Local Wine Tourism: Surviving the Pandemic

By Kat Crockett

It’s been a long and complicated trek from total closure to partial reopening for the Sonoita-Elgin wineries. Many of the local wineries were operating from three to six days a week and business was good until the first case of COVID-19 hit the County on March 20, 2020 and Governor Ducey shuttered tasting rooms.

Deep Sky Vineyard

“Not being able to open was painful from a financial perspective” according to Kim Asmundson owner of Deep Sky. Distributor sales completely shut down and she struggled with managing current inventory as well as planning current year production. “Given the uncertainty, it was hard to plan as the conditions and requirements kept changing,” she added.

Asmundson noted that online sales rose slightly during the period, but not enough to replace tasting room sales lost in the spring. When limited operations were permitted, she and her husband, Phil, moved tastings to the outside patios, limited the number of guests and tour busses, cancelled planned and private events, and implemented cleaning and mask protocols. These conditions are still in effect. Cost increases were unavoidable, including new outside heaters, fans, chairs, cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer and disposable products such as plastic glasses.

“We were very lucky to have our employees stay with us,” said Asmundson, adding that she was able to pay them during the shutdown after obtaining a loan from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) developed for small businesses of less than 20 employees to help keep their workforce employed during the COVID-19 crisis. On a good note, Asmundson added, “My expectation at the beginning of COVID was that it would last at least a year, so I accepted the fact that we would have a reduction in customers with a corresponding decrease in revenue; however, there was one unexpected benefit of COVID. Since people couldn’t travel, they looked for someplace local to go which was outside. Many people discovered the Elgin

See WINERIES, p.6

Sonoita EMS Charges Cause for Concern for Patagonia Residents

By Marion Vendituoli

Two of the three ambulances owned by Sonoita Elgin Fire District stand by for EMS calls to the Fire Station. Last year the EMS teams made 131 runs to Patagonia, 35% of all the runs made by the district. Operations Officer Marc Meredith, “District residents pay a fire district tax that helps to offset the cost of EMS services. We bill district resident’s insurance for EMS services. Non-district individuals (no matter where they live) will have their insurance billed as well, and it has been our practice in the past to then seek payment from non-district patients for the balance of their bill if insurance does not cover 100%.”

Meredith stated that SED is reviewing its practices. Normally, when a patient is transported in the ambulance, insurance covers the costs, but that is not always the case when the patient does not require transport. “Ambulance services traditionally have not been set up to account for non-transport patient encounters,” he said.

The department is “applying to become a “Treat and Refer” approved agency, according to Meredith. “This
By Nisa Talavera

If you look closely at the base of the dried, brown grass out in the pastures you can see little flecks of green starting to show up. You may need to put on your rose colored glasses to see them, but they are there. Garlic and onions are shooting up in the garden, and the hens are laying more eggs in response to the longer days.

Good news is on the horizon with community COVID cases declining and vaccination numbers on the rise. As of Mar. 2, the ADHS reported that 21% of Patagonia residents have received vaccine shots, 14% in Elgin, and 21% in Sonoita. The state of Arizona overall has 17.3% of people vaccinated with a total of 1,857,741 doses given so far.

The Patagonia Museum, Richardson Park and, perhaps most importantly, the town rooms are reopening. Plans for tree planting in Doc Mock Park are moving ahead. Calves, puppies, baby goats and foals are hitting the ground, and calves will be ready for tree planting in Doc Mock Park.

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The articles in this month’s issue reflect the talent and diversity of this group of writers, a dedicated group of individuals with some fascinating backgrounds. Some may just surprise you.

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Joe Brown: Cowboy, Fighter, Writer

By Phil Caputo

He was partly an anachronism, a hard-riding, hard-drinking cowboy straight out of an Old West that vanished decades before his birth in 1930; but he was far more than a colorful character. Former U.S. Marine, private pilot, professional boxer, Hollywood stuntman, a fine writer and story-teller, with more than a dozen books to his credit, JPS Brown was a Renaissance man in a Stetson hat.

He died, age 90, on January 9 in his home on the Rocking Chair Ranch, a few miles outside Patagonia. I learned of his death from a mutual friend and was frankly amazed that Joe had lived into his ninth decade. He’d led a dangerous life on both sides of the border, smuggling whiskey into Mexico, running cattle in the Sierra Madres, spying on drug traffickers to do research for a book he was writing about the narcotics trade. One of his five wives tried to kill him, first with a pistol that misfired, next with strychnine; and - this must be said - Joe had done his damndest to kill himself with gin, bourbon, mescal, or anything alcoholic.

He never sanitized the people in his books, including his own family, and I’m not going to sanitize him. It has always interested me how talented people, remarkable people, people who are larger than life, are walking paradoxes, with flaws as deep as their virtues. And Joe was flawed, a reckless, roaring boy too fond of the bottle and women; and though he had three children by his first two wives, no one was going to nominate him as Father-of-the-Year.

But there was gentler side to him: perceptive, caring, loyal, and funny in a dry, laconic way. I recall speaking to him some time ago about his fifth wife, Patsy, to whom he’d been married for 33 years. He’d looked after her with tender fidelity as Alzheimer’s mercilessly claimed her mind and personality, her very soul. Remembering my own mother’s descent into dementia, I said that caring for Patsy had to be tough on him. He replied, “Nah, Phil, it’s a privilege.”

I met him, oh, it must be twenty years ago now, through Jim Harrison, another of Patagonia’s literary sons, and Jim’s friend Bob Bergier; but I didn’t begin to know him until after I’d heard him do a public reading at the town library a handful of years earlier. The book was “The World in Pancho’s Eve,” an autobiography thinly disguised as a novel - the only fiction in it was the protagonist’s name, Mikey. Otherwise, it was a lyrical account of Joe’s years growing up on Depression-era ranches in Arizona and Mexico.

I had read it before listening to him read from it and talk about his experiences on month-long cattle drives from southern Sonora to the Arizona border, about his family’s battles with drought and their own demons. Joe’s voice was high and soft, almost boyish, and seemed not to belong to a deep-chested man six-feet two and 200 pounds, with a reputation as a two-fisted brawler who had once spared with Rocky Marciano.

What struck me, though, was the story’s gritty, granular realism, and Joe’s refusal to scrub his own background or the characters of the people who raised him. His half-Irish, half-Chocotaw father, Paul Summers, was a cattleman who lived on whiskey and tequila, fed his five-year-old son bacanora on cattle drives, and aban-
doned his family for weeks at a time - behavior that Joe would duplicate in adulthood. JPS stands for Joseph Paul Summers. He took the name Brown from his mother’s second husband, Viv Brown.

In the book, and to me, he de-
scribed his mother, Maggie Sorrels, a “woman quick to love, quick to fight, and as mean and bad-tempered as she was decent and good.” She must have been in one of her foul moods the night she and Paul went on a bender in Nogales, with six-year-old Joe (alias Mikey) in tow. At some point, he became separated from his parents. They were too far gone to look for him, or, apparently, to even notice he was missing. A couple of prostitutes observed the little boy, wandering the dark streets alone, took pity on him, and brought him to their place of employment, where they gave him something to eat and a place to sleep. Mom and Dad retrieved him there in the morning.

In the following years, I got to know Joe better, hanging out at his house, talking about things we had in common - we both went to Catholic high schools and colleges, were on boxing teams, joined the Marines, and eventually turned to writing for a living, learning our craft in news-
rooms rather than in the hothouses of MFA programs. (Joe started as a reporter for the El Paso Herald Post). Sometimes we indulged in a bit of one-upmanship. When Joe mentioned that he’d knocked around with Paul Newman, who starred in “Pocket Money,” the film version of Joe’s 1972 novel, “Jim Kane,” I couldn’t resist countering that I’d hung with Robert Redford, when I was writing an Esquire story about the filming in Montana of “A River Runs Through It.”

Kind of our version of Butch Cassidy (Newman) and the Sundance Kid (Redford).

JPS Brown knew the southwest and Mexico, and he wrote what he knew. It was in his DNA. In 1849, his great-great grandfather, William Parker, pioneered a ranch in the San Rafael valley. Parker Canyon is named for him. I think of Joe as a western writer, as opposed to a writer of westerns. Writers of westerns - Zone Grey, Louis L’Amour, Max Brand - rely on potboiler plots and melodrama, peopling their tales with gunfighters and sexy dance-hall girls; western writers depict the Old West as it really was, or the modern West as it really is, without sentimentality. Larry McMurtry and Thomas McGuane are preeminent examples; so is the least sentimental of all, Cormac McCarthy.

Joe’s major contributions to this genre are the nonfiction “Wolves at Our Door,” a harrowing depiction of the cross-border drug trade, and his 1974 novel, “The Forests of the Night,” a tale as gripping in its way as “Moby Dick.” Based on Joe’s adventures in the wild Sierra Madres, the narrative turns on a Mexican rancher’s pursuit of a cattle-killing jaguar. Known as El Yoco - local slang for “The Devil” - the big cat acquires dimensions as mythic as Melville’s white whale, while the rancher, Adan Martinillo, becomes a monomaniacal Ahab in his frustrat-ed quest to kill the jaguar. But “The Forests of the Night” is much more than a man-versus-beast story; it’s also an unflinching look into the beast that dwells in man, which is presented through a subplot involving a ranch hand named Chombe, a murderer and rapist.

The story reaches its climax only when Adan gives up all hope of ever killing the marauding cat. That moment reminded me of a similar one in William Faulkner’s novella, “The Bear.” “The Forests of the Night” received high praise from critics and literary scholars, about which Joe had ambivalent feelings. I remember him smiling, one afternoon as we ate his homemade chili, and saying somewhat ruefully that the book had been lauded by “academics.”

He was for the most part dry in the years I knew him, though he’d had a tumble or two off the wagon. I was surprised to see him one Sunday morning at Mass in St. Theresa’s, seeking to climb back on with help from a higher power.

Joe was a first-rate writer, but a lousy career-manager. I had the impression that something in him, some self-sabotaging gremlin, restrained him from doing what was necessary to achieve the recognition he yearned for. Ten years ago, he teamed up with a Tucson filmmaker, Rick Padilla, to form a multimedia company that republished several of his out-of-print books and brought out Kindle editions as well. The venture revised his repu-tation to a degree, but not, as I see it, to the degree it deserves.

He and I once joked that for a writ-er, death is a good career move. I pray it will be for him.

Last year, driving back to town from a day’s quail hunt with a friend, I stopped off at the Rocking Chair to pay Joe a call. The man who answered the door said Joe was resting, but he would get in touch later on. He never did. I’m sorry I didn’t make another effort to see him. He and I were different, yet I feel that we were brothers, and I will miss him.

Joe Brown at his Harshaw Rd. ranch in 2019.

File Photo by Patra Kelly
Local Rancher Wins Range Management Award  
By Stephen Williams

Bill Brake stands beside the sign he put up by his ranch. “I had this sign made to show people driving on Upper Elgin Rd. that local ranchers also play a role in feeding Americans,” he said.

At its Winter meeting on Feb. 4, 2021, the Arizona Section of the Society for Range Management named Santa Cruz NRCD Cooperator Leland (Bill) Brake ‘Range Manager of the Year’. Brake, the resident co-owner and manager of the Rose Tree Ranch in Elgin, is a University of Arizona range management graduate who has owned the Rose Tree Ranch since 1999. He runs a red and black Angus commercial cow/calf operation on 9,700 acres of private, Bureau of Land Management and Arizona State Trust land.

During his 21 years on the ranch, Brake has initiated the preparation of a Coordinated Resource Management (CRM) Plan with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Bureau of Land Management, Arizona State Land Department, University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Arizona Game and Fish Department and Santa Cruz Natural Resource Conservation District.

This CRM Plan outlines the ranch’s deferred rest grazing system. Ten rain gauges spread across the ranch and annual vegetation monitoring of the key forage plants on six key areas help inform yearly grazing management decisions. Rangeland monitoring has demonstrated that overall rangeland conditions have improved during the 21 years of Mr. Brake’s stewardship.

The most telling fact about the Rose Tree Ranch is that when Brake bought the ranch in 1999 it had only five pastures. 21 years later, it now has 27 pastures. This change has provided tremendous flexibility to the grazing program by allowing tighter control over the timing, intensity and duration of livestock grazing in each pasture. Livestock and wildlife have both benefited from Brake’s management and stewardship of the ranch’s natural resources.

The award also recognized that Brake serves his industry and community by participating as Past President of the Arizona Cattle Growers’ Association (2005-2007), Bureau of Land Management Resource Advisory Council (present), Arizona Game and Fish Commission (present), University of Arizona School of Renewable Natural Resources Advisory Committee (present), National Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (present), and Santa Cruz Natural Resource Conservation District (present).

Brake is also the originator of the “This Ranch Feeds American Families” sign, which is now promoted by the Arizona Cattle Growers’ Association Young Rancher Committee. His sign is on display in front of his working corrals on Upper Elgin Road.

Investigations Reveal Unauthorized Payments, Toxic Work Environment  
By Kat Crockett

A synopsis of the investigative report received by the Sonora Elgin Fire District (SEFD) Board in late January, prepared by Green and Baker of Scottsdale, indicates that from late summer through fall, 2020, current and former SEFD employees and community members submitted letters (some anonymously) to the Board regarding SEFD employees Joseph DeWolf, Mark Bennett, Kathe Prentice, and Laura Sink.

Supporters of Prentice and Bennett argued they were treated unfairly, while supporters of DeWolf and Sink argued the allegations against them were unfounded. As a result, the SEFD Governing Board requested an investigation into a potential toxic work environment. The following is a summary of allegations and findings contained in a redacted copy of the report.

Allegation #1: Bennett was purportedly wrongfully discharged in supposed retaliation for his knowledge of the Chief’s activities regarding Chrystal Belt. Conclusion: Not Sustained.

Allegation #2: SEFD Paramedic Kathe Prentice was allegedly retaliated against based on her knowledge of the Belt incident. Conclusion: Not Sustained.

Allegation #3: Chief DeWolf created an unpleasant work environment. Conclusion: Sustained in part. Chief DeWolf was terminated Jan. 5, 2021 for allowing and/or accepting an increase in pay without Board approval and a further analysis of his behavior was deemed unnecessary.

A second redacted report was also completed by Green and Baker on SEFD employee Sink based on allegations of employee misconduct as follows:

Allegation #1: Sink was unpleasant to work with and occupied a position that may be eliminated as unnecessary in the organizational structure. Conclusion: Sustained.

Sink, who had been placed on administrative leave, resigned her position on Jan. 25, 2021 and the Department elected to abolish her position and transfer the duties to the Operations Chief. Acting Chief Jon Buonaccorsi noted that eliminating the position will create an annual savings to the district of approximately $77,500.

During a Board meeting held Feb. 23, 2021, Board Chair Chris Johnson announced that a partial forensic audit of DeWolf’s pay and benefits was received; however, the audit was limited to a partial period beginning Nov. 12, 2018 through Oct. 30, 2020. Working with SEFD contractor Vicki Rutter, Johnson estimated DeWolf’s over-payments for the same period at over $75,000, accumulating from a combination of the $300 per week for a salary increase not approved ($30,550) along with unauthorized insurance payments for family coverage ($26,428) and excess benefits and taxes paid ($18,477).

The Walker and Armstrong audit was not yet made available and Johnson wants to compare the two reports, pin down the methodology, and talk to the District’s attorney regarding a plan to move forward. He also stated they would probably issue a letter of demand to DeWolf to recover the over-payments and discuss the matter with their insurance provider.

Rutter also briefed that expenses linked to the investigation exceed $114,600 which include salaries for staff placed on administrative leave, paid time off, retirement contributions and insurance premiums, legal fees and auditor fees. These accrued costs do not include the over-payments to DeWolf.

Board discussion then focused on filling the Chief position. Johnson identified two options, one being an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) with Palominas to provide 50% Chief Services and the other to recruit for a full time chief for SEFD.

The board is interested in community input on the proposed options. Johnson agreed to speak with Palominas to obtain the estimated cost to SEFD for an IGA. Acting Chief Buonaccorsi stated he has a copy of an employment contract from Palominas for their Chief position and is currently reviewing it. Johnson also said that an IGA with Palominas would be a bridging strategy for no more than a few years and down the road they would hire a full-time chief for SEFD.

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designation will allow us to evaluate a patient and if it is the patient's best interest to stay home and/or seek non-emergent treatment, to provide services at a reduced cost." They are also looking at "establishing a formal department policy" to address situations where people are struggling to pay bills owed to the Fire District.

Changes may also be coming to the SEFD ambulance service contract with the town of Patagonia. There were 131 Patagonia ambulance calls in 2020, 35% of the total ambulance calls for SEFD. The average annual income from all ambulance calls over the past three years for SEFD was $257,365. An estimated 35% of that figure would be $90,077 annual income derived from calls to Patagonia.

Although SEFD has three ambulances at the station, it had been SEFD policy that it would not send out an ambulance to Patagonia if one ambulance were already out on a call elsewhere. That practice has been modified recently. "We have instructed our crews if the ambulance is out, as long as we can get additional resources to the station, they should answer the call to Patagonia," Meredith said.

Patagonia Fire Chief Ike Isakson has been looking at alternatives to contracting with Sonoita. "We love Sonoita," he said. "We love the people who work there. It's just something we have to look at." He observed that ambulance response has improved in the past few months but is concerned at the high fees associated with non-transport calls. "I'd rather keep Sonoita. It just seems to me that is a totally unfair charge," he said.

He is exploring the possibility of contracting with the Rio Rico Fire District. Rio Rico is annexing the Nogales Suburban District, which has an active station just south of River Rd. on SR 82, which would place an ambulance close to Patagonia.

Rio Rico does not normally charge for non-transport calls, according to Isakson, and the most they would ever charge is $75. The AZ Dept. of Health Services stated that "according to Arizona Revised Statute 36-2239, an ambulance service must charge the rates set by ADHS but may also choose to provide gratuitous services."

Meredith stressed that SEFD is working to find solutions to these issues. "Whatever decisions this district has made before are not necessarily the decisions that will be made in the future," he said. "We always want people to seek emergency help and do not want someone to avoid calling 911 out of financial concern."

EMS (Cont.)

LITTER IS PREVENTABLE!

INDUSTRIALIZED MINING IN THE PATAGONIA MOUNTAINS PUTS THE FOLLOWING AT RISK

- clean, sufficient water for human and nonhuman life
- regional ecotourism and nature-based economies
- 112 Federally endangered, threatened, and sensitive species important migratory routes for wildlife traveling to and from breeding grounds

THERE IS NO MODERN MINING

that will meet the high standards required to protect the vitality of the Patagonia Mountains—a global biodiversity hotspot—and our water resources. The well-being and economic prosperity of the region is deeply tied to the health of these mountains and Sonoita Creek, which flows into the Santa Cruz River and into a watershed utilized by over one million people.

Fire Dept. Receives New Truck

By Marion Vendituoli

The Patagonia Volunteer Fire Department got an unexpected gift this winter when the Racin, OH Fire Department offered them a new fire engine. "It’s kind of a miracle to me," Patagonia Fire Chief Ike Isakson said.

The 1985 pumper, with a 1000-gallon tank, cost the Patagonia Dept. a grand total of $1.50, one dollar for the truck and 50 cents for the stamp to mail the check to the Ohio station.

According to Isakson, the Racin Fire department had received a grant to purchase a new engine and was looking for a volunteer department to donate their old truck to. After searching the web, they chose Patagonia to receive their engine. "The Chief said he liked what he saw on the internet," Isakson said.

This engine will become the front line truck for the Department. "It’s a beautiful truck," he added. "We didn’t even need to wash it." Isakson estimates that it would have cost $300,000 or more for the station to have to buy a comparable new truck.

When Isakson investigated transporting the truck, he was quoted a price of $12,500 to deliver it to Patagonia. However, Reliance Transport Service donated the cost of shipping and the truck arrived in Patagonia two days before Christmas.

The new truck is now officially Patagonia Fire Department Engine #3. The old #3 engine, built in 1964, is being donated to the Nogales Fire Dept. who plan to use it as a memorial truck. The department now has a new, reliable engine and a new water truck. When asked what was next on his wish list, Isakson thought for a moment before answering with a laugh, "We need more firemen."

Photo by Marion Vendituoli

Chief Ike Isakson stands beside the fire engine donated to Patagonia recently.

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We at the Patagonia Area Resource Alliance work to educate and engage our community about the realities of mining, deepening understanding of our precious and imperiled natural resources. As a volunteer-based nonprofit, we advocate for the protection of those resources, including Patagonia’s distinct and serene rural way of life. Get involved and stay connected:
The De La Ossa Family Story
Part 2 - Onofre and Maureen

By Sarah Klingenstein

If you live in Santa Cruz County, you probably know a descendant of the De La Ossa family. If they have the name Gardner, Padilla, Quiroga, they may well be descended from the original pioneers, Antonio Maria Flugencio and Carolina Llanos De La Osa, who immigrated from California to the San Rafael Valley in 1880. As an indication of their modern-day numbers, a 2017 family reunion at the Sonora Fairgrounds drew over 370 De Las. Part 1 of the De La Ossa family story was featured in last month’s PRT. In Part 2, we take a look at Onofre and Maureen De La Osa. Onofre was one of the eight children of Antonio and Carolina’s grandson Abel Garcia and his wife Armida Elias De La Osa. Born in the San Rafael Valley between 1937 and 1957, they are Adelina, Arnulfio, Ophelia, Onofre, Elsa, Oscar, Anita, and Martha. Seven of the eight siblings are still living, and six still call southern Arizona home.

Their’s was a rugged rural life. Abel Garcia worked as a cowboy at Colonel Greene’s R-O Ranch, first while living at Abel Tomás’s family homestead in Lochiel, and then at a cowboy camp in Parker Canyon with their three young children and one on the way. Several years later they settled at “the rock house” in Duquesne. There, Abel worked the local mines, as well as keeping his own cows on several leases.

Onofre (Ono) De La Osa, the fourth of the eight children, was born in 1942 at the cowboy camp in Parker Canyon. He grew up in Duquesne with a growing number of siblings—Maureen Sullivan of Rochester, NY, was two years old in 1945 when her dad, Jack, got the notion to become a cowboy. And the only place to be a cowboy, to his thinking, was Arizona. So, he and his wife Frances loaded up Maureen and their infant son John and headed west, ending up in Patagonia. An inquiry at a local bar led Jack to a job offer as a cowboy on Johnny Jones’s ranch in Parker Canyon. And where did they settle into their new life in the San Rafael Valley? The same house where Onofre was born four years before.

Eventually, Jack became a line rider for the U.S. Government. He rode the border fence to keep the cows on the U.S. side from coming in contact with the Mexican cattle, as there was a raging epidemic of hoof-and-mouth disease south of the border. A program was underway to eradicate the disease in Mexico and keep it from crossing the border into the United States. The countries worked together through vaccination and slaughter, a controversial program that devastated the livelihood of Mexican ranchers and caused sometimes violent protests. Later Jack served as Patagonia Marshal and Deputy Sheriff for Santa Cruz County.

Maureen knew the De La Ossa kids before entering school in Lochiel, where she went to first grade. They attended school together in Patagonia and, by high school, she and Ono were dating. They attended their junior-senior prom together and after a few years apart, Ono drove to Flagstaff where Maureen was living and “fetched” her back to marry him in 1964. Maureen used to joke with Ono that she’d been following him around since she was a toddler at the house in Parker Canyon.

In their first years together, Ono worked as a cowboy at the Head-Asburn Ranch. On Labor Day 1965, when Ono asked for the day off, the boss refused, and Ono quit.

The couple moved into Patagonia and began planning their cattle import business. They decided to import Mexican corriente cattle, a breed used for team roping and bull dogging, and sell them to rodeo contractors. They pulled together the funds to start the business with Ono’s father, Abel, and became the first to raise native corriente cattle, on a large state lease on desert south of Tucson. “Ono had a knack for conforma- tion,” Maureen said. “From all his years working with cattle, he had a way of recognizing good structure, size and breed characteristics. The corriente cattle were well suited to the desert; not being beef cattle, they didn’t need to put on weight, and they thrived there.”

While raising their five children in Patagonia, Maureen took a part-time job at the Patagonia Post Office in 1979. “I loved it, because I could send the kids off to school, walk to work, and be back before they came home. We lived in our house on Sonota Avenue, which Ono built from plans he made in his head; there was never a blueprint.”

After his father died in 2002, Ono and Maureen sold off some of the state lease. In 2009 Mark and Laurie Butler, who had bought the San Antonio Ranch (aka: Head-Asburn Ranch), asked them to manage the ranch. They also continued to run their desert ranch. They said they had come full circle, back to where they first started their married life in 1964.

Maureen became Postmaster in 2000, serving until 2007. “I loved caring for a small post office in the community where I was raised, and where we raised our kids. When you know everyone, you’re not going to stand on ceremony - if an older neighbor wants to buy two stamps, you’re not going to insist they only come in sheets. And you’re going to do everything you can to get the mail out on time for people.”

Ono died in 2012 of heart complications. “A while after having heart surgery, we were transporting a cow to the desert ranch when he collapsed,” she said. “He was always doing - building, teaching the kids, fixing this and that, developing the business. He wouldn’t have stood being sedentary.”

A much-loved member of the community and the cattle industry, his funeral in Lochiel saw a gathering of over 400 people.

Maureen divides her time between Patagonia and the San Antonio Ranch, where she still helps out with ranching operations. She says if she ever questioned the sanity of having five kids, now she knows why they did.

“Since Ono passed away, they have been everything to me. They help me in so many ways, and they and our 12 grandchildren give me reasons to keep going.”

The De La Ossa clan that descended from Antonio and Carolina are found all over southern Arizona and far beyond. Whether they still call Arizona home, like Ono and Maureen’s five children, or have spent little time in the state, many feel a great connection to the San Rafael Valley. Maureen says, “Every time I top the head of the San Rafael Valley, it takes my breath away. It never loses its pull on my heart.”

Wineries (Cont.)

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Permit Issued for Sonoita RV Park

By Kat Crockett

A public hearing was held on Jan. 28, 2021 to adjudicate a request for a Conditional Use Permit to allow the property owner at 3244 SR 82 in Sonoita to build an RV Park with four units. The 0.64-acre property for the RV park (of a total of 1.15 acres in the parcel) is located behind the Dollar General at the crossroads, on land currently zoned B-2 (General Business). A conditional use permit is required because RV Parks are not allowed as a matter of right within B-2 zones.

After a notice of violation was issued by the County Planning and Zoning Dept. (P & Z) on Feb. 11, 2020 to owners Anthony Gray and Sharon Morris for developing the RV park without a Conditional Use Permit, the owners immediately removed all RVs, stopped work on property improvements, and applied for a permit. The RV park had been operating under the previous owners without proper permitting, unknown to the new owners. According to Morris, “We did not originally desire to do an RV park, we just helping friends, but now that we know there is a need for this, we want to continue to pursue this.”

During a meeting last November, after several commissioners on the P & Z Board recused themselves from voting citing a conflict of interest, it was determined that there was not a quorum, and the public hearing was rescheduled for Jan. 28, 2021.

At the January meeting, P&Z Technician Roberto Rojas informed the commissioners that there were two letters of support within a 300-foot radius and, outside the 300 feet radius, 23 letters supporting the permit and 11 in opposition. Commissioner Marcelino Verona stated, “I would like clarification on this, in case people start coming to us. We can listen to them, or take them (the letters) into consideration?” Following a discussion with staff attorney, Commissioner Nanci Pottinger ruled it would be discretionary.

Varona, echoing Commissioner Kathy Campana’s concern on the length of stays, asked P&Z Director Frank Dillion for the definition of “short term” and Dillon confirmed there was none. Morris added, “I do feel like we have a lot of support from the community and we certainly are not trying to de-value our property or our neighbor’s properties with a trailer park per se, this is short term camping, basically.” Co-owner Gray, said, “We were thinking that short term was six months for hunters – that was our idea.” After a lively 30-minute discussion by the Commission on duration of stays and enforcement issues, Verona addressed Dillion loudly declaring, “I despise the government overreach on business regulations, completely! I don’t want to get into this government overreach - I am not about that! Let them conduct their business. Six months, I don’t care what it is.”

Following the discussion period, Verona stated, “I feel pretty confident in my view that I do support the recommendation of the P&Z director, Mr. Dillion. By the looks of this presentation, these people are young entrepreneurs. They want to go ahead and develop the property and get a return on their investment. They seem to be concerned about environmental concerns around their property and I am sure those concerns can be incorporated into their business plan to make sure that the neighbors and everybody else is happy. I think with the barriers it will distract from it, but here again, if you have a dollar store next to it there, the Dollar Store is more of a distraction than four trailers are going to be.”

The permit was approved on a vote of 3 for and 1 against. Randy Heiss was the only commissioner representing District 3, in which Sonoita is located, to vote against the variance. Campagna, who lives in Sonoita, was not present at the meeting, but would have recused herself since her business abuts the property in question.

The approval will include several conditions for the owners, including limiting any one RV stay to no more than six months, installing an opaque perimeter wall sufficient in height to screen views into the park, and including a landscape buffer along the wall perimeter. There are no wastewater discharge hook-ups on the property, so a lengthy stay seems improbable.

The property, which totals 1.15 acres does not meet the county code minimum requirement for an RV park in Santa Cruz County Code, an issue which was not discussed with the Commissioners. When asked if the conditional permitting granted by the Commission means that the owners can move forward with their plans, or does the county code minimum of two acres for an RV park still apply to them, Dillon wrote “The applicant is required to submit a Development Plan for the proposed use, which will require review and approval of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for conformance with the Santa Cruz County Zoning and Development Code standards, as well as any other applicable local, state and federal requirements.”

COVID Cases Declining

By Sarah Klingenstein

Due to an ongoing downward trend in COVID cases, Patagonia Elementary and Middle Schools went back on campus using the hybrid model on March 1. The School is continuing in distance learning. Superintendent Kenny Hayes reported, “It is more difficult to bring the high school students on campus; their class sizes are larger than at the lower grades, so it is harder to socially distance. Sports are continuing, including basketball, which will wrap up soon, with tennis and baseball beginning in several weeks.”

The recent decline in cases and deaths has been dramatic. In the state of Arizona, there were over 100, sometimes reaching 150, deaths per day from COVID throughout December and January. On Feb. 14, the number of people daily deaths dropped below 50. While all cases and deaths are significant and unacceptable, it is heartening to see numbers continue to decline, probably due to increased vaccination, the immunity of people who have had the disease, and improved social distancing since the holiday period.

Santa Cruz County (SCC) has seen a downward trend in COVID case and deaths over the past several weeks as well. After a stretch during which cases per day hovered between 75 and 100+ following Thanksgiving and Christmas, there has been a solid decline in daily cases. Over the past month, the County has seen fewer than 25 new cases per day, sometimes dipping to the single digits.

Vaccine administration in SCC has seen a steady climb, with the exception of one week’s delay due to the winter storms which tied up vaccine delivery. In the week of Feb. 22, the County administered over 600 doses per day. As of Feb 26, 9188 first doses have been given, and 4308 people in the county are fully immunized. According to the ADHS zip code map, as of March 1, 134 people in Elgin, 261 people in Sonoita and 314 people in Patagonia had been vaccinated.

There have been criticisms regarding the County registration system, with individuals complaining that they haven’t been called and that they don’t know for sure that they are registered. According to Jeff Terrell, County Health Director, the system will show a green check mark when a person has registered successfully. Then it is a matter of waiting until you are called up. as of March 1, vaccines are still being given to the 1B group, finishing up teachers and focusing on essential workers (food workers, store workers, etc.). New subgroups will be added as soon as sufficient doses become available. They hope to continue receiving at least the 1,800 doses they have been allocated each week for the past several weeks.

“It is crucial that people who have registered answer their phones. We always leave a message, but sometimes we don’t hear back for days. By then, we have moved on to call others,” Terrell said. He suggested that people answer any call beginning with 520-375- (a County office landline) or 520-604- (possibly a County’s cell phone). Occasionally, the call may even show up as a blocked number. “If you are not willing to answer a call from an unknown number, then check your messages often, and get right back to us,” he advised.

For those who do contract the coronavirus, immunotherapy is a treatment option. Monoclonal antibody therapy (mAB), common in cancer treatment, was approved last fall to treat people who have had symptoms for fewer than ten days. It can lessen COVID symptoms and duration and reduce risks of needing hospitalization. The mAB treatment is a one-time infusion that takes several hours, including prep and post-infusion observation. It can come with side effects; if you are interested, contact your primary care physician for more information and a referral. He or she will help you find locations to receive the therapy.

One local resident, who did not wish to be identified, reported that she sought mAB therapy and was able to receive it nine days after first symptoms appeared. She reported that, just two days later, she started to feel much better and, two weeks later, had almost completely recovered, except for lingering fatigue.
LIFE AMONG THE HUMANS

By Martin Levowitz

In general, we like to think we know. Uncertainty feels insecure. Rulers, priests, and politicians, either by instinct or machination, have, from the beginning of time, exploited this deep human need. "Hey, follow me! I’ll tell you what The Founders really meant and - even more importantly - what God requires of you." (Title here.) Call it Jihad. Call it Crusade. Or patriotic and devout. Defending their sacred and heartfelt beliefs, many billions of humans have died. To die for your beliefs can be judged noble, or just daft. There is one pesky problem, though: you can be certain and be wrong! On top of that, add this fun fact: we human beings, like malamutes, feel vitalized when we’re part of a pack; theerv helps us overlook the clarity we lack. Can fifty thousand Frenchmen all be wrong? You bet your butt! - just as their warlike Hessian neighbors may. Now, sing along with me, je vous en prie: Deutschland, Deutschland ubers alles! Four legs good! Two legs bad! U.S.A. U.S.A. I Kill Pelosi! Stop The Steal! You may have made it up, but your belief will make it real. The fool who knows he is a fool is a wise man, they say. When vis-a-vis the universe, we are still clueless pissants, by and large, like aphids at the planetarium. This should not come as a surprise: our wisdom (as a species) is proportional to our time here on earth. When the history of this planet is presented as a 24-hour day, our species, Homo Sapiens, has been here for only four seconds or so! The designation Sapiens contains an irony, as when a toddler claims to be King Kong. There’s a pretty good song by the folk-singer Iris DeMent. It is called “Let The Mystery Be.” Religion recommends humility, reminding us of our restricted view. (See Book of Job.) Perhaps we can accept uncertainty when told to do so by authority. Just one more goofy paradox, verdad? True, caca pasa. And rather than simply not know, a lot of humans, will accept elaborate theories - odd notions which cannot be proved - of why things are the way they are. And if you are one of those folks, you’ll note that people like yourself - who share your taste in music, lifestyle, beer and rhetoric, and wave their little flag and beat their drum - see lots of stuff around them that suggests conspiracy. Perhaps the reason they’re so vehement is that, within themselves, they all suspect what none of them is willing to admit - that all their certainty’s a crock. Paranoia’s more exciting than the ho-hum status quo. The Communist conspiracy, the Zionist conspiracy, and Pizzagate, to name a fragment few. Not only do these “dangers” fascinate and frighten us, they help us feel superior to those who, we imagine, scheme to tear our lifestyle down. Entertainment is king. It’s a glorious thing. The more you feel, the more alive you feel. So, why confine your flights of fancy to the likely or banal? Why not make up some brightly-colored stuff? Why live in Sierra Vista if, by lowering your standards, you can live in Disneyland? If my sick fictions and big lies are more exciting than the so-called facts, who’ll blame me for subscribing to such drama-laden bunk? Skip all the work of vetting facts if you enjoy the way it feels to sit in judgment of “the foe.” Our enemies are in cahoots with Satan, as you know.  

Labels

By Clare Bonelli

I have a concern about labels. Not the kind on food, etc, but the kind we take on ourselves and place on other people. There are some labels that are pretty concrete - mother, wife, son/daughter, Hispanic - though these can have some variation - step-mother, Mexican-American, etc. These aren’t the ones I have a problem with. Then there are professional labels - chef, doctor, teacher, maintenance worker. These shape us to a certain extent. Chefs learn about food stuff, by lowering your standards, you can live in Disneyland? If my sick fictions and big lies are more exciting than the so-called facts, who’ll blame me for subscribing to such drama-laden bunk? Skip all the work of vetting facts if you enjoy the way it feels to sit in judgment of “the foe.” Our enemies are in cahoots with Satan, as you know.

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.

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"Eddie was right."
"What do you mean Eddie was right?"

By Cassina Farley

When I was a kid my parents got a membership to the Price Club. In my 12-year-old eyes it was a place where your mom and dad went on the weekends and bought buckets of laundry soap, cases of motor oil and shop towels. There never seemed to be anything for kids there and therefore I never begged to go. Somewhere in the late 80s or early 90s it became Costco and remained a weekend getaway for my parents. I hardly remember them dressing up and spending the day wandering the aisles of Costco. I suddenly felt really ashamed. I tried not to go but Zach, being just as addicted as I am, forced the issue. We went and bought a shelf, a shop light, and a bag of coffee. After we loaded the car and before we left, I turned to Zach and said, "When you tell Eddie about our weekend, leave this part out."

On our way out of town we stopped by the car wash and had the "special out." Zach Farley

"That’s not true!" I said and then thought about it. We had been to Costco every weekend for at least the last three weeks. I almost crashed the car. At that very moment we were on our weekly Costco outing.

When did we get so lame? I could blame it on the pandemic, but we know the truth. We may not be buying shop towels and motor oil, but our cart filled with protein drinks and laundry soap tells a different story. Instead of doing happening, 20-something things, we were dressing up and spending the day wandering the aisles of Costco. I suddenly felt really ashamed. I tried not to go but Zach, being just as addicted as I am, forced the issue. We went and bought a shelf, a shop light, and a bag of coffee. After we loaded the car and before we left, I turned to Zach and said, "When you tell Eddie about our weekend, leave this part out."

On our way out of town we stopped by the car wash and had the "special out" - something my grandparents used to do - and upon arriving home I put on my comfy pants and took a nap. We have reached the point of no return.

Based on this I have nothing left to do but confess to Eddie. Yes, we go to Costco every weekend. Instead of living interesting lives, Zach puts on his "going to town shoes" and shops for toothpaste and twelve packs of deodorant, with me! I admit it. Costco is our weekend getaway.

But the amount of water used during mine production has not yet been made public.

Barksdale Resources, another locally active mining company, is making application to ADEQ as it prepares to apply to the Forest Service to drill 30 exploratory holes on the area known as the Sunnyside Project. This will take place in Humboldt Canyon, where the access is essentially through a wash. The company seeks permission to fill the access with "3-inch to 18-inch stone riprap, or excavation and redistribution of existing streamed materials to build up, level, and even out the roadbed surface." PARA's experts are reviewing this application.

There are a lot of minerals located in the Patagonia Mountains. The minerals that were easy to access were already removed during the 100-year mining history that ended in the early 1960s. During that entire 100-year history, a total of 250,000 tons of ore was removed. The former owner of the Hermosa Project announced plans to remove that 100-year total every 25 days; the current owner has not yet released its production plans. 21st century industrialized mining isn’t anything like the old days.

With the realities of drought, climate crises, and species extinction, it is important to protect the water’s quantity and quality in this watershed for all life forms. The Patagonia Mountains are part of the Madrean Pine Oak Woodlands, a global biodiversity hotspot recognized as one of the top five places in the world most in need of protection for species survival.

It is important that we all accept the responsibility to inform ourselves about all actions which will have an impact on the quantity and/or quality of water. Listen to all perspectives - those who want to use the water for business purposes and those who want to protect the water for future generations. The permitting agencies work with the mining companies for many months, sometimes years, discussing the plans. We, the People, typically get a 30-day period to comment. Please consider submitting comments to ADEQ regarding these proposals Go to www.patagoniaalliance.org for information.

IS OUR WATER THREATENED?

By Carolyn Shafer

Several current applications from South32 Mining may affect our local watershed for years to come. Applications for permission to discharge water from the mines into Harshaw Creek at a rate of millions of gallons per day for several years have caused the Patagonia Area Resource Alliance (PARA) to ask these questions:

- Where will these large amounts of groundwater go once brought to the surface?
- What is the additional flood risk to the town of Patagonia and others in the Harshaw and Sonota Creek floodways?
- What will be the effects to our water quantity and quality?

PARA is working with experts to evaluate the permit applications. The initial review raised significant concerns which PARA continues to investigate.

As a result of the concerns raised by scientists, PARA has convinced ADEQ to extend the comment period for these applications. In addition, PARA requested that the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) exercise its authority to review the draft permits. AZ Congressman Raul Grijalva, Chairperson of the House Natural Re-sources Committee, has written the EPA supporting PARA’s request.

South32 intends to create an exploratory shaft on its patented, private claims to a depth of 1,400 feet to reach the mineral deposit; that is why it needs to “dewater.” The water quality changes when the groundwater is pumped through the geologic rock that is in the mountains and exposed to air, which creates the need to then process the water through a treatment plant to meet state water quality standards.

The permit application says that South32 plans to discharge water into the Harshaw Creek watershed at “flow rates up to 4,500 gallons per minute, or about 6.48 million gallons per day.” This will equal up to 2.37 billion gallons discharged per year. According to the application, the highest rates of pumping and discharge would last for the “first years of exploration activities” before beginning to decline over time.

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 prteditor@gmail.com

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Thank You to Volunteers

Dear friends and members,

The Patagonia Museum extends a debt of gratitude to Ralph Schmitt and Bob Ollerton for their service to this organization. Ralph and Bob will not seek reelection to their positions on the Board of Trustees this year. Ralph joined the Board of Trustees in June 2009 as vice-president. Since then, he has served as treasurer and member-at-large. Ralph’s expertise as a construction owner led to the recommendation of the Lochiel Schoolhouse. His skilled hands made many improvements to the schoolhouse, including the installation of the window frame, window panels, and floorboards.

Ralph invited me to join him in January 2009 at a meeting called by the Patagonia School District to discuss the Lochiel Schoolhouse property. From that meeting, Ralph pledged his support to handle the construction phase if the Board of Trustees approved the construction phase of the Lochiel Schoolhouse property. From that meeting, Ralph pledged his support to handle the construction phase if the Board of Trustees approved the construction phase of the Lochiel Schoolhouse property.

Thank you Ralph and Bob!!

German Quirorgo
Patagonia Museum

Thank You to PRT

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your publication’s support of fund raising for Cindy Martin and Kim Neninger. It was masterful how you took the story and using the same words as the GoFundMe posting, gave it a twist that resulted in a huge increase of donations. Using another photo was also brilliant.

Cindy is HOME! She was discharged from the Rehabilitation Hospital in El Paso, Texas. Now the real work begins. She is scheduled for a month of physical therapy and no doubt there will be many more in the future. As Cindy put it, “The parts are all there now we just need to work to connect them!” Kim is continuing her recovery, getting stronger every day and is very happy to be reunited with Cindy. Both sisters are so grateful for the support and love the community has shown them. This is an amazing community, so willing to put their neighbors health and welfare before their own.

With your generous assistance we made our goal! The money isn’t what’s important to me (it is to the sisters) but the beauty of the community coming together to help neighbors who they may not even know, who are beset with a horrible tragedy, that’s what amazes and inspires me. You and your paper had a big part in that inspiration. Thank you.

Jim Staudacher
Patagonia

By PRT Staff Reporters
January 27, 2021

Marshall Patterson reported that his department had been working on dog issues, a feral cat problem and a school issue.

The Planning & Development Committee reported it was reviewing the use permit process, prioritizing building the economy, and that it welcomes study of the area’s nature-based economy.

The Council and Mayor approved a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the Santa Cruz County Economic. About 60% of the needed money for this project is raised, with multiple organizational sponsors including The Nature Conservancy, Patagonia Area Resource Alliance (PARA), Tucson Audubon Society, and South32.

Ordinance 21-01, was passed, amending the Code of Patagonia by adopting a new Article 16 relating to the regulation of recreational marijuana.

Extensive discussion covered multiple issues. The draft ordinance was recommended for further study and added content, including further research by the Town’s Attorney.

At the request of the Tree and Park Committee, the Council and Mayor approved the writing of a letter of support for a Borderlands Restoration Network grant proposal to the National Environmental Education Foundation for extending irrigation lines in Doc Mock Park.

February 10, 2021

Call to the public opened with an explanation of a Rural Schools Grant being applied for by Zander Ault and his associate, Gabe Trenda.

Vice-Mayor Stabile reported on the meetings he and Town Manager Robinson have had with South32 and Clear Creek Associates in regard to a water discharge study from the Hermosa Project down Harshaw Creek. The study should be done by the end of April.

Mayor Wood presented Marilyn Miller who has been volunteering to assist with COVID vaccinations. The next younger age group and categories of essential workers to receive shots in the next round of vaccinations had not yet been determined by SCC, Miller explained.

Manager Robinson reported that Peter Robbins has an interest in donating a historical caboose for possible use by the Town as a Visitors’ Center, to be placed in the Town’s park. The Southern Pacific caboose dates from 1940, has bay sides and the donation would include some track and ties.

There has been one interest in opening a medical marijuana dispensary in town, and the discussion of requirements and regulation of that type of business is continuing.

Manager Robinson reported that Planning and Development is working on mapping trails, economic development and temporary use permits. The Library Advisory Committee’s recommendations and policies were approved. Librarian Laura Wenzel was appointed by Mayor Wood, what people can access on library computers, particularly if users can access extremism or seditious groups. She explained that the library does not track users’ specific websites or groups visited, and does not use blocking software, but that if she happened to walk by a user and see something inappropriate, she’d step in.

Two new job descriptions were approved, one for Public Works Foreman, the other for Lead Worker.

Amendments were approved for the December 2020 Town Personnel Policy clarifying on-call status and how vacation time will accrue and be capped. Phase 2 of the agreement with Pacific Advanced Civil Engineering was approved, for $59,520, to complete the design of the refurbishing of the Waste Water Treatment Plant, allowing it to go for bid.

February 24, 2021

Marshall Patterson reported that Animal Control Officer Hilliard was temporarily deployed with FEMA.

Melanie Lawson and Pat Risner, from South32, provided a Hermosa Project update, discussing permit applications and public comment period for permits related to dewatering. The ongoing Prefeasibility Assessment is delayed until June, and then there is estimated 12 more months to finalize a Feasibility Study. The tailings water treatment plant continues in operations 24/7 and expects to finish upgrades mid-year. The company plans a public presentation at the County Fairgrounds, March 9, 4p.m. – 6p.m. It also seeks involvement with a Community Advisory Panel being formed.

The Council and Mayor approved extending the intergovernmental Agreement with the high school and elementary school districts until the end of March to allow the Friends of Patagonia Pool to complete a pool assessment. A Study Session on the future of the pool is planned for March 17 at 6p.m.

The Council and Mayor approved three amendments to its Personnel Policy. Vacation hours were capped at 160, compensation practices for work on the weekends were clarified, and an employee new phone program was clarified.

The Planning & Development Committee reported it was reviewing the use permit process, prioritizing building the economy, and that it welcomes study of the area’s nature-based economy.

The Council and Mayor approved a Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and the Santa Cruz County Economic. About 60% of the needed money for this project is raised, with multiple organizational sponsors including The Nature Conservancy, Patagonia Area Resource Alliance (PARA), Tucson Audubon Society, and South32.

Ordinance 21-01, was passed, amending the Code of Patagonia by adopting a new Article 16 relating to the regulation of recreational marijuana.

Extensive discussion covered multiple issues. The draft ordinance was recommended for further study and added content, including further research by the Town’s Attorney.

At the request of the Tree and Park Committee, the Council and Mayor approved the writing of a letter of support for a Borderlands Restoration Network grant proposal to the National Environmental Education Foundation for extending irrigation lines in Doc Mock Park.

February 10, 2021

Call to the public opened with an explanation of a Rural Schools Grant being applied for by Zander Ault and his associate, Gabe Trenda.

Vice-Mayor Stabile reported on the meetings he and Town Manager Robinson have had with South32 and Clear Creek Associates in regard to a water discharge study from the Hermosa Project down Harshaw Creek. The study should be done by the end of April.

Mayor Wood presented Marilyn Miller who has been volunteering to assist with COVID vaccinations. The next younger age group and categories of essential workers to receive shots in the next round of vaccinations had not yet been determined by SCC, Miller explained.

Manager Robinson reported that Peter Robbins has an interest in donating a historical caboose for possible use by the Town as a Visitors’ Center, to be placed in the Town’s park. The Southern Pacific caboose dates from 1940, has bay sides and the donation would include some track and ties.

There has been one interest in opening a medical marijuana dispensary in town, and the discussion of requirements and regulation of that type of business is continuing.

Manager Robinson reported that Planning and Development is working on mapping trails, economic development and temporary use permits. The Library Advisory Committee’s recommendations and policies were approved. Librarian Laura Wenzel was appointed by Mayor Wood, what people can access on library computers, particularly if users can access extremism or seditious groups. She explained that the library does not track users’ specific websites or groups visited, and does not use blocking software, but that if she happened to walk by a user and see something inappropriate, she’d step in.

Two new job descriptions were approved, one for Public Works Foreman, the other for Lead Worker.

Amendments were approved for the December 2020 Town Personnel Policy clarifying on-call status and how vacation time will accrue and be capped. Phase 2 of the agreement with Pacific Advanced Civil Engineering was approved, for $59,520, to complete the design of the refurbishing of the Waste Water Treatment Plant, allowing it to go for bid.

February 24, 2021

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Melanie Lawson and Pat Risner, from South32, provided a Hermosa Project update, discussing permit applications and public comment period for permits related to dewatering. The ongoing Prefeasibility Assessment is delayed until June, and then there is estimated 12 more months to finalize a Feasibility Study. The tailings water treatment plant continues in operations 24/7 and expects to finish upgrades mid-year. The company plans a public presentation at the County Fairgrounds, March 9, 4p.m. – 6p.m. It also seeks involvement with a Community Advisory Panel being formed.

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Thank You to Volunteers

Dear friends and members,

The Patagonia Museum extends a debt of gratitude to Ralph Schmitt and Bob Ollerton for their service to this organization. Ralph and Bob will not seek reelection to their positions on the Board of Trustees this year. Ralph joined the Board of Trustees in June 2009 as vice-president. Since then, he has served as treasurer and member-at-large. Ralph’s expertise as a construction owner led to the recommendation of the Lochiel Schoolhouse. His skilled hands made many improvements to the schoolhouse, including the installation of the window frame, window panels, and floorboards.

Ralph invited me to join him in January 2009 at a meeting called by the Patagonia School District to discuss the Lochiel Schoolhouse property.

Thank you Ralph and Bob!!

German Quirorgo
Patagonia Museum

Thank You to PRT

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your publication’s support of fund raising for Cindy Martin and Kim Neninger. It was masterful how you took the story and using the same words as the GoFundMe posting, gave it a twist that resulted in a huge increase of donations. Using another photo was also brilliant.

Cindy is HOME! She was discharged from the Rehabilitation Hospital in El Paso, Texas. Now the real work begins. She is scheduled for a month of physical therapy and no doubt there will be many more in the future. As Cindy put it, “The parts are all there now we just need to work to connect them!” Kim is continuing her recovery, getting stronger every day and is very happy to be reunited with Cindy. Both sisters are so grateful for the support and love the community has shown them. This is an amazing community, so willing to put their neighbors health and welfare before their own.

With your generous assistance we made our goal! The money isn’t what’s important to me (it is to the sisters) but the beauty of the community coming together to help neighbors who they may not even know, who are beset with a horrible tragedy, that’s what amazes and inspires me. You and your paper had a big part in that inspiration. Thank you.

Jim Staudacher
Patagonia
COVID Causes State to Modify School Testing

By Sarah Klingenstein

A new law and executive order attempt to address the dilemma of gauging student growth and school performance during the pandemic. The State-mandated AZ Merit (AZM2) will be given, but the results will be used differently in this year that has been so impacted by COVID.

The State assessment measures English language arts and math in grades 3-8 and grade 10; and science in grades 5, 8, and 11. In the past, each public school’s results on the Merit test translated, along with factors such as high school graduation rates, into a letter grade A-F.

Last year, when schools statewide closed in March, the test was not given at all. This year, the test will be administered, scored, and reported to districts, for their use in planning instruction for the 2021-2022 school year. Letter grades will not be assigned by the state to individual schools.

Normally, the AZ Merit test, and resulting school letter grade, can determine a school’s eligibility for additional funding and increase the scrutiny it comes under from the State Department of Education. In his Executive Order, Governor Ducey made a point of saying that the letter grade program will resume next year. This practice, which is common nationwide, has been controversial. While schools do receive additional support and potential funding when they receive low grades, the connotation of failure weighs heavily on professional staff and even students.

An ongoing challenge has been to determine how much poor performance reflects the quality of the school and staff, and what is more a result of factors that can put students behind, such as poverty or the language spoken in the home before students enter school. Some education advocates maintain that those struggling schools deserves support, but not fault-finding.

The Governor also issued an executive order on Feb. 15, directing the State Department of Education to analyze the data to understand the degree of learning loss that has occurred over the past year or so.

The executive order states, “The Board shall place an emphasis on understanding how the data impacts students of various demographic subgroups. The Board shall produce a report on their findings, which may include recommendations for evidence-based strategies to mitigate the impact of learning loss” by November of the coming year.

Governor Ducey cited data showing that, when tested last fall using other measures (AZM2 is given only in the spring), students showed an average loss in mathematical learning of three months and a 1½ month loss in reading after Arizona mandated that schools shut their doors and move to distance learning for the rest of the school year. The AZM2 test will give them further data about the extent to which this “COVID slide” has continued in this school year. Results will be released in July.

Local educational leaders expected that the tests would still be given and think it is appropriate that the data be used strictly for instructional planning. Patagonia Superintendent and Principal Kenny Hayes reported that testing that teachers have been conducting throughout the year have given them good data on where students are. “We are adjusting next year’s schedules to include time for intervention for those who have fallen behind, while offering enrichment for students who were able to make good progress this year,” he said. Patagonia Schools have spent much of the year either in distance or hybrid learning models. And, as has been common across the country since last spring, a “digital divide” has hampered schooling for children unable to access the internet from home.

Mary Faley, Superintendent and Principal of Elgin School, said that she had hoped this would be the conclusion the State would reach. “I support giving the test, but to grade the schools this year would be wrong. Each district conducted school the way it saw fit, ever since the opening last fall, based on their communities and their rates of infection.” Elgin School has offered in-person and distance learning options throughout most of the 2020-2021 school year.

But it is not just being on campus vs. learning from home that has affected learning. As Anna Coleman, Elgin third grade teacher, said, “This has been a stressful time, for kids, parents and school staff. The emotional impacts of a pandemic affect learning, as well.”

Nisa Talavera, a mother of two students, said she “has watched the spark for learning literally drain from my children. Most days the internet doesn’t work well, and there is never a sense of accomplishment for these kids.” Talavera feels that any benchmark tests given to the students at this point would “only hinder them. There is no way to accurately test what these kids have or have not learned over the last year.”

The State requires that the AZM2 be administered on school campuses, and has increased the usual window for administration into May. As Superintendent Hayes said, “We will work with our families to figure out how to accomplish the testing in the safest and easiest way possible.”

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.

Gordon Purvis, Agent
Gordon Purvis Agency Inc
Bus: (520) 298-3900
gpurvis@amfam.com
gordonpurvis.com
The community is a major step closer to developing a sustainable Patagonia Pool. The Pool Assessment prepared for the Friends of the Patagonia Pool (FOPP) is essentially complete and shows that the pool, while over 30 years old, is in good shape and could easily provide at least another decade of recreation, water safety training, water aerobics and lap swim to the communities and schools of Patagonia, Sonoita, Elgin and surrounding areas.

The Counsilman-Hunsaker Pool Assessment Report categorized needed actions in terms of immediate, mid- and long-term.

The immediate needs are to provide depth markings that meet current standards, provide an ADA accessible lift, cap the vacuum line, remove the diving boards, repair a leak in the stainless-steel gutter system and purchase a robotic vacuum. The goal would be to provide all these in the next year. The ADA lift is approximately $12,000 and there should be $16,000 left in the Timken grant for this purpose.

The mid-term needs are to replace the deck and perimeter fencing, purchase an adequate pool cover and provide an ADA accessible bathroom (prefab units are available). The mid-term needs are the most expensive, but the five year timeline to provide these would allow for the raising of additional funds.

The long-term needs are to purchase a variable frequency drive to allow the recirculation pump to operate at its most efficient level and to remodel the mechanical room space to provide for separate, ventilated rooms for storage of the pool chemicals. The wish list includes a heater for the pool to allow more than four months of use per year and possibly eventually an enclosure. An enclosure along with a heater would enable year-round use.

The assessment also provided an estimate of operation and maintenance costs. It estimates power, water, and chemicals to be approximately $38,000 per year. An estimate for liability insurance has not been established yet. The current policy evidently does not break out the amount just for the pool. A professional maintenance contract with a competent pool company is estimated to cost about $9,000 per year and a part-time pool manager (10 hours a week for four months - currently) would be $3,000. Not including liability insurance, the estimate for a pool of this size is approximately $50,000 per year. It is obvious why the Town and School Districts need substantial assistance with the pool, as they have been budgeting only $30,000 per year.

The pool is sustainable for another decade at least if the proper care and operation is provided. Considering the cost of a new comparable pool is at least $800,000-1,000,000, an investment of approximately 10% of that would keep this valuable community asset operational. Assuming the IGA between the Town and Patagonia School Districts is extended for a few more months so that FOPP can find new partners, FOPP will ramp up its activities, including fundraising, quotes for needed work and program development. New financial partners for the operation and maintenance need to be identified, as well. The Town and Patagonia School Districts have done a remarkable job for over 30 years, but cannot keep doing it on their own.

The FOPP pool assessment was 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.

FOPP invites all interested citizens to join our work to keep the pool open. Please contact Karen Riggs, FOPP president at: mustangmtnwrit-er@gmail.com to lend a hand.

John William Jenkins of Camp Verde, Arizona passed away peacefully on February 18, 2021 from what he believed to be COVID-19 related health issues.

He was born on March 21, 1930 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. John served in the U. S. Air Force where he was stationed in Okinawa and studied in Japan before returning home to marry Doris Kundart in 1951. They moved to San Diego, California where he attended Linda Vista Baptist Bible College, earning a B.A. degree in Bible with a minor in education.

He is survived by his children Dianna Cramer of Happy Jack, Arizona, Joanna Carter of Siloam Springs, Arkansas, and John Jenkins of Puyallup, Washington. He is also survived by seven grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild.

John’s life touched so many souls as he ministered in Duncan, Winslow, Patagonia, and Camp Verde, Arizona. His community work included chaplaincy at Verde Valley Medical Center, board member of the Verde Valley Guidance Clinic, fireman in Duncan, Arizona, ambulance driver in two communities, and Boy Scout Master where he earned the Golden Eagle Award. John was awarded the Verde Valley Chamber of Commerce 1974 Man of the Year Award.

John was the man everyone knew they could call when there was a spiritual need in the community. He leaves a legacy of compassion, humility, and kindness. Everyone of all walks of life was embraced by Rev. John Jenkins.

John was passionate about living a healthy lifestyle. He hiked the Grand Canyon and Havasupai Canyon trails with many groups. One of his greatest accomplishments was in 1985 when he bicycled from Florence, Oregon to Yorktown, Virginia by way of the TransAmerica Bicycle Trail. His wife drove their camper as backup.

With historical sidebars and inspirational insights, John pursued another passion of his, creative writing. “Catching a Dream,” a journal of this sacred journey, became one of several of his award-winning published books, filled with wisdom and personal stories. The Camp Verde Library was his second home where he was surrounded by all his favorite subjects. The family is asking for a donation to the Camp Verde Library in his memory.
CHOP Looking to Rebuild

By Bob Brandt

Now that a recent affordable housing assessment has been completed, Community Homes of Patagonia (CHOP) has a new foundation on which it hopes to rebuild its organizational strength and increase the housing options for the community’s low to moderate income residents.

Wendy Carter, principal consultant of Wendy Carter Development Consulting LLC, officially presented her final report to CHOP’s Board of Directors during a Zoom call on Feb. 12. Over the past several months, Carter worked in tandem with the organization’s three-member Strategic Planning Committee led by long time CHOP board director, Tod Bowden, Ken Morrow and Bob Brandt.

Carter’s report included data gathered by her team from several key sources including U.S. Census reports, interviews with ten local employers and other key stakeholders selected by the committee and 22 responses to a household survey that was available through certain employers who participated in the study.

Carter’s report confirmed what, to some, may seem readily apparent: there is insufficient affordable housing in Patagonia, both for purchase and rentals. A surprising finding from the study, as Carr confirmed what, in response to the study findings, Carter outlined several strategies CHOP could implement to help improve the supply of affordable housing and to assist individuals in purchasing such units. Over the next several weeks, a group of community members will hold a series of meetings via Zoom to discuss the several directions the organization could take to reach those goals and recommend a specific program direction for the board’s consideration.

While the housing study has demonstrated the need and demand for affordable housing in Patagonia, CHOP will need to bolster its organizational capacity to plan, develop and manage any significant affordable housing effort. This is likely to require partnering with one or more entities with expertise in affordable housing and taking on at least part-time staff, something the organization has never had.

Armed with the study results, Bowden, newly-elected president at the organization’s annual meeting on Feb. 20, said, “I hope to recruit additional board directors to bring new energy and ideas and make a real difference in CHOP’s mission to create more affordable housing in Patagonia.” Interested individuals may contact Bowden at info@chopatagonia.org.

Check It Out At The Library

By Laura Wenzel

Though the library building is closed to the public for the foreseeable future, we are open for contactless curb-side pickup of library books and prints, scans, and faxes. If you need something printed, call us at 520-394-2010 or send us an email at info@patagoniapubliclibrary.org. We’ll print your document and place it in a private folder on the pickup cart at the front entrance.

Don’t miss out on new library materials! Go to www.patagoniapubliclibrary.org/catalog for a list of new library items. If you don’t feel like waiting for your pickup order, download the Libby app to your phone or reading device to download ebooks and audiobooks instantly.

Through the app, we are pleased to now offer digital magazines. Access over a hundred magazine subscriptions for free, including Audubon Magazine, GQ, and The Week.

This time of year not only brings the impacts of COVID-19, the library is working on several grants to fund our collection and programs for 2021. The most recent submittal was the 2021-2022 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Big Read grant, a community-wide reading program with focus on a selected book with supplemental materials, discussions, and events pertaining to the themes of the book.

The library, in partnership with Patagonia Creative Arts Association and several other partner organizations in the community, including the PRT, hopes to win $5000 for this third program at the end of 2021 based on Joy Harjo’s book of poetry, “An American Sunrise.” As a writer from the Muscogee Creek Nation and 2019’s Poet Laureate of the United States, Harjo’s beautiful, powerful, sometimes violent poetry details her tribe’s and family’s historical traumas, spirituality, and healing.

Virtual and potentially in-person book discussions, a middle and high school poetry contest, a film series at the Tin Shed Theater, presentations and storytelling by Indigenous scholars, a photography exhibit and more will result from the grant.

Though COVID-19 prevented in-person programming during most of 2020, it is hoped that the culturally diverse and timely event topics generated from the 2021 Big Read program will bring our community together again after being apart for so long.

Recycling Task Force Update

By Bob Brandt

The Patagonia Recycling Task Force has scheduled its fourth monthly collection event for Saturday, March 27 from 10a.m. until noon, at which time it will again collect glass and only glass. Town Manager Ron Robinson reported that the town saved about $100 in landfill tipping fees as a result of the Jan. 23 glass collection event. Thus, the task force is considering collecting glass more often than other recyclables given the savings in terms of both money and protection of the environment.

The task force collected an estimated half-ton of cardboard, as well as $240 in cash donations, on Feb. 27, behind the Patagonia Post Office. Forty-three vehicles brought enough cardboard to the event to fill two pickup trucks with trailers donated by Mike Swedo and Mike Enright and Bob Brandt’s minivan. All of the cardboard was delivered to Nogales-based Green Planet Recycling where it is baled and sold to companies that reuse it.

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As the task force explores broad-scale recycling options, it will continue to offer single item collection events each month and provide instruction about proper recycling techniques.

The task force would like to expand its membership and is open to hearing suggestions from the community on what recycling ideas would work best. Individuals may email Brandt at Brantownb@gmail.com or call him at 703.615.8002 to provide input and/or volunteer.

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Ann Gortarez, Patagonia School Director of Special Education teacher, was recognized by Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction Kathy Hoffman in her Feb. 9, 2021 ‘State of Special Education’ presentation.

“Patagonia Public Schools’ special education director and teacher Ann Gortarez embraced the opportunity to reimagine their Room 409 resource room into an online support center for all students in special education and their families,” Hoffman said. “The virtual Room 409 is open from dusk to dawn, five days a week, allowing students and families to receive help with classwork or homework at any time.

Using flexible scheduling, Ms. Gortarez and her staff regularly join general education virtual sessions to support their students, which they follow up with secondary lessons and guided practice in Room 409.

Beyond providing the normalcy typically found in the Room 409 classroom, Ms. Gortarez and her team have provided a virtual environment where students are thriving. Students’ skills in learning how and when to use online supports like assistive technology have accelerated in this new environment.

And the students’ boosted confidence in using these tools will stay with them when returning to in-person learning.

Imagine if we provided all public schools the resources to expand on their successes. Imagine if all schools had the means to hire a full range of special education staff instead of having education professionals take on multiple roles. Imagine if all families had access to reliable, affordable internet, allowing them to access not just their learning but a range of professional and social activities.

Imagine if all students in special education had access to a fully staffed and fully resourced Room 409.”

“Ann Gortarez is a truly great asset to not only Patagonia Public Schools, but also to the Patagonia community,” said Patagonia School Superintendent Kenny Hayes. “She goes far beyond doing her job and does everything that she can to help all students at Patagonia Public Schools. Ms. Gortarez knows when students need support and what supports those students need. Her support staff also is well trained and very supportive to our students at Patagonia Public Schools. This shows her eye for talent, and ability to put individuals in the right situation.”

Submitted by Patagonia Public Schools

Patagonia Public School Special Education Director Ann Gortarez was praised recently as an outstanding teacher.

Photo by Marion Vendituoli
By Alison Bunting

The story of Evangelina “Eva” Ferra and Ricardo “Dick” Jimenez is typical of many area families in the early 20th century whose parents or grandparents emigrated from Mexico to work in area mines and ranches. Dick’s father, Antonio Jimenez, arrived from Sonora, Mexico about 1906; his mother, Maria Eugenia Soto was born in Arizona. Eva’s parents, Mariano Ysidro Ferra and Mercedes Escalante, were born in Sonora and their families arrived in Arizona about 1909.

Eva Ferra was born on October 23, 1917 in Pantano, AZ. Her mother died in November 1918 from influenza and her grandparents, Mariano and Juana Ferra, took her in and raised her. Her grandfather worked as a cowboy for the Vail family, stationed at the Rosemont Camp area of the Empire Ranch. The Rosemont school had closed when Eva was of school age, so she attended the Empire School when their father, Antonio, worked in the mines. At age 15 Dick worked as a mine mucker alongside his older brother, Angel. In 1932 he began to work as a part time cowboy for Henry G. Boice at the Rail X Ranch. In 1934 he moved to the Empire Ranch as a full-time cowboy.

On Nov. 25, 1937 Eva and Dick were married in the St. Rita in the Desert Catholic church in Vail. They had a one-night honeymoon in Nogales and returned to the Empire Ranch. Dick resumed his cowboy duties and Eva cooked for the cowboys and did laundry for them for a fee. Their daughter Mercedes “Mercy” was born in 1938. In 1945 the family moved to the Crown C Ranch, owned by Blake and Jane Carrington, where Dick was the foreman.

Dick was an active competitor in rodeo events. In 1960 he and a cowboy from the Douglas ranch, Alfredo Gheredia, killed a male mountain lion that had been hunting cattle in the area. [Tucson Daily Citizen, 2/26/1960]. Dick almost died and lost the hearing in one ear when he was struck by lightning while driving cattle on the Crown C. He was kept alive by mouth-to-mouth resuscitation until the ambulance arrived. His horse was killed. [Dick and Eva Jimenez oral history, 1991]. Dick continued working for the Carrington’s until 1970 when Mrs. Carrington sold most of the Crown C property. She gifted a parcel of land to Dick and Eva for their home and built a shop and a garage for Dick, complete with welding equipment. [Barr, More Hidden Treasures of Santa Cruz County, 2008]. When the Crown C became a guest ranch under the direction of Mrs. Sydney Franklin, Dick and Eva assisted with guests and other ranch chores. Eva died in 2003 at age 85, and Dick died in 2008 at age 95.

mercycmill.jpg

Photo courtesy of the Empire Ranch Foundation

Merry Makers, which Eva frequently wrote reports for the Empire [School] Merry Makers, which appeared in the Arizona Daily Star.

Dick Jimenez was born in Harshaw, AZ on June 23, 1913. Dick and his four siblings grew up in Harshaw where their father, Antonio, worked in the mines. At age 15 Dick worked as a mine mucker alongside his older brother, Angel. In 1932 he began to work as a part time cowboy for Henry G. Boice at the Rail X Ranch. In 1934 he moved to the Empire Ranch as a full-time cowboy.

In 1927 Mariano Ferra was reassigned to the Empire Ranch headquarters where the family lived in a two-room adobe structure known as the hired Man’s House.

When the Boice family purchased the Empire in 1928 they allowed the family to remain in the adobe house. Eva helped Mary Boice with her young sons, Bob and Pancho. While in school, Eva frequently wrote reports for the Empire [School] Merry Makers, which appeared in the Arizona Daily Star.

Dick Jimenez was born in Harshaw, AZ on June 23, 1913. Dick and his four siblings grew up in Harshaw where their father, Antonio, worked in the mines. At age 15 Dick worked as a mine mucker alongside his older brother, Angel. In 1932 he began to work as a part time cowboy for Henry G. Boice at the Rail X Ranch. In 1934 he moved to the Empire Ranch as a full-time cowboy.

On Nov. 25, 1937 Eva and Dick were married in the St. Rita in the Desert Catholic church in Vail. They had a one-night honeymoon in Nogales and returned to the Empire Ranch. Dick resumed his cowboy duties and Eva cooked for the cowboys and did laundry for them for a fee. Their daughter Mercedes “Mercy” was born in 1938. In 1945 the family moved to the Crown C Ranch, owned by Blake and Jane Carrington, where Dick was the foreman.

Dick was an active competitor in rodeo events. In 1960 he and a cowboy from the Douglas ranch, Alfredo Gheredia, killed a male mountain lion that had been hunting cattle in the area. [Tucson Daily Citizen, 2/26/1960]. Dick almost died and lost the hearing in one ear when he was struck by lightning while driving cattle on the Crown C. He was kept alive by mouth-to-mouth resuscitation until the ambulance arrived. His horse was killed. [Dick and Eva Jimenez oral history, 1991]. Dick continued working for the Carrington’s until 1970 when Mrs. Carrington sold most of the Crown C property. She gifted a parcel of land to Dick and Eva for their home and built a shop and a garage for Dick, complete with welding equipment. [Barr, More Hidden Treasures of Santa Cruz County, 2008]. When the Crown C became a guest ranch under the direction of Mrs. Sydney Franklin, Dick and Eva assisted with guests and other ranch chores. Eva died in 2003 at age 85, and Dick died in 2008 at age 95.

COVID-19 Clinical Personnel – Vaccine Administration

The Mariposa Community Health Center in Nogales, Arizona, which has four sites in southern Arizona – Nogales, Rio Rico, Tubac and the Family Health Center in Patagonia, AZ, is currently in high demand for clinical personnel that can provide assistance with the COVID-19 vaccine administration on an on-call basis. If you are interested or know of someone who is, resumes are welcome through humanresources@mariposachc.net, or by fax at 520-281-1112. You may also visit our website for more information, www.mariposachc.net.

Mariposa Community Health Center is an Equal Opportunity Employer, Gender/Minority/Veterans/Disabled

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March of the Winds

If there is a singular force of nature that defines March in the Sky Islands, then it must be wind. Anyone who has literally weathered the local vagaries of March’s meteorology knows the mercurial nature of both this month’s temperatures and winds.

On March 20, winter turns to spring during the vernal equinox. This month seems, then, like a mortal combat between seasons, as spring tries to subdue winter and wrest the weather from its cold grip. As temperatures vacillate between sometimes frosty nights and occasional 80-degree days, fierce winds are generated that both challenge the very fabric of biodiversity, but which also are vital to, and support it.

"Wind that howls, wind that roars, shutter the windows, bolt the doors, earth destroyed, earth restored"

The name “March” is derived from “Mars”, the Roman god of war, possibly because the change to spring’s more temperate climate in the Roman kingdom may have favored battle more often than the gloom of winter.

Locally, the natural world has much to do in this often-schizophrenic month. Perhaps the most palpable effect of March wind is its ability to destroy. Trees may be blown down, entire shrubs cast aloft, and soil rent from the Earth. Both severe gusts and sustained winds can effect these dramatic changes which, on face value, seem only detrimental to our biodiversity.

Indeed, soil loss from overgrazing and poor agricultural practices is now an endemic and chronic environmental crisis that plagues us each year. Highway shutdowns and associated fatal accidents are stark reminders that protecting our soil is crucial not only for safeguarding our biodiversity, but also to our own life and limbs.

Every coin has two sides, however. Soil lost from one area may fertilize another, like an airborne spice of nutrients. The sands of the Sahara sometimes fertilize the distant Amazon Basin thanks to wind! On April 12, 2001, a huge dust storm from China and Mongolia descended upon Arizona, bringing such “manna from heaven” to our local ecosystems. Similarly, fallen trees provide runs for rodents and cover for a wide range of wildlife. Yesterday’s destruction is today’s boon.

Lost hats, which March must lead the league in, attest to the wind’s ability as a transport mechanism. Thus, a host of plants and plant parts have evolved to hitch a ride on substantial gusts. Wind is a highly effective and consistent method for the delivery of pollen, and a wide range of plants, from trees to wildflowers, rely upon gusts to cross-fertilize the next generation of plants. Junipers, mulberries, and ashes are among our wind-pollinated species that may flower in March. Ask anyone who suffers from allergies, and I am certain that March is one of their least favorite months!

Molded by millennia of natural selection, some seeds are primarily dispersed by wind. Seeds in the astar family rely heavily upon this mode of propagation. Many have a seed with a parachute-like set of filaments that serve to carry them skyward. The aptly named “silver puffs” uses its reflective chutes to catch the wind and land away from its parent plant. Frequent cottonwood likewise employs breezes for casting its seeds near and far.

Non-native tumbleweeds attest to the fact that Arizona has no monopoly on wind. These natives of the steppes of Asia may become completely airborne or en masse travel across the parched earth in a windy March, thus dispersing their seeds.

Many species of birds migrate at night, navigating by the stars, but also avoiding vexing daytime winds. Generally nocturnal gusts are more minimal and thus equate to a substantial system. Asteroids, something like our microscopic viruses, not only have the potential to cause considerable destruction, but may have also been the mechanism that brought the building blocks of life to Earth. So, let us be humble in the knowledge that from small things may come the most consequential.

The largest asteroid is Ceres, located in the region between Mars and Jupiter. It is about 600 miles wide. Its home, the asteroid belt, is where the majority of the millions of asteroids can be found. However, some have eccentric orbits and pass close enough to our planet to require ongoing observation.

Asteroids sometimes enter our atmosphere, becoming meteors. If they reach the surface before burning up we call them meteorites. The death of the dinosaurs, some 65 million years ago, was probably the result of a massive meteor. Smaller strikes have left such landmarks as Meteor Crater near Winslow.

Scientists believe that asteroids were formed over 4.5 billion years ago at the very beginning of our solar system. Rather than coalescing into a planet, these oddly shaped leftovers have, instead, slammed into their celestial cousins and into each other, depositing and spreading their metals and organic compounds to all takers.

In an effort to more fully understand how the solar system was formed and the role asteroids have played, NASA continues to oversee a mission in which several ounces of surface material from the Asteroid Bennu have been collected. The agency hopes to begin examining and analyzing the samples in 2023.

Bennu is not a threat to our planet, even though in 2135 it may briefly be closer to us than we are to the moon. Right now, it is over 200 million miles away. Astronomers have calculated its diameter at 500 meters, or roughly the height of the Empire State Building. It orbits the sun every 436 days. Its distance from Earth caused an 18-minute delay in sending and receiving data and from the Osiris-REx spacecraft as it maneuvered toward Bennu’s surface. We take so much for granted.

Just as we have always assumed that beating a virus was only an aspirin or two away, so we also have tended to steer our sights to the mightiest objects in the sky. Mercifully, the brilliance that has given us vaccines mirrors the brilliance that imagines and builds a machine that can travel through space to a speeding skyscraper and then, to top it off, scoop up some dirt that may very well prove how the sun and the planets came to be.

Even today I can hear my mother’s voice telling me not to fear a tiny insect crawling nearby. You are so much bigger than it, she says. She was right, but also wrong. Instead, the emotion I should have focused upon was amazement. It holds true that here on Earth as well as in the heavens, it’s often the little things that matter the most and may be the most far-reaching.

We should be humbled at what the coronavirus has wrought. Similarly, let’s be humbled by the thought that relatively small space rocks may be at the root of so much we’ve come to enjoy - and need - in everyday life. May be from such humility springs greater preparedness, and well as joy.

STARSTRUCK

By Harold Meckler

We may, now more than ever, desperately need kindness, love, and compassion. I think, however, that humility should come first. A piece of genetic material just a fraction of the width of human hair, has killed millions of people in just the past year. The biggest and strongest amongst us is as much at risk as anyone. Sometimes, size alone is simply not enough to beat the odds.

Likewise, we can breathlessly examine the immensity and power of a black hole, and marvel at supersize planets like Jupiter and Saturn. But what we really need to study are the small, often rather insignificant rocky bodies that exist throughout the solar system. Asteroids, something like our microscopic viruses, not only have the potential to cause considerable destruction, but may have also been the mechanism that brought the building blocks of life to Earth. So, let us be humble in the knowledge that from small things may come the most consequential.

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Your Tax Credit Helps Schools

Tax credit contributions help Patagonia Public Schools provide quality extra-curricular programs and activities for our students. Arizona tax code allows an individual tax credit up to $200.00 per individual filing or $400.00 if filing a joint return. This contribution is a dollar-for-dollar tax credit! You can contribute to this fund until April 15, 2021, and still claim on your 2020 tax return year.

You do not need to live within the district boundaries or have a student enrolled in the district to contribute to Patagonia Schools. You can choose either athletics, band, FFA, student CPR training for High School, or athletics or band for middle school. There is also a place to allow the district to designate where the contribution is allocated.

You can come into the student office and fill out a form and submit your contribution Monday through Thursday from 7:30a.m. to 4:00p.m. and Friday from 7:30a.m. to 2:00p.m. Patagonia Public Schools thanks you for your support.

Support PYEC This Tax Season

The Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center thanks the community for all their support. The Youth Center could NOT have adapted all of their services and continue to serve the community during the pandemic without the incredible generosity of donors.

Now that tax time is approaching, we also want to remind you that the Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center is a Qualified Charitable Organization under the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit Program. This means that individuals can receive a tax credit for up to $400 and taxpayers filing jointly can receive up to $800. If you haven’t already done so, now’s the time! Donations for the 2020 tax year can be made until April 15, 2020.

People often ask “Can I make a tax credit-eligible donation to the youth center and one to the schools and receive tax credits for both?” The answer is YES! They are separate tax credit programs, so you can receive tax credits for your donations to both.

Here’s how it works: you make a donation to the Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center (before you file your state income tax return, using the amount and date guidelines shown above); select the Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center from the list of Qualified Charitable Organizations; and you can include your tax credit amount on your return.

You can make your donation by sending a check to the Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center; PO Box 843, Patagonia, AZ 85624 or going to our website www.pyec.org and donating via Paypal.

CALL FOR APPICANTS: Hermosa Community Advisory Panel

South32 is committed to the wellbeing of all communities where we work. As we continue with our studies around the Hermosa Project development option, we are inviting residents of Santa Cruz County to serve on a newly formed Hermosa Community Advisory Panel.

In March 2021, advisory panelists will be selected to convene monthly to 1) advise on aspects of project development with community impacts and 2) identify joint goals and priorities that could benefit both the larger community and South32. Members of the panel will recommend priorities and strategies important to the community, such as those related to transportation, infrastructure, water, environment, wildlife preservation, and workforce concerns.

We encourage community members with diverse perspectives about the impacts of the Hermosa Project to apply, especially those with strong networks within existing local and regional boards, committees, formal and/or informal community groups, and/or businesses. Panelists will be expected to volunteer approximately five hours per month for at least one year.

We’ve contracted with a third party to manage and facilitate this process, and this contractor will select and interview prospective panel members. Panel meetings will be open to the public. For questions or assistance in completing an application, contact Angie Donelson, Donelson Consulting LLC, at angie.donelson@gmail.com. Applications are available at south32.net/hermosa/documents and due by 5 p.m. MST on Friday, March 12, 2021.

HERMOSO PROJECT OPEN HOUSE

Technical and other professional staff from South32 will be on hand to answer questions and to discuss water and roads topics related to the project.

For everyone’s safety, COVID-19 protocols, including mandatory face masks and social distancing, will be in place. The event will be outdoors and is subject to cancellation due to weather or if the COVID-19 situation worsens.

For more information, email askhermosa@south32.net.

SONOITA FAIRGROUNDS

Tuesday, March 9, 2021
Drop in between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m.
Open for Business
New Business News

Vera Earl Ranch Beef
Markets Local, Natural Meats

By Pat McNamara

The Vera Earl Ranch has come a long way from its start in 1968 with the purchase of 20,000 acres of the Sonoita grasslands by Burton Beck, the grandfather of current owner, Ian Tomlinson.

Over the years the ranch has expanded to include a lease on the Empire Ranch in Sonoita and a partnership with the Sands Ranch in Rain Valley for the herd that is maintained by the twenty employees responsible for their care.

Vera Earl is one of 374 ranches that are CARES Certified. This process is part of “IMI Global/Where Food Comes From,” an organization that requires participating ranches to provide transparency and traceability in their beef production. It also requires that each ranch practices sustainability of natural resources with proper land and water management. Certification also assures the consumer that the cattle are properly and humanely handled and cared for until they are shipped for processing. The final processing for the Vera Earl Ranch beef occurs at the University of Arizona, a USDA federally inspected facility.

The calves are born and raised on pasture until they reach 750 pounds, then are transitioned to a locally sourced, grain-based diet for eight to ten months until they finish growing. This process assures the superior marbling that is expected in premium beef. The meat is certified as ‘Natural Beef’ as there are no antibiotics or hormones added during the life of the animal. After processing, the beef is dry-aged for 21 days. Since it generally takes three times as long to finish the cattle on grass compared to grain, the grain finishing process helps to alleviate the strain on the environment by lessening the carbon footprint.

Vera Earl provides wholesale beef to large, natural food companies such as Whole Foods in Tucson as well as the smaller venues like the Café Restaurant in Sonoita. In March 2020, office employees, Amanda Zamudio and Val Burleson saw yet another, opportunity for expansion that would benefit the community. COVID 19 was raging, and people were staying safe at home, so, with the support of owner, Ian Tomlinson, a more community-based specialty company for their beef was established in Sonoita.

Customers can now buy any amount of most cuts of beef as well as lamb. The lamb is provided by Zamudio from her farm in Patagonia. They offer free local delivery and can ship anywhere in the U.S., as well. The meat can also be picked up at their office headquarters 3282 Hwy 82.

A website is currently under construction. Interested buyers can contact the ranch at beef@veraearlranch.com or by phone: 520-455-9317.

2021 ROTARY SWING INTO SPRING Golf Tournament
Hosted by the Mountain Empire & Benson Rotary Clubs

San Pedro Golf Course
Benson Arizona

April 24th, 2021
Registration 8 am
Shotgun Start 9 am

Cost: $ 85/golfer includes: Green Fee - Cart -Goody Bag - Lunch - Range Balls- 5 Raffle Tickets - Scramble Format - Four Person Teams - Hole in 1 Prize (Car)

Prizes:
Closest to the Hole, Long Drive, and new this year - Rotarian Club Team Perpetual Trophy

***TEAMS WELCOME***

Registration forms available from:
Michael Veta 520-226-3626 - mveta@AzTrailFinancial.com
or from your friendly Benson and Mountain Empire Rotarians

Make your check payable to: Patagonia Sonoita Rotary Club Foundation
Mail to: Michael Veta, PO Box 795, Sonoita, AZ 85637
Questions? Contact: Mike Veta 520-226-3626 mveta@AzTrailFinancial.com
Rotary Club Fundraiser

By Anne Gibson

The Mountain Empire Rotary Club is pleased to announce that we are joining The Benson Rotary Club in hosting ‘The Swing Into Spring Golf Tournament,’ Saturday April 24, 2021 at the San Pedro Golf Club in Benson.

This community has been extremely generous in the past at our club’s most successful fundraiser golf tournaments held at the Kino Springs Tournament. Unfortunately, our 2019 tournament was cancelled just a few months prior to the scheduled event due the closure of Kino Springs Golf Club; partnering with The Benson Rotary Club was a fantastic solution. The proceeds from the tournament will benefit our local students with our many literacy awards (Scholarships, Student of the Month, Birthday Books, and many other projects we fund).

Golf is the perfect answer to COVID19 “cabin fever” and the San Pedro Golf Club is a beautiful course. The tournament will begin with registration at 8:00 a.m. and a shotgun scramble at 9:00 a.m. The $150 entry fee includes green fee, cart, range balls, goodie bag, delicious lunch, raffle tickets AND a terrifically FUN in the sun time! We’ll also feature a Silent Auction and our infamous Bloody Mary & Margarita Tent.

Look forward to hearing from your friendly local Rotarian for Tournament Sponsor opportunities which include great advertising/promotional opportunities for your business. We’ll have flyers posted everywhere for details or contact Rotarian Mike Veta, 520-226-3626, mveta@AzTrailFinancial.com.

This community has been generous in the past and we look forward to you opening your charitable hearts in supporting this great event. Mark April 24 in your calendars to have a great day outdoors, get some exercise, and enjoy hours of socialization at the San Pedro Golf Course.

Fairgrounds Kitchen Renovation Completed

By Marion Vendituoli

What started out as a fundraising project to purchase new appliances for the Sonoita Fairgrounds kitchen in autumn, 2017, soon ballooned into a major overhaul and remodeling of the area to make it compliant with Santa Cruz County Board of Health standards. Three and a half years later, the new kitchen has passed inspection and has been certified as a commercial kitchen.

For years, volunteers and staff at the Santa Cruz County Fair and Rodeo Assn. (SCCFRA) had struggled with keeping outdated and unreliable appliances and fixtures working. One of the stoves in use at that time was manufactured in 1956 and parts were not available to fix it. Only the stovetop worked on one of the stoves and only the oven worked on the other one. The freezer and refrigerator broke down frequently and were using excessive amounts of electricity and not maintaining cold enough temperatures.

On further investigation, it was learned that the kitchen, which dated back at least to the 1940s, did not meet the minimum standards for a commercial kitchen and, in addition to the new appliances, drains, sinks, surfaces, refrigeration units, stove hood, fire suppression system, plumbing, electrical wiring and more needed upgrading and/or replacing.

In the process of redesigning the area, a new bar was built, with an ADA counter, a new storage room, closet and laundry room were added, a new hood and fire suppression system was installed, as well as new lighting, new propane and plumbing fixtures, new drains and sewer lines, a new hot water system, and fire doors and handwashing sinks. The electrical system and HVAC system were upgraded and the roof and drainpipes were repaired, new interior walls were built, and the floor was sealed.

Donations and grants totaling $60,977 in cash and $5000 in in-kind donations were raised for this project. The work was completed by SCCFRA staff, volunteer help, the help of inmates from the AZ Dept. of Corrections and by licensed contractors.

The kitchen renovation project, and the Santa Cruz County Fair and Rodeo Association as a whole, were negatively impacted by the pandemic. The inmates who had been integral in the maintenance of the grounds as well as working on the kitchen project were no longer available due to the pandemic, and the cancellation of the Sonoita Races last May, one of the major sources of funding for SCCFRA, as well as the cancellation of private events held in Pioneer Hall, have put financial stress on the 106-year-old community organization.

But the Board, staff, and volunteers at SCCFRA remain committed to continue the tradition of the Fairgrounds as the heart of the community. The commercial kitchen will help them to continue their mission of promoting youth in agriculture, benefiting the local economy, continuing the western traditions of this county and supporting the community.

The kitchen will be utilized at future major fundraising events that support the Sonoita Fairgrounds, a necessity for the financial survival of the fairgrounds, as well as for local charitable events, community parties, funerals, weddings, and reunions.

The kitchen will be an asset to the entire community, including local caterers, bakers, canners and fundraising organizations. It will also be available for community service groups who host fundraising events at the fairgrounds.
Senior Spotlights

This month the PRT begins a series of profiles of the PUHS senior class of 2021. Look for more profiles of these talented and interesting young people in upcoming issues of the PRT.

Hannah Woodward

Participation in school clubs and sports: Basketball, volleyball and tennis. FFA for four years.
Extra-curricular activities outside of school: I have participated in 4-H, serving as San Rafael 4-H president for 5 years.
Plans for next year: My plans for next year are to finish my associates degree and get my EMT certification.
Favorite teachers: Mrs. Posada and Mr. Porter. Mrs. Posada is a very funny and kind teacher, coach, and mentor. Mr. Porter has been my social studies teacher since 6th grade, and was my basketball coach in middle school. I will definitely miss Mr. Porter.
Favorite subjects: Ag and history. In Ag I have learned many life skills and have participated in many competitions. History has always been one of my favorite subjects because I love to hear about the history of the world we live in today.
Which one memory will you remember forever about your time here? I will always remember the fun FFA trips I had my sophomore year and the friendships I have had.
What has been the highlight of your high school years? Sports. Both Coach Ralph and Stephanie have always made me feel welcome. The jokes and the nicknames will always be something I will never forget.

Where do you imagine yourself in ten years? In 10 years I hope to either be a travel nurse or a flight nurse. I hope to have mini cows and a pet monkey. I hope to have traveled to different places in the world.

Asa Sedam

Participation in school clubs and sports: Soccer, cross country, chess, tennis, and basketball.
Extra-curricular activities outside of school: meh
Plans for next year: By next year I plan to save around 15-20k to start my stock trading career.
Favorite teachers: Only had him for two years, but Mr. Melanson and Mrs. Hayes.
Favorite subjects: English and history were always fun.
Which one memory will you remember forever about your time here? I will remember the time that Mr. Melanson took the chess team to Denny’s in the middle of the night at a chess meet.
What has been the highlight of your high school years? Playing sports and spending time with my friends. We take that for granted and don’t realize how much we enjoy it.

Where do you imagine yourself in ten years? I see myself chillin’ on the beach while my money works for me.

Hannah Woodward

Participation in school clubs and sports: Volleyball, Basketball, Softball, FFA, and Student Council.
Extra-curricular activities outside of school: Red Mountain Foods Employee
Plans for next year: To attend the University of Arizona to study Pre-Business.
Favorite teachers: Mr. Porter, Mr. Young and Ms. Nelie.
Favorite subjects: English and Financial Algebra
Which one memory will you remember forever about your time here? I will never forget prom freshman year, I was surrounded by so many amazing people the whole night and had such a great time.
What has been the highlight of your high school years? Playing sports and spending time with my friends. We take that for granted and don’t realize how much we enjoy it.

Where do you imagine yourself in ten years? In ten years I can see myself as a creative director for a company or magazine, living in California with the love of my life and two children.

Emma Young

Participation in school clubs and sports: Yearbook for all four years of high school. I am now the editor-in-chief of the yearbook. Drama Club and Student Government class representative.
Extra-curricular activities outside of school: I volunteer with my church doing things like helping them set up their children’s clinic.
Plans for next year: Next year I plan to attend college. I have been accepted to NAU.
Favorite teachers: Mr. and Mrs. Hayes. I loved being in their classes and I feel like they guided me really well through high school.
Favorite subjects: My favorite subject is English. I loved sophomore English class the most because we got to read some of my favorite books.
Which one memory will you remember forever about your time here? I will never forget going to Field of Steel freshman year. When we performed our pieces on the steels drums it was so fun and satisfying to see all of our hard work pay off.
What has been the highlight of your high school years? The highlight of my high school years has been discovering new things about myself and creating memories and friendships.

Where do you imagine yourself in ten years? In ten years I hope to have found something I love doing and have a career in it. I hope to have a nice house and maybe a family.
Carolina Quiroz

Participation in school clubs and sports: FFA, student council, basketball, volleyball, soccer, and tennis
Extra-curricular activities outside of school: 4-H
Plans for next year: Attend the University of Arizona for agricultural law
Favorite teachers: All the teachers were super cool, so they were all my favorite teachers.
Favorite subjects: History and Ag.
Which one memory will you remember forever about your time here? Accidentally setting off the fire alarm.
What has been the highlight of your high school years? Having the best friend groups throughout high school.
Where do you imagine yourself in ten years? Living in Colorado in a beautiful cabin on a bunch of land, as an agricultural lawyer with my cute family and corgi with a bunch of cows.

Alejandro (Alex) Santos

Participation in school clubs and sports: Basketball 3 yrs, Soccer 3 yrs, Student government 1 yr
Extra-curricular activities outside of school: Hanging out at the Youth Center, mentoring the younger kids. Playing basketball at the park. And helping out the community.
Plans for next year: Going to college, at Pima, studying school counseling, and Sports Psychology.
Favorite teachers: Mr. And Mrs. Hayes, Mr. Porter, and Mrs. Lemons
Favorite subjects: History and English
Which one memory will you remember forever about your time here? Knowing everyone, and having fun while getting the school work done.
What has been the highlight of your high school years? Playing sports with my friends, going to State for Basketball. And most definitely the Renaissance Festival field trip.
Where do you imagine yourself in ten years? Living in a house, somewhere in AZ, helping the youth and continuing to mentor them. Teaching them what’s best for them.

Kurt Whitcoe

Participation in school clubs and sports: Chess, baseball, basketball, soccer, cross country, Student Government
Plans for next year: Attend University of Arizona, majoring in Psychology and Business
Favorite teachers: Mrs. Hayes I guess
Favorite subjects: Sophomore year English and junior year history
Which one memory will you remember forever about your time here? Sophomore year, when we had our pep rally and our class brought home the W.
What has been the highlight of your high school years? Playing sports with my friends, going to State for Basketball. And most definitely the Renaissance Festival field trip.
Where do you imagine yourself in ten years? Living in the rural mountains of Colorado with a nice house, two kids, two dogs and an amazing wife. I will have my own company, but won’t have to manage it. Life is good.

Justice Urias

Participation in school clubs and sports: Volleyball, basketball, softball and tennis.
Extra-curricular activities outside of school: The summer before my junior year I lifeguarded at the school pool, and that was a really fun experience.
Plans for next year: I would like to begin working towards a cosmetology license, and possibly work my way up to being an instructor.
Favorite teachers: All of my teachers have been equally amazing to me, and taught me so much.
Favorite subjects: Yearbook is definitely a challenging class to keep up with, but it is also so rewarding to see the final result all put together when the book is finished.
Which one memory will you remember forever about your time here? This year is definitely a year that I will never forget, but playing sports in the middle of all of this makes it so much easier, and so much more bearable.
What has been the highlight of your high school years? Playing sports, because I have always been so close with my teammates. My coaches have been amazing and sports have definitely been my biggest motivation to keep my grades up.
Where do you imagine yourself in ten years? I definitely see myself getting a family started. As far as work goes, I’m not sure exactly what I’ll be doing, but I know that, whatever it is that I’m doing, I want to be helping people.

Gideon Ellefson

Participation in school clubs and sports: Chess, Drama, and public broadcasting when they where a thing
Plans for next year: Work during the week and go to college during the weekend.
Favorite teachers: Mrs. Hayes, because I love writing
Favorite subjects: English, Math
Which one memory will you remember forever about your time here? The first time I played Dr. Love on the Morning Howl.
What has been the highlight of your high school years? Hanging out with my friends
Where do you imagine yourself in ten years? Hopefully developing video games
**Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Richardson Park and Public Restrooms to re-open</td>
<td>Mar. 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>La Cienega Watershed Lunch and Learn</td>
<td>Mar. 4</td>
<td>12p.m.-1p.m.</td>
<td>Via Zoom meeting ID 846 5850 4052 Pass-code: Cienega</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Connection Recruiting Event at Canelo Cowboy Church</td>
<td>Mar. 7</td>
<td>8:30a.m.-10a.m.</td>
<td>Several volunteer positions available. For more info call 520-455-5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South32 Open House at the Sonoita Fairgrounds</td>
<td>Mar. 9</td>
<td>4p.m.-6p.m.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Border Patrol Meeting at the Canelo Cowboy Ranch</td>
<td>Mar. 11</td>
<td>6p.m.-8p.m.</td>
<td>Open to the public and questions welcomed. Seating limited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonoita Recycling Event at the Fairgrounds</td>
<td>Mar. 13</td>
<td>9a.m.-11a.m.</td>
<td>Items to recycle include: appliances, electronics, cables/wire, camaras, cell-phones, metal chairs, copper, scrap steel. For more info <a href="https://suburbanminers.com">https://suburbanminers.com</a>. Event sponsored by Mountain Empire Rotary.</td>
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<td>Sonoita Recycling Event at the Fairgrounds</td>
<td>Mar. 13</td>
<td>9a.m.-11a.m.</td>
<td>Open to the public and questions welcomed. Seating limited.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends of Sonoita Creek Annual Meeting</td>
<td>Mar. 13</td>
<td>10a.m.</td>
<td>Doug Duncan guest speaker. This is a zoom meeting. For more information and zoom invitation, contact sonoita <a href="mailto:creek@gmail.com">creek@gmail.com</a>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonoita - AZ 83 Mile Marker 30 Adopt a Highway Pick up</td>
<td>Mar. 14</td>
<td>8:00a.m.-10a.m.</td>
<td>Contact <a href="mailto:kim@photosbykrego.com">kim@photosbykrego.com</a> or cell/text 520-990-0137</td>
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**Meetings**

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<tr>
<td>Alcoholics Anonymous</td>
<td>Tuesdays at 7PM</td>
<td>The Sonoita Bible Church 3174 N. Highway 83, Sonoita. Social distancing honored. This meeting is also on Zoom at 544 376 9576 (no password required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overeaters Anonymous</td>
<td>Thurs 6:30p.m.</td>
<td>Patagonia United Methodist Church 520 404-3490. Has moved online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alanon (for family or friends of alcoholics): Patagonia Community Methodist Church Wed 6p.m. online on Zoom</td>
<td>520-315-516-5998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACA): Methodist Church, Tues, 6p.m. Online on Zoom</td>
<td>520-315-516-5998</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHOP (Community Homes of Patagonia, Inc.): Board meeting 3rd Mon. 5:30p.m. in Town Council Room</td>
<td>Patagonia Town Council: Wed. Mar. 10. 7p.m. in Town Council Room. Public invited. CDC Guidelines will be followed.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotary Club: 2nd &amp; 4th Thurs. 5:30p.m. has moved online.</td>
<td>Sue 520-990-4648</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Citizens of Patagonia's Board of Directors: 2nd Mon. 3p.m. at the Senior Center. Senior Center Dining Hall is closed.</td>
<td>Patagonia Bible Church. All are welcome.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Constitutional Conservatives of Southern AZ Club Meeting: 6:30p.m. every 3rd Thursday of the month, Sonoita Bible Church. All are welcome.</td>
<td>Patagonia Museum: Regular hours to resume Thursday, March 4 from 2p.m.-4p.m. Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. <a href="http://www.thepatagoniamuseum.org">www.thepatagoniamuseum.org</a> for more info.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Cruz County Native Plant Society (SCCNPS) resumes in March. Meetings held on the third Thurs. of the month. 6:00p.m.-7:30p.m. Zoom meetings for now Meeting ID is: 874 9175 9629. Questions or considerations, email Robin at <a href="mailto:crobint60@gmail.com">crobint60@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td>Angel Wings Thrift &amp; Gift Shop: Thurs - Sat 10a.m.-2p.m. Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church, 12 Los Encinos Rd, Sonoita.</td>
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<td>Sonoita Farmers Market: Sat 9a.m.-12p.m. Located at post office parking lot, NW corner Hwy 82 &amp; 83. Patagonia Farmers Market: Thursday 10a.m.-1p.m. in front of Red Mountain Foods.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flea Market at Heart of Gold Antiques: First Sat of every month. 10a.m.-2p.m. Free to set up. Call 520-394-0199 for any additional information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patagonia Community United Methodist Church Thrift Shop - Re-opening Mar. 5th and 6th from 10-2p.m. Please note it may not be every weekend. Look for thrift shop signs and flags. Items will be located in Thurber Hall. East SCC 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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>VINE Christian Church 3107 Hwy 83, Sunday Service: 10:30a.m. Youth Group: 2nd &amp; 4th Wed.</td>
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<td>St. Andrews Episcopal Church 969 W. County Club Dr. Nogales Services are weekly, however times changes frequently. Visit standrewsaz.org for additional info.</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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<td>Churches are practicing social distancing. Canelo Cowboy Church 14 McCarthy 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 <a href="mailto:patagoniaumc@gmail.com">patagoniaumc@gmail.com</a></td>
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**Sign Up for the PRT E-News Service!**

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

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**Email**

Email prtasted@gmail.com with any event updates you would like listed.
KPUP Broadcast Schedule
Winter 2021

Mon:
7:00pm to 8:00pm: eTown repeat of Saturday’s show.

Tues:
10:00am to 12:00pm: World Jazz with Mark Berg
7:00pm to 9:00pm: Jazz and Blues with Fred Hansen

Wed:
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.
**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.  March 2021