



THE CHAMBER CONNECTION

A monthly newsletter of the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce, Visitor & Convention Bureau, and Economic Development Commission

November 2015

Thank you for shopping Santa Maria



Thanksgiving is a time when we can pause to reflect on the success and challenges of the past year in the company of those who are really important – our family.

As the community celebrates Thanksgiving, we are taking a moment in advance to acknowledge those people for whom we are thankful.

We are thankful for the hundreds of businesses and organizations that make up the membership of the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce. These men and women are dedicated to maintaining the economic vitality, community spirit and generosity that makes Santa Maria a great place to live, work and play. We are proud to count you among our extended business family.

We are thankful for all who stand in uniform to protect us each day and night.

There are brave men and women in our military at home and abroad who miss these celebrations with family to serve a mission greater than themselves.

There are police officers, firemen and firewomen, EMT's, volunteer patrols, and a host of support personnel who come to our aid and put themselves in harm's way each day on our own streets.

Not all uniforms come with badges. There are doctors, nurses and medical technicians who work around the clock to provide excellent health care.

Throughout our community, our friends and neighbors work in industries and sectors that make our lives better, richer, and more productive. We are thankful for teachers, clergy, office staff, store clerks, political leaders, truck drivers, construction workers and farmers. The list is long.

Businesses in Santa Maria appreciate the dollars you spend with them. On their behalf, we say thank you.

Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce Salutes Veterans

The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce proudly hosted its first-ever Salute to Veterans luncheon at the Radisson Hotel on Nov. 12 in honor of the brave men and women who serve our country in uniform.

With more than 80 participants, including about 40 veterans spanning the generations, the event featured the posting of colors by the Santa Maria Valley Veteran Honor Guard, a patriotic medley by Chamber board member George Majoue and a speech by Col. J. Christopher Moss, Vandenberg AFB Commander.

"The support that's being shown is not only to our veterans, it's also being offered to those who are still serving like myself, and even to the families of those who are serving," he said. "[In a ceremony yesterday] I talked about how common it has become for my wife and my children to be thanked and recognized for their service. I can't tell you how important that is to me, and how important that is to all of us who serve."

See his full presentation on video at <http://on.fb.me/1WQTdZo>.

He said members of the military sign up for the life they lead, but the families have little choice. They are asked to move from post to post, making new friends constantly.

"We ask them to restart their lives over and over again every couple of years."

Col. Moss thanked the Chamber of Commerce for hosting the Veterans Day event.

"It strikes that it is very fitting that the Salute to Veterans event be sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce," he said. "The truth of the matter is that the very history of our nation is tied to the relationship between commerce and military."

The Founding Fathers knew that the future of the nation was tied to commerce and the protection of that commerce required a dedicated force on the waters for shipping, Moss said. The Founders founded the authority to maintain a permanent navy.

For the first 100 years of the United States, the navy was the primary military force, he said. During the Civil War, both the Union and Confederacy turned to the skills and expertise of business men to carry out their campaigns, including manufacturing, accounting, logistics, carpentry, etc.

"The use of businessmen for critical military skills expanded significantly during World War I and World War II," he said. "And in both of those cases, the U.S. military was able to quickly build military capability by tapping the diverse skills of the American businessman. [Those talents] could not be matched by any other country."



Salute to Veterans
Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce

Welcome New Members!

The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce was pleased to welcome the following businesses as new members during the month of October. We appreciate their vote of confidence in our ability to add value to their business and to create a strong local economy together!

■ Betty S Tibbs, MD
345 W Waller Ln
Santa Maria, CA 93455-1946
(805) 925-2558

■ Keller Williams Realty Coastal Valley
Stacy Avila Ruiz
204 E. Enos
Santa Maria, CA 93454-7203
(805) 310-5800
<http://kwcoastalvalley.com>

■ Jaffa Café
Ali Saleh
2530 S. Broadway, Ste A
Santa Maria, CA 93454
(805) 354-7229
www.jaffacafe.us

■ Denny's Restaurant
Juan Rojero
1019 E. Main St.
Santa Maria, CA 93454-5332
(805) 922-3153
www.dennys.com

■ State Farm Insurance - Nancy Boster
Nancy Boster
1100 S. Broadway
Santa Maria, CA 93454-5332
(805) 922-4066
www.nancyboster.com/

■ Brucher & Golden Bear Winery
Janis Schmidt
2115 S. Blosser #118
Santa Maria, CA 93458-7303
(805) 347-8720
www.bruchervine.com

■ Enterprise Truck Rental
Stephanie Melton
2691 Santa Maria Way
Santa Maria, CA 93455
(805) 346-6165
www.enterprisetrucks.com

■ Coast Family Home Care, Inc.
Rhoda DeLeon
2880 Santa Maria Way Ste D-1
Santa Maria, CA 93455-2172
(805) 934-0600
www.coastfamilyhomecare.com

■ Abba Employer Services, Inc.
Gina Avalos
110 S. Pine St. #103
Santa Maria, CA 93458
(805) 928-6555
www.abbaemployerservices.com

■ Landlord Liaison Partnership
Susan O'Higgins
425 E. Cota Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 335-7470
<http://landlordliaisonsb.org>

■ Dream Dinners Central Coast
Lauren Persall
795 E. Foothill Blvd, Ste B
San Luis Obispo, CA 93405-1600
(805) 786-4852
www.dreamdinners.com/
ferrinsquare

GROUND BREAKING • GRAND OPENING • NEW MEMBER • RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONIES



RIBBON CUTTING

Community Bank of Santa Maria

2739 Santa Maria Way
Santa Maria



RIBBON CUTTING

Vallery Art Gallery

1108 E. Clark Ave.
Orcutt



RIBBON CUTTING

Altrusa International

Santa Maria



RIBBON CUTTING

Rabobank Operations Call Center

Santa Maria



RIBBON CUTTING

CovenTree Olde World Market

722 E. Main St.
Santa Maria

**CHAMBER STAFF****President & CEO**

Glenn Morris, ACE 925-2403 x825
glenn@santamaria.com

VP, Chamber Operations

Terri Oneschuck 925-2403 x824
terrio@santamaria.com

Director, Economic Development

Pam Avila 925-2403 x817
edc@santamaria.com

Director, Visitor & Convention Bureau

Gina Keough 925-2403 x814
gina@santamaria.com

Membership Manager

Cara Martinez 925-2403 x852
cara@santamaria.com

Events & Special Projects Manager

Jennifer Harrison 925-2403 x815
jennifer@santamaria.com

Group Sales & Services Coordinator

Terri Paniagua 925-2403 x851
terri@santamaria.com

Administrative Support Coordinator

Patricia Horta 925-2403 x812
patricia@santamaria.com

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Tim Woodbury
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The ChamberConnection is the official monthly publication of the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce, 614 S Broadway, Santa Maria, CA 93454-5111, (805) 925-2403. Send corrections or good news submissions to chambernews@santamaria.com

Helping share your events in the Santa Maria Valley

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the members of our Chamber of Commerce and Visitor and Convention Bureau, as well as the Santa Maria business community, for working with us as we strive to increase overnight stays and promote leisure visits and meeting/convention business opportunities in the Santa Maria Valley.

Without your support, participation, involvement and marketing dollars, we would not be able to achieve our goals of increasing revenue for the City of Santa Maria. I thank the members of the hospitality industry that keep us up to date on challenges they are facing so that we can lend our support and services to them. What you face, we face. Together, we can work toward minimizing or removing obstacles and challenges that hinder your company from success and business.



Gina Keough
Director, Visitor & Convention Bureau

I thank the members of our hospitality industry that are so great at communicating what they have to offer our visitors. An enormous part of my job is being a 'content curator'. I need content to share with resources and industry liaisons outside of the Santa Maria Valley – to further our message and bring more domestic and international travelers to our city. The more I know, the more I can do to promote your business or event, and the Santa Maria Valley.

I am always available to hear what you'd like to share with me. Please stop in or contact me at any time. You can reach me at (805) 925-2403, ext. 814 or Gina@santamaria.com. Our office is located at 614 S. Broadway, Santa Maria. #TravelMeansBusiness #TourismWorks #TravelMeansJobs
May God bless you richly this holiday season!

A Heart for Service during the Holidays and Throughout the Year

During this special time of year, it's an opportune time to devote some time for those in our community who need our help. CASA and the Food Bank of Santa Barbara County are just two of the many organizations needing your heart, hands and mind during the holiday. It's easy to get involved with whatever time you might have available.

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) There are so many ways to get involved – with fundraising events, recruitment and outreach committees. In particular, they need someone with good writing skills to help create media content. They have the huge task of fulfilling Christmas wish lists for over 400 children so being a wish

granter is always a big need. You can even become a friend of CASA's and a few times a year host a gathering in your home, work, coffee shop, wherever... they bring refreshments and provide information about CASA. It's a great networking opportunity and fun way to support CASA's mission. This year CASA will have a float in the holiday parade and I'm in need of holiday and building supplies so maybe doing a social media drive to encourage your contacts to donate, etc. Contact: Crystal Moreno, Recruiting and Outreach Director CASA of Santa Barbara County, phone 805-739-9102 ext. 2594, fax 805-614-1027 e-mail crystal@sbcasa.org, web www.sbcasa.org

When you Bag it and Go... with the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County! Give smiles to hundreds of seniors in need of extra food each month, by volunteering to prepare bagged lunches for them through the Foodbank. The generosity of a couple hours of your time will bring them comfort and joy. For a list of dates and times as well as additional opportunities to serve, please contact Darlene Chavez, Community Leadership Coordinator Foodbank of Santa Barbara County, 490 W. Foster Road, Santa Maria, CA 93455 (805) 937-3422 x 109 or (805) 403-5354 w w w . f o o d b a n k s b c . o r g We're on LinkedIn and Facebook

Shop Local: The Gift of Time and Experience

Please shop local this holiday season, especially with our Chamber members. But if you don't know what gift to give, maybe it's time to consider the gift of an experience.

The following Santa Maria offerings will bring the joy of special memories and time enjoyed together with your family and friends.

Santa Maria Philharmonic's Holiday Program: Yuletide Brass & Organ

www.santamariaphilharmonic.org
December 4, 2015 at 7:30 p.m.
Pre-Concert Lecture at 6:50pm

Held at First United Methodist Church, 311 S. Broadway, Santa Maria, featuring Conductor Greg Magie and a program of Holiday Favorites. General Admission: \$30-35; Seniors/Military: \$25-30; Students: \$12-15.

PCPA Conservatory Theatre Presents Cinderella

www.pcpa.org
November 12-December 23. Special show for children under 5: 1:30 pm matinee performances of Cinderella - ages 4 and up are welcome.

The Great American Melodrama Presents their Annual Holiday Extravaganza

http://www.americanmelodrama.com/
November 19-December 31

Bouldering at The Climbing Pad Gym in Santa Maria

This incredible indoor climbing gym is great fun for all ages to climb the ever changing rock wall and try the tightrope?? Day passes and memberships available. https://www.facebook.com/thepadclimbing. 2399 A St, Santa Maria. (844) 254-6287

Wine & Design Orcutt

Enjoy a delightful afternoon or evening painting your own masterpiece – either featured art or open studio, where you choose the painting you like! Alcoholic beverages are available for purchase, including Santa Maria Valley wine. Feel free to bring your own non-alcoholic beverage and snacks. Perfect for groups, couples, singles and families. https://www.wineanddesign.com/calendars/orcutt

Visit California Update

One of our best tourism supporters, resources, and tourism engines is Visit California. On Nov. 3, we had the honor of hosting our Tourism Marketing Series at the beautiful Far Western Tavern featuring a very special guest speaker, Brian Tucker, our industry liaison with Visit CA.

Visit California has a \$100 million budget to inspire travel to California. Brian gave a dynamic, fact-filled, inspirational message about ways we can work with Visit California to further our branding and marketing messages to grow tourism in the Santa Maria Valley (and beyond). This event was open to our members and the general public. As we enter into our shoulder season, now is the time (if you haven't already), to explore ways you can promote your business by submitting content, photos, events, etc. to Visit California. The database system they use works well to keep our information easy to reach for programming and newsletters, as well as special promotions.

- DREAM 365 TV: Our Dream 365 TV network is now live. The following is a direct link if you are interested in viewing some of the video content: <http://www.visitcalifornia.com/dream365tv>

- CALIFORNIA DREAM EATER: Here is a link to our new social media series showcasing California's culinary experience: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3Oy4vDW9pA>

- CO-OP OPPORTUNITIES: Please use the following link to explore the various co-op opportunities: <http://industry.visitcalifornia.com/Grow-Your-Business/Co-Opportunities/>

- 2015 CALIFORNIA VISITOR GUIDE AND MAPS: The following is a direct link to the bulk order form for the guides and maps. Simply fill out the information and they will be shipped directly to you: <http://industry.visitcalifornia.com/TAP/CVG-Order-Form-Bulk>

- RESEARCH: The following is a direct link to our research dashboard where you can navigate the latest information regarding trends and visitation. Research Dashboard: <http://industry.visitcalifornia.com/Research/>

- GLOBAL MARKET PROFILES: For your reference, the following is a link to the market profiles for: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Scandinavia, South Korea, United Kingdom and United States. <http://industry.visitcalifornia.com/Market-Strategy/Global-Markets/>

For more information, contact: Brian Tucker, Industry Relations

Los Angeles & Southern California
VISIT CALIFORNIA
D: 323.400.7035
E: btucker@visitcalifornia.com
555 Capitol Mall, Suite 1100 • Sacramento, CA 95814
www.industry.visitcalifornia.com

Shop
Santa Maria

WARM WISHES FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

SHOP
WINE
DINE

Local businesses who make up the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce thank you for shopping local and helping maintain a strong economy at home.

Find what you're looking for here:
santamaria.com/business-directory

Write Press Releases that work

A press release is a valuable marketing tool for any business... even if the media never publishes it.

As a former news reporter, I've seen hundreds – if not a few thousand – press releases over the years. The press releases that worked best were always the ones that made my job easier. They often got published as-is without much change from me. Poorly written press releases were often placed in the round file under my desk.

Toward the end of this article I'll explain how even a press release destined for the recycle bin in a newsroom is still a valuable tool to the business that sent it. For now, let's focus on some of the things to avoid, as well as a few best practices for press release success.

If nothing else, a press release is a great tool for boiling down the particulars of what's noteworthy in an organization and determining the essence of what's worth telling others. The rule "less is more" is often a good guide, and the most relevant information should stand out.

Here are a few press release pitfalls:

Don't start with the date – The best press releases read like news stories. News stories never start with the date. News stories start with a lead paragraph that seeks to gain the interest of the reader with the most important facts first – usually answering the questions of what is happening with whom. Details involving when and where are usually not primary.

Don't quote from Webster's Dictionary – Resist the temptation to quote from Webster's Dictionary when you don't know what else to say. Such as, "Webster's Dictionary defines confidence as..." A line like that is sure to be met by eye rolling by the editor who reads it.

Don't use exclamation points – Of course you are excited by the news, but exclamation points will only cause more eye rolling by the editors.

Along those lines, don't unnecessarily capitalize words just



Justin Stoner
Marketing
Manager

for the sake of emphasis. And be sure to use a third-person voice. Don't use personal pronouns.

While I could go on with press release "sins," it may be more helpful to pass along some best practices that will make you look like a press-release superstar.

Do send your press release as plain text or in Microsoft Word document, not as a PDF document. PDF documents are not easy to copy and paste because it transfers formatting styles that are difficult to erase.

Do use plain language that non-experts would understand, not industry jargon or acronyms only you understand.

Do shorten URLs; long web addresses never look good.

Do include quotes from a spokesperson.

Do include photos if you have them.

Do include after-hours and weekend contact information; you never know when a reporter will be assigned to follow up on your release.

Once your well-worded press release is written, be sure to distribute to reporters at all of the local media outlets; radio, print and television. Don't be afraid to follow up with a phone call, sometimes that little extra effort makes the difference between publication and recycling.

And if your press release does flop, don't despair. Proudly publish your press release on your own website, your blog, Facebook, Twitter, etc. Any thoughtfully written piece of work that speaks positively about developments in your business should be seen as a durable digital asset. It's something that will live on the Internet for as long as you're in business, and serve as a tool to drive traffic to your website and win customers over time.

Now go make some news.

Online Course: Advice on customer service training for employees



Editor's note: The Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce has partnered with an online business training service that offers a variety of online courses for employees and bosses alike. You can sample some of the courses at <http://santamaria.com/business-services/online-training-resources>.

Good customer service is imperative to running a great company. As business managers, it is your job to look within your company and analyze who your workers are. Know who you are hiring and implement policies that can be followed by all employees, regardless of age, socioeconomic status or gender.

Managers tend to visualize what customer service policies may look like, however you need to go a step further and understand who the employees are that will be carrying these policies out. CSM has a great explanation of this; take a moment to read their story.

To implement a strong customer service training program, consider the following:

Your company's mission statement. This is what your company was founded on. Let your employees be the face behind that mission.

Think about what you sell or what services you offer. Train your employees about those goods/services so they are confident in their abilities to interact with others.

Ask yourself if you want your customer to receive the same excellent service from the receptionist who greets them and the professional they came to obtain services from. If the answer is yes, create and implement a set of guidelines and procedures that will be followed by all employees.

Role play with your employees. Good customer service allows an ability to adapt as the situation demands. Coach your employees on de-escalating unhappy clients. Remember, that adhering to company guidelines can be just as damaging to customer service as not having any at all. B2B has a great story about customer service rules versus customer service guidelines, and how both affect the treatment of customers.

Provide customer service surveys. These can be a non-threatening way for your client's to offer honest feedback regarding their experiences.

Above all, teach your employees to treat the customers as they would like to be treated.

Cogno is a universe of online training courses created by industry experts, and delivered via an intuitive learning platform through the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce website. Online training through a Learning Management System is an easy and convenient way to distribute the latest coursework tailored to meet the needs of every department within large corporations and small businesses.

The Biggest Unused Advantage Small Businesses Have Over Box Stores

Some days it feels hard to compete with the loss leaders big box stores employ, the operating hours they're able to keep, the programs, their ad budget, their marketing...the list goes on. But small businesses do have an advantage box stores don't and it's one that's rarely used.

Small businesses have a community connection. Shopping local is very vogue right now. If a small business employs digital media to increase that local following, they can compete with businesses whose total ad budgets alone dwarf the small business' annual revenue. Small businesses can easily build a tribe on digital media and all it takes is time. Here's why many big businesses can't compete with smaller ones on social media.

Big Marketing Has Many Levels

Yes, big businesses can employ 15 social media gurus in one geographic area, while small businesses are often stuck posting between customers, but with big operations come big sign-offs. There are often rules, protocols, and procedures that need to be adhered to in a large organization. Marketing initiatives come from headquarters and issues are handled by them as well, often causing



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some delay in response. The content schedule is planned long in advance with big corporations and they are less agile.

Large corporate marketing teams also have tone documents and posting protocols that must be adhered to. This means they have a consistent brand but often lack the local flavor that's imbued in small business social media.

Corporate Marketing Happens Elsewhere

Often social media opps are run out of locations away from your town's branch store. This means the team which is posting amazing content will miss out on the finer points of what it's like to live in your area. If you're a small business using social media, you'll want to capitalize on

this point. Use your time on social media capturing the uniqueness of your town and its residents. It's a great way to shine and big business simply can't compete.

They Operate on What Works for all of Their Stores

If you live in the south, you might've noticed that big national box stores put things on clearance at the end of summer just like they do up north, even if your area stays warm for another five months. Box stores operate from a one-size-fits-all attitude when it comes to inventory. They have to in order to manage their operations. Local stores don't have to operate that way. If a southern beach store wants to keep bikinis on its racks year long, it's not only possible, it's probably a good idea.

You can operate your digital media the same way. Talking to people about the things that are going on in your community and employing content marketing on topics (even if they're past season) is possible, and easy, for a local business.

Their Content Marketers are not Experts in Local Information

Many big businesses have adopted content marketing. They have the money and resources to do it very effectively but just like their inventory selection has to be based on nationwide timelines so does their social media. I have yet to see a box store employ different social media in one area than another (unless we're talking franchises). Box stores are going to provide a lot of content that will be effective for most of their customers. If they targeted content geographically, they'd run the risk of spreading themselves too thin and watering down their ROI.

Local business owners can provide content on things happening to them now. While a box store could write an article about grouper fishing in the gulf, a local store could speak to the current conditions in a much more authoritative way. They're able to write about their experience grouper fishing yesterday or this morning.

Small businesses have multiple advantages over big business when it comes to social media. They can build very tight relationships with their neighbors through publishing much more targeted, effective content and allowing their personalities to show through on social media. The only thing left, is to find the time to do so.

But if you know you have an advantage over the competition, shouldn't you be using it?

Christina R. Green teaches small businesses, chambers and associations how to connect through content. Her articles have appeared in the Midwest Society of Association Executives' Magazine, NTEN.org, AssociationTech, and Socialfish. She is a regular blogger at Frankjkeny.com and the Event Manager Blog.



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Contact Jennifer.Alvarado@officedepot.com



Renewing Members

- **66 Years**
Tunnell Roofing Co., Inc.
- **54 Years**
Valley Glass & Mirror Co
- **40 Years**
Bruce T. Carter, DDS
- **35 Years**
Elks Lodge #1538
- SM Tire
- Knights Of Columbus
- **32 Years**
Workforce Resource Center
- **31 Years**
Straw Hat Pizza
- **30 Years**
Martinez & Assoc Architecture, Inc.
- Santa Maria Museum Of Flight
- **28 Years**
Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites - Portabella Restaurant
- **27 Years**
Rizzoli's Automotive
- **23 Years**
Law Offices of Kim Mistretta, The
- Foodbank Of Santa Barbara County
- **21 Years**
Bent Axles Car Club
- J B Dewar, Inc.
- **20 Years**
Kiwanis Club Of S M - Noontimers
- **19 Years**
Spencers Market
- Zodiac Cabin Interiors
- **18 Years**
Laurel Labor Services
- **17 Years**
Ross Realty
- Santa Maria Swim Club
- **16 Years**
Minerva Club
- JP Morgan Chase
- **14 Years**
Stantec Consulting Services Inc.
- **13 Years**
Luis Oasis Senior Center
- Lucas & Lewellen Vineyards
- Perry's Electric Motors & Controls
- **12 Years**
Jan-Pro Cleaning Systems Central Coast
- Community Auto Group
- Ravatt Albrecht & Associates, Inc.
- **11 Years**
Keller Williams Realty Coastal Valley - JEANNIE LAMBERT
- **10 Years**
Ricky's House of Pizza
- **9 Years**
Knollwood Meadows Apartments
- Dan Blough Construction, Inc
- **6 Years**
Hometown Insurance Services, Inc
- Santa Barbara Family Dentistry
- Tailwinds Bicycle Club of Santa Maria
- **5 Years**
Mission City Fumigation of Santa Maria
- **4 Years**
Jersey Mike's Subs
- Excel Personnel Services
- **3 Years**
DAYS INN
- **2 Years**
Triple Crown Sports
- iCracked - Pete Adame
- Juliet's Salon - Fran Maltby
- **1 Years**
Patricio's Pizza
- Church for Life
- Lineage Logistics

CLASS Act – Attendance Matters

Mentor, we learn in Homer's Odyssey, was the name of one of Odysseus' trusted friends. The king, before departing to fight the Trojans, left his island realm in the care of his reliable counselor.

In addition to his stewardship, Mentor also served as a teacher and advisor to Odysseus' young son. Little did Mentor know he would have to fulfill those duties for nearly 20 years, as the King of Ithaca labored away in the siege of Troy, and then was waylaid for another decade on his winding return home.

The allusion to Homer is an appropriate introduction to three remarkable Santa Barbara County educators who will be recognized as "Distinguished Mentors" at next month's A Salute to Teachers, a gala event that will be held at the Lobero Theatre on Nov. 14 at 5 p.m.

Francisco Diaz Real of Lompoc High School, Clanci Chiu, who worked in the Carpinteria Unified School District last academic year and now works at the Santa Barbara County Education Office, and Janis Spracher from Monte Vista Elementary School, will be recognized for their selfless work with students and new teachers.

All three distinguished mentors are "home-grown," outstanding products of local public school systems to which they continue to give back. Together they are shaping the lives of their students while fostering professional development in young teachers—much as they were helped when they first began in the field.

It wouldn't be correct to say that each entered education as though it was his or her destiny, however. "It was something of an odyssey," Diaz Real says of his route to the classroom. After graduating from Cabrillo High School in 1995, he went to a trade school in Phoenix to study architectural drafting. "I was 17," he says. "My parents had to sign my rental agreement."

The program was expensive, but Diaz Real soon knew it wasn't a good fit for him. "I was in it at that point, however," he says. After finishing the program, he returned home to work as a draftsman. "I had to honor the sacrifice of my parents. They had very little disposable income, and really tightened their belts to make my future happen. I couldn't just walk away. But I started looking for alternatives. I wanted to be a teacher."

Over the next eight years, Diaz Real would study part time at Allan Hancock College, eventually earning his associate degree. "Thankfully, the road to my bachelors went much more smoothly." Now in his eighth year of teaching math at Lompoc High School, Diaz Real has found his calling. And the students and young teachers who benefit from his compassion and expertise are glad he has.

For Clanci Chiu, teaching was in the gene pool. Both her parents taught in local schools, and the idea that an education was the door to opportunity was impressed upon her not only by her folks, but by her grandfather, too.

Mr. Yee, the long-time owner of the Fresno Market on the corner of Micheltorena and Bath Streets in Santa Barbara (now La Bamba Market), emigrated to the U.S. from China in the 1920s with just a fifth grade education. "He was never embarrassed

about his lack of formal schooling," Chiu says, "but he also understood that education can be a game-changer for a child's future."

Chiu, who as a schoolgirl frequently spent afternoons at her grandfather's store, says she wasn't the only one who benefited from his wisdom. "My grandfather emphasized the importance of school to just about every kid who walked through that storefront," she says.

A graduate of Santa Barbara High School, Chiu says she first learned the importance of mentoring when she began student teaching at her alma mater. "It was strange at first, having been a student, and now I was a colleague.

"But those teachers believed in me," she continues. "I saw how they fostered relationships and established connections with students. And when I struggled," she concludes, "those mentors were the first ones to offer encouragement."

Chiu recalls those moments from her formative years when she works with young teachers who struggle with classroom management and teaching strategies. "Teaching is a craft, and requires a lot of practice and commitment. I love working with educators who recognize that."

Education was also a "family business" for Janis Spracher. "My mom and my two older sisters were teachers. But I wanted to break the tradition," Spracher says. She went to UC Irvine and earned a degree in psychology. Soon after she married and started a family.

"I started volunteering at my children's preschool, and continued doing so when they started at Monte Vista," she says. Soon she began working on her teaching credential at CSU Northridge. "Hope Elementary needed a fifth-sixth grade combination teacher, and they initially brought me on with just an emergency credential."

"The support I received from teachers that year was remarkable," she continues. "They would share the workload and share ideas—even about their failures. It provided an opportunity to reflect, to think about the cycle of continuous improvement."

Spracher marvels about her current school and its staff. "To be surrounded by so many people who are so talented and dedicated...that's a very special thing." The help she received as a new teacher is what compels her to be so generous with her expertise with new colleagues.

Fittingly, Spracher told me she's been teaching Homer's Odyssey to her sixth grade students at Monte Vista for nearly 10 years. "It's a poem that nearly every student can relate to," she says. "Homer's figures are so rich; students can always find someone in there with whom they identify."

Not surprisingly, Spracher has a fondness for the Mentor character. "I admire his integrity, his sense of duty and commitment," she says. She also likes the fact that the goddess Athena would often disguise herself as Mentor when she appeared amongst the mortals.

"A good choice," Spracher says, smiling. "Smart woman."

GUEST COMMENTARY

Bill Cirone

Santa Barbara County Superintendent of Schools



NOVEMBER 2015						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 VCB Marking Series Brian Tucker, Visit California Far Western Tavern 9:00 am	4	5	6 Build Your Business Breakfast VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 11:30 am	7
8	9 Transportation Committee Veteran's Memorial Hall 12:00 pm	10 Salute to Veterans Luncheon Radisson Hotel 12:00 pm	11 VETERANS DAY HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSED	12	13 Build Your Business Breakfast VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 8:00 am	14
15	16	17	18 Executive Committee Meeting Chamber Office - 7:30 am Business Development Forum 2016 Business Forecast Santa Maria Fairpark - Fountain Pavilion Building 11:30 am	19 Santa Maria Merchants Committee MIYB Spaces 7:30 am Mixer - Altrusa Festival of Trees 1447 S. Broadway JC Penney Shopping Center 5:00 pm	20 Build Your Business Breakfast VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 8:00 am	21
22	23 Board of Director's Meeting Chamber Office 11:30 am	24 Ambassador's Meeting North China 12:00 pm	25	26 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSED	27 THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSED	28
29	30					

DECEMBER 2015						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 Christmas Mixer Univision 1467 Fairway Dr. 5:00 pm	4 Build Your Business Breakfast VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 8:00 am	5
6	7	8 Freedom Monument Ceremony 600 S. McClelland St. 10:00 am	9 Christmas Luncheon Elk's Lodge 12:00 pm	10	11 Build Your Business Breakfast VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 8:00 am	12
13	14	15	16	17	18 Build Your Business Breakfast VTC Enterprises The A Street Café 8:00 am	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSED	26
27	28	29	30	31		