

## Coast Lines

### SANTA CRUZ

#### Volunteers sought for point-in-time count

Volunteers are needed to help resolve homelessness in Santa Cruz County. The 2023 Point-in-Time Census Count will be held from 5-10 a.m. Feb. 23.

Volunteers are essential to successfully collect accurate and timely data on homelessness countywide, which is vital for funding and the development of policies that will help end homelessness in our community. Volunteers work in teams and are asked to lead a visual count of people who are experiencing homelessness in the County. All teams are led by a trained guide.

To sign up individually or as a team: [bit.ly/SantaCruzPIT2023](https://bit.ly/SantaCruzPIT2023).

### APTOS

#### Cabrillo Youth Chorus has openings

Spring semester registration for the Cabrillo Youth Chorus is open for all singers ages 8 to 18.

This semester offers opportunities to sing with the Santa Cruz Symphony and with the Ensemble Monterey Chamber Orchestra.

All who audition are accepted and placed in the most appropriate group considering age and musical experience. Rehearsals take place weekly, from 4:00-5:30 p.m. at the Cabrillo Music Building. Beginning singers meet Tuesdays, with intermediate and advanced students meeting Wednesdays.

For information, visit [CabrilloYouthChorus.org](https://CabrilloYouthChorus.org) or call 831-824-4023.

### APTOS

#### Santa Cruz Fly Fishing Club to meet

The Santa Cruz Fly Fishing Club will hold its monthly meeting at 6 p.m. Wednesday in person at the Aptos Grange, 2555 Mar Vista Drive and via Zoom.

In addition to the general meeting, there will be a presentation by Andrew Harris of Confluence Outfitters on fishing the Trinity River Basin.

For a Zoom invitation information or a link to the meeting, visit [santacruzflyfishing.org](https://santacruzflyfishing.org).

### FELTON

#### County opens new disaster recovery center

The County of Santa Cruz, in conjunction with federal, state and local partners, has opened a Disaster Recovery Center in the San Lorenzo Valley at the Felton Branch Library, 6121 Gushee St., in Felton.

The center's hours are 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. An additional site is open at Ramsay Park in Watsonville.

The San Lorenzo Valley Disaster Recovery Center includes staff from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the California Office of Emergency Service, the County of Santa Cruz and various state and local agencies that include disaster recovery as part of their mission.

President Joe Biden approved a major disaster declaration for the County of Santa Cruz and several other counties due to a series of atmospheric rivers beginning Dec. 27, 2022.

Anyone impacted by the disaster is invited to visit the center to access information and resources needed for recovery, regardless of the type of damage suffered, location of impacted residence or business, insurance status, immigration status, or any other factor, according to a release from the county.

To fill out an online assessment form prior to visiting a center, visit [tinyurl.com/SCCStormRecovery](https://tinyurl.com/SCCStormRecovery). Resources are also available online. To access the county's virtual recovery center, visit [santacruzcounty.us/OR3/Emergency.aspx](https://santacruzcounty.us/OR3/Emergency.aspx).

### SOQUEL

#### Cash for College workshop slated Jan. 31

A Cash for College workshop will be held from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Jan. 31 in room 202 at Soquel High School, 401 Soquel San Jose Road, Soquel.

High school seniors and their families will get help from Cabrillo College financial aid experts with their Free Application for Federal Student Aid or Dream Act Applications.

For information, email [bbanks@scs.net](mailto:bbanks@scs.net).

### SANTA CRUZ

#### Chowder cook-off slated Feb. 25-26

The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk is calling all professional and amateur chefs for the 42nd annual Santa Cruz Clam Chowder Cook-Off. The fundraiser for the City of Santa Cruz Parks & Recreation Department is a two-day event, with amateur chefs competing Feb. 25 and professional chefs Feb. 26.

This year, early bird registration deadline for all chowder chefs is Feb. 3. Teams that register during the early bird window will receive two Boardwalk rides wristbands and two event t-shirts. The final day for teams to register is Feb. 11. Entry fee is \$75. For information, entry form and rules, visit [beachboardwalk.com](https://beachboardwalk.com).

Prizes include cash and commemorative plaques. The competition takes place rain or shine along the Boardwalk. For information, call 831-420-5273.

### SANTA CRUZ

#### Bob Taylor to address genealogical society

Bob Taylor will be the guest speaker at the Genealogical Society of Santa Cruz County Lecture Series at 1 p.m. Feb. 7 on Zoom. The event is Cohosted online by the society and the Santa Cruz Public Libraries.

Taylor's talk is titled "Introduction to The Family History." The talk takes you through the learning system, activities, and research tools available at The Family History Guide, a free website dedicated to making your family history research easier, more efficient and more enjoyable.

Online registration through the Santa Cruz Public Libraries website is required for this event. To register, visit [santacruzpl.libcal.com](https://santacruzpl.libcal.com).

### SOQUEL

#### District hosts accountability plan forum

The Soquel Union Elementary School District will be hosting its annual Local Control & Accountability Plan community forum at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 8 at New Brighton Middle School, 250 Washburn Ave., Capitola.

Parents, staff and community members are encouraged to attend to hear about the state of the district, engage in roundtable discussions, and give input for the most important plan in the district, the Local Control & Accountability Plan (LCAP). Child care, Spanish translation and refreshments will all be provided to help remove barriers to participation.

The district wants to hear your voice and welcomes your attendance at this event.

## MOUNT MADONNA SCHOOL

# Students to perform 'Mamma Mia!'

The school will host a sing-along performance Sunday

By Aric Sleeper

[asleeper@santacruzsentinel.com](mailto:asleeper@santacruzsentinel.com)

WATSONVILLE » Mount Madonna School will host three performances of the famous musical, "Mamma Mia!" by a high school cast this weekend on Friday, Saturday and with a participatory, sing-along performance Sunday afternoon.

Set to the hit songs of the Swedish band ABBA, "Mamma Mia!" tells the story of Sophie Sheridan and her mother, Donna, in a tale of love, laughter and friendship as portrayed on stage by Mount Madonna School's high school students.

"ABBA's music will get the audience excited and up on its feet," said Mount Madonna junior and actor Anya Gonzalez. "In 'Mamma Mia!' there's a universal theme of identity and the struggle revolving around finding one's identity, which is part of human nature."

Performances will be held at 7 p.m. Friday, 2 p.m.



JOHN WELCH — CONTRIBUTED

Mount Madonna School will host three performances of "Mamma Mia!" this weekend.

Saturday and with the audience participation sing-along performance taking place 2 p.m. Sunday. All of the performances will be held at the Hawks' Nest Theater at Mount Madonna School.

Mount Madonna School faculty cautions that the play "Mamma Mia!" does include some mature-themed content and may not be suitable for young children. The original musical premiered onstage in 1999 and was later adapted into a 2008 film starring Amanda Seyfried and Meryl Streep.

"The story itself has

characters who are all longing for something bigger than themselves and I think that's something that high school students can all relate to," said Gonzalez. "It also sends the message that it's important to let loose from your everyday life and be a little bit more carefree. The show completely counters the idea of the hustle culture that is prominent in today's society."

Mount Madonna's High School performing arts program includes students from all grades in the high school.

"We are thrilled that MMS high school stu-

### IF YOU GO

**What:** Mount Madonna School presents: "Mamma Mia!"

**Where:** Hawks' Nest Theater at Mount Madonna School, 491 Summit Road, Watsonville.

**When:** 7 p.m. Friday, 2 p.m. Saturday, sing-along performance at 2 p.m. Sunday

**Cost:** Ticket prices range from \$10-\$20, all seats reserved.

dents chose 'Mamma Mia!' as their winter production," said co-director Sean Boulware. "It has wonderful themes and music that takes you back to the golden age of disco and ABBA. What a joy to be part of this stellar production."

"The arts are a marvelous place for a community to gather," added co-director Chelsea Otterness. "In the spirit of creativity and collaboration, we are pleased to see the student cast own this story, embrace the soundtrack and entertain us with their inspired movin' and groovin'."

For tickets, visit [mms-mammamia.brownpaper-tickets.com](https://mms-mammamia.brownpaper-tickets.com).

## TRANSPORTATION

# California high court ends legal limbo for over \$545 million in Bay Area bridge tolls

Funding plans for BART to San Jose, Caltrain and bus projects can move forward

By Elyyahu Kamisher  
[ekamisher@bayareanews-group.com](mailto:ekamisher@bayareanews-group.com)

More than \$545 million in Bay Area bridge tolls are now free to fund transit and highway projects across the region after the California Supreme Court ended a legal battle between a crusading anti-tax group and the Bay Area's bridge authority.

Transit planners are breathing a collective sigh of relief after the court decision on Tuesday. If the lawsuit from the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association succeeded the region's entire transportation financing map would have been upended. Projects like BART through San Jose, ferry terminal expansions in Berkeley and San Francisco, and extending Caltrain to downtown San Francisco faced the potential for further delays.

"It's certainly something that's been a cloud over us for the past four and a half years," said Thomas Hall, a spokesperson for Water Emergency Transportation Authority, which runs the San Francisco Bay Ferry. The ferry has been counting on the funding measure to back \$300 million in infrastructure projects along with vital operating funds to maintain current service levels. "It really put our business, our purpose, in the crosshairs."

The litigation centered around Regional Measure 3, a 2018 ballot measure approved by 55% of Bay Area voters to increase bridge tolls by \$1 in 2019, 2022 and again in 2025. The measure is expected to generate \$4.45 billion over the coming decades for projects aimed at combating traffic congestion.

But the money flowing from millions of drivers

passing through the Bay Area's seven state-owned bridges has been trapped in legal limbo, locked away in a Union Bank account pending the litigation. In another twist, the court tied the fate of Bay Area bridge tolls to a separate dispute between residential landlords and the City of Oakland's garbage and recycling fees. Plaintiffs in both cases argued that government fees functioned as new taxes and thus required a two-thirds majority to pass.

Despite the legal uncertainty, mega-projects have moved forward under the somewhat risky assumption that the Bay Area Toll Authority would prevail in the lawsuit. If the court ruled against the authority, drivers would have been reimbursed to the tune of \$545 million.

"This is the largest regional measure that's been

passed in Bay Area history," said Emily Loper, a vice president at the Bay Area Council, which spearheaded advocacy on the toll bridge increases. "The voters who passed this measure are already paying for that for the tolls and now they can finally start to reap the benefits."

Even before the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association stepped in Regional Measure 3 was contentious. The nine-county measure was rejected by voters in Contra Costa and Solano counties but buoyed by strong support in San Francisco and the South Bay.

Tolls across all Bay Area bridges, excluding the Golden Gate Bridge, rose to \$7 a trip in 2022 for commuters not using carpool or clean-air vehicles. In 2025 drivers will pay \$9 to cross the Bay Bridge at peak congestion.

## Harris

FROM PAGE 3

days, leaving her own.

In brief remarks to a gaggle of press, Harris said the White House would be renewing a push for gun control.

"Tragically, we keep saying the same thing," she said during brief remarks.

"I have had the unfortunate experience of visiting many of these sites," she said, "sometimes within days of the massacre like this."

She added: "We will always be a compassionate nation, mourn the loss ... but we must also require that leaders in our nation

will have the ability and the power and the responsibility to do something," she added.

As she started to walk away, a reporter asked her whether she thought something would change after this shooting, the latest tragedy illustrating the uniquely American scourge of mass gun violence.

Turning around with her arms outstretched, she called on lawmakers to pass new legislation to keep Americans safe from guns.

"Can they do something? Yes. Should they do something? Yes," Harris said. "Will they do something? That's why we must speak up."

One mourner, Priscilla

Wong, was among the first to lay down a bouquet of flowers after the vice president's caravan left the scene.

Falling to her knees, Wong wept, as reporters and cameras circled her. Speaking in short sentences disrupted by her own screams, Wong said she knew many of the Monterey Park victims, including Diana Tom — a beloved dance instructor at Star Dance. "We danced together for 10 years over," Wong said.

On Wednesday, Harris touched down at LAX just after 4:15 p.m. and was promptly greeted on the tarmac by L.A. County Supervisor Hilda Solis, Sheriff Robert Luna, L.A. Mayor

Karen Bass, Mayor Henry Lo and Mayor Pro Tem Jose Sanchez from Monterey Park and state Attorney General Rob Bonta.

Harris met privately, behind closed doors, with family members and first responders at the Langley Senior Center — which has served as a counseling and support center for victims' families this week — and was also scheduled to meet with public officials, including Sheriff Luna.

The vice president's visit coincided with a vigil outside the dance center, the fourth such gathering in three days in the heartbroken city that only a few days ago was in the midst of its Lunar New Year celebration.

## Tour

FROM PAGE 3

the wrecked Seacliff pier and crumbling SS Palo Alto, Biden pledged to bring "every element of

the federal government together" to aid in the short and long-term recovery effort.

Additionally, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks is organizing a recovery effort of its own. The organization's Executive

Director Bonny Hawley said its Seacliff State Beach Recovery Fund has raised more than \$13,000 in 12 days from 89 donors across the country. Donations can be made at [thatmypark.org](https://thatmypark.org).

"It means a lot for the re-

covery of our area — that kind of presidential attention," Hawley said, calling the whole day "a team effort."

"All the stars aligned and it's a reflection of our community really," she said.

## Events

FROM PAGE 3

According to the organizers, key components of transit equity are safety and access to public transit to ensure that the most vulnerable members of the community — including children, the elderly and disabled people — can move safely through our streets and around the county.

"Transit equity is acknowledging that everyone deserves safe, reliable and affordable transportation options," said Faina Segal of Friends of the Rail and Trail. "Whether traveling to school, work or the beach, everyone deserves to be able to get around our county. We need to invest in building a more reliable and frequent transportation service."

Organizers point to a 2017 report from the Community Traffic Safety Co-

alition that ranked Santa Cruz County as one of the worst counties in California for pedestrian and bicycle deaths and serious injuries due to traffic violence.

"Traffic violence has escalated over 51% in just a few years," Faulkner said. "Safe walkable communities are a key component of access to public transit. Nationwide and locally, the rate of pedestrian and bicycle deaths from car crashes has skyrocketed more than 30% just during the pandemic."

Transit Equity Week is supported by numerous organizations such as Santa Cruz County Friends of the Rail and Trail, Royal Dutch Gazette Bicycles, Santa Cruz NAACP, Santa Cruz Black, Regeneración, Youth For Climate Justice, GO Santa Cruz County and the Regional Transportation Commission, Ecology Action, Santa Cruz Climate Action Network, Slugs for Coast Connect and others.

For more information, visit [equitytransit.org](https://equitytransit.org).



NEVER GIVE UP UNTIL THEY BUCKLE UP.