Likewise, health officials expect further increases one-and-a-half to two weeks after Christmas. Terrell said that the Health Department, through its contact tracing, has not identified any large events that have caused the spread, that it seems to be brought home by one member of a family, then spread to spouses, siblings, etc.

Statewide, COVID-19 cases reached 520,207 on Dec. 31. The State Schools Dashboard lists all counties in Arizona as experiencing substantial transmission and recommends virtual learning statewide for the time being. Terrell reported that most county school districts are treating the first two full weeks of January as a de facto quarantine period for their staff and students.

This outlook is exemplified by a letter sent to Elgin Elementary School families. "We will be returning to Distance Learning for one week following the scheduled Winter Break... Our concern is that if families travel and/or participate in holiday get-togethers and contract the virus, they would likely develop symptoms after returning.

Surge Continues in SCC Even as Vaccinations Begin

By Sarah Klingenstein

Cases of COVID-19 have risen rapidly in Arizona, in Santa Cruz County, and in Patagonia throughout the month of December. For the first time, new daily cases in Santa Cruz County (SCC) have surpassed the highest reported during the early summer surge, with 125 new cases reported on Christmas Day. Currently, over one in 10 people in the County has tested positive for COVID-19. One in 1,000 Americans have died from the virus.

According to Jeff Terrell, Santa Cruz County Health Director, the COVID-19 spread has developed, as predicted a month ago, when Thanksgiving gatherings caused the virus to spread. Likewise, health officials expect further increases one-and-a-half to two weeks after Christmas. Terrell said that the Health Department, through its contact tracing, has not identified any large events that have caused the spread, that it seems to be brought home by one member of a family, then spread to spouses, siblings, etc.

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Border Wall Construction Continues Despite Election

By Jo Dean

The Coronado National Memorial, located at the southern end of the Huachuca Mountains, overlooks the eastern edge of San Rafael Valley along the border of Mexico. A short hike from the Montezuma Pass parking area on the Coronado Peak Trail leads to an overlook of the San Rafael Valley, which supports an ecosystem of oaks, sycamores, and a wide variety of plant and animal diversity. This area is rugged country with unique biodiversity and world-renowned ecological value.

The overlook provides a vista south into Mexico, north into the United States and west towards the next Sky Island, the Patagonia Mountains. These days, however, quiet contemplation of the vista is interrupted by the sound of heavy equipment. The mountain is literally being moved to make room for the border wall.

A short walk south from the vista, following the unaccustomed sounds of heavy machinery, a wide scar coiling like a serpent down the west slope of the mountain towards San Rafael Valley comes into sight. Activity is high; rocks, plants, and soil are being blasted, scraped, and dumped over the hillside to make room for the border wall. Hydraulic rock breakers, large earth moving equipment all toiling away like a scene from "Atlas Shrugged." Attempting to walk closer, one sees that the entire Yaqui Ridge Trail, section 1 of the Arizona Trail to the international border, is closed indefinitely due to homeland security construction.

The bollard wall construction consists of embedded reinforced concrete barrier, with 30-foot-tall steel slats 4 inches apart. Construction is on fast forward until the inauguration of President-Elect Joseph Biden, who has stated he will stop construction of the border wall on day one of his presidency. Exactly how this will be accomplished is uncertain due to government contracts with companies building the wall. In some manner the border wall, as it is literally bulldozing across the country, will stop. But, where in the San Rafael Valley will it stop?

Numerous lawsuits have been filed over funding for the border wall, based on environmental concerns, government overreach, private property rights, and social justice issues.
WHAT A MONTH! WHAT A YEAR!

By Marion Vendituoli

It has been a jam-packed month here at the PRT! We have successfully concluded our annual fundraising campaign, we have taken on the continuation of Clare Bonelli’s local newsletter, have added an extensive COVID resource page to our website and received 54 essays from local students competing in our 2nd annual school essay contest. Our volunteer writers have researched and written articles on issues including the rise of COVID in our area, the continuing construction on the border wall, internet challenges in eastern SCC, women’s suffrage, and one student’s journey from PUHS to an ivy league school. And make sure to check out our center spread honoring this year’s Community Contributors. Whew!!

First, to our generous readers who donated to the PRT during our recent fundraising campaign, we thank you! You have donated $25,050 over the past two months, $15,000 of which will be matched by NewsMatch, a national organization that supports nonprofit newrooms. Even more impressive, we had 340 individual donations. These donations ensure the future of the PRT and will be used to help us continue to bring you the local news that you depend on us to deliver.

As part of that commitment, we were thrilled when Clare Bonelli approached us to see if we would be willing to take over her weekly newsletter. We look forward to continuing her work and are honored that she trusts us with this important community resource. We also look forward to welcoming Clare as a member of our editorial team, as she plans to start contributing articles to the PRT.

Assistant editor Nisa Talavera has been hard at work revamping our website and is adding a COVID resource page that will contain information on where to get vaccinated, testing sites, local updates, and resources for families. We will continue to work on improving our website, with the help of a grant from CatchaFire, over the next several months.

And a word about our committed group of writers. These individuals volunteer their time and expertise to keep our audience informed and educated about those issues and events that affect our communities.

One example of this is Sarah Klingenstein, of Patagonia, who has written four articles for this issue, and has put in countless hours interviewing local health officials, school administrators, and local leaders, poring over data and organizing all this material into well written articles full of relevant information.

Sarah is just one example of our talented and committed PRT family, which includes not only our writers, our Board members and staff, but also all of you that have donated this year.

We thank you for kicking off 2021 in the best way possible, especially as we emerge from the challenges of 2020. Thank you for your investment in the future of the Patagonia Regional Times because, especially in these tumultuous times, local news matters.

NEW!!

PRT COVID RESOURCES PAGE

The place to go for national, state and local updates, community info, statistics, testing sites, vaccines, family and educational resources.

Look on our website for our COVID Resources Page

Receive Breaking Local News Sent Straight to Your Inbox

As a e-subscriber you will receive an email at the beginning of each month with top stories and a link to the new issue before it is available in the stands. We are excited to announce a new feature.

As we step in to carry on Clare Bonelli’s popular community newsletter, we will continue her tradition of issuing weekly updates of local events, news and items of community interest.

patagoniaregionaltimes.org/connect-with-the-prt
Wall (Cont.)

pertaining to the wall. The Supreme Court has agreed to take up the case that President Donald Trump has unconstitutionally diverted Defense Department funds to pay for the wall expansion, but until the case goes to the Supreme Court, construction will continue. Considering that the court will not hear the case until 2021 after the inauguration, there may be no need to hear the case if Biden stops progress on the barrier. Biden has pledged to “end the so-called National Emergency that siphons federal dollars from the Department of Defense to build a wall,” according to information from his campaign website.

The borderlands between Arizona and Mexico are mostly federally owned. Consequently, building the wall across National Wildlife Refuges, National Parks and Monuments, and conservation areas has allowed the government to move quickly and to waive all environmental regulations and studies. In Arizona, new sections of the 30’ bollard wall have been built almost exclusively across U.S. government-owned land, including Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge, San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, and the Coronado National Memorial.

San Rafael Valley is a jigsaw of various land grants and private ownership. Most of the borderland in the valley is owned by the State of Arizona or U.S. Forest Service, some is private. Part of the valley is in Cochise County and part is in Santa Cruz County.

Currently, the Valley has a Normandy beach-style vehicle barrier fence across the valley that allows animal movement to continue along historic migratory corridors. According to residents interviewed, this fencing was built about ten years ago. In the past three years ‘virtual wall towers’ have helped to significantly reduce the number of illegal migrants coming across the border. Virtual wall towers, also called Integrated Fixed Towers (IFTs), are 160-foot-tall surveillance towers that send data to Border Patrol agents using high-definition cameras, night vision sensors, and radar. IFTs, placed every three to seven miles across San Rafael Valley, have proven to be highly effective in providing surveillance of the border area. These have no noise or light pollution and are found to have no significant environmental impact on plant or animal species. Customs Border and Protection (CBP) plans to acquire technologically advanced towers that are solar powered and mobile to supplement the current IFTs and the Remote Video Surveillance System along the Arizona and Texas border. By fiscal year 2021-2022, CBP hopes to have deployed nearly 200 more towers along the remote areas of the Mexican/US border.

CBP statistics show apprehensions are down for illegal marijuana traffic since the legalization of marijuana in several western states. The last decade has seen a change in cartel activity from cross country crossings to smuggling hard drugs such as heroin and methamphetamine through the ports of entry.

Opinions about the border wall in San Rafael Valley are divided. Some landowners approve of the wall, while others think it is not necessary and irresponsible use of taxpayer’s money. Zay Hartigan has lived on the KHeKay Ranch located in San Rafael Valley, seven miles north of the Mexican border, for 23 years. Hartigan is also an Arizona Trail Steward for the section of the trail that extends from Canelo Pass to Parker Canyon Lake Trailhead. He stated the ranch had numerous illegal migrants coming through his area until the Normandy fencing and the IFTs were installed. Now for several years he has seen no illegal migrant activity. While working cattle in the grassland or traversing his segment of the Arizona trail he sees little trash or any other evidence of illegal migrants. Hartigan thinks the virtual wall has made an enormous difference in activity. He believes the bollard style wall is necessary in heavily trafficked areas closer to urban centers but suggests a tailored approach to border barriers would be an intelligent approach. “One size fits all” is degrading the environment, blocking streams and water drainage systems, disrupting wildlife corridors and habitat.

Border security is important to all Americans. The border in San Rafael Valley may avoid the 30-foot bollard wall. Citizens can be assured that the San Rafael Valley will have border security with a system of border protection, be it electronic surveillance, physical barrier, or a combination of both.

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**Improved Internet May Be on the Way**

By Marion Vendituoli

The communities of Sonoita, Elgin and Patagonia are slated to receive improved internet service as a result of a settlement reached between the AZ Attorney General’s office and Lumen Technologies, formerly known as Century Link.

This settlement stems from a lawsuit brought against Century Link by the AG’s office, contending that the company had engaged in “deceptive and unfair advertising and billing practices,” according to AZ Central. The settlement, announced last March, required Lumen to invest $2 million in improvements to fiber-optic infrastructure in areas that the Attorney General’s Office (AGO) determines are in need. These improvements will help provide internet services to underserved consumers in Arizona.

In a letter dated Nov. 17, the AGO and Lumen agreed to “upgrading the network from Sierra Vista to Patagonia and Elgin to support Optical Wave Services which will greatly increase speeds.” The letter from the AGO’s office states that customers benefitting from this would include schools, Border Patrol . . . approximately 112 small businesses and will impact “approximately 15,000 consumers.” (a perplexing number, as the population of eastern Santa Cruz County is less than 1816, according to 2018 U.S. Census figures.) The cost estimate of the project has been redacted on the public document.

The Attorney General’s office had not notified the Santa Cruz County officials of this settlement, according to District 3 Supervisor Bruce Bracker. He is pleased with the announcement from the AGO about the settlement with Century Link to provide better service to the residents of Eastern Santa Cruz County. “I’m happy that someone held Century Link accountable,” he said Coincidentally, the County has been dealing with its own problems with Century Link, due to Century Link having stopped work on a project designed to bring high speed, affordable internet to schools in the eastern part of the county.

The County and the School Superintendent’s Office have been working with the FCC to implement the E-Rate program across SCC. “E-Rate provides discounts for telecommunications, internet access, and internal connections to eligible schools and libraries,” according to the E-Rate website. Several area schools and libraries are already connected to the internet through this program, which is designed to serve rural and underserved communities.

E-Rate funding helps to pay for the construction cost to get the cable to schools and helps to pay monthly charges. The amount of funding each school receives is dependent on the number of students eligible for the free and reduced lunch rate, according to Chris Young, Chief Deputy at the School Superintendent’s Office. For example, if 80% of the students are getting free or reduced lunches, the school receives a discount of 80% both for the construction costs and the monthly payments.

Fiber-optic cables have been run to the Elgin and Patagonia Schools, according to Bracker, but have not been connected yet. “The last school to get fiber in front of it was Elgin” he said. “Fiber-optic cable is in place, but the last hundred yards have not been laid and the connections not made.” The county signed a contract in May 2018 with Century Link to lay the cable and ultimately to provide broadband service to the schools, but Century Link has stopped work on the project. The SCC School Superintendent’s office has engaged an outside attorney to try to resolve this problem.

Bracker stressed the importance of high-speed internet for Santa Cruz County, for the schools, for residents and for businesses. “Internet now is what electricity used to be,” he said. “This is akin to the Rural Electrification Act of 1936. There’s a huge divide between urban and rural. We need to level the playing field. You have to have it and it’s a huge component of economic development.”

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**Homegrown Instruments**

Beginning Lessons
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DON WENIG  
MAY 28, 1931 – DECEMBER 8, 2020

Don Wenig, long-time member of the Patagonia community, died at Banner South Hospital on December 8, 2020. His love for the town was undiminished to the end, and his contributions to its well-being have established his reputation for years to come.

Don was born on May 28, 1931, in Iowa, and grew up in Dallas, Texas. After attending the University of Texas, he served in the army, but a winter in an unheated barracks at a Nike base in northern Indiana convinced him that a warmer climate would suit him better. He moved to Tucson, where he engaged in several occupations, among them the part-ownership of the ski facility on Mount Lemmon. Deciding on a teaching career, he enrolled at the University of Arizona for certification, and settled happily into a position as an elementary teacher in the Tucson system, specializing in art education.

During his years in Tucson, he was part of a group of young people whose adventurous spirits loved the outdoors and travel. One of those young people was Doris, another teacher, whose mother, on meeting Don for the first time, told Doris, “Hang onto that one, he’s a keeper.” Which she did, and Don and Doris became the love affair of their lives. One of those young people was Doris, who loved the outdoors and travel. One of those young people was Doris, who loved the outdoors and travel.

Draw. They bought an old adobe, made it livable, and soon made it into a B&B. They loved the town, and became a part of its fabric, relishing and promoting its character. Don, a natural instigator, took an active role in developing amenities like the Butterfly Garden, as well as necessities like the local clinic. He was a spark plug for what came to be the Full Festival, and served on more boards, and attended more meetings, than any one person could be expected to experience in a lifetime of service. What other person could have initiated both the local bridge group and the famous Full Moon Picnics in the San Rafael?

Don loved to travel, and Doris, until her last years, was an enthusiastic companion. Both felt strong affection for Mexico, and there is a long list of friends who joined them on jaunts as far afield as raft trips in Chiapas, or fiestas for the Virgin of Guadalupe in Alamos, or mission tours in Sonora, with dancing and mezcal by moonlit pools long into the night.

Don was a consummate friend: always ready to listen to your gripes, console you with a wry observation, cheer you with a perfect martini. He was a gentleman to the core, rarely lost his temper, believed deeply in cooperation and compromise.

Community, while an easy concept to espouse, was for him a project that engaged his full person. His community will remember his name with deep love and respect.

NINO I. GARCIA  
AUGUST 8, 1922 – NOVEMBER 23, 2020

Nino I. Garcia, 98, of Patagonia, AZ, passed away peacefully in his sleep in Tucson on November 23, 2020. Nino was born August 8, 1922 in Salt Lake City, UT, to Jessie Aparicio Garcia and Gregorio Garcia.

Nino moved to California shortly after his honorable discharge from the U.S. Army where he served as a Private First Class from January 8, 1943 to January 31, 1946. He was a Field Lineman and Marksman Rifle M-1 in the New Guinea Campaign, receiving American and Asiatic Pacific Theater Service Ribbons, Philippine Liberation Service Ribbon, Distinguished Unit Badge, and Victory Medal.

Nino retired from Exide Technologies in 1981 and relocated to Patagonia, AZ in 1990, where he resided in the Mowry mountains for 28 years. He enjoyed being a small rancher with a few cattle and horses for some years until his advanced age made ranching improbable. He could be seen driving through the mountain roads several times a week going for feed or other necessities for his beloved animals and himself - in that order. Nino was fiercely independent and treasured his life and his communion with nature. He rarely traveled far from his beloved mountains, except for road trips with cousin Martha to UT and WY, and enjoyed her visits and those from nephew David Nuno.

In January 2018 he suffered severe injuries and dehydration when he drove into a ravine and attempted to walk home nearly three miles at his advanced age of 95. It necessitated hospitalization, surgery and rehabilitation in Tucson. He then entered assisted living in Tucson in March 2018 until his passing in November 2020, where he enjoyed bird watching, reading, light weight “training,” dozing under the Tucson sunshine, sipping wine or a cold beer, and watching sports in the friendship of his new friend and co-resident Gene Easterbury, who sadly predeceased him.

Nino is survived by his sister Beatrice Jacobs of Salt Lake City, cousins Stella McEvoy of Arcadia, CA and Martha Aparicio of Rancho Mirage, CA, as well as several generations of nephews and nieces, including David Nuno of Pinedale, WY.

Sincere thanks to all the Patagonia residents who lent support and friendship and enriched Nino’s mountain life. Special thanks to Charlie Montoy and his mother Norma, who were helpful in so many ways throughout the years both to Nino and his cousin Martha, who visited frequently and helped manage Nino’s survival. Thanks as well to neighbors/friends Gail Shawe and Joel Bernstein (who found Nino after his accident and called the paramedics) and Ellen Fisher.

Post-COVID, a small memorial will be held in Patagonia in the spring of 2021. Nino’s remains will be scattered in the Mowry mountains and at the gravesite of his beloved mother in California shortly after his honorable discharge from the U.S. Army where he served as a Private First Class from January 8, 1943 to January 31, 1946. He was a Field Lineman and Marksman Rifle M-1 in the New Guinea Campaign, receiving American and Asiatic Pacific Theater Service Ribbons, Philippine Liberation Service Ribbon, Distinguished Unit Badge, and Victory Medal.

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women, and it was not a given that Latina women would have voted in Patagonia that year. “For Latinas, things didn’t change until the Voting Rights Act in 1965,” said Isamea Coronado, director and professor of ASU’s School of Transborder Studies. “In some places, there were structural impediments to voting and we still have some of them today.” (apsb.org. June 2020). One of the important safeguards to voting included in the Voting Rights Act was that literacy tests to prove fitness for voting were declared illegal.

As in much of the Western U.S., suffrage for women was established by individual states before the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920. Beginning in the late 1800s, women earned the right to vote in many municipalities, counties, states and territories. In Arizona, women petitioned the territorial Legislature for the right for decades without success.

In 1912, just months after Arizona became a state, proponents used the initiative process to get suffrage on the ballot. It passed by 65% of the vote. It is unclear where and when local women voted from 1912 until the new school was built. It may have been at the old Opera House on McKeown Avenue, which was a center of civic activities at the time.

Soon Arizona women were holding public office and taking their place in decision-making around the state. By the time the 19th Amendment came up for a vote in 1920, the State Legislature passed it unanimously. Historian Mary Melcher, Ph.D, said, “Once the Western states allowed women to vote and hold public office, men saw that their great fears did not come to pass. The traditional family did not fall apart, and women began to use their rights to gain power and do good. They used their influence to push federal suffrage.”

Dr. Melcher, the Arizona state coordinator for the National Votes for Women Trail, was delighted to learn of the significance of the Grammar School building. She contacted German Quiroga, President of the Board of Trustees of the Museum, and they sought and received permission from the Patagonia School District, owners of the building, to erect a plaque.

These markers honoring significant sites along the road to suffrage are being installed across the country, with the goal of marking at least five locales in each state. The project is funded by the Pomeroy Foundation and will likely be completed sometime in 2021. The map and database of the plaques is available at www.ncwhs.org.

The plaque is in place in front of the building now. A formal dedication will be held during the Museum’s annual meeting on January 23 at 10:30 a.m. Dr. Melcher will speak at the dedication, and all are invited. Organizers will use social distancing practices and the event will be outdoors.

**COVID (Cont.)**

to school during the week of Jan. 4. By proactively closing the school for “face-to-face” for one week, we are hoping to avoid spreading the virus in the school setting and avoiding a much longer school closure.”

Patagonia Schools will use the distance learning model until Jan. 18 at the earliest. The decision to bring students back on campus will be made as that period ends.

**Vaccines on the Way**

On Dec. 2, Governor Doug Ducey announced that COVID19 vaccines would be available without cost to all Arizonans. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two doses.

On Dec. 28, Terrell reported that 600 doses of the Moderna vaccine had already arrived at the Mariposa Clinic in Nogales. Another shipment of 900 doses was expected any day. For now, information about vaccine delivery will be available to Health Department officials only about a week ahead of delivery. Within the next several weeks, they hope to have vaccine delivery schedules laid out for several months ahead.

The first vaccines are being administered to people that fall into the CDC’s and Arizona’s “1A” priority category, which includes healthcare providers, emergency medical personnel and the residents and staff of long-term care facilities. Those in Group 1A number around 1,000 in the county, so the first vaccine shipments are expected to cover that high-risk portion of the population. According to Terrell, Mariposa Clinic has been tasked with administration of the early phases of the vaccine, which they are administering throughout various County facilities.

Dr. Eladio Pereira, Chief Medical Officer at the Mariposa Clinic, said that officials are currently working through the logistics of the rollout. “We are learning and revising strategies daily, and working in collaboration with the County and State, as well as other human services agencies.”

“We will move to the ‘1B’ group as soon as we receive enough vaccines to move on,” Dr. Pereira said. That group includes “ frontline essential workers such as fire fighters, police officers, corrections officers, food and agricultural workers, U.S. Postal Service workers, manufacturing workers, grocery store workers, public transit workers and those who work in the education sector (teachers, support staff, and daycare workers). It also includes people aged 75 years and older.” To learn which group you fit into, call (602) 542-1025 and select Option 1, or go to: https://www.santacruzcountyaz.gov/732/COVID-19-Novel-Coronavirus.

In this initial phase, health officials are identifying those who qualify for the vaccine. Eventually, residents will be able to seek out the vaccine and sign up for appointments online. Information regarding vaccine availability for Groups 1C and beyond will be found in the coming weeks and months on the SCC Health Department’s website. Plans are being made to develop vaccine PODS (Points of Distribution) around the County once the supply of vaccines increases dramatically. Potential sites include the Sonora Fairgrounds and a site in Patagonia.

Editor’s note: On Dec. 30, Governor Ducey issued an executive order for the state to take a more active role in vaccination planning and distribution. The PRT will update our readers as these changes develop, and link to a planned State website that will show daily vaccination progress and information for individuals.
One of our constitution’s most cherished provisions is separation of church and state, a real testament to our founders’ foresight. Throughout history, cruel injustice has routinely been inflicted upon innocent citizens by state-sanctioned religions. (Even today, many nations acknowledge only one official creed.) Aware of this, “the framers” sought to discourage government mistreatment of minorities, or of any religious denomination.

As one desperate measure against the current pandemic, public gatherings have been forbidden, including some in-person religious services. Rather than accept the ban, certain reactive champions of “religious freedom” have staged protest demonstrations, including court challenges, accusing the government of anti-religious bias. Some congregations, despite the bans, continue to assemble, presuming, apparently, that God will protect the faithful.

Remind me to tell you about the viper-wielding Baptist preacher I saw once on YouTube, who, bitten in the neck by an angry adder, was dying quickly and grotesquely, on camera, foaming at the mouth and convulsing. Rushed to the hospital by horrified parishioners (against his express wishes!) he survived, but his faith was not vindicated.

There were two immense, illegal Chasidic weddings in Brooklyn recently, planned and executed in secrecy. One wedding had 8000 guests. (8,000 guests! You’d have to be crazy, even without a pandemic.) Meanwhile, secularist protestors challenge the recitation of Christian prayers in public schools, defending the comfort of imaginable Jains, Buddhists, Taoists, Shintoists, Ven- triloquists, Hindus, Jews, Zoroastrians and Muslims among the student body - and even more to the point, of their parents, who vote. "Democracy" comes from the ancient Aramaic word d’mrocaca, meaning "messy kitchen." It’s not hard to see why.

When separating church and state, where do you draw the line? Some Christian groups complain that they are a majority in this country and have always been a majority here. They point out that the original settlers here were Christians, conveniently ignoring the indigenous “heathens,” who were not seen as human. Democracy, they loudly claim, consists of majority rule. (It’s a self-serving, view. Some folks, including Presidents, when they can’t have their way get paranoid; self-pitying. They feel that any point of view but theirs amounts to personal affront - discrimination against them. It’s sad, insane, and dangerous, But not uncommon, as you know.

You have probably heard of The Darwin Awards, which cite, each year, examples of spectacularly stupid, self-destructive human behavior, usually resulting in death or serious injury. Darwin’s name invokes natural selection. Such mishaps cull the morons from the herd, thus helping Homo Sapiens, our species, as a whole. Or so we hope.

At the risk of appearing unfriendly, may I suggest this? Just let the dumbbells and fanatics congregate and die. To do so keeps them happy and protects their sacred rights. Pandemic? Never heard of it! Reality be damned! There will be some innocent victims, of course, like the children of some of these dolts. But let’s be realistic, por favor. Most kids with COVID will survive, and kids with nitwit parents can expect a life of woe in any case.

Allow me to ask - just to ask, s’il vous plait - if giving reckless scofflaws dedicated venues in which to schmooze, hang out, cavort and sneeze and mate and procreate, would be such an awful idea? They’d get to exercise their rights while we impious infidels adhere to rationality - with better prospects for survival and even good health.

By Martin Levowitz
HAPPY RENEW YEAR

By Robert Gay

In Patagonia, both residents and visitors often express their feelings of attraction for the mountains, valleys and communities of the area. Some speak of the serenity and community of the region, or the multiplicity of life forms; some call it magic. It seems that the village is in a region that gets you thinking about your values, pondering what you like, what you do, who you hang out with, what you see and think about as you cruise around in daily life or on special trips, rides or hikes. The place holds up an invisible mirror that gets you thinking about what really matters.

In 2020, a triple whammy of intense politics, pandemic, and climate change put the reflection process on steroids. Nationwide, the incoming Federal administration brings a chance to de-escalate political divisions, move to truly effective coronavirus responses and deepen our responses to climate change. We can restore healthier social and work lives, and more of us will stay alive.

To help with renewal in 2021, I suggest listening for, and using, verbs that begin with RE-, a prefix meaning to do again, to redo, though not necessarily in the exact same way. Solutions to the triple whammy of mega-problems demand innovation and creativity outside the box, not just automatic restoration of the Old Normal for its own sake and cozy familiarity.

Some familiar RE-verbs for getting out of the box include: reimagine, reexamine, reinvent, redraw, and rewrite. In the workplace, new kinds of jobs are emerging, like solar installer, stream restoration specialist, or cybersecurity team coordinator and some of them will require retraining. As we enter 2021, it’s a perfect season to reflect and find ways to use our hearts, eyes and brains to reevaluate, redefine and otherwise renew and regrow.

At home, we can repair and remodel, by redesigning, repainting, rewiring, replumbing, recarpeting and relandscaping. Homeowners might find it a good time to refinance. Even rearranging pictures on the wall or items on shelves and in drawers can be refreshing, especially in a time of pandemic confinement.

In daily life, we can repattern our energy and materials habits by adopting ways to reuse, recycle and repurpose things. Decluttering at home can revitalize our connection to our stuff.

For the evolution of our personal understanding and values, we can slow up a bit, spend a little time in stillness, darkness, and silence to help us center and reinvigorate ourselves. Looking in the invisible mirror, we can find multiple ways to reconnect with our inner selves and with the living systems which sustain and re-energize us in so many ways. Our melting-pot nation has lasting need for reintegration of races, cultures and groups who are unlike our own group. Reintroducing civility, redefining policing, and restrengthening civil rights legislation - all are part of eliminating systemic racism from our nation. Reopening the national discussion about tribal and colonial history in North America is part of “truth and reconciliation” work toward healing the enduring cultural wounds and injustices of past colonization, slavery and genocide. Reconfiguring immigration and border policies is another facet of pursuing justice, as is reintegration with equal opportunity for groups marginalized and discriminated against for reasons of ancestry, disability, faith, or gender identification.

When the discussion shifts to human-caused climate change, an emerging RE-verb is re-wilding, enlarging upon the practice of reforesting. The surprisingly rapid return of both plants and animals to the abandoned (and radioactive) Ukrainian village of Chernobyl after the violent meltdown of its nuclear powerplant in 1986 is one of many examples of nature’s readiness to re-inhabit what humans had taken for granted. Remediation of environmental damage and restoration of habitat for non-human species - especially those nearing extinction - is just the kind of regenerative redevelopment we now must do to large portions of over-developed lands and over-fished waters in order to reverse the elimination of species that accelerates the Sixth Mass Extinction.

In response to climate change, our way of thinking about the basic purposes of business need to be creatively redefined. The impact of any commercial or industrial proposal can be reevaluated beyond its bottom-line profitability to understand business impacts systematically, always embedded in communities and living systems. It’s becoming clear that for long-term survival, our value system must eliminate the equation of wealth with success. This will allow repositioning people and planet above profit, privilege and growth for its own sake.

Happy Renew Year to all!

HAPPY NEW YEAR

By Cassina Farley

I feel like I have just dug myself out of the rubble of a horrendous blast. The past year has been one unbelievable event after another. We have experienced so much shock and tragedy it’s hard to imagine the possibility of a new year and a clean slate.

I picked up a few bad habits in 2020. It’s safe to say we probably all have. Many have lost friendships and marriages. We became fearful of others and unforgiving of the very community we had grown to love. The pandemic weakened us. It tested our empathy. It changed us.

I can only speak for myself when I say that my new bad habits are many. I picked up panic eating/drinking and a few extra pounds. I binged on social media to the point that it may have re-wired my brain. This is especially bad considering all the misinformation put out by social media platforms. I now also suffer from a total lack of structure. When faced with the option of no schedule it becomes easy to do nothing and get nothing done. Most importantly, I have forgotten how to breathe.

I’m not completely a lost cause. Since the universe gave me a forced pause, I learned that I was way too over-scheduled. There was no reason to have 20 nights a month jam packed with activities. I didn’t need to keep doing what I was doing.

I believe there is still hope for us all. We can start by considering consequences. Based on the happenings of 2020 we can no longer shrug our shoulders and say, “what’s the worst that can happen?” We know what can happen and it wasn’t pretty. Just when you think that this current event is the worst thing that can happen, there’s a possibility of Godzilla or murder hornets on the horizon.

We can stop falling into the social media trap and form our own educated opinions without Mark Zuckerberg’s help. In the future we can try to stay calm, maybe even take the time to breathe. We’ve got to remember to breathe.

We must learn to forgive. This includes our vigilante townsfolk, the neighbors with the political flags, barking dogs or wandering cats. We should forgive the people who refuse to follow rules or cooperate. We can also forgive politicians and the media for fanning the fire. We need to learn to trust again. We cannot be jaded.

We can get back to believing doctors and scientists or our friends and family. We can give people the benefit of the doubt and learn to hear both sides of the story. We can stop stress eating and drinking and by doing so fit into last year’s jeans. (That last one is mainly just for me.)

We can do it. We can get back to the life we had prior to this pandemic. 2020 has taught us that the adversity we face, and the resilience we respond with, has the power to shape our lives for the better. We can learn from this and become more grateful, compassionate people. It’s all up to us. We’ve got a clean slate so let’s use it.

Happy New Year to the Mountain Empire and beyond. May this coming year restore our hope.

For general information and news regarding reopening please refer to Cose Buone (Patagonia) on Facebook.

Hoping everyone is weathering the virus storm.

Stay safe and be well!

Gene Griego
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It is our objective as a community newspaper to present many views to our readers. The opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the views of this publication. If you would like to contribute your opinion or commentary to PRT, please send your article, in MS Word, to prteditor@gmail.com. The PRT reserves the right to edit all submissions for language, length, and content.
ARTICLES OF FAITH
Why the Name Change?

By Gardenia Lamadrid Moffett

"I (Jesus) am the VINE, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing." John 15:5

Why the name change? Since we changed the name and rebranded Harvest Christian Church in August 2020, we’ve gotten this question a lot! The short answer to this question is, “God spoke.” Last year, in prayer, the Holy Spirit spoke to my husband Tom, and confirmed in a number of ways, that we were to change the name of the Harvest Christian Church to ‘the VINE’. God spoke, we listened and obeyed. Yes, God still speaks to His creation, His children.

Even Christians struggle with the idea of God speaking and some try to put limitations on God and the ways He speaks. When in actuality God is limitless. We believe Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever. He can and will speak to us in a myriad of ways.

This bible verse is where our new name originates. At first, we did not understand fully why, but then as time passed it became clear. The VINE Church Sonoita is exactly who we are, it’s our heartbeat and our culture. Jesus is the VINE, and we are the branches. The Keyword here is VINE, because Jesus Christ is our life source. We are His branches. As we stay connected to the Vine, we stretch out, cultivate relationships, love people where they are, and connect them to the Vine (Jesus) by helping them grow into branches themselves. The VINE Church branches, are people, and these branches take on many shapes and forms.

Our branches are wide-open and welcoming. For example, Community Prayer & Bible Study groups, Produce on Wheels (monthly veggie distribution), or our Celebrate Serve Days (community projects & clean up). The fruit these branches bear are lives being transformed by the love of Jesus. The VINE Church Sonoita is our identity. We are branches that stay connected to the Vine (Jesus) and branch out to others by bringing hope and heaven to the earth.

When we moved to Sonoita more than two years ago, we didn’t know what life in Sonoita would be like. Tom and I have always lived in big cities, New York City, Houston, Phoenix, etc. You can imagine the culture shock of moving to a small town. Still, we knew the Lord sent us here to pastor. In fact, we said yes to our assignment, before we even met with the church council. We knew God spoke, so we jumped in feet first. It hasn’t been easy, but nothing great ever is.

God still speaks. He can speak in a still small voice. He can speak through others. He can also speak in a song, in a dream, in visions, and through His Word the Bible. The real question is, “Are we listening?” Just as we recognize the voices of those, we spend the most time with, so will we recognize God’s voice as we spend time with Him, our creator. And when He speaks to His kids, it’s always wrapped in love, peace and joy, touching our innermost being. What is God saying to you today? He may not move you to another city or change your name, but He will speak.

Editor’s note: Tom and Gardenia Moffett are the Co-Pastors of the VINE Church Sonoita. They can be reached at thevinechurches.org

The Patagonia Regional Community Fund is now accepting scholarship applications! Scholarships are available for high school seniors or adults returning to school at community colleges, four-year universities and career or technical schools. Apply by March 1. Through one application, you will also be matched to any of the other 90 ACF scholarships for which you qualify.
**Dirtbags Hit the AZ Trail**

By Sarah Klingenstein

A local volunteer trail building and maintenance crew has begun lending a hand to the Arizona Trail’s largest construction project since the Trail’s completion in 2000. They are building, by hand, a 1.3 mile section of the trail that travels through the Borderlands Wildlife Preserve.

The Dirtbags are a loosely structured, but devoted, group of men and women that came together in the mid- to late-90s to maintain the trails at Patagonia Lake State Park. The group fluctuates in size, with generally ten or soregulars turning out every Thursday morning from fall through spring. While many are from Patagonia, members travel from as far away as Tucson, Río Rico and Nogales. There are some who are able swing a pick and move dirt and others who feel more comfortable lopping branches or doing light raking to finish the trail.

“Dirtbags” is a very loose term, but it doesn’t fool you. Their leader, Chris Strohm, of Patagonia, is a Master Trailbuilder, who came to Patagonia in the 90s with years of experience on the trails around Lake Tahoe. He designs the trails, walking the possible routes several times before selecting the path, “rough-flagging,” then “tight-flagging” it. A clinometer to measure grade helps him design for water runoff, and he works to highlight or avoid certain natural features along the way. The result is a carefully planned, “elegant” trail.

Río Rico resident Joe Watkins, the unofficial second in command, has been with the group since 2008, when he wandered into the State Natural Area west of Patagonia Lake and ran into a ranger who wanted to see his hiking permit. In the course of the conversation, Watkins convinced him that he was a responsible nature lover who had done lots of volunteer work on trails and in parks. The ranger convinced Joe to consider joining a group of locals who do just that. Over the years, Watkins has taken on the role of organizer when Strohm is either back in Lake Tahoe or traveling. He takes part in trail design as well.

The name “The Dirtbags” has its beginnings in Lake Tahoe, where Strohm described to the group how trail workers sometimes had to haul dirt and rocks in large canvas bags when working in areas inaccessible for wheelbarrows. The Tahoe crew called themselves “The Dirtbags” and, when Joe had the opportunity to give an interview to a reporter from the Nogales International one day and was asked what the group called itself, he decided on the spot - they were “Dirtbags” too.

Last spring, with the onset of COVID, the group took a break. It was hard to give up the work, camaraderie, and the feeling of contributing to the community. In late summer, Watkins began a conversation with the group via email, and members came up with great ways to begin again safely. Now, on Thursday mornings, you can see a line of cars gathering along Naugle Av. at 8 a.m. to caravan to the work site several miles north of Patagonia.

The 800-mile AZ trail is being rerouted to replace many miles currently traveled along roadsides with single track trails. The existing route that follows Harshaw Road through the town of Patagonia and up Temporal Canyon Road will still be an option. However, there will be a new way, which leaves Harshaw Road near Red Rock Ranch Road, travels down Corral Canyon, under Highway 82, across a section of Borderlands property, and back into Coronado National Forest to the existing trail.

A further benefit to this new route is that it stays outside of a wilderness area that it previously crossed. Once the new trail is open, bicyclists, not allowed in wilderness areas, will be able to join hikers and horseback riders in using one more section of the Arizona trail. (Several other sections will still require “bike-grounds” for mountain bikers.)

When eight Dirtbags gathered on a chilly mid-December morning at the head of the day’s section, Strohm discussed COVID and trail safety procedures before handing out tools. “There’s a way to do everything,” he said, as he covered topics from the right way to carry tools to reviewing the five steps the group follows for building what he calls “a new tread.”

The AZ Trail section is the latest in a string of building projects the group has undertaken over the years, from the Paton - Nature Conservancy Trail to the Smith Canyon Trail in Wildlife Corridors. The Dirtbags also maintain trails annually around the area. The Friends of Sonotina Creek support the group financially, which has helped pay for tools and other needs. Strohm’s wife, and fellow Dirtbag, Mary is currently designing a set of interpretive signs for the Smith Canyon Trail and the new AZ Trail section.

The group’s newest trail is expected to be completed in the spring, while the entire reroute will take until 2025 to complete. The AZ Trail Foundation will hold several public work sessions this January and beyond, which will be sized to address COVID19 concerns. For more information, visit their website at www.aztrail.org for updates.

New members are welcome. Watkins says, “If you can hike two or three miles, you have what it takes to help out on the crew. There are no meetings, no dues, just a weekly work session - and an exclusive Dirtbag cap given to any member who demonstrates his or her dedication to the work. Call Chris Strohm at (520) 999-0530 or Joe Watkins at (520) 377-7294 to sign up or for more information. Or email sierrastrohm@hotmail.com or joeinriorico@gmail.com.”

**Contact Information**

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Pool Progress Update

By Karen Rigsby

A physical pool inspection and a virtual stakeholders’ meeting took place in Patagonia on Dec. 8, 2020. Friends of Patagonia Pool (FOPP) have contracted with Counsilman-Hunsaker Aquatics to physically assess the Patagonia Pool, review available records, take stakeholder/community input and produce an assessment report. It will be used to help determine the sustainability of the pool going forward.

The report will provide an expert, unbiased opinion of the physical state of the pool and mechanical equipment, potential regulatory concerns, and estimated immediate, short-term, and long-term costs to maintain and operate the pool.

The pool owners (the Town of Patagonia and the Patagonia Elementary and High School Districts) had voted this fall to extend the intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that governs pool operation through February 2021 in order for FOPP to acquire this report, as a comprehensive assessment is an important tool for the pool owners as they decide on the best course of action for the future of the pool. FOPP will use the report to determine funding needs and look for financial and management partners and will share the report with the pool and the public. The report should be completed sometime in January.

FOPP was also able to fund a thorough pool cleaning – a necessity after eight months of complete pool shutdown. The assessment and cleanup were made possible by grant funds from the South32 Hermosa Community Fund held at the Community Fund of Southern Arizona, the Patagonia Regional Community Fund, and by donations from many local pool supporters.

For more information, visit Counsilman-Hunsaker’s website at counsilmanhunsaker.com.

Economic Study to Focus on Santa Cruz County

By Lynn Davison

A comprehensive economic study of Santa Cruz County has been proposed by a group of Patagonia residents representing the nonprofit, business and public sectors. With a goal of building a more inclusive and sustainable local economy centered around nature based and human assets, the group has defined the first step of the process to be gathering an accurate description of the drivers of the local economy to establish a baseline, project targets for future economic growth, and provide basic metrics to chart progress.

The Santa Cruz County Economic Study will include all the traditional economic sectors and will also include sectors and subsectors within the restorative economy that have not been well documented. Included within the broad category of the restorative economy are tourism that builds on cultural, historic, and nature-based resources; ranching; farming, including the burgeoning wine industry, and efforts to grow and distribute healthy foods locally; educational programs that prepare people to thrive in the local economy; restoration services that conserve water, restore habitat for native plants and animals, reuse and recycle waste, and expand the sequestration of carbon.

The common factors of a restorative economy are that they support sustainable jobs, keep local the income generated, preserve and enhance a region’s assets, and can slow, rather than accelerate, the impacts of climate change.

The group leading the effort to procure a baseline economic study for Santa Cruz County is currently refining the process to select a consultant, expanding the list of endorsers of the study (over 20 businesses and organizations so far), raising money to pay for the study, and identifying an administrative organization to manage the funds and contract with the selected consultant team.

The goal is to provide reliable economic information to guide decision makers in the business, government, and nonprofit sectors who will collectively be the engines of the future local economy. The study is expected to be completed before the end of 2021. For more information, contact Chuck Klingenstin at patagonia.planner1@gmail.com.

TOWN COUNCIL NOTES

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kudos to Town Employees

During my new house construction project I worked with every one of the Town employees and the end results are beyond my expectations. From permitting, excavation, installation and then final cleanup, I received help from friendly and high quality helpers.

Please share my feelings with my Town employees - “Thank you very much for your work and friendship.”

Take care,

Murphy Musick

The Patagonia Regional Times encourages everyone to comment publicly on the events and times in which we live. Letters must be signed by the author and include town of residence. Letters are limited to 200 words. PRT reserves the right to edit all letters for language, length, and content. Please send your letter, in MS Word, to phteditor@gmail.com

LITTER IS PREVENTABLE!
Don't let mining companies
mislead you.

According to the United Nations Environment Programme, mining makes up over 20% of our global climate impact. It disrupts communities, harms biodiversity, scars sacred lands, depletes regional water sources, pollutes the air, and threatens the delicate habitats needed for species survival. Operations are rarely sustainable; the resulting aftermath can require indefinite water/soil treatment.

While minerals and metals may be necessary for human consumption, we believe there are certain places that SHOULD NOT be mined. In fact, no type of mining can support the longterm ecological needs of the Patagonia Mountains—a hotspot of biodiversity that's home to over 300 bird species, 600 native bee species, and 100 Federally-listed threatened, endangered, and sensitive species. The Patagonia Mountains should never be a casualty of corporate greed.

Let's protect the biological wealth of our region. Learn more about our mining concerns at:
www.patagoniaalliance.org
Making a Difference

Each year, the PRT honors members of our communities who have made a difference in our lives. The individuals and organizations featured here stood out for their commitment and their tireless efforts during these difficult times. But so many people have stepped up to help their neighbors this year, and it was really difficult to choose just a few honorees. To our health workers, volunteers at the Senior Center, at the Fairgrounds, at all our local churches, the Patagonia Town officials and staff, and many more, please accept our gratitude for all you have done. You all help to make this an amazing place to live.

By Lynn Davison

Bob Brandt
You have probably seen Bob Brandt around Patagonia, a guy with a crisp walk and an enviable supply of white hair, always going somewhere. Bob plays many roles in our community. When he sees something that needs doing, he steps up. When asked to take on a volunteer job, he is likely to say yes. Bob is leading the community effort to restore the option of recycling to the people in Patagonia. He is the acting president of the Board of Directors of CHOP, the local nonprofit dedicated to bringing more affordable housing to Patagonia. He is a docent at the Patagonia Museum, volunteers for the Visitors Center, is a member of the Dirtbags (a volunteer group who design, build, and maintain hiking trails locally), and a driver for the Senior Center. Bob also writes for the PRT and is a past president and current member of the PRT Board of Directors.

Coming from his roots as a Pennsylvania farm boy, Bob especially likes getting outside and doing some physical labor. He is the kind of guy who signs on to help roll a giant cistern up a big hill at Deep Dirt Farm. He is not the kind of guy who seeks the limelight and, in fact, will be a little embarrassed to be acknowledged here.

While it seems like Bob is investing all his time contributing to the Patagonia community, that’s not altogether true. He has a “day job” working part-time for Wildlife Corridors and he still gets out hiking regularly with his wife Ann.

What sets him apart is a strong commitment to be of service, to help out, to give something back. Thanks Bob, in so many ways you are making our community a better place. And thanks Ann for giving him some space to do so.

By Sarah Klingenstein

Kenny Hayes and Mary Faley
Strong leaders share certain traits, and we all know them when we see them. Those who study leadership tell us that leaders need to be courageous decision-makers, while having the ability to make those they lead feel heard, understood, respected and valued. The PRT honors Superintendents/Principals Kenny Hayes of Patagonia School District and Mary Faley of Sonora/Elgin School District, who have shown those traits in abundance, as they have been tested in the fire of COVID19 in the past year. The community has watched these two leaders take on the drastically altered world of education that COVID has brought to their doorsteps.

Beginning in March, when schools were closed the day local districts went on spring break, Hayes and Faley took on this new reality. As Ron Pitt, Head of the Patagonia High School Board described, “Kenny Hayes contacted every organization that had to do with schools and health, searching for advice, personal protective equipment, in-service education for staff on distance learning. Very quickly, he presented five scenarios to the Board, and this as a newly hired Superintendent who was still acting as an Assistant Superintendent while teaching courses. It was trial by fire.”

Faley similarly worked through the issues, setting teachers up with distance learning training through ASU, creating protocols with staff for distribution of learning devices and other materials, and creating criteria for in-person vs. distance learning. “I’ve learned a lot about the spread of disease, HVAC and water systems. Even seemingly small decisions like hand sanitizers are more complicated than one would have thought, as there are skin sensitivities and storage,” she said.

In late spring, both leaders and their teaching staffs began planning for the fall. A statewide summer surge made the decision to open in-person or not very last-minute as opening days approached. Leaders met, and continue to meet, regularly with County Health and the County School Superintendent’s Office personnel.

While they have made different decisions along the way as to in-person/hybrid/distance learning, Faley and Hayes have each taken into account the opinions and needs of all community stakeholders. According to Sonora/Elgin Board President Ginny Cosbey, “Mary has a way of dealing with people so respectfully. She listens well, synthesizes the facts. She’s honest; she’ll tell you what she thinks, but when you know you’ve been heard, you feel respected. She looks at things from all sides and she and the Board come to mutual decisions.”

Several overall themes stand out with these two leaders. They have both shown the courage to make hard, sometimes unpopular decisions; and the courage to really listen to every staff member, parent, child, and board member and take their needs into account, knowing that not everyone will be happy.

Neither educator is one to stand alone in the limelight. Faley sees her school as a team, with each person having his or her own area of expertise.

Leonard Sadorff, Facilities Manager, and Annette Kowee, science teacher and School Nurse, especially work closely with me on all important decisions. They share the load,” she said.

Hayes performs a lot of the elementary and high school principals’ roles in Patagonia. Because of that, he relies on his leadership team: Michael Young, Ann Gortarez and Anelie Ollavarria. “There’s a lot of knowledge and experience there and, because I never like to make decisions in a vacuum, they are critical partners. And I must thank my wife and fellow educator Journee Hayes, for all her support,” he said.

Faley and Hayes also acknowledged the support they receive from their boards, and both are quick to commend all staff members for rising to the occasion this COVID year. And they long to be with their students again in the ways they are so used to. Hayes said “The staff and I miss the students. Even when they are on campus, we haven’t seen them in the way we are used to. While six feet doesn’t seem that far, it is when you want to help a student with a tough assignment or help a 1st grader open a lunch container. None of us envisioned our profession being this way.”

So here’s to leadership, and to getting through this year, and on to a fresh beginning next fall. Let’s hope we can be closer together and more like normal, which will certainly seem extraordinary.
Making a Difference

Gardenia Lamadrid Moffet
By Pat McNamara

Developing the monthly Sonoita Produce on Wheels and Sonoita Community Market, where local businesses can share their products with the community, hosting a toilet paper drive during the first weeks of COVID and chairing the community Halloween Party at the Fairgrounds are just a few of the contributions that Gardenia Lamadrid Moffet, along with her husband Tom, has made in the relatively short time that they have lived in Sonoita. She has also partnered with the Fairgrounds to organize and provide complimentary root beer floats for events, and Tom coached the Elgin girls basketball team last year. The couple have obtained a large freezer located at the VINE Church, where she and her husband are co-pastors, which they plan to fill with frozen meals that will be available to the community. To top off her already busy schedule, Moffet also is in charge of, and responsible for, the growth of the Harvest Home Schoolers, a Christian based education co-op open to the public for families in the community.

Moffet married young, and raised and schooled her five children. When her marriage dissolved she went back to college as a non-traditional student, earning degrees in broadcast journalism and mass communication.

Throughout this time, Moffet kept remembering the book that she had read as a young runaway, “The Power of Positive Thinking,” and what peace those words from Norman Vincent Peale brought her. Following that calling she found her home in the Foursquare Church Denomination where she studied to be a pastor. She met her current husband Tom when he officiated at the wedding of her best friend and they were married in 2018. Shortly thereafter, they came to Sonoita as pastors for Harvest Christian Church, which they rebranded in August 2020 as the VINE Church. Their focus is community service, outreach and unification within the Patagonia, Sonoita and Elgin area.

Moffet’s goal is to bring the local population together to celebrate service to others and provide low cost produce for those in need as well as anyone who wishes to partake. She believes that “When people come together in unity, God gives them a specific blessing.”

Moffet also stresses that their congregation is eager to help anyone within the community to celebrate “serve days,” which Tom oversees, where people gather to help those in need with yard work or other maintenance projects. For more information, visit VINEChurches.org or email theVinechurches@gmail.com.

Mtn. Empire Rotary Club
By Marion Vendituoli

The PRT wants to recognize the Mountain Empire Rotary Club (MER). This group of only 10 - 14 volunteers has worked tirelessly to support our communities in so many ways.

MER donated funds to the Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center this past spring to help director Anna Coleman provide meals to children and their families, and they baked goods to add to the meal packets. They donated $500 to Elen Kentnor and Mimi Henley who made thousands of masks that were distributed throughout Arizona. When the Patagonia schools went to distance learning, the Club donated $3000 to buy eight chrome books. When the Elgin School needed to purchase protective cases for chrome books, they donated $3000 to buy the cases.

In addition, they run the Student of the Month program at PUHS, have sponsored scholarships for high school students to attend the Rotary Youth Leadership Academy, a four-day leadership development program, and they also fund two $1000 renewable scholarships for high school seniors.

“Our big thrust is literacy,” MER member Anne Gibson said. The club donated books that were handed out to children this summer in a program run by the Patagonia Library. They have donated books to the Patagonia and Elgin Schools and to the home school consortium in Sonoita and give every student a book on his or her birthday. The Club also provides every third grader in the area with a dictionary, and Gibson, Sue Archibald and Reba Webber read to students at the Patagonia School. For their efforts, MER won a district-wide Rotary Literacy Award for their programs, highlighting their efforts in the schools.

MER also built the Fred Sang Memorial Rotary Park in Sonoita, help at the Produce on Wheels at the VINE Church and have donated live capture traps to the Patagonia Animal Control officer. They donated to the Junior Rodeo, to a woman’s shelter in Sierra Vista and to the Patagonia Senior Center. They also held a breakfast for the staff at local schools.

Under the leadership of Claire Bonelli, they have also organized recycling events. They hope to have one recycling event in Patagonia and Sonoita every three months.

Their work is funded through Rotary grants and their annual fundraiser. Last year they held a successful casino night at the Sonoita Fairgrounds, and this year plan to hold a golf tournament in the spring at the Benson Golf Club. This small group of dedicated volunteers continue to work hard to support a multitude of local causes, driven by a belief shared by Gibson, that “we have to do everything we can to build our community at the ground level.”

Jim Staudacher and Faith Coburn
By Patra Kelly

Jim Staudacher and Faith Coburn became participants in produce distribution for the East Santa Cruz County Community Food Bank in 2016. They had been receiving produce and donating regularly when Clark Lydick and Judy Saber, organizers of the Food Bank program for many years, invited them to become more involved. Later Jim and Faith became Food Bank Board members and Jim has been the Board’s president since October 2019.

Jim described their work as volunteers in distribution as “a unique experience. It is rescuing produce and making it available to people in the community. So much food goes to waste.” He explained that produce crosses the border shipped in pallet increments, but pallets often break. Produce companies turn over boxes from broken pallets to Borderlands Produce Rescue, who makes these boxes available to the Food Bank. Also, some produce arrives too ripe to be shipped farther north, but still in good condition and is offered to the Food Bank. They take both organic and non-organic, though they prefer organic.

Distributing produce is a natural outgrowth of their work in Viroqua, Wisconsin, where they live during the summer months. In 1999 they bought a small farm to grow organic produce and in 2005 began selling it each summer, which they still do. Their philosophy is that organic produce needs to be made available and affordable to everyone. In order to keep prices down and cover costs of the farm, Faith worked full time for the U.S. Department of Justice as a crime victim specialist, providing services to victims of federal crimes. She continues this work, but now from home.

During the COVID crisis, they have adopted standard sanitizing procedures. Faith bags the produce for people, who stay safely distanced. Their goal is to safely bring food and people together. They are doing their own research, adjusting the procedures, and giving out masks and hand sanitizers. Jim said, “We find the entire process to be so rewarding. So many times, people thank us for what we do.”

Produce is delivered by the Food Bank every Monday morning from 10:30 to 11:30a.m. outside the Patagonia Senior Center. On the second Wednesday of the month they distribute canned food and dry goods next to the Catholic Church on Rothrock Ave. They also help with distribution on Thursdays of special food boxes delivered by Dr. John Arnold and his foundation PEPP, outside both the Patagonia Senior Center and the Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center.
Local Student Heading to Yale

By Marion Vendituoli

Chesed Chap has earned a full four-year scholarship to Yale University.

By Marion Vendituoli

When PUHS senior Chesed Chap started looking at colleges this fall, she knew that she wanted a school with a strong Theater Arts program. “I was fortunate enough to find my passion at a young age,” she said. “I’m very, very passionate about theater. I think that’s what got me into Yale.”

Chesed began her theatrical involvement at the age of seven when she took part in the Missoula Theater production of “Sleeping Beauty” at the Elgin School, where she played the part of a caterpillar. She became involved with club theater at the Patagonia Creative Arts Center, starting in elementary school, and last spring she wrote, directed, and starred in a production of “Catcher in the Rye” with the main character, played by Chesed, rewritten as a girl.

She feels she was drawn to the theater because “it’s such an accessible form of expression. There’s so many ways to alter a production,” she said, “so many ways to put your own spin on it. Even lighting choices make a production what it is. It is a melding between whoever wrote a script and whoever executes the production.”

She credits “everyone involved at the Arts Center” for helping her develop as an artist, especially Cassina Farley, Anita Clovesko-Wharton and Laura Wenzel. “I admire them a lot for keeping the arts alive for the kids,” she said. She expressed her gratitude for Laura Wenzel, Anita Clovesko-Wharton and Matthew Lysiak, as well. “He’s always there when I have an idea and he helps me execute them,” she said. “He was a huge help with “Catcher in the Rye.” And she acknowledged Lars Marshal, whom she referred to as her “spirit guide.”

Chesed’s father, Peter Chap, moved Chesed to Patagonia when Chesed was 11, looking for a school system with small classes. He chose Patagonia because “the schools and community offered many opportunities for the children to explore and grow,” she wrote.

Chesed, who applied to twelve schools through the QuestBridge program, was notified of her early decision admission to Yale University, with a full four-year scholarship, at the beginning of December. Earlier this year, she was one of 6885 students, out of over 18,500 applicants, to be selected as a National College Match Finalist in the QuestBridge program, which facilitates early admission applications for students who “exhibit outstanding academic achievement despite financial challenges” Finalists can apply, for free, to up to 12 of the 42 colleges that partner with the program.

Patagonia School Superintendent Kenny Hayes is excited for Chesed. “I think it’s awesome that a student of her capabilities is getting this opportunity,” he said. “It shows students that it doesn’t matter where you go to high school. If you work hard you can accomplish great things,” he said.

Chesed would like to work in the theater as an actor, then perhaps pursue directing, playwriting and possibly screenwriting. “As long as I work in any of these fields, I’ll be perfectly content,” she said. She is also considering teaching theater arts. “It’s not a Plan B. The idea of being a drama teacher really excites me.”

For now, she is focusing on experiencing all that Yale has to offer, including extra-curricular theater programs and possibly student teaching through the Yale Education Scholars program. “I wake up every morning in disbelief,” she said. And I don’t think it’ll feel real until I graduate from college.”

“Patagonia is unique in that respect because within a mile radius a child can safely walk/ride their bike to the library, hummingbird center, the park, school, art center, swim pool, town square, youth center, church, Borderlands summer programs like BECY, KPUP broadcasting, classes, etc., and at any of these places there’s other children and/or adults cultivating their minds.”

Chesed feels that living in Patagonia gave her the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities and was instrumental in her acceptance to Yale. “It takes a village – you hear that a lot, but I don’t think I would have accomplished this feat without this community.” She participated in soccer, tennis, steel band, the yearbook and student government at PUHS. She also worked as a summer intern in the Borderlands Earth Care Youth Institute (BECY).

One of the advantages of a small town, she feels, is the “capacity to know so many people in different ways.” As an example, she cited Caleb Weaver, who has been her soccer coach, her boss in the BECY program and whom she directed when he acted in her play.

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Most of the large ranches established in the late 1800s in the Cienega Valley relied on vaqueros of Mexican heritage for their operations. Some were employed full-time at the ranches, and others were hired to assist during busy times such as the bi-annual roundups. The vaqueros and their families resided or homesteaded near the ranches where they worked, sometimes raising their own cattle to supplement their income. The Empire Ranch, established in 1876 by Walter Vail and Herbert Hislop, employed many local vaqueros and in 1890 seven of them participated in the famed cattle drive from the Empire Ranch to Warner’s Ranch in California. This story, about two of these vaqueros, brothers Blás Lopéz and George E. Lopéz, is dedicated to Edward F. Gardner (1932-2020). Eddie, who was Blás’ grandson, documented and willingly shared the history of his family. Eddie’s mother, Rita Lopez, married David J. Gardner, grandson of famed pioneer, Thomas Frederick Gardner. Rest in peace Eddie, and I hope you’re enjoying swapping stories with all your ancestors.

Blás Lopéz family (L to R): Maria Palianes holding daughter Rita, Elena, Arnulfo Peña, Blás (seated), and Rosario, 1900.

Encrusting Desert Termites (photo taken in Rain Valley)

What is That?

Encrusting desert termites do not tunnel into wood. Instead they encase surface plant matter (and even cattle dung) in a tube gallery constructed of mud and saliva. They are active on the surface in the cooler times of day and at night. They are active between March and September especially after rain showers.
Migrating Mountaineers

Winter arrived on Dec. 21 on an unseasonably balmy day. Even with a warmer and drier projection for weather this season we will still undoubtedly experience our fair share of frigid temperatures. A 70° day in Patagonia can often be accompanied by a 30° night, for example.

Local wildlife species have an array of evolved behavioral and physiological responses to deal with such severe dips in the mercury. One of the most observable behavioral responses is the migration of birds. Of course, various species travel from northern climes to winter in the more amenable temperatures of our somewhat subtropical latitudes. Yet other species travel down from the higher elevations of our higher mountains to partake of the resources in lower elevation habitats. These are the altitudinal migrants that we’ll focus upon here.

Among the most elusive, yet spectacular of these winter wayfarers is the rightly famous elegant trogon. The male, in particular, is a show-stopper in terms of his gaudy plumage that may convert even the most reticent observer into an instant birder. Typically, the species nests in mid-elevation riparian forests with sycamore trees. Post-breeding, the majority of trogons head south of the border to wait out winter’s worst. A mere handful (usually males), however, are detected each winter in southeast Arizona - generally at lower elevations than during the breeding season.

My first encounter with a winter trogon was at our nature sanctuary near Patagonia Lake. It was January and I had just returned from Australia and its own array of striking avifauna. The day after arriving home I took a walk just below my house and heard the distinctive “bark” of an elegant trogon. Knowing their habitat preferences, I ignored the call, thinking that I must be “hearing things.” Soon, however, my eyes belied my doubt, as a male trogon came into view a mere 20 yards away! Making the sighting even more exciting was the fact that it was hunting in a mesquite/cascarilla forest - miles from the nearest sycamore or stream. At Lake Patagonia several years ago, I watched a male trogon (the same one?) sup upon a large grasshopper that it deftly nabbed, thereby explaining why some individuals linger in winter.

While winter trogon hunting is often a fruitless pursuit, other bird species regularly descend the mountains for the water, invertebrates, and warmth proffered by our lower habitats. I truly reckon cold weather has arrived when the ruby-crowned kinglets show up at our place. Normally denizens of higher coniferous or mixed forests, they shun winter’s worst by descending. Watching them frenetically forage in our woodlands, I’m always left aghast that they can actually find sufficient invertebrates to sustain their high-speed lifestyle.

All three species of North American bluebirds can be found at lower elevations in our area in winter. The mountain bluebird lives up to its moniker while breeding, though it readily comes down in small numbers to the edges of our woodlands and even grasslands in its quest for winter sustenance, as do the more common eastern and western bluebirds, which I often detect by flight calls. Within the lower elevations they are very much mobile - here one minute and gone the next. So too with cedar waxwings.

A bit more faithful in its choice of wintering locales is the red-shafted flicker - Arizona’s largest species of woodpecker. Normally, they breed at higher elevations and in denser forests, but during the colder months they grace us with their presence low down. Ants, their dietary mainstay, are much more frequently active in the valleys than in the mountains. Easy math! Coming down does, however, come with a price to pay at times. I have occasionally encountered ex-flickers in the form of a tell-tale, colorful pile of feathers with perhaps an odd body part thrown in as well. These individuals clearly fell prey to predators.

They had had no problem pushing through the wire that keeps Jersey safe and close to home. It soon appeared that they found their way out as easily as they had found their way in, but I went outside to make sure. I wanted to confirm that when we let Jersey out in the morning she wouldn’t be met by anything that didn’t belong on her turf.

I did my tour, convinced that all had moved along. And then, because it’s become habit, I looked at the sky. It was moonless and clear, with a bright Milky Way that made me forget why I’d gotten out of bed in the first place. You’ve got to wait for darkness to really settle in to truly see the magnificence of the Milky Way. What we gaze at is but one arm of our spiral galaxy.

In the early part of January at around midnight, that lustrous haze containing countless stars will run nearly north/south and will not contend with the light of a full moon. If one could follow it far, far beyond the northern horizon, the center of our galaxy would be the reward. And, if you were magically able to travel there, you’d find an enormous black hole swallowing stars - and everything else that continuously succumb to its gravity.

Rather than exceed our reach, or our grasp, let’s focus on what we can see with the naked eye or a pair of binoculars. Follow the glow from the south and look just a bit to the west and you’ll find the sky’s brightest star, Sirius. Further north, and still to the west is Betelgeuse, one of the signature stars of Orion, the Hunter. On the other side of the Milky Way’s arm, the feet of Gemini give clues to finding its primary stars, Castor and Pollux. Then, return to the path, sliding again northward. To the west is the red giant, Aldebaran, marking the eye of Taurus, the Bull.

At this point, we’re about halfway through the tour. Continuing north you’ll find the magnificent Capella, the third brightest star in the northern celestial hemisphere. It is the alpha, or lead star of Auriga, the Charioteer. Off to the west is the beautiful open star cluster, the Pleiades. One could easily spend hours admiring these Seven Sisters, but pulling us back along the Milky Way’s path is perhaps the most wondrous double cluster of stars, falling within the constellation Perseus. If you do force yourself away from that sight and drift north and west, you’ll be able to see, as I did on the night the javelinas paid us a visit, a fuzzy patch that is our neighboring galaxy, Andromeda. It dwarfs the Milky Way with, perhaps, one trillion stars. If you spot it, you are seeing light that has been on the move for over 2.5 million years. Finally, from Andromeda look east and the famous “W” of Cassiopeia, the Queen, completes the journey.

It’s tricky to go from all of that to the bleak remnants of the broccoli plant that seems to have been the object of all the commotion from the javelinas. But it’s a reminder that we can’t afford to completely lose ourselves in the sky when there remains so much to see and do and take care of right here on the ground.

All in all, though, it worked out. The javelinas had a good meal and I, by happenstance, spent a few special minutes in awe once again of the lights in the sky. The animals had their fill, and I had mine.
You ask. We answer.

**The Ask**

South32 regularly hears questions about our giving in the community, many laced with concern that we’re trying to buy support for the Hermosa Project. Simply put, does acceptance of a South32 donation translate to support of the Hermosa Project?

**How We Answered**

No. Our community investment, especially our investment during the COVID pandemic, is designed to help businesses, non-profit organizations, and the local communities they serve. Acceptance of a South32 donation in no way waives your right to oppose activities at Hermosa or the project in general. We simply believe good corporate neighbors should invest in their communities.

One way we invest in the community is by providing grants through the South32 Hermosa Community Fund, which is held by the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona. Visit cfsaz.org/grants/south32-grants for more information about past giving and how to apply.

askhermosa@south32.net

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Volunteers from the Mountain Empire Rotary Club joined hands with members of the Patagonia Recycling Task Force on Dec. 5 to carry out what was the first organized recycling event in Patagonia since the COVID pandemic forced Santa Cruz County to suspend its county-wide recycling program last March. The event was held at the Patagonia Post Office and resulted in seven truck and trailer loads of recyclables being taken to recycling facilities in Tucson.

Rotarian Clare Bonelli joined the meetings of the task force to develop detailed plans for the event and recruited the Rotary volunteers who donated use of their vehicles and helped load the recyclables onto the waiting vehicles. An estimated 25-30 local residents brought their recyclables and donated more than $350 in cash that went to the town’s recycling fund. Bonelli declared the event a “resounding success.”

Building on this success, the task force has opted to sponsor with the town a series of recycling events that will partially fill the void left by the suspension of the county’s program. The task force will begin a monthly collection of a single recyclable commodity beginning with glass on Saturday, Jan. 23. On that date, the task force will piggy-back onto the Rotary club’s electronics and scrap metal collection event at the Patagonia Post Office from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. to collect glass and only glass. No other recyclables will be accepted by the task force that day.

“The rationale for this approach,” said task force chair Bob Brandt, “is that we believe focusing on one recyclable item each month will allow us to better educate our citizens about how to properly recycle each type of commodity until we can begin collecting all items at the same time. It also acknowledges that the town lacks the financial and staff resources to implement a full-scale recycling program at this time, although that is our ultimate objective. For now, recycling in Patagonia will have to be a largely volunteer operation.”

The glass recycling and Rotary events will be conducted as separate operations in the rear of the post office. Rotary has arranged for Tucson-based Suburban Miners to receive electronics and all types of batteries and scrap metal, even major appliances.

The recycling task force will accept glass of any color, rinsed or washed so that it is free of food or beverage contaminants and without lids. Lids may be thrown in with the scrap metal collected by Suburban Miners at the Rotary event. The Rotary Club will accept cash donations - $5 suggested - to help defray the costs of having Suburban Miners come to Patagonia. Donations to the task force will be added to the town’s recycling fund.

Both the task force and Rotary welcome new members. If interested in joining the recycling group, contact Bob Brandt at brantownb@gmail.com. For information about the Mountain Empire Rotary Club, email Bonelli at clarebonelli@gmail.com.

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Kenny Hayes sorts cardboard at the recycling event held in Patagonia on Dec. 5. Seven truckloads of recyclables collected at the event were transported to Tucson recycling facilities.

By Bob Brandt

Photo by Mike Sweedo

By Bob Brandt

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Town Road Projects: More To Come

By Bob Brandt

Patagonians can once again access their local post office relatively free of the ubiquitous cones, signs, machines and noise in evidence during the recent repaving of Taylor and McKeown Avenues and Harshaw Road. More inconvenience may be in store in the new year, however, as the 200 block of McKeown is slated to get a substantial facelift this spring when the second phase of the town’s two-phase road project gets underway.

While changes are likely between now and the proposed May 1 start date, Phase II plans currently call for parking, sidewalk, bike path and helipad improvements.

The north side of McKeown will be the focus of most of the additional work as the repaving of McKeown from Third Avenue to Taylor will permit marked head-in parking spaces to be installed where only undefined parking space currently exists. Whether the parking configuration will be straight in or slanted remains to be determined, but in either case, a new concrete sidewalk will flank the new parking area and run the full length of the block between Third Avenue and Taylor, will curve around on the west end of the block and continue to the intersection of Third and SR 82 (Naugle Avenue).

Cross walks will be marked at the newly-paved intersections to allow pedestrians to safely cross to the post office, town hall and other nearby destinations. Wheelchair access to the sidewalk is included in the plan as are designated parking spaces for handicapped individuals.

The project will also include a designated bike path on the south side of McKeown and the town’s helicopter landing pad will be enlarged, repaved and linked with Third Avenue by a new driveway.

The $1.6 million project is being financially underwritten entirely by South32. It materialized after South32 approached town officials last January seeking ideas for a community improvement project to support.

The parties initially focused on reviving a stalled McKeown sidewalk improvement project that had been proposed in 2016. Ultimately, South32 agreed to fund a much larger project including the post office and Taylor Avenue improvements and paving Harshaw Road all the way to the town limit.

Having agreed on the scope of work, the parties signed a community development agreement setting forth their respective roles. The town then put the project out for competitive bid, which was won by Hunter Contractors.

Town Manager Ron Robinson commended Hunter for going beyond what was required within the contract. He noted that Hunter extended, without additional compensation, the curbing and paving work at the post office to include the area around the juniper and ash trees. They also paved more of the parking lot than the required twelve inches from the curb.

Discussions are presently underway with South32 about the possibility of paving the parking area at the Family Health Center.

The Great Conjunction

By Michael Schwartz

This is a close-up “image” I took on the evenings of the Winter Solstice, 2020. A conjunction is when any two planets appear together in the sky. In this case, the largest planet Jupiter and the second largest, Saturn, the ringed giant.

Is this a “Christmas Star”? If people say it, is so. Such conjunctions are very rare. The last Jupiter-Saturn meeting this close that could be seen was 1226 ACE. The next one is sooner, on the Ides of March, 2080.

We have seen a true rarity. What does this mean to astronomy? The planets move and meet in our line of sight.

What does this mean to astrology? Not my specialty. I have my own interpretation. It heralds the end of a year that was DIFFICULT. Not as bad as Edward I losing to William of Normandy in 1066 under the light of Halley’s Comet, but close.

Therefore this astronomer, if he must assign meaning, says that this conjunction predicts a better world in 2021.

Affordable Housing Survey Underway

By Bob Brandt

Community Homes of Patagonia (CHOP) has announced that its consultant, Wendy Carter Development Consulting, is conducting a survey of local households and employees to determine the need and demand for affordable housing in the town and surrounding area.

CHOP’s Strategic Planning Committee, headed by Tod Bowden, has worked with Carter to design a questionnaire and survey strategy that will help them document the need for affordable housing and the level of interest in both rental and home ownership housing units.

Carter and CHOP are working through schools, employers, and community organizations to get individuals and members of households to participate in the survey. One questionnaire per household is to be completed anonymously and may be filled out in paper form or online. Those who complete the paper questionnaire may return it in a sealed envelope to their participating employer, school or organization or drop it in the drop box at Patagonia Town Hall.

CHOP is asking everyone who participates in the survey to respond by January 14 so that the responses can be tabulated and analyzed by the end of January, after which time the consulting firm will present its findings and recommendations to the CHOP Board of Directors.
The Mountain Empire Rotary Club will host a recycling event for scrap steel and electronics Jan 23 from 9-11 (or until the truck is full) behind the Patagonia Post Office. What can be recycled: scrap steel including fencing and roofing material, batteries of all kinds, electronics, copper, metal desks and chairs, cameras, computers. If you are bringing large items such as fencing or metal roofing, please come early so that there is sure to be enough room on the truck.

Go to https://suburbanminers.com/ and, at the bottom, click on “What We Recycle” for more info. “We do not accept CRT (glass tube) TVs or CRT computer monitors.”

Let’s keep as much as possible out of the landfill! Hopefully, this event will be as successful as the one hosted by Mountain Empire Rotary and the Patagonia Recycling Task Force on Dec 5.

Marcella Ezrré and Robin Kulibert on their way to deliver a loaded truck full of items for migrants living in a bus station turned shelter, and elsewhere in Nogales Sonora, thanks to the many generous Christmas donations given to Voices From the Border.

The future of farming depends on dreams like this. And at American Family Insurance, we’re proud to support the National FFA Organization and the dreams they help make possible.
**2020 Christmas Bird Count**

*By Kathy West*

The 59th Patagonia Christmas Bird Count, held this year on December 17, started off a little chilly but, as usual, it warmed up and the birds began appearing, looking for their morning meal. That’s when the fun really begins.

Forty-six volunteers participated in this year’s count, many birding by foot, hiking two - six miles in some areas, some driving over rough terrain in the Patagonia Mountains to get to prime habitat and others staying out their home feeders.

This year we had the use of an interactive Google map, put together by Alan Schmierer, which enabled birders to see their territory boundaries easier and zoom in on roads and habitats.

The consensus was that the sparrow count was way down this year, except for white-crowned sparrows. No sparrows were seen in the west part of the San Rafael Grasslands, which is unusual, and many tanks and areas that usually have water were dry.

Some new habitats were birded this year, both east and west sides of the Arizona Trail and Red Mountain Road (FR 4649). The latter resulted in a red-headed woodpecker sighting.

The Patagonia CBC could not take place without the help of all the volunteers and the cooperation of ranchers and public land owners who allow us to come onto their property for the day. A big thank you!

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**Total Birds**

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<th>Species</th>
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<td>Ruby-crowned Kinglet</td>
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<td>Townsend’s Solitaire</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Mockingbird</td>
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<tr>
<td>Olive Warbler</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Yellow-bellied Sapsucker</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bullock’s Oriole</td>
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<td>American Goldfinch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fox Sparrow</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rufous-backed Robin</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bendire’s Thrasher</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Kingbird</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Greater Yellowlegs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yellow-bellied Sapsucker</td>
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<tr>
<td>American Goldfinch</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Birds</td>
<td>5725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Species</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Rare Finds**

- *CW-Seen during “Count Week”, which extends 3 days before and after the count day but not seen on count day.*
- Fox Sparrow
- Rufous-backed Robin
- Bendire’s Thrasher
- Western Kingbird
- Red-headed Woodpecker
- Greater Yellowleg
- Yellow-bellied Sapsucker
- Bullock’s Oriole
- American Goldfinch

---

**Long time birder Tony Leonardi, appropriately attired to find that rare bird during the Christmas Bird Count in Patagonia.**

Redhead                           2
Cinnamon Teal (CW)*               2
Northern Shoveler (CW)*           2
American Wigeon                   1
Mallard                           10
Mexican Duck (CW)*                3
Canasback                         2
Northern Pintail                  2
Green-winged Teal                 3
Ring-necked Duck                  8
Bufflehead                        1
Gambel’s Quail                    10
Montezuma Quail                   25
Rock Pigeon                       13
Eurasian Collard Dove             54
Inca Dove                         1
White-winged Dove                 85

---

**The Lending Shed**

*a non-profit community project by Family Health Care Amigos*

Provides wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, shower benches, mobile commodes and much more, free of charge to residents of Patagonia, Elgin and Sonoita.

(520) 297-7065  *(520) 603-7330*
The event "Timeless Carols" was held at Sonoita Hills Community Church Dec. 6. Approximately 40 attendees, spaced at least six feet apart, enjoyed musicians and vocalists Ruth Rauch and Arlie Rauch’s concert of classic Christmas carols.

Rebecca and Brett Smith sold their handicrafts at ‘Christmas in Elgin’ at the Elgin Club on Dec. 5. COVID precautions included limiting the event to only 16 vendors and a mask requirement. “We appreciate everyone coming out,” said Rebecca, “because it will help keep the lights on.” This was the first event at the Elgin Club since February.

Even though this holiday season looked a little different for many of us, with no large gatherings, no sitting on Santa’s lap, and a quieter Christmas than many of us might have liked, the Christmas spirit was still alive and well in our communities. Here’s to a healthier, safer New Year.
CALENDAR

EVENTS

Please note: many meetings will be cancelled or moved online until further notice.


Jan. 10: New Year’s Community Worship Service at the Sonora Fairgrounds. 10a.m. - coffee. 10:30a.m. worship service. Churches Participating: Canelo Cowboy Church, Sonoita Hills Church & the VINE Church, Sonoita. For more information call/text pastor gardenia 602.292.1616

Jan. 23: 9 - 11a.m. Recycling Event in Patagonia Sponsord by Mountain Empire Rotary. Electronics and scrap metal. Behind the Post Office. (This is not for regular household items.) For a list of approved items visit https://suburbanminers.com/ (At the bottom, click on “What We Recycle”)

Jan 23: 9:30a.m. - Annual Meeting of the Patagonia Museum on the grounds of museum facility, 100 School Street. Formal dedication of the suffrage plaque. Dr. Mary Melcher will speak on the suffrage movement.

Email
prtasted@gmail.com
with any event updates you would like listed.

PATAGONIA COMMUNITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
387 McKown Avenue * 934-2274 * patagoniaumc@gmail.com
www.patagoniaumc.org

Sunday Service 10:00 a.m. In-Person. Fellowship follows in Courtyard
On Radio: @ 100.5 FM - On Web @ KUPR/Rocks
Thrift Shop Temporarily Closed. We are not accepting donations at this time.
Check website for updates or look for Open Flag

Calendario

MEETINGS

AA: Patagonia Methodist Church Fri, 7:30p.m. Sonoita Bible Church Tues, 7:30p.m. For more AA meetings call 520-624-4183 (Methodist Church is closed until Nov. 15)

Overeaters Anonymous: Thurs 6:30 p.m. Fragrance-free meeting. Patagonia United Methodist Church. 520 404-3490. Has moved online.

Al Anon (for family and friends of alcoholics): Patagonia Community Methodist Church, Wed, 6p.m. online on Zoom. Call 315-516-5998

NEW Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA): Methodist Church, Tues, 6p.m. Online on Zoom. Call 315-516-5998.

CHOP (Community Homes of Patagonia, Inc.): Board meeting 3rd. Mon. at 5:30p.m. in Town Council Room.

Patagonia Town Council: 2nd & 4th Wed.7p.m. in Town Council Room. Public Discouraged to attend but not barred.

Rotary Club: 2nd & 4th Thurs. 5:30p.m. has moved online. Info: Sue 520-990-4648.

Senior Citizens of Patagonia’s Board of Directors: 2nd Mon. 3p.m. at the Senior Center. Senior Center Dining Hall is closed.

The So AZ Republican Club Meeting: 6:30p.m. every 3rd Thursday of the month, Sonoita Bible Church. All are welcome.

The Santa Cruz County Democratic Party Meeting: every 3rd Sat. of the month, 9:30a.m. has moved online.

Community Youth Bible Hang Out: at the Sonoita Bible Church. 2nd and 4th Wed. April Anderson at andeap@mson.com, 520-508-2502 or Steve Lindsey at 520-559-0155.

Sonoita Community Food Bank: Every Monday from 10:30a.m. - 11:30a.m. Distribution of fresh vegetables at the senior center in Patagonia through vegetable season.

Sonoita Produce on Wheels: every 3rd Saturday of the month, 8a.m. - 11a.m. VINE Church (previously Harvest Christian) Contact Gardenia for more info 602-292-6161.

Patagonia Museum: Open Thurs-Sat 2-4p.m. Info: www.thepatagoniamuseum.org.

Crossroads Quilters: No meetings until further notice. Info: 520-860-0173.

Open Tennis: Sat & Sun, PUHS at 6a.m. - 5p.m. Info: 520-394-2973.

Drumming Circle: Every Tues. 6p.m. Social distance is practiced. Located in Central Park in Patagonia. All are welcome. Weather permitting. Call Lori 520-490-4991 for info.

JPI
Jeanne Peterson Insurance
INDEPENDENT BROKER

Medicare Advantage Plans • Medicare Supplements
Medicare Part D Plans • Medicaid/AI/CCS Plans
Individual Short Term

P.O. Box 1244
Sonoita, AZ 85637
(520) 455-5464
Call: (520) 237-3284
Email: jpie1@gmail.com

Churches are practicing social distancing.

Canelo Cowboy Church 14 McCarthey Lane, Elgin 520-604-6990 Sunday Service: 8:30a.m. Sunday School: 10a.m.

Patagonia Community United Methodist Church In person Sunday service 10a.m. Services will continue to be broadcasted to KPUP 100.5 as well. Several other services are being offered throughout the week. Call or email church office for more info. 520-394-2274 patagoniaumc@gmail.com

St. Therese of Lisieux Catholic Church 222 Third Ave Patagonia In Person Service resumed. Call for time & schedule 520-394-2954

Sonoita Hills Community Church 52 Eldin Rd., Elgin Sunday Service: 10a.m.

Sonoita Bible Church 3174 N. Hwy 83, Sunday Service: 10:30a.m. Youth Group: 2nd & 4th Wed.

VINE Christian Church 3107 Hwy 83, Sonoita Sunday Service: 10a.m Cafe, 10:30a.m service.

St. Andrews Episcopal Church 969 W. County Club Dr. Nogales Services are weekly, however times changes frequently. Visit standrewsaz.org for additional info.

Quaker Worship Group, Meets via Zoom. Contact Janice Pulliam if interested 706-614-6959

Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church 12 Los Encinos Rd., Sonoita 520-394-2954 Sat 10:30a.m. 5:30p.m. Sunday Mass: 8a.m.

JPI
Jeanne Peterson Insurance
INDEPENDENT BROKER

Medicare Advantage Plans • Medicare Supplements
Medicare Part D Plans • Medicaid/AI/CCS Plans
Individual Short Term

P.O. Box 1244
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Palisades Christian Church 8307 Hwy 83, Sonoita Sunday Service: 10a.m Cafe, 10:30a.m. service.

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Patagonia Community United Methodist Church

387 McKown Avenue * 934-2274 * patagoniaumc@gmail.com
www.patagoniaumc.org

Sunday Service 10:00 a.m. In-Person. Fellowship follows in Courtyard
On Radio: @ 100.5 FM - On Web @ KUPR/Rocks
Thrift Shop Temporarily Closed. We are not accepting donations at this time.
Check website for updates or look for Open Flag

Heart of Gold
326 STATE HWY 82
SONOITA, AZ 85637
OPEN: TUES-SAT 10-6
CLOSED SUN & MON
FLEA MARKET
1ST SAT OF THE MONTH

ANTQUES & WONDERTMENT POWERED BY IMPROBABILITY
WWW.RUBYLANE.COM/HEARTOFGOLD

Page 22 Patagonia Regional Times November 2020
HELP WANTED

ARE YOU A COMPASSIONATE AND QUALIFIED CAREGIVER AND LOOKING FOR WORK?
Please contact Patagonia Assisted Care Agency 520-604-8179 or fill out an application online at www.carepatagonia.com

BORDERLANDS RESTORATION IS SEEKING A VOLUNTEER
To help plant sale events and opportunities. Email horticulture@borderlandsrestoration.org if interested

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN RESEARCHING MYSTERY AND FASCINATING STORIES?
Writers wanted part-time to delve into true mystery - if this is a passion for you, the work will be fun. Call David. 520.303.1475

FOR RENT

TRAILER FOR RENT
Trailer for Family in Patagonia $300/month 520-394-2007

MISCELLANEOUS

SONOITA SELF STORAGE+RV/BOAT STORAGE RENTALS
5x10, 10 x 10,10x 20. 520-455-9333 or 520-455-4641.

KPUP Broadcast Schedule WINTER 2021

Mon: 7:00pm to 8:00pm: eTown repeat of Saturday’s show.
    10:00am to 12:00pm: World Jazz with Mark Berg
    7:00pm to 9:00pm: Jazz and Blues with Fred Hansen
Tues: 7:00pm to 9:00pm: Thursday Night News
Wed: Wednesday, 3pm: Jackson’s 10 Songs
     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.

AVAILABLE FOR ADOPTION

Santa Cruz Humane Society
232 E. Patagonia Hwy (Rt. 82)
Nogales, AZ 85621 (520) 287-5654

Bud is a 5 year old male Husky/Rotti with a heart of gold. He is loving, playful and gets along great with everyone!

Dawn is a 3 month old DSH black female kitten. She is very playful and loves everyone she meets.
PATAGONIA: 327 Mckeown Ave., next to Gathering Grounds  520-394-2120
SONOITA: Corner of Hwys 82 & 83, next to Post Office  520-455-5235
www.buysonoita.com

Download FREE Long Realty App for instant Arizona real estate active listings, pending sales and recently sold properties.   January 2021