment of reflection, bringing a hush to the typically festive Farmers Market.

Walkers came to remember, reflect and regroup. But even with the passage of time and the mandate to move forward, it was evident that many are still grappling with complex emotions brought on by the events of Sept. 11.

For Genene Boldt of San Luis Obispo, the month since the East Coast attacks has been "an emotional roller



Participants walk in silence down Chorro Street towards Farmers Market.

coaster."

"That's how I've felt about it," Boldt said as she collected her thoughts before the procession. "You have to go on living, but there's a sense of reserve I haven't felt before."

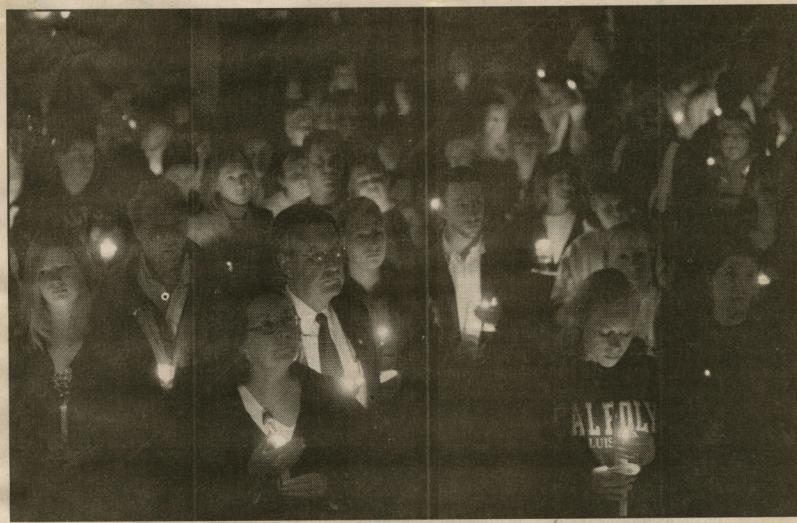
Sheila McKinley, a 20-year-old

Cuesta College student, said last month's events have taken awhile to come to terms with.

"I've become more emotional since it happened," she said. "What really

Please see MARCH, Page A6

## REMEMBERING AMERICA'S TRAGEDY



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY JOE JOHNSTON

The candlelight walk ends in Mission Plaza. The silent walk was organized by the Cal Poly administration.

### March

From Page A1

made me more sad is knowing how many people died in the World Trade Center."

McKinley's boyfriend, Cal Poly senior Christopher Rogers, thought silence was appropriate for Thursday night's walk.

"I just feel it's a very powerful way to voice how people feel and to make a powerful point," Rogers said.

After the procession, Darci Brown huddled with friends in the plaza. The silent walk, organized by the Cal Poly administration, was the first memorial she has participated in.

"I've kind of been wrapped up

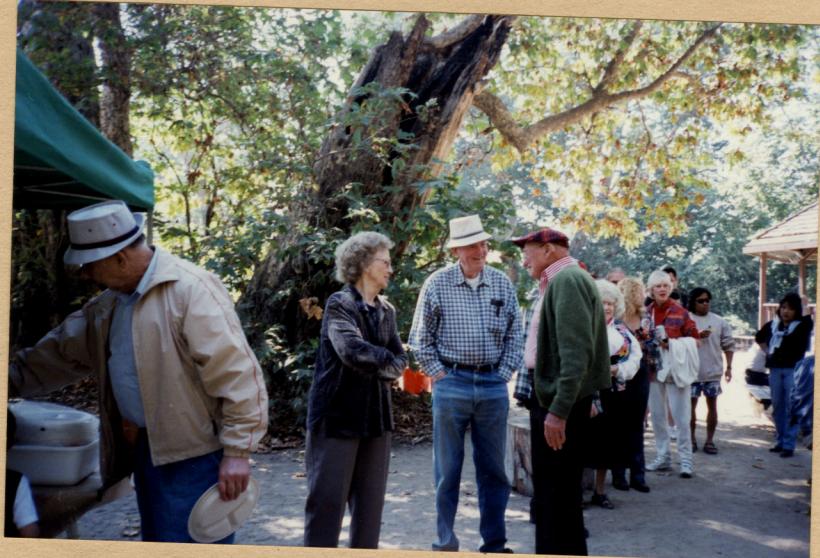
in my own world and haven't had time to think about it," the 23-year-old said.

The procession was healing for the Cal Poly senior, who found comfort in the short walk.

"I felt really connected to all the people that were here tonight," she said, tears in her eyes. "It just instilled a faith in me that there are a lot of people that care."

Barbecue  
Oct 20, 2002











# A harvest of good times



Tribune photo by David Middlecamp

**Maryann O'Brien has reason to smile. In her job as the Downtown Association's promotions coordinator, she said 'I love the variety and personality of Farmers Market.' The market activity, seen below, takes place in SLO on Thursday evenings.**

BY LESLIE E. STEVENS

THE TRIBUNE

**M**aryann O'Brien, the person responsible for San Luis Obispo's now famous Farmers Market is as friendly and energetic as the event she oversees. The Downtown Association's promotions coordinator says she has the "neatest" job around organizing the market and creating activities to bring people downtown.

"I love the variety and personality of Farmers Market," O'Brien says of the city's hugely popular weekly event. "You never know what to expect — every week the bands are different, the crowd, the vegetables and the weather — it's always something new."

It's that constant change that keeps the market vibrant and the job fun. Whether it's Santa Maria-style tri-tip barbecue for dinner, strawberries and roses to take home or Brussels sprouts to try out on your kids, the seasonal food and produce are what keeps the market fresh.

O'Brien, hired in November, takes over at a time when the city's Farmers Market is receiving unprecedented outside publicity and recognition. In the last four months, the weekly Thursday night event has been spotlighted on the front page travel sections of four major California newspapers, according to the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce. It has also been featured recently in *Sunset* magazine, *Westways* and other travel publications.

The market, which has an \$80,000 annual budget and celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, has become some-

## FARMERS MARKET NEARS 20 YEARS OF SUCCESS FOR SLO DOWNTOWN



thing of a gold standard for farmers markets, attracting tourists, media and community leaders worldwide. This month alone, O'Brien is entertaining a film crew from Germany and government and

business leaders from Minnesota.

"They want to see how it's run," she said. "I also got a call from Half Moon Bay wanting to know how we got it started, and how it's funded so they can

**Name:** Maryann O'Brien  
**Job:** Promotions coordinator

**Organization:** San Luis Obispo Downtown Association

**Address:** 1108 Garden St., Suite 210, San Luis Obispo

**Hired:** November 2002

**Education:** Speech communications graduate from San Francisco State University

**Age:** 39

**Definition of success:** Being happy and healthy every day.

start something like it in their town."

O'Brien says she has had her eye on the promotions job since her days as a student at Cal Poly in 1999-2000. This week she discussed with The Tribune what goes into planning and executing a successful farmers market.

APRIL 9, 2003

**Muslims at Farmers Market** say that reaction to them has been more tolerant than confrontational



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY DAVID MIDDLECAMP

Usman Amin in black cap on left and Abdalil Terrell staff a booth Thursday night during Farmers Market in San Luis Obispo. They offer information about the Islamic Center, which is based in San Luis Obispo.

# Local Arabs critique Iraq war and aftermath

By JEFF BALLINGER  
THE TRIBUNE

**'Islam does not condone a war that is not absolutely necessary.'**

Hisham Assal, president, Islamic Center of the Central Coast

Amid the festive face-painter's booth and roasted-almond stand at San Luis Obispo's Farmers Market sits a booth identified as the Muslim Student Association.

The Cal Poly club straddles a delicate balance between this country's tolerance and what polls indicate is the public's strong support for the war in Iraq. So far, the reactions from thousands of passers-by tilt toward tolerance, said club president Usman Amin.

Amin sets up a booth most Thursday nights with a couple of other club members and said he hears far more good than bad responses from the public.

"People wish us good luck. We don't get too many bad comments," said Amin, who expects to graduate next month with a bachelor's

degree in business management. "I think here in San Luis Obispo people are a lot more understanding."

## Future concerns

Amin is not shy about sharing his views, which don't align with what the polls say.

He and other local Muslim leaders say the war in Iraq is an unjust act according to the teachings of Islam, and they are worried about the long-term fallout for the United States and for Muslims around the world.

"Islam does not condone a war that is not absolutely necessary," said Hisham Assal, president of the Islamic Center of the Central Coast, located in San Luis Obispo.

An American-born Pakistani, Amin said Saddam posed no threat to the United States and that the allegations he had weapons of

mass destruction have yet to be substantiated.

Faysal Kolkailah, an elder statesman of local Muslims, is also critical of the war effort. He knows about war, having fought as an air force captain for Egypt against Israel in the 1970s. Now, an American citizen for more than 20 years, Kolkailah is a professor of aerospace engineering at Cal Poly.

Kolkailah and the others anticipate that Syria will be the next target of American forces and that other Arab countries might also be attacked. That would give the impression that America is anti-Muslim, said Assal, a software engineer at Cal Poly and an Egyptian citizen.

While they agree that Saddam Hussein led an unjust regime that punished its own people, the best

Please see ISLAM, B2

**Islam**

From Page B1

way to topple him was not to wage a war that killed thousands of those same victims of Saddam.

"Even one life is too much," Kolkailah said.

All three men believe the hardest part of the conflict is just beginning — the rebuilding of Iraq. They are not optimistic.

Kolkailah said America's track record on picking other countries' leaders does not bode well. He said the leader favored by some U.S. officials, Ahmad Chalabi, would cause further divisions among the Iraqi people, in part, because he would be seen as America's puppet.

"The answer is to get out of

other people's business," Kolkailah said.

**Local impact**

None of the men expected direct impacts from the war on the local Muslim community — which Kolkailah numbers around 500 in SLO County and Santa Maria.

They also felt comfortable in the county and described it as tolerant.

"This is a very educated community, compared to many others," Kolkailah said.

He doesn't expect much impact from the war on the local Muslim community, though there was some after Sept. 11, 2001. He said someone threw a knife at his daughter as she walked near Marsh and Broad streets and that the Islamic Center received several obscene telephone calls.

Kolkailah said people called the FBI to say they thought he was a "suspicious character." He said an agent interviewed him in his Cal Poly office and that the agent apologized for bothering him as he got up to leave.

Kolkailah said the experiences have soured him a bit on the freedoms he has enjoyed as a U.S. citizen. The same freedom to vote for Bush — something he is now embarrassed to admit that he did — extends him the right, he said, to criticize the president now.

"Or else there is something wrong."

*Jeff Ballinger covers K-12 education for The Tribune and can be reached at 781-7908 or jballinger@thetribune-news.com.*

**SLO SNOW: 15 TONS OF IT**

Tribune photo by David Middecamp

**Shea McSorley, 5, of San Luis Obispo** launches a snowball at Farmer's Market in downtown San Luis Obispo on Thursday. The snow was delivered to Chorro Street, and kids could get in five minutes of play before another group was ushered in.

MAY 3, 2003

Farmers Market's 18th Annual Rib Cook-Off.

Some of the city's finest barbecueurs — SLO Brewing Co., F McLintocks, Old Country Deli, Mo's Smokehouse BBQ, Louisa's Place and Mother's Tavern — will compete to see who cooks up the best beef or pork ribs.

Awards will be given for People's Choice, Judge's Choice and Chief's Choice.

The Downtown Association also will be holding a drawing to select a tasting judge from the audience. To participate in the drawing, submit your name at the main stage on Garden Street between 6 and 6:15 p.m.

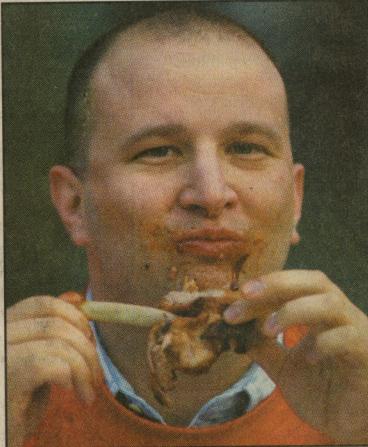
— Leslie E. Stevens

*Look in Biz Buzz every Tuesday through Saturday for the news and notes involving local businesses. To suggest a news story, call 781-7932. Press releases can be sent by fax to 781-7905, by e-mail to [bizbuzz@thetribunenews.com](mailto:bizbuzz@thetribunenews.com) or mailed to Biz Buzz, The Tribune, P.O. Box 112, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406-0112.*

**SLO Farmers Market Rib Cook-Off**

The grills will be heating up in downtown San Luis Obispo tonight for the

## NAPKIN ANYONE?



Tribune photo by David Middlecamp

### Yummest beef and pork honored

Who's got the best rack of ribs? During the 18th annual cook-off Thursday at Farmers Market, two favorites and two newcomers prevailed.

The audience picked veterans Old Country Deli for beef and F McLintocks Saloon for pork. Judges, including Ryan Manus pictured above, conducted a blind testing based upon flavor, tenderness, juiciness, meatiness and overall satisfaction. They liked F McLintocks Saloon for beef and newcomer Louisa's Place for pork.

This year, for the first time, public officials were invited to take part in the blind testing to pick a favorite. San Luis Obispo Mayor Dave Romero chose Mother's Tavern, a newcomer, for beef rib; Fire Chief Wolfgang Knabe liked Old Country Deli's pork ribs; and Police Chief Deb Linden selected pork ribs from Louisa's Place.

# Farmers, chefs work together

**N**ot sure what to do with a persimmon, what a cherimoya is or why okra even exists? Thanks to the Market Chefs program launched and coordinated by chef Kathleen deChadenèdes, you can learn to prepare a variety of seasonal produce.

The program takes place every third Saturday at the San Luis Obispo Farmers Market. It features a local chef, caterer or cooking instructor demonstrating three recipes using products found at the market. The recipes all have a theme, such as winter squash or stone fruits, and copies of the recipes are available to shoppers.

The chefs are also ready to answer questions about the featured recipes or any of the market goods.

The Market Chefs program got its start last summer with deChadenèdes — a trained chef with many years of experience in professional kitchens — at the demo station. One of the first programs featured a vegetable that few people are enthusiastic about.

"I did a demonstration entitled All About Okra," deChadenèdes said, "and people were so excited about it that the okra guy at the market sold out. ... It's not a new concept that as people and chefs need each other. I think chefs can be agricultural producers' best friends. Chefs can connect with the public and help promote what the producers are doing and growing."

She said the Market Chefs program is a good fit with people's increasing interest in their food's origins.

"It's definitely a trend. People are seeing the source of the product as an indication of quality. They're asking where it comes from, who made it, what's in it? Really, it all comes down to a community health perspective. If you're eating real food — fresh food — your health is bound to be better."



PHOTO BY KATY BUDGE

**Kathleen deChadenèdes**  
coordinates the Market Chefs  
Program for the San Luis  
Obispo Farmers Market.

With that in mind, deChadenèdes urged home chefs to "use the best product you can find. If you start with something good, all you have to do is showcase it. You don't need a lot of fancy techniques."

She also offered the seemingly obvious tip of tasting your food before you serve it.

"It sounds basic, but people don't do it. Often, when people are cooking at home, especially for company, they'll get nervous and want to get the food out before even tasting it. Sometimes you just need to add a little salt and pepper."

MAY 28, 2003

# WAR OF WORDS AND IMAGES AT FARMERS MARKET



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY DAVID MIDDLECAMP

Steve Pittelli, left, argues with Marcie Grossman over the war in Iraq while holding a placard with photos of injured children in Iraq and the title 'Thumbs Up?' Grossman supports President Bush. In the background, members of the Downtown Association talk to Robert Zeuner (back to camera) who is with the protesters.

FRIDAY, MAY 30, 2003

## GRAPHIC, BUT LEGAL

A standoff in San Luis Obispo occurred Thursday night between the Downtown Association and an antiwar group that set up an unauthorized booth to display gory scenes from the Iraq war.

By ANGELA MANESE-LEE  
THE TRIBUNE

As thousands walked by Thursday evening, Downtown Association officials faced off with antiwar protesters over graphic and violent video footage shown at San Luis Obispo's Farmers Market.

A dozen members of the Central Coast Peace and Environmental Council with signs protesting war and infringements of free speech drew the attention of officials, market patrons and police officers.

The Downtown Association

'They're saying (the footage) is not in the spirit of Farmers Market, ... but issues of peace are not always cozy and warm.'

Robert Zeuner,  
Central Coast Peace and Environmental Council

tried to use police to remove the group. But police determined they could not legally do so.

Many of the posters showed photos purported to depict Iraqis, many of them children,

'I respect the First Amendment, but our focus is the market and making this a place for kids and families.'

Maryann O'Brien,  
promotions coordinator,  
Downtown Association

killed or severely wounded in a U.S.-led war.

'We're a family-oriented market, and we don't allow anything violent, bloody or graphic,' according to Maryann O'Brien,

promotions coordinator for the Downtown Association.

'I respect the First Amendment, but our focus is the market and making this a place for kids and families,' O'Brien added.

At last week's Farmers Market, a graphic video depicting similar war casualties triggered the dispute between the antiwar group and the Downtown Association.

'They're saying (the footage) is not in the spirit of Farmers

Please see PROTEST, A6

### Protest

From Page A1

Market, which wants everything to be cozy and warm, but issues of peace are not always cozy and warm," the antiwar group's Robert Zeuner said.

"As American citizens we have the right to express our views on public streets," Zeuner said.

After hearing complaints from patrons about the graphic and bloody nature of the footage, O'Brien watched the video and asked organization member Steve Pittelli to turn it off.

As a result of last week's incident, a Downtown Association committee agreed Wednesday to withdraw the organization's

permit for a booth.

Members of the organization came to Farmers Market on Thursday after the withdrawal of their permit to protest what they see as an infringement of their First Amendment rights.

According to association officials however, the video shown last week violated the market's rules and regulations.

The antiwar group didn't have the video pre-approved by the committee charged with clearing all materials on display at the market. Officials also said the video itself was inappropriate.

Members of the antiwar group argued that they have the right to display materials no matter how graphic the images.

According to O'Brien, it

marked the first time in 20 years that the Downtown Association was forced to deal with a group that refused to comply with market rules and leave when asked to do so.

Police Sgt. Steve Tolley said he could do nothing to forcibly remove the group, although the group set up a booth without a permit.

"These people can't be arrested — there's no specific law," Tolley said.

Downtown Association officials were also unable to convince the protesters to leave Farmers Market.

"Normal procedure would be we'd ask them to leave and they'd leave," O'Brien said.

Downtown Association committee member Bob Walters said the association has invited

representatives of the antiwar group to meet Wednesday and discuss grievances and a possible reinstatement of the group's permit.

The association is taking no legal action to prevent the antiwar group from returning next week.

The video of purported Iraqi casualties was intended to illicit strong reactions from viewers, according to Pittelli, who was responsible for compiling and showing the controversial videotape.

By showing the video, "I'm attempting to exercise my first amendment rights and exercise democracy," Pittelli said.

Tribune public safety writer Laurie Phillips contributed to this report.

AGRICULTURE: EDIBLE POD PEAS

# County's lofty pea perch in danger



TRIBUNE PHOTO BY JAYSON MELLON

Looking south from the intersection of Turri Road and Los Osos Valley Road, pea vines stretch toward the Irish Hills. An older field is seen at the top along with red-winged black birds, with a new planting seen in the foreground. Peas are a top-20 commodity in the county, worth \$10 million last year.

By LESLIE E. STEVENS  
THE TRIBUNE

For decades, staked rows of edible pod peas have lined fields in the Los Osos Valley, where more of the tiny round vegetable is produced than anywhere else in the state.

"We have been the No. 1 producer for quite some time," said county Agricultural Commissioner Bob Liley. "They only grow in cool climates like the immediate coastal areas." In hot, dry climates the pea's deli-

## IMPORTS ERODE MARKET SHARE FROM SLO COUNTY GROWERS

cate blossoms just fall off.

A decade ago, the coastal belt from Cayucos south to Los Alamos in Santa Barbara County accounted for almost 80 percent of worldwide production — but not any longer, said grower John Barlogio, whose company First Pick farms about 500 acres

of peas in the Los Osos Valley. Now California growers are challenged by Central and South American imports.

Peas ranked 13th among the San Luis Obispo County's top agricultural commodities last year, valued at more than \$10 million, according to the most

recent crop report. That is less than half of what the county's pea crop was worth in 1989, when it brought in \$24.8 million.

In the last half dozen years, cheaper imports from Guatemala, Chile and Peru have picked up 30 percent to 40 percent of the market, and their share is growing, Barlogio said. Peas are a labor-intensive crop, and American farmers must compete with countries that pay their workers as little as \$1 a

day.

"We can't afford to harvest our crops for what they send it over here for," Barlogio said. "Peas are so small it takes thousands of them to fill a 10-pound box, and all of it is hand-harvested and hand-staked."

The foreign competition has forced the local industry to consolidate and become more efficient, Barlogio said. Where 30 or 40 mostly Filipino and Mexi-

can families used to harvest peas in the Los Osos Valley, today that number has dropped to about four.

"They harvest 10 times as many acres each in order to survive," Barlogio said. Farmers have also improved irrigation and cultivation methods to double yields per acre from about 400 10-pound boxes per acre to almost 1,000.

"It's what's kept us going," Barlogio said. "Small growers have gone under, but the bigger growers are producing enough volume to make a decent living at it."

FRIDAY, JULY 18, 2003

# Crash renewes elderly driver debate

## 86-YEAR-OLD MAN MAY HAVE CONFUSED GAS, BRAKE PEDALS

By RENE SANCHEZ  
THE WASHINGTON POST

SANTA MONICA — Russell Weller had not been drinking when he drove his car through a crowded farmers market here Wednesday afternoon. He was not impaired by medication, or lost on the road, or filled with rage.

Investigators probing the crash, which killed 10 people and injured more than 40 others along three

### INSIDE

**More:** A closer look into the lives of the farmers market accident victims.

Page B7

blocks of the market, said Thursday there may be only one reason why it occurred: Maybe he was too old to be driving.

Weller, 86, emerged from his battered Buick sedan clutching a cane and telling police that the crash was an accident. According to investigators, Weller said he realized too late that a street had been closed to vehicle traffic to accommodate the

Please see CRASH, A6

## Crash

From Page A1

weekly farmers market and he plowed through it at high speed after mistakenly hitting the gas pedal instead of the brake.

Santa Monica police said his account seems credible. "I think what we're going to find is we have an 86-year-old driver that may not have been as competent as he needed to be to drive," Police Chief James T. Butts Jr. told ABC-TV's "Good

Morning America" Thursday. Weller, a retiree beloved by his neighbors in this seaside city for his gentle spirit and volunteer work, is suddenly a symbol of a debate emerging nationwide about the risks of the elderly driving. It is a sensitive subject gaining urgency because as the nation's population ages, its roads are becoming ever more filled with senior motorists whose reflexes and cognition can be in decline.

"This is becoming a huge issue," said Susan Ferguson,

## Local residents witnessed market disaster firsthand

### THEY SAY IMAGES ARE BURNED INTO THEIR MINDS FOREVER

By FREDDIE YAP  
THE TRIBUNE

The image of a woman shrieking for her dead baby will forever be

seared into Gary Tremper's mind.

"She was just screaming, 'My baby! My baby!'" the San Luis Obispo man said. "There was just nothing anybody could do."

Tremper was one of several local residents who witnessed Wednesday's carnage at Santa Monica Farmers Market firsthand, watch-

Please see LOCAL, A6

## Local

From Page A1

ing numbly as an 86-year-old man plowed through the crowd at freeway speeds, injuring more than 50 and killing 10.

The Tremers and an Arroyo Grande man — all peddling their vegetables, flowers and jojoba seeds and oils — escaped death and injury by mere feet.

As the driver George Russell Weller of Santa Monica sped past 3 feet away, Gary Tremper's wife, Penny, gazed into Weller's face.

His hands gripped the steering wheel at the 2- and 10-o'clock positions, she said.

"His eyes were focused. They weren't wide. They weren't narrow," she said. "The look on his face was sheer determination."

Weller's car flew toward a nearby peach stand, hitting a woman pushing her baby in a stroller, Gary Tremper said. The woman was knocked out of the way while her daughter flew 60 feet.

"I'm sure she was dead before she hit the ground," he said.

The red Buick kept going, mangling the stroller underneath, he added.

A few men placed the baby on a table. Her chest was not moving, her head was angled strangely and it looked like her neck had been broken, Gary Tremper said.

The mother had blood all over her shirt and pulled at her

### Santa Monica crash

County locals at scene of farmers market accident.



SOURCES: Associated Press; ESRI

hair, screaming and crying, he added.

Minutes later, emergency sirens wailed and a policeman picked up the baby and ran for help. By now, her little face was blue, Penny Tremper said, but the officer was determined.

"You could see his face and you could see that he thought that if he could run fast enough, maybe he could save this baby," she said.

senior vice president for research at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. "We know that the baby boomers are going to be in this age group in a few years. They've been driving all of their lives and won't want to give it up. The elderly are going to represent more of a problem on the road than they currently do."

In recent years, several states have passed laws requiring senior drivers to comply with licensing regulations that are more stringent than those imposed on most other

motorists. Some forbid motorists older than 70 from renewing their driver's licenses by mail, or test their visual and mental competence every few years.

National studies show that teenagers, and not the elderly, present the greatest risks to themselves and other motorists on the road. But that is partly because seniors drive less frequently and fewer miles than other age groups. And when those factors are considered, their rate of accidents exceeds that of other age groups.

Meanwhile, Weller sped on in the red Buick.

"The thump, thump, thump just kept going," Gary Tremper said.

Half a block down from the Tremper's stall, Jerry Rutiz of Arroyo Grande was in shock. Three customers had received glancing blows from the car as it zipped by a foot away from his stand.

They were thrown under the table, ending up a few feet away from Rutiz's feet, he said. But the potatoes, carrots, green beans and mixed bouquets of flowers on top weren't knocked off.

Three people lay dead within 50 feet, Rutiz said. One was a woman who bled profusely near a stall 25 feet away. Rutiz's employee comforted the dying woman until police officers arrived and draped a blanket over her.

Gary Tremper was so infuriated he ran after the car.

"I was going to go tear him apart, I guess," he said.

When he reached the now-stopped car, a man was splayed across the hood. For a while, Weller was nowhere in sight.

Tremper later saw him in the police car, peering through thick glasses at the people standing around looking at him.

Weller had a look of "bewilderment" on his face, Tremper said. "He didn't really know what's going on."

The Associated Press reported that Weller told police he accidentally veered onto the closed road and may have hit

the gas instead of the brake as he tried to avoid the crowd. He was questioned but not arrested, and police officials were still deciding Thursday whether to charge him.

Gary Tremper said he will never again sell his jojoba oils and seeds at farmers markets on closed-off streets, like the ones in Santa Monica and San Luis Obispo. Penny Tremper wants concrete barricades or fire trucks to block off the roads.

"I just don't feel safe," she said. "I want to be living, not dying."

Maryann O'Brien, a San Luis Obispo Downtown Association representative, described the Santa Monica tragedy as a "random act."

There are no plans, she said, to go beyond the current arrangement of knee-high plastic barricades with stop signs and police officers on patrol. The association runs the SLO Farmers Market, which is popular with locals and tourists alike.

After getting only five hours of sleep in the last two days, Rutiz set up his booth Thursday at Farmers Market in downtown San Luis Obispo. It was better than staying at home and watching the news, he said.

Hopefully he'll be able to sleep tonight, he added. Every time he closed his eyes Wednesday night, the image of the red Buick with bodies on top kept coming.

*Freddie Yap can be reached at [fyap@thetribunenews.com](mailto:fyap@thetribunenews.com) or 781-7858.*

FRIDAY, JULY 18, 2003

## HOMELESS HOUSING PROJECT

# Lending a helping hand to people in need

PASO WOMAN  
HEADS UP EFFORTS  
TO AID HOMELESS

By MARY KEDZIOR  
SPECIAL TO THE TRIBUNE

Pearl Munak's first job after college was as a social worker for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services.

Nearly 40 years later, Munak is still helping others — now as the interim president of the Homeless Housing Project in Paso Robles.

She's been involved with the organization about four years. Two months ago, she inherited the position when former president J.D. Main resigned.

Originally from Houston, Munak took the job in Los Angeles after graduating from the University of Texas in Austin in 1964.

She got involved in the civil rights movement, which was in full swing at the time.

While a law student at Loyola Law School in the early 1970s, she met her husband, Ed. They were both volunteers for a political campaign.

"We were walking precincts," she said. "We wanted to put our feet where our conscience was."

The two married in 1973. Three years later, they purchased 148 acres east of Paso Robles.

Today they mainly grow heirloom tomatoes and melons to sell at farmers markets.

"We both wanted to farm," Munak said. "We both love nature."

Because they lacked experience farming, they learned by trial and error how to make the



Pearl Munak is the interim president of the Homeless Housing Project in Paso Robles. Munak, who has been involved with the group about four years, inherited the position two months ago.

TRIBUNE PHOTO BY DAVID MIDDLECAMP

best use of their land.

"We went through all the wrong things," said Munak, laughing. "We planted alfalfa, but between the time we planted and harvested it, the price dropped.

"We tried alfalfa and cattle, but we couldn't make it on that. Turnips were our first vegetable crop. We didn't make any money on the turnips, but it did pay for the electricity for the turnip crop."

Then with the advent of heirloom tomatoes came success.

"We planted the first highly-flavored heirloom tomatoes to become popular," Munak said.

A member of the Farmers Association, Munak helped start the farmers market in Paso Robles. She also sells their produce

at larger markets out of the area. "I wanted to help the small farmers, of which I was one," Munak said.

She practiced law in Paso Robles from 1980 to 1983, until the partnership broke up.

"I (still) had a farm to keep up," she said.

Then she had her first volunteer experience through Plymouth Congregational Church. She helped prepare a meal once a quarter to deliver to the EOC Homeless Shelter in San Luis Obispo.

When she heard about a need for volunteers to help keep Operation Christmas Outreach afloat, she and four other members of her church revived the nonprofit, now called

the Toy Bank of Greater Paso Robles.

Then Munak met Main of the Homeless Housing Project in Paso Robles.

"He came to our church," she said. "He invited people to join in a project in the (Salinas) riverbed. There had been a flood and I picked up stuff that belonged to people who had been living in the riverbed and disposed of it. After that I started going to monthly meetings."

Since becoming interim president, Munak has helped organize a yard sale that raised \$3,000 toward the motel voucher program. The program had closed April 16 due to lack of funds.

The yard sale proceeds, plus

## What's Your Story?

### Pearl Munak

**Residence:** Paso Robles  
**Family:** Husband of 30 years, Ed Munak

### How to get involved

The next Homeless Housing Project meeting is Aug. 11 at 7 p.m. at 3850 Ramada Drive, Suite D3A, in Paso Robles.

Meetings are held the second Monday of every month. Office hours are Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., depending on staff availability.

For more information, call 238-7056.

another \$3,000 donation from a member of Plymouth Congregational, was enough to reopen the voucher program June 1, Munak said.

Munak believes that one of the biggest misconceptions about homeless people is that most of them are single men living in the riverbed.

"The single men are just the tip of the iceberg," she said. "It's the families that are the biggest part."

"The families have had some kind of crisis — their car broke down or they had to pay a medical bill — and they are on the absolute edge of being homeless," she said. "They are the working poor whose low-wage jobs don't pay enough for rent."

## SANTA MONICA



ASSOCIATED PRESS

A newspaper clip with photos of the victims sits at a makeshift flower memorial Saturday near the site of Wednesday's deadly car crash at the farmers market in Santa Monica.

## With prayers and embraces, farmers market reopens

11 PEOPLE STILL HOSPITALIZED AFTER WEDNESDAY'S TRAGEDY

BY TIM MOLLOY  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

SANTA MONICA — Farmers, vendors and customers joined hands and embraced on Saturday during the reopening of the farmers market where a speeding car killed 10 people and injured dozens of others.

Standing amid flowers, photographs of the victims and letters to their families, several dozen people listened as Rev. Janet Bregar of the Santa Monica Bay Interfaith Council read an American Indian "prayer for entering the day."

"Give me a heart of courage and believing, so I may trust in you and fear nothing," the Lutheran minister said, invoking the Great Spirit in the Plains prayer. It was one of several prayers from different denominations in the oceanside city,

which prides itself on the diversity reflected by the market and its customers.

"Our feelings remain raw," said Mayor Richard Bloom. "I encourage every one of you to day to embrace one another ... Talk to one another, talk about what happened."

Trucks were in place at both ends of the market to keep cars from the area.

Witnesses said 86-year-old Russell Weller's car sped down the length of the open-air market on Wednesday, sending bodies flying. The 10 dead ranged in age from 7 months to 78 years.

At least 11 people remained hospitalized Saturday, three of them in critical condition.

Police are investigating whether Weller hit a Mercedes before the disaster then sped toward the market while leav-

ing the scene of that collision.

Police have said Weller told them he didn't realize until too late that Arizona Avenue was closed to traffic. They also said Weller believes he might have hit the gas instead of the brake as he tried to stop.

On Saturday, vendors hung black ribbons as the market reopened for the first time since the tragedy. Customers began lining up moments after the ceremony to squeeze tomatoes or sample avocados.

Yuppies mixed with retirees. Farmers bagged organic vegetables alongside part-time employees who included surfers and artists.

"We're here with happiness to move on, praying for those people," said Flavia Peres, a vendor selling apricots, peaches and plums.

THURSDAY, JULY 31, 2003

SAN LUIS OBISPO

**Locals get second try  
at 'American Idol'**

Local would-be "American Idol" contenders have the opportunity to test their talent tonight at the San Luis Obispo Farmers Market.

In a contest sponsored by KKFX television and radio stations SLY 96 FM and KISS 107, performers will vie

for the title of Central Coast Idol.

The local idol would get a spot at the Aug. 25 "American Idol" auditions, with airfare to New York and hotel accommodations covered.

The first 50 people to register are guaranteed a one-minute audition, and any additional contestants will perform as time allows.

Registration begins at 5 p.m. at Higuera and Nipomo streets. Auditions follow from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The Farmers Market contest is one of six audition opportunities on the Central Coast.

All auditions will be filmed and judged offsite, and the top 10 regional contestants will compete in a Central Coast Idol finale on Aug. 15.

For information and rules visit [www.kkfx.com](http://www.kkfx.com) or call 925-1200 or 549-9696.

— Angela Manese-Lee

*The Tribune newsroom can be reached by calling 781-7902, faxing information to 781-7905 or sending e-mail to newsroom@thetribunenews.com.*

TUESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2003

## WORK SPACES: JAMES WESTON, PRODUCE GROWER, MARKETER



James Weston of Mount Olive organic farm works from his booth recently at the San Luis Obispo Farmers Market.

Tribune photo by Joe Johnston

# Escape to the outdoors

### Get your office in Work Spaces

Do you have an unusual or interesting work space, or know someone who does? Or maybe a recycled space put to new use? If so, contact Katherine A. Rowlands at The Tribune 781-7932; e-mail: krowlands@thetribunenews.com. Work spaces will run here every Tuesday.

### FORMER OFFICE WORKER NOW TOILS AT A MOVABLE FEAST

By SAM J LIN  
The Tribune

**J**ames Weston used to work in a stuffy office, but now he works in the open air under a tent. Weston is a farmer at the Mount Olive organic farm in Paso Robles who travels around the county every week to vend the farm's fresh organic produce at local farmers markets.

The unique workspace where Weston conducts his business can be set up in just 15 minutes. It makes appearances on Thursday afternoons at Spencer's supermarket in Morro Bay, Thursday evenings in downtown San Luis Obispo and Friday afternoons at the Veterans Memorial Building in Cambria.

**Name:** James Weston

**Occupation:** farmer and vendor for Mount Olive organic farm

**Location:** Farmers markets in San Luis Obispo, Morro Bay and Cambria

Starting in September, the Mount Olive stand will return to the outdoor market at the Madonna Plaza in San Luis Obispo on Saturday mornings.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 29, 2003

DICK AND KIM ROGERS: ORGANIC FARMERS IN TEMPLETON

# Raising consciousness

SUCCESS DOESN'T  
JUST MEAN PROFITS  
FOR THIS NORTH  
COUNTY COUPLE

By MICHAELA BALTASAR  
THE TRIBUNE

For Dick and Kim Rogers, owners of Hollyhock Farms in Templeton, success isn't about profit — it's about philosophy.

The couple's 30-acre certified organic farm earns a gross income of roughly \$55,000 annually, and most of that goes back into the operation, which they have had for eight years.

"It's hard to get value out of the crop to pay for organic cultivation — I think we make about \$3 an hour here," joked Kim Rogers, 43. "We do it because it's really a philosophy of taking care of the ground, nurturing the soil and making the farm its own ecosystem."

Hollyhock Farms is one of about 55 registered organic farms in San Luis Obispo — a number that has remained relatively stable for the past five years, said Jenny Weaver, agricultural inspector for the county department of agriculture.

Folks who run organic farms say they are motivated by a desire to pursue a natural lifestyle as well as a business venture. But it can be tough competing with nearby commercial operations that produce goods on a large scale.

"People tend to go for price rather than where food came from, so it can be difficult to sell organic," said Dick Rogers, 68. "It's difficult for people to go to a farmers market and pay \$2 for peaches when they can look at the back page of the newspaper and see them on sale for cheaper."

To stay competitive, small farmers are diversifying to stay part of the local ag industry, which contributed \$479 million to the county economy last year. The Rogers, for example, believe using a creative approach to what they grow and the services they offer draws customers to Hollyhock Farms.

"We're always experiment-



Dick and Kim Rogers run Hollyhock Farms near Templeton. Here, they show off their Mexican sunflowers among the many flowers grown on their organic farm. TRIBUNE PHOTO BY DAVID MIDDLECAMP

ing with different varieties (of fruits and vegetables), doing taste tests, seeing what works and tastes best," said Dick Rogers. "And we're always thinking of ways to diversify what we have here."

## Hollyhock Farms

**Owners:** Dick and Kim Rogers

**Business:** Fresh produce, flowers and a farm stay cottage

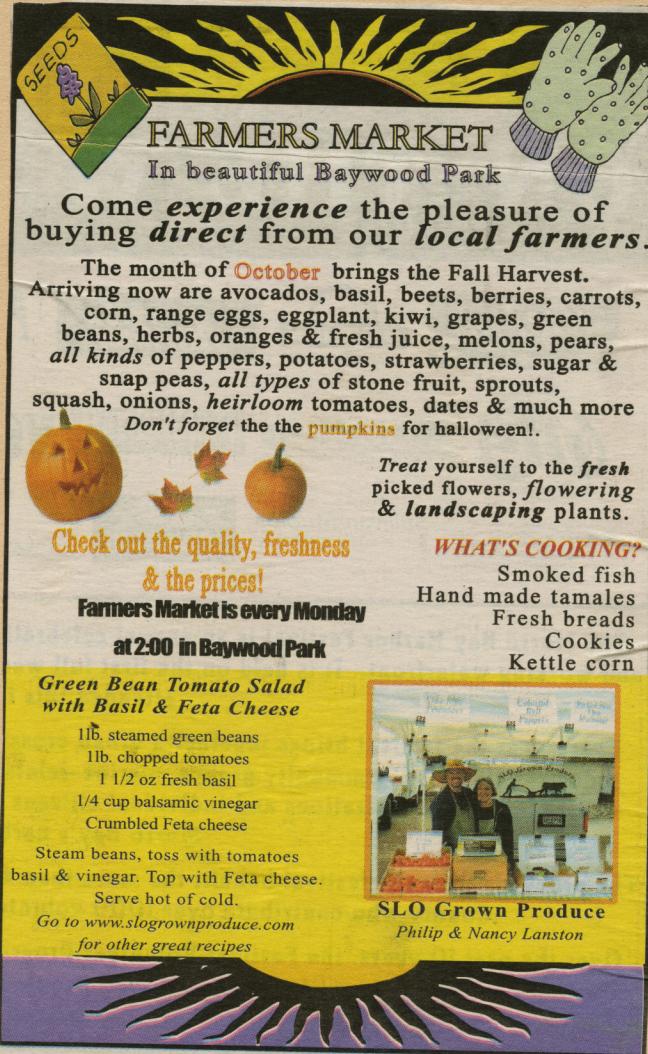
**Address:** 200 Hollyhock Lane, Templeton

**Hours:** Roadside stand is open from dawn to dusk

**Rates:** Cottage stays are \$125 per night

**Contact:** 239-4713 or [www.hollyhock-farm.com](http://www.hollyhock-farm.com)

**Philosophy:** "Small is beautiful."



**SEEDS**

**FARMERS MARKET**  
In beautiful Baywood Park

Come *experience* the pleasure of buying *direct* from our *local farmers*.

The month of **October** brings the Fall Harvest. Arriving now are avocados, basil, beets, berries, carrots, corn, range eggs, eggplant, kiwi, grapes, green beans, herbs, oranges & fresh juice, melons, pears, *all kinds* of peppers, potatoes, strawberries, sugar & snap peas, *all types* of stone fruit, sprouts, squash, onions, *heirloom* tomatoes, dates & much more. *Don't forget* the *the* **pumpkins** for halloween!

**Check out the quality, freshness & the prices!**  
Farmers Market is every Monday at 2:00 in Baywood Park

**Treat yourself to the fresh picked flowers, flowering & landscaping plants.**

**WHAT'S COOKING?**  
Smoked fish  
Hand made tamales  
Fresh breads  
Cookies  
Kettle corn

**Green Bean Tomato Salad with Basil & Feta Cheese**

1lb. steamed green beans  
1lb. chopped tomatoes  
1 1/2 oz fresh basil  
1/4 cup balsamic vinegar  
Crumbled Feta cheese

Steam beans, toss with tomatoes  
basil & vinegar. Top with Feta cheese.  
Serve hot or cold.  
Go to [www.slogrownproduce.com](http://www.slogrownproduce.com) for other great recipes

**SLO Grown Produce**  
Philip & Nancy Lanston

September 26 - October 9, 2003

