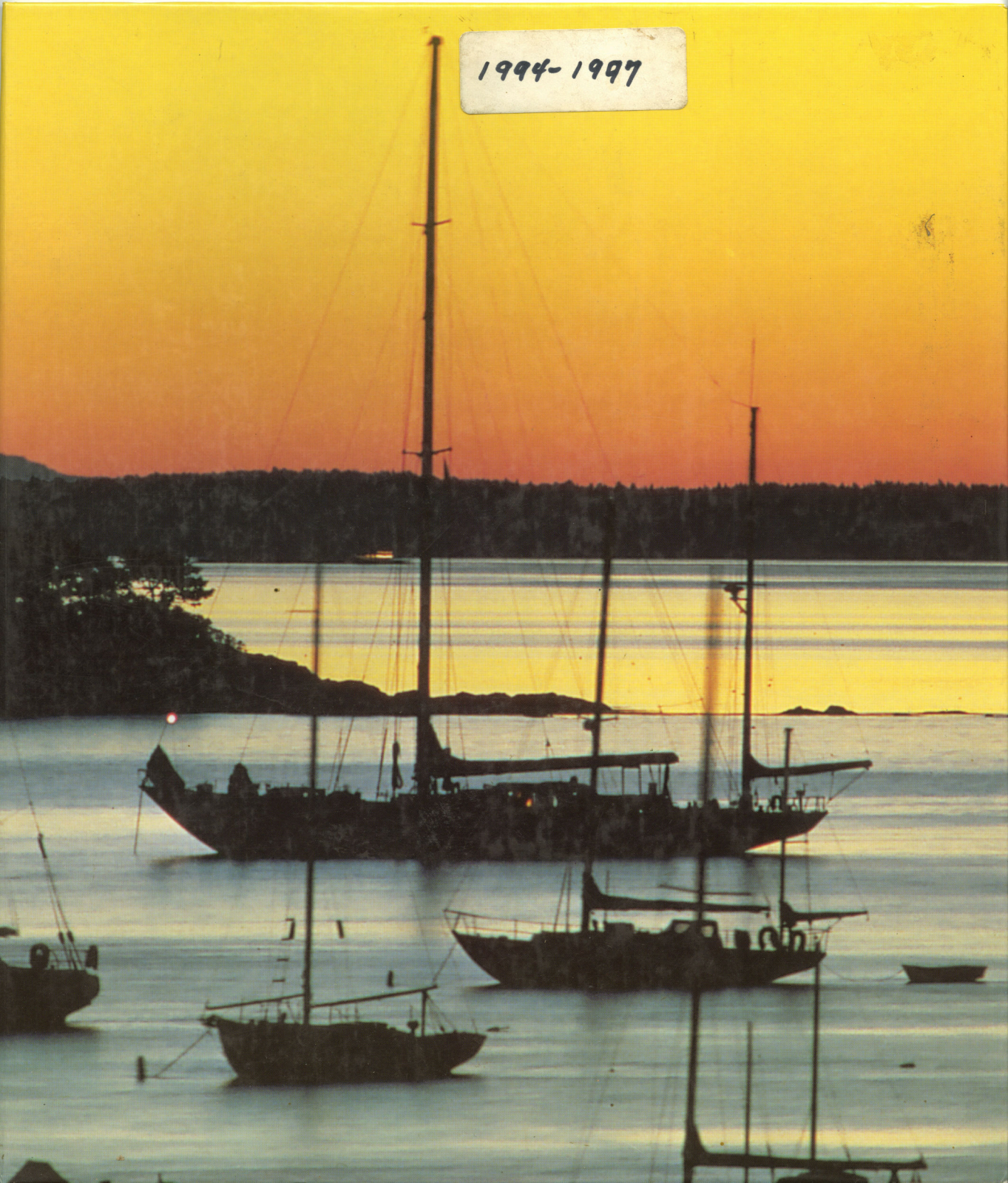
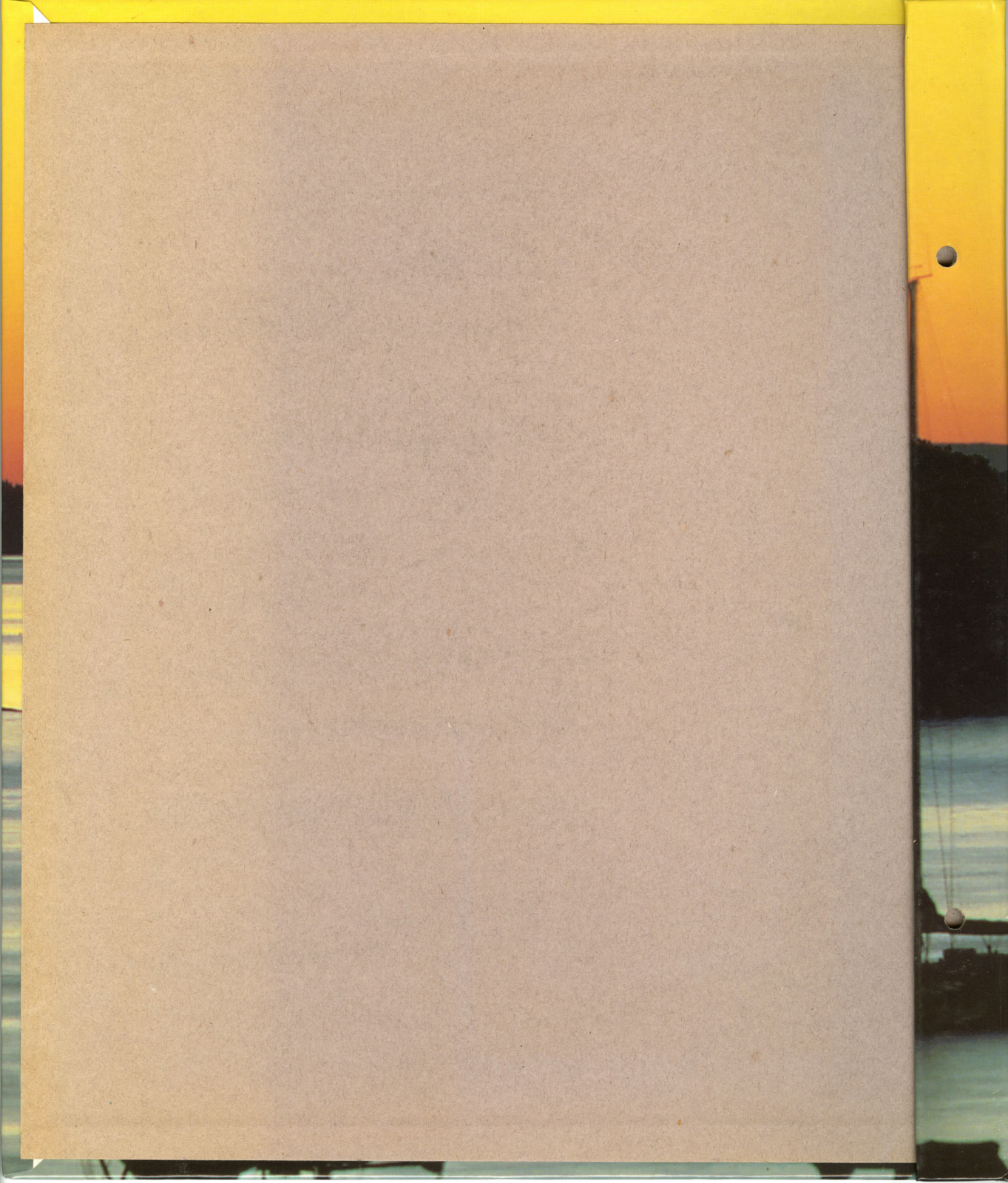


1994-1997





Agriculture

Beekeepers have more to worry about than killer bees

Mite infestations, bears and NAFTA are more pressing problems for Central Coast keepers

By Anne McMahon
Country News Reporter

The havoc created for California beekeepers by the brouhaha over the impending arrival of Africanized honey bees (AHB) is bad enough. Add mite infestations, like one currently responsible for an estimated 40 percent mortality rate in European Honey Bees (EHB) locally and nationwide; bears that can destroy local bee colonies and necessitate expensive fencing; and competition from cheap honey made available through foreign trade agreements with China and the recent North American Trade Agreement (NAFTA); and it's a wonder there are beekeepers like Paul Stoltey left to be found.

Talk to him for awhile, and you get the feeling that the highly-publicized AHB invasion is the least of his problems.

"We are asking ourselves, 'Why should we stay in this business? How can we make it in this business?'" said Stoltey, who has been beekeeping in Atascadero for 35 years. "With the way things are, I can't make a profit. Nobody can."

"Quite a few beekeepers are phasing out, or getting out of the business completely. And there is very little interest [in becoming beekeepers] from younger people," Paul Stoltey

What's at stake is not only the 250 million pounds of honey produced annually by beekeepers nationwide, but also the successful production of crops like almonds, cantaloupes, cucumbers, seed alfalfa and apples, which originated in other parts of the world and were imported to this country by European colonists. Many of those crops evolved with—and still depend on—pollination by the honey bee, also an introduced species.

The United States Department of Agriculture estimates that pollination by honey bees adds at least \$10 billion annually to the value of more than 90 crops in the United States and is responsible for one-third of the food we eat.

Even so, the number of beekeepers is relatively small, and they have little political clout, according to

Stoltey. He said there are only five commercial beekeepers in San Luis Obispo County, and he estimates the membership of the California State Beekeepers Association at about 200.

Many are considering quitting the business, even though the demand for bee pollination in California exceeds the supply of bees in the state. Stoltey said last year bees were brought in from places like North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas and Florida to pollinate crops in California.

There is some money to be made in pollination contracts with almond growers and other farmers, but cheap honey imported from China, Mexico and Canada has priced domestic honey out of the market, making it harder to make a profit. Chinese honey is currently selling for 34-38 cents per pound, according to Stoltey, who said he must sell his honey for 58-60 cents per pound to cover expenses.

Though a honey subsidy program initiated after free trade with China (the world's number one honey producer) began in 1984 provided some financial assistance to beekeepers, Stoltey said the Clinton Administration recently dropped that program.

"There is very little market for domestic honey now, and there is less and less interest in producing it," he said. "Quite a few beekeepers are phasing out, or getting out of the business completely. And there is very little interest [in becoming beekeepers] from younger people."

"We just can't compete with the cheap labor costs in China and Mexico. If their labor costs and quality control were the same as ours, then there would be fair competition."

He and his wife Virginia sell their honey at local farmers markets, but she said times have changed.

"Back in the '60s we used to be extracting [and selling] honey like you couldn't believe," she said.

He added, "Back then they needed our honey."

The trend has farmers and almond growers "very, very nervous," according to Stoltey, who said he knows some growers who are already buying bee colonies of their own.

They aren't the only ones getting nervous about bees.

Most agree that before the end of 1994, the AHB that have migrated

□ Please see BEEKEEPER page 23



Atascadero beekeeper Paul Stoltey says Africanized bees are just one of problems besetting the industry.

□ BEEKEEPER

Continued from page 22

as far north as Texas and Arizona will be entering California, through San Diego or Imperial County.

The AHB and the EHB share many traits in common. Both pollinate flowers, produce honey and wax, look the same, sting the same, and have the same venom.

But the AHB are more aggressive, swarm more often, fly faster, and will sting in larger numbers; although like their gentler relatives, they die after they sting once.

They are agitated by noises and vibrations and have been known to pursue an enemy for one-quarter mile or more. Experts recommend running for cover if you encounter a swarm.

The AHB invasion has been traced back to some specimens brought by a geneticist from Africa to Brazil more than 35 years ago in an attempt to breed bees more adaptable to the tropics. They got lost in 1957 and have been migrating north since.

Stoltey has already developed a strategy for dealing with what ap-

pears to be their inevitable arrival.

While he said the AHB will not immediately take over the hives, he is concerned with unchecked inbreeding between Africanized drones and his queen bees.

"If measures aren't taken, within three to four years the whole colony could be full-fledged Africanized," he said.

He plans to "re-queen" his 1,100

"Back then they needed our honey," Paul Stoltey

colonies each year with queen bees he can buy that are artificially inseminated, and then mark those queens and clip one of their wings so that they are easy to find and unable to fly far from the hive.

While he said the arrival of AHB is "some cause for worry," he believes that state and county agencies here are well-prepared to deal with their arrival.

Now if only they could do something about the price of honey from China.

Farmers Markets

Farmers markets are held throughout each week from one end of the county to the other. All offer great local produce, and many provide live entertainment and numerous other activities.

What's in Season This Week

Tangerines, snow peas, cherimoya, red leaf lettuce, beets, radishes, hothouse tomatoes, jojoba oil, celery, walnuts, pistachios, oranges, kiwi, winter squash, turnips, figs, apple juice, garlic, chayote, arugula, honey, eggs, Brussels sprouts.

WEDNESDAY

- Year-round, the farmers market in **Atascadero** is held at the City Hall Sunken Gardens from **3 to 7 pm**. Further information can be easily obtained by calling the Atascadero Chamber of Commerce at 466-2044.

- The **Arroyo Grande** farmers market gets going Wednesday mornings from **9 to 11:30 am** throughout the year at the Oak Park Plaza (Hwy 101 and Oak Park Ave.), featuring a wide selection of fruits, vegetables, and much more. For further information, just call 544-9570.

- The **Santa Maria** farmers market arrives, with abundant fresh produce, at the corner of Broadway and Main streets from **2 to 6 pm**. Info: 343-2135.

THURSDAY

- Year-round, the biggest farmers market in San Luis Obispo County lives up Higuera Street in **San Luis Obispo** from **6 to 9 pm** with a vast array of food, produce, people, entertainment, and what have you. Nine barbecues serve up ribs and tri-tip sandwiches, and other local restaurateurs tempt you with shrimp chowder in a bread bowl, hot dogs, curry rice dishes, pasta, baked potatoes, and more. More info: 541-0286.

Jan. 20

The bizarre car driven by **champion dragster**

Jim Rizzoli cruises onto Chorro Street; you're invited to come over and check it out. Rizzoli, who's ranked eighth in the world of drag racing, appears with his wheels and five members of his pit crew, to sign autographs and answer your questions. Wander over to Morro Street to catch the show by **flame thrower Bob Heart**; hear live music by **Remnant Rising** on Garden Street, and check out the sweet sounds of the **Street Corner** quartet on Broad Street.

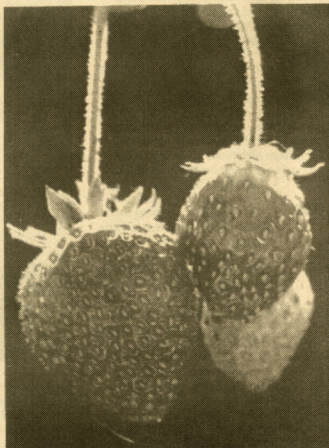
- If you couldn't make it into San Luis Obispo for the Mother of All Farmers Markets on Thursday, don't forget that throughout the year, the Young's Giant Food parking lot in **Morro Bay** has plenty of fresh produce available from **3 to 5 pm** every Thursday, too. Details: 544-9570.

FRIDAY

- **Morro Bay's** fresh fish and farmers market returns to the north T-pier this week, so come

out and sample the fixings from **6 to 8:30 pm** (OK, weather permitting). Seafood kabobs, chowder, fresh vegetables and fruit, freshly caught and filleted halibut, snapper, cod, and more are yours for the asking. Local vendors also offer coffee, cookies, hot dogs, and the occasional art and craft display. More info: 772-4467.

- In **Paso Robles** throughout the year, you'll find produce aplenty at 12th and Park streets from **4 to 8 pm**. Details are available at 238-4103 or 461-3477.



- Year-round, **Cambria** hosts its farmers market from **2:30 to 5:30 pm** on Main Street next to the Vets Hall. Details: 927-4715 or 927-3624.

SATURDAY

- For those who missed out on Thursday's Higuera Street extravaganza, take heart. Central Coast Plaza's parking lot near Gottschalks in **San Luis Obispo** becomes a tasty sea of produce year-round from **8 to 10:30 am**. For complete details, call 544-9570.

- Year-round at Templeton Park, 6th and Crocker streets, the **Templeton** farmers market offers up some of the county's freshest produce, and you can take your pick any time between **9:30 am and 1 pm**.

- The Arroyo Grande City Hall parking lot fills up with great tasting stuff **noon to 4 pm**, where you'll find fruits and vegetables, and baked goods. On **Jan. 22**, check out live music by **Les Beck** till 2:30 pm; on **Jan. 29**, **Bubba Ramey** provides plentiful musical accompaniment. Info: 544-9570.

MONDAY

- Throughout the year, the **Baywood/Los Osos** farmers market lives up Los Osos at 2nd and Santa Maria streets from **2 to 5 pm** (Summer hours start at around 1 pm). For further info, contact the Los Osos/Baywood Chamber of Commerce at 528-4884.

TUESDAY

- The **Nipomo** farmers market brightens up the corner of Tefft and Mallogh streets from **3 to 7 pm**, so come and gather up your favorite goodies. More details: 343-2135.

- Get on down to 14th and Park streets in **Paso Robles** for their weekly farmers market from **10 am to 1 pm**. Details are available at 238-4103 or 461-3477. Δ

Farmers Market snow

SAN LUIS OBISPO — There's a 100 percent chance of snow Thursday night downtown.

Two tons of snow will be available for kids up to 10 years old to play in between 6 and 8 p.m. at this week's Farmers Market. The snow will fall on Chorro Street between Higuera and Marsh streets.

The event is sponsored by Copeland's Sports, the city's Recreation Department and the Downtown Business Improvement Association.

FARM CONFERENCE
FEB. 4-5-6- 1994
VENTURA, CA.





Farmers Markets

Farmers markets are held throughout each week from one end of the county to the other. All offer great local produce, and many provide live entertainment and numerous other activities.

What's in Season This Week

Hothouse cucumbers, artichokes, tangerines, snow peas, cherimoya, red leaf lettuce, beets, hothouse tomatoes, celery, walnuts, pistachios, oranges, kiwi, winter squash, turnips, figs, apple juice, garlic, chayote, arugula, honey, eggs, Brussels sprouts.

WEDNESDAY

- Year-round, the farmers market in Atascadero is held at the City Hall Sunken Gardens from 3 to 7 pm. Further information can be easily obtained by calling the Atascadero Chamber of Commerce at 466-2044.

- The Arroyo Grande farmers market gets going Wednesday mornings from 9 to 11:30 am throughout the year at the Oak Park Plaza (Hwy 101 and Oak Park Ave.), featuring a wide selection of fruits, vegetables, and much more. For further information, just call 544-9570.

- The Santa Maria farmers market arrives, with abundant fresh produce, at the corner of Broadway and Main streets from 2 to 6 pm. Info: 343-2135.

THURSDAY

- Year-round, the biggest farmers market in San Luis Obispo County livens up Higuera Street in San Luis Obispo from 6 to 9 pm with a vast array of food, produce, people, entertainment, and what have you. Nine barbecues serve up ribs and tri-tip sandwiches, and other local restaurateurs tempt you with shrimp chowder in a bread bowl, hot dogs, curry rice dishes, pasta, baked potatoes, and more. More info: 541-0286.

- If you couldn't make it into San Luis Obispo



for the Mother of All Farmers Markets on Thursday, don't forget that throughout the year, the Young's Giant Food parking lot in Morro Bay has plenty of fresh produce available from 3 to 5 pm every Thursday, too. Details: 544-9570.

FRIDAY

- Morro Bay's fresh fish and farmers market convenes on the north T-pier, so come out and sample this week's fixings from 6 to 8:30 pm (OK, weather permitting). Seafood kabobs, chowder, fresh vegetables and fruit, freshly caught and filleted halibut, snapper, cod, and more are yours for the asking. Local vendors also offer coffee, cookies, hot dogs, and the occasional art and craft display. More info: 772-4467.

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- The Arroyo Grande City Hall parking lot fills up with great tasting stuff noon to 4 pm, where you'll find fruits and vegetables, and baked goods. On Feb. 5, Les Beck provides plentiful musical accompaniment till 2:30 pm; then on Feb. 12, Bubba Ramey returns to serve up some of his tasty songs. Info: 544-9570.

MONDAY

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TUESDAY

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- Get on down to 14th and Park streets in Paso Robles for their weekly farmers market from 10 am to 1 pm. Details are available at 238-4103 or 461-3477. Δ

- In Paso Robles throughout the year, you'll find produce aplenty at 12th and Park streets from 4 to 8 pm. Details are available at 238-4103 or 461-3477.

- Year-round, Cambria hosts its farmers market from 2:30 to 5:30 pm on Main Street next

Farmers Markets

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Hothouse cucumbers, artichokes, tangerines, snow peas, cherimoya, red leaf lettuce, beets, hothouse tomatoes, celery, walnuts, pistachios, oranges, kiwi, winter squash, turnips, figs, apple juice, garlic, chayote, arugula, honey, eggs, Brussels sprouts.

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Young's Giant Food parking lot in **Morro Bay** has plenty of fresh produce available from **3 to 5 pm** every Thursday, too. Details: 544-9570.

Feb. 24

Patti and her Troupe Humaa belly dancers shimmy and shake all over Morro Street; **Dan Greenberg** plays his unique stringed instrument, the Chapman stick, for you on Garden Street, and **Brian Kenny** wields his flute on Nipomo Street.

March 3

Eight barbecuers engage in the battle of the bones, as the 9th Annual **Rib Cook-Off** heats up Higuera Street. Hundreds of racks of ribs sizzle their way to your hungry lips, starting at 6 pm. You can take part in the people's choice voting—just pick up a ballot at any barbecue grill, and gnaw away. Winners are announced at 8:30 pm. Angelo's, Assembly Line, Nothing But the Best, SLO Brewing Co., SLO Maid, Brubeck's, McLintocks, and the Old Country Deli are competing for the title of yummiest ribs in downtown SLO.

FRIDAY

- **Morro Bay's** fresh fish and farmers market convenes on the north T-pier, so come out and sample this week's fixings from **6 to 8:30 pm** (OK, weather permitting). Seafood kabobs, chowder, fresh vegetables and fruit, freshly caught and filleted halibut, snapper, cod, and

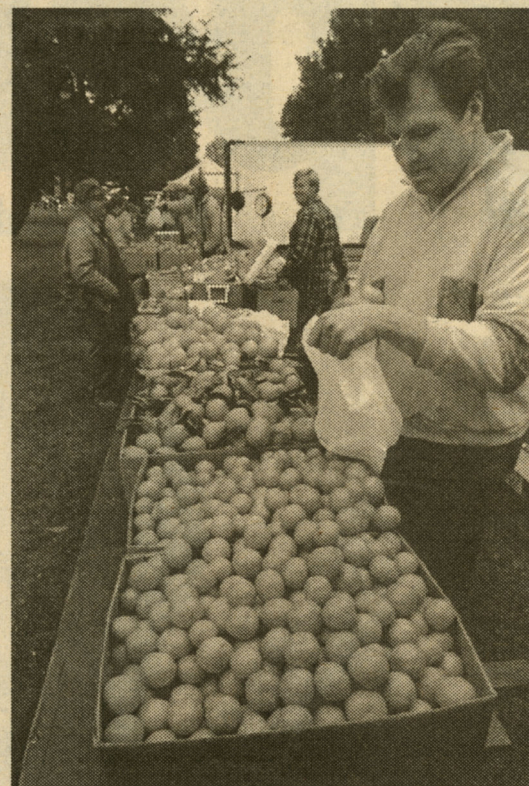


Photo by Robert Oliver

more are yours for the asking. Local vendors also offer coffee, cookies, hot dogs, and the occasional art and craft display. More info: 772-4467.

- In **Paso Robles** throughout the year, you'll find produce aplenty at 12th and Park streets from **4 to 8 pm**. Details are available at 238-4103 or 461-3477.

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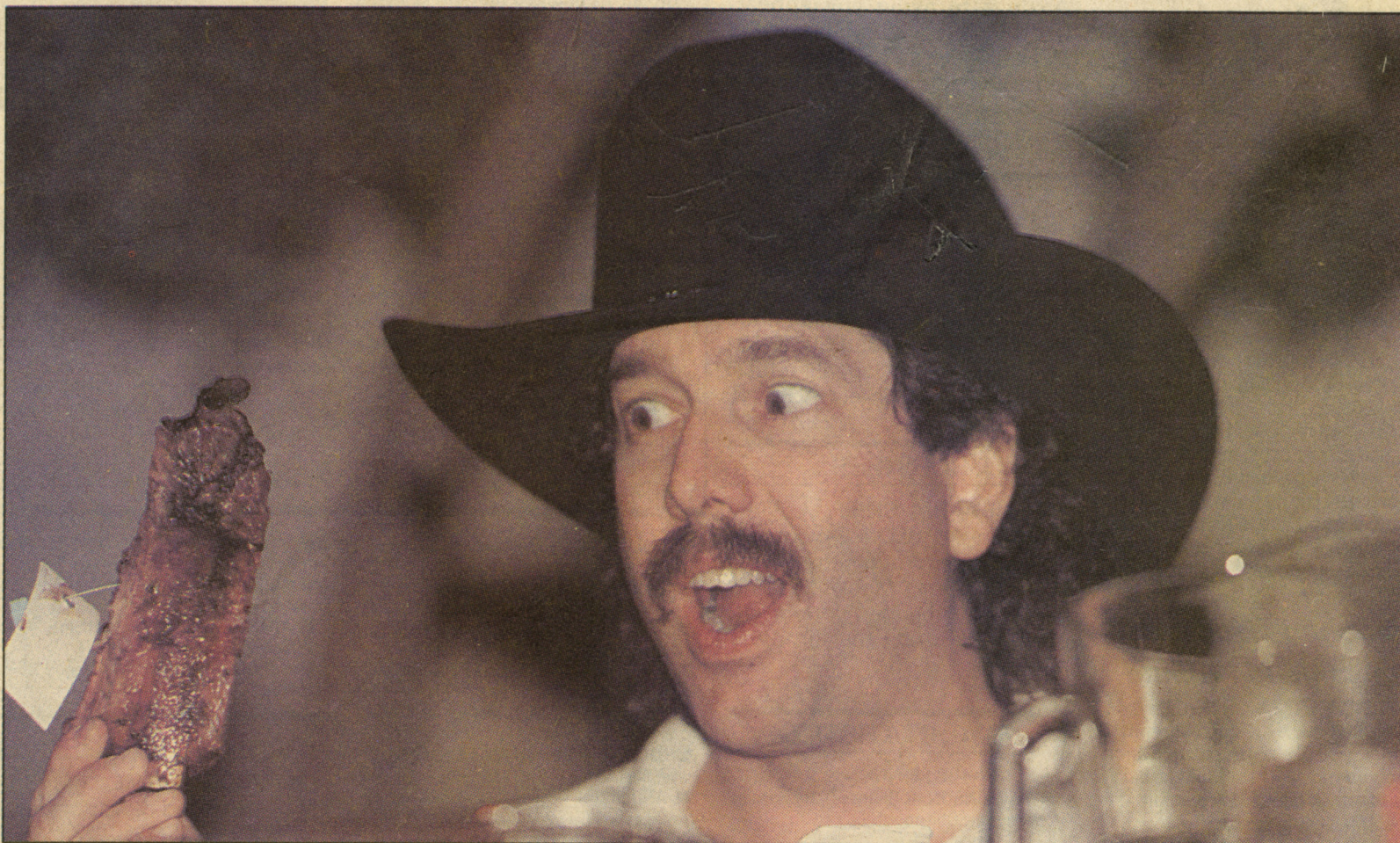
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FRIDAY, March 4, 1994



Robert Dyer/Telegram-Tribune

Mike O'Neil eyes yet another rib to be tasted Thursday. O'Neil of KJUG radio was one of the judges at the popular event.



Mayor Peg Pinard found judging sticky.

Ribs, warm weather bring out big crowd

SAN LUIS OBISPO — A newcomer and a seasoned competitor were winners at this year's Rib Cook-off held Thursday during Farmers Market.

Old Country Deli continued a long winning tradition, taking the "People's Choice" award at this year's competition. Ribs were prepared as they have been in the past with owner Norm Eggen's dry spice combination, Rib Roundup.

Taking the "Judges Award" this year was a newcomer to the rib scene, SLO Maid Ice Cream.

Known for his award-winning ice cream, Fred Peterson decided to try his hand in the rib competition for the first time this year.

Judy Bellis, Thursday Night Activities

coordinator for the Business Improvement Association, said because SLO Maid usually has a barbecue stand at Farmer's Market, they were eligible for competition.

Unseasonably warm weather Thursday brought out a large crowd to Farmers Market for the competition, Bellis said.

"It was just like a summer night last night," she said.

Barbecuers were rated by a panel of seven local rib chompers for the Judges Award. The People's Choice award was given based on ballots cast by those attending the cook-off.

Other rib cookers last night included: F. McLintocks Saloon, SLO Brewing Co., Nothing But the Best, Angelo's Italian Restaurant and Assembly Line.

April 13-20, 1994

the arts

What's in Season This Week

Artichokes, snow peas, hothouse tomatoes, celery, walnuts, pistachios, oranges, cabbage, carrots, leaf lettuce, dates, honey, eggs, strawberries, flowers, asparagus.

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■ farmers market ■

April 13-20, 1994



Photo by Robert Oliver

The Gardens of San Luis

With a Budding Botanical Garden and Growing Community Garden Program, San Luis Obispo Is Becoming the County's Garden Spot

BY BARBARA MARY JOHNSON

Ah, to garden. To plant. To hold an acorn in your hand before placing all that energy and potential in the moist incubating earth. Ah, spring.

And the Garden Festival. Botanical festivities will abound at the Third Annual Garden Festival on Sunday in El Chorro Regional Park. The proposed San Luis Obispo Botanical Gardens benefits from this event.

A free bus will shuttle you across Highway 1 from free parking at Cuesta College to Sunday's festival picnic site. Handicapped parking is in El Chorro Park.

Hone your gardening skills from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with demos and programs ranging from Native Americans' use of native plants to how to grow orchids, mulch and prune and much more. Admission is \$1 and free for children under 12.

Members of 4-H will demonstrate "sciencing with snails." Kids can watch experts spin wool and gin cotton. They will see demonstrations of big-time equipment such

as an aerial lift boom and climbing gear. They'll be able to make paper, leaf prints, and seed collages at the hands-on Nature Safari children's area. The live beehive on display may be more "hands off."

A docent-led tour of 30-45 minutes will take you to parts of the proposed 150-acre El Chorro site for the botanical gardens, featuring the garden's "green spine." This is a creek re-vegetation project already planted with coast live oak acorns by 30 volunteers from the Friends of the Botanical Gardens' propagation group. The seedlings are expected to sprout in time for the festival. Wildflower seeds have also been sown along Dairy Creek Road.

The proposed Botanical Gardens, adjacent to the park's picnic area, should open in 1996. "We haven't signed the lease with the county yet," says Eva Vigil, president of the 350-member Friends organization, "but it's 99 percent sure. We will provide plants to the county for payments."

Community garden: San Luis gardeners can try their hands at growing a crop if they can get through the waiting list.

SLO County Parks is a co-sponsor of the festival with the Friends. PG&E sponsors the festival's "A Budding Vision" flower show with categories from miniatures to succulents to floral displays. Local nurseries have entry forms for the show.

"San Luis has the potential," adds Vigil, an enthusiastic supporter of the project, "to develop one of the largest botanical gardens in California." Her 10-member board of the Friends organization brings together local herpetologists and business people. They plan to emphasize Central Coast flora in the SLO Botanical Gardens, plus Mediterranean plantings.

Two thousand California native and Mediterranean plants will be offered at the Festival plant sale. Cal Poly students from the ornamental horticulture department will help with sales.

Musicians performing at the festival include Barry Kaufman strolling with his mandolin and the SLO Symphony Orchestra harpist. Barbecued chicken and other foods and drink will be on sale during the day.

After the festival fills you with botanical zeal, where can you practice what you learn? You could sign up for a 25-by-25-foot plot in one of the two popular SLO Community Gardens. Broad Street Gardens, tucked in near the southbound Highway 1 onramp, has 12 plots; Laurel Lane Gardens at Augusta has eight. Gardeners pay \$6 for six months for plot and water-spigot access.

However, there is a waiting list. At the city Parks and Recreation Department, office as-



sistant Nina O'Connell warns that it might take some time. "I've got 28 people waiting for Laurel Lane, and 15 for Broad Street. Every once in a while someone calls to give up their space but some have been gardening there for a long time."

But there is hope. The department's new director, Paul LeSage, wants to expand the community gardens, which have been in cultivation since 1976. The concept of community gardens, LeSage says, is popular with seniors, apartment dwellers, and anyone who wants to save their home water ration during a drought.

Landowners can help out the would-be gardeners. "If someone wants to donate a half-acre for this purpose," says LeSage, who was involved with community gardens in Santa Maria for 15 years, "let us know."

LeSage says the first step if land is offered would be to canvass the neighbors for complaints. At the current two sites an emphasis on organic gardening without pesticides has worked well.

"If gardeners try spraying," the park director says, "the others show them a more natural way to take care of the problem."

Residents who want more community gardens need to be heard. LeSage's expan-

'San Luis has the potential to develop one of the largest botanical gardens in California.'

sion plans depend upon results of surveys in current circulation, and community meetings. "I want to know what activities people participate in. Do they have a park in their neighborhood? What do they want?"

Community meetings on expansion of city park activities will be held May 18, June 1, and June 15 at 6 p.m. in the community meeting room of the San Luis Obispo Library at 995 Palm St. Surveys will be available at the meetings or from the department office at 850 Pacific St.

SLO residents should tell the parks director what they want. "If I got 43,000 surveys back," LeSage says, "I'd be a happy camper."

For information on community gardens, the survey, or community meetings, call the SLO Parks and Recreation Department at 781-7300. For Garden Festival information, call 546-3501.A

Barbara Johnson is a freelance writer.

FOCUS ON AGRICULTURE

TO MARKET, TO MARKET

VISALIA TIMES - DELTA FRIDAY April 23 - 1994



Johanna Vossler/Times-Delta

Vegetable sales — Maria Wright of Reedley polishes her red onions for her customers.

Wares thrill shoppers

By Ron Trujillo
Times-Delta

Consumer Alice Morehead looks for bargains and fresh produce every week.

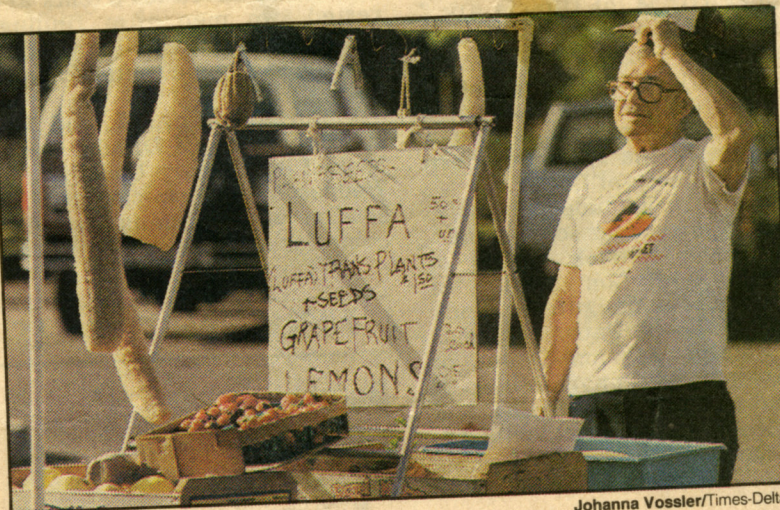
But rather than searching grocery store aisles, she walks between parking stalls.

"I just like the idea of farmers markets," said Morehead, who spent 15 minutes looking for produce Thursday evening at the Tulare County Certified Farmers Market in the Wal-Mart parking lot. "I like fresh vegetables and, sometimes, they're cheaper."

From fresh-cut flowers to hand-picked produce, growers hope to lure more consumers to Visalia's three farmers markets this season.

The farmers market, formerly on Main Street, is in its second week at the Wal-Mart parking lot. Downtown Visalians Inc. has moved its farmers market to 5 p.m. Tuesdays, starting next month.

"People know fresh produce," said Carmen Jones of Visalia. She travels between farmers markets in Hanford, Los Angeles and Visalia every



Johanna Vossler/Times-Delta

Sample of wares — Vernon Holder of Visalia sells loofa sponges, grapefruit and other produce at the market.

■ Specifics: More market facts/2C

week. "If you have a good clientele, they'll come back."

Grower Sandra Campbell, manager of the Tulare County Certified Farmers Market, agreed. Some produce takes at least two weeks to arrive in grocery stores, she said.

"You feel like it's fresher and made with more love," said Janet Collins of Visalia, who has been shopping farmers markets the past 15 years. "And we help out local people."

Small growers are attracted to the markets, which give them a chance to raise some extra cash and reduce the costs for shipping their produce, Campbell said. Many growers avoid traditional retailers to save money on packing and shipping.

"It's just me and my husband," said Maria Wright, who grows 66 fruits and vegetables in Reedley. She sold produce at four markets at the Central Coast the past two days. "The people are so friendly. The customers make my day."

Floral designer Susanne Kupfer agreed — she plans to sell fresh flowers at the three local markets every week.

Thursday, April 28, 1994

Farmers Market earns BIA honor

SAN LUIS OBISPO — The Downtown Business Improvement Association has been chosen to receive a prestigious state award for the Thursday night Farmers Market.

The state Trade and Commerce Agency selected six cities for their downtown revitalization efforts in implementing the Main Street program. The state's Main Street program was started in 1985 to provide technical assistance and training in downtown revitalization.

BIA Administrator Lynn Block was to receive the governor's Main Street Award for Excellence at a conference today in Monterey. Sharon Copeland,

the office manager, and Judy Bellis, the Thursday night coordinator, were also to be on hand.

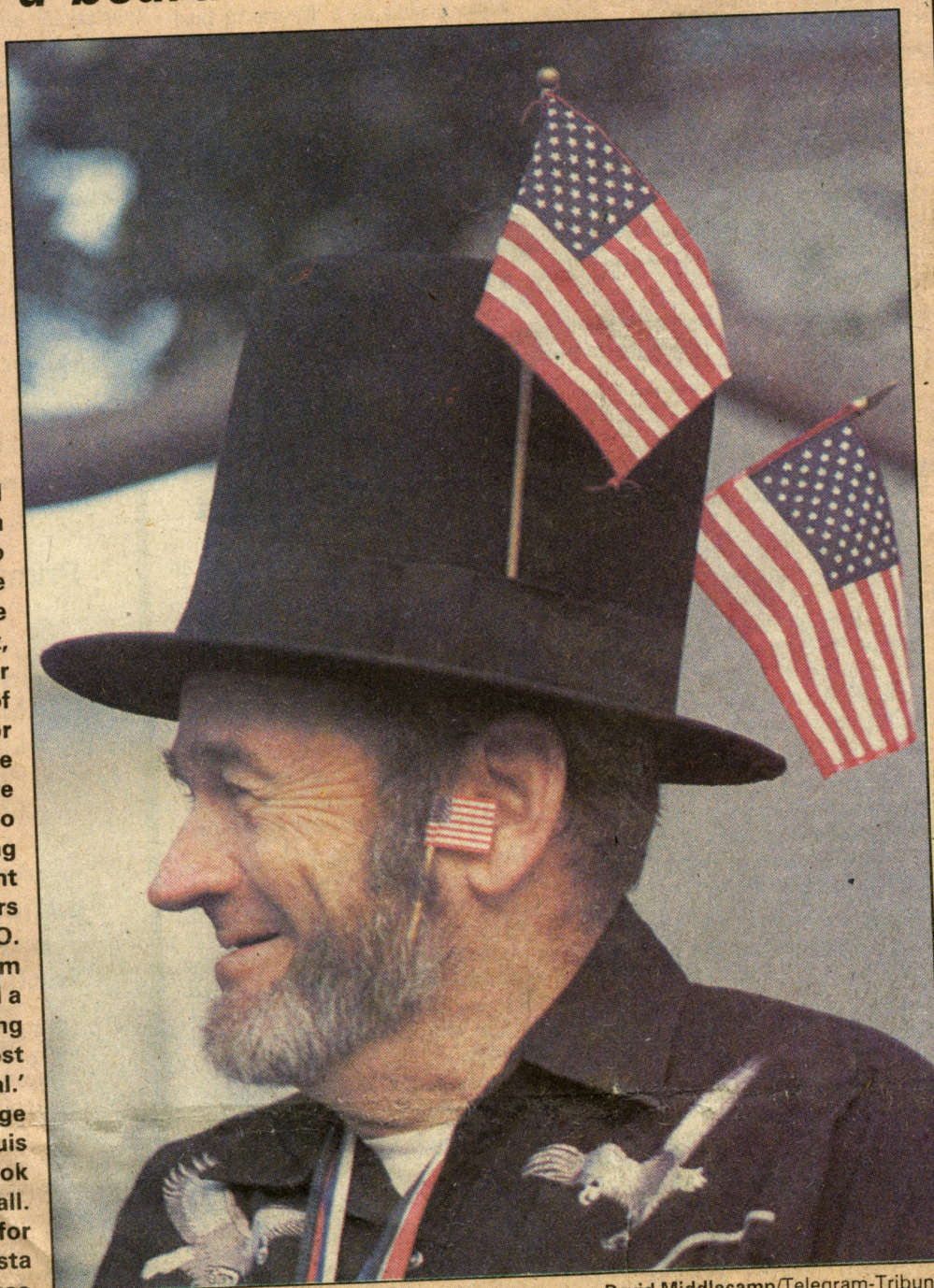
Awards were given in six categories: organization, partnership, promotion, design, historic preservation and economic restructuring.

The BIA won for excellence in promoting the Thursday night Farmers Market, which was originally held to take advantage of the fact that Higuera Street had been closed to stop teen-agers from cruising. The event has received national attention, with coverage in *Sunset Magazine* and *The New York Times*.

FRIDAY, May 13, 1994

Flag in a beard

Contestant Bill Cotnam of San Luis Obispo donned an Abe Lincoln-type stovepipe hat, flags and other bits of Americana for his appearance at the Whiskerino judging Thursday night at Farmers Market in SLO. Cotnam received a plaque for being the most 'presidential.' Roy Schellenge of San Luis Obispo took best overall. See B-2 for more La Fiesta photos.



David Middlecamp/Telegram-Tribune

Farmers Markets: cultivating culinary delights

By Marian Gautier

Special to the Sun Bulletin

ESTERO BAY — Visiting the local Farmers Markets this month is a delight to the senses.

Flowers abound — lilies, orchards, perennials, annuals, and starts for your garden — including vegetables that could be bearing in your own garden in six weeks.

A special delight are the strawberries. The Oso Grandes are at full production right now: big, sweet and red all the way through. Most growers will give you samples to assure you of their quality and flavor.

Tip for fast strawberry sauce:

Just add a couple tablespoons of strawberry jam per cup of sliced strawberries for a quick topping, no extra sugar needed. A low-cal real taste treat over "easy make" angel food cake from the ready-mix section of the grocery store.

To can the easy way: Young's Giant Food has a new product from Schilling on their canning shelf (aisle 4). It is "Garden Fare Freezer Jam Gelling Powder." Most pectins require sugar and acid to jell. This product requires neither as it is made from carrageenan, a kelp which is being commonly used as filler in low-fat ice creams and frozen yogurts. Neither pectins nor gelatins hold up during freezing so this product is ideal for quick frozen jams. I also use it for hot jams and jellies with little or no sugars for diabetic friends.

Another wonderful aromatic find at the markets these past two years are three small bakeries getting a toehold in the battle of the giants. They are Z-best, X-stress and Ida's Ovens. They all have their specialties. Each is delicious for the mood you are in. Black bean bread doesn't really sound that good, but it's moist, small, heavenly and tastes better. With a little cream cheese or butter, the luncheon meal is complete.

Valley stone fruit it is: The new improved Flaming Gold Apricot is at its prime this week. Lots of sugar, a good size. Apricots have always been the bane of a farmer's life. The apricots get ripe all at once and are so fragile that pickets, sorters and handlers wear gloves in working with them. The Flaming Gold is a happy compromise with shipability, size and sugar. So buy them now. The wonderful old variety, the Blenheim, are arriving from See Canyon and they are unlike any other variety. But as growers will tell you, they sell them all at Farmers Markets because they are not shipable. Incidentally, See Canyon fruit is dry farmed which produces intense flavors.

Local Farmers Markets

Morro Bay: Thursday, 3 to 5 p.m., Young's Giant Food on North Main Street.

Baywood Park: Monday, 2 to 5 p.m., Second Street.

Note: Morro Bay's Fish and Farmers Market, held Fridays



Just like Grandma used to grow and bake. Farmers Market produce and breads are fresh, look great and taste even better.

from 6 to 9 p.m. on the Embarcadero, is not part of the Farmers Market Association which runs the 14 Farmers Markets held in the county. These traditional markets

are also overseen by the county Agricultural Commissioner.

Marian Gautier of Los Osos is an active member of the Farmers Market Association.

June 1 - 1994 Check farmers markets for fruit

FARMERS MARKETS are held year-round throughout the county, rain or shine. They're a good place to go for fresh fruit that's in season. Here's the rundown:

- **San Luis Obispo:** Thursdays downtown on Higuera Street, beginning at 6:30 p.m., and Saturdays at the Gottschalks parking lot, from 8 to 10:30 a.m. For information, call 544-9570.

- **Pismo Beach:** Tuesdays, 4 p.m. to dusk, at the corner of Dolliver and Main streets.

- **Paso Robles:** Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at 14th and Park streets. Fridays, 4 to 8 p.m., at 12th and Park streets. Call 238-4103 or 461-3477.

- **Templeton:** Saturdays, 9:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the park.

- **Atascadero:** Wednesdays, 3 to 5 p.m. in the sunken gardens, El Camino Real

and East Mall. Call 461-3477.

- **Morro Bay:** Thursdays, 3 to 5 p.m. at Young's Giant Food; for information call 544-9570. Also held Fridays, 4 to 7 p.m., on the North T-pier. For details on booths or becoming an entertainer, call Doc Klekner at 772-4467 days.

- **Baywood Park:** Mondays, 2 to 5 p.m., on Santa Maria Street between Second and Third streets. Call 461-1973.

- **Arroyo Grande:** Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. at the Oak Park Plaza, Oak Park and Highway 101; Saturdays, noon to 3 p.m., by City Hall. Call 544-9570.

- **Cambria:** Fridays, 2:30 to 5 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Building parking lot on Main Street. Call 927-4715.

- **Nipomo:** Tuesdays, 3 to 7 p.m. at the Nipomo Men's Club, Tefft and Mallagh. Call 343-2135.

023-3009.

1994

FOURTH OF JULY events in Arroyo Grande are scheduled for July 2 and July 3. Featured are a peddler's fair, a country craft jamboree, an old fashioned penny carnival, a chili cookoff, a farmers market and food booths. For details call 473-2250.

July 13, 1994 Send for free brochures on snacks, farmers markets

Here are some free brochures:

- How to make finger foods that can be prepared well ahead of a party. Recipes in a 15-page color booklet include bread sticks, spicy nuts, shrimp, chicken drumettes, finger sandwiches, cheese stacks, prosciutto wraps and more. For a free copy, send your name and address to: Fingerma's Fingerfood Favorites, Ziploc storage bags, Department 6300-PK, Box 78980, New Augusta, IN 46278.

- A guide to farmers markets across the country and six recipes, including peppers and pasta, garden tomatoes on sourdough and roasted honey carrots. For a free copy, call toll-free 800-782-9602 or send your name and address to Land O Lakes Light Butter, Farmers Market Map & Recipes, P.O. Box 26341, Shoreview,

MN 55126-0341.

- Small brochure about cherries. Includes two recipes, one for cherry salsa and another for fruit salad, along with tips for freezing and drying cherries. For a free copy, send a self-addressed, stamped, business envelope to: Northwest Cherry Growers, Department MDS, 1005 Tieton Drive, Yakima, WA 98902.

- A sheet of ideas to get your kids more involved in community service, sponsored by Kraft Foods. For the free tip sheet send your name and address to: Cool to Care, P.O. Box 57168, Atlanta, GA 30343.

Weight management tips

Tips for successful weight management, from the Food Insight newsletter in an interview with Dr. F. Xavier Pi-Sunyer, director of the Obesity

Research Center at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center in New York:

- Don't try to lose more than a pound or two a week.

- Design a healthful eating plan based on low-fat grain foods, vegetables and fruits, with moderate amounts of higher-fat foods; avoid diets that prohibit foods.

- Increase your level of physical activity by experimenting with activities you enjoy.

- Seek out knowledgeable professionals such as a registered dietitian for information about healthful eating and exercise.

- Even after reaching your goal, continue checking in periodically with a professional to help avoid regaining weight.

Recycling leftovers

Ideas for using up leftovers from the popular new cookbook "Moosewood Restaurant Cooks at Home."

- Cook extra amounts of rice, beans, vegetables and sauces to keep on hand for the next few days' meals.

- Use leftover potatoes, roasted vegetables, pilafs and risottos in omelets and frittatas.

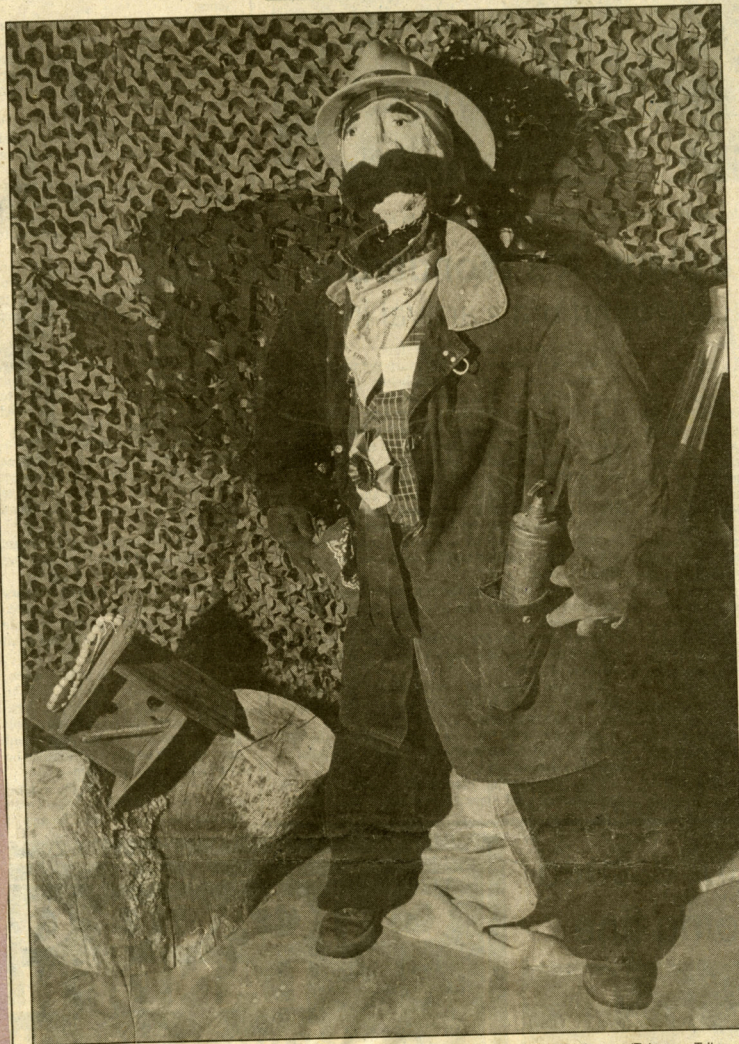
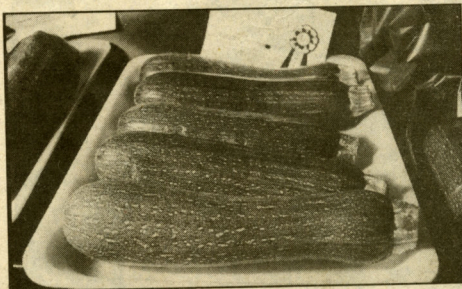
- Cut leftover polenta into cubes for dumplings in a stew.

- The best way to reheat leftover noodles, rice and other grains is to steam them over boiling or simmering water or stock.

- Don't throw out extra plain pasta. Add it to soup or make pasta salad.

— Scripps Howard News Service

Blue ribbon winners



David Middlecamp/Telegram-Tribune

M.J. Graves of Atascadero took first place at the Mid-State Fair with his scarecrow decked in firefighter's garb. Above, these zucchinis grown by Evelyn Fernamburg were the best in their class.



Sept. 17-1994

Lively Farmers' Market Held Thursdays

**Downtown
SLO Fall
Shopping
&
Dining
Guide**

Just-picked produce, barbecued ribs, and ever-changing street entertainment ... it's San Luis Obispo's

Lively Farmer's Market!

Held every Thursday evening (except Thanksgiving or during rain), Farmer's Market is a street fair and produce market.

Locals and visitors alike can shop here for the county's freshest, in-season produce (all delicious and many exotics!) and flowers, munch delicious ribs and other delectables curbside, and take in local entertainment and color.

Held on four downtown blocks of Higuera Street, between Osos and Nipomo streets, the area is closed to vehicle traffic to make room for this popular event.

And keep an eye out for a 7-foot-tall bear — that would be mascot "Downtown Brown" giving hugs and pawshakes to Market-goers.



San Luis Obispo's Farmers' Market has been a Thursday-night fixture of the downtown since 1983.

Telegram-Tribune Photo

Since 1983, Farmer's Market has grown and become a firm Downtown tradition, receiving international press coverage and the attention of city governments across the country.

Farmer's Market begins at 6 p.m. with barbecues and entertainment.

A 6:30 p.m. whistle signals farmers to begin selling their produce.

All activities close at 9 p.m.

Visitors can park in municipal parking structures located at Palm and Morro streets and Marsh and Chorro streets. The first 90 minutes are free!


FRIDAY, September 16, 1994

Strung along



Robert Dyer/Telegram-Tribune

Bill Suen, from right, Jennifer Strauss and Amy Piche get caught up in some WOW fun at Farmers Market Thursday. Their group was joined by a string running under their shirts and out their shorts.



Downtown San Luis Obispo *Experience It!*

Fall Shopping & Dining Guide

Supplement to the
Telegram-Tribune
September 17, 1994

APPLE FESTIVAL '94



**Join the Farmers' Market and
Business Improvement Association for
an educational and fun-filled evening.**

CONTESTS: Apple Pie • Shriveled Apple Head
Guess the Number of Apples

DEMONSTRATIONS: Grafting • Cider Making and Free Juice Samples
Apple Leather • Varieties of Locally Grown Apples

ENTERTAINMENT: Washtub Band • Apple Annie, Johnny Apple Seed and more!!!

WHERE: Downtown SLO, Garden Street

WHEN: 6:00 TO 8:00 p.m. Thursday, September 29

The **contests** are open to everyone. Pick up an **entry form** with apple head instructions from the BIA office 1108 Garden St. #210. For further information, contact the Farmer's Market (544-9570) or BIA (541-0286)

APPLE FESTIVAL 1993 ENTRY FORM

Name _____ please print

Address _____

Phone _____

Circle One Contest

Apple Pie
(Traditional two crust pie)

Shriveled Apple Head



FRESH PRODUCE
FOR SALE







BARBEQUE TIME
OCT. 23. 1994













Catch a Ride On Us — FREE!

During Decemberfest, merchants in the downtown and at Madonna Plaza and Central Coast malls invite you to take a free ride via the trolley and horse-drawn carriages.

☐ TROLLEY

Madonna Plaza/Central Coast Mall:

Free rides Thursday, Friday, and Saturday Noon to 8 p.m.; Sunday 12-5 p.m.

Downtown Old SLO:

Free rides Thursday, Noon to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, Noon to 8 p.m.; Sunday, Noon to 5 p.m.

☐ CARRIAGE

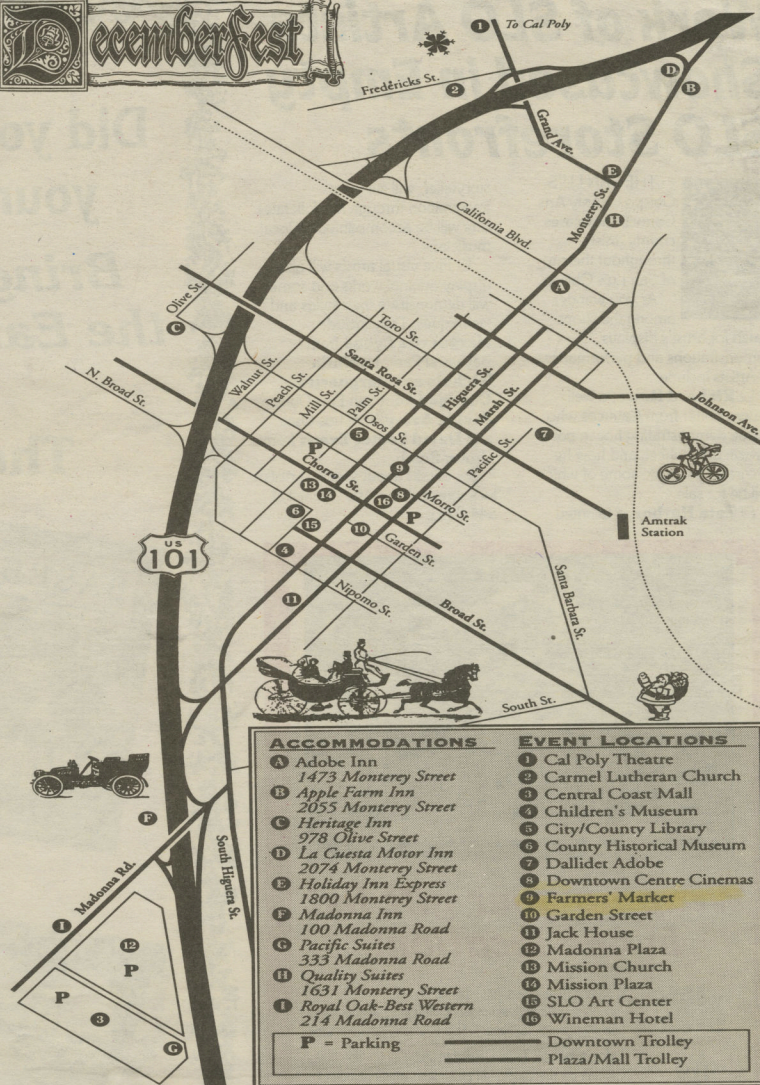
Madonna Plaza/Central Coast Mall:

Free rides Thursday through Sunday, Noon to 5 p.m.

Downtown San Luis Obispo:

Free rides Saturday, Noon to 5 p.m.

Decemberfest



Farmers' features entertainment: Professor Dais' SLO Choral Society, and, at left, Four Heaven's Sake Quartet.

Catch the Xmas Spirit at Dec. 8 Farmers'

A CAST OF entertainers will make the Dec. 8 at Farmers' Market a celebration of the holidays. A feast for the eyes and ears.

performers will include:

☐ Morro Bay, Monarch Grove, and Del Mar elementary school carolers from 6 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Morro Street intersection.

☐ Professor Dais' San Luis Obispo Choral Society, featuring traditional Victorian carolers performing holiday favorites, 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Morro Street intersection.

☐ Four Heaven's Sake Quartet from the Seventh Day Adventist

Church, from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Chorro Street.

☐ Garden Street will showcase: SLO Little Theatre carolers, 6:15 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.; Pat Jackson's American Dance Company, 7 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Torah School of Congregation Beth David, 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

☐ KSLY and Gold's Gym will get you in shape with a holiday workout, from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Broad Street intersection.

1995

DOWNTOWN
SAN LUIS OBISPO
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

Strolling amid farmers hawking mountains of fresh produce you might think you've wandered in to an open air market in Europe. San Luis Obispo downtown merchants have perfected the old world idea of market day.

Every Thursday evening from 6 - 9p.m., the downtown streets become the scene of a lively street fair featuring fresh-picked produce, barbecued ribs, local merchants' wares, and loads of family entertainment.

You'll discover juggling acts, puppet shows, and clouds of helium balloons add flavor to the freshly harvested fruits and vegetables, bouquets of garden grown flowers and other seasonal delicacies.

When you plan your trip to San Luis Obispo, be sure to include a Thursday night to enjoy this internationally renowned event!



Photo by Dana Gentry

FARMERS' MARKET CALENDAR OF EVENTS
Thursdays 6-9 PM

JANUARY	
19TH	Copeland's Snow Night
26TH	Construction Hat Contest
FEBRUARY	
16	Western Night/Chili Cook-Off
MARCH	
2	Rib Cook-Off
23	Nutrition Night

Don't miss the bargains at the Sidewalk Sale, Jan. 20-22!

FRIDAY, February 17, 1995



Jim Weber/Telegram-Tribune

Members of the Central Coast Christian Action Council pray beside their display Thursday afternoon at Farmers Market in SLO.

RECREATION

A day at the farmers market is more than a walk in the orchard

*You can sample fruits and vegetables,
and buy some neat toys, too*



Scott Steepleton

Eight-year-old Matthew Norman of Paso Robles and his sister, Katie, find the local farmers markets good for a lot more than produce.

Local fruits and vegetables have helped increase tourism, revive downtown businesses and created a forum for expression of ideas that has earned national recognition for San Luis Obispo County.

The first farmers market in the county was established in July of 1978 at the San Luis Obispo Giant Food parking lot. There are now 15 markets countywide, each thriving with its own personality and a variety of fresh bounty for the table, and you can make an adventure of discovery at each and every one.

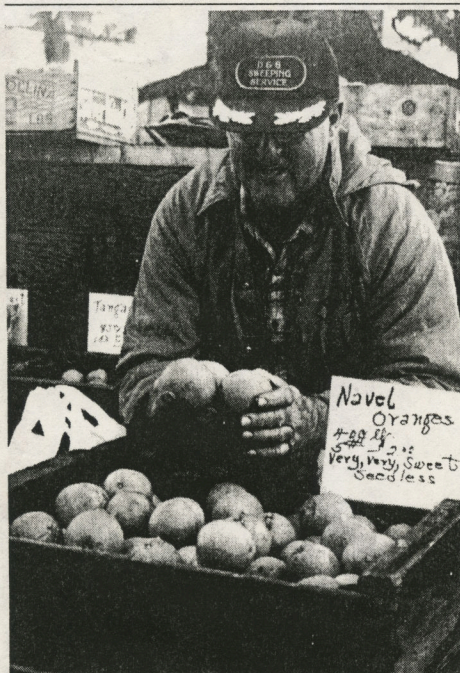
It was quite by accident that the farmers helped revitalize the San Luis Obispo downtown and provide the county with its biggest attraction this side of Hearst Castle.

In the 1970s cruising was the thing to do on Thursday night in San Luis Obispo when stores stayed open until 9 p.m. However, the cruisers drove away the shoppers.

The first move was to close off the street, which chased everybody away. Then, in 1983 a few downtown restaurants sought to revive the scene by staging barbecues. By August of that year they asked the farmers to bring their harvest to Higuera Street.

Now as many as 12,000 people flock downtown for a variety of activities that are held from 6:30-9:30 p.m. "It's kind of a big block party," said Dodie Williams, who as manager of the Downtown Business Association from 1985-1990 helped make the market a model of success.

By Jack Beardwood



Scott Steepleton

Walter Milnier of Fresno takes his produce, which now includes navel oranges, to farmers markets from Morro Bay to Paso Robles.

"It's a place where you can get good food and you can enjoy good entertainment. It's a good family place. It's a place to have fun and meet the community."

Part of the fun is one never knows what they will see at Thursday Night Activities: Costume contests, volleyball games, snow, dramatic readings, jugglers, puppeteers, a tight rope walker, physics demonstrations, pony rides, a petting zoo, gymnastics, and a wide variety of dancers and musicians.

Special events include The Street Heart Dance for Valentine's Day, Health Fitness Night, I Love San Luis Night and the Barbecue Cookoff.

It is also a place where local groups and politicians can pitch their views in a forum of community discussion. "You have a variety of people in a very civil manner presenting their ideas," said Peter Jankay, manager of the market. "It adds to the overall atmosphere of what's going on."

The event has received nationwide exposure in publications that include *Sunset* magazine, the *San Francisco Examiner*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *New York Times*.

SLO COUNTY LIFE & LEISURE 36 MARCH 1995

Willard Scott even mentioned it on his weather segment on NBC.

A Pennsylvania newspaper ran a piece that included a large photo of people at the downtown festival. The headline read: "How One City Shut Down Its Loop."

Western City carried an article describing the farmers market as a "very alive, human sensory experience."

"A group called Making Cities Livable liked it so much that they invited me to speak at their international conference in Charleston, South Carolina," said Williams. "There were people there from all over the world."

Representatives from dozens of cities in California and other parts of the country have traveled to San Luis Obispo to see what all the excitement was about, including Durango, Colorado, Tucson, Arizona, and Santa Monica,

Santa Rosa, Riverside, Thousand Oaks, Vista, Bakersfield, Torrance and Redlands.

"I'm very proud of my part in this because I think they have served to bring a lot of communities together and make it a gathering place," said Williams, who is now a member of the San Luis Obispo City Council.

With widespread promotion, the city used it as a draw to entice tourists to spend a four-day weekend in the local area. "You'll see bus loads of people coming in," said Jankay.

In addition to Thursday night, San Luis Obispo also has a highly successful Saturday market held at the Gottschalk's Parking Lot at Madonna Plaza from 8-10:30 a.m.

Jankay says as many as 3,000 people attend the Saturday market, which features only ag products.

Customers have spent as much as \$11,000 on produce on Saturdays. On Thursday as much as \$14,000 worth of produce has been sold on a single night.

Recently another market has been established in San Luis Obispo at the Market Place, 6 South Higuera St. from 3-6 p.m. It

offers fruits, vegetables, fresh flowers, growing plants, as well as barbecued chicken and tri-tip sandwiches.

The farmers market has also helped Paso Robles in its effort to revitalize the downtown area. As many as 5,000 people have attended their market, held on 12th St. between Spring and Pine on Fridays, 4-8 p.m.

It includes farmer's products, plus arts and crafts, a wide variety of food and entertainment. Ken Jevic, manager of the market, said it has been a success story for downtown merchants. "It has brought a lot of people downtown. The businesses stay open on Friday nights, and they are able to develop more customers."

"I think they're wonderful," said Norma Moye, executive director of Paso Robles' Main Street program. "They bring people to town. The other day I met a woman who discovered a new store downtown when she came to the farmers market. She was thrilled."

Jevic says that the arts and crafts vendors have made it more of a spectacle. "It gives people something else to look at. I think it adds some diversity to it. I think it's a big plus." All products are made by the vendors themselves: jewelry, ceramics, wood products, toys, artwork, fiber arts and knick-knacks.

A scaled down market, providing only agricultural products, is held in Paso Robles on Tuesdays from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. at 14th St. between Spring and Park.

Jevic said that the smaller gathering appeals to those who want to avoid the traffic of Friday evening. With from 20 to 40 vendors, they still are able to draw between 300 and 1,000 customers.

"There's no junk food here," said Los Osos resident John Howell, while browsing at the Baywood Park Farmers Market. "This is sort of an unadulterated farmers market. This is mainly agriculture, while San Luis is a street carnival. I like both kinds. It gives the kids something to do."

The Baywood Park market is held on Mondays from 2-5:30 p.m. on Santa Maria Avenue between Second and Third.

"I go to the farmers markets because I like fresh vegetables," said Los Osos resident Doris Wiedenkiller. "We like to get as much as possible that is free of pesticides."

She said her favorites are the low key

It's a place where you can get good food and you can enjoy good entertainment.

Baywood Park market and the Saturday morning San Luis Obispo market. "I prefer the smaller markets," she said. "I find Thursday night in San Luis Obispo to be a little overwhelming. It's fun for a touristy thing, but I'm not a tourist anymore."

She said she also likes the Morro Bay market held at Giant Food on Main Street on Thursdays from 3-5 p.m. "There is a better variety there, but it's more crowded than Baywood or Saturday morning San Luis."

Another market is held at the North T. Pier in Morro Bay on Fridays from 4-7 p.m. It differs from all the other markets in county because it offers fresh fish. Seafood kabobs, chowder, freshly caught and filleted halibut, snapper, cod and others are available. Local vendors also offer coffee, cookies, hot dogs and arts and crafts.

Pismo Beach's farmers market is staged in a two-block area at the corner of Dolliver and Main St. from 4-7:30 p.m. It includes local produce, crafts, food from local restaurants

and entertainment.

"I always enjoy the food and the crafts are wonderful to look at," said Marj Mills, who lives three blocks from the site. "I usually end up buying a bouquet of flowers, if not fruits and vegetables."

Shele's offers clam chowder, while Marie Callendar's prepares tasty strawberry tarts.

Several drawings are held every week for prizes like food baskets and gift certificates for dinner at a local restaurant.

Arroyo Grande markets are held at the Oak Park Plaza on Wednesdays from 9-11:30 a.m. and at the Village Gazebo on Saturdays from noon-2:30 p.m.

The Oak Park market is strictly for the hard core farmer's marketer looking for fresh fruits and vegetables, said Charlotte Turner, who along with her husband John helped start the first county market at Giant Food. During the winter there are 40 vendors, while by summertime all 48 spaces are taken.

The market at the gazebo includes weekly musical entertainment, bake sales and art, as well as a high number of farmers and their products.

Atascadero's market is held at the City Hall Sunken Gardens from 3 p.m. until dusk.

"It's a great farmers market," said Atascadero native Pat St. Clair, who works for the Chamber of Commerce. "The setting is beautiful. The lawn area in front of our administration building with the fountain. In the summer time you can't ask for more. It's absolutely a gorgeous setting."

"It's very well attended and it's just a nice little event. We get probably three or four calls every day asking about it," she said.

Templeton's market is also in a nice park setting with a gazebo. Angie Lefebvre, a member of the market's board of directors, says weddings frequently take place during the market. "You get to shop and watch a wedding at the same time."

She said it consists mainly of farmer's products, plus a few crafts and bread. "It's a pleasant atmosphere. It caters to many of the local people."

There are two markets in Cambria. Created in 1986, the Friday market is an independent non-profit operation that is sponsored by the Lions Club. It is simply a farmers market with some processed food, bread, fish and preserves, said Jack Gibson, who manages the market with his wife Jane.

"We do not try to make it a circus by having entertainment each week," he said.

They do have seven special events scheduled throughout the year, including a June 30 Food Fair, which features wine tasting and local gourmet cooks, who prepare special dishes; Flowers of Spring April 14, where samples of all fruits are offered for free; and a Harvest Festival set for September 1.

It is held at the Veterans Memorial Building from 2:30-5:30 p.m.

The other Cambria market is across from Bamboo Moon on Main Street from noon-3 p.m.

It offers organic vegetables such as corn, shiitake mushrooms and exotic salad greens, as well as fresh cut flowers, raspberries, dates and watermelon. Shoppers can buy a prepared lunch from farmers who specialize in quesadillas, steamed corn or Korean barbecued beef.

The newest market in the county is being held at Cal Poly on the second Saturday of each month from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Students of the College of Agriculture sell products that include eggs, citrus, fruit trees, jams, cheeses and other fruits and vegetables grown and produced by students.

Take the Highland Drive entrance into the campus and follow the signs to the farmers market.

La Fiesta de Nuestro Pueblo

The Celebration of Our Town

San Luis Obispo
April 19-23, 1995

A Spicy New Fiesta Flavor: Farmer's Market Recipe for Fun



Ingredients: Multi-cultural flair; music; dancing; traditional costumes; ethnic crafts.

Simmer in a melding pot until bubbly. Don't turn your back on this creative dish or it may boil over!

Join in the festivities, at the Downtown Farmer's Market, on Thursday, April 20, as we see "Our Town...A Small World" in action. This new La Fiesta event will showcase the multicultural diversity that has helped to build this community. The merrymaking will include booth displays by several cultural groups, as well as entertainment provided by Aztec dancers, Chinese Lion dancers, Mariachi and Marimba bands, Ballet Folklorico, Native American crafts in the making, story-telling and more.

Try a taste of San Luis Obispo's culture, representing our heritage and who we are in the superb community, today.



AG Farmers' Market boosts the bridge fund

John Clark (left), treasurer of the Arroyo Grande Village Improvement Association, accepts a \$500 donation from Charlotte Turner, board member of the San Luis Obispo County Farmers' Markets, and John Turner, manager of the Arroyo Grande Farmers' Market, for the Save the Bridge Fund.

John Turner said the Swinging Bridge, which was damaged in storms earlier this year, is such an integral part of the Arroyo Grande Farmers' Market the organization decided to contribute to its restoration.

Although the bridge probably won't be replaced in time for the Strawberry Festival, do-

nations are needed to make up the difference in the cost and the funding supplied by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Clark said.

Fund-raising T-shirts, sweatshirts and bridge prints may be purchased at the farmers' market in the Village on Saturdays and at the Village Improvement Association office at 117½ E. Branch during the week as well as at Lund's, 133 E. Branch, and Village Art, 121 W. Branch.

To contribute funds or obtain more information, call 473-2250. Photo by Terry Miller



SWINGIN' — The swinging bridge has been the centerpiece of the Arroyo Grande Village for generations.
Photo by Jim Miner

Historic bridge should get in swing of things for Festival

By Mike Hodgson
Managing Editor

ARROYO GRANDE — It looks as if the historic Swinging Bridge will be carrying pedestrians in time for the annual Strawberry Festival on May 27 and 28.

John Clark, Strawberry Festival coordinator and treasurer for the Arroyo Grande Village Improvement Association, said he met with the contractor, Vernon Edwards Constructors Inc., and worked out a deal to get the bridge reconstruction completed in time for the festival.

Clark said the association is paying \$4,000 extra for the early completion to help cover overtime costs for the contractor.

"This is a load off my mind, I'll tell you," Clark said Thursday. "I was sure dreading having the Strawberry Festival without that bridge."

The 100-year-old Swinging Bridge, which was destroyed by a falling tree during a disastrous storm in January, serves as an important pedestrian link between the Village and the area south of Arroyo Grande Creek.

It's also an attraction for tourists who visit the festival and at other times of the year.

With new cables, specially treated lumber and stainless steel fittings, city officials expect the replacement bridge to last another 100 years.

A rush order for the specially treated lumber drove the cost up somewhat.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is putting up 94 percent of the estimated \$100,000 project, which included demolishing and removing the remains of the old bridge, clearing the creek bed and fabricating and installing a new bridge.

"I was sure dreading having the Strawberry Festival without that bridge."

— John Clark
Festival coordinator

The city has about \$5,300 available for its share, and Clark said the Village Improvement Association will also pick up the \$600 to \$700 shortfall through money it has collected from donations and through fund-raising events and sales.

"The association is guaranteeing the money even through it's not all raised yet," said Clark.

Once all the construction costs have been paid, if any money remains in the association's Save the Bridge Fund, it will be used for beautification of the south end of the bridge with planters and so forth, he said.

A big grand opening celebration is planned for Friday, May 26, featuring the Arroyo Grande High School band, Miss Arroyo Grande and the City Council and mayor, Clark said.

Major contributions of \$100 or more to the Save the Bridge Fund are increasing, he said.

The Arroyo Valley Car Club recently donated \$250. Darrell Pilkington, representing the club, said the Swinging Bridge is an integral part of the car show, which is set up in the Village area surrounding the bridge, and the car show is glad to donate to such a worthy cause.

Marian C. Kirchner of Arroyo

Please see Bridge, page 27

Wed., May 24, 1995

Bridge

• Continued from page 24

Grande also donated \$1,000 to the Save the Bridge Fund.

Other past donations have been \$500 from the San Luis Obispo Farmers' Market Association, \$1,050 from the South County Historical Society, \$500 from the Arroyo Grande Woman's Club, \$100 from Charlotte and John Turner and \$100 from Pete Gallagher, former mayor.

With the money the Village Improvement Association has raised through the sale of T-shirts, prints of a painting of the bridge, profits from the Easter in the Village celebration plus "many other donations too numerous to list," the total will be approximately \$8,000, Clark estimated.

T-shirts, sweatshirts, aprons and bridge souvenirs and prints of the bridge are still being sold at the Arroyo Grande Farmers' Market on Saturdays and at both Lund's and Village Art.

For information about donating to the fund, call Clark at 473-2250.

Friday, May 26, 1995



IT'S OFFICIAL — Pismo Beach Chamber of Commerce President Blaine Forrest wields the scissors in a ribbon-cutting ceremony to officially open the Pismo Beach Farmers' Market on Tuesday, May 16. On hand for the ceremony are (from left) Miss Pismo Beach Rebecca Weems, Charla Anderson, Cameron McFarland, Bob Watts, Laura Lindquist, John and Charlotte Turner, Marlene Lackey, Glo Rivera, Sydney McFarland and Joan Jones. The market will be open through the summer every Tuesday from 4 p.m. to dusk at Dolliver and Main Street.

Photo by Terry Miller



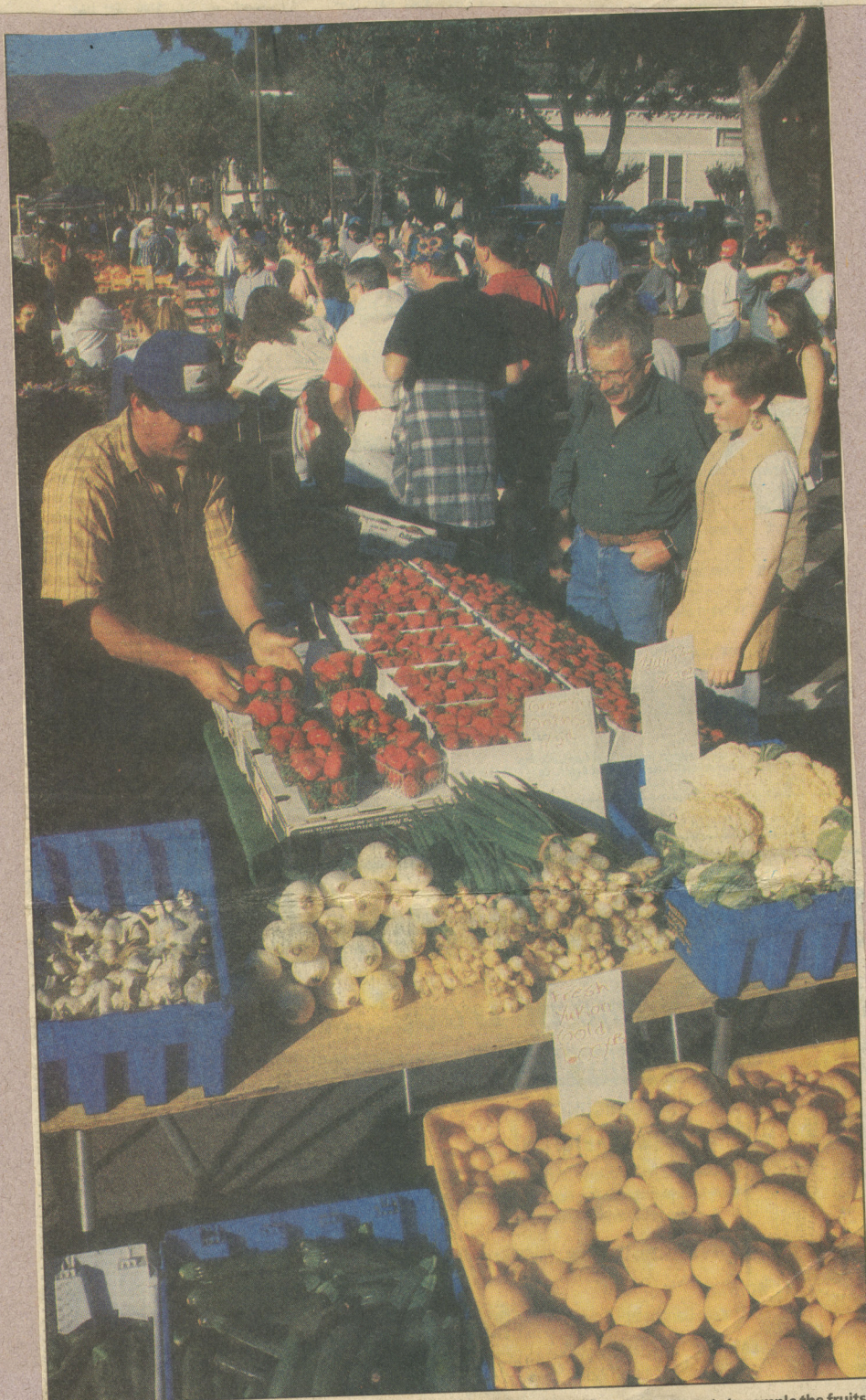
FARM FRESH — Anna Bautista, 12, sells vegetables at Pismo Beach's farmers' market, held Tuesdays from 4 p.m. to dusk at Dolliver and Main. The Central Coast has no shortage of the markets, with weekly events being held in Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Cambria, Los Osos, Morrow Bay, Nipomo, Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo and Templeton, in addition to Pismo Beach.

Photo by Terry Miller

WORLDLY TASTE



SAN LUIS OBISPO



FARMERS MARKET: Every Thursday evening, crowds fill downtown San Luis Obispo's streets to sample the fruits, vegetables and other good things for sale.



Photos by ROLAND and KAREN MUSCHENETZ

THE GREEN, GREEN GRAPES OF SLO: The area boasts more than two dozen wineries.

A trip to bountiful

**DOWN ON THE FARM IN SAN LUIS,
WHERE THE EATING IS GOOD**

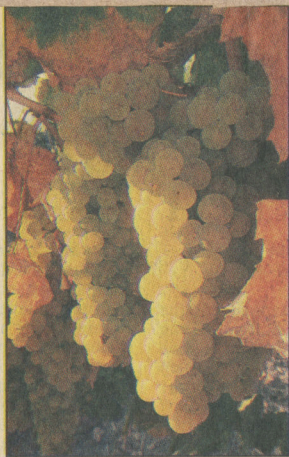


SLO BREWING CO.: This town staple is housed in a historic building.

It's Thursday night in San Luis Obispo, and the town smells good. Steak and ribs are on the barbecue. Great flats of berries, ripe tomatoes and dark green basil give off their sweet scents. It's the evening of the weekly farmers market, when local growers and restaurateurs set up shop on the city's main street, selling the county's bounty.

The market is remarkable — but it offers only an introduction to the fruits, wines and good food of the central coast. We give you a tour of the best.

STORY, PAGE 6



Beauty and the feast

Stories by DAVID LANSING ■ Photos by ROLAND and KAREN MUSCHENETZ / Special to the Register

If San Francisco is Plácido Domingo and Los Angeles is Sheryl Crow, San Luis Obispo must be Merle Haggard. This is outlaw country, with an equal emphasis on outlaw and country.

You'll find it in a local wine labeled Huevos because, as winemaker Tobin James Shumrick says, tongue planted firmly in cheek, "It's a big red wine with a lot of masculinity to it."

You'll find it also in its best restaurants, which take pride in serving platters of locally grown vegetables next to 30-ounce T-bones or slabs of oak-barbecued ribs.

As Lisen Bonnier, who manages an organic farm midway between "San Loo-iss" (don't ever say "San Loo-ey") and Morro Bay says, "There are a number of places in the county, like the Madonna Inn, where you can watch the cows graze and eat them at the same time."

Let's you think Bonnier is being sarcastic, you should know that while she provides organic vegetables to many of the top restaurants in the county — Robin's in Cambria, The Cliffs at Shell Beach, and Olde Port Inn at Avila Beach to name three — her farm, Vintage Organics, has also begun raising beef — steroid-free, organic-fed beef — on 150 acres of adjacent rangeland.

With about two dozen wineries and more than 100 vineyards sprawling across the golden hills tucked behind the San Lucia coastal range, San Luis Obispo County has nurtured in the past few years a well-deserved reputation as California's newest grape trail. But just as its older sister, the Napa Valley, matured into a striking food destination as well, this younger upstart is also gaining attention for what it can do with its regional cuisine.

Chefs in tiny Templeton and fog-shrouded Morro Bay share tips on where to get the best red lasoda potatoes, with their fine texture and sweet flesh, or a tangy locally made goat cheese. And everyone turns to Bruce and Sandra Shomler at Sycamore Herb Farms in Paso Robles for culinary herbs like Greek oregano, lemon thyme and most particularly those palate-teasing basil — spicy globe, purple ruffle, licorice and sweet — to enhance their pastas and sauces.



FRESH FISH: Much of the seafood served in local restaurants is brought ashore at Harford Pier in Avila Beach.

"We're the luckiest chefs in California," says Ian McPhee, whose stylish new restaurant, across the street from the grain silos in rugged Templeton, best represents the new ranchero cuisine.

"I have five different local people who grow fresh vegetables and herbs for me, all year round," McPhee says. "We'll change our menu to suit what's in season. Right now the tomatoes are just coming in. I get seven different varieties — all hand-picked when they're sweet and ripe. How many restaurants in L.A. can say that?"

Recognizing the region's draw as a rising culi-

nary hot spot for travelers from both Southern and Northern California, Jonni Biaggini of the county's visitors and conference bureau has recently put together four self-guided motor tours — each taking about a half-day to complete — on which you can sample and buy the bounty of the county.

Stops take you from Linn's Fruit Bin, along a scenic country road east of Cambria, in north county, to F. McLintock's Mercantile in Pismo Beach, which sells the famous salsas and barbecue sauces served on those giant platters of steaks and ribs at the equally famous restaurants in south county.

There are also a couple of destinations not mentioned in the four tours that you'll want to include, particularly if you can expand your visit by a day or more. While our suggestions focus on the central coast's cuisine rather than its wines, you shouldn't. Many, like Creston Vineyard, off Highway 101 at Vineyard Drive in Templeton, take as much pride in their gourmet foods as they do in their award-winning wines.

Creston, for instance, offers a vegetable pate, called Cowboy Caviar, and a couple of different salsas — all locally made and served on San Luis Obispo sourdough bread — alongside their chardonnay and white zinfandel.

A DAY FOR FOODIES

Start the day at the Harford Pier at Port San Luis Harbor, about 10 miles southwest of San Luis Obispo in Avila Beach. This is where much of the fresh seafood served in area restaurants comes in.

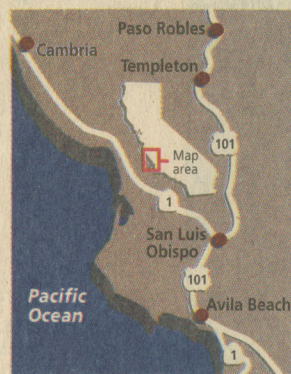
Stop by before 11 a.m. and you're likely to catch fishermen off-loading rock cod, halibut and crab while pelicans and sea gulls tussle with the sea lions for scraps and undersized fish. The retail market next door sells live Dungeness crabs, shark jerky and fresh sole, surf perch, halibut and whatever else has been brought in.

Near the harbor offices and boatyard is Fat Cats restaurant, the perfect place for a casual breakfast. Introduce yourself to the local cuisine with an order of crab benedict or try the spicy linguica omelet, a nod to the area's large Portuguese population.

Nearby, along Avila Beach Drive, not far from Sycamore Mineral Springs, a historic sulfurous hot spring with a terrific restaurant, is the Avila Valley Barn and Pickin' Patch where, on weekends, you can hop aboard a hay wagon while a team of Clydesdale horses takes you to the berry and fruit orchards. The allieberries might be finished but there should still be plenty of raspberries, and in the fruit groves you can pick your own peaches from a dozen varieties. Apples are just starting to come in as well.

About a half-mile north, off San Luis Bay Drive, is See Canyon, a major apple-producing area since

■ SAN LUIS OBISPO



The Orange County Register

the early 1900s. The story locals tell is that the canyon is named after Mary See — of See's Candy fame — but others say that just isn't so.

No matter. What's important is that a number of family-run orchards sell dozens of varieties of apples — including many you'll never find in a supermarket — from roadside stands until mid-November. One of our favorites is See Canyon Fruit Ranch, owned by Mike and Phyllis Hischier, who also own a surf shop in Morro Bay. Mike tends to the surfers and Phyllis operates the apple farm.

There are several places in downtown San Luis Obispo where you'll find a collection of central-coast delectables, including Linn's S.L.O. Bin, but to really experience the showcase of fruits and vegetables from the region and get a taste of those slow-cooked beans, sizzling ribs, and juicy sausages, the place to be is the Thursday night farmers' market along Higuera Street.

The city begins barricading Higuera about 5:30 p.m. as local farmers open their truck tailgates and spread their card tables with crates of freshly harvested fruits, vegetables, flowers and herbs, including a fair selection of organic produce.

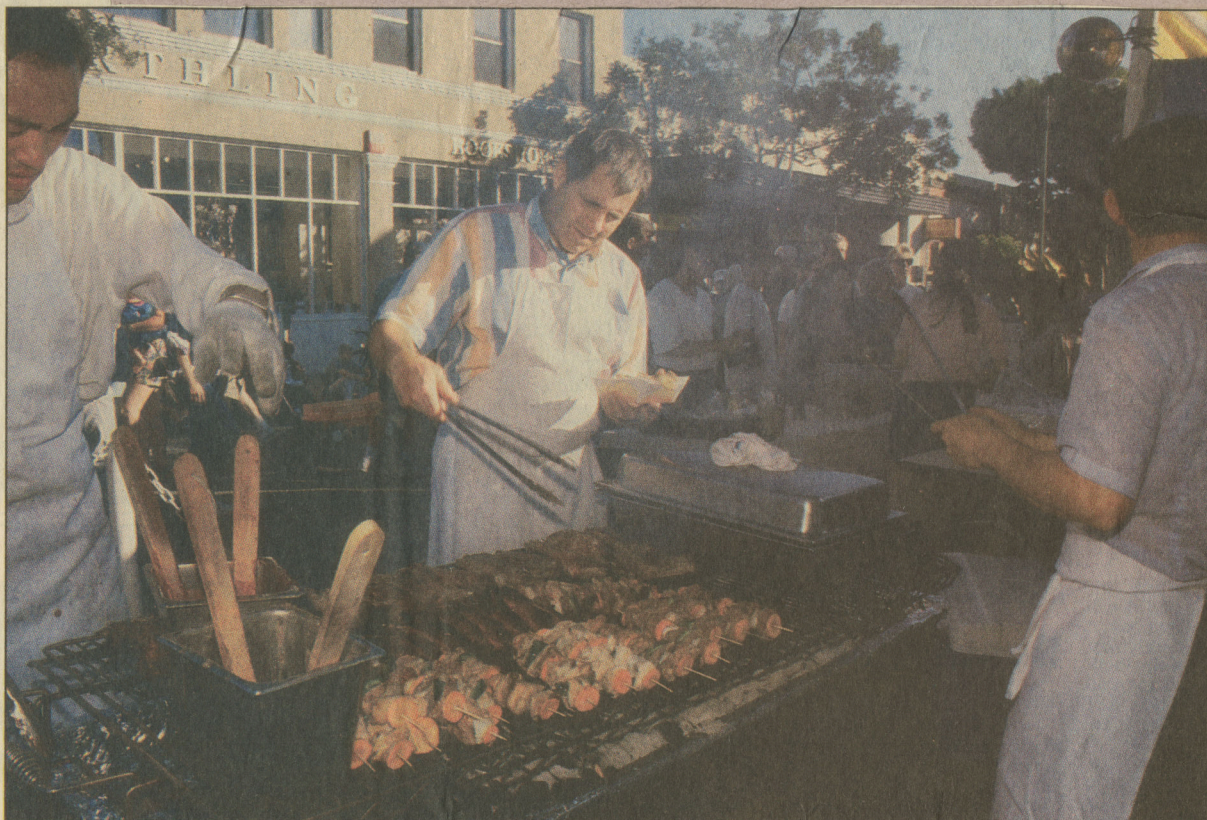
Within an hour several local restaurateurs have fired up giant barbecues and begun grilling mouth-watering meats over aromatic oakwood fires.

For the next three hours, downtown San Luis turns into a summer block party as townsfolk and visitors mingle with farmers and chefs, looking for the perfect yellow cherry tomato or the sweetest Rio Oso gem peach, a great canning fruit unavailable in stores because it bruises easily.

If you miss the Thursday night food fest (and its less-grandiose Saturday morning version), you'll still want to poke around downtown San Luis.

Follow your nose to San Luis Sourdough, which isn't as famous as San Francisco's crusty bread, but is probably better (those big, fragrant loaves of sourdough sold under Trader Joe's label are San Luis Sourdough).

You'll find this bread being sold in just about every restaurant in town, and once you sample a slice (try the rosemary sourdough) fresh out of the Swedish-made ovens you'll know why.



STREET SCENE: Every Thursday night, the streets are full of food and fun at the farmers market.

Agriculture

Farmer's market offers 'A Taste of the Harvest'

September event will offer free samples and karaoke singing in Paso and Atascadero

By Marianne Vigil
Country News Reporter

The scent of fresh fruit is mingled with the sounds of lazy summer conversations as kids entertain themselves in the cool water of the fountain. Amidst it all, Pearl Munak and other farmers are busy selling their wares to those who know what fresh is all about.

Munak and her husband have been selling their fruits and vegetables at farmer's markets like the one in Atascadero for over 15 years and she now runs the markets in Paso Robles and Atascadero.

Though both markets have grown to nearly 40 vendors, Munak said the demand for the produce has not kept up with the supply recently. So, she and the other farmers who run the market have decided that it is time, "To get people familiar with the fact that some of the best produce in California is grown and sold right here," she said.

"A Taste of the Harvest" on September 19 and 20 will give people in the North County that opportunity. Paso Robles holds its market every Tuesday afternoon at 3 p.m. and Atascadero hold its on Wednesday afternoons.

As the name implies, the afternoon event at the Paso Robles and Atascadero farmer's markets will give people a chance to taste some of the produce that they have seen growing in the fields and orchards all around them.

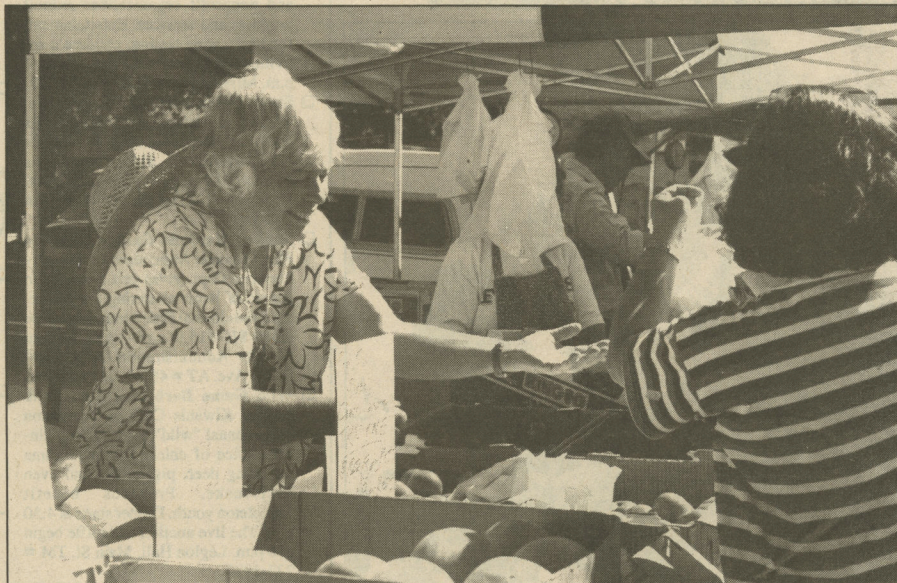
A new law allows farmers to give away cut pieces of fruit so free samples will be given out by the vendors and the first 50 seniors at the market will receive a free item of produce. "We'll

**"To get people familiar with the fact that some of the best produce in California is grown and sold right here."
Pearl Munak**

show people just how good they taste."

In addition, there will be karaoke singing for those who long for the spotlight.

There are over 200 farmer's markets in the state and San Luis Obispo County has more of them than any other county except Los Angeles. San Luis Obispo, Templeton, Morro Bay and several other cities all offer farmers a chance to sell their goods directly to the customer.



Marianne Vigil/Country News

Pearl Munak displays some of her finest produce at the Farmer's Market in Atascadero.

From melons to strawberries to lettuce, much of the produce is picked the day it is sold. Plus it is often cheaper than a supermarket because there is no middleman.

"It is either cheaper or better or both," she said.

Plus, because the farmer sells the produce, every booth has an expert about how to best select and prepare the fruit or vegetable for sale.

In addition to being good for the customer, the farmer's market is vital to the farmers of our area.

"These markets are my primary source of income," said Don Shannon,

who grows and sells specialty lettuce as well as kale.

"We market almost exclusively through the farmer's market...If it

If it weren't for the markets we would have lost our farm years ago."

weren't for the markets we would have lost our farm years ago," Munak said.

In addition to being a source of income, it is also an enjoyable way to spend an afternoon according to

Munak. She said she enjoys the personal contact she has with her customers.



STICKY AND ZANY: Several 'melon heads' show off their personalized hard-shelled headwear Thursday night while marching through Farmers Market in San Luis Obispo. David Middlecamp/Telegram-Tribune

By Carol Roberts
Telegram-Tribune

SAN LUIS OBISPO — You couldn't miss them at Thursday night's Farmers Market. There were hundreds of them.

Brand-new Cal Poly students strolling Higuera Street sampling hot dogs and candy apples.

They traveled in "WOW Week" groups, chaperoned by older student counselors and linked together with long strings.

No one gave them as much as a glance until one particular group of nearly 100 made everybody grin.

They called themselves the "melon heads." They had carved watermelons into crowns, beanies, helmets and other headwear in a

Melon heads

Snake-lines of WOWies take over Farmers Market, while one group's kooks with fruits steal the show

nearby park, then wore them as they paraded down the street chanting "Eat watermelon."

Why?
"It feels good," said Jeff Beck from Tulare. "It's messy and sticky."

"We're becoming one with the fruit," said Vic Herreria of Redwood City.

"It's therapeutic," said Ben Matthews of San Mateo.

The new students gave their counselor

Chris Becker credit for the melon head idea. Becker also spurred a WOW Week group to wear the melons to Farmers Market last year.

"This is the second annual," he said. "It's becoming a tradition."

Becker and other returning students are volunteering as counselors for the 2,500 freshmen and transfer students taking part in Cal Poly's Week of Welcome orientation program.

A sample of what they think of San Luis Obispo?

"I like it," said Christina Hepner from Raisin City in the San Joaquin Valley. "It's sure a lot better than Fresno."

Seeing red: They're the apples of our eye

Farmers Market hosts fest featuring See Canyon's tart progeny

By Mary Schiller
Telegram-Tribune

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Try to remember the first tree you ever drew. Chances are, it stood alone against a white paper sky, as a smiling yellow sun peeked out from the corner with rays that reached oh, about an inch or so. You drew the trunk with a chunky brown crayon, and left a hole in the middle to hide ... an owl? A squirrel? Yourself?

Using the shade of green you've since seen only in a crayon box, you sketched the leaves, looping a line from one side of the trunk to the other, then coloring it all in ever-so-carefully.

And there were always apples: Small, bright red circles drawn with a tight-fisted little hand, placed here, and there, everywhere apples should be.

Next time you bite into an apple and feel the juice run down your wrist, close your eyes and remember that picture, or maybe your third-grade Halloween party when you held your breath and bravely dunked your face in the water to bob for apples. (So what if you didn't get any? It was still fun.) Or the time you lost a loose tooth to a too-tough Red Delicious, or the night your dad told you the story of Johnny Appleseed, the sweet soul who roamed the Earth planting trees and goodwill.

As Johnny may have wished, apples abound these days. Now that the season is in full swing, apple growers can be found selling their goods at farmers markets and fruit stands throughout the county. And what better way to celebrate this bounty than with a festival: The seventh annual Apple Festival, sponsored by KJUG, the San Luis Obispo County Farmers Market and the Downtown Business Improvement Association, taking place tomorrow night from 6 to 8 p.m. on Garden Street.

Apple aficionados, take note: You can watch cider being hand pressed, taste a caramel-covered apple dipped in nuts or chocolate chips (does that sound decadent or what?), read "Ode to the Apple" poetry written by local schoolkids and look at shriveled apple

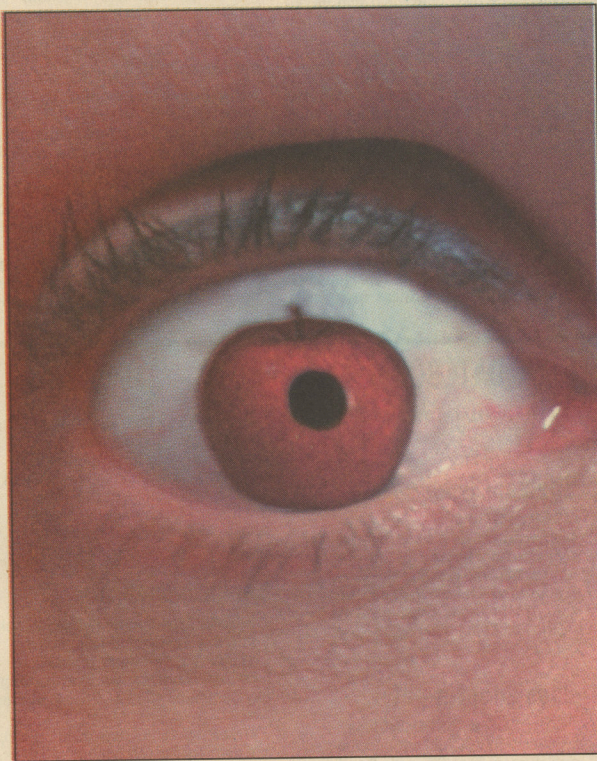


Photo illustration by Robert Dyer/Telegram-Tribune

heads (no kidding; see accompanying story). And there will be an apple pie contest, grafting demonstrations and lots and lots of — you guessed it — apples, many from our very own See Canyon.

There are several reasons why See Canyon apples taste so good, explained Mike Cirone of Cirone Farms. "One of the main reasons is that we have a really cool winter," he said. "And that's what apple trees need. They need to go to sleep in the wintertime."

On top of that, he added, "all the soils here are good. They're well-drained and deep. The summertime temperatures are good, too. It's not too hot, your evenings are cool, so you get good fruit color."

Usually, apple picking begins sometime in July, said Cirone. "Then by

August, we're really into it."

Cirone has been growing apples in See Canyon ever since he graduated from Cal Poly 12 years ago, and he leases 20 acres there. "My biggest orchard is 6 acres, my smallest is a half acre," he said. "I have probably 10 different spots in the canyon that I'm farming."

More than half of Cirone's crop ends up stocking Vons' produce section, with the rest going to a couple of independent grocery stores and eight farmers markets. "I probably will sell to Vons, hopefully, 1,200 boxes," he said, "which is 20 tons."

Hold on a minute. All that — and more — comes from a mere 20 acres?

"You should be getting anywhere from 5 to 10 tons to the acre," said Cirone. "Apples are productive. A big

standard apple tree can yield 1,200 pounds."

Unfortunately, though, See Canyon's apple season doesn't last forever. But apples will be plentiful until bobbing time.

"We'll have everything off the trees by Halloween," said Cirone. "There might be some Granny Smiths lingering on a few individual trees, but the way it is in this canyon, you've got to get them off. (The trees) go dormant pretty quick, and we'll probably have some kind of frost in here by Thanksgiving."

Of the 40 varieties Cirone grows, he still sells the standard Red Delicious, Golden Delicious and Pippin to Vons. But folks who shop the farmers markets, he said, are looking for something more unusual. "They're more educated apple people," he explained. "They're particular, they know exactly what they want, and they're sick and tired of what they get in the store."

And what taste are they looking for?

"I like 'em tart, I like 'em red. That's why I like these," said Pam Nenadal as she selected a palm-sized See Canyon Red-Gold from Cirone's stand at the San Luis Obispo Farmers Market. "I have kids, and I like the size of these. You can put it in their lunch and it's not too much, and they won't throw 'em away."

Parents, be honest: Didn't you suspect that the big ol' apple you stick in your kid's lunch box every day just ends up in the dumpster or on a teacher's desk? Of course you did (because you used to do it, too).

Nenadal, who works at Bishop's Peak Elementary, sees the sad apple truth daily. "(The kids) get 'em every day, the boring ones from the grocery store. And they don't even taste 'em. They just throw 'em away."

"But the kids never throw See Canyon apples away," she said. "They know their parents made an effort to get them a good apple, and they'll eat 'em."

A Braeburn is the apple of Chantel Bartholow's eye. "They're the best," she said, choosing a few from Cirone's stand. "They're crispy, they're hard, they're really juicy. I think they have the perfect flavor."

But Ashley Bartholow, 9, has only one criterion for choosing apples: They must be green, "because the red ones taste disgusting."

Suppose she draws green apples on her crayon tree?

Saturday, September 30, 1995

SLO COUNTY



Robert Oliver/Telegram-Tribune



Fruitful Evening

AN APPLE A DAY: Kaitlyn Tolin of SLO, above, giggles at some of the shrunk heads on display Thursday night during the Farmers Market apple fest. At left, the work of Los Ranchos School second-grader Jenny Piper was judged one of the winners.

Farmers market selling rule tossed

Law had kept some vendors from selling others' produce

By Ken McCall
Telegram-Tribune

SAN LUIS OBISPO — A regulation used by some local farmers markets that requires vendors to sell only their own produce has been ruled illegal by a judge and the state Department of Food and Agriculture.

The ruling, say members of the county Agricultural Commissioner's office, opens a loophole in the rules that will hurt the integrity of farmers markets.

The markets were started, said Rick Landon, deputy county ag commissioner, to allow growers to sell directly to customers and to "eliminate the middle men."

"It's been very successful," said Landon, "so successful that there has become a motivation to cheat — to purchase the produce from a grower and sell it at farmers markets."

"There is a real problem with integrity in the markets."

Vendors must by state law obtain a producer certificate from the ag commissioner's office and display that when they sell to the public. The law also states that associations may allow a vendor to "carry the certificate" of up to two other growers and sell their produce.

Like many associations around the state, the San Luis Obispo County Farmers' Market Association, which administers the markets in this city, Morro Bay and the South County, prohibits vendors from selling any but their own produce.

The ruling, however, will not effect the North County Farmers' Market Association — which administers markets in Paso Robles, Templeton, Baywood and Los Osos — and allows vendors to sell for two other growers.

Landon, who is on a state "integrity task force" looking into the farmers market program, acknowledges that there are benefits to growers of allowing one to sell for several.

"But the problem," he said, "is how do you know it's on the up and up."

Some vendors, Landon said, have "a whole notebook of certificates" from 10 or 15 different growers, and they then display the right ones depending on the day.

"It makes it very difficult to determine if they (the produce) were actually grown by who they say they were."

Last December, the Santa Barbara farmers market association changed their rules to prohibit selling others' produce. That change, however, was appealed by Scott Peacock of Dinuba, who was traveling to the Santa Barbara market and using second certificates to "pile it high and kiss it goodbye," according to court records.

An administrative law judge found in August not only that the rule violated the intent of state law, but also that the Santa Barbara association was motivated by the "pecuniary interest" of the association's directors.

"The evidence ... clearly demonstrates," the ruling states, "that the members of the board of directors of the Association felt at a personal competitive disadvantage in the direct marketing area by appellants' ability (through the use of second certificates) to have a larger, more attractive and varied display of fresh produce, thereby attracting more customers."

State Secretary of Food and Agriculture Ann M. Veneman "adopted" the decision on Sept. 21, according to state records, making it binding on all farmers markets in the state.

If farmers market associations want the ability to make tighter restrictions, said Joy Lavin-Jones, a DFA official, "then there needs to be a legislative change."

In fact, said Lavin-Jones, the department is going to present such legislation to the Integrity Task Force for review.

In the meantime, though, she said the department will be advising farmers market associations "to rescind any rule prohibiting a certified producer from selling for any other certified producer."

Saturday, October 7, 1995



Laura Dickinson /Telegram-Tribune

SELLING HER OWN: Marcia Perez sells her home-grown vegetables at Farmers Market in San Luis Obispo on Thursday night. A law that prohibits vendors from selling any but their own produce has been ruled illegal.

BARBEQUE TIME
1995













CUSTOMER APPRECIATION
SAN LUIS OBISPO
NOV. 1995











Customer Appreciation Day!

Featuring Give-aways, Merchant Gift
Certificates, Farmers Market T-Shirts,
Baskets of Produce, Cookies,
Balloons & More!

December 7

THURSDAY, 3-5pm
Morro Bay
Young's Giant Food

**ALL MARKETS OPERATE YEAR 'ROUND...
RAIN OR SHINE. CALL 544-9570 FOR INFO.**









Oak Park Plaza
Hwy 101- Oak Park
Wednesday 9-11:30

Pismo Beach
Main & Dolliver
Tuesday 4-7:30

Morro Bay
Young's Giant Food
Thursday 3-5 PM



SLO City
Higuera Street
Thursday 6:30-9 PM

SLO County
Gottschalks parking lot
Saturday 8-10:30 AM

Arroyo Grande
City Hall Parking Lot
Saturday 11:45-2:30 PM

All markets operate year round, rain or shine,
except the Pismo Beach Market which operates May through October.
Call 544-9570 for information

Meals on Wheels

Friday, January 19, 1996

PITCHED BATTLE



Robert Dyer/Telegram-Tribune

SNOWBALL EXPRESS: Youngsters enjoy Snow Night '96 on Chorro Street during Farmers Market Thursday. A steady sprinkling of rain that entered the county in the early evening didn't dampen the fun.

Saturday, February 10, 1996



GEM OF A FIND: Christina Manuele, left, with the help of Tamara Keene, recovers two gems and a coffee mug. Robert Dyer/Telegram-Tribune

Woods hits gold with diamond dig

By Marsha McLaughlin
Telegram-Tribune

SAN LUIS OBISPO — The Diamond Dig at Farmer's Market turned out to be a gem of a fund-raiser for Woods Humane Society.

By the time Farmers Market set up Thursday, a line started to form down Garden Street in front of the two big troughs of sand, one for scooping and one for sifting. The sand was obtained from Pacific Home Do-It Center in San Luis Obispo; the troughs and hay bales were provided by Farm Supply.

Lisa Bukowski, a 12-year-old from San Luis Obispo, was in line, waiting with her father to try her luck.

"I'm spending my allowance," she said, adding that she felt lucky. "Two years ago, I won a \$50 sapphire. They have a 14-karat gold ring tonight, and 14 is my lucky number."

Cat lover Pamela Baumann of Morro Bay was also waiting patiently. "I feel lucky," she said, "and even if I don't win, the money is for a good cause."

For \$5 a turn, gem-seekers were

given four 12-ounce cups and a chance to scoop sand, moving to the other trough to see if the sand they scooped contained the key to hidden treasures.

The humane society's executive director, Ron Walsh, said there would be capsules placed in the sand and that the capsules would contain numbers which would correspond to approximately 65 numbered gems, including a 4-to-5-carat opal worth \$400-500 and a 1/2-carat diamond ring.

"All the stones are mined gems, opals, rubies, amethysts, semi-precious gems," Walsh said, "and we're providing a numbered display board with capsules corresponding to the gems on the board. We're doing it this way this time because two years ago, when we last did this, it took hours and hours and hours to sift through the sand for all the gems that were in there."

John and Eileen Calandro of San Luis Obispo were glad to take part, stressing that the fund-raiser was "for a great cause."

They each spent \$5, and John joked that if they came up with anything, it

was a good investment for a "cheap Valentine's present."

As it turned out, Eileen got that early Valentine's gift, scooping up a 10.25-carat blue topaz worth \$205.

Adria Schneider of San Luis Obispo described herself as "sometimes lucky." On this day she was definitely lucky, finding the capsule for a ruby worth \$140.

And Kim Spangle, a Cuesta student who lives in San Luis Obispo, who described herself as "not unlucky," came away a double winner, finding capsules for two amethysts worth \$163 and \$63. She will turn one into a pendant and the other into a matching ring.

The gems were secured through Hamilton Estate Jewelers and Gem Star, a firm based in Dallas. In addition to the gems, Woods buried capsules corresponding to consolation prizes consisting of humane society coffee mugs and shirts.

The proceeds were not earmarked for any new project, and most will go toward spaying and neutering animals.

March 20, 1996

All fired up

*SLO Rib Cook-off
attracts those who
like it hot, juicy,
spicy — and messy*



Jim Weber/Telegram-Tribune

JUST RIBBING YOU: Matt Eggen of the Old Country Deli flips a large side of ribs during the 11th Annual Rib Cook-off in downtown San Luis Obispo.

SAN LUIS OBISPO

By Mary Schiller
Telegram-Tribune

When you're in the mood for ribs, you're in the mood for a mess: grease slathered on your face and running down your arms, meat stuck between your teeth. And napkins? Even a two-foot stack can leave you feeling short-changed. What you really need is a portable shower and a few miles of dental floss.

Let's face it: Ribs are not for sissies. And there wasn't a sissy in sight at the 11th Annual Rib Cook-off at the March 7 Farmers Market in downtown San Luis Obispo. The judges—all sponsors of the event, along with the Downtown Business Improvement Association—came with their sleeves rolled up and their taste buds primed.

And speaking of judges, let's meet them: Erik Stein of Cellular One; Paul LeSage of the Parks and Recreation Department; Reynolds Wolf of KSBY; Mike O'Neil from KJUG; Allen Settle, mayor of San Luis Obispo; John Villa of Villa Automotive; and Rick Jackoway, managing editor of New Times. Not a bad gig, huh?

"It's why I ran (for mayor)," said Settle.

"I'll sacrifice anything for the community," added LeSage.

Trying to be a tad serious—this is serious stuff, you know—Jackoway said there is one piece

of advice he'd give to the judges: "Just take one or two bites (of each rib). Because by the time you get to the 29th rib ..." Hey, even the best might look unappealing on a full stomach.

"I like a tender rib," he added, "and I like a fair amount of sauce, too. But it's really personal taste."

And speaking of ribs, let's meet them. All ribs—both beef and pork—came from Golden China, F. McLintocks, Mo's Smokehouse BBQ. Nothing but the Best, Old Country Deli, and SLO Brewing Co. Numbered for anonymity, the ribs were judged on the basis of flavor, tenderness, juiciness and overall satisfaction.

And, of course, rib lovers who weren't lucky enough to score a judge's seat were able to vote for the People's Choice award for both pork and beef.

"I want to be up there," said Sonia Swift, 10, as she passed by the judge's table. "They need a kid representative. And they ought to get their faces messier. That's what ribs are for!"

"I had some yesterday," added the pork rib aficionado, "and within a very short time, I was very messy."

About halfway through the contest, it was the pork ribs' turn; the wadded paper towels were piling up (and the faces were getting messier). Stein, in true cellular style, got a call just as he took a bite (greasy phone,

anyone?).

"Hey, can't you see I'm busy?" he said, tossing a leftover piece to his friend, Patrick Tray, who had positioned himself perfectly for any handouts.

"Mmmm, these are so unbelievably fatty," Tray mumbled between slurps.

'I like to put the coals on the side of the meat and put the meat in the middle.'

—Larry Kowalski,
Owner, Mo's Smokehouse BBQ

After nearly two hours of tasting, the judges were finished, and the tallying—and recovery—began. The judges had just one word to describe their feelings: "Full."

Let's meet the winners: Judge's Choice for beef ribs went to Old Country Deli; Judge's Choice for pork ribs went to Mo's Smokehouse BBQ; People's Choice for beef also went to Old Country Deli; and People's Choice for pork went to F. McLintocks.

"This is the one we wanted," said Carol Kowalski, co-owner of Mo's Smokehouse BBQ. "I'm happy now!" In fact, this is the second year Mo's has won the judge's award, which makes them two for two.

"We're batting a thousand!" said Larry Kowalski, Carol's husband, who, by the way, is Mo. The secret to their pork ribs is really no secret: just hard work. Kowalski and a friend visited 80 different barbecue joints in the southeastern United States to find the best cooking methods.

"And I spent hours and hours and hours in the kitchen" developing the secret sauce a few days before their grand opening nearly two years ago, he said. "Finally, by 3 o'clock in the morning ... I betcha I had ingested three or four (huge) cups of barbecue sauce."

He finally gave up; when he came back to the kitchen the next day, he stuck a finger into his last mixture "and I said, 'Man, that is just perfect!'"

Kowalski recommended cooking pork ribs at home in a kettle-type barbecue, adding hickory chips for a good flavor.

"I like to put the coals on the side of the meat," he explained, "and put the meat in the middle." After the meat has smoked for about 30 to 45 minutes, "spread the coals flat and caramelize the sauce."

He offered a couple of caveats: Put the sauce on at the end, and don't boil the pork first. "I think boiling takes out all the flavor," he said.

Norm Eggen, of Old Country Deli, is no stranger to the Rib Cook-off: The deli has won the People's Choice award 10 times.

"We weren't in existence for the first one!" Eggen explained. "We've won the Judge's Choice either three or four times, I forget."

Anyone who has passed the corner of Marsh and Nipomo streets has certainly smelled the deliciously smoky barbecues outside the deli. Their secret to cooking ribs is using a very hot flame.

But regular folks—who don't happen to have a giant, open-flame grill in their back yard—can cook beef ribs effectively, too, Eggen said.

"I suggest they trim any extra fat off the inside of the rib," he said. "We season them with our Rib Roundup ... and then you want to cook them without any other sauce on

them. Any sauce, if it's a tomato base, will generally burn by the time the ribs are done."

If you must use sauce, Eggen said, put it on at the end just to warm it up. And if it's a good, hot fire, he said, "it should take about 30-45 minutes to cook." You can leave the lid off, he said, "but having the lid on, you can control the heat of the fire. Sometimes the oven effect will help cook them faster."

Despite their competitiveness, these rib masters are quick with a compliment for each other.

"I understand we won second for pork ribs," Eggen said with a smile, "right behind Kowalski."

"Old Country Deli has great beef ribs," said Kowalski. "I love Norm's ribs."

Is he ticklish?

Rib cook-off winners

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Organizers of the 11th annual Farmers Market rib cook-off said a combination of good weather and large crowds made Thursday's event a solid success.

"We had a great night—some of the rib vendors even ran out of food early," said Pete Eberle, a spokesman for the downtown Business Improvement Association, the group that sponsored the rib cook-off and farmers' market.

Eberle said out of the field of six competitors, the following restaurants won plaques for serving up the tastiest ribs during this year's cook-

off:

Judges' awards

Beef ribs
1st place — Old Country Deli
2nd place — F. McLintocks
Pork ribs
1st place — Mo's Smokehouse BBQ
2nd place — Old Country Deli

People's Choice awards

Beef ribs: Old Country Deli
Pork ribs: F. McLintocks
The People's Choice awards were selected by members of the public attending the rib cook-off. Eberle said several hundred ballots in each category were cast.

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Saturday & Sunday
May 25 & 26, 1996

Over 400 Arts & Crafts Booths * Over 50 Food Booths
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Strawberry Pancake Breakfast

Sat. and Sun., 7 am at the Gazebo
Sponsored by: Lighthouse Christian Church

Strawberry Princess Contest

Crowning: Sat., 11 am at the Gazebo
Sponsored by: **K-BEAR 75** and **Times Press Recorder**

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10K Run, 5K Run, 5K Walk
Sun. at 11 am
Sponsored by: Kiwanis of Greater Pismo Beach

Kids Carnival Area

Rides * Puppets * Clowns * Juggler
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Premier Petting Zoo on the West Coast

Strawberry Blonde Contest

Sat., 10-11 am at the Gazebo
Sponsored by: **K-BEAR 75** and **Times Press Recorder**

Strawberry Pie Eating Contest

Sat. and Sun., 1-4 pm
Sponsored by: **SL 96** and **CCAT**

Ethnic Foods

German * Chinese * Greek * Tai
* Italian * Filipino * Mexican
* American: BBQ, Ribs, Tri-Tip,
Sausage, Chicken

Strawberry Fine Arts Area

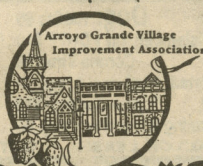
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June 11, 1996

Baywood BOUQUETS

Monday afternoon at the
Farmers Market in Baywood Park



SELLOUTS:

Evelyn
Fernamburg of
Arroyo Grande
sells bouquets of
her home-grown
flowers as fast as
she can make
them.



Robert Dyer/Telegram-Tribune

PULLED: Brandon Saletta, 1, can't resist reaching for some flowers as his mother, Brenda, of Los Osos stops to chat with a vendor.

MARKET BOARD
HARD AT WORK



FOOD

Glorious GARLIC



Jim Weber/Telegram-Tribune

ELEPHANT-SIZED: Farmer Tito Racho of Morro Bay holds up his flavorful elephant garlic.

By Mary Schiller
Telegram-Tribune

In Moscow, it's called chesnok. Italians call it aglio, and in Budapest, it's foghagyma. But garlic, by any other name, would smell as ... stinky. Yes, its smell is sweet to many a garlic lover. But alas, the stinking rose has a checkered past, loved and hated, revered and reviled.

Originating in western Asia, garlic's use as food and medicine dates back to the Babylonians of 4,500 years ago. In ancient Egypt, garlic was even used as a medium of exchange. According to author Lloyd Harris in "The Book of Garlic," 15 pounds of garlic could buy a healthy male slave.

Playing off of garlic's medicinal powers, the Egyptians even used it as a predictor of a woman's fertility (we won't go into the details here, however). The Egyptian people came to worship garlic as a sort of god, believing that it could cure disease.

Other ancient peoples, such as the Israelites, Palestinians and Greeks, also revered the garlic and incorporated it into their daily lives. But for as many cultures that have worshiped garlic, there are just as many that have despised it. Because it became known as a "people's" food, the upper classes — as well as the religious elite — began to view it as a symbol of barbarism.

Ancient Indians of the higher classes — as opposed to the lower classes, who treated garlic as valuable — shunned garlic. They believed that its consumption would pull one away from spirituality and that its smell meant there were evil spirits hovering about. (Guess they didn't have Certs back then.)

The British also showed incredible aversion to garlic in the 18th and 19th century. Percy Bysshe Shelley, the British poet, wrote in a letter dated around 1800 that "Young women of rank eat — you will never guess what

— garlic!" Oh, pish tosh!

Even the American colonists showed a revulsion for the herb, as evidenced by a 17th-century American named John Evelyn who wrote that one should never add garlic to a salad "by reason of its intolerable rankness."

Rank, shmank. If you love garlic, you love garlic. Smell or no smell (odorless garlic tablets seem to be all the rage right now), you're gonna eat it.

"We eat garlic every day," said Vina Racho as she sorted through a crop of garlic that had been harvested and was drying in the sun. She and her husband, Tito, grow several acres' worth of the herb in Morro Bay and

recipes to combat arteriosclerosis, seizures, cough, fever, even insomnia. But Tito may be the best testament to garlic's health benefits: He's 98 years old and still going strong.

"I've eaten garlic all my life," he said, sitting on a stool near one of their fields and peeling some giant red onions. "I like to work."

And work he does. Along with garlic, the couple grows "a little bit of everything," said Vina, like onions, peas, squash tomatoes and shallots. But garlic seems to be their passion. "They call me 'Garlic Lady,'" she said with a smile.

By the way, if you've never actually seen a garlic plant, it's really something else. The garlic head (with all

the plump cloves inside) grows below the ground, and a tall stem — several feet high and topped with a flower — sprouts above the ground.

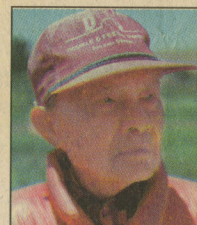
"The flower you can sprinkle in your salad," said Vina, "or arrange in your flower arrangements, too." And garlic itself will keep for about a year, if stored in a cool, dry place (the fridge is a no-no).

You can grow garlic at home, but you'd better have some patience. Plant the cloves in October, explained Vina, and give them lots of water. But when the bulbs begin to form, "too much water is bad for them," she said, as they might begin to rot.

Then, twiddle your thumbs for a good, long time: It takes nine months to grow garlic, said Vina, "just like a baby!"

But what a baby it is. What else can give such sensory delight and keep vampires away at the same time?

"The Book of Garlic," by Lloyd Harris, is available at the library. And did you know that garlic has a fan club? It's called Lovers of the Stinking Rose. If you want to join and get their newsletter, *Garlic Times*, write to them at 1621 Fifth St., Berkeley, CA 94710.



*'I've eaten
garlic all
my life.'*

— Tito Racho,
98-year old Morro
Bay farmer

sell their wares at farmers market in San Luis Obispo.

"In the morning, we make fried rice with garlic," she added. "We slice it, stir fry a little bit with olive oil, and then put in some cooked rice. ... We also put some ham or eggs in."

Vina, who came to this area from the Philippines about 17 years ago, noted that in her native country, garlic is used as an antibiotic. In fact, researchers have found that a substance in garlic called allicin is responsible for garlic's healing powers.

Allicin is even sold in the former Soviet Union as an antibiotic and is called Russian Penicillin. Though not as strong as penicillin, allicin can be effective against certain germs.

Folk remedies include garlic



Free trolleys (running every 15 minutes) help shoppers get around on Higuera Street.

The new face of San Luis Obispo

Higuera Street does Main Street one better in this central California town

SAN LUIS OBISPO HAS ALWAYS BEEN one of the central coast's most eccentric towns. For years its unusual landmarks have lured people from the road between San Francisco and Los Angeles. There's the Madonna Inn, with its campy pink exterior and rock-waterfall bathroom fixtures; the Dorn pyramid, a 25-foot-tall granite monument towering over the Odd Fellows Cemetery; and narrow Bubble Gum Alley, where for almost 40 years, San Luis Obispoans have festooned a 50-yard-long brick wall with the collected works of Wrigley, Chiclet, and Dentyne, to name but a few.

Both the mystical pyramid and sticky alley are on Higuera Street, home to the city's flourishing Thursday night Farmers' Market, from 6:30 to 9 between Nipomo and Osos streets. Higuera also borders Downtown Centre Plaza, a new paseo-style mall where you can watch cartoons and the Three Stooges projected on the outside wall of a movie theater, sip an orange-zinger smoothie, or browse the wares of a handful of upscale rag merchants catering to the Cal Poly crowd.

SIZING UP THE STREET

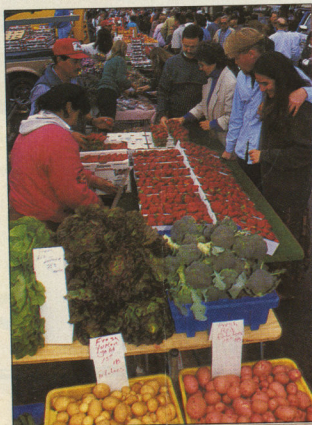
Even if you can't visit San Luis (the locals beg you not to pronounce it *San Loo-ey*) on a Farmers' Market night, you'll find Higuera Street a lively experience most

evenings, particularly on weekends, thanks to a crop of new coffeehouses, taverns, and specialty shops.

Hands Gallery (in a new location at 777 Higuera; 805/543-1921) showcases local art, including the whimsical birdhouses and clocks of Atascadero artist Laurel Tyler, and the slightly neurotic-looking teapots and stoneware of David Gurney from Arroyo Grande.

Another fresh presence is **Mother's Tavern** (725 Higuera; 541-8733), which

The Thursday night Farmers' Market is a must, especially now that strawberries are coming into season.



looks very much the way a saloon in San Luis might have looked in the days when area ranchers rode their horses into town to enjoy a fresh brew and a hearty meal. Try the Red-Headed Stepchild—spicy sausage in marinara sauce over fresh spaghetti. Live jazz or R&B begins nightly around 9.

As in many downtown shopping districts, Higuera's redevelopment has been fueled by caffeine. The oldest coffee-



The Koffee Klatsch has endured even while other businesses on the street have come and gone.

house on the street, **Koffee Klatsch** (778 Higuera; 544-1228), has been around for 15 years. Naturally, this cozy European-style cafe makes a mean espresso, but it is also known for its fine selection of teas, from special blends such as Russian Caravan to decaffeinated brews such as apricot.

Two Higuera Street bookstores are worth a visit. **The Novel Experience** (787 Higuera; 544-0150) is best known for its extensive selection of genre novels—romance, mystery, and science fiction among them. **Leon's Book Store** (659 Higuera; 543-5039) has thousands of used books stacked from floor to ceiling.

Most public parking lots around Higuera are metered. More convenient are the two public parking garages, one at the corner of Chorro and Marsh streets, the other at Chorro and Palm streets, both within a block or two of Higuera. Parking is free for the first 90 minutes at either garage. For more information, or for a list of places to stay if you are planning an overnight visit, call the San Luis Obispo County Visitors & Conference Bureau at (800) 634-1414. ■

By David Lansing

15th Annual MORRO BAY HARBOR FESTIVAL



ON THE WATERFRONT
OCTOBER 5TH & 6TH, 1996
 Saturday & Sunday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

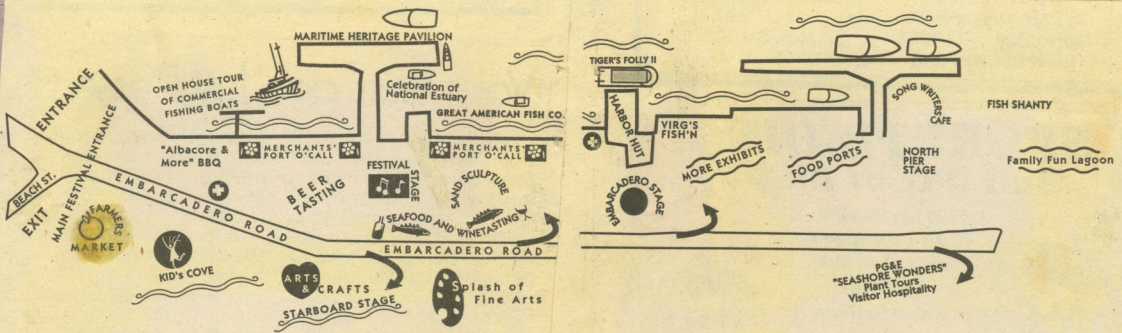
Maritime Heritage Pavilion • Ship Tours • Kids' Cove • Music • Arts • Crafts
 Port O'Call Marketplace • PG&E Plant Tours & Seashore Wonders

launching **October is National Seafood Month** with a
CALIFORNIA SEAFOOD FAIRE
 complemented by Central Coast Wine Tasting and Premium Beer Tasting
 and featuring **35-ton Sand Sculpture Spectacular** by world champion Sandsculpture crew

ADMISSION: Adults \$5 • Children 12 years old and under are free

FREE parking • FREE shuttles

Festival proceeds are shared with community organizations who donate their efforts to the event.
 Since 1987, over \$120,000 has been disbursed among participating San Luis Obispo County nonprofit groups.



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PISMO BEACH MARKET
1996





FARMER'S DISPLAY
MID-STATE BANK
S.L.O. 1996





Farmers' markets reap fresh success across the nation

By Linda Kanamine
USA TODAY

HERNDON, Va. — Lemon Boy, Lady Luck and Brandywine tomatoes, an epicure's feast of yellows, reds and pinks, are arrayed tantalizingly beside lavender eggplants and red Russian kale.

Coast-to-coast, these cornucopias of farm-fresh fruits and vegetables are enticing city and suburban shoppers, sprouting a renaissance of farmers' markets. Just since 1994, state-listed farmers' markets have boomed by 38% to more than 2,400, says a Agriculture Department report out today.

"Markets are gaining in popularity," says farmer John Kersey, who has had the same spot in the Herndon market since it opened in 1989. "Some folks shop for quality and we focus on that."

Kersey farms 70 acres of vegetables and fruits in Ashland, Va., on his Plumbroke Farm — as in, "We're plum broke." His family runs stalls in nine farmers' markets.

The tradition of open-air produce markets sputtered after World War II with the spread to suburbs, long commutes and convenience of one-stop supermarkets. There were fewer than 100 farmers' markets in 1976.

Today, 21,000 growers from small and medium-sized farms rely on the markets; almost a third sell solely at farmers' markets. Nationwide, sales top \$1.1 billion yearly, and the markets serve more than 1 mil-

lion consumers a week.

Cities are becoming the biggest champions.

The 17-year-old Chicago Farmers' Market has swelled from 13 sites to 25 since 1989. "Everybody loves them," says city Consumer Services Commissioner Caroline Shoenberger. "When the market is on the street, crime is not... It kicks the drug dealers out."

In Herndon (pop. 16,150), "the crowds are constant, all day long," says city official John Dudzinsky.

Farmers' markets will continue their surge, predicts Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman. "There is growing demand for fresh fruits and vegetables."

In the Westwood section of Los Angeles, Aaron Shapiro launched the Westwood Village Farmers' Market two years ago "to bring bodies and money back" to the slumping village. Now, every Thursday, people flock to 70 vendors to shop and listen to live bands.

"It's a sound idea that's worked well here," he says.

Beyond the produce, farmers' markets offer ambience. "You have to socialize," says Anne Crocker, a Herndon market regular, greeting a friend with a peck on the cheek.

"Everything is incredibly fresh and there's such good variety," says Crocker, clutching bags filled with beans; white corn; purple, yellow and green peppers; tomatoes and kale. "These farmers come here from all over, so I'll certainly patronize them."



By Matt Mendelsohn, USA TODAY

Growing business: Aria Bettinger, left, of Wheatland Vegetable Farms, sells produce Thursday to Anne Crocker in Herndon, Va.



RICHARD AND WILDA BYNG: 50 years ago ...



... and today.

Mr. and Mrs. Byng

Richard and Wilda Byng of Creston celebrated their golden wedding anniversary on Aug. 7, 1996, with a dinner for 40 guests at the Village Caffe in Atascadero and with a luncheon for friends held in their home on Aug. 11.

Many friends and relatives traveled from Kansas, Washington and Northern and Southern California to help celebrate the occasion.

Mr. Byng and the former Wilda George were married Aug. 7, 1946, in Abilene, Kan., by the Rev. Whistler, following Mr. Byng's discharge from the Navy.

Mr. Byng retired in 1982 after 30 years with Chicago Bridge & Iron Company. The couple made their home in Arroyo Grande until 1993, when they moved to Creston.

They have two sons, Richard and Robert, both of Creston, and three grandchildren.





BARBEQUE -FUN TIME
1996















November 8, 1996

BOMBS AWAY



Robert Dyer/Telegram-Tribune

LOOK OUT BELOW: Cal Poly student Scott Hagenburger drops a packaged egg Thursday during a competition put on by Poly's Industrial Technology 408 Protective Packaging class at Farmers Market. The drops were made from 15 feet above Chorro Street.

November 12, 1996

Produce tainted by mercury



Farm embargoed after lettuce, spinach found to be contaminated

CAMBRIA

By Silas Lyons
Telegram-Tribune

Officials have embargoed all produce from a rural organic farm after finding its lettuce and spinach was tainted by toxic mercury, the County Health Agency said Monday.

The contaminated produce is believed to have been sold throughout the area for at least two years, the most serious food tainting here in recent memory.

Tailings from an abandoned

'It's a situation to be concerned about, but not to panic about. I can say that personally, having eaten that lettuce myself for the last two years.'

— Greg Thomas,
county health
officer

mercury mine about five miles east of Cambria fouled portions of Charan Springs Organic Farm, County Agricultural Commissioner Richard Greek said.

Although the toxicity of inorganic mercury is largely unknown, County Health Officer Greg Thomas said cases of acute poisoning have caused damage to the brain and kidneys.

It's unlikely that anyone ate enough of the tainted vegetables to be so badly affected,

he said.

"It's a situation to be concerned about, but not to panic about," he said. "I can say that personally, having eaten that lettuce myself for the last two years."

Thomas said mercury can be tested in urine. The County Health Agency is setting up a questionnaire for people who think they've been exposed, and will have a nurse assigned to answer questions. The agency's number is 781-5500.

Information sheets about inorganic mercury will also be available at County Public Health offices in Grover Beach, Atascadero, Paso

SPOILED: County Agriculture Commissioner Richard Greek examines lettuce at Charan Springs Organic Farm in Cambria. It was tainted by tailings from a nearby mine.

Photo by Kathe Tanner

Please see **MERCURY**, Back Page

MERCURY from Page One

Robles, Morro Bay and San Luis Obispo, and at the County Agricultural Commissioner's Office and the County Environmental Health Office.

Thomas said health officials are particularly interested in test results from people who've eaten Charan Springs lettuce or spinach 10 times or more during the past month.

Charan Springs produce was a regular at farmers markets in San Luis Obispo, Templeton, Morro Bay and Cambria, but it was also sold to markets and restaurants.

Produce managers at both Questa Cooperative and Foods for the Family — two San Luis Obispo health food markets — weren't available Monday. Workers at the stores said they didn't know how much of their produce came from Charan Springs.

Scolari's Market in San Luis Obispo sold spinach and a spring lettuce mix from the farm, according to assistant manager Bob Armstrong, but hasn't received a shipment in about two weeks.

Giant Foods in Morro Bay bought produce from Charan Springs, but not much, said Vivian Gong, who helps manage the store for her parents.

"We didn't order a lot from them," she said. "The amount of people who wanted (organic produce) is very small."

Other places identified by the health agency as distributors included Brambles Restaurant and Cambria Pines Lodge in Cambria, Albertson's in San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay, the Cookie Crock Market in Cambria, and Natural Flavors health food restaurant in San Luis Obispo.

A spokesman at Albertson's in

Morro Bay said the farm's produce made up a tiny percentage of the store's supply, although he said only the produce manager could say exactly how much. The manager wasn't available Monday afternoon.

Charan Springs Farm owner Michael Limacher, contacted by phone on Monday, said he's shocked that officials found mercury in his produce.

He said he knew of the mine and possible contamination, but had composted the area heavily and thought he'd built up topsoil well above any mercury.

Limacher said he doesn't own the 124 acres he was farming. County officials said the mercury were discovered by a potential buyer who had the soil tested.

"The entire farm is embargoed by the (state Department of Health Services Food and Drug branch)," said Agricultural Commissioner Greek.

Greek said his office found out about the mercury Oct. 31, and immediately got Limacher and two adjoining farms to voluntarily take their crops off the market. The neighboring farms have since been cleared to resume distribution.

Greek said tests of the soil and plants on Charan Springs Farm are continuing. But he said the 2 acres of spinach and lettuce are the only ones considered a serious problem right now.

The mercury contamination is a blow to Limacher. "I've given up indefinitely," he said. "I'm kind of blown away by what's happening. I want to continue testing, and see what's going on, and if there's a way to overcome it. But I don't have a lot of high hopes."

January 18, 1997

Farmers' Market snow

SAN LUIS OBISPO — Snow will fall at Farmers' Market from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 23, on Chorro Street between Higuera and Marsh. Children 10 and younger are invited to play in more than 8 tons of the white stuff thanks to Copeland's Sports, the city of San Luis Obispo Parks and Recreation Department, and the Downtown Business Improvement Association. Call 541-0286 for details.

SNOW IN SLO



Jayson Mellom/Telegram-Tribune

IT'S ARTIFICIAL, OF COURSE: Jacob Taus, 8, hits his friend, Nathan Fuller, 8, in the head with a snowball Thursday night at Farmers Market. The snow was courtesy of an ice-making company.

February 28, 1997



FARMERS MARKET:

Pismo's fees have yet to be estimated for most events, including the popular marketplace for locally grown produce.

NIGHT ON THE TOWN



SWIRLING: What a night at Farmers Market in SLO it was for Abby Merrill, 2: She not only got a swell giraffe balloon hat, but also a ride from mom Lisa. They and dad/husband Craig, all of Grover Beach, were there to see a friend in a band.

Jayson Mellom/Telegram-Tribune

March 7, 1997

THE LAST WORD ON RIBS



MOIST TOWELETTE, ANYONE? Steve Owens, right, of San Luis Obispo Magazine, judges ribs Thursday at the SLO Farmers Market along with SLO Mayor Allen Settle and Maggie Cox, SLO's co-Citizen of the Year. Judges' winners: SLO Brewing Co. for beef ribs, Mo's Smoke House for pork. People's Choice: F. McLintocks for beef, Mo's for pork.

Jayson Mellom/Telegram-Tribune



THE SLO LIFE: Kevin Menton of San Luis Obispo buys an avocado from Mike Cirone at a Thursday evening Farmers Market downtown. The market continues to be a big draw for both Central Coast residents and visitors who appreciate the quality of life.

Jayson Mellom/Telegram Tribune

C-6 Saturday, May 10, 1997

San Luis Obispo County Telegram-Tribune

BIA wins award for Farmers Market

SAN LUIS OBISPO — The Downtown Business Improvement Association's Thursday night Farmers Market won a countywide award for promotion of tourism this week.

In presenting the Outstanding Contribution to the Promotion of Tourism Award at the Performing Arts Center on Wednesday evening, Visitors and Conference Bureau Executive Director Jonni Biaggini said the Business Improvement

Association has gone "above and beyond the call of duty."

"What's so significant about Thursday night Farmers Market is that many visitors and tour groups actually extend their visit to the county so that they can attend the event," Biaggini said. "Farmer's Market has grown to be one of the most written-about events in the county. Because of this, even weekends now last longer in San Luis Obispo County."

FARMERS MARKETS

are held year-round throughout San Luis Obispo County.

• **Arroyo Grande** — Wednesdays, 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., at the Oak Park Plaza, Oak Park and Highway 101; Saturdays, noon to 4 p.m., by City Hall. Call 544-9570.

• **Atascadero** —

Wednesdays, 3 to 6 p.m., in the Sunken Gardens, El Camino Real and East Mall. Call 238-7056.

• **Baywood Park** — Mondays, 2 to 5 p.m., on Santa Maria Street between Second and Third streets. Call 541-6473.

• **Cambria** — Fridays, 2:30 to 5:30 p.m., at

the Veterans Memorial Building parking lot on Main Street. Call 927-4715.

• **Morro Bay** — Thursdays, 3 to 5 p.m., at Young's Giant Food; for information, call 772-4250. For details on booths or becoming an entertainer, call 544-9570.

• **Paso Robles** —

Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., at 14th and Spring streets. Fridays, 3:30 to 6 p.m., at 12th St., from Pine to Park streets. Call 238-7056 or 239-1635.

• **Pismo Beach** — Tuesdays, 4 p.m. to dusk, through Oct. 14 at Dolliver and Main streets. Call 473-9025.

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

• **Templeton** — Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., at the park. Call 239-1635.

Tuesday, May 20, 1997



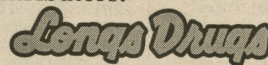
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Come join us at the

Saturday
May 24
&
Sunday
May 25



In the
historic
Village of
Arroyo
Grande

...and spin the Newspaper in
Education Wheel for a \$1 donation.

Every spin wins a great prize for the kids and the money goes to fund
50 San Luis Obispo County classrooms who receive the
newspaper weekly.

Don't forget to bring your PressPass...

and save 50¢ off Strawberry Shortcake and \$1 off Festival T-shirts!



And be sure to enter to win one of 2
\$50 GIFT CERTIFICATES
from Scolari's!

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL YVONNE DE YOUNG AT 781-7921

C-8 Wednesday, July 2, 1997

San Luis Obispo County Telegram-Tribune



The Village of Arroyo Grande
invites you to an
Old-Fashioned 4th of July
Friday, July 4th & Saturday, July 5th
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

★ **Antique Peddler's Fair** ★

More than 40 Dealers Featuring Antiques, Memorabilia & Collectibles
Free Antique Appraisals by Robert Zeise, Branch Street Antique Mall

★ **Independence Day 10K & 5K Run** ★

Saturday, July 5, 7:00 a.m.

★ **Country Craft Jamboree** ★

Local Artists Showcase Arts & Crafts

★ **Old Fashioned Penny Carnival** ★

Games & Prizes for All Kids Saturday Only 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

★ **Chili Cook off** ★

Best Chili Cooks on the Central Coast
Saturday Only 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.

★ **Farmers Market** ★

Friday & Saturday
"Named Best on the Central Coast"

★ **Food Booths** ★

Barbecue, Hamburgers,
Hot Dogs, Ethnic Foods
Strawberry Shortcakes

★ **Fine Art Show** ★

El Camino Art Association

★ **Entertainment Plus** ★

Band Concert at the Gazebo - Performed by the Village 20 Member Band
Under the Direction of Dr. Chris Kuzell

Friday, July 4 at 12 Noon

FREE ADMISSION

Sponsored by:
The Arroyo Grande Village
Improvement Association

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION
CALL 473-2250**



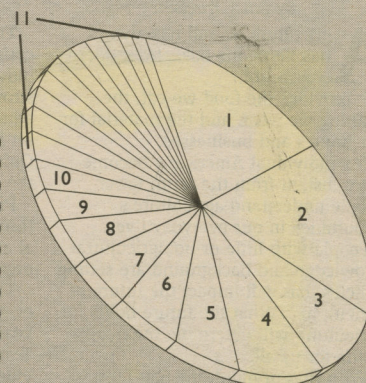
San Luis Obispo County



Appreciation Week October 14-18, 1997
"Celebrating Our Diversity of Agriculture"

Top Ten Value Crops

1. Winegrapes	\$54,620,000
2. Broccoli	30,432,000
3. Lettuce, Head	29,795,000
4. Cattle	19,712,000
5. Peas	17,313,000
6. Vege. Transplants	14,003,000
7. Indoor Decorative	12,200,000
8. Cut Flowers	9,641,000
9. Avocados	9,362,000
10. Lettuce Leaf	9,271,000
11. Other	121,978,000



Farmer's Markets bring success to local growers

By Christine Spane

Stroll down an isle of any Central Coast farmer's market and under those red umbrellas and green awnings will be the smiling faces of local growers.

If you go there two weekends in a row, chances are you'll be recognized with a cheery greeting.

Don't expect anyone to remember your name, but they will remember that you like white corn instead of yellow and that your dog's name is Bon Jovi.

The charm of the farmer's markets is in the interaction among the vendors and the customers.

After a few visits it's clear that the tables covered with produce represent hard work and a commitment to accepting responsibility for one's own success.

One example of such a success is the three generations of the Ruiz family. Roberto and Teresa Ruiz have been married for 32 years.

With the help of their extended family they own and operate Twin Berry Farms.

As a result of the carefully managed cultivation and marketing of 20 acres, they have put three of their six children through college so far and built two homes with their own hands.



Ruben, Griselda, Briselda, and Teresa Ruiz at the Templeton Farmers Market

Nan Curtis of Granny Nanny's Garden, another local market vendor, said the Ruiz's are not only a success story but is representative of why farmer's markets are so successful.

"At a grocery store you can't ask about products. At a farmer's market the vendors welcome your questions and try to help all they can. The Ruiz's are friendly and professional and are really interested in helping their customers. They also have a good product," Curtis said.

The produce is picked the evening before a morning market.

Seventy-five percent of the products grown at the farm are sold in local

farmer's markets and the remainder is sold to a broker. The produce that is not sold daily in the farmer's markets is never destroyed. It is always given away.

"We live in one of the poorer neighborhoods, so if we have anything left over, we give it to friends and neighbors," Ruben said.

Roberto and Teresa came to this country as immigrants and worked for other farms for seventeen years.

They share-cropped for seven years. Then started Twin Berry Farms in 1994 and named it after their twin daughters who recently started their senior year.



BARBEQUE TIME
OCTOBER 19, 1997















