COVID Surge Shuts Down In-Person Learning in Patagonia

By Sarah Klingenstein

The rising number of COVID cases in the County and State have sent Patagonia School District students back to distance learning for the foreseeable future. The district joins most others in Santa Cruz County who have recently closed campuses. The Patagonia Union High School campus had closed three weeks previously after two students tested positive for the virus. Now the entire Pre-K - 12 student body will work from home, with the exception of students needing to come into the safe room. In a recent letter to families, Supt. Kenny Hayes requested of those planning to send their children to the safe room, “If you are having a large family gathering or traveling during the Thanksgiving break please keep your student home for 14 days after you get home instead of sending them into the safe room. This will be on the honor system and we hope you respect the safety of the students and staff that occupy the safe room.” As the PRT goes to print, the Elgin School and Patagonia Montessori School are still holding in-person classes.

Confirmed COVID cases in the County reached 3970 by Dec. 1, while the number of cases statewide was at 337,139 according to the AZ Dept. of Health. According to Jeff Terrell, Santa Cruz County Health Director, the county has re-deployed staff to follow up on new cases and is being assisted in its efforts by contact tracing staff at the state level. “We pass the information to them and they follow up. It’s critical that people are willing to share all the information needed to let others know if they may have been exposed.”

Fernando Silvas, Santa Cruz County epidemiologist, told the PRT, “People appear to be surprised by this surge, but we’ve known it was coming.” Both he and Terrell believe that people seem to have become lackadaisical about social distancing. Terrell observed, “It’s not like in some of the more populated areas, where contact is made in bars or gyms. In our county, it’s...” (See COVID, p. 3)

Local Nonprofits Addressing Growing Need in Eastern SCC

By Sarah Klingenstein

Since the start of COVID, Patagonia has been fortunate to be home to several non-profit organizations that focus on meeting people’s food needs. Over the past several months the Southeastern Santa Cruz County Community Food Bank, Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center, and the Senior Citizens of Patagonia, have been working to ensure that local families have enough food at a time when that need seems to have risen dramatically.

Jim Staudacher, organizer of the Eastern Santa Cruz County Community Food Bank, told the PRT, “Our working families and seniors are facing the same tough times being experienced by people across the country during this pandemic.” Local demand for food assistance spiked in the spring of 2020, when many lost jobs and no federal assistance had yet come through. Then the need seemed to subside for a bit. Food Bank staff expected the need to increase again this summer, but it was October when the number requiring food assistance rose suddenly from 50 to 150 families. “It seems people who make ends meet during good times have exhausted COVID relief and unemployment benefits. There are even some families who have donated to the Food Bank in the past now needing food boxes themselves,” Staudacher explained.

In partnership with the PPEP Inc. Foundation (see PPEP article, page 4), the Food Bank has been distributing 150 food boxes weekly for the past few months in addition to their usual food distributions. Each box weighs about 35 pounds and contains enough food for a family of four for a week, including dry and canned goods, dairy, protein, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Two more deliveries are scheduled for December 10 and 24 in Patagonia, subject to change due to the holidays.

Seniors and residents with disabilities served by the Senior Citizens of Patagonia, Inc. (SCP) have also benefitted from the food boxes being given each week. SCP Secretary Chuck Kelly has also seen a 30% increase in the number of senior citizens picking up lunches at the Senior Center each weekday. “We’ve had around 60 seniors in our lunch program, up from around 40 before COVID,” he said. “Lunch is the main meal of the day for many of the folks who come, and the food boxes people can receive now really help out.” The Senior Center has continued providing its other services during COVID times, including transportation and vouchers for dental care.

The food bank reached out to Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center Director Anna Coleman who connected them with families they didn’t know. She said it was a good transition. “The Youth Center kids were already digging into healthy eating and cooking when COVID happened. They had been making and sharing meals together for the past year, which shifted to taking meal kits home to show off their new skills to their families. The food boxes have helped out even more.”

Local pastors have also helped widen the circle in the Sonoita/Elgin area. According to Staudacher, Pastor Rick Rinde at Sonoita Hills Community Church, and Pastor Gardenia Moffett at Sonoita Vine Church, have been extremely helpful. “They have put in tremendous energy, organizing drivers to deliver boxes to the outlying areas of the eastern County.”

Fresh produce boxes are also available, that effort being coordinated between Santa (See Need, p. 4)
MISSION STATEMENT

To publish a nonprofit community newspaper which serves the Mountain Empire communities of Santa Cruz County, including Canelo, Elgin, Patagonia, and Sonoita, and which is open to all views, highlighting local issues and emphasizing the contributions of local talent.

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2nd Annual PRT School Essay Contest

The PRT, in collaboration with the Patagonia Creative Arts Center and Borderlands Restoration Network, is sponsoring the 2nd annual Patagonia Regional Times essay contest.

The contest is open to all students in Elgin, Canelo, Patagonia and Sonoita in grades 6 - 12.

There are two divisions: 
Middle School (grades 6 - 8)
High School (grades 9 - 12)

Amazon gift cards will be awarded to first place, second place and honorable mention winners.

Grades 6 – 8:

• If it were up to you to choose one item from your community to place in a time capsule for future generations, what would you choose? Use specific reasons and examples to support your choice, explaining both the item’s significance and the reasons why it embodies the culture of your community.

Grades 9 – 12:

• Some people are actively involved in promoting and supporting a cause, such as fighting for racial equity or protecting the environment from climate change. Is there a cause you actively support? Write an essay convincing readers to support that cause.

The deadline for entries is Dec. 15, 2020

For more information about these contests, visit www.patagoniaregionaltimes.org, email prteditor@gmail.com or call 520-604-7534.

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TALKING TOGETHER ABOUT RACISM

By Lynn Davison

Like many folks lately, I have been reading about the very real issues of racial and ethnic inequality, systemic racism, and white privilege. The reading has sharpened my ability to see the many examples all around me. People who have been living with these injustices for generations could fairly say ‘duh, where have you been?’ For those of us who have come late to the table, we now are recognizing the immensity of racial and ethnic injustices and our role in perpetuating them. No doubt about it, the raw reality of racism is very visible in our country in these scary times.

I believe everyone must decide what they will do to address racism in themselves, in their communities, and their governments. White people carry a big responsibility as we have knowingly and unknowingly benefited from systemic racism. Confronting those advantages risks losing some of them. For me personally, it seems important to talk with others and to practice listening. I am learning a lot by being part of the Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Team at Borderlands. I am trying to probe my own racism and to call out racism when I see it in myself or others.

I agree with those who say it is not the responsibility of people of color to educate white folks about the impacts of racism. It is important for people to talk within their own racial and ethnic groups to organize, strategize, and support each other to make meaningful change. I also hope that we can talk together and work together across racial and ethnic groups to address the disparities that cripple our nation and harm so many people. People of different races and cultures, working together, have a chance to make the profound changes in behaviors, customs, practices, and laws that we need.

In that spirit, I encourage everyone reading this piece to consider how you can contribute to defeating racism. Make a plan. The PRT Editorial Group has agreed to encourage and publish constructive letters or opeds that address this subject, particularly those suggesting actions. Addressing centuries of injustice will take time, but if we do not start now, will we?

Starting a local conversation seems a worthy next step.

COVID (Cont.)

more likely to be a casual get-together or, what we’re most concerned about right now, a holiday dinner.” Both officials will be watching the numbers carefully the first week of December, when the impacts from Thanksgiving gatherings will appear.

As of Dec. 1, there were only 189 adult intensive care beds available statewide, 11% of the total of 1757 ICU beds. According to Terrell, people in Santa Cruz County who need to be hospitalized with COVID go to hospitals in Pima County, along with residents of three other counties, Cochise, Greenlee and Graham. The state of COVID-19 care in Pima County, therefore, affects us directly. In an interview with KVOA on Nov. 23, Pima County Health Director Dr. Theresa Cullen reported that ICU beds in Pima County were nearing capacity, and that the number of open beds was “in the single digits.”

Mr. Mark Bessel, Chief Clinical Officer for Banner Health, quoted in an article on the website azbigmedia.com, said “projections show that system will be using 125% of its licensed hospital beds by Dec. 4 as it grapples with the usual winter rise in patients and the sudden spike in COVID-19 cases in Arizona. She compared the [Thanksgiving] holiday weekend to Memorial Day weekend, when unrestricted gatherings were followed by a sharp spike in coronavirus cases. And staffing to attend to patients in the ICU is in high demand. And whereas we were one of only several states experiencing a surge in June, now most states have increasing COVID rates, making it much harder to find healthcare workers to come into our hospitals.”

Terrell said the State has been reviewing its surge planning for increasing hospital capacity and staffing. He continues to recommend that residents wear masks, wash hands often, and only go out to stores as necessary, and that people take advantage of increased testing capacity. Contact the County Health Department, Mariposa Clinic, Holy Cross Hospital or Nextcare to be tested if you think you have been exposed to COVID-19. Test results have been available between 24 and 36 hours after testing, though that may change with an uptick in illness and demand for testing.

Kathryn Schrag, a retired nurse-midwife and family nurse-practitioner and PRT Board member, has offered a set of guidelines. “Living is not risk free, and life during a pandemic carries risk that we cannot completely eliminate,” Schrag wrote. “Now is the time to have frank conversations with family and friends about whether and how you will gather. Considerations to discuss include:

- Who is on the potential guest list: how medically vulnerable are the guests, how prevalent is the rate of infection in their community and how much Covid-19 exposure risk each person has in their day to day life?
- Is everyone on board with agreeing to exceptions regarding safe behavior at the gathering? Before guests arrive, be clear with them about your house practices concerning COVID, and remind them that if they are sick to please not come (while remembering that about 50% of cases are transmitted without the person having symptoms).
- Are guests willing and able to take precautions for at least a week prior to the event or, to be most cautious, self-quarantine for two weeks?
- Be cautious about being reassured by a negative Covid-19 test; when and how to test is complicated.
- How will the guests travel: private car, bus, airplane and, if coming from a long distance, where will they spend the night(s)?
- How many households will gather and how large a group (experts recommend no more than 6-10 people with two households)?
- Consider wearing masks when not eating and drinking.

Border Wall Construction Starting in San Rafael Valley

Ron Pulliam took this photo Nov. 28, approximately one mile west of the Coronado National Monument in the San Rafael Valley. He wrote that “Janice and I took a drive to the San Raphael Valley yesterday to escape COVID confinement and look for signs of border wall construction. We drove on the border patrol access road, never more than 100’ from the border, from Lochiel to the Coronado Monument. All was well for almost 20 miles, only a barbed wire fence and a 2-3’ vehicle barrier, no signs of new wall construction. Then, starting about one mile west of Coronado monument, it looked like they were getting ready to invade Nambie Beach… A huge construction site with massive earthmovers and oversized trunks of all sorts, lined up and facing West, ready for an immediate assault on the valley.

What a travesty - one of the most beautiful and uncared valleys in the west, stunning grasslands, oak lined canyons, ancient sycamores gracing the creeks and mountains in every direction; the filming site for many movies including Oklahoma (no wonder they filmed it here - nothing in the real Oklahoma could compare); a true biodiversity hotspot and one of the most important wildlife corridors connecting the sky islands of Mexico and the U.S.

This stretch of the wall construction, Tucson Project 4 B, is part of a case challenging the legality of the use of DOD dollars to build the wall. The case won at district court and the 9th Circuit stayed the injunction. An oral argument is scheduled for February 22 before the US Supreme court (Sierra Club v Trump).”
Food (Cont.)

Cruz County, the National Guard and the Community Food Bank. These boxes are delivered every Friday to the Gazebo at Town Park. Information is available on the Patagonia Schools Facebook page.

The Eastern Santa Cruz County Community Food Bank has resumed distributing fresh vegetables, as well, at the Senior Center in Patagonia. These vegetables will be available every Monday from 10:30a.m. to 11:30 a.m. This distribution will continue weekly into spring, 2021.

Santa’s Helpers of Sonoita, founded more than 30 years ago by Margaret Carmichael and Pete Bidegain, raises funds and organizes food and toy drives under the direction of Martha Green, of Elgin, to provide Christmas dinners and presents to people in the area who could use a little extra help during the holidays.

Due to COVID concerns, Santa’s Helpers will not be distributing Christmas dinner boxes and canned goods this year. Instead they will be handing out gift certificates for meals to residents in Patagonia and Sonoita. Donations to Santa’s Helpers can be made at the National Bank of Arizona in Sonoita.

SCP President Irene Smith, believes that, with everyone working together, most local people now have enough to get by. “When we hear about someone who needs financial or food help, we look into it right away. We are paying attention,” she said.

Several organizations and individuals contribute to this effort, from statewide foundations and governmental agencies to area residents. Kelly said, “I currently have a list of seven or eight organizations offering grants that I plan to apply for. It is an ongoing effort.”

Coleman senses an evolution in thinking among residents since the onset of COVID. “This is the first time these organizations have come together in this way. I think people are realizing that we are all vulnerable and that what we really need is not what we used to think was important. From kids to adults, people are wondering how to help.”

All those involved appreciate the generosity of the community. Staudacher said, “We don’t do a lot of fundraising, but our stalwarts, people who feel they’re doing well enough to share, have continued and even increased their giving. A local woman is making masks for friends and directing them to donate to us in lieu of payment. A Phoenix man called out of the blue and donated several hundred dollars because he wanted to help a rural food bank.” Donations to the cause may be made through the various organizations’ Facebook pages and websites.

Anyone who needs assistance, or knows of someone who does, can check the Food Bank’s and Youth Center’s Facebook pages, or visit the Senior Citizens’ website for information about the weekday lunches. Or tell a friend. In a small community like ours, that just might be enough.

USDA Food Boxes to be Delivered Through December

John Arnold helps with the unloading of food boxes for distribution. His organization, PPEP, has been partnering with the 3000 Club of Tucson to distribute the free food boxes to low income and rural communities.

By Heather Dodge

When COVID-19 shut down restaurants and schools across the country, the USDA stepped in to help redirect food supplies to those who need them through the Farm to Families Program. Suitable organizations were selected in each state to organize and distribute the food boxes to low income and rural communities. Shamrock was contracted as the vendor for Arizona, and PPEP and the 3000 Club in Tucson were chosen to pick up and deliver the food boxes to outlying towns in Pima and Santa Cruz counties.

Since May 15 when the program kicked off, over 118.3 million boxes have been distributed across America. Each box weighs approximately 35 pounds and has enough healthy fresh foods to feed four people for one week.

Delivered to the Patagonia Senior and Youth Centers every Thursday for the past three months, the boxes did not disappoint. Contents varied but most contained such items as yogurt, cottage cheese, eggs, milk, bags of onions, potatoes and apples, mixed fresh fruit and vegetables, and frozen chicken patties.

As the program winds down, the last two deliveries to Patagonia will be Thursday Dec. 10 and 24 at 2 pm, subject to change due to holidays. Consult the Senior or Youth Center for updates.

PPEP, founded by Dr. John David Arnold in 1967, has been at the forefront of providing much needed goods and services to rural communities in Pima and Santa Cruz counties. PPEP’s established volunteer force has been responsible for loading trucks and driving over 250 miles every Thursday to deliver food boxes to over 4000 people.

In addition to small town delivery, PPEP has brought food boxes to a group of at-risk high school students in Tucson’s south side, 14 group homes for the developmentally disabled, and some 40 refugees, as well as the Pascua Yaqui tribe.

PPEP was distributing food during COVID-19 well before the USDA’s involvement. To view their Essential Services / Food Security Report go to PPEP.org and click the button Food Security vs. Covid-19.

Now that the USDA’s food box program is ending, Dr. Arnold is requesting donations for the continuation of essential food acquisition and distribution via PPEP. The donation link is located at the top of their website, https://www.ppep.org/.

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Photo by Mary Moran

7 year-old Cole Keith carries one of the 100 boxes of food delivered by the National Guard for distribution outside the Sonoita Post Office on Nov. 20. Several volunteers handed out boxes at the event organized by SCC Supervisor Bruce Bracker. The event started at 9:00a.m and all boxes had been distributed by 10:30a.m.
On Monday, Nov. 16, the Coronado National Forest Service (CNF) began a five-mine remediation project in the upper Harshaw Creek area, between Guajalote Flat and the Hermosa Project. The project intends to reduce pollution from multiple minerals, primarily arsenic and lead, present at elevated levels at all five mines. Other contaminants of concern include selenium, cadmium, copper, and zinc. All five mines are within Patagonia’s designated Municipal Watershed. The public comment period (in May) for the project had included questions and requests from the Hopi Nation, South32, and Patagonia Area Resource Alliance.

To understand the presence and movements of these contaminants from mining, the project area has been extensively studied, beginning with flow studies by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality in 2003, and a 2015 US Geological Survey study, in partnership with the CNF. This partnership studied in detail 94 samples of rock, tailings, sediment and surface flow. The CNF’s “Removal Action Approval Memorandum” of October 30, 2020 cited the USGS conclusion “that mine waste erosion and the accumulation of evaporative salts from acidic, metal-enriched discharge from abandoned mine sites are the largest contributor to degraded streamflow during storm events.” The Memorandum particularly notes detrimental effects of lead exposure, and observes that, while there are no residences at these mine sites, there are many types of users of the area, such as hunters and hikers, and that a string of ranches and residents are downstream on the Creek’s path to its junction with Sonoita Creek at Patagonia. The studies also mentioned other pathways of movement of contaminants in ecosystems, such as uptake by plants and animals.

The historic mines involved are the Marstellar, August, Blue Nose, Morning Glory and Endless Chain. The plans are unique for each mine, using the same strategies as PRT had reported on for the recent Mansfield Canyon remediation project in the Santa Rita Mountains, including tailings relocation, capping and revegetating of “cells” in which tailings are placed, surface revegetation with fenced enclosures and erosion control, and closure of tunnels and shafts by either filling or bat-friendly grates. In addition, a small bit of new access road will be needed for one of the mines, and the completion of the work on three of the mines will involve elimination of three already decommissioned Forest Service roads which are short spurs on the west side of Harshaw Road. For all earth movements of this project, the intention is to leave surfaces looking as natural as possible.

The project’s total tailings relocation will be about 44,600 cubic yards of mine waste, about half of which is from the Endless Chain Mine. These mines were operated from the 1880s to 1950s, producing varying amounts of copper, zinc, lead, silver and gold. South32 maintains unpatented claims in the entire area of this project. There are no current proposals to explore or mine where this remediation project is occurring.

The work on the first three mines is planned for completion by March 2021. There will be periodic disruptions of traffic on upper Harshaw Road, so residents and other users might consider Apache Road or Duquesne Road as alternates. The second phase of the project is planned for completion in October 2021, with total project cost estimated at $1.53 million.

CNF sees this project as expressive of their mission. Hailey Stock, a CNF environmental engineer, was quoted by Tucson news station KOLD as saying, “Maintaining public lands within the Coronado National Forest is important for community and environmental health. We value the protection and safety of communities in and surrounding the Forest, and the cleanup of abandoned mines is one way we can continue our commitment to public safety and forest restoration.”
Doc Mock Park Improvements Underway

By Caleb Weaver

Construction has begun on the new gazebo and on concrete walkways in the Doc Mock Park.

Starting in late October, you may have noticed activity in Doc Mock Park – the grassy expanse between the Wagon Wheel Saloon, the public restrooms, and Richardson Park. A new ADA-accessible concrete pathway spanning the length of the park and a six-sided ramada by the Doc Mock Memorial are going up in Patagonia’s public park. Starting in early 2021, the path and ramada will be ready for public use.

The new path and ramada, built by McKay’s Custom Home and Furnishings, LLC, of Patagonia, are the first stages of a grant from Arizona State Parks and Trails. The Patagonia Tree and Park Committee and Town of Patagonia collaborated to receive a $79,175 award, which will also pay for permanent informational signs in Doc Mock Park, a new map highlighting nearby hiking trails by the ramada, splinter-free mulch in Richardson Park, and three workshops. The new signs and mulch will be installed in 2021. In-person workshops will be held once gatherings are deemed safe.

Improvements in Doc Mock Park are part of the Doc Mock Park Master Conceptual Plan, designed by Borderlands Restoration Network with support and approval from Patagonia Tree and Park Committee, the Patagonia Planning and Development Committee, and the Patagonia Town Council. The goal is to transform Doc Mock Park into a space that is inviting to residents and visitors, both human and nonhuman, for many years into the future.

The new six-sided ramada will welcome and orient visitors into Doc Mock Park. Located adjacent to the existing Doc Mock Memorial, this ramada will be a covered gathering space with seating, a trail map, informational signs, and access to the concrete path through Doc Mock Park.

The 1,000 ft. path is a six feet wide path-way made of concrete to ADA specifications. Pedestrians will be able to access the path from multiple entry points: the restrooms, the corner of 4th Ave and McKeown Ave, McKeown Ave on either side of the existing mesquite/ash grove in Doc Mock Park, the covered picnic tables at the far southwestern end of the park, and The Nature Conservancy’s Nash Parcel Trail (also known as the Cemetery Trail.)

While vehicles will not be allowed to park between the concrete path and SR82, there will be parking allowed between the new path and McKeown Ave. Over 100 parking spaces will be available in Doc Mock Park for community events such as the Fall Festival and Fourth of July.

Along with the winding pathway and comfortable ramada, the Tree and Park Committee is currently seeking funding to plant dozens of native trees between the new pathway and Hwy-82. These trees will act as a wind and noise break from the highway, shady respite for passersby, and habitat for migrating birds. The Tree and Park Committee and Town of Patagonia have already collaborated to bring water lines across 4th Ave. However, funding is still needed to lay irrigation lines, valves, and emitters the length of Doc Mock Park to support the future public forest.

The Tree and Park Committee is also seeking funding to further support the future trees with rainwater runoff harvested from SR82. Members of the committee have noticed that trees planted in association with rainwater harvesting features grow twice as quickly as those solely receiving supplemental irrigation. Water that currently floods at the intersection of SR82 and Beaty Lane will be invited into the park with French drains. Before long, Doc Mock Park will be buzzing with the activity of migrating birds, visiting ecotourists, Patagonia children, dog walkers, and shade seekers.

Wastewater Plant to Get Needed Repairs

Patagonia’s Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is aging. Treatment, at the rate of about 40,000 gallons a day, is a complicated process, with many tanks, pumps, valves, regulators, controls and equipment that can go awry in a system that must keep working 24/7. In the summer of 2019, as Town Manager Ron Robinson began working for the Town, he rapidly learned of the many problems and emergencies the Treatment Plant crew faced. Here is Robinson’s account of how the Town is dealing with this issue:

Knowing 16 months ago we had a major issue with the 15-year-old WWTP, I immediately looked around to see who had grant monies available. Because of its focus on the binational border region we live in, the North American Development Bank (NADB) seemed a good fit, so we applied for a Community Assistance Program Grant in the amount of $500,000, which was awarded this March. This grant was for construction, so in order to fund the engineering design work, we also applied for the NADB Technical Assistance grant in the amount of $100,000, which was awarded in May of this year.

We are now in the pre-design phase where all the priorities of construction are set, and the estimates of costs are put together. After we decide on the priorities and costs, the design phase is completed with bidding documents for construction. This whole process will take about 37 weeks to get ready for construction, and the clock started in August. We are looking at next summer for completion.

As you can see in the accompanying photo, the leakage in exterior walls needs repairing, and there are about sixteen more leaks like these as you go around the main tank structure, in addition to some leaks in the internal partitions. The Plant also needs a remodel of the chlorine room and a new or rebuilt belt press, for the settled sludge. These three projects are the most urgent issues, and we are now working on the engineering specifics of leak repair and equipment replacement. The leak repair will be done from inside drained tanks, one by one, so there is complicated staging and pumping of liquids in various stages of treatment to be worked out, to provide dry walls for an advanced leak-prevention method before refilling each tank.

To keep the WWTP working smoothly, we have already handled two other issues over the last year, upgrading the lift stations and replacing the big auger at the head works.

With these projects completed, we anticipate eight to ten years of great service from the plant, but further in the future probably lie more challenges and eventual total replacement.
2020 A Year of Accomplishments for BRN

By Francesca Claverie

This has been a busy year for Borderlands Restoration Network (BRN). The organization has had great success with its Agave for Bats program (high-lighted previously in the PRT), is working on watershed restoration in Smith Canyon, collaborated with the USDA on documenting and collecting crop wild relatives, and built a lasting collaboration with the Huachuca City Community Garden.

In collaboration with the Arizona Dept. of Environmental Quality, Arizona Game and Fish Dept., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, BRN staff has implemented various watershed restoration techniques across Smith Canyon in an effort to address habitat degradation concerns. Restoration treatments within Smith Canyon were designed to reduce erosion impacts and nonpoint source pollution downstream, with the goal of improving the overall ecological function of the watershed.

Also, in collaboration with the Gornish Lab of the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, BRN tested the effectiveness of various planting methods on reducing erosion in Smith Canyon. Planting methods included seedling out-planting (plugs), pelletized seed addition, and bare seed addition.

This summer, BRN’s Native Plant Program team also continued its collaboration with the USDA Forest Service, with support from the USDA Agricultural Resource Service, to document and collect crop wild relatives in the Wild Chile Botanical Area (WCBA) of the Tumacacori Highlands and surrounding public lands for future research and safeguarding of genetic material that may play a role in food security in the future.

That is a species from which the crop was domesticated, or a closely related species in the same genus to a particular domesticated crop species. Crop wild relatives may contribute genetic material to crop species, which may provide for increased disease resistance, fertility, higher crop yield or other desirable traits.

At least 45 species of crop wild relatives occur in the watershed on the east side of the Tumacacori Mountains. Many of these species have proven to have potential as genetic resources for improvement of domesticated crops already being grown commercially. This area, one of the most botanically interesting areas in southern Arizona, is home to numerous plant species that are at the northern extent of their range and grow in few other locations in the United States.

This year the primary objective is to continue locating, inventorying and collecting seeds and identify specimens of priority species for conservation and research. This is being done primarily in the WCBA and Coronado National Forest land in the Tumacacori Highlands, Santa Rita Mountains and Patagonia Mountains. Results of these plant inventories will be used to determine if further protective designation for the WCBA should be pursued as an Important Genetic Resource Reserve for plant species in addition to the wild chile.

Huachuca City Community Garden 501c(3) grows organic vegetables, delivering nutritious food to community members in need every week. In December 2019, the Huachuca City Community Garden received a grant from the Legacy Foundation of Southeast Arizona to expand the garden into a two-acre space adjacent to the Huachuca City Public Library.

Starting in June 2020, community stakeholders came together to build the floodwater mitigation project. Soldiers from Fort Huachuca, part of Company of the 2nd-13th Aviation Regiment, volunteered to line the basins with rock. Residents of Matt’s House, dedicated to supporting people recovering from addiction, planted the native pollinator attracting hedgerow, and BRN led weekly volunteer workshops to finish the rainwater-harvesting basins between June and September 2020.

The hard work of the Huachuca City community will have a lasting impact for humans and nonhumans alike. The 14 rain basins designed, built, and planted in collaboration with the Huachuca City community have the capacity to hold 35,000 gallons of rainwater. Borderlands Restoration Network is committed to supporting further garden development and educational workshops, nurturing the long-term health and well-being of the people of Huachuca City long into the future.

Randi Trantham and Zach Farley plant native grass plugs as part of the restoration work BRN is doing in Smith Canyon outside Patagonia.
LIFE AMONG THE HUMANS
By Martin Levowitz

Democracy is a system in which the preferences of the people are expressed and honored, despite their heated differences. But that’s not all. To really be democracy, there is one more criterion: You’ve got to be committed to the welfare of democracy itself.

YOU ASK. SOUTH32 SPINS.

By H. Ron Pulliam

South 32(S32) placed an advertisement in the November 2020 issue of the Patagonia Regional Times that carried the headline “You Ask. We Answer.” The ad began with the statement “The Ask. In the summer of 2019, a concerned citizen affiliated with a nonprofit conservation group asked us to share our wildlife survey data about Mexican spotted owl near the Hermosa Project.” I recognized myself as the person referred to in “The Ask” but I did not recognize much of what was written under the heading “How We Answered.”

I attended the July 24, 2019 Patagonia Town Council meeting to hear a presentation by S32 on water and wildlife impacts of the Hermosa Project. At that meeting, S32 President Pat Risner pledged to work with the town in a transparent way. His points and in the company of mine - that we had found the site in Sept 2020.

Prior to the meeting I had reviewed the publicly available data and nothing in the S32 briefing was new except very coarse scale information on which breeding sites were occupied by adult owls in 2016 and 2017, and a statement that there was no evidence of successful breeding since 2017, the year that industrial scale activities began on the site. The site visit was equally uninformative and “due to regulatory requirements for mandatory training” we were not allowed to walk around the site and could only see it from selected vantage points and in the company of mine personnel.

In the PRT ad and in the letter inviting Dr. Noon and myself to the briefing and tour, S32 made the false claim that they were only withholding sensitive information that the regulatory agency would not allow them to share. This is not the case and we have, in fact, gotten far more data from the agencies than we have gotten directly from S32.

S32 ends their PRT ad by stating “We are happy to report that during our summer of 2020, a nest with a fledgling Mexican spotted owl was located within close proximity to our site.” This is classic Orwellian double-speak meant to tell the reader that the mine is not negatively impacting the owl population. S32 fails to tell you that no fledglings were found in 2017 through 2019, when industrial activity was at a peak, and were only found in the year of the pandemic when almost all industrial activity had been halted.

Of course, they also didn’t tell the reader - because they did not know - that we had found the nest and photographed two fledglings before they found it.

2020. We could have hoped that this year, as in an optometrist’s office, might represent great clarity of view - with both sides working toward a common good. Oh, well. Too bad. It’s never been more polarized, here in the U.S.A. than now, except, perhaps, before the Civil War. The us-against-them mentality has run away with us. In lifestyle and politics, and even in matters of illness and health, a lot of us behave as if we’re at a hockey game. We strongly want our side to win and feel quite justified in using every dirty trick, not stopping to consider what is being badly mangled when we cheat or break the rules, or falsely blame the other side.

I’ve always disliked politics (sometimes politeness, too) mistrusting those behaviors undertaken mostly for the sake of form. But now that we see how it smells when the gloves have come off, it seems like time to simmer down a bit. We teeter on the brink of something dark and dangerous. Civility is not so superficial after all. Perhaps you should consider that there is no safety net.

I’ve lived with people who were clearly nuts - present company excepted. These people did not - could not - limit themselves to moderate, “normal” behaviors. They often colored way outside the lines. And that’s what insanity is, by and large, in the social purview: bizarre, extreme behavior and ideas. (Hey, what’s the Spanish word for Qanon?) Such antics are corrosive and contagious, as a rule. If someone poke’s you in the eye - which you’ll agree is impolite - the pain and the surprise produce desire to respond in kind. An eye for an eye and a tooth for tooth. Hold my hat. With luck, a few minutes will pass and the rage will subside, allowing a return to sanity. But what results when anger and hostility prevail?

My wife and I were in Croatia several years ago. We went to something called The War Museum and talked to people who’d been through a nasty civil war. Without much glee, they all remarked, on either side, both young and old, on how odd it had felt to try to kill the folks you’d known most of your life: the parents of your friends at school and yes, your friends, themselves. I know this comes as a surprise but firing rifles at your friends does not improve rapport. How weird such situations have to be - both unbelievable and real. May God affect the purblind dunce who stakes a great divide.

You have to ask What’s worth it? What is gained (besides the fleeting pleasure of allowing anger out)? It seems quite obvious that nothing is, but civil war is where you end up if you don’t somehow sidestep the two-edged noose of animos and fear. As for the fuming demagogue, no matter which side he is on, ignore the S.O.B. and walk away. Whatever war you start will someday end, and hatred of the other side will not just disappear; it will persist. Those who survive will get to keep the nightmares, scars and gruesome memories.

“You think PTSD is fun, my friend? Remove your head from colon now! It’s not too late until it is too late.”

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289 McKeown #2 Patagonia, AZ 85624

Become a CASA volunteer today.
Music in the Time of COVID

By Lynn Davison

Like most of us, Christina Wilhelm is feeling the burdens of the COVID pandemic, but she has focused her energy on finding innovative ways to keep music being heard in Santa Cruz County even during the height of the current crisis.

She and her husband, Fred, the founders of the Santa Cruz Foundation for the Performing Arts (SCFPA), have been bringing classical music to our local communities for the past 15 years. Part of the mission of the Foundation is also to provide opportunities for young classical musicians to perform and get paid for it. So how does that all work now in a time of social distancing and pandemic concerns?

Wilhelm has devised a number of pandemic inspired variations to continue this mission. The concert series at the Benderly-Kendall Opera House in Patagonia has been cancelled, so instead there are now live streamed concerts available to the public. The performances can be seen on the SCFPA Facebook page. (See sidebar for concert schedule). They are also archived for future viewing.

“Musicians all over the world are experiencing the isolating effects of this virus. Live performances, live audiences have become a not so distant memory,” a message on their website states. “At this time, SCFPA will continue to present their outstanding music online. We hope to make our social distancing feel less isolating and also help support the musical careers of so many talented artists.”

The concerts are free, but SCFPA gratefully accepts donations. As soon as it is safe to do so, outdoor concerts will begin.

Wilhelm has been a generous supporter of the Patagonia Regional Times. In past years, a ticket to an Opera House Concert has been part of the PRT’s thank you package for some members of the Press Core. This year, with no concerts scheduled, Wilhelm is offering instead an individualized “comprovisation.” Each donor will choose four notes that they will use to improvise a short classical piece on the piano. A video of her playing the piece will be sent to the donor.

The Santa Cruz Singers are also on hiatus because of the pandemic. The annual outdoor holiday sing along with the Patagonia community is cancelled. As a gift to the Santa Cruz Singers, Wilhelm will direct an outdoor “Holiday Hum in Four Parts” in December. While it is not open to public for safety reasons, it will give the singers a chance to use their pipes, if in a slightly muffled fashion.

Wilhelm has also created “ZOOM-BACHS,” combining classical music and free form body movement. At noon every Thursday, four to eight people meet in the opera house courthouse, at least six feet apart, and listen to about 20 minutes of classical baroque music while moving their bodies to the beat. With a short intro and closing by Wilhelm, it offers a new way to experience music. A few more participants are welcome (maximum of 10 people for any session).

Wilhelm is also providing music for services at the Patagonia Methodist Church. Members of the church can come to worship in the sanctuary, or if they prefer, listen to the service at 10a.m. every Sunday on KPUP. Either way, the music for the service is recorded ahead of time. For most Sundays, Wilhelm records hymns on the piano which are then overdubbed by one of the church soloists.

Wilhelm credits her husband Fred and their 65-year marriage, for providing the security that allows her to persist and thrive. In her “spare time,” she is fighting off the pandemic blues by studying French, writing five-line poems called cinquains, and playing with their two new tuxedo cats adopted from the shelter.

SCFPA Livestream Concert Schedule

December 2020

The Santa Cruz Foundation for the Performing Arts is presenting a series of performances livestreamed from the Benderly-Kendall Opera House. Performances are scheduled for Sunday afternoons at 3p.m. and can be seen on the SCFPA Facebook. They will also be archived for additional viewing.

The concerts are free but your generous donations to cover the costs of each event will be much appreciated. To donate, visit the SCFPA website https://www.scfparesents.org/donations.

Livestream Concert Schedule

December 6: Harp & Cello Duo - Carla Fabris and Juan David Mejia
December 20: Art of the Guitar- Maxi Larrea, guitar

ARTICLES OF FAITH

Christmas 2020

By Pastor Stephen Lindsey

Well here we are, barreling our way to Christmas 2020! What a crazy and wild ride 2020 has been and I know that I am not alone when I say “Good riddance 2020.” But before we can say goodbye to 2020, we need to celebrate Christmas. The time when we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. It is my favorite time of year and 2020 hasn’t disappointed in any way when it comes to our government. But I write this with tongue in cheek because, as of this writing, we are left hanging in the balance on so many things when it comes to our government. But please don’t feel like the Lone Ranger when it comes to being dazed and confused by government. Let’s read the story of the first Christmas in the Bible, the 2nd chapter, “In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that should be taken of the entire Roman world.) Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that should be taken of the entire Roman world.)

So, God used this seemingly terrible decree from Caesar Augustus to get Joseph from Galilee to Bethlehem. Don’t you think that he could use the circumstances in your life or in the government to accomplish His will? Be patient and allow Him to work in your life no matter what it looks like on the outside.

And speaking of government, Caesar Augustus, the most powerful man in the world (he thought) was used by God to have His will accomplished and His prophecy fulfilled. This is what Solomon wrote in Proverbs 21:1, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.” In other words, don’t fret! God’s got this whole thing under control! So, celebrate Christmas just like you would any other year and enjoy family and friends. Leave the worrying to God.

Merry Christmas and a Very Happy New Year to All of You!

Editor’s Note: Steve Lindsey is the pastor at the Canelo Cowboy Church. Members of the church can attend a holiday service at noon today. Either way, the music for the service is recorded ahead of time. For most Sundays, Wilhelm records hymns on the piano which are then overdubbed by one of the church soloists.

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Article by Pastor Steve Lindsey and his wife Naomi.
named his truck Brute, and it would forever be called The Brute in every memory going forward. The Brute was my dad’s weekend truck. It took us to every family function and to grandma’s house on the weekends. The Brute became a bonified member of our family.

After a while it seemed that you couldn’t tell where my dad ended, and the Brute began. My dad’s beloved truck took us down every dirt road in this county and four wheeled in places most folks had never been.

The first vehicle I ever drove was my dad’s beloved truck. I remember the day so clearly. It was Labor Day weekend the year I turned 15. On a narrow two track road hugging the side of an embankment my dad stopped the truck and told me to drive. I needed drive or never get the chance again.

I scouted over the bench seat and grabbed the wheel. I remember tears building up and me choking them down as the Brute crept along the narrow road. My dad guided me up the embankment (the only way to get around a huge hole) and he kept reminding me that I just needed to let the truck drive. In his mind the Brute knew what to do and he wasn’t worried at all that his 15-year-old daughter was at the wheel. I managed to drive the heck out of that truck that day but it would be many years before I ever drove it again.

As the years went on, the love my dad had for his truck never waned. If it broke down, he’d fix it. If the tires were worn, he’d replace them. Towards the latter part of his life the Brute, like him, seemed to start to fade. Through my dad’s illness he’d go out and tighten and retighten bolts. He’d back it in and out of the yard until eventually the Brute sat locked up in the back yard, undriven. I swear when you looked at the truck, it looked heartbroken.

Soon after my father died, my mother gifted me with the Brute and I panicked. I couldn’t face it and I certainly couldn’t drive it. It was like a tomb with all the relics of my dad still in place. His sunglasses still sat on the dashboard. Behind the seat were his tools and tow straps. His smell still permeated the seats.

Many things have transpired since receiving my dad’s truck and I’m happy to say that it now sits in my driveway in Patagonia where it belongs. I eventually got brave enough to drive it and just the other day we locked the hubs and got ourselves out of a precarious situation.

If you see me coming in that 1979 Ford F150 please know that I’m spending time with my dad, the best way I know how, by just letting the truck drive.

**JUST LET THE TRUCK DRIVE**

By Cassina Farley

One of my father’s most prized possessions was his 1979 Ford F150 pickup. I recall the day (sometime in the early 80’s) when we drove away from Afmuth Motors in Tucson, my sister and I still small enough to stand on its long bench seat. My dad lovingly named his truck Brute, and it would just let the truck drive. It was either drive or never get the chance again. I scouted over the bench seat and grabbed the wheel. I remember tears building up and me choking them down as the Brute crept along the narrow road. My dad guided me up the embankment (the only way to get around a huge hole) and he kept reminding me that I just needed to let the truck drive. In his mind the Brute knew what to do and he wasn’t worried at all that his 15-year-old daughter was at the wheel. I managed to drive the heck out of that truck that day but it would be many years before I ever drove it again.

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**SOUTH32 “TRANSPARENCY” TURNS OPAQUE**

By Kat Crockett

South32 has announced their potential transportation route for their ore trucks, running 16 hours per day, using SR 82 from Patagonia to Sonoita and down SR 83 to I-10 and to a rail yard on Kolb Road and return. This will devastate our local communities’ businesses and property owners, not to mention our environment and life as we know it. Imagine, a trip to a doctor’s appointment in Tucson, or shopping at Costco, traffic to access our Rodeo and Fairgrounds events, and our winetasting tourists up and down SR 83.

The South32 Open House scheduled for November 16 at the Fairgrounds to address concerns of the Sonoita and Elgin communities was cancelled by the mine for fear that the COVID-19 burden has shifted with the MOU to residents. Carolyn Shafer, of PARA, stated that the MOU appeared to give tacit approval of the mine and neglected to address serious environmental threats and other impacts. The 8-page MOU also identifies County Manager Jennifer St. John as the POC for the County for future communications. The MOU states, “Whereas the parties intend for this MOU to help ensure mutually beneficial outcomes for the County and AMI’’ Wow, does that sound like a done deal to you? I can see the Supervisors rubbing their hands together, excited by what may be in it for them, but my experience with the county makes me very doubtful they will even consider the concerns of our local communities.

So, the mine backed out of talking directly to Sonoita and Elgin residents and business owners, and now the burden has shifted with the MOU to St. John and the Board of Supervisors. Face it, our county is neither transparent nor collaborative in dealing with the “red-headed-step-children” east of the Santa Ritas.

So, it needed a call to action! There is a provision in the MOU with respect to community outreach. “The County Board of Supervisors may elect to community outreach.” For our voices to be heard by the mine AND the county, and to keep informed on proposals and actions by the mine and the county, we need this to happen. I encourage everyone to contact Jennifer St. John at jstjohn@santacruzcountya.gov and Bruce Bracker at bbracker@santacruzcountya.gov to get this in place.

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County Honors Two Local Educators

By Sarah Klingenstein

Both the Santa Cruz County Teacher of the Year and Runner-up Teacher of the Year for 2020 teach at eastern Santa Cruz County schools. Nominated by their peers and/or school principals, Michelle Sebert, from the Elgin School, and Nate Porter, at Patagonia Union High School, were selected out of a pool of 22 educators through an application and interview process with the Selection Committee of the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent’s Office. Both teachers were awarded cash prizes and other valuable gifts provided by the Nogales Rotary Club.

Michelle Sebert

Teacher of the Year Michelle Sebert teaches middle school English to the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders at Elgin School. She is the Director of Gifted Education and the District’s Testing Coordinator. She holds a dual Master’s degree in educational administration and curriculum and instruction. Her Bachelor’s degrees are in English and economics. She began teaching in 1994 and has taught middle school English for 21 years. Sebert lives in Sonoita.

Nate Porter

Runner-Up Teacher of the Year Nate Porter, who has recently been in the news. Eighth grade is looking at whether there is racial inequality in America. Seventh grade students are studying what motivates a person to protest. Sixth graders are studying how a teenager can change the world. Evaluating these issues carefully will develop critical thinking skills that will serve them well in high school and in life.”

Annette Koweek, Elgin middle school science teacher and school nurse, has taught with Sebert for the last 16 years. “Michelle is very energetic and teaches at a very high level,” she said. “Our students go on to do very well in high school. She helps kids who don’t read and write well make peace with grammar. She tackles great current event topics in ways that really grab the kids.”

After having been selected as Coach of the Year for the South region of the Arizona High School 1A Conference last spring, PUHS educator Nate Porter has now been recognized for his academic teaching talents as well. He was awarded Runner-up Teacher of the Year for the 2020 in Santa Cruz County.

Porter has taught history and government at Patagonia Union High School for the past three years, following ten years teaching middle school social studies at the Elgin School, where he and Michelle Sebert worked closely together. He is the PUHS athletic director and basketball coach, and advisor to both student government and the National Honor Society. He holds a Master’s degree in education and is pursuing his master’s in education administration. He received his Bachelor’s degree with a double major in political science and history.

Porter started out as a Park Ranger in Denali National Park in Alaska, where he returns every (non-COVID) summer to educate visitors from kindergarteners to retirees through the Denali Education Center. Porter and his family live in Patagonia.

Porter believes that, for students to thrive and learn, good teacher-student relationships are critical. “That is the basis for everything else. And it is important to make it fun,” he says. “I believe in project-based learning, which allows students to study a topic in a more engaging way. One method I use is ‘Flip the Classroom.’ The students become the experts and teach the rest of the class about an assigned topic.

For example, in our government class, we are getting ready to study the American judicial system. Each student will be assigned an important Supreme Court case and will research the topic, teach the class, and develop a test, all under my guidance. It’s a deep dive, and each student’s topic becomes very important to him/her.”

2017 Teacher of the Year runner-up Journee Hayes, a colleague of Porter’s, said the staff at PUHS had long hoped that Mr. Porter would come over to teach with them. “Now that he’s with us, she said, “it’s wonderful to see the person he has become to his students and his basketball players. He’s more than a role model; he’s a confidant with whom they share their worries and their successes. He has earned their trust. And he’s so engaging - even during virtual learning, he keeps kids involved in their studies.”
Letters to the Editor

Patagonia Parking Plan

The Planning and Development Committee meeting in December will have this as an agenda item. They need to survey the community, because this project will be here in Patagonia for the next 25 years or so and we should solicit other possibilities to make it the best we can right from the start.

Another option would be to have angled parking which would retain about the same number of parking spaces which would be much safer as drivers would get a good view of approaching traffic and I will ask for this to be considered.

I have already contacted the Town Manager and South32, which is sponsoring the Project, and suggested making this a parallel parking area but with zero success.

Safety is my prime concern.

Philip Brister
Patagonia

Thanking All Who Helped

On Sept. 16, I crash landed in the backyard, wrenching my knee while trying to stop a dog attack. I knew it was a bad fall. I couldn’t get up. My friend, who’d just arrived from Colorado, got me to the patio couch, where I sank in agonizing pain. My neighbor brought ice packs.

We called Linda at the Lending Shed and she called Don who brought me a Mearns that had frozen to death.

I know a guy from Virginia that brings six points with him and I have been told he averages 175 Mearns per yr. Why??

‘Arizona Game Birds’ states, in two different places, that lack of grass due to inadequate rainfall is the cause of most mortality. I suspect the lack of rain also limits the feed the hens need to produce large clutches, as witnessed last year by the two and three bird coveys seen. I believe this year will be, VERY SLIM PICKINGS FOR MEARNS!!

If we hunters can’t practice better ethics, perhaps the state can cut the limit again.

for, one, am tired of being called a slob hunter for the actions of others!

Rod Whitehead
Sonora

Thanking the Voters

I want to take this opportunity to thank the voters of Santa Cruz County for their participation in the Nov. 3, 2020 election. We saw a record turnout, far more than we saw in the 2016 election with over 19,000 ballots cast in our community and I also like to thank the Elections Department, the dozens of volunteer poll workers, the Recorder’s Office and the elections observers from both parties, all of whom with their tireless effort contributed in their own way to a fair and transparent election in Santa Cruz County.

I want to thank the voters who supported my campaign and I want you to know that I remain as committed to working on the issues that impact all of us in Santa Cruz County. From supporting our families, to promoting economic development and job creation, to fostering the economic security of all our residents, to protecting the environment, there is much work to be done and it will take all of us to get it done. Know that if anyone needs to get a hold of me, I can be reached at bbracker@santacruzcoun-
ty.gov. Don’t hesitate to contact me as there is no question too big or too small - and if I don’t know the answer, I hope we can work together to find it. I always want to know what you’r thinking.

Sincerely

Bruce Bracker
SCC District 3 Supervisor

Reflections on Local Stroll to the Polls

On the morning of Oct. 24, I had a coffee-fueled idea to bring Stroll to the Polls to Patagonia. Stroll to the Polls (now nationally “viral” on social media) began in Atlanta, GA, led by Maisha Land, daughter of Selma, Alabama, Bloody Sunday co-organizer Rev. Bill Land. Ms. Land had the inspiration to motivate her sphere of influence, the Black Greek sororities, known collectively as the Divine Nine, to get out the vote in Atlanta.

Land, like Kamala Harris, is an Alpha Kappa Alpha. In 1908, Howard University co-ed, Ethel Hedgemann, crystallized her vision of creating a support network for the mutual upliftment of women with like minds to join their talents and strengths for the benefit of others, as Alpha Kappa Alpha, the first Black Greek-letter sorority. The Alpha Kappa Alpha program still reflects the committed consciousness embodied in the credo, "To be supreme in service to all mankind."

I knew it would be easy to rally the women of Patagonia to symbolically Stroll to the Polls on the 100-year anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment, securing the right for women to vote. Though the 19th Amendment was passed months before the polls opened in 1920, numerous hurdles made it difficult, if not impossible, in some states for women to vote in that election. Black women were especially targeted for deterrence. I knew the women of our community would recognize that there is much to celebrate and still much to overcome; much to Stroll to the Polls for.

Later that day, I located Ms. Land through the sizzle reel video that also went viral nationally; Georgette Lar- rouy and Mark Nicholson who contributed the music so we could stroll to it.

- And to the Good Women of Patagonia (and beyond), THANK YOU for showing up with your cowgirl hats and turquoise boots, your flapper-inspired couture, your daughters, your sons and granddaughters (yes, we had three generations in one family present), your dogs and your creative hand-made signs, and, as always, your beautiful, tenacious spirits. By all accounts, it was a success, one that this community (and beyond) can be very proud of.

India Aubrey
Patagonia

Litter is Preventable!
Local Group Plans Xmas Project for Migrants
By Janice Pulliam

Voices From the Border’s (VFB) work has changed and expanded due to the growing resident population of migrants in Nogales, Sonora. At this time, there are thousands of asylum seekers stuck, waiting to request asylum, along the Mexican/US border. They cannot return home to the violence and extortion they fled and now they cannot move forward either, as they await pandemic and border closure changes. VFB continues to support and give aid to many of those currently waiting in Nogales, Sonora, and is planning a Christmas project for them.

Last year about 150 backpacks were donated, and local friends of VFB filled them with donated clothes, toiletries, art supplies, and much more. VFB took the backpacks across the line and distributed them to people in the shelters.

Now, however, because of the pandemic, no volunteers are allowed in shelters. This year, VFB will focus on the families that the organization has established relationships with these past many months, many of whom we continue to help support, especially those families with children. VFB plans to order heaters online, to be delivered to the families’ apartments. With the help of new donations, they will also provide the families with food, warm clothing and educational toys and art supplies for the little ones. They plan to make Christmas purchases in Nogales, Sonora and Arizona and then to distribute gift baskets to the families.

VFB is only taking donations of money at this time. To donate, check payable to ‘Voices from the Border’ and mail them to: Voices from the Border, c/o Linda Hirsch, PO Box 7, Patagonia, AZ 85624. If you want to donate specifically to the Christmas project, write ‘Christmas’ in the check’s memo line. Any amount will help make the migrants’ Christmas a little brighter.

Recycling Task Force Events Scheduled
By Robin Kulibert and Bob Brandt

Until it is ready to roll out a full-scale recycling program, the Patagonia Recycling Task Force will sponsor periodic recycling events beginning with a collection of household recyclables from 10a.m. to noon on Saturday, Dec. 5 behind the Patagonia Post Office.

From 10a.m. until noon, or until the trucks are full, volunteers will collect and transport the recycled materials to recycling centers in either Tucson or Nogales. Those who wish to take advantage of this event should separate their recyclables into three categories: aluminum cans (soda and beer); steel cans (soup, tuna, etc.); and all other recyclables such as paper, cardboard, glass, milk cartons, and plastic.

All items should be clean and dry before bringing them to this event. Bottle caps are acceptable only if secured on the container. No plastic bags, Styrofoam or bubble wrap will be accepted. Volunteers will also collect cash donations to help defray the costs.

The task force will also make “The Story of Plastic” documentary available for showing to small groups at the Tin Shed Theater on Friday night, Dec. 11, and throughout the day on Saturday, Dec. 12. The film is a visually rich testament to the global plastics pollution crisis, and a call to action.

The film will be screened for groups of up to ten people who must all wear masks and sit at least six feet apart. Task force volunteers will ventilate and disinfect the theater between all showings.

The running time for the film is about an hour and a half. Friday evening screenings will be offered at 5:00 and 7:00. Saturday screenings will be available every two hours throughout the day beginning at 9:00 a.m. The last showing will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Reservations will be offered on a first-come-first-served basis. Larger groups of up to ten people are encouraged, so that more people can see the film. To respect a group’s pandemic precautions, individuals will not be added to a scheduled group.

“The Story of Plastic” is also available through the DiscoveryGo streaming service, for rent on Amazon ($2.99), on Apple TV, and on Xfinity video-on-demand.

To reserve a screening time, please email task force co-chair Robin Kulibert at crobin60@gmail.com. Kulibert may also be contacted for more information about the Dec. 5 recycling event.

SC County Offices to Close Due to the Pandemic

Certain Santa Cruz County buildings will close to the public, except by appointment, beginning Monday, Nov. 30, 2020 as officials ramp up efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19.

Below is a list of closures.

2150 North Congress Drive
Department at this site - the Assessors, Recorder, Treasurer, Public Fiduciary, School Superintendent, Emergency Management, Public Works, Information Technology, Finance, Board of Supervisors, County Attorney, Health department, and Community Development.

2170 North Congress Drive
Sheriff’s Office

1368 North Hohokam Drive
Animal Control

610 North Morley Ave
Arizona @Work

“As part of our ongoing efforts to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the decision was made to close all Administrative offices at Santa Cruz County to the general public. Our emergency proclamation ensures that every County Department will continue to provide services to all of our constituents. I would direct all of our residents and partners to visit our website at www.santacruzcountyaz.gov for more information. We urge everyone to err on the side of caution and adhere to the social-distancing and hygiene protocols as indicated by the Arizona Department of Health Services,” stated Supervisor Bruce Bracker, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors for Santa Cruz County.

Jeff Terrell, Health Services Director, said, “Closing of the County Building and only allowing appointments will help prevent community spread of the COVID-19 virus. Each member of the community can do their part by actively social distancing themselves.”

The closing will have no effect on public safety as staff and officers will continue working.

Sheriff Tony Estrada said, “due to the current outbreak of the COVID-19, we are putting the safety of our citizens and employees first. We are closing the lobby to the public to minimize the risk of spreading the virus. All 911 operations will continue as usual and patrols will continue 24/7. Inmate visitations continue to be halted.

The public is encouraged to call, 761-7869 in advance, if they feel it is necessary to setup an appointment with the sheriffs department. In the event of an emergency, the public is directed to call 9-1-1.”
Open for Business
New Business News

New Winery Opens in Elgin

Kati Spencer (left) and Elizabeth Krecker share a taste of their wine in the tasting room at Twisted Union Winery.

By Jo Dean

The newly established Twisted Union Wine Company has purchased the former Kief-Joshua Vineyards at 370 Elgin Rd in Elgin. Their logo, that features a twisted “U”, represents twisting grapevines and is also symbolic of the partnership of investors, who, over time, will be restoring and replacing ten acres of the original vines. “Our collective of grape growers, winemakers, and storytellers came together to craft quality wine celebrating the West’s unique terroir” states their website.

Twisted Union Wine Company will be focusing on crafting premium quality wines, both red and white. The opening date is tentative depending on permitting, approval of wine labels, and Krecker near Marin, CA.

Krecker has an Associate of Applied Science degree in viticulture and enology (wine making) from Yavapai College in Prescott, Arizona. She is an associate winemaker assuring the quality and consistency of wine with a good range of flavors. She will be one of the sommeliers in the tasting room.

Spencer, owner and managing partner, has thirty years of experience in various positions working in public relations departments in fields as diverse as mining, health care, and independent film making. Living in the Phoenix metro area, she has been visiting the Sonoita wine country for the past 15 years with a dream of eventually purchasing and administering a winery. When Kief-Joshua came on the market, she pulled together a group of fourteen like-minded investors who range from wine enthusiasts to owners of wineries and wine makers.

The winery will feature several wines when they open, including ‘Berrried Hits’ (2018) a Rhone-style blend of grenache, mourvedre and petite sirah; ‘Mood Swings’ (2018) a blend of mourvedre and petite sirah; ‘Ground Breaker’ (2018) a bordeaux-style blend of cabernet sauvignon, petit verdot and cabernet franc; ‘Super Tuscan’ (2018) a blend of sangiovese, cabernet sauvignon and petite sirah; ‘Graciano’ (2018) sourced entirely from two Sonoita vineyards; and a 2016 vignonier. These wines, which will carry the Twisted Union Wine Company label, are being sourced from various wineries and vineyards across the southwest until their own vines are mature enough to produce fruit.

Twisted Union Wine Company also has two Airbnb rooms for rental. For more information, email info@twistunionwinecompany.com, or phone (520) 455-5582.

Students Explore Borderland Social, Environmental Issues

Carolyn Shafer speaks to students in the Carpe Diem Education Borderlands Program at the Fray Marcos monument in Lohchiel.

By Nisa Talavera

Eleven students from across the country took part in the Carpe Diem Education Borderlands Program this fall. Carpe Diem is an organization that offers travelling “gap year” programs for students on five continents and 18 different countries. The Sonoran Desert trip, which focused on the “complexities of social and environmental justice in the borderlands of Arizona,” according to the Carpe Diem website, was one of the only student trips planned for the fall semester that was not cancelled due to the pandemic.

The group of 11 students and two senior advisors spent eight weeks engaging with communities in Santa Cruz County that are experiencing the effects of immigration policy and climate change. These experiences are aimed at giving the students a more informed perspective on issues of great importance here in the United States and globally.

While in Santa Cruz County, the students spent most of their time learning and working with organizations such as Borderlands Restoration Network (BRN), The Deep Dirt Institute and the Canelo Project while focusing on sustainability, permaculture and social justice.

BRN afforded the students the opportunity to learn about and plant native seeds and grasses while creating sustainable gardens. Kate Tirion, at Deep Dirt Institute, led hands-on activities in erosion management, soil development, growing food, composting, designing a permaculture site, and building rock structures to restore arid lands. The students also heard from Carolyn Shafer, from PARA, about the threats to the border environment and what is being done to protect it.

“Over the course of this trip, I have learned so much about myself and about a part of this country I came in knowing very little about,” said Elsie Yang, an 18-year-old from CT. “I have loved hearing stories and perspectives from all of our contacts and have learned so much about sustainability and consumption.”

The Borderlands education experience was so successful that Carpe Diem has already scheduled additional trips for 2021.

South32 Awards More Than $65,000 to SCC Nonprofits

South32 today announced the names of eight charitable organizations selected to receive a total of $65,650 in grants during the current cycle of the company’s Hermosa Community Fund: The grantees are the Arizona Trail Association, Boys and Girls Club VIP Job Training, Family Health Care Amigos, Friends of Patagonia Pool, Girl Scouts of Southern AZ, Patagonia Creative Arts Association, Rich River Athletic Club, and Sky Islands Tourism Association.

The South32 Hermosa Community Fund is held by the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona (CFSA) and was established by South32 in May of 2019. It supports non-profit groups working to improve education, environment, health and welfare, recreation, civic enhancement, and arts, culture and history in the county, in accordance with the community’s needs and priorities.

To learn more about the fund, visit www.cfsaz.org/south32. To view the most current annual report of giving from the fund, visit www.south32.net/hermosa/documents.
Art Sale to Benefit Montessori School  
By Jo Dean

Local artist Andrea Wystrach Walker, professional photographer and spiritual painter, will be promoting her work and donating 20% of the proceeds to the Patagonia Montessori School at an exhibit of her work at the Steak Out Restaurant in Sonoita on Dec. 6. The fundraiser will be held from 2p.m. – 6p.m.

Walker, the daughter of Grace and Michael Wystrach, owners of the Steak Out, the Sonoita Inn and Sonoita Mercantile, was raised in Elgin on her family’s ranch, and now lives in the Sonoita area with her husband, Ted Walker. She enjoys her painting, photography, and quality time with her four horses, who are often featured in her work. As a 1994 graduate of Brooks Institute of Photography, she has a Bachelor of Arts in illustration advertising.

After surviving a serious car accident in 1999, Walker experienced spiritual awareness that is now expressed in her art. Daily meditation, exercise, and diet are part of her regimen in her journey of self-awareness and the spiritual world. She never knows what the painting will be until she sets up the canvas and begins to work. “I paint mostly acrylic abstracts,” she said. “I channel my spirit guides, high vibrational angels and God and the Universe. Painting is like a meditation for me. I use very bright colors and metallic paint. Each painting is different.”

Spiritual painting has been described by some viewers as art that speaks to them more profoundly than any other form of art. Abstract, spiritually guided art has been recognized since the early 1900’s. This form of expression was unrecognized and hidden, until a few, now famous artists brought their art into the public realm, and who are now being featured in various art museum retrospectives.

One such artist, Hilma of Klint (1862-1944) from Sweden, began her series of spiritual paintings in 1906. They were the subject of a successful exhibit at the Guggenheim Museum, New York City in 2019. Wystrach’s paintings and photography will be offered for sale at the Dec. 6 fundraiser. Coffee, cookies, and discounted wine will be available. For further information about the fundraiser, or about Wystrach’s art, contact the artist by email at awe1223@yahoo.com.

Check It Out At The Library

By Laura Wenzel

Are you looking for ways to support Patagonia Public Library and the Friends of Patagonia Library this year but not sure where to start? Here’s a handy list of ideas to inspire:

1. We have tote bags for sale, just in time for the holidays! For $20 you can gift a sturdy and stylish bag to someone you love that benefits the Friends of Patagonia Library.

2. The Friends are accepting donations in honor of Henry Krzys for the library to purchase books about multi-ability children that will help expand the diversity of our children’s collections. Titles for this collection include: “47 Strings: Tessa’s Special Code” by Becky Carey, “We’re All Wonders” by R.J. Palacio, “Understanding Sam and Asperger Syndrome” by Clarabelle van Niekerk, and “Rescue & Jessica: A Life-Changing Friendship” by Jessica Kensing.

3. If you’re in need of books to purchase for the holidays, the library has you covered. Make an appointment to browse the book sale.

4. Though our hours are limited, we are still providing curbside and appointment services at this time. Use our online catalog to browse thousands of books, DVDs, audio books, music CDs, and magazines available for check out. Unsure about handling physical items from the library? We now offer free ebooks and movie streaming through our website. Go to www.patagoniapubliclibrary.org for more information or call us for assistance.

We are grateful for the support of our wonderful patrons, donors, and partners. Whether you make a monetary donation or check out a book, you are actively helping us to continue our mission of being a common ground for the community, a site for lifelong learning, a source for current topics and titles, and a guardian of local history. COVID-19 has made coming into the library trickier, but we strive to do everything we can to ensure that you are still able to access the library from the comfort of your own home. Thank you!

**Fibseq@aol.com**  
**PH 520-394-0199**  
**CELL 520-240-4490**  
**WWW.RUBYLANE.COM/HEARTOFGOLD**

The Patagonia Library is open this holiday season! Make an appointment to visit & check out materials today.

Thank You

We are grateful for our community support. Please look for more information in our upcoming annual newsletter.

Shop locally this season to support your local library. Gift cozy reading materials for your loved ones from our Library Book Sale & personalize your gift wrapping with a stylish tote bag.

3266 STATE HWY 82  
SONOITA, AZ 85637  
OPEN: TUES-SAT 10-6  
CLOSED SUN & MON  
FEA MARKET  
1ST SAT OF THE MONTH  
520-394-2010  
info@patagoniapubliclibrary.org

**ART SALE TO BENEFIT MONTESORRI SCHOOL**

**Photo by Nick Robb**

**Wystrach's art, contact the artist by email at awe1223@yahoo.com.
Deadly Desertification

The word desert may conjure images of the Sahara’s seemingly endless dunes or perhaps a Lawrence of Arabia-like, otherworldly landscape. Here in Arizona we boast parts of four deserts, winning us the prize for the most types in any U.S. state. Each of our deserts has a wealth of wildlife and plants, when left unmolested by the effects of humanity.

However, when we stress their already inherently climatically strained environments with various types of degradation, the process of desertification, the process by which fertile land becomes desert, typically because of drought, deforestation, mining, or inappropriate agriculture, often ensues. Non-desert habitats - grasslands, shrublands, and even woodlands and forests, for example - can be inexorably converted to deserts via human mismanagement of the land. Further, our diverse desert flora and fauna may become greatly diminished by desertification as well, leaving them ecologically shadowy versions of their former selves.

Our Sonoran Desert is the most diverse one on perhaps the entire planet. Given its two rainy seasons - summer monsoon and the remnants of winter Pacific storms - the Sonoran Desert often abounds with life. Cacti, including the iconic giant saguaro, and various leguminous shrubs and trees characterize many of our Sonoran Desert landscapes.

Here too are Arizona’s most populous cities, Phoenix and Tucson, exerting their multitude of detrimental influences on the surrounding desert. The cities themselves were desert prior to these modern hubs, each with rivers flowing through them up to the early 20th century. The richness of these locations prompted urban development in the late 19th and throughout the 20th centuries.

Beyond the conversion of desert to cities and suburbs, perhaps the most glaring incursion on all our Arizona desert landscapes has been a largely unseen one. Groundwater pumping for agriculture, the livestock industry, mining, and for municipal use has lowered local water tables so much that many of the mesquite forests that once graced local rivers have completely vanished. Unsustainable agricultural practices create razed landscapes where water from storms runs off, failing to recharge the already stressed aquifers. The bare dirt of agricultural fields affords our frequently fierce winds the opportunity to rip the soil from the earth, creating destructive and dangerous dust storms.

To get a glimpse of the degraded former natural desert landscapes, keep an eye out as you drive between Phoenix and Tucson. There you will witness scenes that ultimately led to the Dust Bowl era in other states. Perhaps even more alarming than the loss of desert habitat are the habitats that are slowly but surely changing from non-desert environments into desert landscapes. One need only look at other countries at our very latitudes to have a crystal ball into the near ecological future. Jordan, for example now hosts perhaps a mere 2% of its original forests. Jordan? Forests? you might ask. Since biblical times humans have overgrazed, cut trees for firewood, and generally squeezed the environment far too much. Much of what we now call desert in that small, Middle Eastern country was once diverse woodland and forest, replete with leopards, hyenas, and likely even brown bear. The remaining Jordanian forests look suspiciously like our Madrean evergreen woodlands with oaks, junipers, and pines. Thus, our biodiverse habitats that straddle the lower deserts and even tower above them in our Sky Island mountain ranges can in short order themselves become human-made deserts.

Middle Eastern degradation occurred over millennia with less livestock, fewer people, little use of underground aquifers and no global warming. Today we may witness the frightening rapidity with which desertification can proceed, especially in the aftermath of wildfires spawned by our ongoing drought. After the 2011 Horseshoe II Fire in the Chiricahua Mountains I saw tumbleweeds and tarstruck asteroid, 3200 Phaethon. This relative of the 13th and 14th, Gemini plays host to an annual meteor shower. At this time of year, every year, the earth passes through a debris field left by an asteroid, 3200 Phaethon. This relatively small space rock is about 3.5 miles wide and hustles along at some 45,000 mph. As it makes a close pass by the sun, loose particles on its surface break away. Though they cause no damage to us, these tiny bits of dust give us a wondrous show of streaking lights. Since the meteors appear to originate in and around Gemini, we treat them as if somehow, they too are a part of the heavens.

Size, color, and age have no say in the categorizing and naming of the denizens of the sky. We look up, see a shape that reminds us of something, and we feel free to give it a name. The sky is a_port of call for our imaginations. I often have seen shapes in the sky that suggestsanimal forms, or weather phenomena near our homes or what we may have heard about a hero or heroine whose tale has been passed down orally through the ages. Though totally unrelated, a bunch of wildly different stars can become the Big Bear or the strong man Hercules. For constellations, differences among the stars are cast aside; the broader view is more important than any of its parts.

As is frequently the case for me, I wonder why one set of rules applies to the sky while another seems to apply to life on our planet. From afar we’re all Arizonans, or Americans. But, up close, we all too often focus on what separates us. It’s a damn shame. If only we were better able to recognize that widening our field of view, that stepping back a bit to see ourselves from a distance could very well serve to give us a greater acceptance of each other. If only we saw in ourselves what we see in Gemini, a village, where all are welcomed.

Gemini is one of the twelve signs of the zodiac. The apparent path of the sun across the sky determines which of the 88 recognized constellations are given astrological importance. In this case, the sun “passes” through Gemini from the end of May to the end of June. It then makes sense that the sun would be opposite Gemini in the winter, making it easiest to observe in late December through January. Of course, it is the Earth’s revolution around the sun, and not the sun’s movement, that creates the changing view.

There are a handful of deep sky objects within Gemini, with Messier 35 being the brightest. Containing hundreds of relatively young stars, this open cluster is found far beyond the famous twins, about 2800 light years from our backyard perch. Open clusters differ from their globular cousins or heroine whose tale has been passed down orally through the ages. Though totally unrelated, a bunch of wildly different stars can become the Big Bear or the strong man Hercules. For constellations, differences among the stars are cast aside; the broader view is more important than any of its parts.

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South32 has received community and Patagonia Town Council requests for us to share any and all water data in our possession.

Four PUHS soccer players have been honored by the Arizona Interscholastic Assn. Three students, seniors Kurt Whitcoe, Lalo Aguilar, both wings, and Julian Vasquez, defense, were named to the 1st team for the Southern Region, Division 1A. Senior Alex Santos, who plays goalie, was named to the 2nd team. Whitcoe had been named “Player of the Week” during the first week of the 2020 season which was cut short in mid-October after players tested positive for COVID. Athletes are selected for these teams by coaches in the region.

PUHS Athletic Director Nate Porter noted that “We’re one of the smallest schools.” The Lobos’ schedule included games against much larger schools like Benson, Willcox and St. David. This season was the first time PUHS had bested Benson on the soccer field. Porter feels that this team was the best that PUHS has fielded. “It’s a great accomplishment for these young men to be recognized by the coaches of the schools they competed against,” he said.

Lobos goalie Alex Santos is one of four Lobo soccer players recognized by the Arizona Interscholastic Assn.
Glimpses Into Our Past

By Alison Bunting

Three miles south of Patagonia, on the east side of Highway 82, is a highway turnout with steps leading to a shrine in a natural niche in the rock cliff. The shrine, dedicated to the sacred heart of Jesus, was constructed in 1949 by Juan Telles for his wife Juana to fulfill a promise she made when her son Ralph and Richard left to serve in World War II and the Korean War respectively. Juana had vowed “that, should [her sons] be returned safely, a perpetual shrine would be built to honor the power and glory of right. ’It wasn’t for me alone,’ said Mrs. Telles in her age-old rock-walled home, ‘that I made the vow. It was for mothers, wives, and families of all men who serve in freedom’s name.’” [Arizona Republic, 11/30/1953]. The Arizona Department of Transportation later constructed a stairway to the shrine and paved a parking area at the foot of the stairway. “In November 1988 the Pimeria Alta Historical Society declared the Telles Family Shrine a historical monument and had a bronze plaque made. The shrine was dedicated on San Juan’s Day June 24, 1989.” [The History of the Telles Family Shrine by Carl Etchart, 2002].

The Telles family’s Arizona roots date back to 1875 when Jose Epifanio Apolonio Telles came to Bisbee from Mexico. The 1900 U.S. Census lists Epifanio as living in Bisbee with his wife Ruth and six children.

Epifanio and Ruth’s second son, Juan Telles, was born on February 14, 1888 in Bisbee. In 1907 Juan married Juana Diaz, who was born on June 1, 1889 in Tombstone. The 1900 U.S. Census lists Juana and her mother, Theodora Diaz, living in the home of Daniel and Manuela Hughes. Juan and Juana were living in the widowed Mrs. Hughes’ household in Tombstone in 1910. Juan’s occupation was a teamster.

By 1920 Juan and Juana and their growing family were settled in Elgin farming on Juan’s 311-acre homestead claim in Section 15, Township 21S, Range 18E. Juan was issued title to the land on June 9, 1919. This is in the area now designated the Appleton-Whittell Research Ranch of the National Audubon Society. The couple had nine children: Ruth, born in 1909; Dora, born in 1910; Anita, born in 1912; Margaret, born in 1914, Lila; born in 1916; Ralph, born in 1918; Fred, born in 1922; Richard, born in 1924; and Elvira “Boots,” born in 1926. By 1930 the family had moved from their homestead to a ranch just north of Elgin in Section 29, Township 205, Range 18E. The children grew up in Elgin, attending local schools.

Juan died in 1951 and Juana continued to live on the family ranch, with her youngest son Richard, until the 1960s when she moved to Tucson. She died in 1971, age 82.

While she lived, and for many years after, the Telles family gathered annually at the shrine to maintain it and to picnic on land now part of the Nature Conservancy Patagonia Sonoita Creek Reserve. Juan and Juana are buried in Holy Hope Cemetery in Tucson. Most of the Telles children remained in the SE Arizona area throughout their lives and several of their descendants live here today.

The author is grateful for the assistance provided by Telles family members who shared family memories and photos for this article.

Ranching Tradition Continues on Pyeatt Ranch

By Pat McNamara

The Pyeatt Ranch sits at the northwest slope of the Huachuca Mountains, bordering the west gate of Fort Huachuca. Located with a spectacular view of the Mustang Mountains, Lyle Canyon and the Sonoita Valley, the homestead has been in the Pyeatt family since 1899 when James Henry Pyeatt purchased it from Hugo Igo. The ranches at that time were unfenced and large bands of wild horses mingled with the cattle spanning the area between the Huachucas, the Santa Ritas and the Whetstone mountain ranges.

After purchasing the land, Pyeatt started to improve the herd by introducing Durham and quality Hereford Cattle. He married and had nine children. Roland Pyeatt, better known as “Buster,” was born on the ranch in 1906 and was the youngest of the children. The only one of his siblings to remain on the ranch after his mother’s death, Roland acquired the property and liked to boast that he had “never been out of the county.” Roland married Rose Ritchie and they had two sons, Ronald and James (Jim). At the time, Roland was cited as being one of the three oldest ranchers in the Valley.

He remembered when there were more wild horses roaming the area then cattle. He continued to work the ranch with his son, Jim until his death in 1993.

Upon Roland’s passing, his son Jim took over the operation and continued to make improvements on the land, practicing rotational grazing and decreasing the herd to restore the area to a more viable state. Jim married Judy Grennan and they had three daughters. Terri, Tina and Penny. Jim worked full time for the Civil Service, so often the ranch was left for his wife and three daughters to run. Terri (Pyeatt) Murrietta remembers working cattle from 1973 -1977 with just her mother and sisters for help.

Though it was hard work, there were fun times, too. Murrietta stated that one of the things ranching kids were never allowed to do was run their horses unnecessarily. But they would still sneak down to the sandy washes and race their horses anyway, thinking that no one would know. Only later did they find out that their Grandpa Roland would watch them from a hill and make sure that no one got hurt, but he never "told" on them.

Murrietta also remembers the best times riding the ranch in the summers with her sisters and three visiting cousins. They explored the area, each with their own horses, accompanied by their beloved Grandpa Roland.

Jim Pyeatt married Marie Higgs Pyeatt in 1975, having met her at Fort Huachuca where they both worked. They moved to the ranch in 1976, and, in 1985 when he retired from the Fort, he became a full-time rancher. Jim died in 2016. Marie still lives at the family ranch.

Terri Murrietta was the only one of the three sisters to remain in the area. She married Ruben Murrietta, from Patagonia, her high school sweetheart. They had two children, daughter Amanda and son Manuel, who became a high school rodeo champion and coached rodeo for Cochise Community College, while studying welding. He now manages the Sands Ranch portion of the Vera Earl Ranch and arranges for acquisition of the cattle used in various working cattle classes in horse shows throughout Arizona. The Pyeatt Ranch has become Manuel’s and his wife Tammy’s to continue the ranching tradition, raising cattle on the approximately 5000 acres of deeded and leased land on the northwest slope of the Huachucas.
The poetry class at PUHS chose to write this poem and create a video in honor of Veterans Day. Teacher Journee Hayes wrote “The class consists of 18 seniors who wanted to all write one poem together. This type of poem is called a chain poem, or a tejeda. Since we are currently virtual, I created a Google doc and invited all 18 students on as collaborators. Each student wrote two lines on the document and once everyone was finished we brainstormed and moved lines around to fit into an order we thought sounded the best. Then the students videoed themselves reading those lines. The class came up with their own rules for the videos such as dress nicely, look for a creative backdrop, make sure there isn’t any wind while you’re filming, speak clearly, etc.” PUHS junior Ben (Luke) Anderson edited the film, “which he did wonderfully,” according to Hayes. “The end product was more beautiful than I expected,” she said. “But I should never underestimate these kids. They are truly wonderful and creative and brave and I am so proud of them.” The video can be viewed at https://fb.watch/1V9VSwMSF1/

Veterans Day 2020

Veterans Day looked a little different this year, but the communities of Sonoita, Elgin and Patagonia still found creative and meaningful ways to honor our local veterans.

An Honor Guard prepares for the opening of the Veterans Day Celebration at the Sonoita Fairgrounds. Festivities also included a mounted unit from the Nogales BP Station, the Sonoita Labor Day Rodeo Royalty, speeches, prayers, music and poetry, a slide show, lunch in Pioneer Hall and gift bags for veterans.

Elgin School students waved flags and cheered as veterans drove through the school parking lot on Nov. 10 as part of the school’s celebration of Veterans Day. The students from all grades lined the driveway at the school holding signs they had made thanking the Veterans for their service.

Murphy Musick places a new flag on the grave of Rodolfo Valenzuela, a Korean Vet buried at the Patagonia Cemetery, in preparation for Veterans Day. “I have been honoring Veterans Day for over 30 years now by placing small flags on the graves of those honorable people,” Musick wrote. This year he also replaced the large American Flag that flies at the cemetery.

By Students in Journee Hayes’ PUHS Poetry Class

To honor those brave and bold,
Fighting for life and freedom.
For those that stepped away from their lives,
To protect those they didn’t know.
Our thoughts and prayers were with you everyday,
As you fought for our freedom so far away.
Although we’re sad when you leave home,
We await your arrival, you are never alone.
Your sacrifice is not unnoticed,
Your fight for freedom shows devotion.
To those that have given all to our country,
Bravery unmatched by any other.
Fighting for yourself and the world,
Fighting so that future generations may not have to.
I will never be able to understand what you have been through, but I can thank you,
The sacrifice and devotion you have given your country is remarkable.

You served your service to us in honor,
And now today we honor you.
Securing freedoms for those who cannot serve,
The flag painted with proud, vibrant colors to portray the sacrifice.
The right to bear arms and fight for freedoms that this country has,
For the best country in the world.
From carrying wounded brothers off the battlefield,
To come home to those who respect and thank you.
You give your life for the battle and for the fight,
It is because of you we appreciate our rights.
Men and women fight for for our freedom, risking their lives,
Freedom won by those who fought.
You were of the lucky and skilled who were able to return home,
And tell amazing stories of the times you served.
Red, white and blue is where we stand,
The battles you fought for our freedom, we thank you.
I thank you for risking your life for ours,
And it’s great when you guys come back.
To the lives lost and souls broken,
For a shot at a future for your family and the generations of nameless faces to come.

The poetry class at PUHS chose to write this poem and create a video in honor of Veterans Day. Teacher Journee Hayes wrote “The class consists of 18 seniors who wanted to all write one poem together. This type of poem is called a chain poem, or a tejeda. Since we are currently virtual, I created a Google doc and invited all 18 students on as collaborators. Each student wrote two lines on the document and once everyone was finished we brainstormed and moved lines around to fit into an order we thought sounded the best. Then the students videoed themselves reading those lines. The class came up with their own rules for the videos such as dress nicely, look for a creative backdrop, make sure there isn’t any wind while you’re filming, speak clearly, etc.” PUHS junior Ben (Luke) Anderson edited the film, “which he did wonderfully,” according to Hayes. “The end product was more beautiful than I expected,” she said. “But I should never underestimate these kids. They are truly wonderful and creative and brave and I am so proud of them.” The video can be viewed at https://fb.watch/1V9VSwMSF1/
Volunteers Celebrate Wildlife Preserve Kiosk Improvements

Wildlife Corridors, LLC Managing Director Ron Pulliam uses the new kiosk maps to explain how the company’s Borderlands Wildlife Preserve is a key component of the Sonoita Creek Wildlife Corridor.

By Bob Brandt

A small group of people who were instrumental in creating new features now available at the Borderlands Wildlife Preserve Welcome Station gathered on Nov. 14 to celebrate completion of their work.

The event was sponsored by Wildlife Corridors, LLC and hosted by Managing Partner Ron Pulliam. Attendees included Alex Johnson, Cholla Nicoll, Chris and Mary Strohm, Kurt Vaughn, Denise Ortega Lorona, Cassina Farley, Tammie Quiroga and Martha Kelly.

The new welcome station improvements include a picnic table, water fountain and signage on the three-panel kiosk that orients visitors to the preserve.

The kiosk displays maps that depict the preserve’s location relative to the Sonoita Creek Wildlife Corridor and the Coronado National Forest and text that explains the preserve’s role in saving critical wildlife habitat threatened by surrounding residential developments.

The water fountain was decorated with local stones and colorful ceramic tiles hand-made by Farley, Quiroga and Kelly.

Native Grasses In Our Landscape

By Francesca Claverie

Southwest desert grasslands are rare ecosystems abundant with biodiversity. Arizona is home to mountains, plains, and desert grasses which used to cover one-quarter of the state. Today, due to historic overgrazing, climate change, and invasive grass, roughly only 30% of native grasses remain in good condition. The remaining grasslands have been invaded by shrubs, invasives, or are now bare ground.

Grasslands are critical for wildlife habitat in a variety of ways. They provide ground cover for rodents, as well as forage for deer and other herbivores. Some native succulent species found is grasslands, such as beargrass (Nolina texana), yucca (Yucca spp), sotol (Dasylirion wheeleri), and agave (Agave spp) provide nectar for insects, birds, and migrating nectar-feeding bats.

The grasslands surrounding Patagonia have changed dramatically over the last 100 years and will continue to change for years to come. Hiking through our grasslands 100 years ago you would not have seen any mesquite trees, except for maybe in a bosque along the riparian corridor. Mesquites, although a native species, found a foothold in grasslands after large-scale overgrazing in the past, by out-competing grasses and rapidly spreading through horse and cow manure.

Native grasses are adapted to our intense summer downpours of southern Arizona. Although this area only receives an average of 18” of rain per year, the native grasses are well adapted to the intermittent, heavy rainfall and absorb fast-falling rain preventing erosion, allowing grasses to thrive, and the soil to remain intact.

The more than 60 species of grass that thrive in southeastern Arizona are, for the most part, easiest to differentiate in late summer once they flower and start to form seeds. The desert grasses that dominate our wildlands are termed perennial bunchgrasses. This means they grow in dense clusters, or bunches, that come back every spring after being dormant during the winter. They rely on extensive root systems that allow them to dig deep for water and nutrients. The roots of the giant sacaton can extend 20 ft below the ground! Giant sacaton (Sporobolus wrightii) only remains in 5% of its original distribution. You can find it hiking all along the railroad trail heading north out of Patagonia, as well as in the dry lowlands on the outskirts of riparian habitat.

Native grasses to look out for and know in our watershed in order of smallest to largest are: blue grama (Bouteloua gracilis), side-oats grama (Bouteloua curtipendula), cane bluegrass (Bothriochloa barbinodis), deergrass (Muhlenbergia rigens) and giant sacaton (Sporobolus wrightii). It is important to get to know your grasses in our region, both native and non-native. It is a great way to understand the biodiversity in our landscape as well as to support the natives that live in our yards and wild spaces.

The top invasive/non-native species to keep an eye out for are Bermuda grass (Cynodon dactylon), Johnson grass (Sorghum halepense), tumbleweed or Russian thistle, which is not a grass but often will take over bare soil in grasslands (Salsola tragus), and Lehmann’s lovegrass (Eragrostis lehmannii).

A great way to learn your native plants and especially grasses, is to take home a seed head, and look it up. A good source for lists of plants in our region is Jim Koway’s book, “Grassland Plant ID for Everyone” which you can buy online or in numerous local businesses in the Patagonia/Sonoita area or check out at the Patagonia library.

You can also look up native plants through the Borderlands Restoration Network’s catalog on their website (borderlandrestoration.org) that has lists and pictures, or join your local Arizona Native Plant Society Santa Cruz chapter by signing up at santacruzaznps@gmail.com.
Local youth competed in a wild cat drawing contest, sponsored by the Patagonia Creative Arts Association (PCAA) and Borderlands Restoration Network (BRN), for a chance to have their art included in new interpretive trail signage on the Smith Canyon Loop Trail within the Borderlands Wildlife Preserve.

Judging of the 26 entries was conducted blindly by the PCAA. The five winners are Hana Bartine (Ocelot), Matteo Brancaleone (Mountain Lion), Siena Brancaleone (Bobcat), Violet Nicoll (Jaguar) and Celine Schlappy (Jaguarundi).

A new welcome kiosk has been installed at the Borderlands Wildlife Preserve just north of Patagonia. The new interpretive signage along the Smith Canyon loop is nearing completion, and is anticipated to be installed late this fall, including a special Wild Cat sign featuring the art from our Wild Cat Drawing Contest winners.

The public is encouraged and welcome to visit the Borderlands Wildlife Preserve to view the new kiosk and hike the trails. The BWP is located on the west side of Highway 82, approximately 3 miles north of Patagonia at the Wildlife Corridors sign.

Borderlands Restoration Network is a 501c3 nonprofit located in Patagonia, AZ serving southeast Arizona and Northern Mexico with a mission to partner and grow a restorative economy by rebuilding healthy ecosystems, restoring habitat for plants and wildlife, and reconnecting border communities to the land through shared learning.
**EVENTS (CONT.)**

Dec. 5: 10a.m. - 4p.m. Christmas In Elgin: Elgin Community Club. Decorations, music, raffles, gifts. Masks required. Call Rebecca Smith for info: 520-559-4835

Dec. 5: 10a.m. - 12p.m. (or until the trucks are full) - Recycling for Patagonia Residents. For a list of items that can be recycled go to www.tucsonaz.gov/files/es/wn_flyer_eng_span_web.pdf


Dec. 5: 10a.m. - 4p.m. Flea Market - Flea market at Heart of Gold Antiques in Sonoita. Art, books, and more. Contact Pat Rorex fíbíse@gáol.com.


Dec. 7: 1p.m. - 2p.m. Discover Christmas Bird Counts Hosts: Luke Safford and Various Local CBC Collectors Register Here: https://tas2systems.com/np/clients/tas/eventRegistration.jsp?event=7166&

Dec. 8: 4p.m. - 6p.m. Pool Assessment and Community input Join with Google Meet: meet.google.com/rge-cuaah-ahb or join by phone 1 443-776-0804 (PIN: 969385716) To get in the virtual meeting you will need the above link:This is a part of the Coalition-Hunsaker Pool Facility above link. This is a part of the virtual meeting you will need the email: Join with Google Meet: meet.google.com/pool-assessment-join

Dec. 9: 5:30p.m. - 8p.m. Community Youth Group Christmas Celebration, at Sonoita Bible Church across from the Fire Station. Call for info: April Anderson 520-508-2502.

Dec. 11: 5 and 7p.m. The Story of Plastic at the Tin Shed. Groups of up to ten people by reservation only. Email Robin crobbint60@gmail.com


Dec. 19: 8a.m. - 11a.m. Sonoita produce on Wheels. Begins in December, continuing every third Saturday each month. Contact Gardenna for more info 602-292-6161.

Dec. 20: 10a.m. - 12a.m. Santa Claus will be arriving at the Sonoita Fairgrounds. A gift for every child. Donations of gifts accepted at the Fairgrounds Office. M - F 9a.m. - 3p.m.
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5x10, 10 x 10,10x 20. 520-455-9333 or 520-455-4641.

KPUP Broadcast Schedule
Fall 2020
Mon: 7:00pm to 8:00pm: eTown repeat of Saturday’s show.
Tues: 10:00am to 12:00pm: World Jazz with Mark Berg
7:00pm to 9:00pm: Jazz and Blues with Fred Hansen
Wed: 7:00pm to 10pm: Sean Alexander show
Thurs: 7:00pm to 10:00pm: Possibility Explorers.
“Celebrating the Evening of Mushkil Gusha, the Remover of All Difficulties.” Hosted by Graves
Fri: 7:00pm to 9:00pm: Hook’s Sunken Roadhouse
Sat: 12:00pm to 1:00pm: eTown - “Educate, entertain and inspire listeners through music and conversation”
Sun: 10:00am: Patagonia Community United Methodist Church service
6:00pm to 8:00pm: Acoustic Café “Today’s great songwriting talents. A bit of country, rock, blues, folk, pop”
8:00pm to 10:00pm: Folk Alley “Folk Music Radio from WKSU-FM in Kent, OH”
Daily Shows:
Swing Hour: 5:00pm to 6:00pm.
Best of the Oldies: 1:00pm to 2:00am.
Feature Story News (FSN.com) Mon – Fri. 8 am., 12pm and 6pm., Sat. 8am & 6pm., Sun. at 8am.
Patagonia Weather Forecast: Every odd hour.

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COMING SOON!
Look on our website for our New COVID Family Resources Page
www.www.patagoniaregionaltimes.org/covid-family/resources/

What is That?
By Cami Schlappy

Mantis Egg Case
Photo by Cami Schlappy

Commonly known as praying mantises, the females will lay their eggs in a soft foamy egg case that will later harden into a protective case called an ootheca. Upon hatching, 50-200 tiny mantises will appear. About a fifth will survive to adulthood. Occasionally, small holes will appear in the intact case. This is where small parasitic wasps have emerged.

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