

THE SAINT JOSEPH'S  
*Chronicle*

*"We write frankly and fearlessly but then we 'modify' before we print". - Mark Twain*

*The Inside Scoop*  
with Kevin Donaghy

Interview with Wanda Snow Porter  
Author of "Emily Decides"

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## MEET THE PRESS



**SAVANNAH ANDRESON**

“I do sports. I play Golf and Bocce Ball. I like to hang with my friends. I like to take care of my Mom. I grew up in Santa Maria. I have cousins that live in Orcutt. I like working at Oak Creek Farm with my friends. I like to open the door for people when they need help.”



**ANTOINETTE ELLIS**

“I was born in California. I like to cook and I like to make things. I like to learn new things. I like goats and chickens and cats. My favorite goat is named Hans. I have nice friends. I like to do things with my friends and family. My best friend is funny. My favorite food is pizza.”



**JACOB DOLAN**

“I grew up in Santa Maria. I am very hardworking and I get the job done! I enjoy working with my hands. I am going to work on my old truck, it is a working project that I want to go to school to learn more about. I definitely love to cook. I am also a nice and kind person.”





**KEVIN DONAGHY**

“I am 56 years old. I have general education requirements completed. I am pursuing a major in language and arithmetic. My hobbies are horticulture and animal care. I am single. I like to keep busy with my schedule, work is a big benefit in my opinion. I am a Lompoc native. I choose to commute for environmental benefits. I appreciate renewing the arts. I keep entertained.”



**CORY CULMER**

“My name is Cory Culmer. I was born here in Santa Maria. I am a red/black stripe belt in Taekwondo. I like to help my classmates at Taekwondo. I like going different places. My wife and I go together to the movies. I enjoy getting out and meeting new people in our community.”



**JEANNIE MATTER**

“My name is Jeannie. I grew up in Santa Maria. I am hardworking. I recently retired and now have more time to be an Explorer. I am a good friend and I like animals. I have always been The Chronicle's #1 Fan.”



**STEVE SALUTAN**

"My name is Steve. One of the things that I like to do is run the sound system at my church. I am a friendly guy with a good attitude. I have family in Guadalupe, Santa Maria, and Lompoc. I enjoy BBQ'ing with my family, occasionally we cook a pig. I love to ride my bike. I ride it anywhere! I really like working on cars. I am a Chevy guy. I have a Camaro that is a Father/Son project with my Dad. I am handy and like to fix things. I like using power tools. My favorite power tool is...all of them!"



**ROBERT BOBB**

"I play golf. I can hit up to 55 yards on the driving range. I am pretty good at golf. I made four birdies in a row! I am a wrestling fan, I have all the movies at home. I have met Stone Cold Steve Austin. He gave me a t-shirt with his autograph, but I won't wear it at Oak Creek Farm because I don't want it to get dirty. I am a good guy and I like to help people. I do a lot of things with my church. I enjoy volunteering. When I was in ROTC in school, I shook President Reagan's hand and we played golf together. He had his own golf course. I like coming out to Oak Creek Farm, and I keep an eye out for everyone there. I want everyone to read my article and get a kick out of it."

# The Great OUTDOORS *with Jake*



I miss the Farm when I am absent from the Explorers, but most of all I miss my chickens! Even though Abraham the Rooster is a pain to pick up sometimes, I still miss him. The chickens make me feel happy, and they make me laugh. They like to roam around. Sometimes they are sneaky and they escape the perimeter. If one of the chickens goes rogue, we have to find it. That job is hard, funny, and crazy!

This year I have planted Bangkok Thai Chile Peppers, they are hotter than a habanero. I am growing it for my Aunt. She likes all that hot stuff, not me! We have a black cherry tomato planted in “protective custody.” Once in a while we are watering our garden boxes and we run out of water. I guess the well runs out and we have to wait for it to fill back up again before we can finish watering.

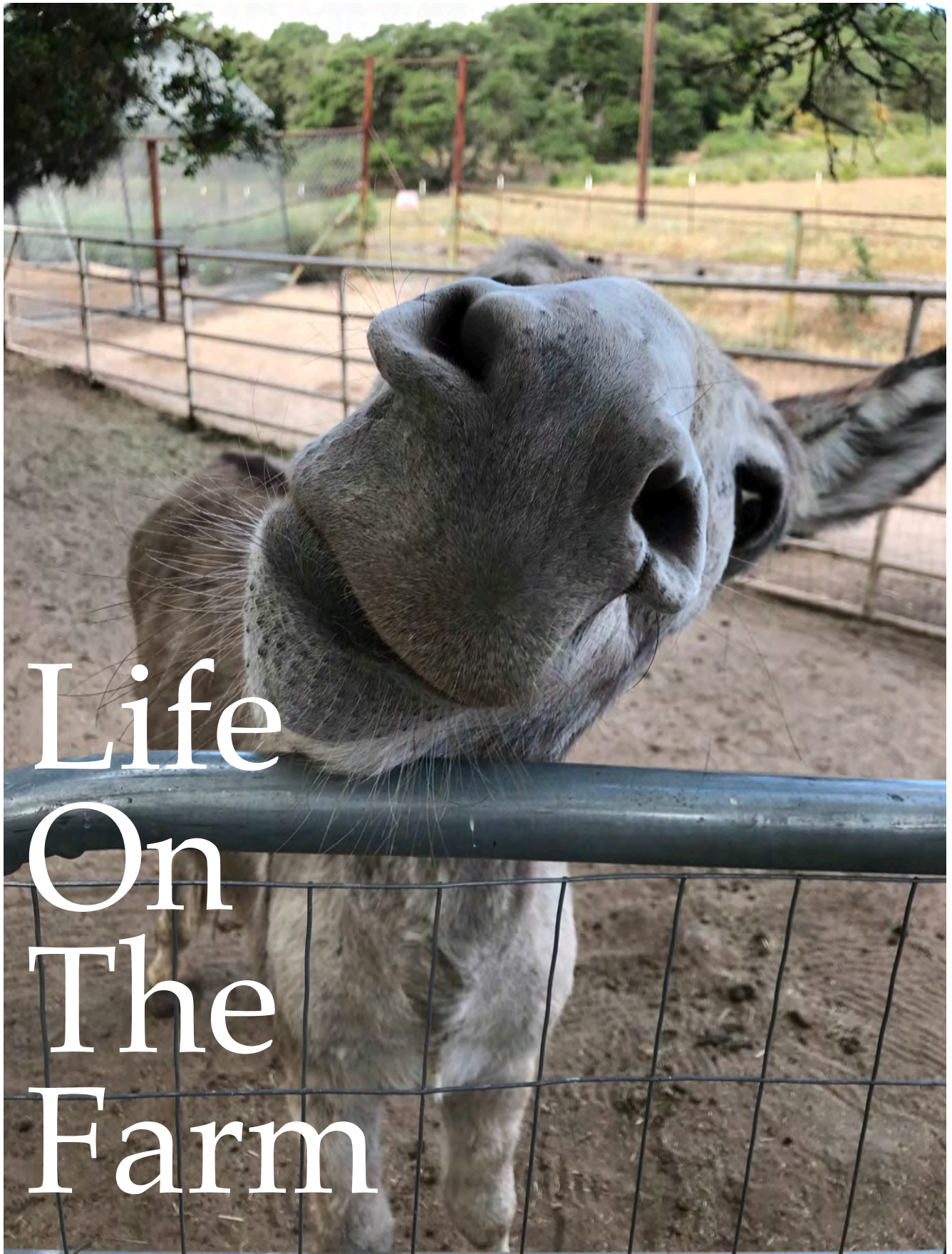


**Jacob Dolan**  
Santa Maria Explorer  
& Columnist









# Life On The Farm





*"We let all our animals out to run around. We have to keep Hans out of the chicken coop though."*



*"Tilly's laying down. She is taking a fiesta."*



*"Duke is a good boy."*



*"Eric picked that out of the garden. I don't know what he is going to do with all that!"*



*"Thumper boy is in his pen."*



*"We have a sun door on our coop. The sun makes it open or we can open it with a tool."*



**Robert Bobb**  
Santa Maria Explorer  
& Photographer







Josiah did a really great job on his testing, and he is now a red belt. Now we are both red belts. Josiah and I will both be testing together for our black belts sometime next year. I assisted with the testing by holding the board out in front of me. Students can use their hands or their feet to break the boards. It's my job to hold the board strong, so it doesn't move. I don't want anybody to get hurt. I was really proud of my classmates that tested. They all did a really good job. Thank you, readers, I will talk to you again in the next article.



**Cory Culmer**  
Santa Maria Explorer  
& Columnist







# Let's Talk Painting!

by Antoinette Ellis

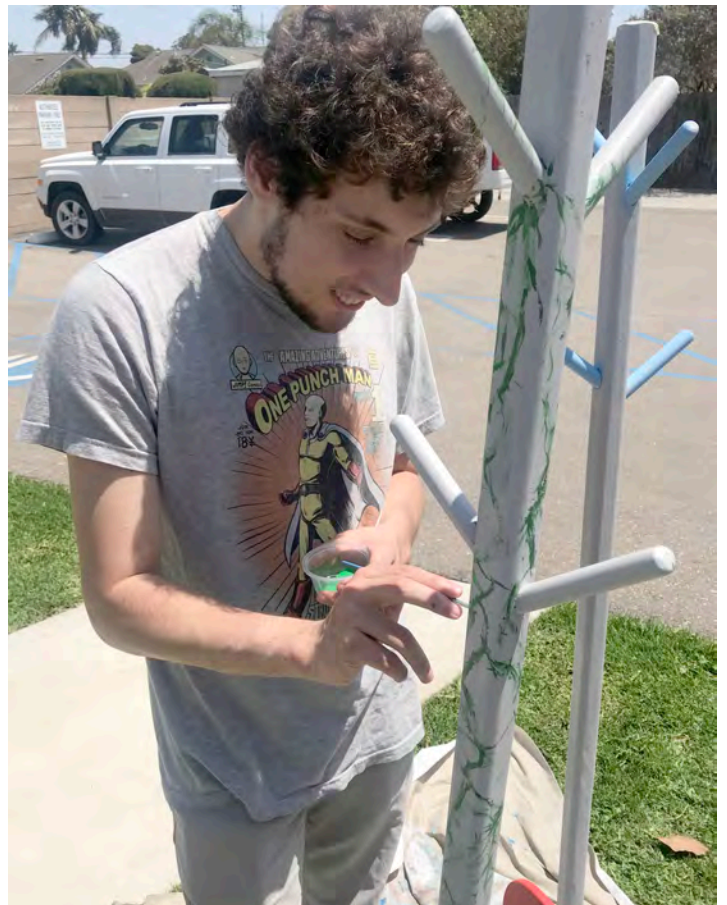


My coat rack is blue. We made them at our wood shop class, The Splinter Group. I had fun painting, I even got blue paint in my hair! The blue color matches my backpack. I am going to put my coat rack by my front door at home. I will hang my jacket and backpack on it. I liked painting outside in the sun.



**Antoinette Ellis**  
Santa Maria Explorer  
& Columnist











# Let's Chisel This Out With Steve

It was fun making and painting the chair for our entry in the Painted Chair Raffle for the fundraiser for the Santa Maria Library. We picked out a book and it was by Wanda Snow Porter and the title was *Emily Decides*. Larry designed our chair and we built it. It was based on the book. Building the chair was fun. It was at least a five-step process, to make this chair from start to finish. Some of the processes were sanding, gluing, putting it together, and painting and designs on the chair. The design came from the story of the book. The story was about the Dana Adobe house and the three donkeys that lived there. My favorite part of this build was seeing the chair displayed for the fundraiser! I hoped it raised a lot of money for the Santa Maria Library.

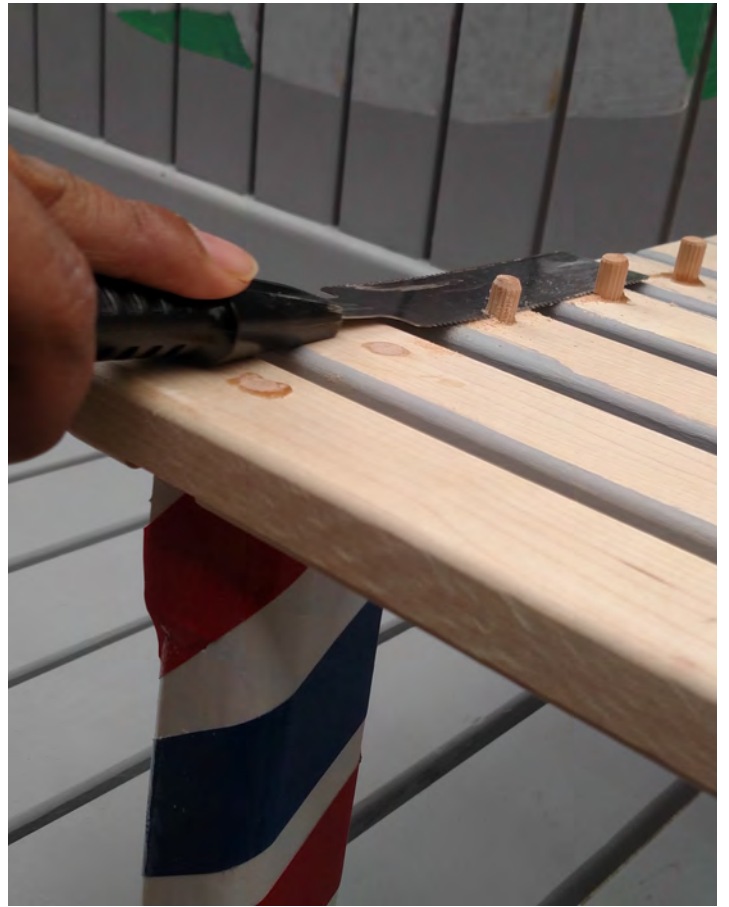


**Steve Salutan**  
Santa Maria Explorer  
& Columnist















# FARM COOKING

with Jeannie



Our recipe was really good. We used radishes, lettuce, and cilantro that we picked from our garden in the salad. I chopped vegetables and put them in big red and blue bowls. We cooked the hamburger and put eggs from our chickens on top. That was my favorite part! I also had fun playing games with my friends.



**Jeannie Matter**  
Santa Maria Explorer  
& Columnist

## Garden Salad & Hamburger Patty with Fried Egg

### **Garden Salad**

Serves 6

#### *Ingredients:*

8 cups romaine or green leaf lettuce  
torn into bite-sized pieces  
1 pint cherry tomatoes  
3 to 4 radish ends trimmed, sliced  
1 bag of shredded carrots  
1 bunch of cilantro, chopped  
2 cucumbers halved lengthwise and  
chopped  
1 bunch of green onion, chopped  
2 colored bell peppers, chopped  
3 avocados sliced

#### *Directions:*

In a large bowl, combine all ingredients.  
Top with the salad dressing of your choice.

### **Hamburger Patty with Fried Egg**

Serves 6

#### *Ingredients:*

6 hamburger patties  
favorite seasoning  
6 eggs  
1 stick butter

#### *Directions:*

Using tongs, place the hamburgers over the hottest part of the fire or directly over the heat and grill, turning once, for 5 to 7 minutes per side for medium-rare, or until done.

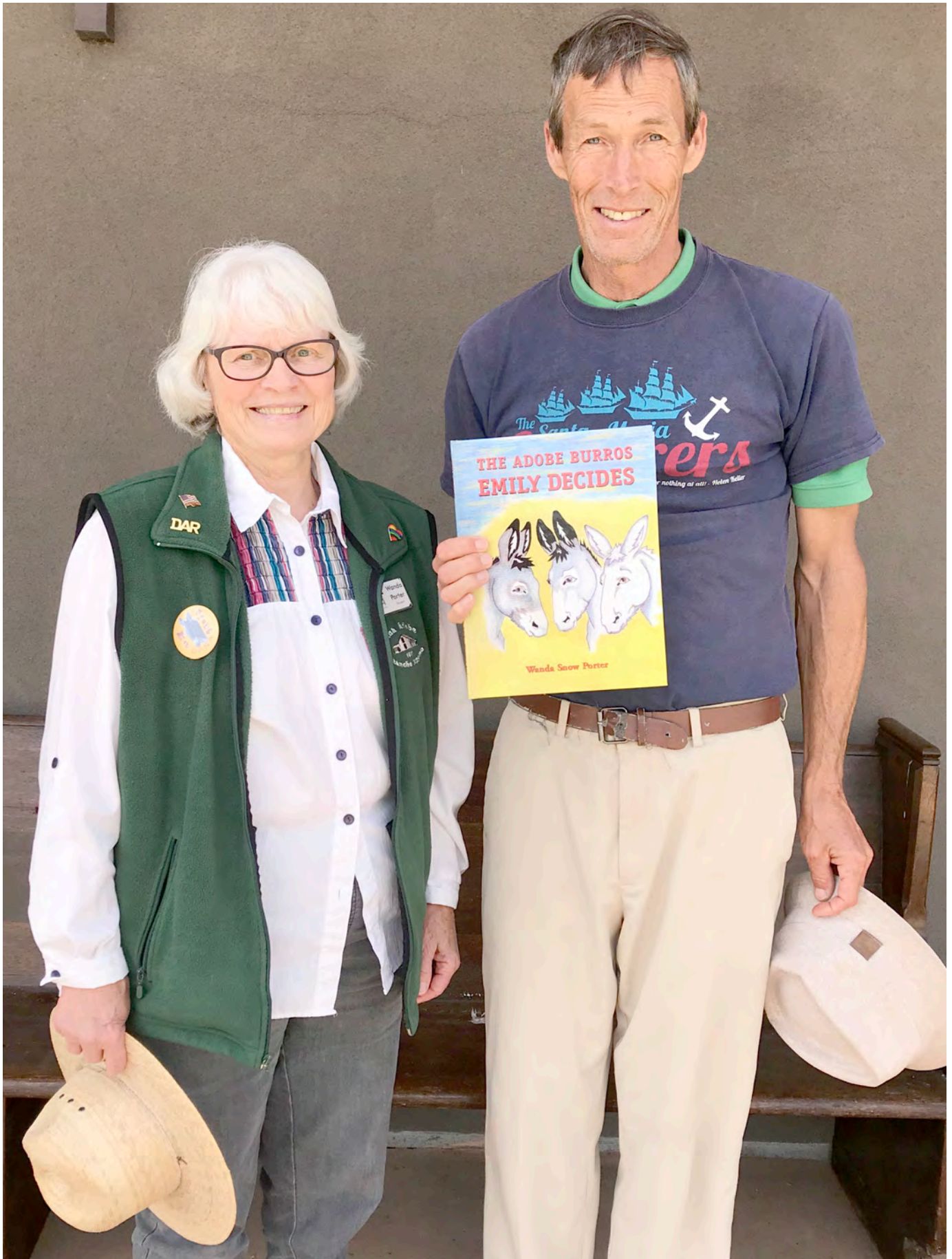
In a cast iron skillet over medium-high heat, melt the butter. When the butter foams, break the eggs into the pan, spacing them about 2 inches apart. Reduce the heat to low and season the eggs. Cook until the whites are set and the yolks are just beginning to firm around the edge, about 5 minutes.













# The Inside Scoop

## with Kevin Donaghy

Interview with Wanda Snow Porter  
Author of "*Emily Decides*"



Are there any special writing styles or specialization that you combine in a book?

Well, not really. I try to write at a fourth-grade level. My main goal is to keep the word usage and sentence structure such that it won't be too hard. I also like to try and make it fun! Plus, the illustrations, of course, help to tell the story. Doing the illustrations is the most fun for me!



Is the story of Blanco, Sara, and Emily in your book, *Emily Decides*, based upon historical fact?

Yes. All three of the burro picture books are based upon something that truly happened to the Adobe burros. The woman who was the director of the Adobe at the time loved the burros and always had fun stories to tell about the things that happened. This particular story from *Emily Decides*, the donkeys did make an escape. They had been in a corral, up by the house in those days, and somehow they managed to open the gate and they took off! They ended up on the other side of Thompson Street. I added to my story of course. They never quite made it to town before somebody called and reported them out and they were brought home. I thought it would be fun for the readers of *Emily Decides* to walk the town of Nipomo. So we made the burros walk the town and of course, there is no place like home, so they ended up back home where they should be.





Do you have fun writing about animal characters in your stories?

Oh yes! When I first started writing about Emily, Blanco, and Sara I would come to visit them at the Adobe. I was doing their illustrations, so I wanted to do my best to make sure that each one looked different when I drew them. Each donkey had their own personality. Blanco was very reserved, he was more wild and didn't want to get petted. Sara thought she was a superstar! She was like a spoiled little girl. Emily was the mothering one. She was sweet and kind, very motherly to both burros, where Sara was very spunky. So it was very fun drawing those pictures and getting to know the burros. I fell in love with them!



The Dana Adobe in Nipomo is the location of the flavorful tale *Emily Decides*. Do you live and work in Nipomo?

I have lived in Nipomo for 40 years now. My husband was Captain Dana's great-great grandson. So, we were already attached to the Adobe when I started working here as a docent and writing the books for the DANA Cultural Center.



Have you ever had any of your books read over the radio or made into an audio book?

No, I have not done any audio books. I have read my books in public but not on the radio.







A beautifully depicted illustrated chair of *Emily Decides* was enrolled in this year's Friends of the Santa Maria Public Library 8th Annual Painted Chair Raffle by The Santa Maria Explorers Club. Were you surprised that your book was chosen?

Yes, I was surprised! Delighted might be a better word. I was very pleased, and it was a beautiful chair. You guys did such a good job building it and painting it. I was so impressed, I couldn't believe it. It was beautiful! I bought tickets, but I didn't win. Then I was thinking after I bought the tickets, that is one heavy, stout bench. How am I ever going to pick it up to get it home? But, I thought I will call everybody I know to get this thing home if I win. Unfortunately, I didn't win, but I am hoping that next year you enter the raffle again.



Because of authoring a book, do you have "known journalist" or "local contributing writer" fame?

I don't think I have much fame. But, I have attended Allan Hancock College, where I have made some appearances. I still take art classes, it is continuing my education. It has opened a different world for me for sure. I think people know me because I have written some books, so they will come up and talk to me. So, I have gotten to know people that I never would have gotten to know otherwise. I guess that could be considered a type of fame. It has been a really wonderful adventure to write these books.





Where can your books be purchased?

Well, they sometimes have my used books available on Amazon. Most of the Adobe books are available for sale at the DANA Cultural Center. They are a limited publication, so the first Sara book sold out right away. They were made into hard cover to go into library circulation in Nipomo and Arroyo Grande.



Have you ever been a contributing writer for another author?

My writing career started by doing a newsletter for a horse riding group. This was a long time ago! Horseback riding lessons was my career and I had students with a donkey and I drew some pictures of the donkey and used him to help teach my students through a story. The director saw my work and wanted me to write a little story to teach children how to be safe around horses. That story was published for a riding group in a book with a lot of other works by other famous people. That was really a thrill! The picture books started after that. I did some books for an older audience and now I am back to the younger picture books. I have written five novels and five picture books total. I am currently working on a 6th picture book!









Do you have a degree from attending school?

I have an AA degree in Liberal Arts from Allan Hancock College.



Are you, Wanda Snow Porter, yourself, an avid reader of California history?

Oh yes! I love California history. It is so fascinating. Of course, my husband is Captain Dana's great-great grandson and through his association with the Adobe, it gives me a wonderful association to local history. It makes history more interesting and it becomes more alive when you see the house, the land, the people. I was born in California and I love the state. Now I am particularly interested in the Santa Fe Trail. My husband's other great-great grandfather came from Saint Louis with Jedediah Smith, the first people that came over the mountains from back East. It is just so interesting.



How many years in professional writing have you now worked?

It has been over 25 years now that I have been doing this as a career. Being serious about it, making myself sit down almost every day and doing a little bit and the research. I love doing research! Sometimes it is hard to make yourself stop researching.









*"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all."*

*- Helen Keller*

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