

AMERICAN RIVER BANKSHARES  
Form SC 13D  
December 16, 2009

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**UNITED STATES**  
**SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION**

Washington, D.C. 20549

**SCHEDULE 13D**

**Under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934**

**(Amendment No.)\***

**American River Bankshares**

**(Name of Issuer)**

**Common Stock, par value \$0.01 per share**

**(Title of Class of Securities)**

**029326105**

**(CUSIP Number)**

**Mr. Terry Maltese, Sandler O'Neill Asset Management LLC,**

**780 Third Avenue, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10017 (212) 486-7300**

**(Name, Address and Telephone Number of Person Authorized to Receive Notices and Communications)**

**December 7, 2009**

**(Date of Event which Requires Filing of this Statement)**

If the filing person has previously filed a statement on Schedule 13G to report the acquisition which is the subject of this Schedule 13D, and is filing this schedule because of Rule 13d-1(b)(3) or (4), check the following box " .

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**Note:** Six copies of this statement, including all exhibits, should be filed with the Commission. See Rule 13d-1(a) for other parties to whom copies are to be sent.

\* The remainder of this cover page shall be filled out for a reporting person's initial filing on this form with respect to the subject class of securities, and for any subsequent amendment containing information which would alter disclosures provided in a prior cover page. The information required on the remainder of this cover page shall not be deemed to be filed for the purpose of Section 18 of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 ( Act ) or otherwise subject to the liabilities of that section of the Act but shall be subject to all other provisions of the Act (however, see the Notes).

Page 1 of 15 pages

Exhibit Index located on Page 15

SEC 1746 (12-91)

**SCHEDULE 13D**

CUSIP No. 029326105

Page 2 of 15 Pages

1. Name of Reporting Person

S.S. or I.R.S. Identification No. of above person

Sandler O Neill Asset Management, LLC

2. Check the Appropriate Box if a Member of a Group\*

(a)  (b)

3. SEC Use Only

4. Source of Funds\*

00

5. Check Box if Disclosure of Legal Proceedings Is Required Pursuant to Items 2(d) or 2(e)

6. Citizen or Place of Organization

New York

7. Sole Voting Power

NUMBER OF

SHARES

8. Shared Voting Power

BENEFICIALLY

OWNED BY

752,600

EACH

9. Sole Dispositive Power

REPORTING

10. Shared Dispositive Power

PERSON

WITH

752,600

11. Aggregate Amount Beneficially Owned by Each Reporting Person

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752,600  
12. Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (11) Excludes Certain Shares\*

13. Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (11)

8.08%  
14. Type of Reporting Person\*

00

**\*SEE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE FILLING OUT!**

**INCLUDE BOTH SIDES OF THE COVER PAGE, RESPONSES TO ITEMS 1-7  
(INCLUDING EXHIBITS) OF THE SCHEDULE, AND THE SIGNATURE ATTESTATION.**

SCHEDULE 13D

CUSIP No. 029326105

Page 3 of 15 Pages

1. Name of Reporting Person

S.S. or I.R.S. Identification No. of above person

SOAM Holdings, LLC

2. Check the Appropriate Box if a Member of a Group\*

(a) " (b) "

3. SEC Use Only

4. Source of Funds\*

00

5. Check Box if Disclosure of Legal Proceedings Is Required Pursuant to Items 2(d) or 2(e) "

6. Citizen or Place of Organization

Delaware

7. Sole Voting Power

NUMBER OF

SHARES

8. Shared Voting Power

BENEFICIALLY

OWNED BY

352,600

EACH

9. Sole Dispositive Power

REPORTING

10. Shared Dispositive Power

PERSON

WITH

352,600

11. Aggregate Amount Beneficially Owned by Each Reporting Person

352,600  
12. Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (11) Excludes Certain Shares\*

13. Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (11)

3.79%  
14. Type of Reporting Person\*

00

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**SCHEDULE 13D**

CUSIP No. 029326105

Page 4 of 15 Pages

1. Name of Reporting Person

S.S. or I.R.S. Identification No. of above person

Malta Partners, L.P.

2. Check the Appropriate Box if a Member of a Group\*

(a)  (b)

3. SEC Use Only

4. Source of Funds\*

WC

5. Check Box if Disclosure of Legal Proceedings Is Required Pursuant to Items 2(d) or 2(e)

6. Citizen or Place of Organization

Delaware

7. Sole Voting Power

NUMBER OF

SHARES

8. Shared Voting Power

BENEFICIALLY

OWNED BY

17,000

EACH

9. Sole Dispositive Power

REPORTING

10. Shared Dispositive Power

PERSON

WITH

17,000

11. Aggregate Amount Beneficially Owned by Each Reporting Person

17,000  
12. Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (11) Excludes Certain Shares\*

13. Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (11)

0.18%  
14. Type of Reporting Person\*

PN

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**SCHEDULE 13D**

CUSIP No. 029326105

Page 5 of 15 Pages

1. Name of Reporting Person

S.S. or I.R.S. Identification No. of above person

Malta Hedge Fund, L.P.

2. Check the Appropriate Box if a Member of a Group\*

(a)  (b)

3. SEC Use Only

4. Source of Funds\*

WC

5. Check Box if Disclosure of Legal Proceedings Is Required Pursuant to Items 2(d) or 2(e)

6. Citizen or Place of Organization

Delaware

7. Sole Voting Power

NUMBER OF

SHARES

8. Shared Voting Power

BENEFICIALLY

OWNED BY

55,500

EACH

9. Sole Dispositive Power

REPORTING

10. Shared Dispositive Power

PERSON

WITH

55,500

11. Aggregate Amount Beneficially Owned by Each Reporting Person

55,500  
12. Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (11) Excludes Certain Shares\*

13. Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (11)

0.60%  
14. Type of Reporting Person\*

PN

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**SCHEDULE 13D**

CUSIP No. 029326105

Page 6 of 15 Pages

1. Name of Reporting Person

S.S. or I.R.S. Identification No. of above person

Malta Hedge Fund II, L.P.

2. Check the Appropriate Box if a Member of a Group\*

(a)  (b)

3. SEC Use Only

4. Source of Funds\*

WC

5. Check Box if Disclosure of Legal Proceedings Is Required Pursuant to Items 2(d) or 2(e)

6. Citizen or Place of Organization

Delaware

7. Sole Voting Power

NUMBER OF

SHARES

8. Shared Voting Power

BENEFICIALLY

OWNED BY

280,100

EACH

9. Sole Dispositive Power

REPORTING

10. Shared Dispositive Power

PERSON

WITH

280,100

11. Aggregate Amount Beneficially Owned by Each Reporting Person

280,100  
12. Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (11) Excludes Certain Shares\*

13. Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (11)

3.01%  
14. Type of Reporting Person\*

PN

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**SCHEDULE 13D**

CUSIP No. 029326105

Page 7 of 15 Pages

1. Name of Reporting Person

S.S. or I.R.S. Identification No. of above person

Malta Offshore, Ltd

2. Check the Appropriate Box if a Member of a Group\*

(a)  (b)

3. SEC Use Only

4. Source of Funds\*

WC

5. Check Box if Disclosure of Legal Proceedings Is Required Pursuant to Items 2(d) or 2(e)

6. Citizen or Place of Organization

Cayman Islands

7. Sole Voting Power

NUMBER OF

SHARES

8. Shared Voting Power

BENEFICIALLY

OWNED BY

100,000

EACH

9. Sole Dispositive Power

REPORTING

10. Shared Dispositive Power

PERSON

WITH

100,000

11. Aggregate Amount Beneficially Owned by Each Reporting Person

100,000  
12. Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (11) Excludes Certain Shares\*

13. Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (11)

1.07%  
14. Type of Reporting Person\*

CO

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**SCHEDULE 13D**

CUSIP No. 029326105

Page 8 of 15 Pages

1. Name of Reporting Person

S.S. or I.R.S. Identification No. of above person

**SOAM Capital Partners, L.P.**

2. Check the Appropriate Box if a Member of a Group\*

(a)  (b)

3. SEC Use Only

4. Source of Funds\*

**WC**

5. Check Box if Disclosure of Legal Proceedings Is Required Pursuant to Items 2(d) or 2(e)

6. Citizen or Place of Organization

**Delaware**

7. Sole Voting Power

NUMBER OF

SHARES

8. Shared Voting Power

BENEFICIALLY

OWNED BY

**300,000**

EACH

9. Sole Dispositive Power

REPORTING

10. Shared Dispositive Power

PERSON

WITH

**300,000**

11. Aggregate Amount Beneficially Owned by Each Reporting Person

300,000  
12. Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (11) Excludes Certain Shares\*

13. Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (11)

3.22%  
14. Type of Reporting Person\*

CO

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**SCHEDULE 13D**

CUSIP No. 029326105

Page 9 of 15 Pages

1. Name of Reporting Person

S.S. or I.R.S. Identification No. of above person

Terry Maltese

2. Check the Appropriate Box if a Member of a Group\*

(a)  (b)

3. SEC Use Only

4. Source of Funds\*

00

5. Check Box if Disclosure of Legal Proceedings Is Required Pursuant to Items 2(d) or 2(e)

6. Citizen or Place of Organization

USA

NUMBER OF 7. Sole Voting Power

SHARES 8. Shared Voting Power

BENEFICIALLY

OWNED BY 752,600  
EACH 9. Sole Dispositive Power

REPORTING 10. Shared Dispositive Power

PERSON

WITH 752,600

11. Aggregate Amount Beneficially Owned by Each Reporting Person

752,600  
12. Check Box if the Aggregate Amount in Row (11) Excludes Certain Shares\*

13. Percent of Class Represented by Amount in Row (11)

8.08%  
14. Type of Reporting Person\*

IN

**\*SEE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE FILLING OUT!**

**INCLUDE BOTH SIDES OF THE COVER PAGE, RESPONSES TO ITEMS 1-7  
(INCLUDING EXHIBITS) OF THE SCHEDULE, AND THE SIGNATURE ATTESTATION.**

**Item 1. Security and Issuer.**

The class of equity securities to which this statement relates is the common stock, par value \$0.01 per share ( Common Stock ), of American River Bankshares (the Issuer ), a company incorporated in California, with its principal office at 3100 Zinfandel Drive, Suite 450, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670.

**Item 2. Identity and Background.**

(a) This statement is being filed by (i) Sandler O'Neill Asset Management LLC, a New York limited liability company ( SOAM ), with respect to shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by Malta Partners, L.P., a Delaware limited partnership ( MP ), Malta Hedge Fund, L.P., a Delaware limited partnership ( MHF ), Malta Hedge Fund II, L.P., a Delaware limited partnership ( MHFII ) and Malta Offshore, Ltd., a Cayman Islands company ( MO ), (ii) SOAM Holdings, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company ( Holdings ), with respect to shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by MP, MHF and MHFII, (iii) MP, with respect to shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by it, (iv) MHF, with respect to shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by it, (v) MHFII, with respect to shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by it, (vi) MO, with respect to shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by it, and (vii) Terry Maltese, with respect to shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by MP, MHF, MHFII and MO; and as managing member of SOAM Ventures, LLC ( Ventures ), a Delaware limited liability company, with respect to shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by SOAM Capital Partners, L.P. ( SCP ), a Delaware limited partnership of which Ventures is the management company. The foregoing persons are hereinafter sometimes referred to collectively as the Reporting Persons and MP, MHF and MHFII are sometimes collectively referred to herein as the Partnerships. Any disclosures herein with respect to persons other than the Reporting Persons are made on information and belief after making inquiry to the appropriate party.

The sole general partner of each of the Partnerships is Holdings, and administrative and management services for the Partnerships are provided by SOAM. SOAM also provides management services to MO. The managing member and President of Holdings and SOAM is Mr. Maltese. In his capacity as President and managing member of Holdings, Ventures, and SOAM, Mr. Maltese exercises voting and dispositive power over all shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by MP, MHF, MHFII, SCP, MO, SOAM and Holdings. The non-managing member of Holdings and SOAM is Sandler O'Neill Holdings, LLC, a New York limited liability company ( S.O. Holdings ).

(b) The address of the principal offices of each of MP, MHF, MHFII, SCP, Holdings and SOAM and the business address of Mr. Maltese is Sandler O'Neill Asset Management LLC, 780 Third Avenue, 5 Floor, New York, New York 10017. The address of the principal office of MO is c/o BYSIS Hedge Fund Services (Cayman) Limited, P.O. Box 30362 SMB, Harbour Centre, Third Floor, George Town, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, British West Indies. The address of the principal office of S.O. Holdings is c/o Sandler O'Neill & Partners, L.P., 919 Third Avenue, 6th Floor, New York, New York 10022.

(c) The principal business of MP, MHF, MHFII, and SCP is that of private partnerships engaged in investment in securities for its own account. The principal business of MO is that of investment in securities for its own account. The principal business of Holdings is that of acting as general partner for the Partnerships. The principal business of SOAM is that of providing administrative and management services to the Partnerships and management services to MO. The present principal occupation or employment of Mr. Maltese is President of SOAM and Holdings. The principal business of S.O. Holdings is investing in Holdings and SOAM.

(d) During the last five years, none of MP, MHF, MHFII, SCP MO, Holdings, SOAM, S.O. Holdings or Mr. Maltese has been convicted in a criminal proceeding (excluding traffic violations or similar misdemeanors).

(e) During the last five years, none of MP, MHF, MHFII, MO, SCP, Holdings, SOAM, S.O. Holdings or Mr. Maltese has been a party to a civil proceeding of a judicial or administrative body of competent jurisdiction as a result of which such person was or is subject to a judgment, decree or final order enjoining future violations of, or prohibiting or mandating activities subject to, federal or state securities laws or finding any violation with respect to such laws.

(f) Mr. Maltese is a U.S. citizen.

**Item 3. Source and Amount of Funds.**

The net investment cost (including commissions, if any) of the shares of Common Stock held by MP, MHF, MHFII, MO, and SCP is \$106,438, \$347,439, \$1,754,009, \$625,752 and \$1,875,000 respectively. Such shares were purchased with the investment capital of the respective entities.

**Item 4. Purpose of Transaction.**

The purpose for which the Common Stock was acquired by the Reporting Persons is for investment. As such, in the ordinary course of their business, the Reporting Persons intend to review their investment in the Company on a continuing basis and may engage in discussions with management, the board of directors, other shareholders of the Company and other relevant parties concerning the business, operations, management, governance, strategy and future plans of the Company. Depending on various factors including, without limitation, the Company's financial position and strategic direction, the outcome of the discussions and actions referenced above, actions taken by the board of directors, price levels of the Common Stock, other investment opportunities available to the Reporting Persons, conditions in the securities market and general economic and industry conditions, the Reporting Persons may in the future take such actions with respect to their investment in the Company as they deem appropriate including, without limitation, purchasing additional shares of Common Stock or selling some or all of their shares of Common Stock, engaging in short selling of or any hedging or similar transactions with respect to the shares of Common Stock, voting for or against and expressing support for or against the proposals of the board of directors of the Company or other shareholders of the Company and/or otherwise changing their intention with respect to any and all matters referred to in Item 4 of Schedule 13D.

**Item 5. Interest in Securities of the Issuer.**

(a) Based upon an aggregate of 9,317,533 shares of Common Stock outstanding, as determined by the Issuer's most recently available public information, as of the close of business on December 7, 2009:

- (i) MP beneficially owned 17,000 shares of Common Stock, constituting 0.18% of the shares outstanding.

- (ii) MHF beneficially owned 55,500 shares of Common Stock, constituting approximately 0.60% of the shares outstanding.
  - (iii) MHFII beneficially owned 280,100 shares of Common Stock, constituting approximately 3.01% of the shares outstanding.
  - (iv) MO beneficially owned 100,000 shares of Common Stock, constituting approximately 1.07% of the shares outstanding.
  - (v) SCP beneficially owned 300,000 shares of Common Stock, constituting approximately 3.22% of the shares outstanding.
  - (vi) SOAM owned directly no shares of Common Stock. By reason of its position as management company for MP, MHF, MHFII, MO, and SCP under the provisions of Rule 13d-3, SOAM may be deemed to beneficially own the 17,000 shares owned by MP, the 55,500 shares owned by MHF, the 280,100 shares owned by MHFII, the 100,000 shares owned by MO, and the 300,000 shares owned by SCP, or an aggregate of 752,600 shares of Common Stock, constituting approximately 8.08% of the shares outstanding.
  - (vii) Holdings owned directly no shares of Common Stock. By reason of its position as general partner of MP, MHF and MHFII, under the provisions of Rule 13d-3 of the Securities and Exchange Commission ( Rule 13d-3 ), Holdings may be deemed to beneficially own the 17,000 shares owned by MP, the 55,500 shares owned by MHF, and the 280,100 shares owned by MHFII, or an aggregate of 352,600 shares of Common Stock, constituting approximately 3.79% of the shares outstanding.
  - (viii) Mr. Maltese directly owned no shares of Common Stock. By reason of his position as President of Holdings and SOAM, Mr. Maltese may be deemed to beneficially own the 17,000 shares owned by MP, the 55,500 shares owned by MHF, the 280,100 shares owned by MHFII, the 100,000 shares owned by MO, and the 300,000 shares owned by SCP, or an aggregate of 752,600 shares of Common Stock, constituting approximately 8.08% of the shares outstanding.
  - (ix) In the aggregate, the Reporting Persons beneficially own 752,600 shares of Common Stock, constituting approximately 8.08% of the shares outstanding.
  - (x) S.O. Holdings directly owned no shares of Common Stock.
- (b) The Partnerships each have the power to dispose of and to vote the shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by it, which power may be exercised by its general partner, Holdings. Holdings is a party to a management agreement with SOAM

pursuant to which SOAM shares the power to dispose of and to vote the shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by Holdings. MO has the power to dispose of and to vote the shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by it. MO is a party to a management agreement with SOAM pursuant to which SOAM shares the power to dispose of and to vote the shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by MO. Mr. Maltese, as President and managing member of Holdings, Ventures, and SOAM, shares the power to dispose of and to vote the shares of Common Stock beneficially owned by the other Reporting Persons.

(c) During the sixty days prior to November 2, 2009 the Reporting persons effected the following transactions in the Common Stock.

**Transactions by MP last 60 days**

Date	Transaction	Price	Shares
12/07/09	Purchase	6.2500	16,900

**Transactions by MHF last 60 days**

Date	Transaction	Price	Shares
12/07/09	Purchase	6.2500	55,200

**Transactions by MHFII last 60 days**

Date	Transaction	Price	Shares
11/23/09	Sale	6.8700	(200)
12/7/09	Purchase	6.2500	278,300

**Transactions by MO last 60 days**

Date	Transaction	Price	Shares
11/23/09	Sale	6.8700	(100)
12/07/09	Purchase	6.2500	99,600

**Transactions by SCP last 60 days**

Date	Transaction	Price	Shares
12/07/09	Purchase	6.2500	300,000

(d) Not applicable.

(e) Not applicable.

**Item 6. Contracts, Arrangements, Understandings or Relationships With Respect to Securities of the Issuer.**

There are no contracts, arrangements, understandings or relationships among the persons named in Item 2 or between such persons and any other person with respect to any securities of the Issuer.

**Item 7. Material to be Filed as Exhibits.**

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Exhibit 1 Written Agreement relating to the filing of joint acquisition statements as required by Rule 13d-1(f)(1) of the Securities and Exchange Commission

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**SIGNATURES**

After reasonable inquiry and to the best of my knowledge and belief, I certify that the information set forth in this statement is true, complete and correct.

Dated: December 16, 2009

**MALTA PARTNERS, L.P.**

By: SOAM Holdings, LLC,

the sole general partner

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese

President

**MALTA HEDGE FUND, L.P.**

By: SOAM Holdings, LLC,

the sole general partner

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese

President

**MALTA OFFSHORE, LTD**

By: Sandler O Neill Asset

Management LLC

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese

President

**MALTA HEDGE FUND II, L.P.**

By: SOAM Holdings, LLC,

the sole general partner

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese

President

**SOAM CAPITAL PARTNERS, L.P.**

By: SOAM Venture Holdings

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese

Managing Member

**Sandler O Neill Asset  
Management LLC**

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese

President

**SOAM Holdings, LLC**

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese

President

**Terry Maltese**

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese



JOINT ACQUISITION STATEMENT PURSUANT TO RULE 13d-1(f)(1)

The undersigned acknowledge and agree that the foregoing statement on Schedule 13D is filed on behalf of each of the undersigned and that all subsequent amendments to this statement on Schedule 13D shall be filed on behalf of each of the undersigned without the necessity of filing additional joint acquisition statements. The undersigned acknowledge that each shall be responsible for the timely filing of such amendments, and for the completeness and accuracy of the information concerning it contained herein, but shall not be responsible for the completeness and accuracy of the information concerning the other, except to the extent that it knows or has reason to believe that such information is inaccurate.

Dated: December 16, 2009

**MALTA PARTNERS, L.P.**

By: SOAM Holdings, LLC,  
the sole general partner

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese  
President

**MALTA OFFSHORE, LTD**

By: Sandler O Neill Asset  
Management LLC

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese  
President

**SOAM CAPITAL PARTNERS, L.P.**

By: SOAM Venture Holdings

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese  
Managing Member

**SOAM Holdings, LLC**

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese  
President

**MALTA HEDGE FUND, L.P.**

By: SOAM Holdings, LLC,  
the sole general partner

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese  
President

**MALTA HEDGE FUND II, L.P.**

By: SOAM Holdings, LLC,  
the sole general partner

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese  
President

**Sandler O Neill Asset  
Management LLC**

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese  
President

**Terry Maltese**

By: /s/ Terry Maltese  
Terry Maltese