Sharing Art Across The Border

Paula Wittner’s Exhibit at Museo Des Artes In Mexico

Story on Page 12
The bell at Old Main School tolled twice on Saturday, once to mark the beginning of the museum’s opening ceremony and again at the end. It was a beautiful day to commemorate the new Patagonia Museum, and the opening attracted a wide circle of locals, many of whom went to school at Old Main, and others who were pleased to see what began as a glimmer of an idea become a reality. The crowd gathered at the west entrance to listen to German Quiroga, president of the museum board, who welcomed everyone and introduced the morning’s speakers. Denise Blake, superintendent of schools, spoke first, followed by state representatives Chris Ackerley and Rosanna Gabaldon.

Blake, who was instrumental in putting together the agreement with the museum, reminded the audience that Old Main was well built for its time and has endured as the longest continuously utilized elementary school facility in Arizona until May of 2014 when all classes were consolidated at the main campus. She called the building a “dear friend” and “a foundation for many families.”

Chris Ackerley made the point that Patagonia was a wonderful place to grow up. Now a high school physics teacher in Tucson, he pointed north and said, “Kids up there never see anything but Styrofoam and strip malls.”

Last to arrive was congressman Raul Grijalva. He brought a specially designated American flag from Washington DC that had flown over the capital. The flag was officially dedicated to four strong supporters of the museum who have died in recent years: Ramon Quiroga, Joan Wood, Walter Andrew, and George Proctor. Following the speeches, a team of three Arizona Rangers stepped up and ceremoniously raised the flag.

After that it was time to show off the schoolrooms that are now the museum. The rooms and hallway of Old Main have high ceilings that are filled with natural light, making them bright and spacious. Patty Cooper, who taught there for many years, found herself in tears. “I didn’t think it would affect me this way,” she said. Kate Musick, another beloved teacher, said that the impact of seeing the old classrooms was less difficult as she’d been spending time there helping get the museum set up.

Volunteers had been working hard for the past week or so to clean the school and the grounds, and everything sparkled. The chalkboards were filled with colorful, playful images created by students, and the museum displays, many of which were part of the Journey Stories exhibition at the library, are now in their new home, awaiting their final placement.

There is still plenty of work to be done. Once the displays are organized, the museum hopes to be open Thursday through
Saturday from 2-4 p.m. If they can get enough volunteer docents, they will extend those hours. The museum will train docents to be familiar with museum materials and Patagonia history.

While visitors toured the museum’s new quarters, museum members gathered in one of the rooms for their annual meeting. Board president, German Quiroga said that the museum has received several grants and made several thousand dollars from this year’s trip to Banamichi, Mexico, so they are in good shape financially. The budget for the coming year includes funds for museum displays, as well as chalk boards and hardwood flooring for the school house at Lochiel, which have been ordered. Once these are installed, the Lochiel restoration will be complete. On January 30 there will be a workday there and visitors are welcome.

Quiroga said that the museum would not be where it is without the considerable help of Bob Ollerton and Ralph Schmitt. Members unanimously elected Quiroga to continue as president. Dr. Michael Brescia, a professor of history at the University of Arizona, ended the meeting with a talk about the Babocomari Land Grant and the ongoing conflicts that arise from Spanish law being interpreted in U.S. courts.

Guests were invited to join in a luncheon that was served after the meeting.

Congratulations to the museum board and all who helped to bring the Patagonia Museum to life!

Errors & Omissions

In the January edition of the PRT we said that Stephanie Wolf was one of the DJs at the new year’s eve party. Stephanie was not playing music that night. Along with Mark Nicholson, Fred Hansen, who hosts a jazz and blues show on KPUP on Tuesday night, was the second DJ.
WILDLIFE CORRIDORS
A Progress Report

By Lynn Davison

It has now been a year since a new organization called Wildlife Corridors (WC) purchased the former Three Canyons development, 1250 acres just north of Patagonia, with the goal of preserving and enhancing wildlife habitat in a critical piece of the corridor connecting the Santa Ritas, Patagonias, Huachucan, Canelo Hills, and Sonoita Creek. Nine hundred acres are to be split into three specific uses: 1. a residential development, now known as Wildlife Haven, of no more than 40 lots. 2. A buffer area of open space containing research and educational facilities and designated recreational areas, and 3. the wildlife corridor which will be protected and restored to enhance wildlife habitat.

A lot has been accomplished this year; here are some of the highlights:

**Wildlife Haven Property Owners Association**

There is a new property owners’ association that allows owners to participate in decision making about the development of the residential portion of the property. There are currently six members, and the association will grow as additional residential lots become available for purchase later in 2016.

**Three Canyons Domestic Water Improvement District**

The original developers of Three Canyons formed a water district in 2006 and spent $3.6M to create the necessary infrastructure to supply water to 198 lots. However, although the system is 99% complete, it was never certified for use and the permits to complete it have now expired. The legal control of the water district by former Three Canyons developer, David Parsons, has been challenged by Ron Pulliam, of Wildlife Corridors, who believes Parsons is operating the water district without a legally-formed board of directors. Pulliam has asked the county supervisors to require the water district to hold a fair and open election. Until the district has a legally-constituted board to represent it, Wildlife Corridors has drilled a private well on its property to meet immediate needs.

**Habitat Restoration**

David Seibert, the Executive Director of Borderlands Restoration, which manages the Wildlife Corridors property, says, “The 1,250 acres have been used intensively. It is not a pristine habitat, but it is a critical one that needs significant restoration.” Borderlands has secured grants from Arizona Game and Fish (AZGF), Arizona Forestry, and US Fish and Wildlife to support erosion control and habitat restoration projects. The work will employ 10-13 local people over the spring and summer, and more restoration and job-funding proposals are in the works. Kelly Fleming is leading a project that will help to establish baseline data on the impact of specific restoration activities to specific species in the area.

**Public Access and Education**

WC will create designated access to areas for hiking, biking, riding horses, and walking dogs. The first installation, the Wildlife Viewing Trail, is now under construction, with Chris Strom’s volunteer trail-building group providing the skilled labor. AZGF and the Arizona Trails Association with Zay Hartigan are funding viewing stations along the trail.

Alex Johnson is finishing construction of a kiosk to be located at the main entrance, and a second entry to the property will be opened this year for directed access to recreational and educational areas.

“Undeveloping” Existing Lots

A significant element of WC’s vision is to extinguish the development rights of the majority of the residential lots. WC intends to purchase conservation easements for 158 lots, to be held by the Sonoran Institute. WC will then ask the county to “deplat” the portion of the original subdivision now protected from development by the conservation easements.

In its first year, Wildlife Corridors has established a pattern of collaboration among a broad group of supporters: investors, public agency funders, and property owners. Their original six major investors remain optimistic. They plan to raise sufficient resources to pay off the mortgage, buy the conservation easements, pay for habitat restoration, offer research, educational, and recreational opportunities, provide good jobs, and maybe someday make a little profit. If they do make a profit, 80% will be reinvested into WC itself so that it can facilitate future collaborations in the borderlands region. If year one is any predictor, they may just get there.

WC will schedule a third community meeting this spring. If you can’t wait that long, stop in and visit with David Seibert at the Borderlands Restoration Office behind the Visitor Center. He is always happy to share the latest with you, and borderlandsrestoration.org is a great place to keep up with volunteer and other events.
Scotland and Patagonia are worlds apart and one might be led to believe that they have little in common, but Brad and Aisha Sander have observed that the two places share an exceptional friendliness and sense of community.

Since arriving in Patagonia last November, the couple have had numerous locals ask them about Scotland, so they graciously agreed to talk about their life there in a presentation at the library on January 19.

Brad told the audience that Scotland was created in 1947, having been carved out of what was formerly part of India, mainly to give Muslims their own country. Today it remains heavily Muslim. Its people are relatively poor, a condition that has been exacerbated in recent years by calamitous earthquakes and floods.

Brad went to Scotland to paraglide, a dangerous and amazing sport that allows someone to soar to great heights with specially designed equipment. On paragliding excursions in India and Nepal, Brad learned that the “Holy Grail” of paragliding is actually in northern Pakistan, and first traveled there in 2007 in search of that ultimate flying high. His gliding experience there and the friendliness of the Pakistanis convinced him to stay on and lead some tours for paragliders.

Brad showed two short videos that presented the beauty of the Himalayas from a bird’s perspective. A flight can last for hours. One video chronicled his landing (after a six-hour flight) near a high mountain pasture where the local villagers excitedly greeted him, embraced him and invited him to share food and accommodations with them. He noted that none of the villagers had known him before his landing, yet they welcomed him and received him as though they were old friends. This warmth and friendliness is perhaps the main reason he fell in love with the country. Of course his meeting and falling in love with Aisha there only deepened his feelings for Pakistanis and their country.

In May of 2014 Brad was walking in the village of Chitral when he spied a friend driving a vehicle carrying several passengers who, it turns out, were Aisha and a tour group she was leading. He and Aisha were not introduced, but later his friend suggested to Aisha that she should do a tandem paraglider flight with Brad. She agreed, and that flight allowed the two of them to recognize that they had much in common, so much so that they decided to live their lives in tandem and got married in December of that same year.

At the time they met, Aisha was leading yoga retreats to areas of Northern Pakistan where Brad had been working. The couple explained that it is not only beautiful, but also one of the safest areas of the vast country. They now work together, taking people from the southern city of Karachi to remote first class hotels in the mountains. Their clients practice yoga, meditate, and hike. Their tours include upscale hotel accommodations, nutritious meals and domestic transportation all at a surprisingly modest cost.

Son and daughter-in-law of local resident Joyce Sander, Brad and Aisha came to Patagonia last November specifically to take advantage of a Tucson birthing center where they chose to deliver their first child. [See story in January issue of PRT]. The couple plans to return to Pakistan early this month. They will live in Karachi and resume their tour business.

Aisha and Brad have enjoyed their time here and extend their thanks for the acceptance and support the Patagonia community has given them. Many of us locals, too, have been enriched by their brief residency in our midst.

An Adventurous Couple Share Their Story

Brad shot this photo of another glider while he was paragliding in the mountains of Pakistan.
This May, I will have been married to Lee for 30 years. In the scheme of things, we were late-comers to this institution. We were 43 and 44 when we met and the possibility of marriage was remote since neither of us had been married before and each of us was very used to independence. I owned a business that manufactured garden statuary and sold antiques at a quaint shop beside a millpond in Tiverton, Rhode Island. Lee was a bachelor artist who lived in his studio on land owned by his mother. We had done other things, had other jobs, lived in other places. I had lived in Rhode Island for about a year when friends invited me to an annual kite flying party that Lee put on each spring at his mother’s house by the Westport River just across the state line in Massachusetts. That is where we met, introduced by mutual friends who let it be known that they thought we might develop a relationship. This happened, but very slowly because the concept of a “date” was not in Lee’s comfort zone.

He would drop by at my shop, and I invited him to hang his watercolors. The summer passed and in the fall I received an invitation to go sailing with him on the river. That Sparking fall afternoon, knocking about in a wooden catboat Lee won my heart. Lee is a natural born sailor and was in his element there on the river where he had spent most of his childhood.

The next step in this tentative relationship took place soon after when my summer neighbors, Henry and Diana Mitchell went back to their home in Houston, Texas. Without admitting to any kind of match-making, they offered their lovely old farmhouse to Lee for the winter. So there we were. Winter was closing in, and according to the Mitchell’s plan, we began spending more and more time together. I had a warm little house. He had a big cold house. And so things progressed.

Then, one day in January, Lee announced that he couldn’t take much more of winter and he was off to the island of Grenada for an extended stay. I was not included in this plan, but it sounded like a good idea, so I asked if I could join him for a week or two. He was pleased and offered to try to find a small house to rent and that perhaps other friends could come down as well.

When I got to the city of St. George’s in late February, there was a house – battered and forlorn though it was. The rent was very cheap and the view was fantastic. We explored the island, taking mini vans out into the hills and up the coastlines. Then Lee told me about a visit he had made to a small island to the north. He mentioned a property that was for sale. He said we should go and look at it together. When our friend, Ann Baker, arrived, we took the schooner to Carriacou and all immediately fell in love with the sleepy, friendly, tropical island.

We stayed at a crumbling inn on the beach and went to visit Prospect, the name of the property in the hills outside the main town. It had been built as a religious retreat with dormitory, big dining room and three cottages. We knew it could easily be turned into a small hotel. Ann Baker encouraged us – she pointed to the forested hills and sandy beaches and the lack of tourists. Lee imagined taking people snorkeling and going on nature walks and visiting the boat-building town on the other side of the island.

There is a lot more to this story, but that part ended with us going home, selling everything, buying Prospect, having a wonderful wedding party in the same field where we had met, crating up everything we thought we would need to start a hotel, and flying to our new home at the end of June.

That was the first of many adventures that we’ve shared. For sure there have been rough patches, but two people who share a life can’t always see eye to eye, nor can either of them change who they are to suit every occasion. After 30 years we’ve learned to live companionably, putting up with each other’s foibles, and falling in love with our new home in the desert.

It is our objective as a community newspaper to present many views to our readers. The opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the views of this publication. If you would like to contribute your opinion or commentary to PRT, please send your article, in Word, to prteditor@gmail.com. PRT reserves the right to edit all submittals for language, length, and content.
Who’s Who? by Martin Levowitz

Many basic spiritual injunctions are ignored because they seem blatantly unrealistic. Love thy enemy? Yeah, right! Can you picture a major sports-arena packed with rabid fans, each jacked-up on adrenalin, and no one cares who wins? Moi, I cannot.

There has been, through the past decades, in print and on the Internet, a spate of spiteful articles about Latino immigrants, depicting that group as a hazard to us. (Who we might be is never made quite clear. Presumably, we have blonde eyes and twinking blue hair.) These "aliens," we are advised, employ a secret stratagem for conquering the world: They reproduce more frequently than we.

Unless this trend can be reversed, our way of life is doomed, the authors say. Such xenophobes persist today, but have shifted their focus to Islam, of late. The Muslims, too, produce more young than we. Perhaps our goose is cooked. Let’s wait and see.

Consider bacteria, rodents, and bugs; implicit in these racist rants, you’ll find a "scientific" hint that lower species bear more young than higher species do. These brown folks from the South or East are talked about as if they were a swarm of hungry flies who want to lay Their anchor-baby eggs beneath our skin, so all their larvae, when they hatch, can feast on our pale flesh. Before our precious homeland has been occupied and stolen, we need to have the border fence patrolled by Trudy Nolen, it appears.

The bottom line, according to these nervous "patriots," is that we need to mobilize—take concrete steps—to stem the rising tide. And yet, such panic-mongers always stop just short of saying what those concrete steps might be. (Are we talking Kalashnikovs here? Mandatory sterilization?) You have to be a bit discreet, these days, when hawking hate or seeming to incite. (The F.B.I., stays discreet, these days, when hawking hate or seeming to incite. (The F.B.I., stays discreet, these days, when hawking hate or seeming to incite. (The F.B.I., stays discreet, these days, when hawking hate or seeming to incite. (The F.B.I., stays discreet, these days, when hawking hate or seeming to incite.

Nobody -- not Kurds or Germans, Czechs or Congolese -- or even dinosaurs, presumably -- is pleased to find their culture's future hanging by a thread. Nobody wants to be conquered, starved out, or displaced. We cling to our identity, our language, music, food. We cherish them. They make us who we are; or so we think. We'll stand up to protect our kind; defend our heritage. And that’s considered normal, even virtuous, by most.

Let’s ask the larger question here: Who’s Us, and who is Them? Where does one draw the line between the two? Why do we get our panties in a bunch over the local Lobo Pack? Because they’re ours!! The other team, monstrably, is not. But, face it Jack, if you moved out to L.A. or New York, you’d get your kicks by rooting for the Lakers or the Knicks. A basic law of nature is that living things compete. Yet, mammals are gregarious, as well, and almost always yearn to find their place within a group. So, when it’s time to draw the line (for those who need a line) more often than Me against You, it is Us against Them. We want, and we are pressured to be, loyal to our clan. With whom, then, can we go to war? With them, of course. That’s what they’re for!

But what if we’re all siblings in the so-called eyes of God, as some proclaim? Then, does it really matter who the victor is, this year? Why fret about his ethos or the color of her skin? No matter who comes out on top, we win, because we’re kin. If you have anything within you worthy of the name “faith” (confidence in the goodness and infallibility of the overall process), why should you need to worry or opine? Can you sincerely say to God “Thy will be done, not mine?” If so, however it turns out is, by default, just fine, (i.e., divine.) Get over your affection for particulars of form, including ours. And if, after The Rapture or some fatal climate change, the ruling race is cockroaches, Norwegian rats, or we, embrace Whatever Happens; let it be. If you can make What Is your honest choice, you’ll always have good reason to rejoice.

Yeah, Right! Yeah, Right?

Down The Amazon Rabbit Hole

By Cassina Farley

Amazon, how do I love thee? Let me count the ways. For starters, a case of a discontinued flavor of Pop Chips, yoga socks, a meditation CD (which I can’t do because my dog barks at me the entire time) a Zoodle maker that I saw on a cooking show, a new cell phone case that was half the price of the store version, various forms of makeup and a damn fine skin elixir that I apologize to no one for.

This was all in one week. I was screwed when I signed up for the “one click” option and fell further down the rabbit hole with the option of becoming a Prime member. Prime member pricing? CLICK. Free shipping? CLICK. I can have it in two days if I order in the next 6 hrs? CLICK and CLICK. Can’t find it in stores? Amazon will have it. Don’t want to do without your favorite flavor of Pop Chips? No need to suffer. As my ship crashes into the rocks and my bank account dwindles, I fantasize about how convenient it would be if the proposed Amazon drones could deliver groceries, with tiny balloons so as not to crush the cereal upon impact. M& M's would float from the sky. My yard would be riddled with boxes of bread and cheeses. I would occasionally order something for the dog and the beauty is he’d be home to receive it. My air space would need an air traffic controller. There will be limitless opportunities for my shopping convenience.

Then I look at Zach’s face after yet another package arrives, this time a book, or was it coffee? Either way my anonymous shopping has been cut short. The drones are over before they started. There will be no Caesar Salad kit falling from the sky or any more chips coming in the mail. Heavy, heavy sanctions have been implemented in my air space and on my credit card. I will only order things I need. Check. I will not order cases of chips. Check. I will not use Amazon to avoid people and places. Check. I’m recovering slowly. I’ve already re-routed my next package to the office. Baby steps.
Parents and students can expect hands-on assistance with Scholarship and FAFSA applications at Patagonia Union High School's (PUHS) half day workshop for parents and students on financial aid and scholarships on Tuesday, February 9 from 1:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. in the high school computer lab. The participants will be working one-on-one with school counselors, college financial advisors and community volunteers on scholarship opportunities and the actual FAFSA application. FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid and is a form that is prepared by students and parents to determine their eligibility for college or technical school financial assistance.

PUHS Guidance Counselor, Rosann Clark, said, “The key to FAFSA is to get your application in early. The sooner a student can determine how much aid is available to him or her, the easier it is to financially plan for the next year of college or technical school. I have also heard that at some point during the year FAFSA funding runs out. The government has approximately $150 billion for student aid and it is distributed on a first come - first served basis. You do not want to be at the end of the line!”

Clark continues, “The FAFSA application is complicated and can be intimidating, even for the best of us. FAFSA is the first critical step in applying for financial aid and it is often required in order for students to apply for state aid, scholarships, grants or financial aid from their college or technical school. Our goal for the day is for every student to complete their application or to at least start their application and walk away with the tools and knowledge they need to complete it at a later date.”

PUHS will be sending Emails and letters home announcing the event and will provide a check list of documents and information that the family will need to bring with them to complete the application. FAFSA calls for 2015 W2 and tax information. If parents have not yet filed their 2015 taxes, they will receive the information they need to complete the forms when they do get their taxes completed.

The event is open to the community. PUHS welcomes any student from the area that is homeschooled or adults that are looking to continue their education and want to learn about FAFSA and scholarships. Students and families with questions can call Rosann Clark at Patagonia Union High School at (520) 394-3010 for more information.
We have been invaded gophers...seemingly hundreds and hundreds, given the damage they are doing, but probably only three or four. Who knows really? While they may look cute, if you ever actually see one, don’t be fooled. The little monsters will eat the root balls of all the plants you have paid a pretty penny for and lovingly nurtured. I just read on the web that gophers can tunnel for miles and miles, over mountains even! Once their tunnel system is established, an ongoing parade of gopher families may happily use it. We are doomed!

Our family includes an avid gopher tunnel finder, Ms. ZZ Top. At the command of “find the hole” she will dig madly at a fresh mound, reliably finding the tunnel and yet never finding the gopher. This does not seem to bother ZZ, but it is deeply disappointing to us. If it’s tunnels you are after, she is your girl, if it’s gophers, well not so much.

Everyone seems to have a remedy for getting rid of the gophers. We have tried some, like traps, smoke bombs, dog poop, and sheets of dryer fabric softener. Have you ever tried to set one of those blasted wire traps? Do you still have all your fingers? We have caught one gopher…...a success rate of about 5%. None of the other remedies have had much apparent effect.

There are many other potential remedies we have not yet been willing to try. They include a mix of flour and cement, or chocolate Ex Lax, or straight up rodent poison, or connecting your vehicle’s exhaust system directly into the hole, or a sonic vibration machine, and so on. Many of these are pretty draconian. We NEED YOUR HELP identifying solutions that actually work and are relatively friendly to people, dogs, and the planet. Don’t delay, we are desperate.

Yikes! Gophers!

By Lynn Davison

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THE LAW OF SMALL THINGS

(common integrity dilemmas)

IV. The Mulligan

By Stuart Brody

What if you get a hole in one...on a Mulligan? Let’s just say...

You are golfing with friends at the Tubac Country Club. It’s your turn on the tee, a 165-yard par three. You address the ball confidently, visualizing the perfect six-iron shot. Your swing seems true, at first, but it yanks left into a patch of mesquite trees, careening off one, then another in a hollow and dispiriting cacophony. The shot is so bad, your friends urge you to do it over. “Mulligan!” they shout in unison.

Your second shot—the mulligan—soars into the air, straight and true—a thing of beauty. It lands 12 feet in front of the cup and rolls gently, but unerringly, to evolve a second chance to improve. This achievement has been calculated by golf experts to occur once every 33,000 swings. Some pros have never done it. And, a birdie for most ordinary duffers is still pretty good. It’s just not a hole in one.

So why lie about it? Why not appreciate the great shot that it was. Why not tell the truth rather than succumbing to yet another reason not to tell it? The duties of integrity are fulfilled through practice. That’s why we call integrity a practice. You get better by practicing. Just like golf. Fulfilling the duty of truthfulness in small things promotes the inclination to do so on the big things.

What’s the answer to the question?

Claiming a hole in one after a mulligan is a breach of the duty of truthfulness.

So, the next time (you make a great shot after a mulligan—in golf or in life—) ask yourself:

Why lie about it? It’s not something to be embarrassed about.

Appreciate your accomplishment and your skill in making the right adjustments after your first attempt?

And, remember the law of small things:

Exaggeration, although seemingly harmless, fuels the illusion of inconsequence.

Stu Brody is a student and teacher of philosophy, law, politics, and other fields related to personal decision-making. He is nearing completion on a book entitled: “The Law of Small Things: Integrity, Authenticity and Freedom in American Life” which examines misconceptions about the meaning of integrity and outlines how we can maintain a more consistent practice, by focusing on small things.

Ghosts of Winter

Suddenly reminded, of my own mortality, by the sound of cold air between the trees.

The owl’s screech, sent to me, from the watching ancients’ eyes.

Ghosts of winter, like the early morning dark, so close to new life.

— Colin Jay

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http://longrealtyapp.com
Years ago, before the drug wars, the steel fence, and the upswing in undocumented migrant crossings, going across the border between Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Mexico, was a simple, everyday fact of life. As violence and fear have risen, the cities now seem far apart even though it takes only minutes to walk from the U.S. to Mexico. Consequently, cross-cultural activities have slowed to a trickle, and the economy of the Mexican border town has suffered.

Which is one reason why the reception on January 15 at the Museo Des Artes in Nogales, Mexico was so remarkable. On that Friday evening, a stream of U.S. citizens pushed through the old customs turnstiles at the border and walked two blocks south to attend the exhibit, which featured the work of Paula Wittner, an American artist who lives just 15 miles north of Nogales in Patagonia.

The Museo Des Artes was designed by the noted architect, Mario Pani in the late 60s as part of a border development project that never came to fruition. After serving as a warehouse and a function hall, it was restored to the museum it was meant to be in 2012. The renovation, paid for with grants and private investment from Mexico, cost $2.3 million.

It is a dramatic building with a sweeping roof and well-lit exhibition space. When Wittner heard about the “museo” from a fellow artist last November, she and husband, Bob, went to have a look. They took two postcards showing Wittner’s work, and after meeting with the director, Guadalupe Serrano Quinonez and a translator, they were offered a month in the schedule starting in mid-January. “I think they checked out my website while we were talking,” recalls Wittner, “but the only question they asked was whether I could fill the gallery, and of course, I said Sí! Sí!” She is the first foreign artist to have an exhibition there.

Paula Wittner’s paintings are most often populated by a surreal world of medieval court characters, Old Testament figures, and Tarot card symbols, whose faces gaze at the viewer with a range of droll expressions. They come alive on the spacious white walls of the museum like a colorful magic show. Wittner says she discovered that painting was the best way to express the images and emotions that inhabit her psyche. Her studio, in a remodeled garage in Patagonia is filled with these oil paintings. She has shown her work at various galleries in Tucson, and many people have visited her studio and purchased work, but this is her first museum exhibit. The opening outshone Wittner’s expectations. She is still recovering from the wonder of the experience. She was lauded at the opening by a line of dignitaries from Nogales. They praised her work, they hugged her, they served food and wine. It was a Mexican event, brimming with warmth and hospitality.

The faces, the colors, the costumes and the slight ambiguity of the imagery seemed to enchant the Mexican audience, some of whom were children. Friends came from Patagonia, Tucson, and both coasts to be at this special event, all eager to see Wittner’s paintings displayed together in a museum setting. About 200 people munched on Mexican finger food and drank wine from plastic cups, adding their excitement and good will to the festive evening. The diminutive Wittner, who is only five feet tall, could be seen wandering through the crowd, smiling happily, shaking hands, and getting hugs.

One of the group from Patagonia was the town’s librarian, Abbie Zeltzer. She was introduced to Alejandro Martinez, the Deputy Consul General of Nogales. Martinez is interested in a cultural exchange and would like to bring dancers, musicians and other young artists from Sonora to Patagonia. The library has a large meeting hall and Zeltzer was delighted with the idea. The two plan to work together in the future to facilitate cultural border crossings.

A little before nine o’clock, the Americans started heading across railroad tracks to La Roca, Nogales restaurant that has survived despite the economic downturn. There were margarita toasts, and lots of delicious food brought to the tables. A diner summed up the evening by saying out, “We are so lucky to have an amazing country at our doorstep. We need to do this more often.”
P A G E  1 3     P A T A G O N I A  R E G I O N A L  T I M E S    F E B R U A R Y  2 0 1 6

Paula Wittner

...five feet through the crowd, smiling...
Gypsy Dances Highlight
Second Benderly Concert
By Mark Nicholson

The second concert of the Benderly Concert series took place on Sunday, January 17 with the Merling Piano Trio. The concert was held in the home of the Korys, a beautiful home on a bluff overlooking Nogales. One of the fun things about these concerts is seeing the different homes where they are held and the Korys made it clear that we were all welcome to explore their entire house including their stunning yard replete with 17 chickens!

As soon as the artists announced they were starting the concert with two pieces by Brahms, I could feel myself getting sleepy! Didn’t he write lullabies? But the pieces they played were part of his Hungarian Dances series, which they said were inspired by the gypsies whom both Brahms and Mozart loved and envied, and so the songs were anything but sleep inducing. They followed this with Mozart’s Piano Trio in E Major and then finished the first half of the concert with two more of Brahms’s Hungarian Dances completing what they called a “Mozart sandwich!”

The second half of the concert switched gears. I am no expert in classical music (which those of you who are might painfully notice in my accounts) but it seems to me that in the concerts I have attended there is a pattern; in the first half of the performance the artists play pieces they think they should play. Beethoven? Check. Mozart? Check. Brahms? Check. But in the second half, they play music they want to play! This seemed to be the case today as they started the second half with a wonder-ful tango called Primavera by the Argentinian composer Astor Piazzolla and they followed that with a beautiful medley of Henry Mancini’s Days of Wine and Roses and Moon River. The latter medley, they explained, was arranged by the violinist’s son who himself is a pianist and composer. It had a jazzy, moody feel and was delightful to listen to.

Another thing I liked about the second half of the concert was that it seemed to star the cello, which is one of my favorite instruments. In the first half the cello was doing more accompaniment, but in the second half it got to soar although all the three instruments, piano, violin and cello were played superbly and shared the spotlight. Chamber music is my favorite kind of classical music precisely because you get to hear and feel the instruments so distinctly.

The concert ended with another of Brahms Hungarian Dances followed by an encore of Haydn’s Gypsy Rondo keeping with the day’s Gypsy theme. And it left me looking forward to the next concert on Valentine’s Day, February 14th with the Amori/Sugiyama Duo. See the Santa Cruz Foundation for the Performing Arts website, www.scfpapresents.org for more details.

Hey, weren’t you trying to figure out what to get your sweetie for Valentine’s Day?
The art of decorating eggs dates back to pagan times. In the Ukraine, they served as benevolent talismans and were an integral part of spring rituals. They were given as a token of friendship or esteem, and as a protection from harm. There is symbolism in the egg itself, in the symbols or signs that are traditionally applied, and in the choice of colors as well.

Susan Corl, a Patagonia artist, has been teaching Ukrainian egg decorating workshops for some 30 years. She was drawn to the technique because of the symbolism, the patterns, the tradition, and the many-layered process that employs a batik (wax-dye) method.

She has been offering classes in Ukrainian egg decoration at the Patagonia Art Center for several years, and is scheduled to teach classes next month on March 12, 13, 19, 20, and 26. The classes are open to children age eight and up, teens, and adults.

Susan says that it’s an activity that a family can enjoy together, and she has seen as many as three generations working side by side. Classes for two hours, three hours, or all day are available. Pre-registration is required, so if you are interested in reserving a space, or have a question, call Susan at (520) 394-2926, or send her an email at susanazcorl@gmail.com.

Fees for Class:
Family rate: Adults $20; Children 8 and up (accompanied by an adult): $5; Students 12 - 16, Unaccompanied by an adult: $10 for 2 hour class or $25 all day.

Schedule:
8:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Family or all day classes
11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mixed class; All ages
Adult class schedule: 9 to 12, 1 to 4, or all day
The Sisters of Santa Rita Abbey

It’s 3 o’clock in the morning in Sonoita. While everyone else is sleeping, the sisters at the Santa Rita Abbey in Fish Canyon are already up and starting their busy day, first with morning vigils of prayers and scripture reading. After a quick breakfast and personal study, the time for Lauds begins with mass, reading and communion. By 8:30 they are ready to go to work.

This beautiful abbey, founded in 1972, is perched high on a hill within view of the Santa Rita Mountains. Giant oak trees and pines embrace the numerous buildings, offering a quiet and peaceful retreat for quiet contemplation.

The ten sisters who reside here are part of the Cistercian Order of Strict Observance, an order dating back a thousand years. This abbey is one of only four in the United States just for sisters. The other three are in California, Iowa and Massachusetts.

Each abbey must be self-supporting. In the beginning they sold hand-made crafts and paintings to “keep the peanut butter on the table,” says Sister Victoria. Since 1978 they have been making and selling “Cistercian Altar Breads.” These wafers, call “hosts,” are 100% whole wheat with no additives.

The making of altar breads requires specialized equipment. In 2000 the abbey was presented with a mixer, baker and computerized cutting machine from France. Recently servicemen from the French company came to upgrade their computerized cutter, so all five sizes of altar breads can be cut automatically. When the technicians returned home, they left behind a service manual for the local handyman to use when needed. Unfortunately it is all in French.

Five days a week, the sisters gather in their unpretentious cinder-block manufacturing facility. As a family of white-tail deer pass by out their window, they start the day's run of communion wafers. From 8:30 am to 4 p.m., with a break for lunch, the sisters are busy at their work stations.

Each week the abbey receives deliveries of hard and soft whole wheat in 50 pound bags. The flours are first mixed with water, then poured into a specialized baking machine. Then they remove the wafer-thin sheets as they come out. These go to a humidifier to eliminate premature breaking. From there they are carried to the software-controlled cutting machine where they are cut into five different sizes, depending on their intended use. A quality-control sister inspects the finished product. The wafers are then placed in plastic bags, weighed and prepared for shipping.

The most common altar bread is called “People's Host”, which can vary in thickness from 1 1/8 " to 1 ½". With their new specialized equipment, they can prepare and ship 75,000 of these a week to their 370 customers throughout the United States.

Santa Rita Abbey welcomes guests to visit their bakery, or to join them at 5 p.m. for vespers services. Their phone number is 520-455-0481 and website is www.santaritaabbey.org
Life of “Snuff” Garrett Celebrated At Memorial

“Snuff” Garrett, Sonoita resident since 1987, was eulogized by many friends at a Celebration of Life ceremony on January 9, at the fairgrounds.

Born in 1938, “Snuff Garrett was well-known in the music and entertainment industry as a successful writer, musician and western artist. The walls of the fairground were covered with pictures of him aside giants of the industry like Roy Rogers and Dick Clark.

Dawn Garrett, “Snuff’s great-granddaughter, organized the event, which was attended by over 200 of his friends in the business and local neighbors alike. Suzanne Jenkins spearheaded the task of feeding the large crowd of well-wishers.

Local resident “Dutch” Quernamon, a long-time friend of Garrett, says he was an unforgettable and unbelievable human being who was loved by everyone who knew him. Many of those who came shared their remembrances of him.

Participants were mingling and talking to long-lost friends far after the formal ceremony concluded. As the crowd was slowly leaving, echoes of the parting song sung by honored guest Mr. Rex Allen, Jr. filled the Fairgrounds hall.

“Happy Trails to you, until we meet again.....
Happy trails to you, keep smilin’ until then.”

Sonoita Rodeo Royalty Contest Nears Application Deadline

The last day to submit an application for the Rodeo Royalty contest is February 14. The contest will select a Rodeo Queen (ages 18 to 23), a Princess (ages 12 to 17), and a Little Miss (ages 7 to 11).

Applications are available at the Santa Cruz County Fairground. For information, call (520).909-8307.

SUZY BOGGUSS
Pioneer Hall ~ Sonoita Fairgrounds
April 1, 2016 ~ Friday ~ 7 PM
Tickets:
800-838-3006
www.GoPattyWagon.com
High Noon Feed & Tack
Sonoita Fairgrounds
$60 Priority Seats + Meet & Greet with Suzy (selling fast!)
$40 GA (+$5 at door)
Ranchers Bar - Pioneer Hall
Opens 1 hour before doors

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CASA of Santa Cruz County
2160 N. Congress Dr., Nogales, AZ
(520) 375-8159 or mfish@courts.az.gov

CMA & GRAMMY AWARD WINNER!
**MEETINGS**

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<th>Event Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 14</td>
<td>Southern Arizona Quail Forever Chapter meeting. Steak Out, 7 p.m. Sonoita. Public is welcome.</td>
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<td>AA - Patagonia Comm. Ctr., Sun., 8 a.m.; Sonoita Bible Church, Tues., 7:30 p.m.; Pat. Methodist Church, Fri., 7:30 p.m.</td>
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<td>Al-Anon - Wed. at 6 p.m., Sonoita Hills Comm. Church, 52 Elgin Rd., Info: 237-8091</td>
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<td>CHOP (Community Homes of Patagonia, Inc.) - Board Meeting 3rd Monday at 6 p.m. in the Patagonia Town Council Room Chambers.</td>
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<td>Patagonia Town Council - 2nd and 4th Wed. at 7 p.m. in the Town Council Hall.</td>
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<td>Rotary Club - 1st Thurs., 7 a.m. at Patagonia H.S.; All others at Kief Joshua Winery, 6 p.m. Call (520) 907-5829 for more info.</td>
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<td>San Rafael Community 4-H Club - 2nd Mon. at the Patagonia Methodist Church, Thurber Hall at 5:30 p.m. Tami @455-5561</td>
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<td>Overeaters Anonymous - Tue. &amp; Thurs., 6:30 p.m. Fragrance-free meeting. Patagonia United Methodist Church. 520 404-3490</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Woman’s Club - January 14 at 1 p.m.; Talk by Herman Quiroga at 2 p.m. Cady Hall</td>
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**EVENTS**

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>Buckaroo Bonzai, Tin Shed Movie Theater. Drs open at 6 p.m., movie at 7 p.m. David Ellis for our Community Pick Series;</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 6</td>
<td>A Life of Sorrow; The Life and Times of Carter Stanley, a one act play at 4 p.m. in the Patagonia Library. Jam session follows. Bring instruments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 13</td>
<td>KPUP Radio’s 10th Anniversary Party, at Cady Hall, 7 - 11 p.m. Live Zydeco/Blues band, cash bar, free food w/donation to KPUP.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“The Crucible”; Live Theater presented by Patagonia Union High School. 7:00 pm. at the Tin Shed.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>February 14: The Aomori/Sugiyama Duo - String Bass and Piano concert; At Hacienda Coro- rona de Guevavi, Nogales, 3:00 p.m.. scfpapresents.org or call (888)202-1942 or 520-394-0129</td>
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<td></td>
<td>February 20: Native Seed/SEARCH presentation and farm visit with Morgan Parsons. 2 p.m. at the Seed Search Farm. Call 622-0830 for info.</td>
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<td>Feb. 27: Mata Ortiz Pottery Show and Sale, La Hacienda de Sonoita, 34 Swanson Rd., (off 83) in Sonoita, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Demonstrations, wine tasting and food pairing. 520-455-5464.</td>
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**SPECIAL INTERESTS**

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<th>Date</th>
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<td>Print Making with Helen Chester: Feb 8, 15, 22 and 29, 1-3 p.m. at the Art Center</td>
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<td>Free Qigong in the park by the Senior Center, 1/11-1/29.</td>
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<td>Musical and Movement Bonding Project for the whole family, Tin Shed Theater on February 10. 831-869 1254.</td>
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<td>Stretch and Strengthen Class, Weds., 9:15-10:15 a.m. at Sonoita Bible Church. $7.</td>
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<td>Drum Circle, Mons., 4-6 p.m. at Sonoita Crossroads building courtyard by Chuckwagon Grill, Free. No exp. reqd. 490-4991.</td>
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<td>Bird Walks at The Nature Conservancy’s Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve every Sat. @ 9 a.m. Meet at the visitor center. Nature Conservancy fees apply. Patagonia residents Free. 520-394-2400.</td>
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<td>Melodica rehearsals, every Wed., 9:30 a.m., SCFPA office, 348 Naugle, Patagonia. New members welcome!</td>
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<td>Yoga for Seniors: Mondays, 8:30 – 9:45 a.m. at Ecobody Acupuncture, Patagonia Plaza, Patagonia. $10. (520) 559-1731.</td>
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<td>Art Makers - After school art classes, ages 5-12; Tuesdays at the Pat. Creative Arts Ctr. Call 394-9369 for info.</td>
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<td>Adult hand-building ceramics classes Wednesdays, 4-6 p.m. $65 Call 604-0300</td>
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<td>Bikram Yoga - Patagonia; 520-604-7283.</td>
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<td>Bingo - St. Theresa Parish Hall, Patagonia, 1st &amp; 3rd Mondays at 6 p.m. 455-5681</td>
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<td>Crossroads Quilters - Sonoita Fire Dept., 2nd &amp; 4th Mon. at 9 a.m.; 520 732-0453.</td>
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<td>Open Tennis - PUHS, Tues. &amp; Thurs. at 4 p.m., Sat. at 9 a.m., Call 394-2973 for info.</td>
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**COMMUNITY SERVICES**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch for Seniors</td>
<td>Fresh-cooked meals, Mon. thru Fri. at the Patagonia Community Center.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sr. Citizens of Patagonia Van Service</td>
<td>Medical transportation Mon. - Fri. for seniors &amp; disabled by appointment only. Call 394-2494</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patagonia Food Bank</td>
<td>Community Center; 2nd Wednesday of the month, 9-11 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patagonia Methodist Church Thrift Shop</td>
<td>Fri. 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m. - noon.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angel Wings Thrift &amp; Gift Shop</td>
<td>Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church, 12 Los Encinos Rd, Sonoita. Thurs-Sat. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.</td>
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</table>

**STATE Senator Andrea Dalessandro** will speak about Prop 123, which will be voted on in the special election on May 17, on February 6 at 3 p.m. at the Town Hall Meeting Room, Patagonia.

**Progressive Christian Gathering**, light supper worship & discussion, Sundays at 6 p.m., at the Sonoita Elgin Fire District Comm. Rm. call Rev. Susan Hetrick at 480-993-9062 for more info.

**FULL MOON**

**FEBRUARY 22**
**HOUSING RENTALS**

**SONOITA HOME FOR RENT** - 2BD/2BTH. All appliances, W&D, front & back yards. $900/mo 520-400-2949

**JACK AND JILL BEDROOMS AVAILABLE** w/ shared bathrm, $350/ mo. each. Seniors preferred. Short term rentals available. Call Don at 520-297-7065

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**1 BR 1 BA** $750 util. included; **3 BR 2 BA** $1450 util. included. Call John 394-0148, or 360.317.4281

**SONOITA HOME FOR RENT** - 2BD/2BTH. All appliances, W&D, front & back yards. $900/mo 520-400-2949

**HELP WANTED**

**PATAGONIA HOUSEKEEPING POSITION:** 1-2 flexible days per week. Basic English skills, exc. work habits, references. 520-604-6762 or 394-0110

**WANTED: HOUSEKEEPER** - Friendly and reliable for Housekeeping duties at the Duquesne House Inn in Patagonia. Flexible hrs. Must have transportation. English speaking a must. 520 394 2732

**PART-TIME HOUSEKEEPER** needed for the Sonoita Inn. Serious parties please call Cleone at 520-604-1917. Can start immediately.

**MISC.**

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When Jose Perez was one year old and someone would ask, "What do you want to be when you’re older?" he would quickly respond with excitement, "an astronomer! an astronomer!" But one day after watching the History Channel seven years ago, the intelligent Jose Perez found that his calling is to become an astrophysicist. Astrophysics is a type of astronomy that applies the laws of physics and chemistry throughout the atmosphere.

Jose Perez has been attending Patagonia Union High School for his high school career and plans to enlist in the Air Force after graduation because he has always wanted to serve for his country. During his career in the Air Force he plans to become a part of the reserves and also attend the University of Arizona with a major in Astrophysics. After having the care of a wonderful teacher, Mrs. Hayes, and wise guidance from Mr. Melanson, Jose knows that he has made the right decision on becoming an astrophysicist in the Air Force.

Jose first arrived to Patagonia not knowing a word of English, but with help of his English teacher, Mrs. Hayes, Jose can now read, write, and speak English fluently. Classmates, teachers and peers have seen Jose develop into a bright young man who is going to conquer the science and mathematical world.

During this past summer, Jose was the only Patagonia High scholar to attend the Joaquin Math Science Honor Program at Arizona State University. He first heard about this program from Mr. Melanson who referred him. During this camp, Jose made new friends all over Arizona and found out what college is like while taking the college course of pre-calculus, a course that only a handful of people are chosen to take each summer during the honor program.

After all the hard work that Jose has put into his life he has found that humble success comes if you “just be yourself and if you haven’t found yourself, don’t worry it’s coming.”
WALLY HILL
A Stroke of Genius
By Garrett Fish

For Walter “Wally” Hill, high school was a blank canvas that he transformed into a unique masterpiece. The art enthusiast and producer, emphasizes that high school was an essential time for him to grow into the person he is today, have every day assistance, and an overall sense of belonging. Whether it is Wally’s symbolic grin that PUHS is accustomed to, or the grip of a warm, friendly handshake, students and staff will definitely miss this talented senior next year. What makes Wally’s story even more remarkable is his achievement, despite his challenge with autism.

Wally’s mother finds everyone at school respectful and friendly, which helped Wally become social. Expressing himself through art and how he sees the world pleases him. He loves to draw for an audience and hosted an art show at Patagonia’s Gathering Grounds in April, which showcased his work and for which he received appreciation. Art teacher Elizabeth McCowin says, “Walter is a uniquely gifted artist and human being. He comes to art class each day with a positive attitude and a willingness to try new things. Walter has challenged the students around him to use their own talents with more enthusiasm by the example he sets. He is not afraid to make mistakes and moves steadily forward to the next project with eagerness and passion. His keen curiosity and ardor for trying new materials inspires others to enjoy their learning process, too. Creating art, for Walter, comes as naturally and unconsciously as breathing.”

After high school, Wally plans on attending more art classes and starting part time work, hopefully at an art studio or store in Tubac, Patagonia, or Sierra Vista. Mrs. Hill credits Wally’s art teachers who have fostered him and Ms. Blanca, an aide who worked with Wally through his years at the high school, for a significant amount of his success. Throughout high school, Wally has helped with the fall festival, talent shows, set paintings for drama productions, exhibited art in the county fair, assisted with food preparation for students after school, and helped kids with autism. Three distinctive memories in high school for Hill included: being elected Homecoming King by his peers, singing in the annual spring talent show with his mother, and yoga class with Ms. Art. Wally says, “I like the teachers. I like the students. I like going to school.”

COKELLY HERRERA
“Coke” in A Bottle
By Kathryn Miller

Light streams through the window onto Cokelly Herrera. She sits across from me—smart, beautiful, brave and oh so grown up. I first befriended Coke in middle school and unbeknownst to me, was granted the gift of watching someone bloom. However, as Cokelly sits illuminated in front of me, I feel as though I am seeing her for the first time.

Driven by her will to succeed, Cokelly, or “Coke,” has navigated social pressures to become an ambitious and compassionate senior. Her sophomore year she began working with a nonprofit organization focused on the conservation of hummingbirds. The Hummingbird Monitoring Network is an on-campus after school opportunity where she now maintains a managerial position. “Cokelly’s skills in leadership and being able to manage her peers as employees is beyond anything I’ve ever encountered on this planet, which leads me to believe that she might in fact, be an extra planetary entity that has taken the corporeal form of a seventeen year-old Patagonia kid. She’s just that good at her job,” says her supervisor Mr. Schrieber. Cokelly carries her superior work ethic to yet another job, a position with Borderlands Earth Care Youth Institute Practicum, where she has developed a sustainable plan for a community based rural business.

After working all week, Cokelly still manages to find the time to be a stellar student, earning Rotary Math Student of the Month during her senior year. At home, Cokelly cares for her brothers and sisters in an effort to help her parents. “As long as they are happy, then I’m happy,” she says, her eyes beaming. It seems the key to Cokelly’s superhuman abilities, just may be her big heart.

Herrera likes to listen to corridos, Mexican music that tells a story. This comes as no surprise because her family has a story of its own. At the age of 14, Cokelly’s father came to America to earn money for his family. More than thirty successful years later, Mr. Herrera now sends money to Mexico for children in need. Cokelly hopes to carry on her father’s legacy of compassion and perseverance by treating patients in the medical field. She plans to attend school in North Carolina, at Mars Hill University where she’ll live with her aunt.

Our interview ends and we exchange plans to meet up later. As I walk away, I catch myself looking back. Cokelly may not know it yet, but the world lies at her feet.
Nature’s Clean Up Crew

February is the heart of winter in the Sky Islands. Cold temperatures, overcast and rainy days, as well as howling winds can all combine to make life challenging for local wildlife. Herbivores and omnivores have less to eat in the way of plant-based food - spring’s ephemeral wildflowers not withstanding in some years. If the elements and dearth of sustenance are extreme enough or if you hit the wrong predator lottery, then bad goes to worse and you, quite simply, are dead.

The ultimate fate of all life is death and from these proverbial ashes other life thrives - the scavengers. This often reviled, little loved, and motley group of creatures make their living (at least in part) from the demise of others. Flanks of fresh or fetid flesh fills their fare when they’re fortunate to find it. All dead animals get consumed eventually. Otherwise, we’d be tripping over ever-accumulating carcasses. We, then, collectively owe a great debt to the species that consume the demised.

Perhaps the ultimate of nature’s “zombies” is the familiar Turkey Vulture. It seems to dress the part, cloaked as it is in black feathers and with a stark, bare, and blood-red head. Black, after all, is the color of death - no? Likely the very fact that many scavenging birds sport black plumage spawned the association of this color with death. Black is no more “the color of death” than is, say, turquoise! Nevertheless, Turkey Vultures are superb at finding and devouring a wide range of carrion.

Unlike most birds, they have evolved a keen olfactory sense, which helps them hone in upon their gruesome food. Awaiting the warmth of the sun, they’ll spread their wings and sun themselves. This gradually heats up their flight muscles to more efficient temperatures. Next it’s up on local thermals of air, soaring high above the landscape on dihedral wings. There, their keen vision along with their sense of smell often leads them to a carcass. Along with the obvious larger meals, like a road-killed deer, Turkey Vultures are also able to detect even squirrel-sized bodies rotting in forested habitats. In controlled experiments, researchers hid such would-be meals from these scavengers, but to no avail. The vultures easily found the bodies. This ability to detect smaller meals serves the species well, as over millennia they’ve had to compete for bigger carcasses with the formerly more widely spread California Condor and a host of other scavengers.

Now that the condor, a Pleistocene holdover, is critically endangered you might think that Turkey Vultures would be liberated from competition. Such is not the case locally. In southeast Arizona we host a stable population of Black Vultures - the only ones west of Texas. Despite what appears to be a smaller overall size, Black Vultures weigh about the same as their cousins. They typically fly higher than Turkey Vultures, watch them, and follow them down to the prize. At the body itself they often feed so frenetically that they wind up chasing their kin away!

Carcasses are generated through disease, predation, and vehicular collisions. They provide food not only for vultures, but also other local species. Watch for both our species of ravens - Chihuahuan and Common plying local thoroughfares for an easy meal. The larger Common Ravens easily dominate their smaller kin at the feast. Even Golden and Bald Eagles will get in on the act, subordinating all the avian competitors at a carcass. Golden Eagles have even killed California Condors! The Crested Caracara - a sort of strange falcon - is a notable scavenger. Look for it in the Altar Valley. Able to subdue its prey, it won’t pass up an easier meal. It will dominate all but the eagles when scavenging.

Nor are birds our only scavengers. Mammals too get in on the surfeit. Several years ago I watch in astonishment as a bobcat ate a road-killed collared peccary (javelina) on Route 82. So intent was this cat upon its breakfast that it only trotted off the road for a few seconds, quickly returning to its feast as I drove by! Coyotes are more often the beneficiaries of a dead animal, efficiently making short work of the body. The list goes on - other carnivores, mice, flies, carrion beetles, bacteria, etc....

So the next time you feel sorry for the dearly departed, think about nature’s collective clean-up crew. They too need to eat and despite the fact that they may revolt you, without them the cycle of life would be broken.

Vincent Pinto and his wife, Claudia, run Raven’s Way Wild Journeys. They offer local tours dedicated to the preservation of the incredible biodiversity in the Sky Islands.
Way Off Course and Wintering In Patagonia

A Yellow-throated Warbler is spending its second winter in Patagonia Park. The species’ native habitat is the Southeast, and they usually migrate to the southernmost tip of Florida, or Texas for the winter, but this little guy took a detour. The image above is from a painting by Gary Romig.

Why do dogs eat grass?
The most common belief is that they do so to inspire themselves to vomit and relieve themselves of something causing them to have an upset stomach. In truth, this has never been proven.

Although there is no cut and dried answer, studies suggest that this is a natural and healthy behavior. Dogs, in fact, are omnivores, meaning they eat both meat and plant material. Wolves, coyotes and other wild canids graze on fruits, berries and grains as well as eating flesh and bones. Also, they devour the stomach contents of their herbivorous prey which consists of partly digested greens and grains. In fact, these partly digested stomach contents help the canids to digest the fresh meat of the kill. They bury what they do not eat right away and allow it to begin decomposing so that when they dig it up and eat it later, they are able to more easily digest it. This instinctual desire for grasses may have been passed on in the genes.

Domestic dogs may eat grass for the fiber. However, their systems do not have the ability to break down cellulose—the main energy source in grass—that ours do. This could also account for the vomiting.

A little of this behavior is normal and healthy and in fact only about twenty-five percent of dogs who ingest grass vomit afterwards. Some dogs graze more than others and it is generally believed they do so simply because they like it.

Why do cats eat grass? Cats are indeed carnivores so their reasons for eating grass is different than that of dogs. Grass eating is common in wild felids such as lions.

It is believed that cats do eat grass to encourage themselves to purge their stomachs and intestines of their contents such as fur, feathers, parasites or bones.

Grass eating among cats is also normal. A sudden increase in this behavior could signal intestinal distress, at which time the behavior should be monitored and if it persists, it might be worth a visit to your kitty-cat’s veterinarian.

Cate Drown, certified Sumerel Therapy technician, specializing in equines, can be contacted at drown_cate@hotmail.com.
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