

50,000 EGGS

EASTER EGG DROP



WITH SKY DIVING EASTER BUNNY

50,000 Easter Eggs from Above: Celebrating Easter in the Community

By Pastor Todd Anderson, Compass Church



At Compass Church we are opening the Easter season with a couple of great events in the community. At Cardinale Stadium in Marina, on March 23, we are hosting an Easter event

that children and families will not want to miss.

To start things off, the Easter Bunny will be parachuting into the stadium to 3,000 waiting kids. A local skydiving icon will be starting this event by descending softly from the clouds

dressed as the Easter Bunny. As if that wasn't enough fun, a helicopter will pour eggs from the sky onto the field. There will be 50,000 eggs for children up to 5th grade to collect and exchange for candy. There is a limit of the first 3,000 kids, so you will want to register for this free event at compasschurchmc.org.

In the planning of this event, demand was so high that we are doing a second Easter egg drop of 50,000 eggs on March 30, in Rabobank Stadium at the Rodeo Grounds in Salinas. The Easter Bunny is skydiving in, and it will start at 10 a.m. as well. Registration at compasschurchmc.org.

org is required (limited to the first 3,000 kids and also free).

On Easter weekend we remember the death of Jesus and celebrate his resurrection. You are invited to join us at 1044 S. Main St. in Salinas for Good Friday services at 6 p.m. on March 29, and Easter services on Saturday at 5 p.m. and Sunday at 8 a.m., 9:30 a.m., and 11 a.m. I look forward to meeting you and your family.

My prayer for you this Easter season is that you will know the power of our risen Savior and celebrate everything God has done for you, your family, your business, and our community. Amen. 🌿

American Cancer Society Fundraiser Relay for Life is a Year-Round Endeavor



By Mac McDonald, Salinas Valley Business Journal

Relay for Life of the Salinas Valley, an annual fundraiser for the American Cancer Society (ACS), may not be until Sept. 21, 2024, but planning, logistics and even fundraising, have been ongoing since the end of last year's event.

"It's an all-year thing, we have 31 teams already registered," said Nancy Valdez, Senior Development Manager for the American Cancer Society's California Guam Hawaii Division. "We have events all year too. We just had the 30th anniversary of the Monterey Fashion Show. We have the 'Paint Your Town Purple' event at the end of August to let people know it's coming. We have the 'Rollout of Cars' event, barbecues, a lobster feast, and luminaria bags can be purchased. So many events take place throughout the year and raise a lot of money."

So much money that the Salinas event, now in its 27th year, is the #1 fundraiser in California and #3 in the entire country, even competing with much-larger municipalities. In fact, Valdez and others representing Salinas, traveled to Nashville to accept an award for their fundraising efforts.

"I was pretty proud to receive the award in Nashville, we're just a little dot on the map," says Valdez. It was awesome."

Across the country, more than 250,000 Relay for Life participants help support the American Cancer Society's mission in countless ways — providing education and advocating for the needs of cancer patients and their families, and providing essential services throughout their cancer journey.

Since 1985, Relay For Life has raised \$6.9 billion, allowing the



American Cancer Society to invest \$3.1 billion in cancer research, contributing to 3.8 million fewer cancer deaths.

But there's good news and bad news on the cancer front. While the latest data has shown that overall cancer mortality has continued to decline, resulting in over 4 million fewer deaths in the United States since 1991, but that progress has been stunted because there is increasing incidence for 6 of the top 10 cancers as the projected number of new diagnoses now tops 2 million (2,001,140) for the first time.

The other alarming data point in the ACS's annual report "Cancer Statistics, 2024," released in January, is that cancer patients are getting younger: the proportion of diagnoses in people who are middle-aged (50-64 years) increased from 25% in 1995 to 30% in 2019-2020, whereas the proportion 65 years and older decreased from 61% to 58%, despite both age groups growing in the general

population (from 13% to 19% for ages 50-64 years and from 13% to 17% for ages 65 and older).

That troubling data points out the importance of funding cancer research on prevention, detection and treatment, which is where Relay for Life comes in. This year's goal is \$550,000, with the event held from 4-9 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 21, at the 100 and 200 blocks of Main Street at the Salinas City Center.

Valdez says there are a few ways to get involved: join a relay team, create your own team or go as an individual; donate to ACS; or just join the festivities on Sept. 21, observe, cheer on the walkers and stroll the streets and check out the vendors.

"Some people just want to go and have fun, just sit and watch (the relay)," says Valdez, who has her own team walking the relay course. "It's the community coming together and having fun. It used to be a 24-hour event, now it's from 4 to 9 p.m., so come down and feel the energy and see people smile! You



see the impact (on people) when you go in person."

Valdez says the reason the event is so successful is a testament to the community, including residents, government and businesses, and the stories of the survivors, caregivers and those who have lost a loved one to cancer.

"It's about the stories and getting involved," she says. "I think that's what drives these events, so many people have been touched by cancer."

To learn more about Relay For Life and how you can get involved, visit RelayForLife.org/SalinasCA. To contact Valdez, email her at nancy.valdez@caner.org or call her at (831) 621-5554. For more information on the American Cancer Society, go to: www.cancer.org.



Salinas Valley Food and Wine Festival Showcases Local Food, Wines and Art on Aug. 3

Event Kicks Off July 25 With Chamber Mixer at California Welcome Center in Salinas

By Mac McDonald, Salinas Valley Business Journal

If you can't wait until the 13th annual Salinas Valley Food and Wine Festival on Aug. 3, get a sneak preview of the food, wines, and atmosphere at the festival's kick-off event and Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce Mixer on July 25, in Salinas.

The event will be held from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday, July 25, at the California Welcome Center – Salinas, located at 1A Station Place (Amtrak station). The event not only sets the stage for the festival in August, but allows fellow food and wine enthusiasts to network, enjoy a glass of local wine or a local brew and soak in the vibrant atmosphere. It's the perfect opportunity to connect with friends, colleagues, and clients in a relaxed and enjoyable setting.

There is no fee to attend the mixer, but you're encouraged to pre-register so the Chamber can get a headcount for the event. Register at: <https://business.salinaschamber.com/ap/Events/Register/wZFqqwUeCxv>.

For more information on the event, contact the Chamber's Jasmine Bhardwaj by phone at (831) 751-7725 or email at jasmine@salinaschamber.com.

As for the festival itself, this is its 13th year, with record-breaking attendance the last two years, and voted The Monterey Herald's "Salinas Valley Reader's Choice" as one of the Top 3 favorite local events — just above the California International Airshow and just under the California Rodeo Salinas.

The festival, set for 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 3, at Oldtown Salinas / Salinas City Center, is dedicated to increasing the popularity of



locally grown and crafted food and wine, bringing the community together as well visitors to experience and celebrate the tastes and sounds of the Salinas Valley, while raising funds to support local worthwhile and important community nonprofit organizations. The event also features local art and artists as well as entertainment.

"It has a really nice community vibe," says Krishna Patel of Duda Farm Fresh Foods and the festival's Finance Director. "Now that the area has been revamped and revitalized, people like to go down there. It's a very busy day, very vibrant and energetic. This festival has always been a lot of fun."

Salinas' Main Street (100 – 200 blocks) will be filled with wine tasting stops, food sampling stations, live music, artist/artisan vendors, and the opportunity to experience world-class wines, craft beers, and gourmet foods. Admission to the main festival is free. Purchasing a ticket includes wine and beer tastings along with samplings of culinary delights from

local chefs, caterers, and restaurants.

Patel says a ticket gets you a lanyard, wristband and plate so vendors can serve ticketholders tastes of wine, beer and food. The event entry is free, but a ticket allows the holder to partake of the food and beverages.

Some of the wineries include De Tierra, Morgan, Blair, Talbott and Jackson Family Wines. Brewers include Steel Bonnet, Alvarado Street Brewery, Other Brother and Firestone Walker. Food purveyors include The Steinbeck House, Schoch, Spontaneous Confections, Chamoy Bros., Sabor Latin Fusion, Kleinfeldt Family BBQ and Mia Fusion Cuisine.

Tickets are \$90 through July 19, \$100 after July 19 and through Aug. 3, or \$70 for U.S. military veterans and active duty personnel. To purchase tickets, go to

<https://www.squadup.com/events/salinas-valley-food-wine-festival-2024>.

For more information, go to salinasvalleyfoodandwine.com, call (831) 770-7507, or email



salinasvalleyfoodandwine@gmail.com.

Patel said there will be about a dozen breweries, 17 food vendors and 20-22 wineries, plus two bands on opposite ends of the street, about 15-20 art, jewelry and other vendors. She expects tickets to sell out.

"It always sells out," she says.

"Last year we sold 1,000 tickets, we have 1,100 on sale this year, 500 set aside for sponsors and about 100 for volunteers. We used to donate to one nonprofit, but this year we'll spread the money out a little to more local groups."

The festival is an event of Ye Old Main Street Foundation Inc., a 501(c)3 nonprofit. Patel has been with the festival since 2018 and was assured that she was putting her volunteer efforts into a very worthwhile event by one important person.

"Last year my Mom came out for the first time and she told me 'This is the best thing I've ever seen!'" she says.

Hard to argue with Mom. 🌿



California International Airshow Benefits Go Beyond Dollars and Cents

By Mac McDonald, Salinas Valley Business Journal Staff

The California International Airshow Salinas, which holds its 42nd annual event Sept. 27-29, has raised almost \$9 million for local nonprofits and charities in its four decades. But there are other benefits that can't be quantified by dollars and data alone.

"There's also the social benefit that the Airshow brings to the community," says Harry Wardwell, who returned in 2018 as executive director after retiring from the position in 2012

after serving 10 years. "There's a strong sense of community spirit that comes out of the Airshow, the spirit of volunteerism."

Wardwell says that there are second and even third generation of volunteers who work at the Airshow every year and that just attending and seeing aircraft flying by and other aircraft displayed on the ground can be inspirational.

"That happens a lot, it can be an inspiration for all ages," he says. "The sense of pride and patriotism

that can come from the Airshow is huge."

In addition to the \$9 million raised over the 40-plus years, there's also a benefit to the business community, the restaurants, bars, hotels, shops and more. An economic development report released in 2015 revealed that the Airshow brought in \$.4.5 to \$5.5 million in business during the weekend. "And that was almost 10 years ago!" says Wardwell, a Salinas businessman and former banker, who also served on the boards



There's a strong sense of community spirit that comes out of the Airshow, the spirit of volunteerism.

— Harry Wardwell

of Salinas Valley Health (as board president), California Rodeo Salinas and served a year on the board of our own Salinas Valley Chamber.

“There are 450 airshows in the U.S. and Salinas is a mid-sized one, but in terms of community-based volunteers, it's one of the top in the country. We've raised nearly \$9 million over the years,” says Wardwell, who adds that the Airshow invites more than 70 local organizations to provide volunteers and other help. “Salinas is well thought-of in the industry and performers love coming here.”

This year's Airshow, held at the Salinas Municipal Airport just off Highway 101, is headlined by the U.S.A.F. Thunderbirds, the Air Force's version of the Blue Angels and a top-line aerial flight team in their own right. The other attractions over the weekend include:



- The U.S. Patriots Jet Team
- The incredible “Wall of Fire”
- C-5M Super Galaxy - NEW
- Jon Melby in his Pitts - S1B
- Brad Wurston MX2 Aerobatics
- Cory Lovell flying the Sukhoi 26
- Dueling Sukhoi's
- Smoke & Thunder Jet Car
- KC 135 Refueling Demo
- P-51 Warbirds
- Melby & Wurston in an exciting dueling performance
- Lucha Libre - Empire Wrestling Federation
- Smoke & Thunder Jet Car

In addition to the aerial spectaculars, the Airshow has a number of so-called static displays

of aircraft, including the massive and jaw-dropping C-5M Super Galaxy transport plane, the almost equally huge C-17, two T-130 fighters and much more. There's also “ground” entertainment, including the Smoke & Thunder Jet Car, the incredible Wall of Fire (a literal wall of fire!) Empire Wrestling Federation's wild and colorful Lucha Libre wrestlers, plus educational and entertaining exhibits, including Chevron-sponsored STEM exhibit and the Carl's Jr. Kid's Zone.

There's also Maverick's Lounge, a gourmet food, wine, beer and cocktail lounge with dancing and the exclusive President's Club VIP experience to enhance the festivities.

For all the details and to buy tickets, go to: www.salinasairshow.com.

My Hispanic Heritage

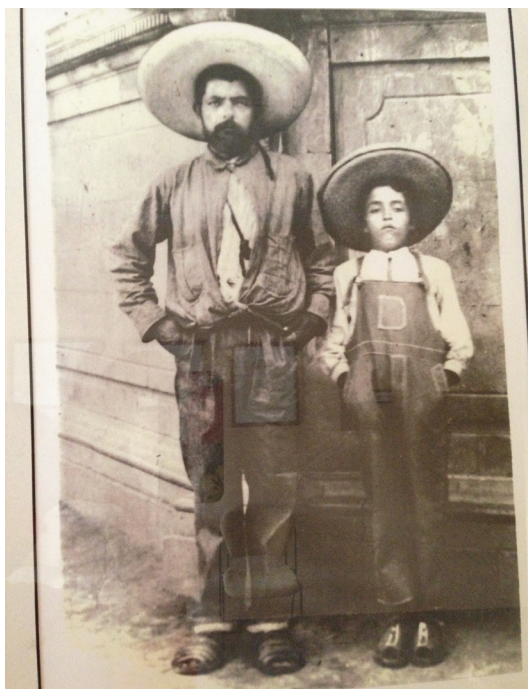
By **Blanca E. Zarazúa**, Attorney and Honorary Consul of Mexico

Many thanks to the Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce for this opportunity to comment on my Hispanic heritage for National Hispanic Heritage Month from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15. I will oblige by offering several different thoughts on what has been my Hispanic heritage.

I write this as I sit in my childhood home in Monterey County, which dates back to at least 1893 and which was formerly the servants' quarters on a Monterey County ranch. I have so many wonderful childhood memories here. I often remind people that I was born and raised in the previous century and so I am often distracted by and certainly respectful of my family history.

Until I entered elementary school, I spoke only Spanish and only Spanish was spoken at home. Later on, of course, I learned to speak and write in English. Having so many "word flavors" was such a treat! I could think, feel and solve problems using many, many words. Adding to these "verbal crayons" was the strong cultural environment at home. We were a very traditional Mexican family and there were so many cultural gems I could tap into as I was growing up. Indeed, I continue to apply cultural teachings to my problem solving and daily interactions.

In 1945, my father Aquilino came to this country from Santa Catarina, Guanajuato, Mexico as a bracero or guestworker. He began his U.S. working years in Chualar, California. He was interviewed for the job



Blanca's grandfather Quintil and her father Aquilino.

partly by a visual inspection of his hands — if they were tough and worn, then he might be hired. Now I understand why I have a penchant for "crunchy hands."

Aquilino became friends with the cook at the labor camp, Angel De León, who was from Huejúcar, Jalisco, Mexico. It was not long before my father traveled to Jalisco with Angel. There he met my mother, Ampelia, and eventually they married and had three daughters: Albertina, Blanca and Gladys. They were married for 55 years.

Through my father, I learned sensory skills. Having had no formal education and absolutely no taste for technology, my father was forced to find ways to communicate using his sensory attributes. What a fabulous set of skills he transferred to me. Surely we can find ways to communicate without relying exclusively on technology? I can tell



Blanca preparing to appear in U.S. Federal District Court.

you from personal experience, the rewards are profound and enduring.

From my mother I learned to be pragmatic. She was a female warrior who protected her children fiercely and who taught us the value of hard work, dedication and perseverance. She had a difficult childhood in Mexico, but she learned to be resilient and not give up under any circumstances. I am so fortunate to still have my tenacious mother, Ampelia with me.

I share this background with you because I believe many families in the Salinas Valley and Monterey County have similar stories to share. As immigrants, there are no "rough drafts" and you need to make the best version of yourself along the way — with consistency, commitment and responsibility. There's no going back for many people and many of us have been committed to this country in ways

which many U.S.-born individuals may never understand.

My father taught us to love a country which was, for many years, still foreign to him. This example has guided me throughout my life, and I will always be grateful to this country for all it has offered to me, my family and to so many immigrants from around the world. I was a grateful child, and now, I am a grateful adult.

Our heritage and that of so many families is one of dedication, commitment and loyalty to this country. We have made these values part of our *raison d'être*. Thanks to my wonderful upbringing,

I do not consider my mind and my heart to be mutually exclusive. I will feel something, then put my mind to work on finding a way to address what my heart is yearning for. If my mind draws a conclusion, I apply a bit of my heart, to make certain there is a sensitivity component to all major decisions rendered.

My hope is that we continue to uphold the values of this vibrant and vital agricultural community. May our children continue to protect and preserve the traditions our ancestors generously bestowed upon us.

I look forward to seeing what future generations formulate as their Hispanic heritage. To those who choose to disrespect our ancestors or to disparage this great country, I simply say: "Call me when you recover." 🌿

Blanca E. Zarazúa can be reached at Blanca@zaralaw.com.



Salinas Valley Pride Festival 2024 Theme Embraces Salinas' Western Heritage

By Mac McDonald, Salinas Valley Business Journal Staff

With the city of Salinas celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2024, the theme for Salinas Valley Pride Celebrations' 14th Annual Pride Festival seemed obvious to organizers.

"Personally, it's hard to talk about Pride in our area without thinking of the much-larger San Francisco Pride event, so I was really happy that the group selected a theme that highlights the Salinas Valley's western roots," said Eric Mora, President of SVPC about the "Spurs and Sparkles" theme. "Our Board Member Jose Luis Barajas suggested the Western theme we've adopted this year and the group instantly loved it. I also love the idea of inviting people to dress up

and have a great time."

SVPC'S 14th Annual Pride Festival will be held from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 12, at Central Park in Salinas. The event is free to all and with the theme "Spurs and Sparkles," participants are encouraged to "don your best western attire with a dash of sparkle!"

Participants can expect:

- Live DJ
- Drag and dance performances
- Community resources and organizations
- Local LGBTQ vendors and artists
- Fun activities for all ages
- And plenty of PRIDE

Mora says anyone coming to the event should expect music, dancing, socializing and fun activities, but also information on health care services.

"I always tell people that Salinas Pride is one of the most mellow Pride events in the tri-county area. We host our event at Salinas' Central Park which provides a lot of open space for people to talk, dance, or simply sit on the grass and enjoy the performances. A perennial highlight of our event are the drag artists who light up the day with their artistry," he said. "Equally important are our healthcare partners like Access Support Network, who provide free, rapid HIV and Hepatitis C testing as well as the Monterey County Health Department, who offers a free