**Out & About**

Newman joins CEC board

Charles A. Newman has been named to the board of directors of the Community Environmental Council. A Southern California native, he earned a law degree from Loyola Marymount University and has a B.A. from the University of Notre Dame. He is the founder of the Newman School of Law and went on to specialize in environmental and complex class-action suits. In January, Mr. Newman was appointed to serve as a commissioner on the Montecito Planning Commission by the Board of Supervisors. He has also served as director and chair of multiple committees of the Montecito Water Board. He is a member of the Environmental Defense Council, Human Rights Watch and the Montecito Association.

—Charlotte Roessler

**Our Town**

‘Homo Deus’ author to speak

Historian Yuval Noah Harari will present a free public lecture on the future of humankind titled “Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow,” based on his new book, at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 27 at UCSB Campbell Hall. Free copies of Mr. Harari’s book, “Homo Deus,” will be given away at the event while supplies last. In the talk and his book, Mr. Harari looks to the future, exploring how geopolitical and scientific engineering will define what we become. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Oxford in 2010 and specializes in world history, political history and international relations. He is now a member of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem’s Department of History. For more on the UCSB Arts & Lectures event, call 889-5533 or visit www.ucsbartslectures.org.

—Mirjana McGovern

**On Stage**

Martha Schneider Orchestra at Lobero

The Martha Schneider Orchestra will perform at 8 p.m. Monday at the Lobero Theatre, 261 E. Canon Perdido. Tickets are $29 for general admission and $35 for VIP seats. To purchase, call the Lobero box office at 963-6891 or go to www.lobero.com.

—Dave Mason

**Dinner dates being replaced with ‘just drinks’**

By LINDSAY WEBER

These days, hitting the town for a dinner date often involves more dining and less drinking. The no-alcohol trend is sweeping through the restaurant scene, and it’s not hard to see why.

“People are looking for more options and more casual environments,” says Sarah Johnson, general manager of the West End Bar and Grill in downtown Santa Barbara. “They want to enjoy their meal without worrying about getting wasted.”

But what’s the deal with all the no-alcohol bars and restaurants? One possibility is that people are looking for more social activities that don’t require alcohol. Another idea is that people are looking for more healthy dining options.

“I think people are becoming more health-conscious,” says Johnson. “They want to make sure they’re eating healthy while they’re out.”

So, what does this mean for dinner dates? It means that couples are spending more time talking and enjoying each other’s company, rather than getting wasted and forgetting what they talked about.

“I think it’s great for couples to have a chance to have a meaningful conversation without getting distracted by alcohol,” says Johnson. “It’s a great way to connect and get to know each other better.”

But what about the bars and restaurants? They’re still open for business, just offering a more user-friendly experience.

“I think it’s great to have a variety of options for people,” says Johnson. “Some people want to drink and some people don’t. It’s great to have a place where everyone can feel comfortable.”

So, if you’re looking for a dinner date, consider heading to a no-alcohol restaurant. You might just find that it’s just what you need to reconnect with your partner.
Restaurant rewards well-behaved kids with family meal discount

**FOOD AND WINE**

A restaurant in northern Italy is beginning to be renowned for its unusual policy that rewards families with a meal discount for keeping children under control.

Antonio Ferrari has been running his own eponymous restaurant for 12 years and says he now wants to show his customers that he enjoys having children at his establishment — as long as they’re well-behaved, according to The Local.

The newly introduced policy, which Mr. Ferrari says is more like a wine bar, rewards families with a special discount and will often result in a free meal, for making loud noises or being difficult to satisfy picky parents.

But, says the restaurateur, not all of his younger patrons are deserving of his special discount.

When you give parents what they want, the kids think they can do whatever they want. They may not notice the table with their shirts on, play in the bathroom and make a mess with the toys, or annoy the other customers, explained Mr. Ferrari.

On a recent Sunday, however, the restaurant welcomed a large family of adults and children — and Mr. Ferrari found the young-diner’s table manners to be exceptional.

The children, he said, were exceptionally well-behaved on tables and sitting and made even the most impatient parents want to dine in the company of children.

When the meal was done, Mr. Ferrari offered a 5 percent discount, resulting in an extra 50 euros being knocked off the bill.

The family was especially pleased with the discount that they had earned with their children’s good behavior.

Mr. Ferrari’s father, he says, will definitely offer the same discount again, but he won’t make it a permanent one because “that’s not the point.”