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Cover: Along with Independence Day celebrations, the holiday reminds us of our country's founding and the legal profession's vital role in our republic. Photo courtesy of Tara Jacobi.

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Emphasize Mental Health in Our Legal Community

by Gregory Gillett

s we navigate the postpandemic era, our legal community faces unique challenges. Among these, the one I want to spotlight today is the increasingly pertinent issue of mental health.

We, as attorneys, are no strangers to the inherent stressors of our profession—tight deadlines, high stakes and demanding clients. During the past year, the pandemic has undeniably amplified these stressors, revealing the urgent need for a supportive infrastructure addressing mental health within our community. Anecdotally, we've heard from our members about the escalating emotional toll, increased unreasonableness and heightened desperation in clients. The impact is real, and it's time we face this issue head-on.

Recent findings by the American Bar Association lend credence to these anecdotal accounts. A survey of more than 4200 members found that a significant number of attorneys, particularly women with children and lawyers of color, feel overwhelmed by their professional pressures. Many contemplate leaving the legal profession as a result of escalating stress levels.¹ Tragically, we have lost colleagues in recent years to struggles with mental health, further highlighting the importance of addressing this crisis. This is not just a matter of individual concern. The mental health crisis in our profession affects us all—as professionals, as friends, as a community. Further, it impacts the quality of justice.

Is it Just Stress?

How can we recognize when stress transforms into a more significant mental health issue? Here are a few signs:

1. Prolonged and Persistent: When stress is continuous and persistent over a long period, without adequate relief or relaxation between challenges, it can lead to a state of chronic stress. Chronic stress can increase the risk of developing mental health disorders like depression, anxiety and substance abuse disorders.

2. Interference with Daily Activities: When stress starts to interfere with an attorney's ability to perform their duties or manage other aspects of their life (such as personal relationships, self-care, etc.), it may be a sign that the stress has progressed into a mental health issue. **3. Physical Symptoms:** Excessive stress can also manifest as physical symptoms, such as headaches, sleep disturbances, changes in appetite, and other health problems. If stress is causing physical health issues, it may indicate a mental health concern.

4. Changes in Behavior or Mood: Changes in behavior, such as increased irritability, difficulty concentrating, feelings of being overwhelmed, or social withdrawal can be signs that stress is becoming a mental health issue.

5. Substance Misuse: If an attorney begins relying on alcohol, drugs or other substances as a way of coping with stress, this could be a sign of a developing substance use disorder, which is a serious mental health concern.²

Secondary Trauma

Secondary trauma, or compassion fatigue, is another increasing issue. This refers to the emotional distress experienced when exposed to another's firsthand trauma. It can result in significant changes to one's psychological, physical and emotional well-being, and our profession is particularly susceptible.

So, what can we do about it?

1. Prioritize Self-Care: Maintaining physical health can significantly bolster mental resilience. Make time for regular exercise, eat healthy foods and get enough sleep.

2. Employ Mindfulness

Techniques: Practices like yoga, meditation and deep-breathing can help manage stress and promote relaxation.

3. Establish Boundaries: A healthy work-life balance is crucial. Set clear boundaries to prevent work stress from invading personal time.

4. Seek Professional Help: If you notice symptoms of secondary trauma, do not hesitate to seek help from mental health professionals.

5. Embrace Peer Support: Share experiences with colleagues to garner emotional support and practical advice.

6. Educate Yourself: Understanding secondary trauma (its risks and symptoms) can aid in recognizing signs and seeking timely help.

7. Take Regular Breaks: Short breaks can provide relaxation and prevent feelings of being overwhelmed.

8. Cultivate Hobbies: Engaging in activities outside of work can provide a mental break and help reduce stress

9. Foster a Positive Work Environment: Encourage open dialogue about mental health and promote resources that support mental well-being.

10. Practice Self-Reflection: Regularly assess your emotional health. Acknowledge your feelings —it's okay to feel upset or stressed; recognizing these feelings is a critical step in managing them.

Supporting Others Close to Us

The weight of overwhelming stress isn't something to bear alone, and we need to be vigilant in recognizing it in our colleagues. If you notice a fellow attorney appearing to grapple with mounting pressures, I encourage you to take the first step and connect with them. No psychology degree is needed for this—sometimes a kind word or a willing ear can be transformative.

Remember, in these conversations, kindness and patience are your best tools. You aren't there to make a diagnosis but to offer a compassionate space for them to voice their concerns. It could also be beneficial to share any resources you've found useful, such as mental health support networks or mindfulness practices.³ If they seem open to it, urge them to seek assistance from a mental health professional—those trained to handle the storm that they might be navigating.

And please, let's remember to check in again later. A quick text or a brief call to see how they're faring can be a crucial lifeline, reminding them that they're not facing these struggles in isolation and that help is always at hand.

What We Have Done and What We Need to Do

Our local Bar is working diligently to support you. We had an impactful presentation last month from the Lawyers Assistance Program of the State Bar of California, which provides free counseling for attorneys.

Specifically, "[t]he State Bar provides free, short-term counseling for attorneys who need help with a difficult personal problem or career transition. You can access up to two free one-on-one counseling sessions with a local therapist who specializes in working with legal professionals around any personal issue or concern impacting work productivity—stress, burnout, depression, career concerns or relationship issues."⁴

Moving forward, the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association is considering the creation of a peer support program. We need volunteers to spearhead this initiative. By developing such a program, we can provide muchneeded assistance to our fellow legal professionals, helping them navigate these challenging times and supporting their mental health.

As attorneys, we have dedicated ourselves to help others. It is now time that we extend that same dedication to help our own. We owe it to ourselves, to our colleagues and to the legal community at large.

If you are interested in developing a peer support program, please email me directly at president@slobar.org.

Thank you for your time and, please remember, we are all in this together.

In Service,

gfg 🔳

Footnotes

¹ Roberta D. Liebenberg & Stephanie A. Scharf, Where Does the Legal Profession Go From Here? Lawyers Tell Us How and Where They Want to Work, in American Bar Assn., Practice Forward Report (2022), available at https://www. americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/ administrative/law-practice-division/ practice-forward/2022-practice-forwardreport.pdf.

² American Psychiatric Association, Warning Signs of Mental Illness (2020) https://www.psychiatry.org/patientsfamilies/warning-signs-of-mental-illness (as of May 30, 2023).

³ For a Reading list, see, Wellness, Mindfulness, Work-life Balance American Bar Association, https://www.americanbar. org/groups/lawyer_assistance/resources/lawyer_wellness/

⁴ https://www.calbar.ca.gov/Attorneys/ For-Attorneys/Lawyer-Assistance-Program/LAP-Support-Services-for-Attorneys



Editor's Note

by Tara Jacobi

that it was done with being ruled by Great Britain. Done. Yet, we should never forget that independence likely comes at huge cost—a cost in human life. A cost in the infrastructure of a country. A cost in everything previously known before.

ation of Independence was signed by

Congress. The United States declared

Sydney Schanberg, a journalist for *The New York Times*, inspired the film, "The Killing Fields," covering Cambodia's fall. Yet, that is only part of the story; his friendship with photojournalist Dith Pran is the profound part.

During their forced separation, Schanberg made it back to New York, while Pran was sent to the countryside to work as a slave, surviving more than four years of beatings, labor and a horrid diet. Pran later escaped over the Thai border. When he found freedom, Schanberg, who never gave up hoping and trying to find his friend alive for the years he was in a prison camp, flew to him to greet him.

John Lennon's song "Imagine" plays in the background during the

end of the movie, one of my favorite true-life stories. When Pran sees his friend Schanberg, it is the final scene in the movie. It just might restore your faith in humanity. Might. It might because it shows the power of friendship, and the power of humans connecting rather than destroying.

In 1958 President Eisenhower established Law Day. Wikipedia quotes Eisenhower as saying, "In a very real sense, the world no longer has a choice between force and the law. If civilization is to survive, it must choose the rule of law." A truth beyond a doubt, but a truth humanity cannot seem to grasp.

SLO County's Law Day May 4, 2023, was a wonderful event. If you had the opportunity to be there, I hope you enjoyed it. I had the opportunity to watch the Morro Bay High School Mock Trial team in action along with my son. Priceless. The students were impressive. A thank you to all those who volunteered to put forth a great event for our community. Well done.

Enjoy the pages ahead. ■



The law is an ugly place. It is a dirty, ugly place. Spend time in criminal, landlord tenant, estates and trusts, family, the corporate world—the list goes on and you will know.

Lawyers are cleaners. Cleaners to the core. They clean up the mess. They put Humpty Dumpty back together again. And again. And again.

This spring I took my son to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the traveling memorial wall version, which paid a visit to SLO County at the Madonna Inn. The last time I saw it, I was a child with my father in Washington, D.C. The wall hosts the names of people who gave their lives during the war.

I went to find the name of an 18year-old marine, Skip, who I came to know about through my friend Jerry, also a Vietnam veteran living in Kentucky. Jerry and I became pen pals of sorts, after I published my article in the national magazine about the war; the editor put us in touch. After losing my dad, now having another veteran to thank warms my heart. We found Skip. My son did a rubbing of his name to send to Jerry, who made it back from that ugly time, the ugly time we call War.

Independence Day is a time when we celebrate our independence. On July 4, 1776, the Declar-



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Kerrin Adams, SLO Bar Executive Director, and Stephanie Barclay represent the Lawyer Referral and Information Service (LRIS).



The Morro Bay High School Mock Trail Team presented at the courthouse podium.





Left, members of the District Attorney's office staff a booth. Above, Louis Benton and Annie Manuelle provide information about services offered by the San Luis Obispo County Law Library.



Morro Bay High School Mock Trial Team, winn a mock trial demonstration. Judge Matthew Gue



Lisa Sperow (left), Executive Director of the Cal Poly Low Income Taxpayer Clinic, and team fielded tax questions.



Dean Erica Flores Baltodano (third from right) College of Law staffed an information booth.

Thank you to those who joined us at the County Courthouse for **Community Law Day May 4, 2023**

aw Day offered the public 12 informational booths about community services in San Luis Obispo County, five informational talks, a mock trial demonstration by this year's county winner Morro Bay High School Mock Trial Team and numerous informational consultations provided by 15 volunteer attorneys. Thank you to all those who volunteered their time to put together a great event for our county!



Booths were staffed with representatives from CRLA–California Rural Legal Assistance (above), Lumina Alliance (below left) and Wilshire Creative Mediation (below right).



er of this year's county competition, presented errero presided.



and representatives from San Luis Obispo



San Luis Obispo Legal Assistance Foundation (SLOLAF) staff members Martha Garcia (left) and Kristyna Gaytan provided program information.

Law School Forum

"SLOCL thrives on the opportunities to collaborate...with the community"

by Alexandra Bernal, SLOCL Student Bar Association

an Luis Obispo College of Law (SLOCL) is a lot like the community of San Luis Obispo. It is one among many other law schools that are larger and more recognized. Where SLOCL and San Luis Obispo may fall short in size or acclaim, they both offer unique and personable characteristics compared with other options.

Despite San Luis Obispo's smaller stature, it exemplifies decision-making rooted in community-focused values. San Luis Obispo was the first city in the nation to ban smoking indoors (and it now bans smoking anywhere downtown); it has prohibited drive-thru restaurants since 1982; and it actively designs bike and pedestrian-friendly streets and neighborhoods.

SLOCL's small size offers students greater access to faculty, in-depth relationships with classmates, and engagement with the surrounding legal community that begins long before graduation. Although small, SLOCL thrives on the opportunities to collaborate with the ingenuity of the community that surrounds it.

SLOCL was founded in 2015 as one of a small family of nonprofit California-accredited law schools affiliated with Monterey College of Law (MCL), which has been producing California attorneys and judges for more than 50 years. Offering evening classes for individuals who have established roots in our community, work full time, or have caretaking responsibilities during the day, SLOCL benefits from MCL's history as the first law school on the Central Coast, the first law school to open a community mediation center, the first law school to offer guaranteed tuition rates, and one of the first law schools to offer an accredited hybrid online JD program.

As I contemplated a new journey into law school, I feared I'd have to move away from San Luis Obispo, a community near and dear to my heart. Many classmates, like me, were seeking a way to pursue their dreams for a legal education locally while working full time. SLOCL was a clear choice for all of us.

Although SLOCL students come from different backgrounds and experiences, we have at least one thing in common: an incredible knack for efficiently filling our days with work, school, family responsibilities and professional engagements—all in pursuit of our ambitions. Members of the SLOCL Student Bar Association (SBA) are no exception.

According to SLOCL SBA's Bylaws, the purpose of the Student Bar Association is to enhance communication between students, each respective local bar association and the school administration, and to diligently foster an environment that provides opportunities for participation and an enhanced student experience.

Bound by a lifestyle of packing the day with work and school, and an internal call to make a visible impact in the community, the SBA is a vital part of the experience and excellence that SLOCL offers its community and students. Since I was elected as the 1L Representative on the SBA Board in October 2022, the SBA Board has held 10 meetings, approved 32 motions, created two subcommittees and planned three social events (as of May 15, 2023).

Dean Erica Flores Baltodano has attended many of our meetings and collaborated with the SBA to ensure that students have opportunities to integrate into the local legal community by advocating for low-cost MCLEs for students, enhancing visibility, and promoting the Student Bar Association as well as the general student body by engaging us in volunteer and other San Luis Obispo County Bar social events.

The ABA Model Rules Preamble asserts, "A lawyer should seek improvement of the law... and should cultivate knowledge." Further, it states, "All lawyers should devote professional time and resources and use civic influence to ensure equal access to our system of justice.... and should aid the legal profession in pursuing these objectives and should help the bar regulate itself in the public interest."

Coretta Scott King emphasized these values when she stated, "The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members." These principles of ingenuity, growth and generosity are qualities that the SBA strives to embody.

As a first-year law student, I recognized that involvement in the SBA would provide networking opportunities, build confidence, and expose me to rules of conduct and order. On top of that, my time with the SBA has helped me foster good habits, and I hope that my involvement on the board will continue after my IL year. I am learning that the expectation, and hopefully the desire, to be of service and commitment to our community, academic or otherwise, is not a temporary theme in the legal profession but will continue post licensure and upon acceptance to practice law.

As we approach another nomination season this fall, I challenge each law student to take an inventory of their skills as well as their time and service to the community, and to deeply consider participation in the SBA. I believe that participation is a vital part of the law school experience and provides a forum to create good practices and devotion to growth that the American Bar Association urges all attorneys to observe.

I also challenge our local attorneys to reach out and get to know our current students and alumni. No one knows better than one who has been through the same or a similar experience being in law school is an incredible challenge, marked by exhaustion, uncertainty and so much self-reflection and growth. If you are already familiar with a current student, please reach out to them to see how they are doing. If you do not already know a SLOCL student, I encourage you to offer guidance as an attorneymentor by enrolling in SLOCL's Mentorship Program, currently coordinated by Dr. Jeanine Kraybill. She can be reached by email at jkraybill@montereylaw.edu.

We are all extremely blessed to live in beautiful San Luis Obispo, and we are also lucky to have a college like SLOCL that fosters the betterment of diligent and astute future lawyers in our community. In sum, small things can have a profound impact. The San Luis Obispo College of Law Student Bar Association will not slow in its efforts to improve our community and our college, and I invite you to do the same. ■

ANDRE, MORRIS & BUTTERY CELEBRATING OUR

KTH

ANNIVERSARY

Andre, Morris & Buttery is Celebrating its 75th Anniversary on the Central Coast.

We value and appreciate our community and all those who we have worked with throughout the last 75 years. We are looking forward to growing and continuing these relationships in the next 75 years!



The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County: A Conversation with Kaila Dettman, Executive Director

by Tara Jacobi

Tell us about The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County.

We are a local nonprofit 501(c)3 accredited land trust who serves San Luis Obispo County. Our mission is to conserve and care for the diverse wildlands, farms and ranches of the Central Coast, and to connect people to the land and to each other.

Our organization was formed in 1984, and we have a large variety of projects and programs. We are perhaps most well-known for our restoration of the Octagon Barn in SLO and recently opening it as a community gathering space, and for the Pismo Preserve, a beloved nature preserve opened in 2020 and visited by 200,000 people each year.

Since our founding, we have protected more than 35,000 acres of land through conservation easements and outright purchase, and we have restored sensitive habitats in our local streams and coastal dunes ecosystems. Our Learning Among the Oaks nature education program is imbedded in our local public schools and focuses on kids teaching kids about the wonders of nature through place-based learning at nearby trails.

We also host docent-led hikes and activities on conserved land throughout the County—connecting people with nature for their own well being and to cultivate a love of our local lands and wildlife.

We are funded through local, state and federal grants, and dona-

tions from our amazing supporters. We have an extremely dedicated staff and volunteer board, and amazing volunteers who help us with everything from trail maintenance to fundraising.

When did you get involved? In what capacity? And what attracted you to The Land Conservancy's cause?

I joined The Land Conservancy's team as Restoration Program Manager in late 2005. I became Deputy Director in 2010 and Executive Director in 2012. As a kid I grew up running wild through the forest and hills of my childhood home in the Santa Cruz Mountains. I was immersed in nature every day and came in at dark when my mom rang the literal dinner bell. I know now how lucky I was to have those experiences and to grow up in a place where you could find nutritious food at the local farmers market and hike in all sorts of different parks and open space areas.



I was attracted to The Land Conservancy because we protect wild places, farms and open space for future generations—so that my kids, other peoples' kids and everyone can have those same opportunities. I love that we work proactively and in partnership with our communities to find win-win solutions that keep San Luis Obispo County a beautiful, healthy and accessible place to live work and play.

How has your role evolved?

I originally joined The Land Conservancy as restoration program manager, overseeing our habitat restoration projects. I became deputy director, focused on staff management, budgeting and project development. As executive director I oversee the entire organization, work with our supporters and government partners to advance new conservation projects, set the strategic direction of the organization and serve as its spokesperson and leader.

What does it mean to have a degree in watershed hydrology and soil conservation? How might you have you applied that degree at The Land Conservancy?

In college at Cal Poly, I was focused on Animal Science as an undergrad and then my studies evolved to focus on soil health, restoration of streams and rivers, and general natural resources management as a graduate student. Soils and water serve as the foundation for life, and an in-depth knowledge of the natural sciences provides me with a deep understanding of our work and how protecting and restoring landscapes can be achieved.

What does it mean to have a certification in erosion and sediment control? And how might you have applied that certification at The Land Conservancy?

CPESC is an official professional certification administered by the International Erosion Control Association that deems an individual qualified to consult on erosion and sediment control projects and specifically is recognized by stormwater permitting programs. I put my professional certification into use more during my early years at The Land Conservancy when I was closely managing on-the-ground restoration projects and advising how we manage the properties we own. I maintain the license because it is an important suite of skills to have when overseeing an organization that manages large tracts of land and natural areas. The trainings and ongoing education I pursue to maintain it ensure that we were meeting laws and best practices related to erosion and sediment control.

What is The Land Conservancy currently working on now to promote its mission?

We have several significant projects in the queue, including a 27,000-acre conservation easement in eastern SLO County focused on protecting a family ranch and critical wildlife corridor; we are ramping up docent-led programs at two of our preserves and the Octagon Barn Center as we emerge from the COVID pandemic; and we continue to restore local creeks and important wildlife habitat. We have also



partnered with yak tityu tityu yak tiłhini, Northern Chumash Tribe of San Luis Obispo County and Region (ytt Tribe), REACH and Cal Poly to conserve the 12,000 acres of lands surrounding the Diablo Canyon powerplant and reconnect the tribe to their ancestral homeland. And we have partnered with San Luis Obispo County Parks to acquire the Toro Creek Preserve between Cayucos and Morro Bay.

If this question is geared toward how we are bringing awareness to our work, we have been building our social media presence, increasing our activities that welcome people to connect with our local lands, and we encourage people to give their time, talent and treasure toward our work. We couldn't do this work without our incredible supporters. Articles like this help us spread the word and we are grateful!

What are some of the greatest challenges you've experienced imparting The Land Conservancy's mission?

• Complexity and cost of the work—conservation projects, whether we are pursuing a conservation easement or buying a

property—are not inexpensive and property values are high. It takes a lot of time and skilled people to pull off these projects and can put stress on our team.

• Building sufficient reserves to act on new opportunities—so much of whether we can do these projects is based on funding—it influences our ability to retain qualified staff. Because we sign up to protect this land in perpetuity, we must have sufficient funding to support our work indefinitely.

• Being patient—some of these projects take a long time—and are so worth it—but we have to have the long view, both when restoring landscapes and processing real estate transactions.

What are some of the most rewarding experiences you've had at the helm of The Land Conservancy's mission? Is there an achievement that you are the most proud of?

This is a tough one to answer since there are so many small dayto-day things that are so rewarding. The pride on a child's face when they lead a hike with their classmates and share all they have learned about oak woodlands; wit-*Continued on page 14*

The Land Conservancy continued

nessing egrets and herons and frogs gathering at a new wetland we created; watching a bobcat bound between the trees that are under our care; seeing the relief on a farmer's face when they know that their land will forever be protected; creating the opportunity for a person who must use a wheelchair to experience our trails for the first time. I get to witness those things a lot and it keeps me inspired.

I am certainly proud of the Pismo Preserve. Engaging our community and raising the funds through a whirlwind campaign to buy that land and create a new, once-in-a-lifetime park for our community to enjoy, and to protect important homes for wildlife at the same time was incredible. Opening weekend of the Octagon Barn Center, marking a 22-year effort to restore that iconic structure and connect people with our agricultural history and with each other, was just so much fun. And finally, all of our recent conservation projects along Highway 46 West that protect working lands and local food, critical wildlife habitats and corridors. and cultural resources. We have had great success there and in the overall Adelaida region in North County.

What might The Land Conservancy hope to work on in the future here in SLO County?

See the question above about promoting our mission. Plus, there are still so many opportunities to work with willing landowners to protect the landscapes and natural areas that make our county so special. Some day we will likely transition to being primarily a stewardship organization—sharing all the lands we have protected, but there is still so much to be done to shape the future of our home. I hope we continue to build our engagement programs to connect more people to nature.

What might people do in their everyday lives if they care to be good stewards of our environment?

At this point it might be cliché, but it still holds true: reduce, reuse, recycle. Try to drive less. Buy local food to support our farmers and ranchers. Respect the rules of parks and open space areas. Leave no trace where possible. Stay on trails. Volunteer at your local park or with organizations like The Land Conservancy. Encourage kids to get outside and explore. Join in on tree planting and creek clean-up efforts. Normalize respect and reverence for nature.

How might people get involved if they care to contribute?

Our website and social media pages are great sources of information about our work at www.lcslo. org We can be reached by phone at (805) 544-9096 and by email at info@lcslo.org. We have a regular volunteer trail crew, docent programs at various properties and always have needs for in-kind services or donations of supplies and equipment. Cash donations are greatly appreciated and make our work possible. It is easy to do on our website. And simply spreading the word.

Is there anything else you might wish to share with our bar membership about The Land Conservancy?

Our organization is deeply committed to our community and there is still so much important work to be done. Land trusts like ours are focused on implementing on-the-ground, win-win projects that will shape the future of our County and support our way of life. Sometimes our work is implemented quietly. I appreciate the chance to share our incredible work with your membership.

Images courtesy of Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County website.





Join us at The Jack House & Gardens 5:30-8:30 p.m. Thursday, August 3

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Food – Lidos Food Truck Drinks – Bottles & Ice Fun – Truck 'N' Tunes & Dunk Tank

Purchase additional tickets at the event for a chance to DUNK a special guest. All proceeds go to the SLOCBA Endowment Fund!

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Let Go of Pursuing Perfection & Decide Your Best Is Good Enough

by Kara Stein-Conaway

At the end of 2019, Raymond Allen, then-editor of the Bar Bulletin, asked me to write a series for 2020 where I would share my perspective about navigating the various important roles I was balancing in my life as a lawyer, law firm owner and mama of two young children. I loved writing that series of articles, and I was later drawn to create "The Business Mamas Podcast," so that I could share my stories and tools for practicing more self-care and self-love with more people who I knew could benefit from hearing them. The article I'm sharing with you here is a blog post I created from the 24th episode of the podcast. I hope you enjoy it.

I introduced a "Framework for Enhanced Well-Being —Focus on Beliefs, Relationships & Making Heart-Guided Decisions." By using this framework, I have been able to unlock the incredible peace that comes with being present in my work, with my kids and in other aspects of my life. I know you're ready to welcome that peace into your life as well. When you have empowering beliefs and empowering relationships with yourself and others, you are setting yourself up to value yourself, to know your truth, and then to honor yourself and your truth by making heart-guided decisions.

Today, I want to talk with you about making the heart-guided decision to know that your best is good enough rather than only being satisfied with perfection.

If I'm struggling with a decision that I need to make, I can always come back to Don Miguel Ruiz' book, "The Four Agreements," for the support that I need to make the decision. Reading this book was life-giving for me. And my hope is that with this podcast, the ideas, stories and tools that I share are also life-giving for you. One of the Four Agreements that Ruiz discusses is *always do your best*.

How does Ruiz describe doing your best? He says, "Under any circumstance, always do your best, no more and no less. But keep in mind that your best is never going to be the same from one moment to the next."

To fully examine what it means to do your best, I think it's helpful to first consider: *What is perfectionism*?

Brené Brown in "The Gifts of Imperfection" describes it in this way. "Perfectionism is not the same thing as striving to be your best. Perfectionism is the belief that if we live perfect, look perfect and act perfect, we can minimize or avoid the pain of blame, judgment and shame. It's a shield. It's a 20-ton shield that we lug around thinking it will protect us when, in fact, it's the thing that's really preventing us from flight." I want to tell you the top four reasons why I choose to do my best, rather than striving to be perfect.

1) Perfect is unattainable. Thinking that perfect is my goal keeps me playing small to protect my ego. I don't want to play small, I want to play all-out. So, by reminding myself that perfect is not my goal, I give myself permission to play bigger.

2) My best is always attainable. As Don Miguel Ruiz explains, your best is never going to be the same from one moment to the next. So, as long as I'm doing my best in that moment, I am setting myself up to succeed and to feel proud of myself.

3) When I'm striving to do my best, I think creatively. When I know that my best is the goal, I give myself permission to think outside of the box. In my lawyering work, this could be coming up with a case theory or presenting the evidence with a new angle that I wouldn't have seen if I had been so focused on perfectionism. Or it could be allowing myself to talk about something or write about something that I may or may not be right about, like using my voice to contribute what my opinion might be in the moment that I otherwise would hold myself back on.

4) Making mistakes allows me to redirect. Here's a quote from author Cara Alwill that explains this. "For some reason, most of us women are serious perfectionists. We are so damn afraid to look silly, that we hold ourselves back from so much. Here's a little secret. Nobody is perfect. Some of the most fabulous women that I admire have made mistakes, some that I've witnessed, some that they've told me about. Do I think any less of them? Of course not. If there is one glaring quality that all fearless and fabulous women possess, it is that they are not afraid to look silly. I truly can't stress that enough."

Now, it's time to shed the disempowering belief that your best isn't good enough and to develop the empowering belief that your best is good enough. The first time I remember feeling as a child that my best wasn't good enough was in fourth grade when we were taking standardized multiple choice tests at school. I remember that the teacher told us to put our pencils down and stop taking the test. I had not finished the test. I still had questions that I had not even read yet, let alone tried to answer. I was devastated. My conclusion was that my best was not good enough. I had been doing my best but I hadn't even answered all of the questions, so of course, I wasn't going to get all the answers right.

The reality of the situation was that my best was not perfect. However, at the time, I believed that my best was not good enough and, accordingly, that I was not good enough. I was expecting perfection, and the fact that I fell short of achieving a perfect outcome led to my suffering.

Now, let's talk about the empowering belief that my best is good enough.

In 2008, I graduated from law school. When I received the good news that I had passed the California Bar Exam, I was hired to be a Deputy Public Defender at the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office. One of my first assignments in the office was to be a deputy public defender in Compton, California. There was a courtroom where I was the assigned public defender. One morning, I had issued subpoenas for witnesses to appear for a trial that I was scheduled to start that morning. I checked in with my client and the witnesses who I had subpoenaed to let them know that a colleague of mine in another courtroom was ill, and that I would be assisting briefly that morning in the other courtroom.

I went to the other courtroom and I started helping. When I returned to my home court about 10 minutes later, the judge in my home court verbally attacked me for being late to court. Although I don't remember the exact words he used, he spoke loudly in open court for everyone in the courtroom to hear and his words were something to the effect of, "You are late. It's very disrespectful to be late to court and to leave witnesses that you have subpoenaed in court, not knowing what's going on."

At this point, I was 28-years old and I had been a lawyer for less than a year. Being publicly shamed was not something that I thought was appropriate under the circumstances, and I was not going to stand for it. So, I spoke loudly to him in open court, as he had spoken to me. I told the judge, "First, I was here on time. I checked in with my client and also with the witness I had subpoenaed. Had you taken the time to ask anyone in the courtroom, I'm sure they would have told you that they saw me working diligently in the courtroom this morning before you were on the bench. Second, another department had an emergency need for my assistance, as the public defender who normally works in that court had called in sick. I was assisting them get their calendar moving, so that I could come back here as soon as possible."

He apologized to me in front of the entire courtroom, and he never spoke to me in that disrespectful manner again. I was doing my best. And even if he didn't think it was good enough, I was proud of myself, and I was happy to tell him that I was doing my best, and that it was good enough for me! We started my client's jury trial later that day, and the witness who I clearly had treated appropriately, was the key witness in my trial. The jury's unanimous not guilty verdict was a welcome result as well. However, the jury's decision was out of my hands. I did the best that I could in presenting the evidence at trial, and then I had to leave it in the jury's hands to decide. I'll always remember the courage it took for me to speak up for myself to the judge and to voice that I was doing my best.

Now, I want to talk with you about the disempowering belief that I should dream small, so that I won't disappoint myself or others, versus the empowering belief of dreaming big, knowing that even if I don't reach my goals, my best is good enough. Let's start with the disempowering belief that I should dream small, so that I won't disappoint myself or others.

As a child, I remember that when I tried something, and I felt like I wasn't good at it, often I didn't want to try again. In eighth grade, I tried out for the girls' basketball team, and I made the B-Team. Even though I'd never played basketball before in my life, and even though most of the girls on the A-Team had been playing since they were little kids, I was embarrassed to play on the B-Team. I didn't try out again in high school. Even though there were aspects of playing a team sport that I was drawn to, I didn't want to face the possibility that I would try my best and not even make the high school team. Or that if I made it, I would be sitting on the bench the entire time. So, I decided not to try.

The empowering belief of dreaming big, knowing that even if I don't reach my goal, my best is good enough—this is the place where I feel like I'm just starting to scratch the surface. In the past, I have let my fear of failure stop me from dreaming really big. I only allowed myself to dream of things that I was pretty confident I could achieve.

Starting a podcast was never on that list. Where would I find the time given all the other responsibilities I had in my life?

But when I started to practice allowing my dreams to have a little space to grow, I realized that starting a

Continued on page 18

Let Go of Pursuing Perfection continued

podcast was very much a big dream of mine. So, here I am, practicing dreaming bigger and trying something I've never done before—and being okay if it doesn't reso-

nate with a broad audience. I'm doing my best to create a tool that will bring value to others, and that's good enough.

Don Miguel Ruiz explains, "Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are healthy as opposed to sick. Under any circumstance, simply do your best, and you will avoid selfjudgment, self-abuse and regret."

My interpretation of this is, you are enough and your best is always good enough. "Do your best" are powerful words to me. I find that by verbalizing my beliefs, I internalize them. I oftentimes repeat to myself, I am not trying to be perfect. In just saying this to myself, I feel a huge weight lifted off my chest. It's like I'm reminding myself of something that I know is true but that needed to be verbalized, so that I can really know that truth.

Here are some tools for how you can practice this. The words "I am not trying to be perfect" are words that are really powerful for me. When you say them, do you feel that weight lifting off of your chest too? If so, use these words in the morning, when you have that rush of thoughts swirling around in your head.

If saying these words doesn't bring you the relief I'm talking about, what words remind you that perfect is not the goal and that your best is good enough?



I encourage you to practice different phrases and see how they feel to you. Another way that you can practice letting go of perfectionism is to do something

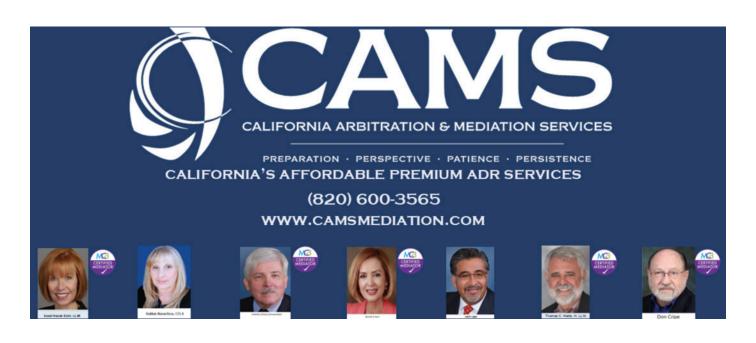
> each week that you think you're bad at. For me, I grew up thinking that I was bad at creating art. I'm still pretty confident that my art is not something that anyone would want to pay money to have hanging in their homes, but I allow myself to paint and to draw with my children now. Allowing myself to do this is one way that I remind myself

that I'm not even trying to be perfect. I have learned to allow myself to enjoy painting and drawing, and I have no expectation that it will be viewed as perfect or even as having any value at all for other people.

Do you have something that you think you're bad at that you could allow yourself to do as a reminder that you're not even trying to be perfect?

If you would like free resources to help you practice more self-care and self-love, visit www.karasteinconaway.com/linktree to listen to the podcast, receive a free Morning Routine Guide, or receive inspiring emails from Kara. You can also learn more about the podcast on Instagram @karasteinconaway

For more information about the Stein-Conaway Law Firm, P.C., where attorneys Kara Stein-Conaway and Jeff Stein help adults accused of crimes in SLO County protect themselves and their futures with their criminal defense practice, please visit www.steinconawaylaw.com



Storytelling in Motion

by Tara Jacobi

LO Film Fest kicked off its 29th annual film festival in April. With lots of options for viewers, there is a film for everyone. Film festivals are a great way to obtain access to diverse, impactful, poignant films from around the globe that might not appear on your streaming service. Here is an example.

"Crows are White," is a documentary feature written and directed by Ashen Nadeem. Nadeem ironically wishes to travel to Japan to study the Tendai Buddhist monks that walk the mountains by night for months at end and sometimes starve themselves close to death to achieve enlightenment. Little does he know at the start of filming that he is going to take a journey into himself.

Nadeem wishes to speak to a particular monk named Kamahori in order to obtain spiritual guidance that he himself needs desperately. Kamahori is getting ready to set out on a walk as long as the circumference of the earth, known in Japan as Komahori. Nadeem wishes to speak with Kamahori about this task, but Kamahori has taken a vow of silence. Nadeem cannot actually converse with Kamahori during his visits. Moreover, after being granted exclusive access to a Buddhist prayer ceremony, when Nadeem's cell phone goes off, the monks banish him. This equates to a disrespect that would likely not allow him to be welcome with the monks ever again.

At the same time, Nadeem begins to tell the story about his own life. In fact, he has been telling it all along. In the beginning he tells the viewer he has been living a double life. This is why he is seeking guidance. He tells us he was born in Saudi Arabia and was raised Muslim. His family left the Middle East during the Gulf War and moved to Ireland, where he spent his childhood. He was expected to be a good Muslim, marry a Muslim and raise their children Muslim.

As an adult Nadeem leaves Ireland and moves to America. He moves to Los Angles to become the filmmaker he is today. During this time, the religious practices his



parents demanded of him shifted. He falls in love with a non-Muslim American woman. He deeply believes his family will disown him if he marries outside his faith. So he is gravely conflicted. Yet, he marries the non-Muslim American woman he is in love with. But he does not tell his parents back in Ireland. He lives a double life.

Nadeem seeks out Kamahori because he believes he is someone

who is so dedicated to his faith that this person will likely have the answers Nadeem needs to stop leading a double life. But after the cell phone incident he is told to leave, to go home to Los Angeles.

Before leaving, however, he does converse with the lowest level monk on the mountain, Ryushin. Ryushin must take care of his grandparents and parents, all living on the mountain. He works in the gift shop making cards. While he is a spiritual man, he is also a lover of ice cream and heavy- metal, things not necessarily associated with being a Buddhist monk. He wishes to do what the ancients did, but he also at times wishes to be a sheep farmer in New Zealand, where he had a chance to study abroad.

As a time passes, Nadeem's wife becomes increasingly angry that she is kept a secret. The marriage is about to crack. Ironically, Nadeem gets a call from the Buddhist monks saying that he can come back to interview Kamahori because his vow of silence is over. While in Japan he films a bad storm brewing at the time, while Nadeem knows he must make a choice. He needs to tell his parents about his marriage but he will lose his parents, his family.

Nadeem finally has the opportunity to interview Kamahori to ask about his faith, his devotion to his faith and for guidance with regard to his own personal set of circumstances. He asks Kamahori what he should do to stop living this lie he is living. Kamahori does not seem to know what, if anything, to say. Likely with complete lack of experience for

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Storytelling in Motion continued

Nadeem's circumstances, his reaction is childlike: he rushes off to take a phone call and ends the interview.

Yet, Nadeem has a breakthrough and insight into a profound understanding that will help him. He also consults with his friend, the lowestlevel monk, Ryushin, for guidance. Ryushin listens. He does not act superior or demeaning, nor does he tell Ryushin what to do. He simply listens and seems to understand the gravity of it all.

Nadeem goes to Ireland to tell his parents. And to film it. He talks about the profound insight he had. He now believes he was maybe seeking guidance from the wrong source. Maybe he needed guidance from a different source. As Nadeem sits at home in Ireland, he tells his parents he has been married to a non-Muslim American woman for a while now.

While I am holding the hand of my almost 12-year-old son, both of us scared for Nadeem, both of us with tears in our eyes and frightened. It is sad that all the viewers are likely sitting in that theater afraid. Afraid for this man. It is deeply upsetting to see a grown man so fearful of his parents' reaction. His mother erupts in tears, wailing and covering her head. His father shakes his head in shame. His parents are beside themselvesdevastated.

Maybe the most profound statement in the film is by a monk we never meet. Another monk tells Nadeem his master told him. "Crows are white." Just what does that mean? Does it mean that crows are not black but white? Does it mean that those that obtain the highest status in a faith are not what you think they are? Nadeem explores what this might

mean, leaning towards the contradictions that can be found in practicing a faith to an extreme.

My son and I study world religions. In doing so we learned Buddhists embrace a way of life called the middle way. I ask my son if he believes this is the middle way. We studied Islam too. He is able to see the practices of the Islamic faith come to life on the screen. For the first time after this film. I think he understands more of what I've been teaching him in the last half decade than ever before. This is the power of storytelling in motion.

I won't tell the ending, but I will say Nadeem's truth depicted on camera, at times completely unknown to him during filming, engages an audience about the profound but small truth of intolerance.

Crows are white.



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SLOLAF'S 8TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISING GALA

Diggin' a Groovy Time at Here Comes the Sun!

by Donna Jones, SLOLAF Executive Director Photos courtesy of Melissa Walker-Scott

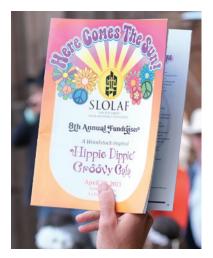
groovy time was had by all on April 29 as San Luis Obispo Legal Assistance Foundation (SLOLAF) once again hosted its annual fundraising event. This year's "Hippie Dippie Groovy Gala," a Woodstock-inspired event, was held at La Cuesta Ranch in San Luis Obispo with 250 hippies and flower children in attendance, happy to see each other and take part in the festivities.

In keeping with the vibe of concerts being held at farms and barns in the late 1960s, La Cuesta seemed the perfect place for this year's festival. Locally owned by the Miossi family, La Cuesta has been lovingly restored and outfitted as an event venue by Gabriel Miossi with the help of family and friends, complete with original barn, outbuilding now repurposed as restrooms and antique trappings all over the property. Thanks to the recent rains, the stream running through the middle of the property was babbling along, adding to the beautiful ambiance of this rustic outdoor setting.

Arriving at an empty field used as a parking lot, guests sporting tie-dye shirts, patchwork dresses, bell bottoms, suede fringed vests and more period garb waited in anticipation of what was in store for them this year. In retrospect, a costume contest would have been a perfect addition since almost every guest went all-out with their choice of attire. Color and fun abounded, and—best of all—hippie garb is comfortable!



Bessy the Foto Bus enticed guests to take home a memento.



After a short ride down the hill in a golf cart, guests landed at the main venue, where they were greeted with a spiked raspberry hibiscus kombucha punch welcome drink (try to say that fast five times!). Bessy the Foto Bus, a restored 1966 VW Westfalia van tricked out as a photo booth, enticed guests to loosen up and memorialize the occasion. Many thanks to Bessy's owner, Dez Cobb, for this perfect addition to our evening.

Music from the late '60s–early '70s was playing throughout the venue, prompting guests to recall their favorite tunes from the era...The Band, Santana, Joan Baez, Blood, Sweat & Tears, Bob Dylan, The Who and, of course, The Beatles, to name just a few from the playlist. Guest tables sported purple tablecloths and fun paisley fabric with centerpieces handcrafted as peace signs and adorned with flowers and "magic mushrooms," compliments of florist Kimberly Olson of Coast Flower Company.

Continued on page 22



Flower-bedecked peace signs decorated the guest tables.

Here Comes the Sun! continued

On the patio, guests enjoyed a hosted bar with lava lamps and signature drinks of the era, including the "Groovy Gimlet" and "Hippie Juice" along with local wines and beer. Servers from caterer Taste! Craft Eatery hand-passed appetizers your mom might have made, like stuffed celery and "snakes in a blanket." Quite a few guests took part in the Flower Power Tower of Wine raffle, eagerly anticipating the chance to win 52 unique bottles of wine from across SLO County. Across the bridge, guests sampled wines from local winery MCV Wines and whiskey from SLO Stills, while photographer Melissa Walker-Scott captured guests enjoying the evening. The Peace, Love & Prizes game of chance was teeming with those hoping to find a prize in their envelope, with some making out with gift cards to local stores and restaurants or a bottle of wine.

A "lounge" tent, bedecked with vintage furniture and era décor beckoned guests to sit a spell and try their hand at coaxing a tune out of a guitar. Coast Flower Company's booth was a popular destination for those wanting to adorn their head with a handmade-on-thespot floral wreath. Popular as well was the vintage desk offering "pet rocks," hand painted by Kathy Devaney of kkd Designs, who also created all the venue signage, artfully lettered in the style of the times.

But what was inside the barn through the beaded curtains? The silent auction, of course, with 55 curated items to fit all styles and budgets. Every item went to the highest bidder, happy to support SLOLAF and thrilled to take home winnings like gift baskets from local stores to jewelry to golf to wine racks to gift certificates galore. There was something for everyone inside the barn and guests just ate it up! Guests also ate up the wonderful buffet prepared by caterer Taste! Craft Eatery, feasting on Beef Wellington, Chicken a la King, wedge and potato salads, and roasted roots.



After dinner, Executive Director Donna Jones took the stage, introducing SLO-LAF and its work to guests who may not be familiar with the organization. Jones thanked all involved with the event, from vendors to volunteers to the 32 event sponsors, recognizing that "it takes a village" to put on an event this size. She spoke about SLOLAF's unique position in our community as a nonprofit legal firm. Unlike a traditional legal firm, SLOLAF's services are entirely free for

low-income individuals and



SLOLAF Executive Director Donna Jones spoke about the organization's growth.

/or seniors residing in SLO County. SLOLAF does not bill its clients, but rather is funded solely through public and private grants, donations and fundraising. SLOLAF aims to serve the most underserved and most vulnerable of our county, providing them with services they desperately need but could never afford.

Jones outlined SLOLAF's growth since the last fundraising event a year ago, including the addition of a government benefits program, a consumer debt program and, most recently, a family law program that currently serves survivors of intimate partner violence, sexual assault and stalking though a partnership with local nonprofit Lumina Alliance. Jones reiterated that as of



Above from left, Christin Brittingham, Joe Rosilez, SLOLAF Board member Kellie Phillips, Randy Myrick. Left, silent auction items drew bidders into the beautifully decorated barn.



Above from left, Alana Maxwell, SLOLAF Board member Brian Stack, previous SLOLAF Board member Ryan Maxwell.

the beginning of the pandemic, SLOLAF's clients were limited to seniors and veterans. Now, just a few short years later, the organization has grown to assist all lowincome SLO County residents with its new programs as well as existing programs in the areas of housing, eviction defense, accessibility and habitability, conservatorships and guardianships of the person, elder abuse and senior legal services. SLOLAF has also continued its partnership with CAPSLO, providing legal assistance to veterans who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless, with the goal of helping the veteran have a successful transition to permanent housing.

Jones shared that SLOLAF celebrated its 30-year anniversary in October 2022 and was finishing its rebranding, with a new logo already in use and a new website in the design phase. She then introduced the audience to SLOLAF's staff of 12, the "boots on the ground" who make SLOLAF's work possible. One name that some guests may be familiar with, she said, was missing from the list of current employees— Stephanie Barclay. Earlier in April, Barclay left her position as SLOLAF's Legal Director of Civil Law Services after 10 years of dedicated service to the organization.

Barclay started with SLOLAF as its only part-time employee in 2013, when the only program was Senior Legal Services Project. Bringing a vision for growth and perseverance in building relationships with other local partners and volunteers, along with providing excellent legal services, Barclay played a big part in the growth of SLOLAF over the last few years. Barclay is moving on to Carmel & Naccasha, where as a partner she will work in Elder Law and Trusts & Estates. Jones presented Barclay with a custom-made bouquet of protea and other local floral from Flower Girl Farms and a card of thanks from the SLOLAF Board of Directors. Jones then introduced the President of SLOLAF's Board of Directors, Khouloud Pearson of Glick Haupt Marino LLP. Pearson also thanked Barclay for her dedicated service to SLOLAF and its clients. She then introduced SLOLAF's current Board of Directors, thanking them and recognizing the large amount of work they perform in this volunteer role.

Pearson had the pleasure of debuting a new award, the SLOLAF President's Award. Recipient Erica Flores Baltodano was invited to join Pearson on the stage to be recognized for her service on the SLOLAF Board, spanning seven years from 2017 through 2023. Baltodano spent four years of this time as the SLOLAF Board



SLOLAF's President of the Board of Directors Khouloud Pearson presented a new award, the SLOLAF President's Award, to former four-year Board President and seven-year Board member Erica Flores Baltodano.

President, partnering with Executive Director Jones to lead the organization through the pandemic years, assisting tremendously in establishing much-needed infrastructure for the Board and the organization as a whole as SLOLAF rapidly grew, and acting to this day as a champion for SLOLAF and its services in the community at large. Pearson said that she "has big shoes to fill" and is looking forward to continuing the excellent work done by Baltodano.

Here Comes the Sun! continued

Next on the evening's agenda was the presentation of the second annual SLOLAF Ambassador Award. Inaugural award winner Angie King was unable to attend the event to present the award to this year's recipient John Carsel, so Jones filled in, though admittedly could never quite channel King's signature humor and colorful attire.

Jones shared some history on how Carsel became an attorney, including the fact that as a youngster he knew he would become a doctor or a lawyer, but that a stint as a medic in Vietnam taught him that he did not want to be a doctor. Carsel had "a great sense of right" and, after attending University of San Diego, wanted to join Nader's Raiders but ended up coming to work for his brother's law firm here in San Luis Obispo in 1974. Carsel originally worked in criminal law, but ultimately started his own firm working in family law.

Over the years, Carsel has been known as a fierce advocate for the rights of survivors of intimate partner violence, working at temporary restraining order clinics and being very involved with the Women's Resource Center, which became the Women's Shelter, now known as Lumina Alliance. Carsel also sat on the SLOLAF Board of Directors for 25 years from 1993 to 2018, takes a few pro bono cases for SLOLAF to this day, and has been supporting SLOLAF for almost its entire 30-year history. Carsel sat on the SLOLAF Family Law Working Group from 2021-22, the group that helped shape the Family Law program SLOLAF is now administering.

Carsel's compassion and devotion to the underserved, especially for vulnerable survivors, is legendary in this county and beyond, and SLOLAF could think



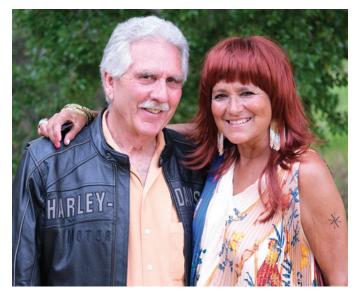
John Carsel, a member of the SLOLAF Board of Directors for 25 years and a supporter for nearly 30 years, received the second annual SLOLAF Ambassador Award.



Hunter Boaz rocked the tie-dye.



Arpad and Adela Soo and the gang from Gold Sponsor Rose Care Group.



Platinum sponsor Don Ernst and SLO County Supervisor Dawn Ortiz Legg.

of no one more deserving of the SLOLAF Ambassador Award. Carsel took the stage, wearing his military fatigues from his Vietnam days, and shared with a rapt audience what this work means to him. Carsel noted that SLOLAF is doing everything he had hoped to see by helping people who cannot help themselves. He is so happy that we are now including family law in our offerings and believes that child custody cases are extremely important—an area SLOLAF hopes to expand into soon. Carsel thanked the audience for supporting SLOLAF's work and graciously accepted the art glass award presented to him.

With presentations concluding, it was time for the live auction fun to begin. Local auctioneer Todd Ventura and radio personality Jessie Carroll as emcee took the stage and got the crowd going with a favorite live game of chance—Heads or Tails—with the last guest standing taking home a fully stocked 24-bottle wine fridge.

Next up was an opportunity for those with a sweet tooth-the live Dessert Auction, featuring goodies like Taste's flourless chocolate torte, tiramisu from Giuseppe's, and cheesecake from The Spoon Trade. Desserts led into the live auction with 13 items up for bid, ranging from a fishing trip on Jeff Stulberg's boat to tickets to see long-time favorite band Chicago to local staycations to Dodger tickets. Vacation destinations were the big sellers of the evening, with three winners going to Belize and six bidders going to their choice of resorts in Mexico. And we can't forget the success of the Lobster Boil Dinner Party live auction item, back again after a hiatus due to the pandemic. Not one, but two Lobster Boils were auctioned off for a record \$7,000 each, and SLOLAF can't wait to bring this one-of-a-kind event back to life again.



Platinum sponsor Jacqueline Frederick (right) and guest.



Auctioneer Todd Ventura and emcee Jessie Carroll.



Above, Sichuan Chef Garrett Morris peaces out. Right, Head or Tails Winner Nicole Pazdan was the last guest standing and took home a fully stocked 24-bottle wine refrigerator.



Continued on page 26

Here Comes the Sun! continued

Following the live auction came the paddle raise. SLOLAF's Legal Director of Family Law Services Melodie Rivas came to the microphone to share her insights about SLOLAF's work. Rivas shared that survivors of intimate partner or sexual violence often tell her after just one hour with SLOLAF that they "can breathe again." She spoke about how important our work is—that in many cases we are the only ones in this county doing this work, and that the community's support, both financial and with word of mouth and referrals, is crucial. Rivas shared how she herself has been changed in the short amount of time she has been working for SLOLAF, and that she looks forward to what the future will bring. She spoke about the work being done by the civil law side of SLOLAF, highlighting that we also help keep clients housed and safe, providing peace of mind during a turbulent time in their lives. Rivas asked the audience to ponder what they could contribute to this worthy cause, and the tables came alive with paddles raised in support.

The evening concluded on a lighter note with Ventura and Carroll pulling the winners of the Second Chance Drawing from the Peace, Love & Prizes game of chance, along with the much-anticipated winner of the Flower Power Tower of Wine. Guests then enjoyed more music and mingling before heading home.

Just shy of \$170,000 was raised at Here Comes the Sun!—more than at any SLOLAF fundraising event. SLOLAF thanks its multitude of sponsors, auction and raffle donors, volunteers and supporters for their contributions! Long after the bell bottoms and John Lennon sunglasses have been put away, SLOLAF will continue with your support—to help vulnerable members of our community. We look forward to including you as we press forward on our journey to make our corner of this world a better place. ■

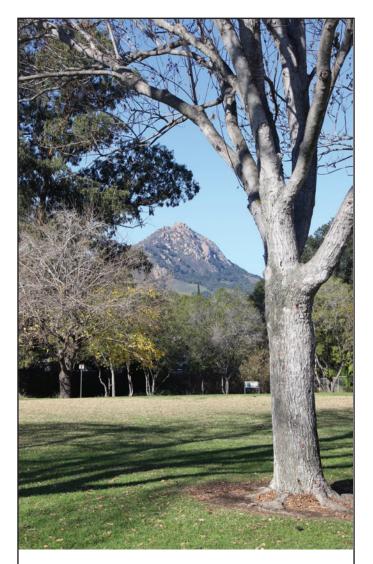


SLOLAF's Legal Director of Family Law Services Melodie Rivas spoke about the importance of SLOLAF and the community's strong support for its programs.



Guests enjoyed a blissful evening.





SUMMER CHALLENGE—

As you roam SLO county and elsewhere this summer, look for what captures your sense of wonder/imagination/humor. Please take a high-resolution photo (lots of pixels) and send to tarajacobi@icloud.com for possible inclusion in the *Bar Bulletin*. Thank you!

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Contributors are encouraged to limit the length of their submitted articles to 2,500 words or less, unless the article can be published in two parts in successive issues. Lengthy lists of footnotes or citations should be incorporated into the the article.

Editorial contributions to the *Bar Bulletin* must be submitted electronically *ONLY* in Microsoft Word format directly to the 2023 Editor at tarajacobi@icloud.com

To ensure consideration for inclusion in the next scheduled edition, your articles, photographs and art, advertisements and ad payments must be received by the deadines listed in the Publications Schedule at right.

The *Bar Bulletin* reserves the right to reject or edit any contributions. By submitting contributions for publication, contributors consent under this policy to the editing of their work, the publication of their work and the posting of their work online.

The San Luis Obispo County Bar Association does not pay contributors for their submissions.

Opinions expressed in the *Bar Bulletin* do not necessarily reflect those of the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association or its editorial staff. The *Bar Bulletin* does not constitute legal advice or a legal resource and must not be used or relied upon as a substitute for legal counsel that may be required from an attorney.

Photograph/Artwork Policy

Your submission of photographs/artwork to the *Bar Bulletin* authorizes their publication and posting online. All photographs must be submitted in jpg or tif format with a resolution of not less than 300 dpi via email or, for large files, via WeTransfer. Please include the photographer's name and that you have permission to use the photograph.

Publication Schedule

The *Bar Bulletin* is published six times per year. The deadlines for accepting articles, photographs/ art, advertisements and ad payments follow.

ISSUE	DEADLINE
 January–February 	11/25
• March–April	1/25
• May–June	3/25
• July–August	5/25
• September–October	7/25
• November–December	9/25

Advertisement Policy

All advertisements in the *Bar Bulletin* must be submitted in jpg, tif or pdf format with a resolution of not less than 300 dpi.

Flyers or announcements for the opening, closing or moving of law practices, upcoming MCLE programs or other events put on or sponsored by organizations other than the San Luis Obispo County Bar Association are considered advertisements, and therefore they are subject to this policy and to all applicable advertising rates.

Information on advertisement sizes and rates can be found online at **www.slobar.org.** All advertisements should be prepared prior to publication.

Contact Kerrin Adams at (805) 541-5930

to reserve advertising space and arrange payment.

2023 Bar Bulletin *Tara Jacobi, Editor* tarajacobi@icloud.com



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HAVE AN ARTICLE FOR THE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION'S BULLETIN?

Do you know that writing an article for the Bar Bulletin counts toward CLE credits? Please email article ideas or articles for consideration in Word format to Tara Jacobi at **tarajacobi@icloud.com**.



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