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# OJAI VALLEY NEWS

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Ojai Valley News photo by Dougal Brownlie  
Holly Woolson (left) helps 4-year-old Penny McMurray create a print of a monarch butterfly at Woolson's "Save the Monarchs" booth during Saturday's Earth Day festival. The event was held at Oak Grove School.

## Oak Grove puts Ojai in the eco-friendly spirit

**Olivia Hardley**  
Ojai Valley News contributor

**Keywords:** Earth Day, Oak Grove School

Last Saturday marked another successful Ojai Valley Earth Day festival at Oak Grove School. The event was put on by the combined efforts of Oak Grove School, the Ojai Valley Green Coalition, Food for Thought and the Ojai Valley Land Conservancy.

Locals kicked off the day with a morning shoreline cleanup at Lake Casitas, after which guests were encouraged to take the trolley — which ran free all day — back to Oak Grove. In keeping with the eco-friendly theme, a bike valet service was run by student volunteers.

There were activities for people of all ages, including a rock-climbing wall, yoga lessons on the grass, peace sticks, herb walks through the school, field games, fairy house building, and recycled arts and crafts. Highlighted during the day were environmental and sustainability projects from



Ojai Valley News photo by Dougal Brownlie  
The Meyer brothers — Logan (left), 7, Stone, 5, and Shepard, 3 — look inside an eco-friendly model house with their mother, Leigh, at Earth Day.

students at The Thacher School and Oak Grove School, as was a car that can travel 3,000 miles on one tank of gas. Live music was provided by Kahinka, Shiyah Ray Sunshine, Voices of the Valley, Dave Palmer & Friends and Oak Grove's

own high school jazz band. Many food options were available such as Vegan Mario's food truck, La Fuente's tamale stand and Oak Grove's own kitchen. Coffee Connection provided drinks and Freezer Monkeys offered popsicles.

## Ruling not likely to affect most Ojai water users

**Tim Dewar**  
publisher@ojaivalleynews.com

**Keywords:** Water, drought, Casitas, GSWC

A 4th District Court of Appeal's ruling, released Monday, will change how local governments charge for some services, including water. But it will not likely result in rate changes for Ojai Valley residents.

The ruling affirmed that tiered rate structures — which charge customers more based on the volume they consume — are not legal unless they are based on the actual cost to supply the additional service.

The largest local government entity likely to be impacted by the ruling is Casitas Municipal Water District (CMWD). It charges a typical Ojai Valley residential customer 88.2 cents per unit for up to 20 units of water over a two-month billing cycle. The next 14 units are charged at \$1.344 per unit and each unit over that is charged at \$1.77. A unit of water is 748 gallons.

Although he had little time to confer with experts about the impact this could have locally, CMWD general manager Steve Wickstrum said the municipal water district has taken care in the past to comply with the intent of Proposition 218, the state statute affirmed by Monday's decision.

Wickstrum explained that one reason Casitas is able to charge tiered rates is because of "peaking factors" — the additional load on its system and what it has to pay to provide the additional capacity. "They (San Juan Capistrano) didn't do a very good job of explaining their costs," Wickstrum said Tuesday, "but we are fairly certain that our rates are justified."

Wickstrum added that CMWD is in the process of doing a rate study that should be completed probably within next three to four months. "We expect that new rates might be in place by Sept. 1. We will be establishing new allocation levels for customers and people will be required to live within them."

Tiered rates are a tool some waters districts have relied on to help meet state-mandated, water-reduction levels.

See Ruling, Page A3

## Watershed group seeking public input Thursday

**Bill Warner**  
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**Keywords:** Water, sustainability

A public outreach meeting has been scheduled Thursday at 7 p.m. to discuss the establishment of a groundwater sustainability agency (GSA) for the upper Ventura River, and the public is encouraged to take part.

"This is something the public will want to help us work on," said Bert Rapp, general manager of the Ventura River Water District, one of five agencies involved in planning the new GSA. "It's going to be a long process."

The GSA is being formed in compliance with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, signed into law by Gov. Jerry Brown in September 2014, which requires the formation of local agencies to manage groundwater resources

See GSA, Page A3

## Burger joint, winery moving forward

**Bill Warner**  
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**Keywords:** Restaurants, government

Ojai is a little closer to having a new restaurant and a new winery. Permits for the proposed Ojai Burgers and the Topa Mountain Winery were approved at the April 15 session of the Ojai Planning Commission.

Ojai Burgers received the

Commissions's approval for a design review permit (DRP) and a conditional use permit (C.U.P.) related to the remodeling of the company's proposed restaurant space at 401 E. Ojai Ave., the site of the former Il Giardino restaurant. The commissioners were unanimous in their vote.

Topa Mountain Winery, similarly, was granted a

DRP and C.U.P. for its second phase of construction at 821 W. Ojai Ave. The commissioners were unanimous in voting, with the absence of Commission Chair Steve Foster, who had recused himself from the agenda item due to a professional connection to the winery.

Northridge-based architect Alex Ugrik, designer for the proposed Ojai Burgers

site, said the company's finalized set of plans would probably be submitted to the Ojai Community Development Department sometime next week.

"We'll be going in for the structural plan check," he said. "Then there will be a 15-day public comment period. After that, the owners are looking forward to getting construction going as soon as possible."

## It's My Job: Gillian McManus, Ojai Music Festival operations director

**Tiope Barron**  
Ojai Valley News correspondent

**Keywords:** Ojai Music Festival, Gillian McManus

One hallmark of a successful festival is its ability to run of its own accord — and the annual Ojai Music Festival is no exception. But don't let appearances deceive you; behind that seamless musical façade is a skilled team, one led by Music Festival operations director Gillian McManus, to organize, schedule and finesse this Ojai institution.

"One of the challenges I face is that every year the festival keeps getting bigger, which makes it increasingly complicated ... But challenges, when

they are met, become fun, rewarding," McManus said. "I worked with an unbelievably bright group of people, and teamwork makes my job easier and more fun."

Born on the East Coast, McManus lived abroad for many years, including Canada, Germany and South Africa. She returned to the United States to attend college, and moved West circa 1990. McManus "married into Ojai," moving here in 2007 after a decades-long freelance career in advertising based out of Los Angeles.

"I worked on all kinds of ads: beers, cars, beans, public service announcements," McManus explained.

Her fondest advertising experiences include shooting an ad for Chrysler in

the New York Harbor on the same day the pope visited; helicopter traffic made the shoot complicated, but for McManus, successfully pulling it off in the face of those challenges made it that much more rewarding. A commercial for Saturn, shot on a small island in Alaska, is another of McManus' favorite advertising memories.

After helping coordinate a Jack Johnson concert at Libbey Bowl with Food for Thought, former festival park director Lynn Malone approached McManus and asked if she would be interested in working for the Ojai Music Festival. Not one to turn down a

See McManus, Page A3

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# Earth Day celebrates balance, harmony

**Esoteric astrology as news for the week of April 22 through 29:**

Every 22nd of April, humanity celebrates International Mother Earth Day and Earth Day. As more than a billion people participate in Earth Day activities every year, Earth Day has become the world's largest civic observance. The massive concern to build right relations between humanity and the living being we call Earth is evidence of humanity's love of the mother. In 2009 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed April 22 International Mother Earth Day, with a significant resolution affirming "the interdependence existing among human beings, other living species (the kingdoms mineral, plant, animal and human) and the planet itself, the Earth which we all inhabit." The Earth is our home.

Celebrating Earth Day helps us define new emerging processes (economic, social, political) focused on the well-being of the kingdoms. Through these humanity seeks to raise the quality of life, foster equality and begin to establish right relations with the Earth. We dedicate ourselves to bringing forth balance and a relationship of harmony with all of nature. Learn about planting a billion trees (the

Canopy Project); participate in 1.5 billion acts of green. Disassociation (towards Earth) is no longer viable; we lose our connection to life itself. Participation is viable — an anchor, refuge and service for all of life on Earth.

From Farmers Almanac, "On Earth Day, enjoy the tonic of fresh air, contact with the soil, companionship with nature! Go barefooted. Walk through woods, find wildflowers and green moss. Remain outside, no matter the weather!" Nature, Earth's most balanced kingdom, heals us. The New Group of World Servers is preparing for May 3, Wesak Buddha Taurus Solar Festival, with a significant resolution affirming "the interdependence existing among human beings, other living species (the kingdoms mineral, plant, animal and human) and the planet itself, the Earth which we all inhabit." The Earth is our home.

**ARIES:** Money concerns are shared by you and Taurus this month. Pull back on spending for a while assessing exactly what you need and no more. Before any actions with money, title to those in need. Do not refrain from this, even if you feel you have no money. We can always give even small amounts. This ensures constant loving resources flowing into our lives from spiritual sources. After giving, financially organize.

**TAURUS:** Read Aries, following the suggestions. And now about your money and resources. You have re-

sources all around — hidden away in containers (boxes, bags, drawers, garages, storage units, etc.) — kept as historical reminders. However, now a new resource is needed. Trade the old for the new so new money can come in. Ask if you need assistance in organizing. Know when things are used their light shines forth.

**GEMINI:** Allow yourself contemplation and solitude. Your own thoughts need to be listened to now. You may feel dreamy during the day and/or dreams become vivid through the night. Record all dreams your dream journal, then talk about them. Dreams are messages clarifying yesterday's, releasing emotions, future prescriptions. Over time, chronicling our dreams, they become understandable.

**CANCER:** More and more you must come out of your shell. You're a cardinal (initiating things) sign (a leader) that knows the future must be prepared for in ways different than before. You're the nurturing "great mother," realizing food must be grown and necessities must be sustained for family, friends, pets and humanity later on. Tend to all personal health matters first. Then, "carry on."

**LEO:** As you observe those you work with, looking for constancy, trust,

confidentiality and abilities, you're also being observed. You're influencing many at this time. Let your work ethic be a model for others. It's important to acknowledge, praise and recognize everyone. We, you included, evolve through praise, recognition and what we create. We see, recognize and applaud your gifts and endeavors.

**VIRGO:** Tend to resources and money with care. If you do so, ponder upon and prepare to travel to places that transform your mind and heart, cast a radiance of dappled light onto your body, and allow you to adapt to new ways of life, food, people and cultures. It also could be time to return to school or a certain study. Some great learning calls to you — heart to heart.

**LIBRA:** Thinking planning and organizing finances for the future is appropriate now. A good idea is purchasing gold and silver instead of retirement plans and/or other ideas the banks have created. Find someone reputable who ethically deals in gold and silver. Discuss with others (family, intimate, financial advisor, etc.) what and how you are planning for your death. Make a plan. Legalize it.

**SCORPIO:** With all your present relationships, partnerships and interactions with others, you consider

new ways of relating that include more good will and kindness that create right relations. Having the intention to act with greater depth and love is alchemical, creating a magnetic aura around. It attracts others seeking the love you so potently (or potentially) emit. Think on these things. Do you need new sunglasses?

**SAGITTARIUS:** Lots of little things need your attention. So often you see the big issue, the grand scale, the great philosophical foundation of knowing. However, little parts and pieces in your world need to be tended too. Survey your daily agenda, tasks and environments for what is calling for care and attention. Then heavens and earth meet, heart and mind, body and soul integrate and balance.

**CAPRICORN:** Something new is asking to come forth. A new path perhaps, new garden, new foundation of life. May a new child or a new creative endeavor at home, in rooms around the house. Something repaired, repainted, refloored, resurfaced, carpeted or perhaps a new art form of creativity. Everything must be fun, lively, filled with color, music, dance, fire, friends, nurturing foods and children at play. A new comfort. **AQUARIUS:** Careful with

communication. You could be too quick for others to follow and/or understand. You could also be potentially frustrated with others, thinking them too slow. Act instead with kindness and understanding. No one in the zodiac is as fast as you, talks quicker, or understands new realities with your comprehension. Look with love and compassion upon your fellow travelers. They all wish they had your mind.

**PISCES:** The environments around you are in need of change. You need a change of environment, neighborhood, yard, and room. Some Pisceans might actually need a completely new home. If this is you, begin with a list of all you need in a home, town, village, etc. Then draw and write down what your perfect home would be. Working on this daily, hourly, creates a magnet field within you that attracts your new home directly to you. And the resources needed. Begin now. There is happiness in change.

Risa D'Angeles is founder and director of the Esoteric and Astrological Studies and Research Institute, a contemporary wisdom school in the ancient mysteries tradition. Send email to risagoodwill@gmail.com, go to [nightlightnews.com](http://nightlightnews.com) or see her Facebook pages.

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## Ruling:

Continued from Page A1

Wickstrum again discounted the impact locally. "It's not the death of conservation because of the Capistrano decision," he explained. "There are other ways to go about that and we have quite a bit of authority to do it." CMWD was recently required to comply with a 32 percent reduction in the amount of water its customers use. Wickstrum said residential customers will likely see additional water-wasting provisions after the lake dropped below 50 percent capacity this week. Currently, CMWD customers are restricted

from outdoor watering to two days a week between the hours for 6 p.m. and 10 a.m. They must use a shut-off nozzle when washing vehicles or hand-watering and cannot wash sidewalks, driveways or parking areas. The court ruling will not impact Golden State Water Company (GSWC) customers because it is a private company whose rates are controlled by the Public Utilities Commission. If, however, CMWD increases the amount it charges Golden State, those increases would likely be passed on to GSWC customers.

## GSA:

Continued from Page A1

throughout the state. "By the year 2022, we have to have adopted a groundwater sustainability plan," Rapp said. "And 20 years after that, we have to be able to show we're operating the GSA in a sustainable way." The proposed area, which will cover a zone along the Ventura River between Matilija Canyon and the confluence of Coyote Creek, might not seem the most likely setting for appreciable reserves of water. Most of the year, the riverbed is dry. There is water beneath it, however, in numerous deposits of ancient colluvium, old riverine sand and gravel formed into "pockets" by tectonic activity. These pockets, in turn, now tend to trap and hold water in quantities sufficient to supply wells

for portions of the year. Rapp said anyone who wants to learn more about the proposed agency should attend the meeting, which will convene at 7 p.m. at the Oak View Community Center, 18 Valley Road, Oak View. There will be a brief presentation of the 2014 law, he said, along with a general description of the GSA area and its geology. The other agencies involved in the proposed GSA include the Meiners Oaks Water District, the Casitas Municipal Water District, the city of Ventura and the Ventura County Watershed Protection District. For additional information or to be included on an e-mail list, contact Rapp by phone at 646-3403, or by e-mail at Bert@venturariverwd.com.

## Add your veteran to the Wall of Remembrance

Nancy Hill and the Ojai Memorial Day Committee, in conjunction with Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 11461, have announced their plans for the annual Memorial Day observances. The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 482 in Ojai will kick off the day with a free breakfast for all veterans at the Ojai American Legion, 843 E. Ojai Ave., including scrambled eggs and biscuits with sausage gravy.

After breakfast the vets are invited to stroll the fences around the tennis courts in Libbey Park in Ojai to view the Memorial Wall, featuring photographs and memories of veterans, both living and deceased, who are being honored at the wall. At 11:30 a.m. the British Brass, a band from Ventura, will entertain the public at Libbey Bowl with patriotic songs from the past. Then guest speak-

ers, including veterans and their families, will speak of their experiences. All the events are free to the public and both adults and children are welcome at all venues. Contact Nancy Hill at 302-6093 as soon as possible if you have a veteran you want to honor on the wall, or email photographs and information to PattiBagley@gmail.com.

## McManus:

Continued from Page A1

challenge. McManus accepted, and has been serving as operations director since 2008. One of the biggest challenges in her role involves finding housing for staff, interns and musicians participating in the festival. Instead of putting guests up in hotel rooms — and in order to save funds and give a more comprehensive, authentic Ojai experience — the festival relies on local hosts to volunteer to open their homes.

McManus has a thorough method to meet this challenge: she investigates performers online, fishes for information from co-workers and past volunteers, personally visits each home to review logistical details such as stairs or ramps, then draws up pairings between visitors and hosts. Once she has this draft, McManus has her co-workers review it and offer their input.

"It is kind of a team effort; I do a lot of the groundwork, they cross my T's and dot my I's," McManus explained. "One of the high points is when everything seems to work properly, effortlessly, after all those months of preparation."

One small example of such a success involves housing a cellist who practiced every evening with a family who loved the cello, and would sit outside on their patio every night to listen to their guest play.

When she is not working for the festival, McManus enjoys walking Ojai trails with her border collie, and also still enjoys travel. In fact, she just returned from a voyage around the world, visiting Cambodia, Burma and Turkey, sleeping on trains, carrying a scant 20 pounds of luggage. She still hopes to visit Greece and India someday.

Looking to the future of the festival, McManus hopes to dispel the notion the Ojai Music Festival is



Photo submitted

Gillian McManus is a force for the Ojai Music Festival.

elitist or caters only to a certain portion of the community. She and her co-workers have made efforts to put some distance between this misconception and the festival, utilizing food trucks and smaller, more diverse events, as well as offering free community concerts. "I've been working with the festival since 2008, and I've seen it change not only in scope, but in increasingly opening itself to the

community. To me, that's been a very satisfying thing," McManus stated. "Ojai is such a major part of the festival, it would be nice if the festival were a major part of Ojai. Certainly we are trying to design it that way." The Ojai Music Festival is June 10 through 14, and always needs more volunteer hosts. E-mail McManus at operations@ojaimusicfestival.org for more information.

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