BAND

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Middle School and Watsonville High School.

He went to Cabrillo College then San Jose State University, returning to his alma mater to teach music in 1978.

Smith, 61, taught in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District for 31 years, eventually becoming the district's music director.

But he left the district in 2009 when the music program was eliminated.

"I really hope that someday the kids in the Pajaro Valley will once again have an opportunity to play music," he said. "There is a huge inventory of instruments sitting and rotting away in the school that is waiting for the day the school board brings the program back. I look forward to that day."

After his departure from PVUSD, Smith continued teaching at Joseph George Middle School, a Visual and Performing Arts Anchor School in San Jose. There, he teaches three bands, choir and drum corps.

But Smith said he plans to retire from teaching, too, citing the 124-mile commute between his home in Mountain Ranch and San Jose, where he stays in an apartment during the work week.

His time with the band has taken him to performances across the U.S. and all over Europe.

He was with the band when it played for the pope and when it did a two-hour Fourth of July performance on the rear lawn of the White House in 1996, after which President Bill Clinton and then Chief of Staff Leon Panetta came to speak with them.

"That was the experience of a lifetime," he said. "For a kid from Watsonville it was an amazing experience."

Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian file

Watsonville Community Band director Eugene Smith pulls Priscilla Garcia from the crowd to help direct the band during the 2006 Fourth of July parade in downtown Watsonville.

Traveling the world, Smith said, afforded him opportunities few people experience.

"These are dreams come true," he said. "I would have never had the opportunity to do those things had it not been for Watsonville Community Band."

Smith said he has enjoyed seeing the band progress musically, and said he is excited about seeing it under new leadership.

"We're well-positioned to head through the rest of this century," he said.

Although he is officially retiring, Smith said he is keeping his musical options open.

There are three community bands within driving distance from his home, and he is looking into teaching opportunities, he said.

"I'm sure there will be plenty for me to do if I want to play or wave a stick," he said, referring to the baton held by conductors.

But when he's not pondering music, he will be participating in a rather unusual hobby —hitching his team of mules to a covered wagon and going on long trips ranging from short hops to cross-country treks such as a recent trip over Sonora Pass.

"When you're on the trail and the mules are working, what we experience is just the faintest echo of what the pioneers experience," he said.

Smith also plans on frequent trips to Watsonville, where his 83-year-old mother still lives.

Watsonville Community Band, with its distinctive green-and-yellow uniforms, got its start in 1947 when high school students founded the volunteer group.

Dan Young, who taught music at Pajaro Valley High School until the program ended, said he has known Smith since they were Boy Scouts.

"He inspired a lot of kids to go on to music and music education," he said.

Watsonville Community Band member Merrie Ann Turner said the announcement of his retirement came as somewhat of a shock.

"All at once we're saying goodbye to someone who's stood up in front of us for years," she said.

"He's really intertwined his life around promoting the band and giving his all, and we are so sorry to lose him."

Bass clarinet player Louise Viales, who has been with the band for 53 years, said she was disappointed.

"We all hoped he would be with the band for a lot longer," she said.

Viales, who sits on the board tasked with finding a replacement, said the assignment is a daunting one.

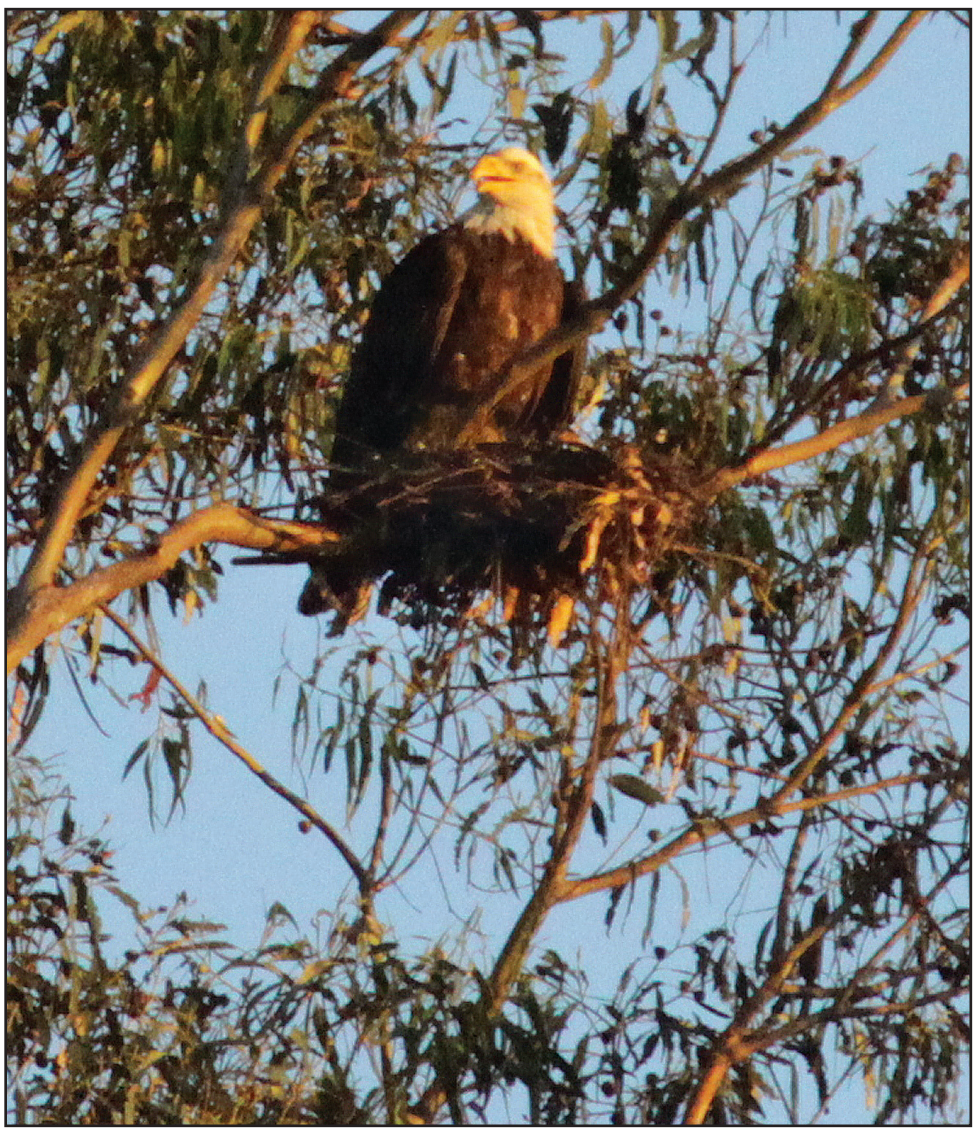
"It's a real concern," she said. "Someone can't just step in and take over a community band without a lot of communication with the previous director."

She explained that the varying personalities of the huge band — and the fact that none of the members are professionals — require a unique type of leader.

"Eugene was very good, and very sensitive," Viales said. "He has really followed the traditions of the band and followed the previous conductors in their footsteps very nicely."

Tom Mitchell, a 45-year member, said Smith "has a great feel" for band music.

"This is going to be a big loss," Mitchell said. "He is a band person 24 hours a day, seven days a week. "I sure hate to lose that."



Tarmo Hannula/Register-Pajaronian

The eagle has landed

A female bald eagle perches on a nest atop a eucalyptus tree Saturday evening at Pinto Lake. A pair of the eagles recently arrived in the area and set about building a nest. The majestic birds are the national bird and a symbol of America. In the late 20th century the bald eagle was on the brink of extinction in the continental U.S. while flourishing elsewhere. Since their numbers have gradually increased, they were removed from the endangered species list in 1995. A mature bald eagle typically has an 80-inch wingspan.

MESA

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prowess.

"It takes a lot of work and time to get something to work right," he said. "But it is worth it, because it's the only opportunity that I have to work on these types of projects."

Yescas focused on the robotic sumo-wrestler challenge, which requires competitors to push each other out of a ring. The robot is a test of engineering design, as well as programming and strategy.

"The robot took months to complete, but it was able to do its job and win," Yescas said.

Alianza Charter School eighth-grader Isaac Veal said the stick bridge that he and partner Oscar Serrano built withstood more than 1,000 pounds of pressure, far surpassing standards in the competition.

"I got the design from a model I saw in the regional competition," Veal said. "We changed our design a little bit and it worked out really good."

The MESA judges were impressed by what they saw Saturday. Out of all the things these kids might be doing on a warm afternoon, they choose to spend it testing their mechanical contraptions.

"The kids like the challenge. They enjoy working on their projects," said Norm Ploss, a retired civil engineer and MESA judge. "They learn skills that apply to school."

Edgar Garcia, a Watsonville High School senior, believes that participating in these competitions has led him to pursue further academic interests in the fields of mathematics and science.

"I've competed for over five years and learned not only to design but to construct bridges and windmills. The things that I have learned I think will help me when I start college," Garcia said.

Garcia competed in the MESA "Civil Structures" challenge, which requires contestants to design and construct a model balsa wood bridge that would carry a maximum load while using as little wood as possible, stressing neatness, craftsmanship and creativity.

Jason Antaya, an English teacher at East Lake Middle School in Watsonville, said he believes the program helps students who would otherwise struggle in school.

"It provides a safe environment for the children. Most importantly, it gives the students confidence," Antaya said.

Got news?

E-mail the Register-Pajaronian your news tips, press releases, meeting notices or letters to the editor.

newsroom@register-pajaronian.com

Watsonville Today

A few scattered showers

High 59 / Low 36

Extended Forecast

Wednesday
Mainly sunny, seasonable
High 66 / Low 39

Thursday
Turning warmer
High 73 / Low 42

Friday
Partial cloudiness
High 76 / Low 44

Saturday
Periods of sunshine
High 72 / Low 47

Sunday
Rain showers likely
High 68 / Low 45

Monday
Cooler, more rain showers
High 55 / Low 44

Monterey Bay Tides

	High	High	+/- feet
Today	7:41 AM	9:10 PM	5.39 / 4.26
Wednesday	8:28 AM	9:37 PM	5.50 / 4.61
Thursday	9:15 AM	10:06 PM	5.49 / 4.96
	Low	Low	+/- feet
Today	1:40 AM	2:41 PM	2.22 / -0.19
Wednesday	2:26 AM	3:15 PM	1.79 / -0.21
Thursday	3:12 AM	3:48 PM	1.31 / -0.10

Almanac

Temperature

Yesterday's High	69°
Yesterday's Low	44°
Normal High/Low	64° / 41°
Record High	84 in 1932
Record Low	26 in 1909

Precipitation

Yesterday's Precip.	0.00"
Month to date	0.33"
Normal Month to date	0.72"
Year to date	8.22"
Normal Year to date	18.48"

Water year runs July 1 to June 30

Sunrise/Sunset

	Sunrise:	Sunset:
Today	6:30 AM	6:07 PM
Wednesday	6:29 AM	6:08 PM
Thursday	6:27 AM	6:08 PM
Friday	6:26 AM	6:09 PM

Forecasts and maps prepared by:
DayWeather, Inc.
Cheyenne, Wy
www.dayweather.com

bz-blizzard, c-cloudy, fg-fog, hs-heavy snow, hz-haze, ls-light snow, mc-mostly cloudy, mix-wintry mix, pc-partly cloudy, r-rain, sh-showers, sn-snow, su-sunny, ts-thunderstorm, w-wind

Monterey Bay

Today	Tonight	Tomorrow
40's to 50's	30's to 40's	50's

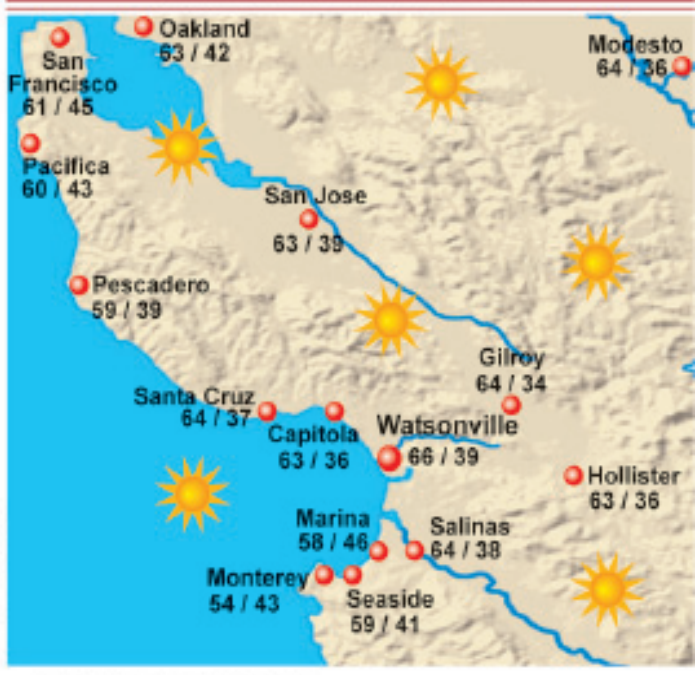
Santa Clara Valley

Today	Tonight	Tomorrow
50's	30's	60's

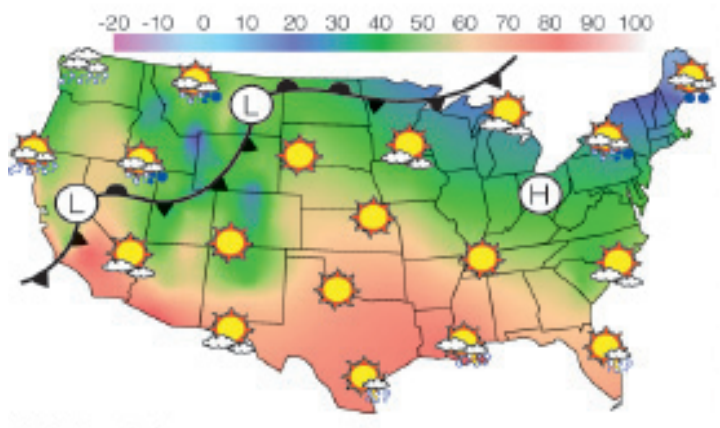
Around The Region

	Yesterday			Tomorrow			Thursday		
Local	Hi	Lo	Prec.	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Gilroy	78	40	0.00"	57	34	sh	64	37	su
Hollister	78	42	0.00"	56	36	sh	63	39	su
King City	78	37	0.00"	57	31	pc	64	35	su
Morgan Hill	76	41	0.00"	57	36	sh	63	39	su
Salinas	68	38	0.00"	56	38	sh	64	41	su
Santa Cruz	72	41	0.00"	59	37	sh	64	39	su
San Jose	69	45	0.00"	57	39	pc	63	42	su
Regional									
Oakland	58	40	0.00"	63	42	su	70	45	su
Los Angeles	79	59	0.00"	64	47	su	75	49	su
San Francisco	57	43	0.00"	61	45	su	65	48	pc

Tomorrow's Regional Map



Around The Nation



Valid 6 p.m. today

Yesterday's National Extremes:
High: 87 at Borrego, Calif. Low: -18 at Pellston, Mich.

	Today			Tomorrow		
	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Albuquerque, NM	71	41	pc	62	31	pc
Billings, MT	39	19	ls	41	26	pc
Boston, MA	34	26	su	55	40	su
Chicago, IL	56	47	pc	60	43	sh
Dallas, TX	73	61	pc	71	64	r
Houston, TX	76	62	pc	78	68	sh
Kansas City, MO	73	55	pc	64	38	th
Las Vegas, NV	74	47	sh	54	45	pc
Miami Beach, FL	76	71	pc	78	75	sh
Minneapolis, MN	56	36	pc	40	23	mx
Nashville, TN	63	43	su	66	51	pc
New York, NY	43	35	pc	52	44	su
Oklahoma City, OK	73	55	pc	69	46	sh
Phoenix, AZ	83	52	pc	62	44	sh
Portland, OR	47	33	pc	51	37	pc
Rapid City, SD	52	25	pc	39	24	pc
Reno, NV	37	18	ls	44	21	su
St. Louis, MO	56	31	r	46	28	ls
Salt Lake City, UT	56	31	r	46	28	ls
San Antonio, TX	59	49	sh	62	49	pc
San Diego, CA	46	31	pc	51	36	pc
Seattle, WA	72	50	su	66	52	sh
Washington, DC	49	34	su	63	44	su