

JULY 2023

# Montecito

## NEIGHBORS

*An exclusive magazine serving the residents of Montecito*

**BETSY O'BRIEN:**  
NATIVE BEACH GIRL, BLOGGER  
AND PODCAST HOST IS LIVING  
"THE BETS LIFE!"



Best Version Media®

Cover photo by  
Linda Blue



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Table with 2 columns: CONTENT DUE, EDITION DATE. Rows include dates from April 8 to March 8.

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DEAR RESIDENTS,

We hope you enjoyed a relaxing 4th of July! Did you get a chance to see the Montecito 4th Road Show?! The motorcade started on San Ysidro Road at upper Manning Park, proceeded down North Jameson Lane and over to Coast Village Road. It wound its way onto Cold Springs Road and along a stretch of East Valley Road. In past years, the parade route was short and attendees lined both side of the San Ysidro route. Due to the pandemic, the event was reimagined as a road show, which continues to be a popular format. It allowed residents a way to safely enjoy seeing a collection of vehicles decked out with patriotic decorations, from the comfort of their own driveway. Kudos to the Montecito Association for sponsoring this unique community-based tradition!

This issue features Betsy O'Brien, a Montecito "Millennial" who left town, only to return after realizing, Like Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz, "there's no place like home." She's now living "The Bets Life;" she's a content creator blogger and has a podcast, sharing "life updates, friendly advice, design inspirations, home projects, travel tips, fashion finds, and shopping loves."

Finally, Joseph Miller, our expert contributor from Santa Barbara Screen and Shade, informs us on the benefits of various folding shade designs. Learn how you can enhance the beauty of your home windows as well as create a thermal buffer between the glass and the room.

Thanks, neighbors; see you next month!



Sincerely,

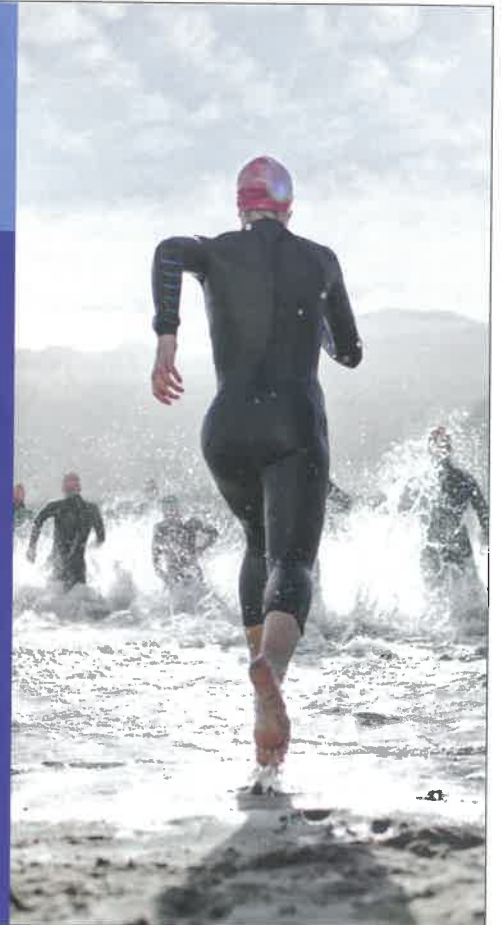
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THE "MONTECITO VIBE" - LOCAL BEACH WATER MONITORING

by Sarah Ettman-Sterner

The summer ocean is finally "warming" up from winter temps hovering in the low 50s. Wondering if a wetsuit is needed? Check out seatemperatu.re.com. It states that July's average water temperature in the Santa Barbara area is a refreshingly brisk 63°F (min: 59°F/max: 66°F). Before hitting the beach, it's also helpful to know local tides. An easy to read tide chart, specific to Montecito is tide-forecast.com/locations/Montecito/tides/latest resource. Another important resource for determining if the ocean water is safe for local swimming and surfing at Butterfly, Hammonds and Miramar beaches is the Santa Barbara County Ocean Monitoring Program's weekly report on Beach Status and Ocean Water Testing (countyofsb.org/2263/Ocean-Water-Monitoring-Program). Beaches between Guadalupe Dunes and Carpinteria State Beach are tested to determine "levels of bacteria in creeks and ocean water often associated with stormwater runoff. While indicator bacteria are not in themselves pathogenic, their presence indicates that disease causing bacteria may be present. Anecdotal reports have linked high levels of indicator bacteria with skin rashes, sinus infections, and other unhealthful conditions."

Be safe in the water and have fun!





## You Gotta Know When to Fold 'Em

Article and photo provided by  
Joseph Miller, Santa Barbara Screen & Shade

EXPERT  
CONTRIBUTOR



Customers who visit our showroom are often overwhelmed at the sheer variety of window shades. I usually try to simplify the matter by pointing out that all of them are either folded, rolled, or louvered. Three methods: period. And yet, as with music, a simple theme can lend itself to countless variations. In this article, I'll introduce one of these themes: folding shades.

A Roman shade is, quite simply, a horizontal drapery. With the aid of very strong, thin, nylon cords, the shade folds up and onto the wall above the opening. The stack of a Roman shade, like that of a drapery, is essential to its beauty. Our aesthetic brain finds repose gazing at fabric folds. (How else to account for the marvelous, painstaking rendering of clothing in painting and sculpture?) The stacked folds of a Roman shade often mask the upper edge of a window, and thereby support the illusion that the window is architecturally taller than it really is. This gives a feeling of openness that lifts the eye.

But what to do if you don't have much space between the ceiling and the top of your window? Are you willing to sacrifice the upper 12" of your glass to the stack of a shade? Now the situation is reversed, and a Roman shade no longer extends but cuts down the height of the window. Or, what if your home is very modern, and you don't care a hoot for Raphael's blue satin folds? You want privacy and sun protection when you need it, and a discrete stack when the shade is up.

You might then turn to fan-folded shades, the most popular being the so-called cell or honeycomb shade. The small folds (usually 3/4") compress tightly when stacked, the whole shade to about 3" once rails are factored in. Furthermore, studies have measured significant insulation value to these shades, the layer of air within the cells functioning as a thermal buffer between the glass and the room.

One of the most useful innovations with folding shades, universally available now for all Romans and cells, is the capacity to stack either at the top or the bottom of the window. The so-called "top-down/ bottom-up" design sandwiches the fabric between two moving rails, giving you an option for covering the lower portion of the window, while leaving the top unimpeded.

This idea probably dates to the "cafe curtains" in diners that shielded patrons from sidewalk pedestrians. But the design is very useful to homeowners now, especially in houses with bedroom or living room windows facing the street or sidewalk. Instead of entirely shutting out the world every time you need privacy, you can cover what you wish while continuing to welcome the mountains, skies, and treetops.

The lift cords for top-down/ bottom-up shades are necessarily complex. Two independent systems of cords are required – one for each moving rail. If the shade is designed with pull-cords, this can get unwieldy. However, companies like Hunter Douglas have engineered sophisticated "cordless" systems that eliminate pull-cords altogether. You simply move the rail manually, and it stays in whatever position you wish. Furthermore, the newest electric motors are small, strong, and quiet – becoming the preferred lift system for many folding shades.

And yet, for all the virtues of modern folding shades, it is with rolling shades that I have seen the most innovation. And that will be the topic for my next article.



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Story by Sarah Ettman-Sterner  
Photos by Linda Blue and Betsy O'Brien

## Betsy O'Brien:

### *Native Beach Girl, Blogger and Podcast Host is Living "The Bets Life!"*

Here at *Montecito Neighbors*, we are grateful to those of you who have taken a leap of faith, entrusting us to share your life story! The goal is to open up a dialogue between neighbors; help people make connections; foster friendships and create a support network. We think you'll agree that positive communication builds bonds between us. And, while we savor the natural beauty all around - a place perfectly located between majestic mountains and sparkling sea - it's actually the people who live here that form the authentic heart and soul of Montecito.

It's interesting to note that like a magnet, our splendid surroundings and laid back vibe are attracting Millennials, born and raised here, back to the nest. Take for instance, thirty-something Betsy O'Brien, who was raised in the Hedgerow. Like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, she lived in the Midwest and, in time, realized "there is no place like home." Longing to return to Montecito, she was excited the stars aligned just right to provide an opportunity for her and her husband, Patrick, to create a new beginning back

in the place where her roots first grew. In 2015, Patrick, a Ph.D. in sociology, was offered a fulltime professorship at Santa Barbara City College. Now the happy couple are settled in a charming bungalow they remodeled. It's a stone's throw from the house she grew up in and where her parents still reside. How's that for good fortune?! Let's discover Betsy's full circle journey and how she is truly living "The Bets Life!"

#### **Betsy, you're a true "Hometown Girl!" What's it like to return to Montecito, where you were born and raised?**

It was a dream come true to return to Montecito! We were living in Madison, Wisconsin at the time because of my husband's job, but I was hopeful that we would make it back to California one day. Santa Barbara seemed like a long shot, so when I found out that Patrick was offered the

*(Continued on pg. 8)*





job as a sociology professor at SBCC, it was truly one of the most joyous days. I was so grateful and excited to be able to move back home!

**Tell us about your childhood; home life, school and how you spent your free time.**

I feel so fortunate to have grown up here. I grew up playing tennis, surfing, hiking, and playing beach volleyball at East Beach. California living at its finest! I am a beach girl through and through, and I am at my happiest with my toes in the sand. I attended exceptional schools – shout out to Montecito Union School - Santa Barbara Middle School, and Santa Barbara High School. I was a dedicated volleyball player and have fond memories of playing for my high school team. When I tell people that I'm from here, the response is usually an incredulous look and the comment, "How lucky are you!" I couldn't agree more.

**What drew you to attending the University of Colorado at Boulder, trading the sands of Miramar Beach for Rocky Mountain snow?**

I have two older brothers and they both attended CU Boulder, so naturally I thought that there was no way

that I was going to follow in their footsteps. I received an academic scholarship and my parents urged me to go visit the campus. I saw the green lawns, beautiful architecture, and stunning mountain views, and I begrudgingly admitted to myself that there was zero chance that I wasn't going to spend my college years at Boulder.

**How did you meet Patrick? Did you get married in Montecito?**

We met at CU Boulder and started dating in 2011. I was finishing up my undergraduate degree and Patrick was working on his Ph.D. We were married on the beach in Carpinteria (where we also got engaged) in 2017, and we even had dolphins in attendance! How do you beat a beach and mountain view for a wedding? We couldn't have asked for a better day, and I can't think of anywhere else that we would have rather tied the knot!

**Describe your career path, from real estate to blogging.**

I have a background in real estate, and I've fixed up homes and managed properties. I'm always looking at houses (although it's tough to find a "deal" in this market), and I



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enjoy the design process. I think real estate will always be a part of my life. I've also always been a writer, and when I turned 30, I had the realization that I wanted to start writing more and pursue other creative interests. I started my blog, "The Bets Life," (thebetslife.com) and launched it (for better or for worse) during the pandemic. Since 2020, I've been writing, creating social media content, and (more recently) podcasting all under The Bets Life. It's been a joy to write and speak vulnerably and connect with others. Whether it's through a funny video, personal podcast episode, or "Real Talk" blog post, I hope that others will be able to relate and feel empowered and inspired.

### What made you and Patrick decide to return to Montecito? Was it an easy or difficult decision?

When we first moved back in 2015, we were living in the Funk Zone. We had a blast living there and we loved the walkability and central location. I've always appreciated the gorgeous landscaping, calmness, and small-town feel of Montecito, and we now live very close to my parents and the home that I grew up in. Patrick and I weren't planning on moving, but in 2019, I found a charming lit

(Continued on pg. 10)

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tle house with lots of outdoor space, and we decided to go for it and make the move. One of the best decisions that we've ever made

**Once you returned to Montecito, was it easy to make friends and create your community?**

When I moved back it was so fun to re-connect with old friends. I see friends from my childhood frequently, from preschool, elementary school, middle school, and/or high school. To this day, I still play beach and indoor volleyball with friends from my high school team. It's really special to have friends that have witnessed all of your different ages and life phases. It's now come full circle and I get to see a lot of my childhood friends with their own children. I've also made a lot of new SB friends from blogging, social media, and modeling. I've connected with other bloggers, artists, photographers, content creators, and local business owners. There's an incredible creative community here, and it's always a pleasure to collaborate and work with other local people and businesses.

**Tell us more about the content you write and curate on "The Bets Life."**

I created The Bets Life as a lifestyle website where I could write and share about travel, design projects, fashion, and whatever else was coming up for me personally. My favorite category is "Real Talk" where I discuss everything from dealing with negative self-talk to making mistakes to the pressures of being a 30-something woman. I try to put it all out there on the page, and my biggest compliment is when someone says, "I needed to hear this" or "I've been dealing with this too." I've now completed two seasons of The Bets Life Podcast with the same mission of authentic connection. I've interviewed mainly local female entrepreneurs – not surprisingly, there's no shortage of fascinating, successful, and inspiring women in this community.

**What are your go-to activities for fun around town?**

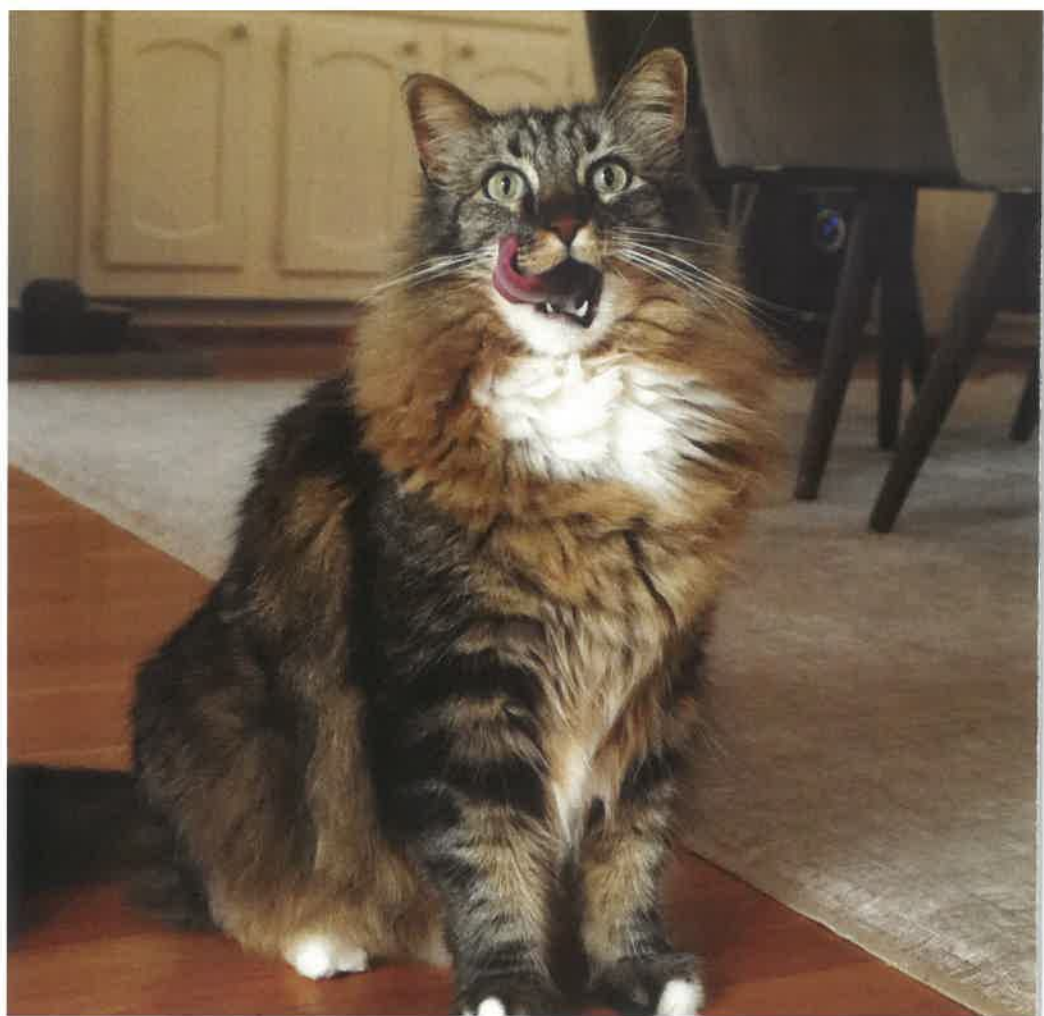
I get asked this question a lot! Whether it's from people visiting Santa Barbara for the first time or people who have lived here for decades. Patrick and I enjoy riding our electric bikes from Montecito to Carpinteria or from Montecito to downtown Santa



Barbara. We'll hit the beach or stop somewhere for a snack or a drink. I'm also all about taking advantage of the natural beauty of Santa Barbara, whether that's having a park picnic, going on a hike, taking a beach walk, or getting out on the water.

**What are your plans for the summer? Are you going on an adventure here or abroad?**

Yes! Although we love Montecito and will miss being here - especially our two cats, Lucy and Finnegan (he's pictured here) - we are, we are preparing for our next big adventure. Patrick is taking his sabbatical and we are going to live in France for four and a half months. We will be in Nice for two months and Paris for two and a half and we can't wait! I plan on capturing our trip via social media, (yup, just like *Emily in Paris*, lol) so please follow along at @thebetslife. Don't worry, I promise Santa Barbara will always be home.



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**WED., JULY 12, 19, 26**

**AFTER HOURS AT THE ZOO**

@Santa Barbara Zoo

The Santa Barbara Zoo is staying open later so you can enjoy the quieter side of the Zoo...after hours! While some animals go to bed at 4:00 PM, you'll enjoy a peaceful vibe, late train rides, lawn games, face painting, live music, and see animals like giraffes too. S'mores and chicken or tri-tip picnic dinners are available for purchase. Reservations are required to visit the Zoo.

Time: 5pm - 8pm

Cost: FREE with Zoo Admission

[sbzoo.org/series/after-hours-at-the-zoo/](http://sbzoo.org/series/after-hours-at-the-zoo/)

**FRI., JULY 14, 21, 28**

**FREE SUMMER CINEMA**

@Santa Barbara County Courthouse

Spend Friday night under the stars and enjoy the free Summer Cinema at the Santa Barbara County Courthouse. The theme for the Summer Cinema this year is "Out of This World," exploring seven nights of space-inspired films. Please respect the lawn and your fellow filmgoers: only bring blankets that are permeable (no plastic/nylon/tarps), and chairs that are low-backed and low to the ground. Setup permitted starting at noon on the day of the screening.

**July 14 - Alien**

The time is the future. Seven astronauts are returning to Earth in their battered commercial starship for some well-earned leave. When responding to a mysterious distress call, they become the victims of a galactic creature of unspeakable horror. Their desperate attempts to combat the alien and escape make for a story you could never imagine in your wildest dreams – or nightmares. Starring Sigourney Weaver, Tom Skerritt and John Hurt, *Alien* is one of the most suspenseful and powerful science fiction films of all time. (Ridley Scott, 1979, R, 116 min.)

**July 21 - Mars Attacks!**

When a shiny silver flying saucer lands in the Nevada desert, a group of skull-faced Martians emerges and promptly vaporizes a gathering of unfortunate Earthlings, kicking off a bizarre high-tech war with wild special effects. This sci-fi spoof features an all-star cast including Jack Nicholson, Glenn Close, Pierce Brosnan, Danny DeVito, Rod Steiger, Sarah Jessica Parker, Annette Bening and Tom Jones. Don't miss this hilarious frenzy as Tim Burton directs – and Mars attacks!

**July 28 - The Fifth Element**

New York City, 2263. Korben Dallas, an ex-soldier turned luckless cab driver, has just picked up the kind of fare that only comes along every five thousand years: Leeloo, the perfect being... the perfect weapon. Together, they must save the world from the universe's ultimate evil. An extrav-

agantly-styled 23rd century tale of good versus evil, this outrageous sci-fi adventure from acclaimed director Luc Besson stars Bruce Willis, Milla Jovovich and Gary Oldman. (Luc Besson, 1997, PG-13, 126 min.)

Time: 8:30pm

Cost: FREE

[artsandlectures.ucsb.edu/events-tickets/whats-on/](http://artsandlectures.ucsb.edu/events-tickets/whats-on/)

**SUN., JULY 23**

**SING! CONCERT SPECIAL EVENT**

@Lobero Theatre

Music Academy presents SING! Concert Special Event. Our famed SING! children's choir joins forces with the Young People's Chorus of NYC – an innovative program that has become the model for children's choruses around the world. See how pairing with the "Chorus of the World" takes our SING!ers to the next level.

Time: 3:00pm

Cost: \$55 - \$60

[lobero.org/events/ma03-young-peoples-chorus-of-new-york-city/](http://lobero.org/events/ma03-young-peoples-chorus-of-new-york-city/)

**SAT., JULY 29**

**23RD ANNUAL WOODIES AT THE BEACH**

@ Santa Barbara City College

The Santa Barbara Woodie Club brings the "Best of the Best" Woodie Wagons from all over the western United States to gather together on the west lawn of Santa Barbara City College overlooking the blue Pacific Ocean. Bring a picnic and soak in the cool beach vibe as you listen to the tubular tunes of a fun surf band and enjoy the artistry and craftsmanship that made the Woodie legendary. Raffle tickets for a silent auction benefiting local charities will be available for purchase. Registration starts at 8:00 AM. Special parking will be available for Classic Car friends (Pre-1954 only)

Time: 9:00am - 3:00pm

Cost: FREE

[facebook.com/events/303560648666252/](https://facebook.com/events/303560648666252/)

**WED., AUG. 2 - SUN., AUG. 6**

**OLD SPANISH DAYS FIESTA**

@Various locations, Downtown Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara's rich heritage comes alive during the first week in August with the music, dance, and pageantry of Old Spanish Days Fiesta, the granddaddy of city celebrations, reaching back to 1925.

**Wednesday, August 2**

La Fiesta Pequeña, 8pm

Mercado De La Guerra, 11am

**Thursday, August 3**

La Misa del Presidente, 10am

Las Noches de Ronda, 8pm

DIGS, 6pm

Mercado De La Guerra, 11am

Mercado de la Playa, 11am