Local Act of Kindness Headed to Big Screen

By Dottie Farrar

When 8-year-old Dáyami released a red balloon with her Christmas wish list tied to it in Nogales, Sonora and watched it rise toward the North Pole in 2018, she set off a series of events that would connect two families across the Border and inspire a major toy company to make a movie.

Sending Christmas wishes to Santa via balloon was a tradition with her family, and her parents Christian Leyva and Damaris Martinez had taken a video of Dáyami and her sister Ximena letting go of the balloons with hope and excitement.

A few days later, Randy Heiss was out walking his dog in Patagonia when he spied a red balloon with a note written in Spanish attached. He knew he had to find the little girl who was likely in Mexico and fulfill her Christmas wishes. He and his wife, Marcella, who is fluent in Spanish, reached out to friends and contacts across the border but without luck. With Christmas just around the corner they were becoming anxious and contacted radio station XENY 760 AM in Nogales, Sonora for help.

Radio show host Cesár Barron immediately broadcast the search for Dayami and posted the story on Facebook. Within an hour she was found.

The next day the radio station arranged a meeting between the Heisses and Dáyami’s family. Randy and Marcella shopped at Walmart on the way, finding as many items on the list as they could and added presents for little sister Ximena. They hurriedly wrapped the presents at the station.

It was a wonderful meeting, and Dayami’s parents promised to send a video of the girls opening their presents on Christmas. The families made plans to meet in the new year.

This Christmas story quickly gained national attention and was reported by NPR, the Washington Post, CNN, NBC Nightly News, as well as on Mexican and other international news networks. The families met and corresponded often during the next two years, and the Christmas gift giving became a tradition for Randy and Marcella.

Then came a surprise announcement from Mattel on Dec. 16, 2021, that the company would produce the “Christmas Balloon,” a film featuring Dáyami, her family and the Heisses. The families met and corresponded often during the next two years, and the Christmas gift giving became a tradition for Randy and Marcella.

The press release stated that Gabriella Revilla Lugo will write the screenplay. Producer Chris Lemos said that “Randy and Marcella’s story exemplifies the holiday spirit and shows the miraculous way small acts of kindness can change lives, bring families together, and inspire entire communities on both sides of the border.” The Heisses have been given some editorial rights and will ensure that the story not become political, but will instead remain “the story of people doing something wonderful for a little girl.”

For several years, radio host Barron has worked to make it possible for around five thousand kids in Mexico to receive Christmas gifts. This year, Marcella had suggested to Mattel that the company contribute gifts for kids in Sonora. In answer to her request, three 50-pound boxes arrived at the Heisses with about two thousand toys. They transported the boxes across the border, hoping that perhaps next year there will be even more.

Dáyami, now eleven and very self-assured, presented gifts to some of the one thousand children assembled in a large gymnasium in Sonora.

Making a Difference

By Dottie Farrar

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!
THANKS TO YOU, PRT FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN A HUGE SUCCESS

By Marion Vendituoli

To our generous readers who donated to the PRT during our recent fundraising campaign, we thank you! You have donated an astonishing $36,200 over the past two months, $10,200 more than our goal of $26,000! $14,000 of the funds raised will be matched by News-Match, a national organization that supports nonprofit newsrooms. The PRT was also selected to receive an additional $20,000 matching grant from The Loud Hound Fund. The Loud Hound Partner Fund is awarded to select newsrooms serving residents in five states with local news about issues that impact their lives and support civic engagement. We are honored to have been selected for this award.

On top of that, we had 123 NEW DONORS give to the PRT. This has earned us a bonus grant of $500 for having signed up at least 100 new donors. What we are proudest of, though, is the fact that we had a total of 512 donations during this fundraising campaign, 172 more donations than last year - a 150% increase - demonstrating the strength of our relationship with our readers and the role we are playing in our community. These donations ensure the future of the PRT and will be used to help us continue to bring you the local news that you depend on us to deliver.

This coming year we will continue to work hard to bring you our weekly e-newsletter and the monthly print edition of the PRT. We are also working on building a new website that will enable us to bring you more news, along with an interactive community calendar.

Our staff is working to improve our digital footprint, and to develop new tools and skills to support our evolving technical resources. The board and staff also continue to work on our long term goals and strategic planning to ensure that the PRT will be a viable news organization for years to come.

Our committed group of volunteer writers continue to amaze us with their professionalism, and dedication to the PRT. These individuals volunteer their time and expertise to keep our readers informed and educated about those issues and events that affect our communities.

Our PRT family members includes not only our writers, our Board members and staff, but also all of you that have supported us this year. Here are just a few of the many kind notes we have received from our donors recently:

“The PRT adds a dimension to this community that’s truly worthy. Keep up the good work!”

“I'm always delighted to see something from you pop up in my inbox. Happy to donate.”

“The PRT is a community treasure.”

We thank you for kicking off 2022 in the best way possible, especially as we emerge from the challenges of 2021. Thank you for your investment in the future of the PRT because, especially in these tumultuous times, local news matters.

PRT Welcomes New Board Members

By Marion Vendituoli

The PRT is pleased to announce that Kay Pitt and Sue Archibald have joined the PRT Board of Directors. Both women bring a wealth of experience to the board.

Kay, who lives in Elgin with her husband Ron, taught accounting at Northern Arizona University for 30 years. She is active in the Crossroads Quilters, the Elgin Club, and the Patagonia Methodist Church, where she volunteers in the thrift shop. She joined the Board after being approached by her friend, board treasurer Jamie Smith. “I really like the paper,” Kay said. “The articles are good, and I just like being involved in the community.”

Sue, who lives in Whetstone with her husband Steve, was CEO of “Our Family Services,” a nonprofit, for 20 years. She has served on numerous communities, city, state and national boards, and has testified before the U.S. House of representatives about homeless youth, her area of expertise. She has also been a federal contractor, reviewing nonprofit programs that receive federal grants. She has been a Rotarian for 20 years, and has been on the board of Friends of the Patagonia Library and the Sonoita Elgin Fire District, volunteers at the Sonoita fairgrounds, Our Lady of the Angels Church, Angel Wings Thrift Shop and the Elgin Club.

Kay and Sue will fill seats vacated by Donna Lee and Bob Brandt. Donna has returned to her Alaska home to be closer to family. Her efforts on the fundraising committee, organizing, strategizing, writing handwritten letters to donors, and her unfailing good spirits all made her invaluable and a large part of the success the PRT has experienced. Bob has retired from the Board after five years of service to concentrate on other interests, including establishing viable recycling options in Eastern Santa Cruz County, management consulting for local merchants in The Mountain Empire.

We thank them both for all they have done to help the PRT grow and thrive, and we will miss them.
Redistricting Commission Finalizes Maps

By Kat Crockett

Every ten years, following the census, states across the country redraw their boundaries of congressional (CD) and state legislative districts (LD).

Redrawing district lines impacts who you can vote for, where you can vote, may influence who wins elections, and ultimately who will make the laws and what laws get passed in Congress and the State Legislature.

In 2000, Proposition 106 enacted the Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission (IRC) and criteria for drawing new districts. Arizona is one of only 13 states with a commission to exclusively draw electoral district boundaries independent of the state legislature. Previously, the state legislature had been responsible for redrawing the new districts, but many people believed the practice resulted in boundaries that served the politicians instead of the people.

The commission is formed every ten years, drawing from a pool of 25 nominees, ten from each of the two largest parties and five from neither of the two largest parties. The State Senate President, Speaker of the House and minority leaders select the first four commissioners from the pool, then these four commissioners appoint the fifth from the pool who cannot be a member of either party already represented and who will serve as Chairperson.

This year, the Commissioners were Democrats Schereen Lerner and Derrick Watchman; Republicans David Mehl and Douglas York; and Independent Chair Erika Neuberg.

The commission began the process by eliminating all existing districts established in 2010 and starting anew using a population-based grid map to allow them to play out “what if” scenarios when drawing and moving boundaries. The six criteria that guided the new mapping were, (a) equal population, (b) compactness and contiguousness, (c) compliance with the US Constitution and Voting Rights Act, (d) respect for communities of interest; (e) incorporation of visible geographic features, including city town and county boundaries as well as undivided census tracts, and (f) a competitive geography created for each seat.

On Dec. 22, 2021, after numerous public meetings, the Commission unanimously approved the Congressional District (CD) Map, creating a new CD-7, which will seek redistricting of Cochise County extending east to Douglas.

CD-7 is considered by the Commission to be Democratic leaning based on vote spreads in nine prior state elections averaging 68% democratic votes to 32% republican. U.S. Representative Raul Grijalva (D) currently represents CD-3 and has been in office since January of 2003. His position, as well as all 435 members of the US House of Representatives will be up for election on November 8, 2022. It is not clear if he will run for another term for the new district. The 2022 elections will also include the Senate seat held by Mark Kelly (D) who will seek reelection. To date, five Republicans have announced their intent to run against him.

With only the LD Map pending on the day of the last meeting of the IRC on Dec. 22, the commission began with a host of proposed changes, sensational partisan fighting, numerous accusations, and members interrupting and talking past each other. The meeting lasted well into the afternoon with little accomplished. In the end, the LD map was adopted with a vote of 3-2, both Democrats voting against the map, both Republicans voting for the map, and Neuberg breaking the tie.

The new LD Map divides Santa Cruz County into two new districts (LD-19 and LD-21), splitting the northeast and southwest portions of the county. LD-19 has Patagonia, Sonora, and Elgin combined with most of Cochise, all of Greenlee and parts of Graham and Pima counties previously covered by LD-14. LD-19 is considered to be Republican leaning with a prior vote spread of 61% Republican and 39% Democrat. Within the former LD-14, State Senator Gail Griffin, and State Representatives Lupe Diaz and David Gowan are all Republicans and are subject to the elections in November.

The new LD-21 includes Nogales, Rio Rico, Tubac, Tumacacori, Kino Springs, Patagonia Lake, parts of Sahuarita and Southeast Tucson, extending east along the border to Douglas. LD-21 is considered by the Commission to be Democratic leaning. Representing the former LD-2, which embraces all of SCC, State Senator Rosanna Gabaldon, and State Representatives Daniel Hernandez and Angela Dalessandro are all Democrats who will be subject to elections this November.

This may not be the end of the journey for the IRC. During this year’s process, the Democratic representatives did not vote in favor of the Legislative District maps and made several allegations including that the Chair swayed her votes to the Republicans, that Tribal and Latino concerns were marginalized, and competitiveness was not properly weighted. It remains to be seen if the final maps will be challenged in court.

Lion Attack Decimates Goat Herd in Sonora

By Marion Vendituoli

Rory and Leisha George woke up to a horrific sight on Dec. 4 when they discovered that three of their goats had been killed the previous night. The Georges, who live near Paragao Springs Rd. in Sonora, have kept dairy goats, which Leisha milks and uses to make cheese, and pack goats for the past 25 years. This was the first time they had lost any of their animals to predation.

Even though the Georges then penned up their remaining goats close to their home, putting them in with a mule and a burro, that night another 17 goats were killed. “Leisha heard a ruckus that night, around 12:45” Rory said. He went out to check on the goats and “a lion walked in front of me maybe 20 feet away.” A neighbor also reported that they chased a lion off their property earlier that evening.

Only one of the goats showed signs of having been partially eaten. “There were ten babies with claw marks and puncture wounds. Goats were laying all over the place,” Rory said. Both Rory and AZ Game and Fish Wildlife Manager Brit Oleson agreed that the panicked goats charging around may have caused the lion to attack so many of them. “I have seen this,” Oleson said. “It tends to happen when there is there is a bunch in a small pen.” She likened it to the reaction that a cat displays when someone shakes a feather at it.

The Georges called local lion hunter Shane Lyman after the first attack.

He found a partial lion track in the dirt but could not determine if it was from a tom or a female lion. He took his dogs out that morning but didn’t find anything. After the second killing spree that next night, he went out again and this time found tracks from both a male and a female lion. Lyman says they may have been a mating pair, although it was early in the season to see that. “They are so unpredictable, it’s hard to say,” he commented. He was unable to track the cats further, as the animals had moved out of the forest onto private property.

There have been at least three similar instances of lion attacks in the Patagonia, Sonora and Elgin area over the past year. This summer, according to Oleson, 20 animals, including cows, goats and sheep, were killed in and around Patagonia. “There’s a pretty good reason to think they were all killed by the same cat,” she said.

Lyman, who is called out an average of 10 – 15 times a year to track lions who are causing problems, thinks the same lion is most likely responsible for the Georges’ attack. “A male lion has a territory of 200 sq. miles,” he said. He recounted one lion he captured in Box Canyon which had a gps collar that had been placed on the lion in the Rincon mountains.

He guesses that there are between 30 and 50 lions in this area living in the surrounding mountains. There are more females than males, and the females have an average of two cubs per year. “There is no data to indicate that the lion population is up,” Oleson said.

“We have a healthy population of lions because we have such a good population of white tail deer and javalinas.”

“A normal lion avoids people,” Lyman explained. “I think some of these lions live on the edges of town.”

Lions are attracted to populated areas by easy prey, including cats, pet dogs, and domestic animals. Two years ago a starving male lion was euthanized in Patagonia after several sightings around residences. At that time Oleson told the PRT that “the lion’s continued presence is a consequence of people putting food out to attract wildlife, which can attract predators,” she said in an interview in May 2019.

Lyman expressed similar sentiments about the lion who did such damage to the Georges’ goat herd. “From my perspective, this lion seems to be habituated and unwary of people and dogs,” Lyman added. “I think these lions get comfortable around people’s houses and lose some of their fear.”
New Teachers Join Patagonia District

By Sarah Klingenstein

Five new staff members joined the ranks of Patagonia School District in August, from kindergarten to high school agriculture and welding. The PRT finally caught up with them as they celebrated the final week of school before winter break.

Daniel Codding

Daniel Codding is not new to the District, but he is new to the formal teaching of technology. Having spent the past six years as the technology specialist, keeping computers and networks running, he saw that students could really use a better understanding of the world of tech. Though Codding never imagined he’d be a teacher, he especially loves teaching Introduction to Computers, as the material and techniques are second nature to him. And he loves working directly with kids to learn how the technology they use every day works and what is involved in making it work.

Elysse Beach

Patagonia’s new kindergarten teacher, Elysse Beach, says that to have a class of around ten students is a teacher’s dream. “Other years when I’ve taught first or second grade in classes of 25 students, it was so hard to give each child even a few minutes of undivided attention.”

Beach knew she enjoyed working with children, so becoming an elementary teacher was a natural choice. On top of that, she comes from a long line of teachers, including her parents, grandparents and several aunts and uncles. When asked what her favorite subject is to teach, she didn’t hesitate a moment. “Taking a young child who doesn’t yet read and turning him or her into a reader is the most wonderful thing! I hope students leave my classroom with a desire to keep reading, and to read to their parents and siblings. It is really important to me, too, that they go on to first grade being excited about school, and feeling curious and open to their own creativity.”

Beach is impressed by the knowledge the local teachers have about their students: being familiar with or related in some way to their students. “It is nice how the teachers have this personal connection with their students.”

Kaleigh Best

When she saw Patagonia for the very first time on the first day of school in August, Kaleigh Best did not find the size of our small community to be anything unusual. She grew up in San Simon, Arizona, whose school is the second smallest in Arizona. Before coming here, she worked as a paraprofessional in the agriculture program at San Simon School. A teaching position became available and “it all just fell into place.” Best is currently working to attain her teaching credentials. She has been delighted by the confidence and faith the school community and parents have shown in her in this, her first independent teaching endeavor. Best wants her students to see how important agriculture is in the world and all that goes into bringing food to our tables.

Her favorite area of Ag/FFA has been the animal showing segments. “These are filled with opportunities for kids to make life connections out in the world - and to learn responsibility and hard work.”

Kate Peake

Kate Peake, the new middle school language arts teacher, moved to town with her parents. The PRT finally caught up with them as they celebrated the final week of school before winter break. During this time she met the second love of her life Bobby Basilian. Some may remember Mary and Bobby on stage at the gazebo playing guitars and singing “If you missed the train I’m on, you will know that I am gone, you can hear the whistle blow five hundred miles.” They spent ten happy years together until his passing in the year 2000.

One day in 2002 at the Gathering Grounds, where Mary was endearingly known as Triple Shot, for her espresso habit, Dr. Meg Gilbert mentioned being in need of a secretary. Mary knew it was the job for her. Shortly after beginning work, she proudly changed her job title to “Office Manager” and was attentive to a myriad of details. Reflecting on her ten years at the office, Mary wrote “I cared about the patients and loved working with them.” Mary was a loving mother and friend. She will be remembered for her witty kindness, extremely strong coffee, and love for this wonderful little community.

Mary is survived by her son John Lakich of Hobe Sound, FL.

Mary McGANN

MARCH 16, 1948 - JULY 15, 2021

Mary was born in St. Louis, MO and passed away July 15, 2021 at her home in Patagonia, AZ.

Mary graduated with honors from Ft. Lauderdale High School, where she was an editor of the school newspaper and president of the Latin Club. She attended the University of Florida where she met George Lakich, a snake-wrangling geologist she would follow out west. Around 1975 they opened Damemi’s West leather shop in Tucson, where Mary honed her leathercraft. They moved to Bisbee and had a son, John.

With John and her dog Heather, Mary moved to Patagonia in 1980. She opened her own leather business, “La Rosa de Cuero.” She made custom sandals, purses, tooled belts, and holsters. Mary also went to Prescott College and received her bachelor’s degree in art education.

During this time she met the second love of her life Bobby Basilian. Some may remember Mary and Bobby on stage at the gazebo playing guitars and singing “If you missed the train I’m on, you will know that I am gone, you can hear the whistle blow five hundred miles.” They spent ten happy years together until his passing in the year 2000.

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Balloon (cont.)

Christmas spirit, good food, music, and happy relatives coming and going, the Heissses watched Dáyami and her sister open their presents. All enjoyed a special, magical evening full of hope, gratitude, and love.

They plan to continue to meet during the new year. Dáyami and her family will renew their visas now that the border has reopened and visit Randy and Marcella in Bisbee and Patagonia where they live and work.

When interviewed by the PRT in Jan. 2019, Randy said that he hoped that the message people receive from the story is to “never miss an opportunity to spread love and kindness. Do that good deed, don’t ignore it, because the world needs it. If everyone would do that, then the world would be a different place than it is today.”
Robert Michael Barnhill (Bob) passed away peacefully at the age of 86 on November 29th in his home in Sonoita, Arizona. Bob will be remembered by many for his charismatic charm, wit, and generous heart. He leaves a legacy of contributions made over the years to his community.

Bob was born in Tucson in 1935. He lived with his parents and brother, Larry, on the corner of Highland and Linden Street when there was nothing but desert to the north. Bob was an Eagle Scout and graduated in 1953 from Tucson High where he was part of the undefeated varsity football team that won the state title that year.

After a year at the University of Arizona, Bob joined the Navy. Later, he married Calista Donohoe and returned to the University as a young husband and father, graduating in 1960 with a degree in Chemical Engineering. Bob worked as an engineer and in related sales fields for many years as he and Calista raised their children. He was an award-winning float builder for the Indian Ridge 4th of July parade, much to the delight of children. With his father, Bob was an active member of the Tucson Rodeo Parade committee for many years.

Bob moved to the Sonoita area in the 1960s and spent many years raising Arabian horses with his second wife, Kaia Johnson Bunn. Bob helped to establish the Sonoita Crossroads forum, served as a board member and active supporter of the Santa Cruz County Fair and Rodeo Association, and served as an Advisory Board member for Save the Scenic Santa Ritas. Bob was a founding member of the Sonoita Fire Department where he volunteered as a firefighter, first responder, and dispatcher for SEESI and later SEFD. Bob and his third wife, Barbara Smith, split their time between Sonoita and Cayman Brac, Cayman Islands. Bob and his fourth wife, Gail Woodard, traveled extensively, especially in Latin America where they often lived for several months at a time. They established Dudley Court Press, a contemporary hybrid book publishing company in 2008.

Bob was the patriarch of a large, blended family. He was preceded in death by his parents, Barney and Flossie, his son John, his spouse Kaia, his spouse Barbara, and stepson Carl Bunn.

He is survived by his wife Gail Woodard and three stepsons, Duncan (Noel) Shea, Reed (Avis) Shea, and Casey Shea.

He is also survived by his former wife, Calista Donohoe Schafer, and their children Meg (Dave) Gebert, Jim (Tina) Barnhill, Sam (Darcy) Barnhill, Patty McDonald, and Michelle Lewis. Other survivors include his brother Larry Barnhill, stepchildren Sara Bunn (Tom) Shifrin and Brad (Mary) Smith, as well as nephew Patrick Barnhill, many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

Bob valued family and community above all else. He lived fully until the very end and left this life peacefully, passing away next to a window with a view of the tall grass and land he loved.

A celebration of Bob’s life will be held on January 29th at 11:00a.m. at the Sonoita Elgin Fire Station, 3173 Highway 83, Sonoita, AZ.

Donations may be made in Bob’s memory to the Sonoita Elgin Fire District for protective gear and equipment, education, and training.

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Rose (Posy) Elizabeth Piper born June 30, 1929, passed away on November 28, 2021. She was 92 years old. She was redeceived by her loving husband of 68 years, WT (Bill) Piper, her parents Ray and Vic Hickok, her brother and sister-in-law Norman and Juanita Hickok.

She is lovingly remembered by her children Tom (Jane) – Redwood Valley, CA; Ted (Rosie) – Patagonia, AZ and Terry – Vail, AZ., grandchildren, Kari (Jared) – Seattle, WA; Cory (Kim) -Patagonia; Gabrielle (Nick) – Vail; Andrea (Tony) – Vail; Michelle (Andrew) – Scottsdale, Az; Merisa (Jesse) – Mill Valley, CA; Monica – New York City, NY; Jack (Dave) – San Francisco, CA. Her great grandchildren, Isaiah, Kalee, Mason, Anthony, Jaden, Chloe, Peyton, Simone, Vivienne, Noelle, Ethan, and Ray, nephews Gary (Linda) Hickok and Stephen (Janie) Hickok and niece Jan Bracco, all from Texas, Bill and Kathy Schock her friends and cattle partner for over 50 years. Last, but by no means least, the entire Piper family she loved so dearly.

She loved God and led a life honoring him in all she did. She was a teacher, coach, drama director, journalist, author, historian, mentor, promoter of the beef and the cattle industry and lover of music and books. But first and foremost, she was a dedicated wife, mother, and friend.

In writing about her father, she states: “My best trait is probably my ability to get along with and accept people and to find something to like about almost everyone. I don’t know whether I gained this trait by inheritance or by seeing my father’s example, but I believe it is a legacy from him.” It is a legacy by which she truly lived.

Her memorial service will be held at the Santa Cruz County Fair Grounds where she was a lifetime member of the Fair and Rodeo Association, and where the stage dedicated to her and Bill for their lifetime of service is located. It will on January 22, 2022 at 2:00p.m.

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Making a Difference

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

Mary Moran
By Marion Vendituoli

Mary Moran first became aware of the need for a food pantry in the Sonoita Elgin area when she and her husband Steve were helping a senior citizen in the community move to a new home and she discovered that the woman was eating cat food to make ends meet. “It broke my heart,” she said. “We realized that there was food insecurity in this community.”

Two years ago, Mary contacted County Supervisor Bruce Bracker to get permission to open a food pantry at the County building in Sonoita next to the library. She then obtained a grant from the Legacy Foundation for $500 to purchase a food locker and a grant for $1000 to purchase food.

The motto of the food pantry is ‘Give what you can. Take what you need.’ Mary checks the food pantry twice a week, cleaning it if necessary, and restocks it once a week with nonperishable items such as canned vegetables, soups, and toiletries.

“The community completely supports it,” she said. “If there’s a need, I’ll post it on Facebook. Within a day it’s filled up again.” The pantry, which is open 24/7, has made a difference for many people in the area. One elderly woman told her “That food pantry comes in very handy at the end of the month when things get tight.”

Mary became involved in distributing fresh produce during the pandemic after being approached by Bracker. “He’s been wonderful,” she said. “He cares very much about this community.” She and her team, including Gail Christman, the Keith family and Bob Garber, receive food boxes from the Nogales Food Bank filled with 20 pounds of fresh produce the 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month and hand them out in the Sonoita Post Office parking lot. “These are available to anyone,” she stressed. They started with 40 boxes and are now up to 150 boxes, which are all gone within an hour. They also deliver boxes to people’s homes if they request it.

This past Thanksgiving, Mary contacted Bracker, who raised $1000 to underwrite the cost of 100 turkeys, purchased from Villa’s Market in Nogales. Local Arizona Rangers picked up the turkeys and distributed them throughout the community. The Corner Scoop also gave out turkeys and food baskets for Thanksgiving.

In the last six months, she and her husband have also become involved with the Crossroads Mission in Nogales to help raise awareness and funds. They have designed and underwritten the cost of a new website for the organization. “If we see a nonprofit who needs a website or a Facebook page, my husband and I donate it and keep paying for it,” she said.

They had previously created a website for the Huachuca City Animal Shelter, where Mary had been working with dogs to get them adopted. That shelter closed in 2018 and animals were then taken to shelters in Willcox and Douglas. Last year Mary contacted the Southern Arizona Humane Society, and Mary and her husband now drive dogs from the Douglas facility to the Tucson shelter to give the dogs a better chance at being adopted. The couple picks up a shuttle van in Bisbee, drive to Douglas, then to Tucson, drop off the animals, and return the van to Bisbee before going home to Elgin.

Recently they delivered nine dogs and a dozen cats. “There’s nine more dogs that haven’t been euthanized,” she said. When she sees a dog or cat that needs a home, she also posts them on local chat pages on Facebook. “Anytime we can help a dog or a cat, we try to place it. We even placed a pig once!”

Mary is quick to give credit to her fellow volunteers, the local churches, and to the community that supports her work. “It’s definitely a team effort,” she said. “This community is like an extended family. People are so wonderful here.”

Pat and Dave McNamara
By Jo Dean

The McNamaras have contributed to this Mountain Empire community consistently since moving to Elgin from Wisconsin in May 2015. Wasting no time, they became involved with the Elgin Club and the Empire Ranch within one month of settling into their new home in Elgin.

Their lives in Wisconsin were active with their three grown children, five grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren, careers, owning a small farm, training Welsh ponies, riding instruction, music, and art. When they transitioned to Elgin, they brought all that energy and zest for life right along with them.

Dave has been on the board of the Elgin Club. They both regularly volunteer for the Elgin Club, providing lunches for rodeos, fairgrounds, and horse racing. Recently they helped provide a holiday meal for the Department of Correction workers at the Sonoita Fairgrounds. During this interview, Pat was cooking sweet potatoes for 100 people attending that evening’s Elgin Club Christmas party. Dave McNamara, as a board member for the Empire Ranch, has been busy with the Christmas activities and decorations at the Empire Ranch. Dave drives for the Patagonia Senior Center providing weekly transportation to Tucson. He recently volunteered for three months at the Nogales COVID vaccine program.

Pat has been a writer for the PRT the past three years, volunteered at the Sonoita Fairgrounds and the Fund the Feed program. As an accomplished artist, she designed the logo for the Voices from the Border.

Their home is a showplace for McNamara’s art. She has a variety of mediums including mosaics, pastels, acrylic, stained glass, and wood carving.

Music is another talent she shares with the community, playing her flute at various programs in the community. She is an avid equestrian with boundless enthusiasm for burros and mules. The McNamaras volunteered for several years at Horse N Around Rescue in Hereford.

Their first impression of Elgin was how happy and friendly people are here. They maintain this happiness comes from living in a sunny place where people choose to live because they want to be here. They have jointly and individually contributed to this community. After 52 years of marriage their partnership is an example of mutual respect and support which they share with their community.

Tubac Buddhist Meditation Center
An Arizona Humanities grant recipient

Sundays 8:30am—10:00am
2247 Frontage Road #2 Tubac, AZ 85646
tubacbuddhistmeditationcenter@gmail.com for Zoom
www.facebook.com/tubacbuddhistmeditationcenter

The mission of Arizona Humanities is to build a just and civil society by creating opportunities to explore our shared human experiences through discussion, learning and reflection
Making a Difference

Patra and Chuck Kelly
By Marion Vendituoli

When Patra and Chuck Kelly started volunteering at the Patagonia Senior Center in 2016, they “wanted to get involved in the town.” Well, they certainly got their wish. Chuck estimates that he spends at least 30 hours per week working to keep the Center running. Patra oversees the program that provides van rides for seniors and disabled people in Sonoita, Elgin and Patagonia.

Soon after joining the Board at the Senior Center, Chuck took on the role of secretary-treasurer for the organization which provides meals for 65 people Monday through Friday, van rides to doctors’ appointments and for shopping, and a place for seniors to gather.

Socializing at the Center has been greatly impacted by the pandemic, but the Center did reopen its doors this fall to vaccinated seniors. Chef Roxann Valenzuela, her sister Marla, and Zoila Urias provide takeout meals each day, as well as serving in the dining room. “More and more people are benefitting from the service,” Chuck reported. “For many seniors in the area, this is their main meal of the day.”

Chuck supervises the Senior Center; writes grants; deals with insurance issues; meets with ADOT, who contributed the vans, as well as half of the cost of operating expenses; coordinates with the South Eastern Arizona Governments Organization (SEAGO), a regional planning agency, which provides half the funding for the meals; does the payroll and banking; and corresponds with donors. He prepares the menus, with input from Chef Valenzuela and Patra, which are then reviewed by a nutritionist. He also picks up food donated by the Nogales Food Bank and from Wholesome Harvest in Nogales.

Chuck’s grant writing has resulted in two recent grants, one for $5000 from Delta Dental to help with the dental costs for area seniors, and one for $10,000 from the Arizona Food Banks to help pay for food. The Center also recently received a new freezer from SEAGO.

Chuck, who was a management consultant and an executive with Con Edison, also taught pre-school for 24 years. “Being around pre-schoolers prepared me for seniors. There’s not much difference between them,” he said. “They both need love and comforting.”

Patra’s main responsibility at the Senior Center is overseeing the van program. She arranges volunteer drivers and van routes for three vans (soon to be four). There will be three vans in Patagonia and one that is stationed in Sonoita. ADOT pays for half the operating expenses for the vans. The Center’s half of the expenses is made up of the in-kind contributions of the volunteer drivers. “There used to be a lot of drivers,” Patra said, “but now because of COVID, not so many.” Seniors and disabled residents in Eastern Santa Cruz County can request a ride to medical or dental appointments or to go shopping in Sierra Vista, Tucson, Nogales, or Green Valley.

“It takes a lot of time” to coordinate the volunteer drivers and provide this service,” Patra observed. But she enjoys the work. “I like helping people who need to find information and resources.” She also helps to clean and sanitize the Senior Center, makes phone calls to the County Health Dept., and helps to keep the center going.

Patra has also been involved in the Patagonia Regional Times as a contributing writer and as a volunteer.

Both Chuck and Patra stressed the importance of the whole team at the Center. Jon Larsen volunteers five days a week, doing maintenance, mopping the floors, serving meals, and distributing food. Valenzuela is not only head chef, but she also shops for food and does the ordering.

Patra and Chuck both love their work. “The fact that we are feeding people is a real service to the community,” Chuck said. “We’ve been involved in community activism for a long time.”

Patra added, “I think what is valuable is to have a connection with others and to the community by doing something that is worthwhile.”

Ron Robinson
By Lynn Davison

Ron Robinson is a brave man. Though he had never worked for government and had only lived in Patagonia for one year, he signed on as Town Manager on July 1, 2019. Ron works for the Town Council and is responsible to them and to the residents of Patagonia for managing all the town’s services and staff. It’s a high visibility position that doesn’t pay much for the responsibility and hours of work it requires. Nonetheless, Ron really likes the job. “It’s a challenge and I like challenges” says Ron.

Ron and his wife, Debbie, moved to Patagonia in 2018 to be close to Debbie’s parents, Connie and Bud Alford. Like a good son-in-law, Ron first handled all the families’ remodeling priorities. Once that was done, he looked for something else to do that might benefit from his broad business and building experience. Why not Town Manager?

Ron began his work life as a draftsman designing restaurant kitchens, then joined his father as owner of a company that designed, installed, and eventually manufactured ventilation systems for commercial kitchens. Their business grew to employ 15 people and was eventually sold in 1993. Ron moved on to owning and managing seven Wendy’s franchises in the Midwest, then relocated to Texas and opened a restaurant.

After selling the restaurant in 2011, Ron built a house for his family and then began building houses for others, both custom and spec. And while he was helping raise his family and directly managing these businesses, Ron also was a Southern Baptist pastor for 30 years.

Ron says he “loves Patagonia for the beauty of the place and for the good people who live here.” He is particularly proud that with the leadership of the Mayor, Council, and Town Manager, respectful civil discourse is again a cornerstone of doing the Towns’ business. The pandemic and the associated economic impacts have been difficult. In response, Ron successfully secured over $100,000 in relief aid through the federal Cares Act that allowed the Town to keep most Town employees at work providing basic services. He also wrote a successful $600,000 grant that will significantly repair and upgrade the wastewater treatment plant. Ron has brought in private partners, like South32, to help financially support Town infrastructure priorities. He also solved a thorny problem of ongoing cost overruns in the Town Marshall’s Office by negotiating a contract with Santa Cruz County to provide consistent law enforcement services to the Town. And recently, he oversaw the complicated logistics of bringing a caboose (and future visitors center) to Doc Mock Park. Ron says that’s all part of doing his job. We are lucky that he thinks so. Thanks Ron.

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

CASA of Santa Cruz County
2160 N. Congress Dr., Nogales, AZ
(520) 375-8159 or
mfish@courts.az.gov
and one day I arrived home from work, offer rides, show up at parties I was at the site of every boyfriend I had ever dated. At the time he had a terrible DUI, both convicted, both sentenced to serve - or even of just sitting around drinking for hours in windowless, fluorescent-lit rooms, waiting to hear if you've been accepted or even of just sitting for hours in windowless, fluorescent-lit rooms, waiting to hear if you've been accepted for jury duty. I groan when I find a jury-duty summons for language, length, and content.

By Cassina Farley

Love is bringing me coffee every morning in the right cup - not too thick, not to thin, and not the one with the dumb handle. Love is bringing me water before bed and spilling it all over the nightstand. Love is not falling asleep during his many flute solos. Love is nagging him about cholesterol, blood pressure and heart disease. Love is him telling a story about my dad and never asking to drive my truck. Love is knowing everyone I know. Love is me watching him cry over a dog that broke our heart. In the early morning hours before work it is love that keeps me from killing him when he decides to play the piano.

I know now that it was love that drew me to that boy with the bad mullet, but it is luck that has kept him stubbing his toe in my bedroom for 25 years. I love you Zach and now everybody knows.

By Martin Levowitz

Like pretty much everyone else, I groan when I find a jury-duty summons in the mail. The prospect of having to serve - or even of just sitting for hours in windowless, fluorescent-lit rooms, waiting to hear if you've been picked or not, is the perfect amalgam of inconvenience and boredom.

And yet, to tell the truth, the two times I have actually sat on a jury (both DUI - both voted to convict) were both interesting and reassuring. Every single juror paid close attention and seemed sincerely determined to serve justice.

Fair, unbiased jury trials are a mainstay of democracy. Theoretically, when you've been busted for picking your nose and then wiping the goo on the post office wall, 12 of your peers will determine your guilt or innocence. They may be right. They may be wrong, but that's how the game is set up. But, you may ask, who are your peers? Would they have to be nose pickers, too, to be actual peers? And, if so, will their judgment really reflect the best interests of society? Who the heck wants to live in a snotocracy?

Well, the jury is no longer out. When Kyle Rittenhouse was acquitted, I felt vaguely ill, assuming it would encourage others in the current, misnamed Patriot Movement (where “Patriot” really means gun-toting thug) to act out their vigilante fantasies, suppressing “progressive” demonstrations/riots. I presumed a miscarriage of justice, as in the OJ Simpson fiasco years ago, where a cynical jury with it’s own agenda and grievances ignored damning evidence of the defendant’s guilt.

Not wanting to be governed by my own knee jerk bias, I sat down to watch the trial on YouTube. And, for the first time ever, I was wrong. The testimony, and especially the video footage, convinced me the jury was right. As regards to the charge of murder, the evidence pointed to Kyle’s innocence and legitimate self-defense. His real infraction, though, was to exercise bad judgment, grabbing a weapon he could not legally possess and going downtown to play make-believe cop.

Any father figure (of either gender) worth their salt would have delivered a more simple, appropriate punishment: a swift, painful kick in the young, foolish ass, and confiscation of the bad boy’s very deadly toy. Apparently, there was no such father figure.

Young Rittenhouse, if we believe him - and he did seem both honest and forthright - went out that night with his AR-15 to oppose anarchy. This has been seen by some as the heroic behavior of a model citizen. To others, it was misguided behavior and youthful folly. Perhaps both are right. In the big picture, the important thing about Kyle’s trial had little to do with the silly, and eventually desperate behavior of a 17-year-old, and everything to do with the dangerously polarized attitudes of this country today.

Poor, clueless Kyle became a bone of contention between the crazed, rabid dogs on the gun-happy right and the bleeding-heart, humanist dogs of the left - the verdict’s fallout less about his guilt or innocence than about conflicting value systems. More “culture wars,” to call them that.

I only regret that demagogue/flame-fanners, like Tucker Carlson, have seized upon this silly kid as some sort of symbolic hero, which he is assuredly not.

May God have mercy on us all in these demented times.

Oh, yeah. Amen.
TOWN COUNCIL NOTES

By PRT Staff Reporters

December 15, 2021

In call to the public, new town resident Cherise Monge presented the initial idea of opening a solo private mental health practice here, saying she believed the town has a need for such services, especially around addiction. Mayor Wood added the thought that the ongoing opiate settlement agreement previously approved by the town might cover costs of such services.

Councilor Finch gave a county vaccination update, mentioning that the Nogales Recreation Center would be offering vaccinations for kids older than 12, on the 28th-29th-30th of December. Kids under 12 can receive 1/3 doses in January, and vaccination in general continues to be available at Walmart and Walgreens.

Manager Robinson again acknowledged the cardboard donation by Peter Robbins, placed on its short rails at Doc Mock Park the day before. South32 paid for the transportation, in the range of $9,500-12,000, and the Town is supporting Sky Island Business Alliance’s use of the carton as a visitor center.

The November 4-6 Spirit World 100 gravel cycling event was reviewed by Zander Ault, beginning with his organization’s great pleasure at the whole event and appreciation for the Town’s support. He felt the new park location, including the private use of the gazebo area worked out well, noting that the event’s 250 registered riders also brought about another 150 supporters, for a total visitor group of around 400. $13,000 had been donated to Borderlands Restoration Network, raised at the benefit dinner before race day. Ault acknowledged that the $30a.m.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Secure Your Garbage

We are about to enter the ‘Season of the Wind’. I have no scientific proof, but I believe the Season of the Wind starts earlier every year, blows harder and lasts much longer than it did in previous years. Growing up in the east, I liked the wind. Living in the mountains of Wyoming I learned what the wind is capable of. Living in southern Arizona, I’ve learned to fear the wind. When your garbage is not secure, the wind takes that garbage and turns it into litter, sending those garbage bags we have all used from grocery stores into the tall trees to flap in the wind — until it finally sheds and leaves tiny pieces of litter.

Are you responsible and securing your garbage? Are you putting your garbage into a garbage bag, then putting that bag into a garbage can with a secure lid? That is what the town ordinance of Patagonia requires you to do for proper and safe disposal. It’s a new year, be ready before the winds begin. If you are not already, it is time to start securing your garbage.

Thank you for helping to keep Patagonia beautiful! Cynie Murray Patagonia

Thank you to local musicians Zach Farley, Brett and Janet Dodd, Barry Muehe and the Hog Canyon Band, Lori Carroll and the Gratitude Drum Circle, and Jerry and Cenovia who brought us mariachis! Christine Schlenker Aspenhill and Kathi Gordon offered storytelling and singalong children’s activities.

Gratitude to Town Manager Ron Robinson, the Patagonia Creative Arts Center, and all the locals who supported the ART WALK. Appreciation also to helpers Jacqui Treinen, David Krest, Wade Johnson, Don Durham, and Rick Marshall for help with banners and site prep.

Thank you John Shelton for graciously allowing us to transform his vacant lots on McKeown into an Artisan Courtyard and Fine Arts Pavilion. In addition to mainstreet displays, we thank Barbara Kuhns for hosting the Textile Courtyard, Judith Hinton Andrew for opening her art studio, and VOICES from the Border for the quilt show in Cady Hall.

It was my pleasure to reach out and meet so many wonderfully talented and creative members of our community. Thank you for so generously sharing your time and talents in the ART WALK!

And to those who I failed to mention by name, I appreciate your contribution and support too!

Anyone interested in next year’s ART WALK can write to patagoniaArtWalk@gmail.com

Thank you,
Mary Sky Scolarch Patagonia

Support Business

I would like to give a shout out to Zander and Heidi for the opening of their business, The Lumber Co. They not only bring a much needed youthful vitality to our community, but they are really trying to bring us live music occasionally, and music is something we all can use more of. Please do what you can to support their efforts.

Dave Rollins Patagonia

Need to Address Environmental Issues

I just read Martin Liebowitz’s recent editorial condemning the conquering classes of humans for their roles in history. This has been, for decades, an endless theme of self-re-crimination over centuries of humans doing de-humanizing things to each other. I think anyone who has attended a public school, watched many of the thematic movies from Hollywood, or the television’s PBS documentaries need not hear Martin repeat what has been said by so many for many times. I have no idea what technical background Martin has but his focus is social science. I believe we have more pressing problems.

I am an engineer. I have spent 50 years in the environmental engineering field. I have focused on the environment that all humans share on this planet. The topic that I rarely see discussed, is the world population as the primary cause of our environmental challenges. Yes, we hear about global warming because of emissions from specific sources. But here is my point. As fast as scientists and engineers try to advance the technology for “cleaning” human waste products, the growing population always stays ahead of that technology and our planet cannot self-clean at the current world population. I read that a Harvard sociologist believes that the “sustainable” world population is 11 billion humans. His basis is merely the ability to manufacture a food supply. I disagree. We just simply cannot find ways to self-sustain biologically, chemically, and economically at that population. I do not have a number that is defensible but in the environmental engineering field, we see constant failures with the answers of “too bad about that” or “who can we blame?”

If we are, as a human social group, committed to “humanizing” each other, we need to address the environment. Social issues won’t improve if the planet cannot sustain our waste loads.

Bob Owen
Tucson (formerly of Elgin)

In the December issue of the PRT, “Broadband Breakthrough” was incorrectly attributed to Sarah Klingenstein. The correct author of the article is Kat Crockett. We apologize for this error.
Santa Cruz County is fine-tuning when and how to begin disbursing some of the $9 million of American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds allocated by the State. The County received half the funds in 2021 and will receive the second half in 2022. Spending must be accomplished by 2024.

Angie Donelson, of Donelson Consulting, LLC, briefed the County Supervisors during a study session at their regular meeting on Dec. 7 on proposed fund distribution strategies for small businesses and nonprofits. Donelson’s strategy focused on asset building to construct and preserve financial wealth to fall back on during times of stress. She highlighted industries who experienced higher unemployment and reduced capital because of the pandemic, which include logistics, produce, services, retail, artists, hospitality, construction, and entrepreneurs.

Donelson proposed allocating up to $500,000 for capacity loans, ranging from $25,000 to $45,000, for nonprofits, to be used to develop competencies, strategies, systems, and structures to improve organizational effectiveness. She also suggested allocating $1 million for business loans, forgivable loans up to $25,000 each, and grants to artists, up to $2,500. Proposed implementation would be late January to give us some proposals of how they would address this. Four carriers responded. He added that the cost came in much higher than anyone anticipated and noted that the project “perhaps will never get built unless there is an infusion of funding.”

Palmer reported that he and the County’s IT Director, Juan Balderas, concluded that, “the area that had no service and probably needed it the most is Patagonia, Sonoita and Elgin.” Palmer then parceled down the scope of the project to fit within the funding and he sent another inquiry to the four carriers; responses were pending at time of the meeting. Palmer concluded to the Board, “Once we identify what the proposal will be and what carrier will fit that need, then we will proceed to work with that carrier with your support and apply for the grant funding and then proceed with building that out and providing service to an area of Santa Cruz County.”

County Manager Jennifer St. John recently stated, “the AZ Commerce Authority will be the next grant we apply for in regards to broadband, but there are other grants we intend to apply for so that we can build our broadband infrastructure around the County. We are also working with private partners to potentially help fund some of the grant matches that may be required. The County plans to hold a study session the week of January 10 to discuss broadband in more detail...I am certain that our study session the week of the January 10 will have much more detail and more answers as to our overall plan.”

St. John is concerned that the final ruling from the U.S. Treasury outlining the details of how the funds may be used has yet to be issued. “The county is trying to balance the need to get this money out to the community versus the unknown of the details of how this money can be spent, so that’s why more exact timelines haven’t been provided,” St. John stated. She also mentioned that revenue replacement is another option for the funds. The County is hopeful that their road fund may qualify, especially important because the gas tax revenue decreased dramatically over the past 18 months.

By Jo Dean

For months before January 20, 2021, the Mexican/US border was an enormous linear construction zone. Overlooking the border area from a vantage point in the Coronado Natl. Memorial, one could see that the top of a mountain just south of Coronado Peak had been removed, heavy equipment and use of explosives had crawled up the east side of the peak and snaked down the west side toward San Rafael Valley.

All went silent on January 20, 2021, Inauguration Day of President Biden, when the President signed an “Executive Proclamation on the Termination of Emergency With Respect To The Southern Border Of The United States And Redistribution Of Funds Diverted To Border Wall Construction.” A border map shows the older vehicle barrier across the San Rafael Valley, flanked east and west by the bollard pedestrian fencing coming from the east into Coronado National Memorial, and east and west of Nogales for five miles in total.

The border is segmented with new bollard pedestrian fencing. Much of the new fencing was constructed on Federal land such as National Forest, National Wildlife Refuges, and National Memorials to avoid any legal action that would have delayed the road construction and building of the wall. As a last-minute push in January 2021, a 1.5-mile road was bulldozed from the Kino Springs area in the Coronado National Forest towards the west side of the Patagonia Mountains, within the Patagonia Unit of Jaguar Critical Habitat. Severe damage was incurred leaving the soil of volcanic tuff exposed to the elements, causing dust, erosion, and a scar that will be visible for eons. Much of the older vehicle barrier fencing along that route was removed, leaving an open border along the route. West of Nogales the construction caused severe damage in the Pajarito Mountains. In the Sasabe area, segments of new and replacement pedestrian fencing span approximately 21 miles with severe damage in the Cerro Del Frenal area, according to Wildlands Network, “The Border Wall Arizona and New Mexico,” July 2021.

Wildlife has been significantly impacted where the stretch of pedestrian fencing has been erected. Trail cameras that, before the wall, had captured thousands of photos of wildlife including javelina, bobcat, javalina, an occasional jaguar, now capture very few. Trail cameras in the San Bernadino Wildlife Refuge that had previously captured hundreds of photographs of wildlife, captured one photo of a skunk along the newly constructed pedestrian wall. (“The Refuge & the Wall,” 2020 documentary video, by Leslie Ep- person, Small Wheel Films, Wildlands Network).

Plans are evolving to repair environmental damage, including erosion control, revegetation, repairing vehicle barrier fencing, and returning some private lands to individuals. Understand the Office of Management and Budget said in a statement, “Building a massive wall that spans the entire southern border and costs American taxpayers billions of dollars is not a serious policy solution or responsible use of federal funds.”

The new administration plans to return $2 billion of the $3.9 billion taken from the Pentagon to the projects for which the funds were originally intended. The remaining $1.9 billion appropriated by Congress will be used for restoration of environmental damage caused by wall construction. According to the Sky Island Alliance of Southern Arizona’s, “some repairs to flood barrier systems and dangerous soil erosion areas have been made, but there is still much to do in Arizona. During FY2021 appropriations, the House version of the Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill directed $75 million from DHS to the Department of the Interior’s Fish and Wildlife Service for mitigation activities around the border wall and barriers. We are hopeful that these funds will be used to start restoration projects.”

Funding could also be used for virtual surveillance, a mix of surveillance towers mobile and fixed, underground sensors that detect motion, aerostat blimps, drones, facial recognition cameras at border crossings, and license plate readers. Virtual surveillance has little negative effect on the ecology of an area and is considered highly effective.

When Bill Clinton established the border enforcement policy in 1994, it was known as ‘Prevention Through Deterrence,’ the theory being that pedestrian fencing will reach so far out from the areas of urban illegal crossing that the migrants would be deterred from crossing into the dangerous desert areas. Deterrence has not worked and has contributed to thousands of deaths of people trying to migrate into the US. Since 2000 the remains of almost 4,000 people identified as migrants have been found in the Arizona desert.

Addressing the humanitarian needs on both sides of the border with effective law enforcement is a challenge that has eluded many administrations. Across the southwest, in fiscal year 2021, there were 1,734,686 Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) ‘enforcement encounters,’ a 279% increase over the previous fiscal year. Construction of the border wall remains unwavering, but the border remains a political hot spot for the new administration and its evolving approaches to control illegal immigration.
Local Students' Art Sends Message of Welcome

By Sarah Klingenstein

Locals and visitors who enjoyed the quilts on display at Cady Hall during November’s Art Walk may not have realized that this exhibit was a long time coming. The finished quilts, pieced together using artwork by local students, were the final step in the project ‘Leaving Home: The Art of Asylum’ which began in March of 2020. At that time, local organization Voices from the Border sponsored a multi-day event to highlight the experiences of children seeking asylum across the southern US border.

The 2020 event featured artwork gathered from children at Casa Alitas, a Tucson shelter for migrant families, but, unfortunately, it was cut short by COVID19. One aspect of the project that just made it in “under the wire” before the shutdown was a series of presentations to Patagonia students by Gale Hall, an educator and member of the Esperanza Quilters in Oracle. She shared children’s artwork that had been incorporated into quilts.

Tammy Quiroga, art educator at Patagonia Elementary School, recalled that Hall showed the students an old, battered suitcase that had belonged to one of her ancestors who had immigrated. “Gale said that often, families petitioning for asylum must leave home in a hurry, as they may be fleeing from threats and violence. Parents may give a child a small suitcase and say, ‘Take what you can fit in here.’ This hit home for our kids as they imagined how hard a situation that would be, and what they would pack for such a trip, with the likelihood they would never come home again.”

The Patagonia students, grades 2-12, were then asked to draw pictures with messages to the children, which were transformed into the second batch of quilts. A variety of encouraging messages, ranging from “Bienvenido a Arizona” to “This land was made for you and me” and “Welcome to Pizza Land” adorn the brightly colored works. Each of the eight quilts features ten student drawings, as well as an image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a cultural and religious symbol for many people of Mexico and Central America.

Sydney McKay, a senior at Patagonia Union High School, remembered, “I felt encouraged that there were people like those at Casa Alitas who provide shelter and safety. I had only known about the detention centers so many migrants end up in, which sounded so traumatic, for children especially.”

Maggie Urgo, a member of the Board of Voices from the Border, hopes that the quilts can be displayed somewhere that the local students can enjoy seeing their own and each others’ work, before finding a permanent home for them.

Trail Sign Project Completed

By Lynn Davison

The final interpretive sign was placed on the Smith Canyon Loop Trail, north of Patagonia, in December. Like the other nine signs, this one is part of a larger vision to make the Borderlands Wildlife Preserve welcoming and educational for visitors.

The Smith Canyon Loop was the first trail within the Preserve. It was designed and constructed by the Dirt Baggers, a local volunteer trail building crew, who also installed the signs and several strategically placed benches on the trail. It’s an easy to moderate 2.3-mile loop with beautiful views of Mount Wrightson, Red Mountain, several ridge lines and canyons, and a lovely oak bosque.

Borderlands staff, Wildlife Corridors managers, and Chris and Mary Stromh envisioned the project and determined the topics for the ten signs. Each sign had a primary author. For example, Cholla Nicholl wrote the language for the wildlife sign and Patagonia Creative Arts provided drawings from local children; Ron Pulliam wrote the language for the biodiversity sign; and two representatives from the Tohono O’Odham Nation wrote the language for the Land Recognition sign. All the signs are in both Spanish and English. Shannon Bilegas, a graphic artist, was the sign designer. Rock Art Signs and Makers manufactured the signs. The whole project has taken about 18 months.

The interpretive signs and the kiosk at the south entrance to the property at Wildlife Haven are the first phase of signage for the Preserve. In 2022 the Discovery Trail will be built around the south Kiosk area. It will also have interpretive signs and be ADA accessible. A second kiosk will also be built at the north entrance at Casa Blanca Canyon.

For Wildlife Corridors, who own the Preserve, and for Borderlands Restoration Network, who manages the maintenance, restoration, and education on it, their goals are to permanently protect a critical section of the corridor for wildlife traveling between the Sierra Madre in Mexico and the Santa Rita mountains, as well as to offer a place for people to be in nature, learn about the plants and animals we share it with, appreciate the history of the region and the people who have lived on the land, and understand how conservation, restoration, and education are all key to assuring the remarkable natural resources of the borderlands region remain for our children’s grandchildren to enjoy. The signage is an important step in achieving these goals.

The partners of this project encourage you to take a walk on the Smith Canyon Loop Trail, appreciate the interpretive signs, the beauty of the landscape, and the occasional wildlife sighting.
13 Longer Loops in San Rafael Valley

PRT contributor Robert Gay is working on a trail map of Patagonia and surrounding areas. The PRT is continuing to feature sections of his map in the next several issues.

1. SPIDER TOM TRAIL - AZ Trail, passage 3. 37.3 miles / 2936’ elev. gain
2. ALTO RUINS - 29 miles / 2600’ elev. gain
3. SPIRIT WORLD 50 - 57 miles / 3361’ elev. gain
4. PATAGONIA 50 - 50.31 miles / 3022’ elev. gain
5. NOGALES - 47.9 miles / 4412’ elev. gain
6. BUD AND BOO - 44 miles / 3018’ elev. gain
7. WINE COUNTRY LOOP - 56 miles / 2824’ elev. gain
8. MONTEZUMA EL GRANDE - 71.9 miles / 6592’ elev. gain
9. PATAGONIA 80 - 81.5 miles / 5907’ elev. gain
10. SAN RAFAEL BOOGIE - 73.6 miles / 4771’ elev. gain
11. SPIRIT WORLD 80 - 83.4 miles / 5281’ elev. gain
12. SPIRIT WORLD 100 - 101 miles / 7063’ elev. gain
13. MONTEZUMA - 36.2 miles / 4237’ elev. gain

For more route information, visit these links: https://bit.ly/3t96qts
dirtyfreehub/adventure/arizona

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289 McKeown #2 Patagonia, Az 85624

PATAGONIA REGIONAL TIMES JANUARY 2022
Hercules has become a favorite in my household, so much so that I purchased my own copy after checking it out (and letting it go overdue) many times over. Prior to this book, I’d never eaten Ukrainian or Eastern European food, but everything I’ve attempted to make has been a hit: Ukrainian borscht, zucchini and potato stew, and especially the frumentary, or Moldovan lazy flatbreads, that are so easy to make. They’re fried dough filled with scallions, feta cheese, and dill. I love to cook up a plate and snack on them throughout the day, but they’re best eaten right out of the pan with a dollop of sour cream and a pinch of flaky sea salt.

“The Modern Comfort Food: A Barefoot Contessa Cookbook” by Ina Garten has saved me. I highly recommend the Caesar salad dressing, roasted shishito peppers with easy hollandaise, as well as the baked rigatoni with lamb ragu. The next recipe I plan to try out of the book is the baked fish chowder, which is chock-full of cod, Yukon gold potatoes, yellow onion, and sprinkled with saffron threads.

The library has nearly 200 cooking titles to choose from, so if these cookbooks don’t capture your fancy, there’s bound to be one in our collection that will. Stop by the library today to find the perfect cookbook, whether you just want to drool over the photos or a book that will get you into the kitchen.

“Mamushka: A Cookbook” by Olia Hercules has become a favorite in my

Check It Out At The Library
By Laura Wenzel

PRAC Takes The Plunge
Clare Bonelli

The Friends of the Patagonia Pool (FOPP) has been renamed the Patagonia Regional Aquatic Center (PRAC). This change has been done to align with our long-term goals and include our regional participants. In support of keeping the pool open, PRAC is aiming to create a $1,000,000 endowment. We have some very talented grant writers and creative fundraisers and are off to a good start.

We’ve raised over $45,600 this year in donations, pledges and proceeds. We’ve applied for and received grants, written a strategic plan with short and long-term goals, completed the Articles of Organization, formed an AZ LLC, filed for non-profit status, set up mailing and email addresses and chosen a logo. We are close to completion of a Memorandum of Understanding with the schools and opening our own bank account.

A big THANK YOU to all the businesses who supported our efforts, to all the donors and workers who contributed to this effort and to the Patagonia-Sonoita Rotary Foundation for serving as our 501c(3) fiscal agent. Another big THANK YOU to Erin Botz who took over as president of PRAC and is doing an amazing job, Samantha Carlson who has put in countless hours getting the paperwork done for legalizing the organization, and watch the Weekly PRT for more info!
**Current COVID Protocol**

By Sarah Klingenstein

Two years into COVID-19, news about variants, mask usage, vaccines and testing options still abounds. Because the information has changed over time, and we often find ourselves unsure of the who, what, when, why and how of it all, the PRT gathered the latest facts about COVID-19 testing in our community.

Using sources such as the Centers for Disease Control, the Cleveland Clinic, Dr. Eladio Pereira of the Mariposa Clinic, and information from the local pharmacy websites, here is what we’ve learned:

**When should I get tested?**

The following people should be tested for COVID-19:

- Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19, whether or not you have been vaccinated. If your result is positive, let the County Health Department or Mariposa Clinic know. They will advise you further.
- Non-vaccinated people who have had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with someone who has a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Anyone who is advised to do so by their healthcare provider or health department.
- Vaccinated people who have been exposed to COVID-19 and plan to spend time with an unvaccinated person (e.g. elderly or a child under the age of five) may want to be tested. Both the Delta and Omicron variants can cause breakthrough infections and vaccinated people can still carry the virus and pass it on to others.

If a test is warranted due to exposure or symptoms, you should self-quarantine pending test results, and follow the advice of your healthcare provider or a public health professional.

**How do I choose between PCR testing and rapid Antigen testing? How long does it take to get the results?**

- The **polymerase chain reaction** (PCR) test searches for the virus’s RNA in your sample. The test is done with a nasal or throat swab. These tests must be sent to a laboratory and it can take between 24 hours and several days to a week to receive the results.
- With an antigen test, a nasal swab is used to detect certain proteins on the surface of the virus. These tests can give results in as little as 15 minutes, and usually within 24 hours.
- Studies indicate that they’re not as sensitive as the PCR test; therefore there is a greater chance of missing an infection. These “false-negative” results are more common if somebody gets tested too soon after exposure, or 5 days or more after exposure. At that point, the amount of antigen is typically low and could go undetected even though the patient has or had COVID-19.

**Where can I take or buy a test?**

Many experts recommend that if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, seek testing at a facility. Healthcare professionals can best determine what type of test you should take, and what to do when you learn the results.

- The Santa Cruz County Health Department is offering free COVID-19 testing at 275 Rio Rico Drive in Rio Rico. Testing is conducted Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Call for an appointment: 520-604-9321.
- Mariposa Community Health Center offers testing. The tests can be done at their Nogales, Patagonia, Tubac and Rio Rico Clinics. The Clinics are open Monday through Friday, with Saturday hours in Nogales. Call for up-to-date information: 520-281-1550.
- Holy Cross Hospital in Nogales offers testing through its emergency department.
- Nogales/Santa Cruz County Chamber of Commerce, 123 Kino Pl Park Pl. Nogales offers PCR and rapid testing and antibody testing. Call or book online for an appointment.
- Home tests may be purchased online or at some local retailers such as Walmart, Walgreens and other pharmacies. The availability of tests in stores has been sporadic. If you choose to take a home antigen test, and find out that you have COVID-19, the Health Department may request a confirming PCR test. Report your result to the Health Department at 520-375-7900, or Mariposa Clinic at 520-281-1550.

**Are these tests free or is there a cost?**

Most testing is offered at no cost. Rapid tests for travel purposes may be an exception.

**What if I’m required to present a negative test to travel?**

Sometimes authorities require that a test be taken within 24 - 72 hours of departure. Once you know the requirements, including the type of test, there are several locations to receive that rapid testing.

- The Tucson International Airport has testing on-site, near baggage claim, so you don’t have to pass security to be tested. Their website shows the rapid PCR test at no charge, antigen testing at a cost of $79.
- Several other laboratories (ARC Labs, Carbon and Drip Hydration) in the Tucson area advertise rapid PCR tests, with costs between $130 and $249.
- You may also get a rapid PCR test at the Mariposa Clinic.

When seeking to get tested, check beforehand to make sure the information you have is current. When asked about how to keep up with the changing information, Dr. Pereira said, “What I tell you today may not be true tomorrow. One thing we do know is that COVID is still very much with us and will be for a while.” Dr. Pereira emphasized that he hopes everyone receives the COVID-19 booster, as it appears to help resistance to the very contagious Omicron variant of COVID-19.

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**New CDC Guidelines: IF YOU TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 - ISOLATE:**

Everyone, regardless of vaccination status:

- Stay home for 5 days.
- If you have symptoms or your symptoms are resolving after 5 days, you can leave your house.
- Continue to wear your mask around others for 5 additional days.
- If you have a fever, continue to stay home until fever resolves.

**IF YOU WERE EXPOSED TO SOMEONE WITH COVID-19 - QUARANTINE**

If you have had a booster shot or completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine within the past 6 months or Completed the primary series of J&J vaccine within the last 2 months:

- Wear a mask around others for 10 days.
- Test on day 5, if possible.
- If you develop symptoms, get a test and stay home.

If you completed the primary series of Pfizer or Moderna vaccine over 3 months ago and have not had a booster shot or Completed the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and have not had a booster shot or are unvaccinated:

- Stay home for 5 days. After that, continue to wear a mask around others for 5 additional days.
- If you can’t quarantine you must wear a mask for 10 days.
- Test on day 5, if possible.
- If you develop symptoms, get a test and stay home.
STARSTRUCK

By Harold Meckler

On any night this month, take a step outside. Get away from as much light as possible. Maybe choose a night when the moon doesn’t seem to fill the sky. Let your eyes become accustomed to the darkness. Forget the trusted binocular, or the telescope. Just look up. Is it even possible to count the stars? Is it possible to gaze at that oddly shaped fuzzy glow stretching across the sky and not wonder how many more stars are located within it, within that single arm of the Milky Way Galaxy?

Then again, why bother? There is nothing in the sky that changes, or can improve upon, what is currently going on right here on Earth. Does Covid, for example, go away if one stares for a while at a distant star?

The simple and honest answer is that stargazing is never about escaping or trying to push something aside. It’s about adding. It is a passion not unlike all the others that give us joy and laughter and leave us amazed. It’s a willful act to try to step a little beyond regular boundaries, even if it’s only for a short while.

So, go outside and look up. Everything you see - except this month’s topic - is in the Milky Way. Our spiral shaped galaxy is home to an estimated 400 billion stars. Our planet orbits just one of those stars.

An immensely strong beam of light propelled from one edge of the Milky Way to the other would take over 150,000 years to complete its journey. And, just as our sun is but one of very many, so is the Milky Way. Incredibly, new research indicates that there may be 2 trillion galaxies in the universe. I don’t think it is possible to grasp the enormity of it all.

What is within our reach, and within our ability to comprehend, is our neighboring galaxy, Andromeda. On a cosmic scale, it’s not very distant. Holding perhaps 1 trillion stars, it is even larger than the Milky Way. But, let all the numbers go.

This month, there is a good chance to see, with our own eyes, one object in the sky that is not in our galaxy, but is actually another galaxy with its own stars and planets and comets and, perhaps, its own amateur astronomers.

We live in a finite world. We’re reminded of that every day. But space extends well beyond our world. While most of it is dark, light from countless sources makes its way to us. If you are persistent enough to spot Andromeda, you are seeing it as it was 2.5 million years ago. It’s taken that long for its light to reach us. But that’s really not that impressive. Astronomers have seen the light from galaxies billions of light years away. The point? In the vacuum of space, light seems to be able to travel forever. Unimpeded, light is infinite. Yogi Berra once said that a baseball player can’t hit and think at the same time. For me, when I find Andromeda, I can think of nothing else.

Now, how to find it. You could buy a star chart. You can do an online search. You can also download a free app onto your phone and then use it to line up your view. Quite frankly, all will serve you better than any directions I might give here. Without magnification, you’ll need to look for a small hazy spot in the sky that looks distinctly different from the pinpoint light of a star. Throughout January, early in the evening, Andromeda will be nearly overhead and slightly to the west. Your best chance to see it is on a very dark night either early or late in the month, when the moon is in a crescent or new phase.

With the help of a telescope I’ve seen quite a few galaxies, all appearing in my viewfinder as hazy smudges. Those smudges, though, fill me with awe, an acknowledgement that I’ve captured a tiny sliver of what there is beyond my backyard, via a ray of light. And, in that moment and, perhaps for just that moment, everything is very close to perfect. And, very close is more than good enough.

By Harold Meckler

Lifting up the work of local nonprofits through the South32 Hermosa Community Fund

We’re supporting initiatives focused on the arts, culture and history, environment, health and welfare, recreation, and civic enhancement. Non-profit organizations are experts on what makes a community stronger, happier, and more resilient. With assistance from our Hermosa Community Fund, many have been helped in reaching their goals and working through challenging times.

OUR NEXT GRANT CYCLE OPENS JANUARY 3, 2022.

To learn more, please visit cfsaz.org/grants/south32-grants

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Winter's Winged Wayfarers

January is generally our coldest month and often promises rain, though with a la Nina in full swing, this one may prove to be warmer and drier than historic averages.

Drab is the word that comes to mind in January. Increasingly fewer plants are green, fall colors are long gone, and spring is but a frail promise. Still, the dead of winter in Arizona’s Sky Islands can be an exciting time for those who watch birds.

Unless you just returned from your most recent trip to Pluto, you’re likely aware that our extraordinary corner of the state is truly a birding Mecca. Avid birders flock here from near and far in the hope of bird species that, by and large, are more typical of Mexico than the rest of the continental U.S. I know, because it’s been my privilege to guide many of them over the years.

Even species that are locally common, such as Abert’s towhee and pyrrhuloxia - our other cardinal species - often represent “lifers” for birders living in other parts of the U.S. and certainly outside the states.

A birding trip here in winter, while it misses many of the warm-weather species that make birders salivate, still offers winter rarities:

So far this year, the list of cold weather rarities has been a rich and varied one. I believe this is due to three factors. First, we just had a monumentally wet monsoon, which has literally set the table for birds both common and rare to partake of the resultant feast. More rain produces more plants, hence more seeds, fruits, and insects and ultimately more birds.

Second, our cold season has been anything but, and the warm weather has offered a proxy climate to species that normally winter south of the border.

Third is the fact that there are more birders looking for rarities these days. Not only is birding a rapidly growing sport, but the Covid pandemic has produced more than a few new fans of the feathered. We can sort rarities into a few helpful categories. Liangereps represent the individuals of Sky Island species that normally migrate away for winter.

Northern beardless tyrannulet - a diminutive flycatcher that looks like a vireo - is one such species. Its distinctive downward piping call is a dead giveaway, though catching a good look at this frenetic forager can be challenging indeed.

Strays are birds not normally expected in our region every year. A Herrman’s gull from its normal west coast/Sea of Cortez range is a good example of this category.

Finally, we have misplaced migrants, species that normally give Arizona a pass. Several eastern warbler species, such as black and white warbler, fall into this category.

A fourth designation could well be mountain migrants, which are species normally found at higher altitudes than where they are recorded in winter. An errant Stellar’s jay in Tucson fits the bill.

All that said, here are some of the current rarities at press time. A black-throated green warbler was in Tucson near the Santa Cruz River, where remnant riparian habitat may well mimic its normal digs. A red-shouldered hawk was seen patrolling the Tucson Country Club in December, straying either from the east or the west coast population. Both winter and Pacific wrens - formerly one and the same species until they were split years ago - were near the outskirts of Tucson. All of these species aptly demonstrate the vital importance of preserving habitat in urban areas.

Without these remnants it’s unlikely any of them would surface.

In Patagonia a rose-throated becard - a hyper-rarity in the U.S. - was found in a number of places around town. It was joined by a red-breasted sapsucker, a handsome woodpecker species from the west coast region.

Out at Whitewater Draw Wildlife Area in Cochise County, a clay-colored sparrow was spotted. A ruddy ground dove, a species that breeds just over the border, also was at Whitewater along with the usual bitzkrig of sandhill cranes and waterfowl.

The Tubac and Tumacacori area hosted green kingfisher, eastern phoebe, and gray catbird. The kingfisher is a perennial rare breeder and wintertime visitor. A tyrannulet spotted at Raven’s Nest Nature Sanctuary.

A Herrera’s gull from its normal west coast/Sea of Cortez range is a good example of this category.

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So too with painted redstart, a winter rarity often seen in winter in Patagonia, and Biodiversity Tours. Visit: www.ravensnatureschool.com
Holiday Scenes

Photos by Marion vendituoli, Sally Reichardt and Robert Gay

1. Martha Green, of Elgin, and her great-granddaughter Lisa Tomolillo visit with Santa at Sonoita Small Town Christmas at the Sonoita Fairgrounds on Dec. 11.

2. Students at PUHS displayed gingerbread houses at the Gathering Grounds in Patagonia.

3. Children could leave letters for Santa at the Sonoita Fairgrounds.

4. Gay Moss sells her handmade bowls and crafts at 'Christmas in Elgin' at the Elgin Community Club on Dec. 4.

5. This house on the corner of 3rd and Sonoita Aves. in Patagonia had an elaborate holiday light display.

6. The Patagonia Fire Dept. parades through town with decorated trucks.

7. The Patagonia Library displays a holiday tree constructed of books.

8. Santa greets kids as he arrives at the Sonoita Small Town Christmas Event.

9. Shoppers peruse the 40 vendors set up at Sonoita Small Town Christmas.

10. Santa visits with a young boy on the porch of the Empire Ranch house during the Christmas at the Empire Ranch celebration on Dec. 11.
Glimpses Into Our Past

By Alison Bunting

The mining towns of Washington Camp and Duquesne are about a mile apart, in the Patagonia Mountains, south of Patagonia. The communities were most active between 1890 and 1920 when the Pride of the West mine was most active between 1890 and 1910, two well-known residents, Dr. Andrew S. Russel and Captain Stephen O’Connor had a violent confrontation that resulted in Dr. Russel’s death.

Andrew S. Russel (some sources spell the name Russell) was born in Scotland in 1862. He emigrated to the U.S. about 1881 and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Medical School in 1892. He was first licensed to practice in Colorado in 1893 and was naturalized as a U.S. citizen in Colorado in 1895. He moved to Arizona in 1899. "Dr. A. S. Russell... has come to reside among us to enjoy the benefit of our famed Nogales climate. The doctor comes highly recommended as an ocu-list and aurist." [The Oasis, 6/10/1899]. By early 1900 Russel was residing in Washington Camp, where he was the attending physician for the Pride of the West mine.

Captain Stephen O’Connor was born in 1837 in New York State. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1860 and served for 40 years, fighting in the Civil War and the Spanish American War. After providing an extensive review of his military career he described the “famed Nogales climate. The doctor comes highly recommended as an ocu-list and aurist.” [The Oasis, 6/10/1899]. By early 1900 Russel was residing in Washington Camp, where he was the attending physician for the Pride of the West mine.

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O'Connor's acquittal a "commission of doctors in the hearing inquiry with regard to Captain Stephen O'Connor, U. S. A. retired, rendered their verdict that the gentleman was afflicted with paranoia, and he was committed to the insane asylum at Phoenix." [The Oasis, 2/4/1911].

Andrew S. Russel and Captain Stephen O’Connor had a violent confrontation that resulted in Dr. Russel’s death.

By Pat McNamara

Sonoita Pharmacy Closing

(Mickey) Ginsburg will finally be retiring after 69 years as a pharmacist, his last 22 years spent serving the Sonoita/Elgin/Patagonia community. Ginsburg, already a world traveler, plans on revisiting Austria and Hungary where his roots are, and then down to Argentina. He also plans on spending more time with his race horses with an emphasis on breeding his mares.

The building has been sold to a winery, and after renovation will be a tasting room for that enterprise. Ginsburg will transfer all of the current pharmacy records to the Walgreens Pharmacy in Sierra Vista unless otherwise specified by the clients he has been serving.

Ginsburg stated that he has mixed feelings about retiring, though he looks forward to the travel and more time with his horses. He also wants to “thank all of the wonderful customers and the community’s support” for his business.

Become an ERF Docent

Docent Gail Corkil guides a tour at the Empire Ranch

News Release

Are you interested in learning more about the Empire Ranch and sharing your knowledge with visitors to the Empire Ranch? We plan to have a docent training class on February 19, 2022.

Docents conduct monthly Empire Ranch House tours that provide a general introduction to the history of the Empire Ranch, its buildings and its people. Each docent provides an average of four monthly tours annually. Upon completion of the Docent Training Class each docent receives individual tour training.

If you’re interested in participating as a docent, please let us know by January 31st. You can register via the ERF website https://www.empireranchfoundation.org/about/programs/docent-training-program/ or by emailing Alison Bunting [alisbunting@gmail.com].

Washington Camp, 1909

Photo courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey Photographic Collection, Denver
By Louie Dombrowski

The Christmas Bird Count is a long-running, nationwide and world-wide effort to census wintering birds, sponsored by the National Audubon Society.

The Patagonia Christmas Bird Count was conducted on December 16, 2021. A total of 4,777 individual birds, of 127 species, were counted by 36 participants. Volunteers counted all the birds they saw or heard within a specified area, all located within a 15-mile diameter circle centered about 1/2 mile southeast of the junction of Harshaw Creek Rd and San Rafael Valley Road.

The most remarkable find of this year’s effort was the first recorded count of a rose-throated Becard. This is a bluebird-sized bird with a short tail, large head, and broad-based, stout bill that it uses to glean insects from dense foliage in trees in short flight sallies.

A tropical and subtropical bird with a breeding range that extends into the U.S. in only a few Arizona locations, this species has recently been found nesting along Sonora Creek after being absent for several years. Individuals staying this late into the winter is a recent development. Only adult males have the pink throat patch that gives the species its name.

The individual found on the count was a female or immature bird, which is entirely a buffy orange color below and brown above with a contrasting dark brown cap. The becard was actually seen by two count parties, first in the morning in the town park, and then in the afternoon at the Paton Center for Hummingbirds (quite nearby as the becard flies - the odds of there being two birds involved is very small)

Other unusual or difficult to find species tallied on the count include white-tailed kite, ruddy ground-dove, red-breasted sapsucker, Baird’s sparrow, and blue grosbeak.

While finding unusual birds is a fun aspect of the count, the information collected on all species becomes part of a large data set that helps determine trends and anomalies in bird populations. This year, for instance, the Christmas Bird Count helped document that pyrrhuloxia numbers were low, and lazuli bunting numbers were high.

Many thanks to all who participated, and to the private property owners who granted permission for counters to survey birds on their land.

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Belted Kingfisher 2  Acorn Woodpecker 24  Gila Woodpecker 107
Red-naped Sapsucker 16  Red-breasted Sapsucker 1  unidentified 2
Money for the restoration and offering to volunteer," she said recently. "It's a good thing," wrote Linda Shore, President of SITA. "People are donating money for the restoration and offering to volunteer," she said recently. "The timeline for opening is driven by the funding for the restoration."

**Garden Guides**

A Crash Course in the Art and Science of Pruning

By Mary McKay

Pruning is a necessary part of maintaining the health of a landscape. And though it does take some practice and knowledge on the subject, it really isn’t all that difficult. Read on for a crash course in the art and science of pruning.

**Why Prune?**

We need to prune fruit trees in order to create a shapely canopy, increase air flow, create strong branches, and increase fruit quality or size. We prune ornamental trees and shrubs to create and maintain a desirable shape, create strong branches, and to invigorate and create dense growth.

**When to Prune?**

Pruning can be done anytime to remove dead or dying wood. But most pruning is done in late winter when the tree or shrub is completely dormant. (Late January and throughout February, before buds break.) An exception to this is flowering trees or shrubs that flower in spring on wood formed the previous year. These should only be pruned after their spring flowers have faded, otherwise you will cut off next year’s flowers. Assess your tree. Does it appear healthy? Does it have a nice shape and plenty of sunlight within the canopy? Never prune more than 1/3 of the living canopy per year.

Let’s move on to the C’s and D’s of pruning. Remove Crossing, Crowding or Competing branches. Crossing branches tend to rub on each other and create wounds where potential pathogens can enter. Crowding small branches block light and air circulation, creating a situation where fungus and other nasty things can grow. Competing branches sap the energy from each other and the fruits will be smaller.

Removing the competitors will allow other branches to grow stronger and have larger fruits.

**Removing Dead, Diseased, or Dying branches.**

Removing deadwood improves the tree’s aesthetic value by correcting its overall shape and balance. Deadwood can also prevent a tree from growing properly. If deadwood is not removed, it can prevent sunlight from reaching within the canopy, and the tree may not be able to grow evenly. Removing dying or diseased wood helps create more attractive trees and shrubs. It also prevents disease from spreading to other trees and plants. Trim so that you maintain a 45-degree angle between limbs for the strongest tree.

Don’t remove fruiting spurs. Fruit spurs can look like a diseased swelling of a branch on a fruit tree, but these rather ugly, swollen areas at the tips of branches or along the branch are really where the flowers and ultimately fruits will form.

I heard about someone who thought these swollen areas were diseased wood and cut them all off! Of course, they had no fruit that year.

Make cuts cleanly and not too close to the branch collar. Leave a small stub in order for the tree to heal its wound. If you cut into a branch collar, you are leaving open wounds and an invitation to passing bacteria to get in.

When cutting along a limb or branch, make the cut about 1/4” above a new, outward facing bud at a slight angle. The tree will branch out at that point. Trim branches that point downward or straight up.

Remove water sprouts and suckers. Water sprouts are very vigorous branches that originate from a branch or trunk of a tree. They tend to grow straight up. Suckers are vigorous shoots that emerge from the roots at the base of a tree. Both are problematic and should be removed in most cases. Heavy pruning produces water sprouts, as does anything that might cause dieback in your tree, such as extended drought. If removing the suckers and water sprouts reduces by one-third the total living branches, then stop there or you can potentially damage your tree. You can work on the canopy shape the following year.

Alternatively, if you remove all the crowding or competing branches and if that reduces the canopy by one-third, then stop there. Remove the suckers or water sprouts next year.

Always use sharp bypass hand pruners and loppers for branches that are under ¾” and a small saw for things under ½”. I like to disinfect my tools after every use.

**Dates and Times Subject to Change**

If you would be interested in sponsoring upcoming events, please contact Cassina Farley at 520-394-9369. Visit www.patagoniacreativearts.org or 394-9369 for more information.

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The Santa Cruz Foundation
For The Performing Arts

Benderly-Kendall Opera House,
344 Naugle Ave., Patagonia, AZ

**January Schedule**

**January 16: 3 p.m.** Violin Duo - Grace Nakano and Emily Chao
$25 Prepay / $30 At The Door
Visit www.scfpapresents.org for more information

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Movies at the Tin Shed Theater
October/November 2021 Schedule

January 23, 2 p.m.: Film: ‘The Pilgrimage to Magdalena’ a documentary by Border Community Alliance - Trento Italy Film Festival winner. Each October, members of the Catholic faith, usually Hispanic or Tohono Oodham, make the annual pilgrimage to Magdalena Sonora about 25 miles from the US-Mexico Border A carnival sets up around the church courtyard which also holds the grave of Padre Kino with a concrete/glass dome to allow the faithful to commune still with the good padre.

20-minute intro and 30 min film followed by a Q and A with film makers $5 suggested donation

*Dates and Times Subject to Change*

Visit www.scfpapresents.org for more information.
Recycling Pick up Begins in Patagonia

By PRT Staff Reporters

Just as the long-awaited start of its Patagonia curbside pickup of recyclables finally got underway in early December, Recyclops announced a new rate structure for its customers nationwide that will make it more difficult for the company to achieve its minimum customer goal of 100 subscribers in this market.

Recyclops had set a $12 per month price for its basic service that includes biweekly pickup of the most common household recyclables except glass. The new plan, effective Jan. 1, keeps the $12 monthly rate in place for customers who pay for a full year of service upfront, but those who wish to pay monthly will now pay $15 a month. The cost to add glass to the service will remain at $7 monthly.

Bob Brandt, chair of the recycling task force, expressed exasperation upon learning of the rate increase and contacted Dennis Wise, Recyclops’ marketing and sales chief, requesting a delay in implementing the higher fees in Patagonia. Wise responded that inflation and increased supply chain costs had made the painful decision necessary. He emphasized, however, that those who pay for the full year at the start will continue to receive the service at the $12 monthly rate.

“The unfortunate turn of events is troubling,” Brandt said, “but the results of our 2020 survey to determine the level of support for recycling in our community showed that a lot of our friends and neighbors are willing to pay considerably more than the new Recyclops rate for this service, so I’m hopeful the damage will be minimized.”

Two weeks into the service rollout, Eric Holeman, the company’s Director of Operations in Arizona, reported that 76 customers were receiving services and 46 of those have added glass to their basic service. He also noted that 101 had signed up but 25 still had not provided their billing information and therefore had not yet received service. Seven Patagonia Lake households have signed up as have several Sonoita-Elgin area households, but Recyclops will not begin to serve those residents until they can substantially increase the number of participants or work out some alternate plan with pricing tailored to more rural areas.

Utah-based Recyclops began picking up recyclables from customers in Patagonia on Dec. 8. The company has divided the town into two routes, each being serviced on alternate Wednesdays. One route includes households south of Naugle Avenue, the other serves the north side of town. The company has signed up only one driver to date but would like to hire additional drivers. Anyone interested in becoming a driver should visit the company’s website, www.recyclops.com/careers.

Early reports from participating households included a mix of praise and criticism about the start-up experience. While some reported a lack of communication after signing up and confusion about when their service would start, those who signed up and actually had their recyclables picked up were pleased with the service.

The high percentage of subscribers who have paid for glass recycling may be a major reason that the glass recycling event sponsored by the task force on December 18 was lightly attended. The volunteers who worked at that event collected less than half of the usual volume. After a few months of Recyclops operations, the task force will assess the impact of the curbside program on its alternating monthly cardboard and glass collections and decide whether to halt, continue or modify those events.

After having changed its usual fourth Saturday collection date because of the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays, the task force will return to that schedule and collect cardboard on January 22. A larger than usual amount of cardboard is expected because of Christmas, but the big unknown, Brandt said, is how much cardboard will be picked up at the curb by Recyclops instead of being taken to the drop off event held at the post office.

Recyclops subscribers can put small amounts of cardboard in the blue recycling bags, but larger quantities should be flattened, tied in bundles and placed at the curb with indicators of welding.

they can to become skilled at the trade and how many people he had made an impact on.

They have been excited throughout his life and how many people he had made an impact on.

and how many people he had made an impact on.

That is a day I will never forget.

You sure will be missed.

That was my father figure, the person I considered my father.

That day, September 8th, 2018, I realized how many people he had touched throughout his life and how many people he had made an impact on.

That is a day I will never forget.

Badges #432 and #433

Poetry Slam Wraps Up

NEA 'Big Read' Events in Patagonia

By Madison Vines

Madison Vines reads some of her poetry at the NEA Big Read Poetry Slam held at the Gathering Grounds on December 17.

Welding instruction is new to the District, but Nate Mershon brings many years of experience to the program. A Patagonia native, Mershon grew up learning to weld at a young age. He worked for years for the late Brent Bowden at AFT Incorporated, and now works for South 32.

Last fall he began to teach at the High School one day a week. “It takes a while for kids to get the hang of it, but when they finally run their first solid bead, the lightbulb goes on,” he said. “They know that, with that skill, they can do so much. It’s a skill that they will be able to take with them wherever they go, and get a job anywhere. It’s a great program to offer here.”

Mershon hopes to offer advanced welding in addition to the introductory course next year and, from there, the goal is to receive accreditation. He remembers that when he was attending Patagonia schools teachers went out of their way to accommodate students’ needs for higher level classes, sometimes even creating a class of one. He hopes he can help his students learn all they can to become skilled at the trade of welding.

Teachers (cont.)

family in 2017 and took some time off from teaching while her two children were young. She came back to teaching when they went to school, to continue sharing her passion for literature and the written word. She has always taught middle school, in public, private and charter school settings, and was most recently a director of curriculum and instruction. In addition to involving them in the study of her favorite books, Peake says, “There’s a powerful technique I enjoy using that immerses students in nonfiction reading – it’s a nontraditional writing exercise that encourages creative thinking and a deeper understanding of the text.”

“It is important to me that students know their voice matters, and that the skills they are practicing here will take them where they want to go,” she said. “And I am so impressed by these kids; they are intelligent, thoughtful, creative, and have showed such resilience coming back to school from their pandemic year. They have been excited to move forward.”

Nate Mershon
### EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 7</td>
<td><strong>Lochiel School Workday:</strong> Hosted by The Patagonia Museum 10-2p.m. Bring water, hat, gloves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 8</td>
<td><strong>Polar Plunge:</strong> Patagonia Regional Aquatic Center Fundraiser. 1:00p.m. $5 admission Hot Choc., cider, donuts, snacks. Ages 10+ invited to join. Bring towel, extra clothes. For more information, call Clare at 520-403-5383.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 15</td>
<td><strong>Paper Shredding/Recycling Event</strong> - Sonoita Fairgrounds 9a.m. - 12p.m.</td>
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<td>Jan. 16</td>
<td><strong>Violin Duo - Grace Nakano and Emily Chao</strong> 3p.m. The Santa Cruz Foundation For The Performing Arts $25 Prepay/$50 At the Door</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 22</td>
<td><strong>Patagonia Museum Annual Meeting:</strong> 10:30a.m. at the Patagonia Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 23</td>
<td><strong>Film: “The Pilgrimage to Magdalena”</strong> 2p.m. a documentary by Border Community Alliance at The Tin Shed Theater. Call for more info - 394-9369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 23</td>
<td><strong>SABRA Awards Banquet:</strong> 10-2p.m. at the Sonoita Fairgrounds</td>
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### SPECIAL INTERESTS

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Lunch for Seniors:</strong> Fresh-cooked meals. Take out @ 11:30-12:15p.m. In-house dining 12:15 to 1:30p.m. Must be vaccinated for dine in. Patagonia Senior Center.</td>
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<td><strong>Sr. Citizens of Patagonia Van Service:</strong> Medical, shopping transportation, Mon - Fri for seniors &amp; disabled. By appointment only. Info: 520-394-2494.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**Santa Cruz County Native Plant Society (SCCNPS) Meetings held on the third Thurs. of the month. 6:00p.m. -7:30p.m. Meeting ID is: 874 9175 9629. Questions contact <a href="mailto:int60@gmail.com">int60@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td><strong>Patagonia Farmers Market:</strong> Thursday 10a.m. - 1p.m. In front of Red Mountain Foods</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Nogales Little Mercado:</strong> Friday 4-7p.m. 163 Morley Ave, Nogales. email <a href="mailto:cdavid@mariposachc.net">cdavid@mariposachc.net</a> for more info</td>
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<td><strong>Purple Elephant Thrift Store:</strong> 325 - 327 McKown Ave, Patagonia. Open 10a.m - 3p.m., Thurs - Sun.</td>
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<td><strong>Flea Market at Heart of Gold Antiques:</strong> First Saturday of every month. 10a.m. - 2p.m. Free to set up. Call 520-394-0199 for any additional information. Open from Tues.-Sat.:10 - 6p.m.</td>
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<td><strong>Angel Wings Thrift &amp; Gift Shop:</strong> New location: 22 Los Encinos Rd, Sonoita Thurs. - Sat. 10-2p.m.</td>
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<td><strong>Patagonia Community United Methodist Church Thrift Shop:</strong> Friday &amp; Saturday, 10a.m. - 12p.m. Look for open flags to be sure it is open.</td>
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<td><strong>East SCC Community Food Bank:</strong> 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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<td><strong>Sonoita Produce on Wheels:</strong> 3rd Sat. of the month. 8-11a.m. VINE Church. Contact Gardena for more info 602-292-1616.</td>
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<td><strong>Patagonia Museum:</strong> Open hours 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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### SPECIAL INTERESTS

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Patagonia Library:</strong> Now open without appts. Mon.-Fri 10a.m.-5p.m., Sat. 10a.m. - 2p.m. Call for more info. 520-394-2010.</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Free Produce Boxes:</strong> 2nd and 4th Fridays of the month. 9:30a.m. In front of the Sonoita Post Office.</td>
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## MEETINGS

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**AA: Alcoholics Anonymous Tuesdays at 7p.m. at The Sonoita Bible Church 3174 N. Highway 83, Sonoita. In-person meetings weekly. Social distancing honored This meeting is also on Zoom at 544-376-9576 (no password required) Fridays at 7p.m. Methodist Community Church 387 McKown Ave., Patagonia. In-person meetings weekly. Contact Dave at 207-249-8302</td>
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<td><strong>Overeaters Anonymous:</strong> to find a meeting go to <a href="http://www.oasouthernaz.org">www.oasouthernaz.org</a>. Contact Adrienne H. for more info 520-404-3490.</td>
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<td><strong>Patagonia Town Council:</strong> Nov. 17 6p.m. in Town Council Room. Public invited. CDC Guidelines will be followed.</td>
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<td><strong>Rotary Club:</strong> 2nd &amp; 4th Thurs. 5:30p.m. has moved online. Info: Sue 520-990-4648.</td>
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<td><strong>Senior Citizens of Patagonia’s Board of Directors:</strong> 2nd Mon. 3p.m. at the Senior Center.</td>
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<td><strong>The Constitutional Conservatives of Southern AZ Club Meeting:</strong> 6:30p.m. every 3rd Thursday of the month, Sonoita Bible Church. All are welcome.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>The Santa Cruz County Democratic Party Meeting:</strong> every 3rd Sat. of the month, 9:30a.m. NOW hybrid. In person at 32 Morley Ave, Nogales or <a href="http://www.azsantacruzdem.org/meetings">www.azsantacruzdem.org/meetings</a></td>
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<td><strong>Community Youth Bible Hang Out:</strong> at the Sonoita Bible Church. 2nd &amp; 4th Wed. April Anderson at <a href="mailto:andeads@msn.com">andeads@msn.com</a>, 520-508-2502 or Steve Lindsey at 520-559-0155.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Crossroads Quilters:</strong> 1st &amp; 3rd Monday of the month 9a.m. at the Sonoita Bible Church. Contact 520-860-0173 for more info.</td>
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### CHURCH SERVICES

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Canelo Cowboy Church:</strong> 14 McCarthy Lane, Elgin 520-604-6990 Sunday Service: 8:30a.m. Sunday School: 10a.m.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Patagonia Community United Methodist Church:</strong> 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/email church office for info. 520-394-2274 <a href="mailto:pata-goniaumc@gmail.com">pata-goniaumc@gmail.com</a></td>
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<td><strong>St. Therese of Lisieux Catholic Church:</strong> 222 Third Ave., Patagonia. In-Person Service resumed. Call for time &amp; schedule 520-394-2954</td>
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<td><strong>Sonoita Hills Community Church:</strong> 52 Elgin Rd., Elgin Sunday Service: 10a.m.</td>
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<td><strong>Sonoita Bible Church:</strong> 3174 N. Hwy 83, Sunday Service: 10:30a.m. Youth Group: 2nd &amp; 4th Wed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>VINE Christian Church</td>
<td>3107 Hwy 83, Sonoita Sunday Service: 10a.m. Cafe, 10:30a.m. service</td>
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<td><strong>St. Andrews Episcopal Church:</strong> 969 W. County Club Dr. Nogales Services are weekly, however times change frequently. Visit standrewsaz.org for additional info.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Quaker Worship Group:</strong> Meets via Zoom. Contact Janice Pulliam if interested 706-614-6959</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church:</strong> 12 Los Encinos Rd., Sonoita 520-394-2954 Sat 10:30a.m. 5:30p.m. Sunday Mass: 8a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Tubac Buddhist Meditation Center:</strong> 2247 Frontage Rd #2, Tubac Sunday: 8:30 - 10a.m. <a href="mailto:tubacbuddhistmeditationcenter@gmail.com">tubacbuddhistmeditationcenter@gmail.com</a> for zoom.</td>
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HELP WANTED

WHISPER’S SANCTUARY IS SEEKING EXPERIENCED ANIMAL CARETAKERS
Couple with RV preferred. 520-455-9246. Start date negotiable.

WANTED: PERSON OF QUALITY, INTEGRITY AND RELIABILITY
Seeking household manager or horse caretaker position to include room and wage. Part-time caretaker negotiable. Contact prwmd@yahoo.com

BARN HELP WANTED
Fri. Sat. Sun: Feed hay, water, pick up manure for two horses. Approx. 1 hr/day $20/day. Located in Sonoita 1 mi. south of Fairgrounds.
Call: 520-975-9920.

NOW HIRING DETENTION OFFICERS
Incentives Include: Health Insurance, Paid Vacation, Paid Sick Leave, Shift Differential Pay, Double Time Holiday Pay, $32,181.00
Please Apply Online www.santacruzsheriff.org Or call: Santa Cruz County Sheriff’s Office 2170 N. Congress Dr. Nogales, AZ 85621 • 520-761-7869

MISCELLANEOUS

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

Homegrown Instruments
Beginning Lessons
Ukulele, Guitar,
Native flute Sales
Zach Farley
520-216-0258

LITTER IS PREVENTABLE!

KPUP Broadcast Schedule - WINTER 2021 - 2022

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: Wednesday, 3pm: Jackson’s 10 Songs
7:00pm to 10pm: Sean Alexander show
Thurs: 7:00pm to 10:00pm: Possibility Explorers.
“Celebrating the Evening of Mushkil Gusha, the Remover of All Difficulties.” Hosted by Graves
Fri: 7:00pm to 9:00pm: Hook’s Sunken Roadhouse
Sat: 12:00pm to 1:00pm: eTown - “Educate, entertain and inspire listeners through music and conversation”
Sun: 10:00am: Patagonia Community United Methodist Church service
6:00pm to 8:00pm: Acoustic Café “Today’s great songwriting talents. A bit of country, rock, blues, folk, pop”
8:00pm to 10:00pm: Folk Alley “Folk Music Radio from WKSU-FM in Kent, OH”

Daily Shows: Swing Hour: 5:00pm to 6:00pm /Best of the Oldies: 1:00pm to 2:00am/ Feature Story News (FSN.com) Mon – Fri. 8 am., 12pm and 6pm, Sat. 8am & 6pm, Sun. at 8am / Patagonia Weather Forecast: Every odd hour.

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patagoniaregionaltimes.org/connect-with-the-prt
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

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