

RSF ASSOCIATION

Board votes to pursue county approval to expand use at Osuna Ranch

By Karen Billing
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The Rancho Santa Fe Association will pursue a major use permit modification at the county level for Osuna Ranch, allowing for expanded member use.

The Association has owned the 24-acre horse ranch with a historic adobe since 2006, and over the years it has historically been used to host events, unknowingly in violation of county zoning. Under both its existing major use permit with the county and its own internal Covenant zoning, no events are allowed.

To create what outgoing Association President David Gamboa has called "stepped up function" or an intensification of use of the property, the board voted on June 16 to pursue a permit for a maximum of six large events and numerous smaller events a year. Larger events would include the Celebrate Osuna gathering, which the Association has been hosting on the ranch for nearly 10 years, while smaller events could include R. Roger Rowe school field trips or "Osuna Talks" hosted by the Osuna Committee on equestrian-related topics.

The Association's Osuna Committee members applauded the board's action to allow for a more meaningful community amenity.

"Our shared purpose is to honor our heritage and expand community uses in ways that are low-impact and neighbor-friendly," said committee member Sally Kolbinsky. "Osuna is part of our history and our future. We owe it to our children, our grandchildren, and our community to protect it, reactivate it, and share it."

According to Association Assistant Manager Brian Bosse, the major use permit (MUP) modification for the property on Via de Santa Fe will cost between \$151,000 and \$251,000, and up to \$826,000 in a "worst case scenario" that could include community opposition, appeals and additional county infrastructure improvements.



The Rancho Santa Fe Association installed a new sign on the Osuna Ranch's main barn. The logo is the same Osuna brand used on cattle back in the 1800s. **SIRENA BRIANT**

structure improvements.

The cost estimates include the initial \$14,700 county permit fee, the hiring of a consultant and completing required studies on parking, noise, traffic and fire. The county may require infrastructure enhancements such as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) modifications on the dirt and gravel facility or to align with the stormwater regulations, items which could surpass \$150,000.

The MUP modification process is anticipated to take between 15 to 22 months and would additionally require a recommendation from

the San Dieguito Planning Group and approval from the San Diego County Planning Commission.

The board was considering options to apply for two events and four smaller events or go for six events and numerous smaller ones. Another option would have been to maintain the status quo and continue to operate the ranch in conformance with the county zoning, including the current restrictions for no events, no adobe tours, weddings or parties.

A motion by Vice President Jeff Simmons to go for the six large events option passed narrowly by

a 4-3 vote with Simmons, Gamboa, Skip Atkins and Joanne Marks in support and directors Courtney LeBeau, Courtney Silberberg and Mark Simpson opposed.

Simpson, who has changed his thinking on Osuna Ranch after admittedly being "anti" for the past two years, said he would've supported an option for two larger events and four smaller events, similar to how the ranch has been historically programmed. Atkins, who was initially hesitant to vote in favor, said he supported the motion because they could always scale back as they move through the

county process.

Simmons, one of Osuna's biggest advocates on the board, said the selected option gives the Association the most flexibility. If approved, the Association will have a larger umbrella under which to operate but Simmons said that doesn't necessarily mean they would immediately start hosting six large events a year. Community outreach could begin on any expanded use by pursuing an internal Covenant modification.

The land is currently zoned by the Covenant as use class A and L with allowances for residential and commercial housekeeping facilities. A Covenant zoning modification to Class H would be required for six or more large events.

A Covenant zoning modification, which the Association unsuccessfully attempted to do last year to allow for uses such as a dog park, requires two-thirds support from residents holding acreage within 500 feet of the site.

If the county approves the MUP modification, Chief Administrative Officer Dominique Albrecht said the Association would not need to do the Covenant modification to bring back some events.

"We have looked at this extensively, consulted with the building commissioner and legal counsel, and we feel comfortable under the current zoning that you could do the two large events and four small ones," Albrecht said. "If you went beyond that, you would need to be a good neighbor and talk to the surrounding community and make sure it's aligned with the intensification of the property."

While he supported the option to go for more events, Gamboa cautioned that the option does come with more risks than staying with two events and four smaller ones.

"If we win stepped-up function, it could lead to litigation and internal dispute resolution in the future

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Renderings show the design of the proposed Gateway development in the Rancho Santa Fe Village. **KAREN BILLING**

Rancho Santa Fe Association votes down variance for Gateway project

By Karen Billing
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The Rancho Santa Fe Association board rejected a variance for the Gateway project, a proposed new residential development and market at the entrance to the village, citing the parking and traffic impacts of the bonus density.

Proposed to replace the existing

gas station, LandRock Development was seeking a variance to increase the floor area ratio, exceeding the bulk allowed in the commercial zone. The increase in total allowable building square footage, from .6 to .93, would permit Gateway to build on 93% of the site with 13 age-restricted apartments and a

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Covenant voters elect Chuck Reynolds, Jeff Simmons to RSF Association board

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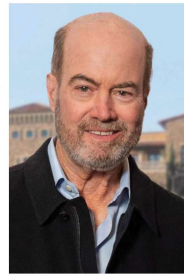
The Rancho Santa Fe Association wrapped up its 2026 spring election season with members voting in the incumbent Jeff Simmons to a second term and welcoming new director Chuck Reynolds.

Votes were tallied on the patio of the RSF Association office during the June 16 board meeting, election inspector Bruce Bishop and volunteers counting a total of 1,256 ballots submitted, with six invalidated. Reynolds was the top vote getter with 737 votes, followed by Simmons with 704. Candidate Annie Finch received 565 votes.

Reynolds, who brings a background in communications and marketing and experience serving on the Association's Infrastructure Committee, will join the board at the July meeting.

In his last board meeting, outgoing President David Gamboa gave some parting words about the Covenant, "the jewel that we steward."

The community, what he has called "the family" during his term, includes 1,800 homes on 6,700



Chuck Reynolds. **COURTESY CHUCK REYNOLDS**



Jeff Simmons. **COURTESY JEFF SIMMONS**

rural landscape acres with a taxable value of \$7 billion. The Association, which will celebrate its centennial anniversary next year, is among the 10th largest homeowners associations in the United States by size of employees and budget.

Of the staff, he said the Association is "blessed beyond belief" to be led by Chief Administrative Officer Dominique Albrecht, who

was promoted to manager shortly before Gamboa was elected to the board. Albrecht was recently recognized as the Southern California Rising Star by the California Association of Community Managers.

"It has been a privilege to serve here with this team," said a grateful Gamboa of his fellow board members.

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'COUNTING CREATURES AND THEIR FEATURES'

Rancho Santa Fe author conjures up fourth rhyming book

By Catharine L. Kaufman

Dee Leone, a Rancho Santa Fe author, has cast another spell on young readers with her fourth picture book, *Counting Creatures and Their Features* (Little Golden Books/a Division of Penguin Random House). The book is set to launch July 14 with a parade of quirky and fun-loving monsters, dragons, vampires, werewolves, and witches who frolic through a counting adventure.

For Leone, who was weaned on Little Golden Books growing up in Boardman, Ohio, now seeing her own title join the lineup of shining treasures is a decades-long dream fulfilled. Adding to the excitement, the book has already crossed the Atlantic with Random House Spain acquiring the rights and publishing a Spanish-language edition, *¿Qué ilusión!*

Beloved kid lit illustrator Kelly Kennedy brings the creatures to life with his vibrant and whimsical artwork that has also enlivened numerous children's books in the past, including collaborations connected to the world of Dr. Seuss, as well as animated projects for studios such as Nickelodeon.

A grandmother of two energetic young boys, Leone began her writer's journey during her teaching career as she crisscrossed the country enlightening second, third, and fourth graders in Ohio, California, and Texas, and as an aid for gifted elementary students in Alaska.

While contributing to teachers' magazines, her creative talent was recognized by an editor at Good Apple, an educational publisher, who enlisted her to create a series of activity books for elementary students. Leone earned her writing stripes in the academic market with 20 publishing credits in reproducible books, and over 200 articles, word puzzles,



Author Dee Leone. COURTESY OF DEE LEONE

poems, plays, and stories appearing in magazines, such as the popular *Highlights*.

A lifelong lover of rhyme and wordplay, coupled with an affiliation with SCBWI (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators), Leone eventually traded workbooks for picture books. Her growing collection includes *Nature's Lullaby Fills the Night*, *Dough Knights and Dragons*, and *Bizz & Buzz Make Honey Buns*.

The inspiration for *Counting Creatures and Their Features* traces back to her childhood fascination for languages and ultimate goal of becoming a United Nations interpreter. She taught herself to count in several languages in preparation for this imagined career. Then years later with Halloween approaching, the "Queen of Rhyme Time" found herself

counting again—now to a melodious rhythm humming in her head while conjuring a cast of delightfully spooky characters.

"The book not only offers a whimsical way to learn counting but also touches on language arts skills with its rhyming verses," says Leone. Readers will meet "spiky-haired monsters, knobby-kneed goblins, shiny-scaled dragons, pointy-toothed vampires, hairy gray werewolves, ghosts that glow, and witches who concoct bubbling brews"—all accompanied by "a fun and repetitive chorus of moans, growls, shrieks, and snorts."

As Leone puts it: "You can count on reading to take you anywhere, so one, two, three—let your imagination run free!"

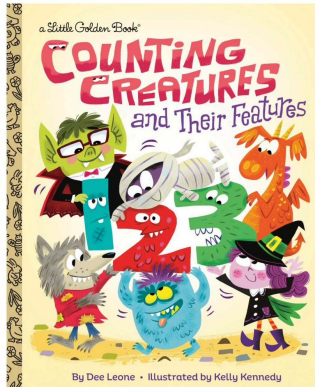
A writer utterly prolific in a genre quite specific, Leone already has her next adventure in the pipeline. The fifth

book, titled *Tiny the Mustard Seed* (Parade Press, 2027), uses the humble oilseed as a metaphor for discovering one's special gifts and talents and distinct place in the world. Her sixth magical book is also brewing. For a final contribution, Leone does out some parting words for aspiring authors: "Dream, write, revise, repeat—and never give up hope."

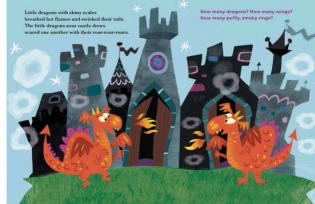
Counting Creatures and Their Features can be ordered from Amazon, B&N, Target, Walmart, Powell's, Books-A-Million, Hudson Booksellers, Bookshop.org and many other places where books are sold. For direct links to some of the vendors, visit: shorturl.at/Mz0IS

Generally, for more information, visit DeeLeone.com. Some upcoming author appearances include:

- July 18: 12 noon, Storytime, Activities, and Signing, B&N, 11744 Carmel Mt. Rd., San Diego
- Aug. 21: 1 p.m. Signing and Craft at the San Diego



The cover of "Counting Creatures and Their Features". COURTESY OF KELLY KENNEDY AND LITTLE GOLDEN BOOK/DIVISION OF PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE



Little dragon verses. COURTESY OF DEE LEONE, KELLY KENNEDY AND LITTLE GOLDEN BOOK/DIVISION OF PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE

Market Center, 10775 Westview Parkway, San Diego

- July 25: 11 a.m. Storytime, Activities, and Signing, B&N, 810 W. Valley Rd., Escondido

- Aug. 1: 11 a.m. Storytime, Activities, and Signing, B&N, 11744 Carmel Mt. Rd., San Diego

- Aug. 21: 1 p.m. Signing and Craft at the San Diego

Book Festival at USD in the SCBWI Booth

- Oct. 7: 10:30 a.m. Rancho Santa Fe Library for Toddler Storytime, Activities, and Signing

Check out the children's picture book trailer for *Counting Creatures and Their Features* on YouTube.com.

Foster teens receive very special graduation from a caring community

The graduates of San Pasqual Academy were recently very appreciative and overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of many wonderful individuals and local organizations. Friends of San Pasqual Academy, a volunteer organization that has been caring for these students for over 25 years, hosted a very special graduation for these deserving foster graduates, a news release stated.

The featured speaker was Assemblymember Dr. Darshana Patel, who is a dedicated supporter of San Pasqual Academy. She was very inspirational and gave a very meaningful message of hope and perseverance to the graduates. Each student received a scholarship to continue their education, which was made possible by Friends of San Pasqual Academy supporters. Former graduates who completed other degrees were recognized at the graduation ceremony, as well. The alumni and graduates of San Pasqual Academy were very appreciative of being supported and



A graduation ceremony was hosted by Friends of San Pasqual Academy to honor all the Class of 2026 graduates. Assemblymember Dr. Darshana Patel was the featured speaker at this very special event for the foster students of San Pasqual Academy. Friends of San Pasqual Academy was also presented an award for being selected as the California Non-Profit of the Year, through Assemblymember Patel's office. Shown with the award, from left to right, are Friends of San Pasqual Academy Board members Kathy Lathrum, Joan Scott, Dr. Gloria Ciriza, San Diego County Superintendent of Schools, Lois Jones, Assemblymember Dr. Darshana Patel, Teri Summerhays and Andrea Reynolds. COURTESY OF FRIENDS OF SAN PASQUAL ACADEMY

for the generosity and recognition they received by the community, the news release stated.

Many of these graduates plan to continue on with their education. Friends of San Pasqual Academy has

supported many foster graduates who have attended schools that include UCLA, Cal State San Marcos, San

Francisco State, San Diego State, Humboldt State, San Jose State, Sacramento State, Palomar College, Miracosta

College, Southwestern College and various trade schools.

"These are amazing kids who have worked hard and had to overcome many obstacles. They have had to attend multiple schools, as they've been moved around in the foster care system numerous times, interrupting their efforts to meet the requirements for graduation or develop bonds with other students and adults. When they arrive at San Pasqual Academy, they are grateful to remain at one school, get involved in school activities and sports, and continue their education in a safe, consistent, and stable environment," states Andrea Reynolds, board member of Friends of San Pasqual Academy, in the news release.

Friends of San Pasqual Academy is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations can be sent to PO Box 8202, Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92067.

For more information, visit their website at www.friendsofsanpasqualacademy.org.

Two local youth rowers win 2026 national championship

Carmel Valley students and rowers Gabriella Bigler and Thalia Makris won a national championship at the 2026 US Rowing Youth Nationals, held June 11-14 in Sarasota, Florida.

Gabriella 17, is a rising senior at Canyon Crest Academy and Thalia, also 17, will be a senior at Torrey Pines High School. The pair competed in the Women's Youth PR3 Inclusive 2X division. In this inclusive double skulls rowing race, an athlete with a physical or visual impairment is paired with an able-bodied rower. Gabriella was born with Aniridia, a rare eye condition where the iris and other eye functions are not developed, and she is legally blind in both eyes.

"This team and experience with Gabby is something I will never forget and further reinforces the love I have for this sport and my teammates. I enjoyed the opportunity to row together to the finish line and earn our National



Carmel Valley students and rowers Gabriella Bigler and Thalia Makris won a national championship at the 2026 US Rowing Youth Nationals. GORDON BIGLER

Championship," said Thalia in a news release. "After we crossed the finish line, Gabby and I just hugged, and it

is something I will always remember."

Both girls are members of the San Diego Rowing Club

(SDRC). At nationals, Gabriella also competed in the able-bodied Women's Youth 4-division for SRDC and



Carmel Valley students and rowers Gabriella Bigler and Thalia Makris won a national championship at the 2026 US Rowing Youth Nationals. ADAM BRUCE

finished ninth in the country.

After the Nationals, Gabriella will attend the US Rowing Paralympic Development Camp in Boston to train with Paralympians and other hopefuls in pursuit of her goal of making the National Team, competing in the 2026 Rowing World Championships and eventually the 2028 Paralympics in Los Angeles.

"US Rowing Youth Nationals is so much fun and such an incredible experience, and I have so much respect for everyone I met there," said Gabriella in the news release. "Special shoutout to our amazing coaches Pat and Jane. We are so grateful to everyone for making it happen — parents, coaches, and fellow rowers at SDRC."