Local Communities Join in Women's March

Photo by Cindy Matus-Morriss
A Peaceful, Powerful Event

by Ann Katzenbach

A group of about 50 women and a few male supporters took their slogans and marching shoes to Tucson on Saturday, Jan. 21, to participate in an historic worldwide declaration of solidarity. The marchers carpooled to downtown Tucson and came together at Armory Park with a crowd that grew exponentially as the morning went on. Speakers representing various ethnic groups, political groups, and women’s groups addressed the marchers, exhorting them to stand firm in the face of proposed new laws or overturned old ones. Tucson’s mayor Jonathan Rothschild said that the only way to bring about change was to go directly to elected officials or find and elect new ones.

Scattered through the crowd were hundreds of women wearing pink knit hats with cat ears, called “pussy hats,” a defiant response to President Trump’s statement about grabbing women’s genitals. These became an overnight sensation as women around the globe knit the caps for themselves, their friends and strangers.

A brief icy rain shower moved through during the speeches, but when the march down Sixth Avenue began, the sun came out. There were hundreds of signs, most referring to unity, resistance, and women’s rights, with some often humorous comments about Donald Trump in the mix. “Make America Think Again,” “Women’s Rights are Human Rights,” and “Love Trump’s Hate.” The Patagonia group carried large, eye-catching banners that had lots of people pointing and taking pictures.

The march ended at Joel D. Valdez Library Plaza where thousands more people were gathered to listen to speeches and music. As the event wound down and people started heading for home, there was a spirit of excitement and solidarity on the streets. Women, men, lots of children, and a few dogs all seemed to take heart from this peaceful, powerful event. At the end of the day, the police estimated that 15,000 people had attended the march—thousands more than were estimated.

A young woman from Patagonia wrote this about her experience. “Today I ‘marched’ not against others, but in support of what I believe. I believe in people; in women and the respect of all women and men—that human beings all have the same color blood running in our veins regardless of what is on the outside, and that we all deserve to be treated as such; we are not objects, or things, or stupid, or less than anyone else. I marched for our young girls who deserve to grow up with confidence in themselves, in each other; so that girls will know how important it is to respect themselves and their bodies always and know that it is not okay to let anyone speak to them or do to them in any way they wish. For boys to grow up with the notion that they too should be confident, but respectful to girls, to all…”

This group intends to continue meeting to work at the local level.
On Monday mornings, Jim and Faith Staudacher drive their truck to the Borderlands Food Bank warehouse in Nogales. If everything goes according to schedule, they arrive a little before 9 a.m., load up with boxes of fruits and vegetables, and are back in Patagonia by 10:30 a.m. to distribute the bounty to the Eastern Santa Cruz Community Food Bank (ESCCFB). A crowd of customers waits outside the Patagonia Senior Citizens and Community Center at 100 Quiroga Avenue.

But things don’t always go according to schedule. On January 16, for example, the ancient forklift that unloads pallets of boxes from the warehouse had a dead battery. Attempts were made to recharge it, but Jim, seeing the futility of this effort, went to Walmart and bought Borderlands Food Bank a new battery. When the forklift finally came to life, it took time to clear away the rotten tomatoes and cucumbers from boxes that had fallen off pallets the previous Friday. Finally, workers brought produce from the warehouse.

Along with the Staudachers, volunteers from other nearby nonprofits waited to fill their trucks, watching the exiting boxes closely to see what they might want to take, once they had permission to move into the area. When the coast was clear, members of each group moved forward to find the most desirable produce. This week the watermelons looked better than they had last week, but Jim, a farmer who lives in Wisconsin half the year, avoided the corn. “You’d think in the heat of Mexico they could grow decent corn.” He shook his head. “It tastes terrible.”

The produce that Borderlands Food Bank picks up and sells at low cost to nonprofits like ESCCBF comes from Mexican farms. Until Borderlands was organized in 1994, most damaged produce ended up in landfills. Much of it was perfectly good but didn’t meet the high standards of supermarkets.

Patagonia’s food bank has a regular group that shows up on Monday mornings. There are people who depend on getting this produce for free or at minimal cost, and others who like the easy access to fresh food and enjoy the community spirit that pervades the Monday distribution. Nothing is priced; a donation jar is set conveniently close by on a table. It is a cheerful gathering that few regular customers would miss. Heather Dodge is there, looking over the offerings and taking what she needs to cook the lunches offered every day at noon at the Patagonia Senior Center. After about an hour, when the crowd has dispersed, volunteers take the remaining produce across the street to Charlie Montoy’s gas station, where people stop throughout the day, taking produce and leaving a donation.

On the second Wednesday of every month, on the porch of the Seventh-day Adventist Church at 296 Duquesne Ave. in Patagonia, ESCCBF gives out 70 to 80 bags of staples including bread, eggs, pasta, rice, cereal, and canned goods. Volunteers drive to the Tucson Food Bank the day before to pick up these offerings. Gama Leyva, a ESCCBF board member, says the food allows families and elders without sufficient means to make it through the month.

Every 12 months, ESCCBF sends a check to Borderlands Food Bank for the many pounds of produce picked up and brought back here for distribution. Both organizations walk a tight financial line. “We get a little bit here, a little bit there,” says Leyva, adding that there is always a need for funds and that the Senior Meals Program walks the same thin line.

To help these community organizations, you can put extra dollars in the donation jars or send a check to ESCCBF, PO Box 1147, Patagonia, 85624.

Errors & Omissions

In last month’s issue, the photo on the cover by Kathy Pasierb was incorrectly identified. It was a view of the Whetstone mountains to the right and Empire mountains to the left (not San Rafael Valley). Sorry! On page 3, we spelled council member Andy Wood’s name as Woods. Our apologies to Andy.
Celebrating the Life of Mike O’Halloran

by Donna Reibslager

Edith O’Halloran offered shots of Jameson and raised a toast to the town at the memorial for her husband on Sunday, Jan. 22 in the Patagonia Senior Center. A crowd of 240 filled the main room. People spilled out onto the porch and nearby picnic tables outside, enjoying potluck dishes and exchanging memories of Mike, who gave generously of his time to this community for so many years.

Mike grew up in Detroit, Michigan, together with four siblings. He put himself through college by working summers at the Ford assembly plant, and graduated with a teaching degree from Northern Colorado University. One day, while working as a math teacher, he noticed a matchbook cover promoting computer programming jobs, and he applied. Though his math skills were excellent, he doggedly took the entrance exam three times in order to score high enough to be hired at the pay grade he was seeking. After beginning his career with Emerson Electric, he later moved on to a position with HK Systems, where he was promoted to higher positions over time, eventually retiring in 2001 as Vice President of Manufacturing.

He and Edith were married in 1986. Between them they had seven children from previous marriages, of similar age, all grown and living on their own. Fifteen years later, when the couple began looking for a place to retire, they focused on Patagonia, where Edith had spent time with her family as a child. In 2001, they drove down here on a whim to look at properties. As Edith tells it, they arrived on St. Patrick’s Day. They took a room at the Stage Stop Hotel and walked over later that evening to the Senior Center, where a rip-roaring party was going on to celebrate the holiday. They made their way back to their room late that night, having much enjoyed the festivities. The following morning, they saw a small sign advertising “Lots for Sale” and by midday, they had purchased the lot they would build their home on. They moved to Patagonia later that year, and Mike soon began volunteering as a van driver for seniors, which led to his involvement with the senior center. For the last 12 years, he served as the center’s director, and he also managed the Patagonia Food Bank for many years. He and Edith could usually be found helping to prepare and serve the holiday meals at the center. Mike loved to cook, and was in his element when cooking for a crowd. His other passion was fishing, and those who joined him on his boat to fish in San Carlos over the years can attest to his skill and his fearless penchant for adventure.

When asked what stands out in her mind about her husband of 30 years, Edith replied, “I never heard him blow his own horn— he believed that what you do today is what matters... and I never heard him belittle anyone.” It’s a fitting testimony to a man who will be truly missed by this community.
Donations from our fundraising campaign netted $17,000, bringing the year’s total to well over $19,000. Our heartfelt thanks go out to all of you who contributed to PRT in 2016. We could not have done it without each and every one of you!

Deborah Allen
Shirley & William Ambrose
Molly Anderson & William Farr
Judith Andrew
Sarah Andrew
Russell Arbuckle
Thomas Arny
Karen Arthur
Dee & Avery Bates
Susan Belt
Philip Robert Bergier
Tod Bowden
Bob Brandt & Anne Townsend
D. Briles & P. Higdon
Jean Brothman
Ann Brownback & Charlie Clough
Ann & Don Byron
Mary Kay & John Chapin
Helen Chester
Linda (Zilla) Copper
Gail & Craig Coray
Ginnie & Jim Cosbey
Shanti & Gabriel Cousens
Nancy Coyote
Ann Danowitz
Lynn Davison & Judy Clegg
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Melanie Dreisbach
Barbara & David Ellis
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Cassina Farley
Tom Fink
D. Avril Forest
Rita & Gary Gay
GEM International
Marie Getz
Gail & Steve Getzwiller
Meg Gilbert & Julie Holding
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High Spirits Flutes
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Linda & Cliff Hirsch
Holder Family Trust
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Bert Huffman & Nancy Tarantino
Nancy & John Hughes
Robert Hyland
Kathleen James
Bekki & Rick Jaynes
Cyndi & Jerry Jenkins
Johnson Family Trust
Jill & Alex Johnson
Rita Johnson
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Linda Kennedy
Barbara & Jay Kittle
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Phyllis & Dick Klosterman
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Lil & Dave Fund
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Gerardo Lorta
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Justin McEldowney
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Bob Misiorowski
Ali Morse
Phillis & Jim Moutray
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Elizabeth Myers
Lila Niccum
Joseph Nitsche
Richard Ohnstad
Diane Olson
Beverly Parker & Donald Weinstein
Debra Paterson
Christin Peterson
Susan & John Phillips
Molly Phinny
Sandra & David Porter
Carmen Portillo
Richard Pritzlaff
Ron & Donna Reibslager
Victoria Reynolds
Dorothy Rhodes
Philomena & Wesley Rhodes
Barbara & Ronald Rodgers
Doris Rusch
Frances Russell
Wendy Russell
Joyce Sander
John Schaefer
Louise & Jim Schatz
Kathryn Schrag & Martin Levowitz
Sue & Tam Scott
Carolyn Shafer
Linda & Thomas Shore
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Lawrence Spears
Michael Stabile
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Mark Stromberg
Beth Sullivan
Virginia Thiers & Philip Brister
Deborah Tolleson
Virginia Treherne-Thomas
Deborah Upton
Elizabeth Vandenberg
Linda & George Vensel
Anne & Rick Waits
Leslie Ware & Philip Caputo
Reba Webber
Nancy Webster
Jude Weierman & David Clark
Doris & Don Wenig
Laura Wenzel
Steve Wenzel
Donna & Allan West
Judith Whitcomb
Wild Horse Restaurant
Christina & Fred Wilhelm
Janet Winans
Tera & Peter Wood

Update on the Future of PRT
by Ann Katzenbach and Donna Reibslager

It has now been about five months since the PRT began searching for a way to continue publication. The community has responded with a gratifying financial contribution. Since then, we have added new board members whose input will be invaluable, and we are working on long-range fundraising strategies.

It is still a work in progress, but we are encouraged by some recent developments. Ali Morse has greatly improved our organization and data management, and has worked to encourage more participation from Sonoita and Elgin residents. Unfortunately, she has decided to resign, due to other commitments that take up her time.

However, Marion Vendituloi, a long-time reporter for the Nogales Bulletin, has agreed to take on the role of Editor-in-Chief. A Sonoita resident, she has been covering the people and events of this area for many years. She has a working knowledge of the newspaper business and will begin her job this month.

We have reduced some of our color pages, increased our advertising, and hope that we can bring in more revenue without changing the quality of what we print. We know that this community reads the PRT because it provides an important thread of communication for a diverse and widespread population. We hope to initiate a survey in the coming months so that we can get your input about what you’d like to see more or less of in the paper. And we encourage you, more than ever, to send us your comments, concerns, and opinions.
COUNCIL NOTES
by Bob Brandt

JANUARY 4:
Along with Melissa Murrietta, who won reelection, newly-elected Patagonia Town Council Members Ronald Reibslager and Michael Stabile were sworn in by Patagonia Municipal Court Judge Concepcion Bracamonte in a brief ceremony.

JANUARY 25:
Truck Weight and Traffic
Discussion of the sections of Chapter 11 in the Town Code of Ordinances which govern truck traffic was resumed. Much of it focused on how truck weight and frequency of trips are to be regulated. When the number of trips per day was discussed, DM Excavation owner Brent Bowden appealed to the council to exempt him from the ordinance, citing the many years his overweight trucks have used the roads before weight became an issue. Town Attorney Michael Massie replied that there is no legal way for an exemption to be granted to a particular party, but that anyone can request a permit to exceed the limits set by the ordinance, for a particular trip. Council delayed action on the ordinance pending further modifications by Attorney Massie. The revised ordinance will again be on the agenda for possible adoption at the next regular meeting on February 8.

Drought Plan
Again reviewed the Drought Preparedness Plan, which had been revised since it was tabled at the December 28 meeting. In progressive steps that grow more restrictive as a drought worsens, the plan sets forth the water-conserving measures the town will take as the depth to tap its well water increases. A couple of minor corrections were again suggested so the plan will be placed on the February 8 agenda.

Grant For Watershed Plan
Considered a proposal by the town’s Flood and Flow Committee to seek a $5,000 grant to pay for the preparation of an Annotated Outline of a Watershed Management Plan. Committee Chair Carolyn Shafer explained that the outline would pull together the results of a broad array of local water-related studies, identify the many groups involved and affected by water issues, and serve as the first step in the development of a comprehensive watershed plan, which is sorely needed given the town’s risk of drought and flood. The proposal was unanimously approved by the council.

Recharge and Retention Plan
Discussed a plan being considered with the assistance of David Ellis, engineer, to establish a recharge area along the path of the Sonoita River, before it gets to the bridge at the beginning of town. The recharge area would divert some of the flow from heavy storms, and that water would be absorbed back in to the ground. It was noted that one important purpose for this is to assure that downtown flooding cannot occur, and in doing so, to obtain a lower flood insurance rate. Currently, downtown businesses and residences pay up to $2500 a year for such insurance, which is mandated for mortgage loans.

The council also approved appointment of Kathy West to the town’s Tree and Park Committee.

Impact of Early Native Tribes in Sonoita Valley
by German Quiroga

The Patagonia Museum will host a presentation by Dr. Deni Seymour entitled “Following Kino’s Footsteps through the Sonoita Valley” on Saturday, Feb. 11 at 10:30 a.m in the Patagonia Public Library. Dr. Seymour is an internationally recognized authority on protohistoric and historic Native American and Spanish colonial archaeology and ethnohistory. For 30 years, she has studied the ancestral Apache, Sobaipuri-O’odham, and lesser-known mobile groups who were present at the same time. She has excavated two Spanish-period presidios (Santa Cruz de Terrenate and Tubac), numerous Kino-period mission sites, and several indigenous sites of the period. She works with indigenous groups in reconnecting with their heritage, tackles Coronado and Niza expedition archaeology, and is rewriting the history of the pre-Spanish and colonial period southern Southwest. She has published extensively on these groups and this period.

Dr. Seymour received her doctorate and MA degrees in Anthropology from the University of Arizona in 1990 and her BAs with honors in both Anthropology and Environmental Studies from the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1980. She has taught, was employed by a number of state and federal agencies, and has worked for a number of cultural resource-management firms, including one she founded and directed. Now she is a full-time research archaeologist.

The Sonoita Valley has a rich past spanning the prehistoric era into the historic. The valley’s character has been shaped by human-environment interactions. This talk focuses on the early historic period from the time of Father Kino in the 1690s up through the late 1700s when the Europeans first encountered the Sobaipuri-O’odham and when this interaction had its greatest impact. The Sobaipuri-O’odham settlement of Sonoita played a key role in the area through time and was central in the area’s history. For more information, email German Quiroga, tortugawerx@gmail.com.
A Guided Visit to AMI’s Mining Site

by Caleb Weaver

On a crisp morning in mid-January, I found myself bouncing in the backseat of a roomy truck on my way to the Arizona Mining Inc’s (AMI) Hermosa-Taylor Deposit in the Patagonia Mountains. After signing up for a tour of their mining site, I had been contacted by AMI, and was now headed there in a truck driven by Vice President of Sustainable Development, Greg Lucero, along with Patagonia residents Bonnie Maclean and Ron Reibslager.

While I cannot separate myself from my perspective as an ecological restorationist, I had made the decision to seek an unbiased tour of AMI’s operations, and to set aside personal feelings. Greg was generous with the information he shared as we ascended the Harshaw Creek watershed. He told us of the 14 drilling pads, as this tour visited the mineral processing facilities and not the actual active drilling operations.

As we entered AMI’s private land, signs appeared telling us that “No Cameras” were allowed. We continued up a freshly graded road, sliced into the hillside. At one point, we pulled over, allowing a water truck to spray down the dirt road. Greg told us this water was being drawn from one of the two private wells on AMI property. As we waited, he added that all exploratory drilling has occurred on AMI’s 450 acres of patented (private) land, with the goal of mapping the underground geologic formations. These maps may eventually be used to develop future mine plans.

The last time I was on this road, it was narrow and overgrown with native vegetation—only accessible in a high clearance, 4-wheel drive vehicle. As the now-smooth, wide road crested the ridge top, I saw a flat expanse of the sparsely vegetated old mine tailings, framed by Red Mountain and Mount Wrightson beyond. A stream of opaque, grey water trickled down along the side of the road, which had been widened and fortified with large rock to divert it from flowing down into the tailings pile from the old Trench Mine, a longtime source of toxic leakage. Greg said that the grey water was from the saws that cut the core samples. They use water to cool the blade, which becomes colored by dust. He also noted that AMI plans to divert rainwater runoff around the toxic tailings as part of its remediation plan for the Trench Mine leakage whose source is buried in the old tailings.

Our vehicle came to a halt at the headquarters of the processing facility—a compound of structures overlapping the tailings. We passed by tens of storage containers, each filled with core samples—cylinders of rock that had been extracted from deep below the earth’s surface. There were structures that housed offices, cement fuel pads, and wastewater facilities.

When the soil test results are in hand, CHOP plans to retain an engineering firm to do a feasibility study to determine the best way to develop the property, then engage an architect to draw up preliminary drawings for the houses. These steps should be completed within the next few months.

While the organization has a long way to go to raise enough funds to fully fund the new housing project, 2016 was a very successful year for CHOP. In addition to the very generous donation of a building lot by former Patagonians Caroline and Jack Walsh, CHOP has received a $7,500 grant from Wells Fargo and raised a record $10,190 in its annual year-end appeal.

Contributions to CHOP are tax-deductible and qualify for a state tax credit. Checks should be payable to CHOP, at PO Box 1063, Patagonia, AZ 85624.

CHOP Moves Forward Toward Plan to Develop Lots

by Bob Brandt

In a very limited sense, Community Homes of Patagonia (CHOP) recently “broke ground” on its affordable housing project. The town of Patagonia dispatched Jack Routledge, along with Pancho Valenzuela and his backhoe, to CHOP’s Gopher Field building site to dig three trenches needed to analyze the soil conditions. The soil testing, being carried out at a reduced price by Pattison Engineering, is required before CHOP can move forward on its plan to develop four affordable single-family houses on the site. Assessments completed last fall by Harris Engineering and paid for by an anonymous $5,000 gift revealed no environmental, historical or cultural barriers that would interfere with development.

When the soil test results are in hand, CHOP continues to invite community members to tour their operation—not only the processing facilities, but also the active drilling area.
Project GROW: Groundwater Resources and our Wells

Kathy Pasierb is conducting a research project identifying and locating wells currently drawing groundwater within the Sonoita Creek watershed. She measures the water level, photographs the site, takes an altimeter reading, and finds the GPS coordinates for the specific location of the well. She is investigating the depth at which wells are tapped into the water table and at what rate water is being drawn down from our underground water source. By collecting scientific data, she hopes to graph trends in flow rates of wells and the depth of the water table over time. She says, “Assessing our wells in a systematic way may present us with some answers to questions about the availability of water.”

During her investigation, she was pleased to find conservation-minded residents who use roof catchment systems to collect rainwater for landscaping purposes. She also noted private restoration of hillside properties using techniques that replenish the groundwater.

The information she collects will be made available to the public, along with preexisting information held by the town of Patagonia. The resource may help inform policy decisions regarding water conservation and our water future.

Pasierb says, “If climate conditions continue to degrade, water pumping increases, rainfall diminishes, and/or trends in the depth of wells over time decreases, we will be able to fall back on some hard facts about our groundwater and make reasonable choices regarding water use.”

If you are interested in being a part of this study you may contact Kathy by email kpasi-erb1@gmail.com or call 520-604-6679.

Borderlands News by Lynn Davison

Things are happening with the local organizations working to restore the land and water, preserve critical habitat, develop a major teaching institution, and build the economies of communities in the borderlands of Arizona and Sonora. Here is an update:

Borderlands Restoration Leadership Institute (BRLI)

BRLI is hard at work preparing for its first year of teaching. The initial group of institute fellows and interns has been hired. The first flagship summer course is “under construction.” You will see a gaggle of students in town for the 6-week course that runs in July and August. Also, there will be community workshops on a variety of topics beginning this spring.

BRLI’s offices are located on the Old Main campus. The school district recently extended the lease for an additional two years. Plans are in the works for modest upgrades to the interior of the leased space and to the surrounding landscape.

The BRLI website will be launched on the first of February. By the time the PRT hits the newsstand, you can go to www.borderlandsinstitute.org to learn more about the institute’s history and vision, faculty and staff, programs, projects, courses, and workshops.

See also the article above about the well monitoring project led by Kathy Pasierb of the Friends of Sonoita Creek. This effort is part of a larger BRLI-supported program addressing Patagonia’s water futures.

Borderlands Restoration (BR)

The recent move to the Old Main campus has allowed substantial expansion of the Borderlands Restoration Seed Lab, part of the Madrean Archipelago Plant Propagation (MAPP) Initiative that connects native plant and seed producers across the region. The seed lab is housed in the historic Old Main cafeteria, which provides the perfect space for germination testing, seed cleaning, research, and a walk-in cooler for seed storage. Recent research developments with the seed lab include investigation of revegetation methods for drylands, and protocol and training development to ensure that all restoration activities have a solid foundation of genetic diversity, an important component of biodiversity. The lab engaged over a dozen volunteers in fall seed collection workdays and welcomes winter volunteers for wild seed cleaning every Monday from 9-12 p.m. Contact Allegra at 949-690-2592.

Wildlife Corridors (WC)

The local trail-building crew led by Chris Strohm and known as the “Dirtbags” has made tremendous progress on extending the Wildlife Haven hiking trail, the first leg of which they built last spring. Once completed, the loop trail will traverse scenic areas on both sides of Smith Canyon and will feature secluded places where hikers can rest and view wildlife. The Wildlife Haven Trail will eventually connect to the Arizona Trail which is being rerouted to the east of town and the whole combination will eventually connect to town by an extension of the Railroad Trail. The Wildlife Haven trailhead is located at the end of Fox Tail Lane in Wildlife Haven, the former Three Canyons development. Users are respectfully asked to please sign in at the station provided at the beginning of the trail.
Some Patagonians have been concerned about the clearing that has recently taken place along Blue Haven Road. For those accustomed to the wild and chaotic look of the flood plain, this clearing seems unnecessarily intrusive. Martin Lawrence, the new manager of Sonoita Creek Preserve who has just taken over and wasn’t involved in the decision-making process, explains as follows:

“The purpose for the project was threefold. Fence line access, fuels reduction, and responder access: the summer flooding along the creek sent loads of vegetative and flood debris through the area, much of that collecting along and damaging the fence line bordering the road. In addition to clearing away the debris in order to do fence repairs, we had the opportunity to simultaneously clear a substantial amount of dead wood, ‘fine fuels’ (dead grasses and forbs), and ‘ladder fuels’ (brush and smaller trees) from the vicinity. As a potential ignition source along the road due to a careless cigarette tossed from a car, all the fine fuels obviously pose a hazard for creating a fast-moving fire that, in combination with ladder fuels, could easily spread wildfire further into the tree canopy and concurrently threaten residents. This slim firebreak created could help to slow the spread of a fire.”

This approach to fuels reduction, though admittedly somewhat minimal in scale, can still have a positive effect toward mitigating potential damages from wildfire. In addition, the clearing allows fire response teams better potential access to these areas, should it be necessary to enter the area in the event of a wildfire.

The State Forestry [Arizona Dept. of Forestry and Fire Management] and DOC [Department of Corrections] fire crews that did the clearing are expected to return in the fall to continue clearing areas along the road until the contract term is fulfilled. In most respects, it will return to a very similar look after a full growing season, given sufficient water (not an issue of late) and time.
Wilson’s Donuts
by Binx Selby from “Stories for My Daughter”

Let me introduce you to Wilson. To say that Wilson worked for my father as a mechanic would be misleading. He could make or find anything, and solve employee, customer or logistics issues—whatever no one else could figure out. I had caught onto this by the time I was eight, and cultivated a close relationship with Wilson. He tutored me in the practical arts—welding, machining, scouting junkyards—all the skills needed for a young inventor with little money.

My father was the Lincoln Mercury dealer in Tucson but his real passion was ranching. He had a small ranch called The Umpire that overlooked the San Rafael Valley from the top of Canelo Pass. Dad needed skilled cattle horses for the ranch and word was that the best and cheapest were to be found in Mexico. So, Wilson and I got the assignment.

We went in a 4-wheel drive pick-up pulling a big livestock trailer. Our first stop was Harold’s Heavenly Donut Shop, where Wilson picked up two 144-count boxes of donuts. “What are these for?” I asked. “You’ll see,” he answered.

We headed toward Sasabe and Mexico. There were only a few shacks and a tiny cement block shed with a sign, “U.S. Customs.” Inside were a beat-up metal desk and three customs’ agents playing cards. Wilson presented them with one of the giant boxes of donuts. They were delighted. “I’ll see you on my way back later today!” he said.

On the other side of the barely marked border, we pulled up next to a similar shed of adobe. Inside were five officials, also playing cards. Wilson presented them with the second box of donuts. This was received with even greater appreciation and camaraderie.

Wilson got some forms and off we went.

The road changed from asphalt to dirt at the border, and then became a single lane track. Three hours later we pulled into a clearing surrounded by mesquite log corrals. There was an outside cooking area, and smoke rising from the adobe house. There was no one in view as we pulled up, but almost like magic the truck was surrounded by kids, ranch hands, and women. We were ushered to a big table under a massive mesquite tree. “¿Le gusta machaca?” Wilson and I both nodded and one of the ranch hands left and next thing I know there was an unfortunate steer slaughtered and reduced to thin strips of meat that were hung over all the fences. While this was going on, the ladies brought a lunch of beans, cactus, and steak with chilies.

After lunch, Wilson got down to business. The horses were in the corral, and they were saddled and ready to ride. The vaqueros then demonstrated each horse’s skill at working the herd of cows. Wilson picked the three he wanted and they were loaded into the trailer.

In the several hours that we had been there, all of the meat hanging on the fence had completely dried for making machaca. It was put into two big burlap bags as a parting regalo. There were lots of handshakes and hugs before we headed off toward the border. Wilson told me, “Now these cows that we got, you may think they look a little strange but...they’re cows ‘til we get to the States, then they will magically turn into horses. Immigrant cows have a much easier time than immigrant horses.”

On the Mexican side, they stamped our forms and expressed their appreciation for the donuts. On the American side, one of the agents looked inside the trailer counting, “1-2-3,” came back and stamped the papers, saying, “Those were sure good donuts,” and waved us through.

Those three horses ran the ranch for years.

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The Year of the Hummingbird

With a crazy exact homing ability that can remember a specific flower or feeder after a 7,000-mile flight, a respiration rate of up to 600 breaths per minute, and a wing flap of up to 80 times per second, hummingbirds are extraordinary creatures. Here in this region we have more hummingbirds in terms of population and different species than perhaps any other part of America. They zip and whirl through our desert yards, our parks and our gardens, dazzling us with color and aeronautical tricks. But have we really gotten to know them—and their secrets? The Tucson Audubon Society has declared 2017 our year to celebrate, support, and explore our amazing local wealth of hummingbirds.

“Hummingbirds are incredibly easy to get to know,” says Audubon’s Keith Ashley, who spends a lot of time at Paton Center for Hummingbirds in Patagonia. “You don’t need binoculars—just a feeder or a couple of native plants will bring them into your yard. Once they get comfortable, they’ll buzz right up to your face and say hello—especially if the feeder is empty.”

According to Karen Fogas, Executive Director, “If we do not broaden understanding of the intrinsic and all too often scientifically-based value of birds and their natural world, we will never be able to rest assured that future generations will enjoy what we have been blessed to know. This campaign is about creating easy opportunities for birds to touch people’s lives. Being able to get up close and personal with a few of our local birds can inspire someone to value our region in an entirely new way.”

Tucson Audubon was formed in 1949 by members who cared deeply about our birds and their future. The organization has a long history of sharing that passion by encouraging people to experience birds, educating them about birds, and advocating for birds and their habitat—all based upon what Audubon is known for: solid reasoning and science. And the organization will continue in all of those areas, but Tucson Audubon is also going to do all it can to expand its audience. “The only way we can affect lasting change to benefit and protect birds and their habitat is to help people understand more about why it is important. This tiny little bird is going to help us do just that,” said Fogas.
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Staying Focused
by Cassina Farley

There is so much on my mind and yet I have nothing this month for you, dear readers. It’s like when you are trying to sleep and everything from the last 20 years comes flooding back. Things you should have said, moves you should have made, and the peanut butter you should have bought. I find myself thinking about the new Whole Foods in Tucson and how fun it would be to drink beer while I shopped and about things yet to happen that I have no control of.

I spent at least 30 minutes yesterday daydreaming about waffles—more specifically Tater Tot waffles. I just can’t quite calm my mind down long enough to have a single idea worthy of a column.

I lament about the gutting of our health care system almost hourly, fantasizing about my conversations with the people responsible. I could devote an entire column to the idiocy of such changes but then my mind jumps to my need for an office toaster and, almost simultaneously, I wonder if the Nutella in the cabinet is still good.

Facebook is to blame for most of my wandering mind shenanigans. I can drift for hours reading all about people with the greatest weight loss strategies or the best celebrity breakups. It has it all—politics, bad hair days, the crumbling friendships and marriages of my high school friends. To make matters worse, Pinterest aids and abets in the further drifting of my mind. I can find recipes for donuts and black bean soup and if I really want to wallow in the emotions of recent events I can go to the sad quotes page and cry and cry. Just now my mind drifts away to the drive home from Tucson yesterday and the deer that crossed the road. I’m sure there were more of them, I just couldn’t see them. What should I make for dinner? Chinese sounds good. Oh, wait I’m going out to dinner. What time? See! It happens that fast. As I look at my desk at work, I am drawn to the pile of file folders with grant applications, all due in the coming month, and I can’t help but feel overwhelmed. I’ll get them done, not to worry. I just need to focus. Focus, focus, focus! Maybe change the radio station to something soothing. Just like that my mind just drifts back to Tater Tot waffles and the fact that Trump’s education secretary thinks that schools in the West need guns to protect kids from grizzly bears. I can’t help but laugh at that. It dawned on me that perhaps I can’t focus because I have too many unresolved issues.

So I’ll buy that office toaster and check the expiration date on the Nutella. When I finally go to the new Whole Foods I will order a beer and purchase Tater Tots and make those waffles. I’ll find out what time I need to show up for dinner and maybe I’ll stop watching the news (aka reality TV) and logging in to Facebook. It’s just too traumatizing. With a little luck, I’ll get something done and settle my mind long enough to focus.
Opening Ceremonies for Benderly-Kendall Opera House

On Saturday, Jan. 28, with scissors in hand, John Henry Kendall, benefactor, and Fred and Christina Wilhelm, founders of the Santa Cruz Foundation for Performing Arts (SCFPA), cut the ribbon at the entrance and opened the doors of the new Benderly-Kendall Opera House, welcoming in the crowd of 250 people that had gathered below the steps.

Master of ceremonies, Mike Massee, introduced Father Bill Cosgrove, who gave the invocation. Visiting dignitaries then spoke to the audience about the importance of this venue and its impact on the community. Fred Wilhelm thanked the speakers, then recognized the members of the team who have been working together since the beginning of the project. Christina Wilhelm paid tribute to Gini Benderly, who first had the dream of a performance center. She played one of Benderly’s favorite pieces, “Träumerei,” by Robert Schumann on the piano Benderly bequeathed to the foundation at her death. Almost spontaneously, members of the Santa Cruz Singers rose from the audience and began to sing the universal song of peace, “Dona Nobis Pacem.” At the end of the program, all were invited to enjoy a reception of cake and cider, accompanied by the magical sounds of the Mariachi Plata.

The following evening there was a special fundraising gala at the new opera house, with a champagne reception, concert by the Tucson Pops, and three-course catered dinner. A most memorable weekend for the SCFPA!

Jill Johnson Exhibit at Gathering Grounds

by Donna Reibslager

Jill Johnson’s paintings celebrate the simple beauty of the natural world around us. “A trip to California Gulch, a walk along Sonoita Creek, a glimpse of a varied bunting in Montosa Canyon; these are what kick off these works,” she explains.

Johnson uses acrylic that is sometimes thinned, giving it the appearance of watercolor, and a vibrant color palette, to portray lyrical images that are often adorned with border design. She says that these paintings are an expression of her gratitude to the community and setting in which she lives.

Johnson grew up in a rural setting in Massachusetts. In 2005, she and her husband began spending winters in Patagonia, and they moved here in 2012.

An exhibit of her paintings will open at the Gathering Grounds on Feb. 1, and will be up till the end of the month.
Deputies Remove Suspicious Figure in Patagonia Park

by Donna Reibslager

On Thursday, Jan. 19, Marshal Joe Patterson was driving past the Patagonia Park when he happened to notice a figure dressed in costume, sitting on a bench. A short while later, he was told that the figure had been seen sitting in a tree. He responded to the scene, where he saw the effigy-like figure lying on the sidewalk, covered with a cape. The figure’s face had been made from a rubber mask of President Trump. Two deputies were advised by radio of the marshal’s whereabouts and drove over as well. A small group of people had gathered around the figure.

Marshal Patterson photographed the scene and confiscated the handmade dummy. As he explains, “The figure appeared to be half a person lying on the ground, which could distract a driver, causing them to take their eyes off the road, thus posing a safety hazard as well as littering concerns.” The Marshal also noted that the apparent effigy of the new president was disrespectful and that it suggested “hateful protest” which, given the times we live in, might have warranted a call to the Secret Service.

The figure in question was, in fact, a large puppet-like creation that Anita Clovesko-Wharton had made and planned to take with her to the women’s march in Tucson on Saturday, Jan. 21. She was advised that she should not bring it, so she had left it in the back of her pickup. Anita had parked her truck across the street from Red Mountain Foods that day and was working there when the incident occurred. A passerby had apparently taken the puppet out, and that person—and perhaps others—had moved it about, from one place to another.

Anita says she was able to retrieve her puppet the following day and has apologized for having caused a concern. She told Marshal Patterson that she appreciated the fact that he and his deputies had demonstrated such a quick response to the situation.

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Wolves in Government Clothing?
by Don Brush

About 150 people crowded into the Sonoita Fairground Pioneer Hall on Saturday, Jan. 21 to hear a presentation on Mexican gray wolves possibly being reintroduced into the Sonoita, Elgin, and Patagonia areas. The title of the presentation was “Wolves in Government Clothing.”

Wolves historically roamed much of the western United States and an active recovery program has been in effect since 1998, when Mexican gray wolves were reintroduced in the White Mountains of eastern Arizona and western New Mexico. The program is regulated under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The meeting began with an introduction by Dean Fish, Manager of the Santa Fe Ranch in Nogales. This was followed by a 30-minute video produced by David Spady, depicting the impacts of the wolf recovery program in parts of the western U.S., including Arizona. Clearly intended to dissuade its audience from considering the program in a positive light, the video touched on impacts to the cattle industry, the potential dangers to humans including children, and the questionable aspects of introducing any endangered species predator to an area occupied by humans.

Presenters included Wink Crigler, owner of XDiamond Ranch in Greer, who echoed many of the points raised in the video and acknowledged that, while she initially felt lukewarm about the reintroduction program, after seeing its effects over the years has become adamantly opposed to it. She added concerns regarding ethical issues surrounding the reintroduction program, the possibility of disease transmission, and the fact that the program is in an expansion mode.

Next up was Cindy Coping, Pima Natural Resources Chair, who explained that the current rules open the possibility of wolf reintroduction in Arizona in suitable areas south of the I-40 corridor. Southern Arizona is located in Wolf Management Zone 2, described as “an area in which Mexican wolves will be allowed to naturally disperse and occupy, and where Mexican wolves may be translocated”.

Last to speak was Mary Darling, a biologist and former Litigation and Appeals Coordinator with the U.S. Forest Service. Darling discussed how the original intent of the ESA was being abused and that the law needed to be modified. She urged attendees to become educated and involved in the issue. For more information on this project, visit: www.fws.gov/southwest/es/mexicanwolf/BRWRP_home.cfm

Dave Stamey
Coming to Pioneer Hall

Popular cowboy and western entertainer, Dave Stamey, is coming to Sonoita on Saturday, Feb. 25, to perform in Pioneer Hall at the Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds.

The Western Music Association recently honored this exceptional singer, songwriter, entertainer, and musician as their newest member of their Hall of Fame.

Western music may have left the country music genre with the end of the silver screen cowboy crooners, but that hasn’t stopped this cowboy from romancing the west. There’s still a strong niche for music that is enjoyed by all audiences who love to experience the West. With over a two-decade career, this singer songwriter has released 11 CDs.

Stamey, originally from Montana and now living on his ranch in California, is one of the most popular and most requested western and cowboy folk entertainers working today.
When Art Lamely became a full-time saddle tramp more than 6,000 miles and eight years ago, he had neither a smart phone nor a Facebook account. Last month when the former Marine turned his horse, Big John, from Sahuarita Road onto State Route 83 a few miles south of Interstate 10, he had more than 100 Facebook friends following him as he headed down toward Sonoita. The two-lane scenic highway didn’t give him pause. “It was no big deal. It wasn’t near as bad as the Beeline Highway. If you can survive Beeline, you can survive anything,” said Lamely, a gift from an admirer he met while traveling last March (and who insisted she be able to follow him on Facebook), came in handy as he came into the crossroads. He connected with Desert Mountain Veterinary Hospital. He also connected with Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds where he boarded briefly in the jockey room. “They were very nice,” Lamely noted. He stayed there just long enough for Big John to enjoy a few laps around the race-track. The vet’s wife (Katy Phelps) put the word out and Mickey Ginsburg, owner of Old Pueblo United Drug, put him up in a spare bedroom on Christmas Eve. He then hired Lamely to renovate living quarters in a barn at his Elgin Farm Racing Stable.

Lamely, 61, actually had a job lined up at Old Tucson Studios but he found the accommodations were less than satisfactory. An experienced handyman in many trades, Lamely plans to fix up the barn living quarters, pay some rent, take on whatever work he can find, and head out in the spring. “I like changing jobs and moving around.” He added that Big John will move to the end of a corral and look off in the distance like he’s ready to go. “He listens to me and I listen to him.” Lamely hopes by then he will have found a pack horse to replace one he had to put down in northern Arizona. His goal is to ride through the Grand Canyon. He got within 20 miles last year but had to turn back because of horseshoe trouble and started riding farther south as temperatures dropped.

After his oldest son died and his marriage broke under the strain, Lamely began his saddle tramping. He rode out of Broken Bow, Nebraska in July 2008. Three months later, his wise horse stepped up onto the property of a woman watering her yard in Pine Bluff, Wyoming. That woman, Sue, rode more than 4,000 miles with Lamely until her death from cancer in 2015. They had planned on making it to the Grand Canyon one day and Lamely wants to honor her memory.

A glorious holiday season at the Sonoita Fairgrounds began with our membership dinner in Pioneer Hall at the fairgrounds on December 3. During the meeting, we elected four new board members to fill our nine seats. Our board of directors for the 2017 season are: President Tom Hardesty, Vice President Gary Brown, Treasurer Jamie Smith, Secretary Jennifer Bollin, Jim Rowley, Amanda Zamudio, Steve Getzwiller, Jimmy Lewis, and George Fry.

The Dave Stamey Concert will take place February 25th in Pioneer Hall. Tickets may be purchased for $27 online at gopattywagon.com or at the fairgrounds office. Also on February 25th the first of a series of five Sonoita All Breed Circuit Horse Shows will happen in our arenas. Other dates are: March 25, April 15, June 8-12, and September 16. Participants must enter four of the five shows to participate in the year-end awards. For more information please call Jamie 305-395-0043.

Please check our website, www.sonoitafairgrounds.com for updates and more to come. Memberships to the fairgrounds are still available. They include free admission to the events listed above and to the annual membership dinner. Membership is a great way to meet your neighbors while keeping our western heritage alive.

Jen is manager of the Santa Cruz County Fair & Rodeo Assn.
Sharing a Common Language of Spirit

by Linda Jade Fong

Storytelling may be the secret for success at Patagonia’s Spiritual Roundtable, which is heading into its fifth year, a remarkable milestone for a year-round, weekly discussion group in a small village. Although it’s held at Patagonia Community United Methodist Church, the roundtable honors all spiritual traditions and explorations. Attendance averages around 15 to 20 people, with as many as 35 in the winter, numbers that would be impressive in even a large city.

The group started in 2012 when Binx Selby, Patra Kelly, and Linda Fong began putting together weekly readings from widely diverse spiritual philosophies. The readings still range from the teachings of Jesus and the Dalai Lama to poems of Hafiz, St. John of the Cross, and Leonard Cohen. Quotes from Lao-tze might be found next to those of Dr. Seuss, serving as stepping stones for a conversation or story about how they touch one’s daily life. Recent topics have included the spirituality of friendship, impermanence, the power of gratitude, anger, being at ease with the pain of others, and solitude. This is not a comparative religions discussion group but an invitation to share personal insights and the experiences of one’s spiritual journey, whatever form it may take. The roundtable provides an opportunity to connect with others through the heart rather than the mind—with camaraderie and laughter.

There is a transformative power in listening, especially to someone whom one has nothing in common with—or agrees with,” Binx explains. “We do not debate or challenge or teach, or feel a need to justify a belief.” In simply listening, we learn something about others,” says 93-year-old Bernice Pomeroy, a member of the group from the beginning. “And about ourselves.”

Aisha Sander, with husband Brad and baby Ali, returned to Patagonia this fall from Pakistan. She put together a set of readings for a recent Spiritual Roundtable and introduced them by talking about rediscovering her Islamic faith through Sufi poets. One of her offerings was Rumi’s poem “The House Guest,” whose lines excerpted here are an example of a roundtable springboard or theme for conversation:

This being human is a guest house
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows.

Aisha, who just gave birth to her second son, stresses the importance of talking about her inner life with people who share a language of spirit. “The Spiritual Roundtable provides me that safe space, and it has helped me feel at home as a member of this unique and diverse community.” In fact, Brad Sander says, “The Spiritual Roundtable accelerated our decision to stay and buy a house here.”

The Spiritual Roundtable meets on Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m. in the church’s Thurber Hall, 387 McKeown Ave. in Patagonia, and welcomes people to experience a connection not easily found in today’s busy world. For more information, contact Linda Fong at lindajade500@gmail.com.
Having shed the trappings of her upper-class beginnings (but not her money) and having been transformed into a genuine cowgirl, Anne C. Stradling found in Patagonia a community that embraced her and her Museum of the Horse. Although diminutive in physical stature, Anne was a larger-than-life figure in this town for more than 30 years. The polar opposite of the high-society lady that her privileged upbringing would have predicted, Anne was kind, engaging, and unpretentious, a truly “down home” creature whose positive attributes were apparently balanced by a liberal use of profanity.

Above all else, my informants spoke of Anne’s generosity. Murphy Musick, who built display cases in her Museum of the Horse, was one of many on the receiving end of Anne’s generosity. He and others tell me that every year she would give Christmas gifts to “an amazing number of people” and could be seen delivering them by horse-drawn cart all around town. Richard Connolly, who worked restoring Anne’s museum wagons, says she always remembered him at Christmas with a meaningful gift, even after he no longer worked for her.

Lucy Mihalik, who worked in the museum as both receptionist and gift shop clerk, describes how Anne would start perusing mail order catalogs early in the year, seeking just the right gifts for those on her Christmas list. “She was one of the dearest people I ever met,” Mihalik says, and chuckles as she recalls Anne inviting her and husband Paul to the Stradling home “for a little snort.”

Lee Gordon, Connolly’s wagon-restoration colleague, remembers that Anne was very touched when his father came to town to present her with a remnant of a banner from the destroyer USS Schley. The ship was named for one of Anne’s ancestors, naval hero Winfield Scott Schley, and the elder Gordon had served as a crew member on the ship’s final voyage. Perhaps Anne’s legendary profanity was passed on from Commodore Schley: Both Connolly and Gordon affirm she “swore like a sailor.” Gilbert Quiroga substantiates this side of Anne’s personality as he tells me she could swear with the best of them, especially if her horses were uncooperative. Quiroga should know…he often trailered her horses to rodeo and parade events where her wagons served as prominent advertising for the museum.

While never a huge financial success, the museum eventually became the dominant feature of the area’s emerging tourism industry. As her health gradually deteriorated in her twilight years, Anne offered to keep the museum operating here if the town would provide a minimal level of financial support. But the town didn’t bite, and she was left with little choice but to seek another home for the museum. She found that home in Ruidoso Downs, New Mexico, where it lives on as the Hubbard Museum of the American West, a fine place affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution.

Anne Stradling’s museum may have slipped from our town’s grasp, but her local legacy lives on in very tangible ways. Along with the memories held dear by many Patagonians, the Bowman-Stradling History Center at the Sonoita Fairgrounds retains artifacts from Anne’s life and collection. Also based in Sonoita, the Stradling Foundation continues to give expression to her generosity and love of horses by giving awards to talented young rodeo participants and providing college scholarships to deserving students.

In Patagonia, remnants of the museum’s interior structures are still visible in Vivapura’s headquarters, off Smelter Alley. Most prominently, in the heart of town, her Stage Stop Inn still welcomes visitors with Western-style hospitality. Stop by and the current owners, Lynne and Gerry Isaac, will proudly point out some of the building’s architectural features, including the local cattle brands which give the inn’s tiled lobby floor historical authenticity, and which served as the figurative start button for this literary replay of Anne Stradling’s life.

Thanks for the memories, Anne!
Last month’s article described Walter Vail and Herbert Hislop’s trip from Los Angeles to the Arizona Territory border, crossing the Colorado River near Blythe, CA. The next phase of the journey took four days in early July of 1876. On the Arizona side of the Colorado was the community of Ehrenberg, the next stop was Tyson Wells (modern day Quartzsite), and from there the stage travelled to Wickenberg where the stage road forked, going north to Prescott or south to Phoenix.

Hislop wrote on July 9, 1876: “Nothing particular happened except my nose bled again and we still were enjoying the beautiful desert ride. I now know what a desert is having to drive 45 miles at a stretch without water, carrying 24 gallons with us for the horses on the road, we all had to fill our canteens with putrid water or else die from thirst, sometimes it was full of mud.” On July 10th they “Breakfasted at Desert Station, 5 a.m., and then started for Phoenix, reaching it at 11:30 a.m., this being the first signs of cultivation we had seen since we left Los Angeles. My poor nose bled again. Left Phoenix at 12:30 p.m. for Florence with only a pair of horses which had to travel 65 miles with only one feed, and that we stopped for in the desert at 7 p.m., when we took supper, oysters, biscuits, canned meats, melons, etc., as there was no house for 30 odd miles. After supper curled up in blanket and slept again, as one had to sleep when and where they could or else get none at all.”

They “Arrived at Florence at 4:30 a.m. (July 11th) and had breakfast in hotel at 6 a.m. The hotel, like all the other houses, is built of mud, there being no bedrooms, people sleeping out of doors and under trees wrapped in their blankets. We were obliged to stay here a day and a night as we missed the other stage that connected at Florence for Tucson.” Walter Vail wrote that same day, “It is very aggravating to have to wait here in this place, as there are no accommodations here. Hislop slept in an old school house with a young fellow I met in Tucson and I slept under a tree. The country around here is much better than I expected to find it, they have plenty of water for irrigation and the crops look very well and there seems to be a good excitement about the mines which seem to be paying well. I see by the paper that Fish has advertised everything for sale in Tucson and amongst other things his ranch, the sale comes off the latter part of this month.”

Hislop described the last day of their journey: “Got up or at least rolled out of my blanket at 5:30 a.m. and went and bathed in a pool about a mile from Florence. I enjoyed this as it was the first time I had taken off my clothes and washed since the morning of July 5th. Washing is a luxury in this country. They have very little water here. I heard a man describe Arizona like this, he said; “Get a box of sand and in one corner put a thimbleful of water and in the other a horned toad and you have Arizona.” Left Florence at 7 p.m. for Tucson having for travelling companions two Indian agents going to look after their reservations.”

Next month’s article will describe Vail and Hislop’s search for the best ranch to buy.
February’s Fickle, Frozen Flowers for Feasting

Well, it finally happened. It rained and snowed hereabout in late December and January. This after a hiatus of several months in some locales. The last sizable rain near Patagonia Lake until these winter soakers was in mid-September! So now we wait, patiently or not so patiently, for more precipitation and then (dare we conjecture?) spring wildflowers.

Along with monsoon blooms, this is our main chance to revel in the beauty, fragrances, and natural history of a wide range of wildflowers that yearly may or may not grace us with their presence. If I had to guess, as I’m prone to do, I would predict a medium wildflower bloom this late winter and spring, perhaps rating 5 out of a possible 10. Autumn rain was mostly lacking, so I believe that the recent moisture came too late for a calendar year of flowers. February will be the telling month, when most cool-season species will play their hand the form of dainty sprouting leaves of various shapes and textures. A green carpet bodes well for a colorful late February, while spotty micro-greens promise a meager—or absent—visual treat. Only time will tell.

Surely this year we’ll have a dense carpet of tansy mustard. Several species in the genus Descurainia can grow densely this time of year, even with sparse rains that suppress other wildflowers. There is a native tansy mustard as well as a nonnative species. Either species is edible in small quantities, as a condiment mainly, and provides a biting, wasabi-like treat to those who know how to forage wild plants for sustenance. Though often widespread, these plants may fly under the radar, since their flowers are tiny and hence rather inconspicuous. Tansy mustards grow dense enough, however, to become a minor fire hazard once they cure.

Much sparser yet more likely to garner attention are Papago lilies, or blue dicks. These winsome flowers are hard to pinpoint when they first poke above terra firma, as their leaves resemble nothing more than succulent grass. When the purple flowers appear, any mistaken identity is cast aside, and all of a sudden, in a good year, you see how abundant this species can be in our grasslands and deserts. A few years ago, during a winter of drought, severe cold, and (eventually) fires, I saw just one wildflower where I live at Raven’s Nest Nature Sanctuary by Patagonia Lake—a lone Papago lily! In years of plenty, I collect the corms (an underground and swollen extension of the plant’s stem) of this species for a starchy treat. In the process, I till the soil a bit and replant the budding young corms, to assist with the propagation of this beautiful species.

Joining these lilies in most years are several species of evening primrose. In particular, Oenothera primiveris (or “first in spring”) can spice the ground with its distinct flowers: a rich yellowish four petals and obvious stamens, slathered with pollen. Go in for a sniff of this delectably sweet flower and you might well be scoffed at by the next humans you encounter. If so, you’ve likely received a nose full of sticky yellow pollen! This easy transfer of pollen seems to be an evolutionary trick for ensuring delivery of one plant’s sperm to another, thus ensuring cross pollination. Don’t fret, as you can turn the tables—the whole plant is delicious!

Vincent Pinto and his wife, Claudia, run RAVENS-WAY WILD JOURNEYS, a nature adventure and conservation organization devoted to protecting the unique biodiversity of the Sky Islands region. Visit their site at www.ravensnatureschool.org
**FEBRUARY CALENDAR**

### meetings

| AA | Patagonia Comm. Ctr., Sun. at 8 a.m.; Sonoita Bible Church, Tues., 2:30 p.m.; Pat. Methodist Church, Fri., 7:30 p.m. |
| CHOP (Community Homes of Patagonia, Inc.) | Board Meeting 3rd Mon. at 6 p.m. in the Patagonia Town Council Room Chambers. |
| Patagonia Town Council | 2nd & 4th Wed. at 7 p.m. in the Town Council Hall. |
| Rotary Club | 1st Thurs., 7 a.m. at Patagonia High School; All others at Kief Joshua Winery, 6 p.m. Info: 520-907-5829 |
| San Rafael Community 4-H Club | 2nd Mon. at the Patagonia Methodist Church, Thurber Hall, 5:30 p.m. Tami, 455-5561. |
| Overeaters Anonymous | Tue. & Thurs. at 6:30 p.m. Fragrance-free meeting. Patagonia United Methodist Church. 520-404-3490. |

### events

| Feb 1 | Rex Allen Jr at Elgin Club, 7—9 p.m. - patagoniaaz.com/event/live-music-rex-allen-jr |
| Feb 1 | Salt Creek Bluegrass Band (aka the No Chicken Wire Band), 6—8 p.m., the Steak Out in Sonoita |
| Feb 8 | FRANK Talk: War, Liberty, & Law: The U.S. Constitution and Crisis, 6:30 p.m. at Patagonia Library, 342 Duquesne Ave. |
| Feb 9 | Beethoven’s Wig - 7 p.m. at the Benderly-Kendall Opera House, 344 Naugle Ave, Patagonia. Created and performed by Richard Perlmutter. Info: scfpapresents.org or call 888-202-1942 or 520-394-0129. |
| Feb 10 | Elgin School Spaghetti Dinner - 5 p.m.—7:30 p.m. Adults $10, Kids 5-10 yrs. $5, under 5, free. Elgin School Gym. |
| Feb 12 | Strauss Divas - Sopranos Dianne Iauco, Mary Paul, and Amy Williams, with Bonnie Bird on piano; arias and songs by Richard Strauss. 3 p.m. at the Benderly–Kendall Opera House, 344 Naugle Ave, Patagonia. 888-202-1942 or 520-394-0129. www.scfpapresents.org |
| Feb 14 | Valentines Dinner at the Cafe in Sonoita. For reservations call 455-5044. |
| Feb 15 | Salt Creek Bluegrass Band, 6—8 p.m. at the Steak Out in Sonoita |
| Feb 19 | Ranch Family Fun Day at Canelo Cowboy Church - rodeoing for the whole family. Starts 7 a.m. |
| Feb 19 | Musicians on Tour - Performers from the Fred Fox School of Music, U of A., 3 p.m., Benderly – Kendall Opera House. 888-202-1942 or 520-394-0129. www.scfpapresents.org |
| Feb 25 | Dave Stamey, 7 - 9 p.m. at SCC Fairgrounds. See page 16 for details. |

### special interests

| Medicaid help with Amaury Gama | Feb. 13 & 22, 3—5 p.m. at Patagonia Library, 342 Duquesne Ave. |
| Stretch and Strengthen Class | Weds., 9:15—10:15 a.m. at Sonoita Bible Church. $7. |
| Drum Circle | Mon., 4—6 p.m. at Sonoita Crossroads building courtyard by Chuckwagon Grill, Free. No exp. req’d. Info: 520-490-4991. |
| Santa Cruz Singers | rehearsals Thursdays at 5 p.m. beginning Feb. 16 SCFPA office, 348 Naugle, Patagonia. New members welcome! |
| Adult hand-building ceramics classes | Weds., 4—6 p.m. $65 Info: 520-604-0300 |
| Bingo | St. Theresa Parish Hall, Patagonia, 1st & 3rd Mondays at 6 p.m. Info: 455-5681 |
| Crossroads Quilters | Sonoita Fire Dept., 2nd & 4th Mon. at 9 a.m. Info: 520-732-0453. |
| Open Tennis | PUHS, Sat. at 9 a.m., Info: 394-2973 |
| Sonoita Tergar Meditation Practice Group | 1st Mon. Free. Info: Jonelle 455-9222. |

**Patagonia Youth Group** meets at Patagonia Community Church, 387 McKeown, every Sunday, 5:30—7:30 p.m. Please call Pastor Tom Jelinek at 394-2274 for more information.

**FULL MOON**

FEB. 11
HELP WANTED

**SITA (Sky Islands Tourism Association)** is doing amazing things - New advertising opportunities, VisitSkyIslands.com, Patagonia Fall Festival, Regional Visitor Center and we continue to expand our vision. Looking for someone with Marketing experience to join us. If this sounds like you, call Rita Johnson, 520 455-5653.

NOW HIRING - High Spirits Flutes
Please email your resume to admin@highspirits.com

**PT HOUSEHOLD ASST:** for chem-sensitive woman in 30s. Must be fragr. free! Org. skills, cooking, cleaning, etc. Lizzie: Elizabethday12@gmail.com.

MISC.

SEEKING HOUSING: Responsible woman in 30s seeks chem-free/fragrance-free 1BR/studio/share or equiv. Lizzie: Elizabethday12@gmail.com

***HELP WANTED***

**AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION**

Bandit is a sweet 3-year-old Lab mix. We found him outside our gates with a note from the owner saying they could no longer care for him. He's very playful, loves toys, and loves to run.

Sushi is a grey tabby cat, one year old, with a sweet personality. He loves people, specially kids, and enjoys cuddling and purring.

Santa Cruz Humane Society
232 East Patagonia Highway (Rt. 82)
Nogales, AZ 85621 (520) 287-5654
Mon. - Sat. 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

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***HOUSING RENTALS***

**BRIGHT, PRIVATE 1-1/2 BA VACATION RNL.** in town. Kitchenette, courtyard. Nightly/weekly. 520 994-0877

**JACK AND JILL BDRMS** w/ shared bthrm, $350/ mo. each. Seniors preferred. Short-term rentals available. Don 520-297-7065

**CLEAN, BRIGHT 3 BDRM MOBILE HOME, 2 full baths, big deck, W/D hookups, non-smoking. $650 plus utilities 394-2121**

**RENTAL HOMES** Contact Kathy O'Brian at Sonofita Realty 520 455-5381

**MISC.**

**JULIA GREEN VOICE AND PIANO STUDIO**
voice & piano lessons $45/45 mins. 505-350-8543 Patagonia 85624
www.juliagreenmusic.com

**SONOITA SELF STORAGE- RENTALS**
5x10, 10x10, 10x20; 520-455-9333 or 455-4641.

**NEED MORE ROOM?**
Call Les’ Storage Units 520-988-0421 Patagonia, AZ.

***HELP WANTED***

AND HOUSING RENTAL ADS ARE FREE
UP TO 3 LINES OR 25 WORDS

***CHURCH SERVICES***

**Patagonia Community United Methodist Church**
387 Mckown Ave., Patagonia
394-2274 Sunday Service: 10 a.m.

**St. Andrews Episcopal Church**
Casa Blanca Chapel of Sonoita
Justice of the Peace Courtroom
2nd & 4th Saturdays; 10 a.m.

**Sonoita Hills Community Church**
52 Elgin Rd., Sonoita
455-5172 Sunday Service: 10 a.m.

**St. Therese of Lisieux Catholic Church**
222 Third Ave., Patagonia
394-2954 Sunday Mass: 10:30 a.m.

**Sonoita Bible Church**
374 N. Highway 83, Sonoita
455-5779 Sunday Service: 10:30 a.m.

**Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church**
12 Los Encinos Rd., Sonoita
394-2954; Sunday Mass: 8 a.m.

**Canelo Cowboy Church**
Hwy 83, MP 14 455-5000
Sunday Services: 8:45 & 11:00
(except third Sundays)

**Harvest Christian Fellowship/ Sonoita Foursquare Church**
3107 Highway 83, Sonoita
455-5505; Sunday Service: 10:30 a.m.

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**Volunteer Drivers Needed**

Now that more people have learned about our services, the Senior Citizens of Patagonia transportation program is expanding our reach. So, we are seeking additional volunteer drivers for our Dodge Caravan and Ford minibus with wheelchair lift. We service Patagonia, Sonoita, and Elgin, and drive seniors (60+) and the disabled to Sierra Vista, Nogales, and Tucson, and anywhere in between. Rides are offered primarily for medical appointments, but also for airport drop-off and pick-up, shopping trips, and cultural events.

To volunteer, contact Chuck Kelly at 520-604-8087, or charlesraynerkelly@gmail.com, or Heather Dodge at 520-732-0598 hdodge712@gmail.com. To make appointments for transport, call the Patagonia Senior or Center at 394-2494 between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday-Friday.
What do our Thrift Stores do for the Community?

When you walk into one of our local thrift stores and find a great pair of jeans or the teakettle you’ve been looking for, do you ever think about who profits from your purchase?

by Ann Katzenbach

If you’ve been in one of our county’s three thrift shops, you might not have thought much about why they’re there, where your donations end up, or what they do with the money they make. Angel Wings Thrift and Gift Shop in Sonoita supports Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church and now that they have built and paid for a church, they support an increasing number of other charities. Janice Urman, who is on leave from her position as manager, says they are just getting to a place where they can spread some of their profits around. They help the Santa Rita Abbey north of Sonoita and the small, local Holy Trinity Monastery, as well as an historic Franciscan monastery in Wisconsin that needed repairs. They are also considering local nonprofits that are not religiously affiliated.

“We know what will sell,” says Urman, and the shop reflects this in its selection of clothing, home furnishings, children’s clothing and toys, as well as the “gift” section of the enterprise that includes homemade crafts, toasted pecans, and dog biscuits. Things that they know won’t move in Sonoita go to Red’s Thrift Store in Nogales, where pots and pans and small appliances are among the best sellers. Angel Wings is up the hill from the Catholic church on Los Encinos Road, and is open Thursday through Saturday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

The United Methodist Church Thrift Shop in Patagonia, located at 387 McKeown Ave, is open Friday from 10 a.m. to noon and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. They prefer that people bring donated items Thursday mornings. Seeing a need to sell used low-cost items, Ann and Avery Dudley founded the shop in 1983. They started in a little house on the church’s property that has since been torn down. Staffed by volunteers from the church and community, the store sells clothing, household furnishings and other “stuff.” They discourage donations of electronics, oversized items, and boxes of books.

Fran Russell, who has volunteered at the thrift store for many years, points proudly to the many charities to which they contribute. Like Angel Wings, many of these are religiously affiliated, but they also give a generous contribution to the local food bank, disaster relief, and health agencies. “It’s amazing how nickels and dimes can add up,” Russell says.

At Red’s Thrift Store in Nogales, your donations and purchases support orphaned dogs and cats. The store is named after a female chocolate lab who was one of the shelter’s original dogs and had grown too old for adoption. Board member Sue Rogers says “We used to put her with the puppies to teach them manners.”

Prices at the store are very reasonable and the inventory, especially furniture, moves fast. Proceeds from the store cover 20-25% of the society’s expenses. They supplement this with annual fundraisers and monetary donations. Red’s is open Monday – Saturday, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. except on Wednesday, when it is closed in the afternoon. That’s when Dr. Roberto Rojas, a local vet, comes and gives shots and performs surgeries for the kennel animals and also for local pet owners.

All three of these thrift stores welcome donations, but each mentioned that they are sometimes used as place to dump what is basically trash. This makes more work for volunteers and is certainly more of a hindrance than a help. They like clean, usable items in working order. Angel Wings takes its unsold items to charity stores in Sierra Vista, the Community Church takes things to Goodwill, and Red’s often takes things across the border or gives bedding to a shelter in Nogales.

These three labs, without leashes, maintained their calm demeanor as they waited for their owner, never barking or leaving their post, for about an hour while he had coffee inside the Gathering Grounds.

“\textbf{As a member of the U.S. Army, I stand up for my fellow soldiers. But when I’m not wearing my uniform, I also stand up for him.}”

Stand up for a child who has been abused or neglected. Become a CASA volunteer today.

\textbf{CASAs of Santa Cruz County}

2160 N. Congress Dr., Nogales, AZ (520)375-8159 or mfhst@co.nogales.az.gov
Meredith Honored for Academic Achievement

by Bob Brandt

The quality of emergency medical services in the Mountain Empire recently got a boost when Patagonia resident Marc Meredith received an Associate of Arts degree in Paramedicine from Pima Community College. To earn the degree, which qualifies him to work as a certified emergency paramedic, Marc completed an intensive 11-month program of classroom instruction and field experience that began last February and ended in December. He now works as a full-time paramedic for the Sonora-Elgin Fire Department, which paid for his tuition and books.

That he completed the course is laudable, but what's more impressive is that the instructors voted Marc the most outstanding student of the 46 enrolled in the class. Academic achievement is nothing new to Marc, however; in addition to his A.A. degree, he holds a B.A. in Communications from Chapman University and an M.A. in Education from California State University at Dominguez Hills.

Seeking a change of pace and having become familiar with Southern Arizona through family members living in the area, Marc and his wife, Meg, moved here about three years ago, after Marc's successful career in college admissions and recruitment.

Marc is very grateful for the support SEFD has given him to attain this new set of skills and thanks the Patagonia Fire Department as well for giving him the opportunity to get involved with local fire and rescue efforts. He loves his work, but when not on the job Marc likes to spend time hiking, reading, and cooking.

The Lending Shed: An Open Letter to the Community

by Linda Huffstetler-Dearing

Family Health Care Amigos has been sponsoring The Lending Shed since 2013. Located at the end of Rothrock Alley behind the senior housing in Patagonia, it provides walkers, canes, crutches, toilet lifts, and other small durable medical equipment items to be borrowed by residents at no cost. A resident came to The Lending Shed several months after it opened and, peeking into the shed to see the inventory, inquired about getting some diapers for her sister. She told the volunteer, "My sister lives on Social Security and wheels herself around in a wheelchair. She's incontinent and sits on sheets or towels all day. Supplying her with diapers for a month costs over $300. Could we have some of those adult diapers for her?"

In the months that followed, other borrowers shared similar stories. In response, The Lending Shed, under the umbrella of Family Health Care Amigos, partnered with the Southern Arizona Diaper Bank in order to receive these supplies. To meet the demand during some months, Amigos must purchase diapers. The Lending Shed does not charge for any items it provides, but requests monetary donations from residents in order to continue to provide these items for residents who fall under the poverty line.

As of 2016, Family Health Care Amigos meets the guidelines as a qualifying charitable organization in Arizona. This means that Arizona residents who donate to the Lending Shed can get a tax credit. Call Family Health Care Amigos at 520-256-7213 for more information on this important project.
Soon you may not have to wear your long johns and cover up with a blanket for a show at the Tin Shed Theater in Patagonia. Thanks to Meg Linton, Cassina Farley, and Bob Ollerton, the Creative Arts Center received $10,000 to install heating and ventilation in the Ted Shed. The set-up will also allow for a future investment in air conditioning. The funds came from the Rea Charitable Trust and the competitive grant process was managed by the Wells Fargo Foundation. Proposals were solicited for building infrastructure improvements—a rare priority for private funding sources. Linton wrote the grant; Ollerton did the design and cost estimates. Farley said, “Frankly, it was a bit of a surprise as we thought it was a long shot when we submitted it. I checked the mail just after Christmas and found an award letter and a check. No fuss—very efficient. We got the maximum award possible.”

Farley also said, “While the Tin Shed will be warm, it will still look like the Tin Shed. We are committed to maintain the character of the building while we make it more comfortable.”

With the heating in place, the theater will be able to host more productions and events during the winter months. The heating and ventilation systems, plus a little unobtrusive insulation, will be installed as soon as possible—maybe before the end of the winter!

PUHS Poetry Slam Winners

On Saturday, Jan. 21, students from Patagonia Union High School traveled to Tucson to compete in the monthly Youth Poetry Slam at Bentley’s House of Coffee & Tea. Approximately 20 students from all over Tucson and Southern Arizona competed. PUHS Juniors, Eden Lattanzio took first place and Duke Norton took third place in the competition. PUHS English Teacher, Journee Hayes states, “I am always amazed at how talented our students are and how well they perform. I am a very proud teacher!”

COMING SOON to The Tin Shed Theater: Heating and AC

by Lynn Davison

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Induction of Elementary School Board Members

Interim Superintendent of the Patagonia School District Robert Tollefson oversaw the induction of four elementary school board members on Monday, Jan. 16. Cindy Morriss, Kathy Pasierb, Summer Lewton, and Kenny Hayes took the oath. Janet Winans, who has been on the board for many years, resigned her current post as president. There was a celebration of her spirit and dedication. Kathy Pasierb, who was voted in as the next president, says she is grateful for the opportunity to serve the community’s children in their educational endeavors.

From left: Cindy Morriss, Janet Winans, Kathy Pasierb, Summer Lewton, and Kenny Hayes.

LAND FOR SALE BY OWNER

36 Acres in Sonoita Creek Estates
Minutes from Patagonia Lake
Electricity on pole - GREAT HOME SITE
View of Mt. Hopkins & Mt. Wrightson
20 minutes from Patagonia and Nogales
Owner Terms Available
$110,000 - Priced to sell quickly
Michael Schwartz, 520-904-6493
ELGIN WINE COUNTRY  12.74 ac next to public lands for great horseback riding. 3283 sf 4Bd/3Ba plus Bonus Rm. & office. High knotty pine ceilings, panoramic views. $445,900  Call Jean 520 508-3335

GORGEOUS VIEWS LAKE PATAGONIA  4Bd/4Ba  2599 sf  Man Cave or guest quarters, 2 fireplaces, 3 car garage. Lovely patios, solar gate. 4.14 ac. MLS# 21623172  $399,000  Call Jean 520 508-3335

THE BEST IN SONOITA COUNTRY LIVING. Trees, views, privacy, room for horses & pets, multiple gardens & patios, garage, & chicken coop. 28d/28a. sunroom. MLS # 21623324  $425,000  Call Jean 520 508-3335

CASAS ARROYO de SONOITA  2321sf 39d/28a mud adobe on 37 easy-care acres. Charm & character. HOA w/pool, mature trees, quick Hwy 83 access. Weekender paradise! MLS# 21615292  $324,000  Call Carol 520 604-0162

“GREEN” PATAGONIA HOME  on .9 ac ready for your organic garden. Rastra construction, guest house, office, lovely views. Built in 2013, energy efficient. Huge workshop/studio MLS # 21623486  $349,000  Call Jean 520 508-3335

GOT DOGS? Spacious Elgin home w/great views. Room for horses, full kennel setup, huge bonus room, 38d/2.5Ba, 2783sf. 2 metal sheds for all your projects. Fenced & cross-fenced. MLS # 21623562  $339,000  Call Jean 520 508-3335

SECRET GARDEN in the heart of Patagonia. 28d/2.5Ba w/large enclosed bonus room, sunroom, garage/ workshop, high beamed ceilings & beautiful courtyard. MLS# 21617125  $310,500  Call Jean 520 508-3335

CROWN CRETREAT, PATAGONIA 58 Acres fenced. 38d/28a, 1269 sf bungalow. Corrals, separate bldg site facing Mt. Wrightson. Access to Nat’l Forest. MLS# 21701568  $540,000  Call Carol 520 604-0162

Z TRIANGLE RANCH—CANELO HILLS 124ac Rambling ranch house w/apartment, bunk & guest house. 8 stall, 2 story barn, lovely views & historic charm. MLS# 21624712  $695,000  Call Carol 520 604-0162

Patagonia: 325 McKeown Ave, next to the Gathering Grounds  520 394-2120
Sonoita: Corner of Highway 82 & 83
Next to the Post Office  520 455-5235

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jeanmiller@longrealty.com

Carol Ford, Co-Owner, Designated Broker
Direct 520 604-0162
cford@longrealty.com