

Patagonia Regional Times



DECEMBER 2024

SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF CANELO, ELGIN, PATAGONIA AND SONOITA

VOL. 14 ISSUE 10

New Supe Says He's 'Got a Lot to Learn'



Photo by Marion Vendituoli

Incoming Santa Cruz County District 3 Supervisor John Fanning, shown here at Gathering Grounds in Patagonia, intends to be in eastern Santa Cruz County once a week after he takes office.

By Marion Vendituoli

"I felt I could make a contribution to the County," John Fanning said when asked why he ran for Santa Cruz County Supervisor for District 3, which includes Sonoita, Elgin and Patagonia, as well as Tubac, Carmen, Tumacacori, and parts of Rio Rico.

Fanning sat down with the PRT after his win in the November election to share his thoughts about the issues he and the other two Supervisors will be facing when he takes office in January.

Two of the most pressing issues that the Board will be dealing with are the fallout from the embezzlement of \$38 million by former County Treasurer Liz Gutfahr, and the development and operation of South32's Hermosa Mine Project.

"I don't know enough," Fanning said when asked about the lawsuit that the County has filed against the State Auditor General, accusing state officials of negligence in not uncovering the embezzlement in their annual audits during the decade that Gutfahr was illegally transferring County funds to her personal accounts. "There's a lot of fingers pointing in [different]

directions," he commented.

"I have confidence in [SCC Treasurer] Alejandro Paz," Fanning said. "He has put in place checks and balances to where this would be very difficult to happen again."

He then quoted from the County website about the responsibilities of the Board of Supervisors. "The very first power of the Board is to supervise the official conduct of all County officers...charged with assessing, collecting, safekeeping, managing, and disbursing the public revenue.

"Do I think that the State has some culpability in this? I think a lot of people do," he said. "I think if the state has any, they should have caught this, along with the banks, then it's worthwhile to move forward with that. I have a feeling that the schools are going to seek damages because it hit them the hardest. I'm not for lawsuits, but if it needs to happen, then it needs to happen."

When asked if he believed South32, the company developing the Hermosa Mine project in the Patagonia Mountains, could be trusted, Fanning

See Fanning, p.15

Keep 'Em Spinning New Bike Shop Opens in Patagonia



Photo by Marion Vendituoli

Patagonia Bikes proprietor Noe Mencias works on the gears of a bike brought into his shop by a visitor from British Columbia.

By Robert Gay

Patagonia Bikes proprietor Noe Mencias is conducting what can be called a "soft opening" in the old Patagonia Visitor Center shop on the corner of McKeown and Third Ave.

Prior to 2024, Mencias had been repairing and reconditioning bikes out of a quiet shed on Smelter Alley behind the Patagonia Lumber Company's shop for almost two years. In January 2024, Mencias leased the corner shop, formerly an art gallery, and began opening his doors to the public. In September, he finally hung a big 'Patagonia Bikes' sign in front of the shop but refrained from conducting the usual advertising/social media blitz or holding a flashy grand opening party. Instead, Mencias has elected to allow customers to slowly, organically find him at his high-visibility corner in "downtown" Patagonia.

"People are giving me good feedback," Mencias said. "They like having

my shop here." He guesses that 80% of his customers are visitors and 20% locals. He appreciates that the locals help him spread out the repair work throughout the year.

The shop is open Friday-Sunday. In addition to the repair and reconditioning work, Patagonia Bikes carries parts and patching kits. He doesn't plan to have a new bicycle showroom, but has begun offering bike rentals so that customers can "try before you buy." One is a tandem Schwinn, often on display in front of the shop.

Mencias is also able to service e-bikes and is optimistic about their future in helping people explore the Patagonia area. One part of his resume that makes it easy for Mencias to adapt to working with the electric parts and controls of e-bikes is his experience working at Tesla.

Moving through the world on two wheels—any kind of cycling—is in Mencias' blood; he calls being on two

See Bike Shop, p.11

Patagonia Regional Times

MISSION STATEMENT

To be a reliable and engaging source of news for the communities of eastern Santa Cruz County—open to all views, focused on local issues, written and edited by local people, and providing a platform for community education and involvement.

WHO WE ARE

We are a nonprofit news organization, funded by paid advertising, donations and grants. The PRT is distributed in print monthly in eastern Santa Cruz County, weekly in the PRT e-newsletter and on our website.

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Do you have an idea for a story having to do with the Eastern Santa Cruz County region? It could be a person or organization who's doing something interesting, a concern about possible wrongdoing, or a unique approach to local challenges. Send your ideas to editor@prtnews.org

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INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

By Nisa Talavera

As the holiday season approaches, it's a time to reflect on what makes our community strong and resilient. Here in the heart of eastern Santa Cruz County, the Patagonia Regional Times is more than just a source of news – it's a vital part of our community fabric.

We're pleased to have delivered a year of unique, local reporting in 2024, and we're looking forward to doing more of it in 2025. But none of this work is possible without the ongoing support of our loyal readers.

Local newspapers like the Patagonia Regional Times play an essential role in connecting us to the people, events, and stories that define our rural life. We cover everything from community events and local government to issues that impact the lives of our neighbors.

However, like many community-driven organizations, we rely on the support of our readers to continue our work. Donations, home delivery subscriptions, local sponsorships, and even a simple word of encouragement go a long way in ensuring we can continue providing the information that matters most to you.

It's our privilege to do this vital work, but it's only possible with support from people like you, our community.

Here's how you can help: We have about three weeks remaining in our NewsMatch 2024 campaign to reach our goal of \$30,000 — and we could really use your support to secure much-needed funding for 2025. Your contribution will be DOUBLED, which is a huge deal for a nonprofit newsroom like ours. That means that if you give us \$20, we get \$40. By

helping us take advantage of this high-impact fundraising opportunity, you enable us to create much more of our difference-making reporting.

We hope we can count on you to help us take advantage of this great opportunity.

Let's come together this holiday season to support not only the Patagonia Regional Times but also the people and businesses that make our community a place worth celebrating. Whether you're shopping for gifts, enjoying a meal out, or donating to a cause, every dollar spent locally stays in our community and helps those who are working hard to provide for their families and neighbors. Your support helps foster a stronger, more connected community where we all thrive.

Thank you for believing in the PRT.



This season is the perfect opportunity to shop local, and to give gift certificates to our neighborhood restaurants, shops, wineries, and B&B's. Help our local artists and small business owners live their dream.

It Takes a Social Club to Bottle Wine



Photo by Keith Krizan

Tom Delaney looks on as Lori Johnson carefully injects argon into empty bottles during a recent bottling day at Twisted Union Wine Company in Elgin.

By Keith Krizan

One of the biggest treats for me is living in Arizona's very first American Viticultural Area (AVA). Established in 1984, the Sonoita AVA was the result of the work pioneered by Gordon Dutt, a soil scientist from the University of Arizona.

Dr. Dutt planted his first vines in the area in the 1970s when he recognized the potential in the soil—primarily alluvial and volcanic, rich in calcium and other minerals—and a mostly cooperative climate with a large diurnal temperature variation. Warm days and cool nights promote excellent conditions for ripening grapes while maintaining acidity levels.

My wife and I were first attracted to the area in the early noughts because of the abundance of horses and ranches, but I was well aware of the nascent wine industry that was underway here.

Eric Asimov, a wine and food critic, had famously declared that "Wine Is Food." I thought that if our retirement home was in an area with active vineyards that good food and restaurants were sure to follow. Witness The French Laundry in the heart of Napa Valley, a bucket list place for me.

The years of yearning to be out here, far from the ice and snow and hustle of a working life, caused me to make a promise to myself, to wit: I want to promote and support the Arizona wine industry in ways other than just consuming it. Anyone can enjoy

wine. To participate by working at it was an even higher contribution.

Of course, when you work at wine you usually get paid in wine, so there is that.

On a recent November morning I found myself in the company of Kati Spencer. She is one of the partners of the group of grape growers and winemakers that make their home at Twisted Union Wine Company on Elgin Road. I am there to help out on Bottling Day for friends Chris and Lori Johnson, owners of Sunset Ride Vineyard, who have just put the finishing touches on their Harvest Moon and Riesling offerings.

Kati explains that theirs is "a very small and manual process capable, on average, of bottling 150 cases in a single day." The focus for Kati is in seeing that in all steps of the process that wine comes into contact with only sanitized surfaces. The wine is at rest in the stainless-steel vats in which it had been fermented.

First up is the 100-micron Plate and Frame filter. According to Kati, "it uses paper filters to remove any remaining leaves and large sediment. The wine then flows through the sterile filter which takes it down to .45 microns. This ensures that the wine will be shelf stable."

The wine is pumped through the filter and into the gravity fed filler, which looks like nothing so much as a Turkish hookah.

The wine itself has already gone

through "a kill step." When yeast is introduced to grapes it breaks down the sugar and converts it to alcohol. Fermentation eliminates bacteria.

In order to ensure sterility, all hoses, filters and the gravity-fed filler are flushed with hydrogen peroxide and a solution of citric acid and sulfites and water. Everything gets cleaned twice, both after each use and immediately before its next use.

While the hoses are being sanitized, Chris takes a ride on a heavy duty Toyota Fork Lift and delivers a pallet and a half of empty glass bottles to the back of the bottling room. There are 16 boxes to a layer and 5 layers to a pallet. Each box contains a dozen 750 ML bottles.

Meanwhile a work crew has assembled. Janet Veta, Terri Malloy, and Claudia Butler are in from Elgin. Vern and Connie Vassey and Tom and Eileen Delaney have made the early morning drive up from Vail.

The bottling room at Twisted Union is a cavernous affair. The ceiling is 22 feet high. Two fans turn languidly to move the air. Everything is painted antiseptic white. The large overhead garage door is fully open, and the room is cool. There is still ice in the puddles beside the crush pad just outside the door but in true Arizona fashion at least one person will be working in shorts.

Everyone leans in as Chris gave a

lesson on the process. Instead of getting assignments we all self-sort into the jobs that we think we might like to do.

The workflow looks like this: Tom opens up the boxes of empties, inverts them, and shimmies the bottles out, right side up, onto a waist high table.

Lori, next in line, injects a quick shot of argon, an inert gas, into every bottle. The argon rises in the bottle as it is filled with wine and forms a protective layer to prevent oxidation. Terri takes the bottles and hands them to Claudia and Connie who place them under the nozzles of the gravity feeder, which begins to fill them when the nipples are pushed up. The wine doesn't stop flowing until the bottles are removed and the nipples are allowed to drop back down, so one has to stay on one's toes.

Janet is in charge of deftly putting the black caps into place over the open necks as the now-full bottles move towards the capping machine.

Eileen is running the mechanical capper, a General Electric Vat 200, operated by placing two index fingers, from two hands, on two widely separated buttons to ensure that no fingers are lost in the screw top process. When the bottle is pushed into place and the machine is activated, a whirligig of a contraption clamps

See Social Club, p.22

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Matus Morriss Retires From School Board After 36 Years



Photo by Ron Morriss

Cynthia "Cindy" Matus Morriss has served on both the elementary and high school councils in Patagonia.

By Carrie White

Adolfo Barela was a tough teacher by all accounts. Heading up Vocational Office Education at Patagonia High School, Barela demanded professionalism of the students entrusted to his care.

No gum chewing. Respectful attire. Proficiency in shorthand and typing.

A youthful grumble: "Why?"

But a 17-year-old Cynthia "Cindy" Matus quickly learned the answer to that question when she beat out older, more experienced candidates for a job at a law firm in Nogales.

That level of professionalism is something Matus Morriss has carried with her throughout life—both in work and public service.

But now, after 36 years, she chose not to seek another term on the Patagonia Union High School board. Her service on that board began after 31 years on the elementary school council. Her reason for stepping back is based on a higher need—taking care of an aging father.

That she will be missed by the local school governing boards, district teachers, staff and students is an understatement.

"In the 12 years that I have been with the district, Cynthia Matus Morriss has been a model governing board member that always advocates for the teachers and students of Patagonia School districts," said Kenny Hayes, superintendent and principal of Patagonia Union High School and Elementary School. "Her experience and knowledge have been invaluable to the functioning of the board."

Ron Pitt, Patagonia Union High

School Board President, said Matus Morriss's input on national and state-wide educational initiatives has been indispensable. "Her vision has been broader than just the local situation," Pitt said. "She is an excellent Board member."

In a 2011 oral history recording for the Arizona Memory Project, Matus Morriss recounted getting a call asking of her interest in filling a vacancy on the Patagonia Elementary School board. At the time she was volunteering with Young Audiences, an educational learning network bringing music and art to rural communities. What was one more hour a month at the school?

She was appointed in 1988, with her first election that same year. She filled the seat in earnest in 1989.

Since that time there have been a lot of wins. To name a few: the hiring of a single superintendent for both elementary and high school districts, a significant cost savings. A new school that still allowed the two districts to maintain their own identities. Service as a child advocate at a local level.

But her contributions have not stopped with the local school boards. She has served on several boards. She is a member of the board of directors of the National School Boards Association (NSBA), the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEAO). She has also been an Arizona School Boards Association (ASBA) officer.

And she's been recognized for her contributions. In 2015 she was the recipient of the ASBA Barbara Robey

See Matus Morriss, p.16

Spirit World 100 Organizers Promote Eco-Business Growth



Photo by Shannon Dudley

Heidi Rentz and Zander Ault, along with their daughter Burch, enjoy the festivities at the Patagonia Lumber Company during the 4th annual Spirit World 100 event.

By Marion Vendituoli

Local entrepreneurs Zander Ault and Heidi Rentz, of Patagonia, have been successfully promoting the region as a top destination for gravel bike enthusiasts. On Nov. 4, as part of their vision for promoting ecotourism in eastern Santa Cruz County, they hosted their 4th annual Spirit World 100 gravel bike road race, part of a three-day event organized by the couple who hosted an estimated 400 visitors in Town over the long weekend.

Bikers had a choice of riding a 50, 80, or 100 mile course, all of which took them through the San Rafael Valley. The 50 mile course took riders out Harshaw Rd. to Lochiel and the Mexican border and then east to Jones Mesa before looping back to Patagonia. The 80- and 100-mile courses followed the same route but, instead of looping back across Jones Mesa, continued further east to the base of Montezuma Canyon in Cochise County. The 100-mile course included a trip up and back to Canelo on the Canelo Pass Rd.

The race started on McKeown Ave. with Patagonia Volunteer Fire and Rescue Dept. Chief Zay Hartigan driving a truck in front of the cyclists

to the intersection of Harshaw Rd. and Harshaw Creek Rd. where the race began in earnest. Ault explained that this is done to get the riders warmed up and to ensure a "neutral start" for the race. 124 contestants in the 50-mile race, 38 in the 80-mile race and 101 riders in the 100-mile race completed the course.

On Thursday evening, Oct. 31, the couple hosted a fundraiser dinner that raised \$23,000 for the Arizona Trail Assn. The Patagonia Lumber Company, a bar and music venue that Ault and Rentz developed and recently sold, was the site for this dinner and for meals throughout the weekend, as well as an after-party and concert Saturday night.

An event of this size requires a lot of planning. "In order to pull something like this off, it takes permitting by the town of Patagonia and by Santa Cruz County and Cochise County, as well as approval from, and review by, the Sheriff's offices, the Coronado National Forest, Sonoita Elgin Fire District, Patagonia Volunteer Fire and Rescue Dept. and Border Patrol," Ault said. "If we don't properly manage it, any of the entities can say, 'No thank you.'"

Spirit World, p.22

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Sheriff David Hathaway

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School Board Approves Four-Day Week for Elgin School



Photo by Marion Vendituoli

Sonoita School District Governing Board President Harry Dotson listens to Supt. Dan Erickson describe the benefits of the four-day school week proposal.

By Marion Vendituoli

The Sonoita School District Governing Board approved the adoption of a four-day school week at their meeting on Dec. 3. This will be a three-year pilot program. The new schedule will be implemented at the start of the 2025/2026 academic year.

The motion to adopt the new schedule was passed by a vote of 3-2, with Ginny Cosbey and Nancy Webster voting against the new schedule, and Tony Fennell, Harry Dotson and Megan Thomas voting in favor of the measure.

Under this plan, the number of days that the students will be in school is being decreased from 180 to 152.

“We don’t want to go past Memorial Day, and we really don’t want to start much sooner than July 28,” Superintendent/Principal Dan Erickson told the Board members. “We’re cutting into that summer break that’s traditional to Southern Arizona.”

There will be no increase in the length of the school day, in large part because, according to Erickson, busing is provided by the Patagonia School District, and there would be scheduling conflicts.

Before the vote, Erickson addressed the Board, saying that he was in favor of the new calendar. “Academic excellence and growth are achievable within this structure,” he said.

The rationale for this plan, according to the proposal, includes improved student and staff morale, reduced absenteeism and cost savings. Teachers would receive the same pay for the four-day week that they currently earn under the present schedule.

The school had circulated a survey asking for respondents’ input on the proposed four-day schedule. They

received 90 responses to the survey, which was sent to taxpayers in the Sonoita School District, as well as to teachers and students’ families.

Governing Board President Harry Dotson said his vote in support of the proposal was, in large part, due to the survey results. “For me, the single biggest thing is that Dan did considerable work to solicit input from the various stakeholders of the district,” Dotson said. “I think we have a responsibility to listen to and respond to the voice of the constituency.”

“I’m still very torn,” Board member Tony Fennell commented before voting in favor of the schedule change. “The constituency does overwhelmingly say, at least those that responded, ‘Hey, do this,’ [but] we heard a lot of comments from others that are the other way.”

“I’m not voting against our teachers,” Board member Ginny Cosbey said during the comment period, explaining why she was opposed to the four-day week. “I’m voting for our children.”

After the vote, Cosbey expressed her concerns about the new schedule. “You lose a day a week,” she said. “I hope it works for the kids. If it doesn’t go well after the first year, they are committed to three years. The kids are going to lose.”

Erickson, who came to Elgin School this year from a school that operated with a four-day week schedule, also discussed developing a program called the “Friday Academy” which was implemented at his former school.

“We targeted students who needed extra help,” Erickson said. “It also put a little extra money in the teachers’ pockets, because they could work and get paid \$30 an hour above their regular salary.”

Slurs Officially Removed From Local Place Names



Photos by Robert Gay

Before and after: The top sign has been removed and replaced with a sign that conforms with Federal place name guidelines.

By Robert Gay

“Squaw Peak” and “Squaw Gulch” no longer exist. These locations, north of Salero Road, are now officially renamed as Santa Rita Peak and Santa Rita Gulch.

But why?

The replacement of local place names containing “the word ‘squaw’ is part of a nationwide, federally mandated purging. In 2021, the Interior Dept. formally declared “squaw” to be an offensive and derogatory term. “The term has historically been used as an offensive ethnic, racial, and sexist slur, particularly for Indigenous women,” the Interior Dept. stated in a news release.

This Federal mandate came as a Secretarial Order from Deb Haaland, the first Native American Secretary of the Dept. of Interior. At the time of issuing it, she said “Racist terms have no place in our vernacular or on our federal lands. Our nation’s lands and waters should be places to celebrate the outdoors and our shared cultural heritage—not to perpetuate the legacies of oppression.

Today’s actions...mark a significant step in honoring the ancestors who have stewarded our lands since time immemorial.”

To implement the name changes, Secretary Haaland’s order also established a task force to work with the US Board on Geographic Names.

The Board has compiled a nationwide list of 660 US place names containing “squaw,” including land features like peaks, meadows, and valleys, and watery places like bays, lakes, springs and creeks. Through this Board, citizens can propose name changes. In choosing a new name, the Board is required to consult with any interested tribal groups as well as any local resident groups.

In Arizona, there were 67 instances of “squaw” having been in place names, distributed among 12 of the state’s 15 counties. Maricopa County, for example, has had two re-namings. First, for Squaw Peak, north of Phoenix, efforts to change the name had begun in 1992, culminating in a name change in 2008, to Piestewa Peak, after Lori Piestewa, a Hopi US Army soldier who had been the first Native American female to die in combat. Piestewa’s name was also used to rename the Squaw Peak Parkway.

Haaland’s order covered only Federal place names, so municipal and private entities are not required to change their names. For public streets,

renaming can be an intensive and often heated process, with residents rightfully objecting that it’s a lot of work to try to change your address everywhere you might have it registered.

In Southern Arizona, Cochise County had one name on the geographic features list, another Squaw Peak. Pima County and the Tohono O’odham and Pascua Yaqui Reservations have no entries. Closer to home, Santa Cruz County (SCC) has two names on the list, a peak and a gulch, side by side. The peak is now Santa Rita Peak, and to the east of it, the renamed Santa Rita Gulch drains southeast to Sonoita Creek.

About four miles up from the Patagonia side, Salero Rd. (Forest Service Road 143) swings left at a junction that until this summer displayed the only known road signage with the S-word—old, cracked and barely legible. An arrow had pointed to Squaw Gulch Rd, now officially labeled Ivanhoe Road in the SCC roster of streets. The name “Ivanhoe” comes from the historical Ivanhoe Mine in the area. It’s a short, obscure side road (FS Road 144) that sees little use and has no signage. Google maps still has it labeled as “Squaw Gulch Road.”

On Salero Road, the Nogales District of the Coronado National Forest has replaced the former signs, one facing each way, as before.

The Coronado National Forest map for Sierra Vista and Nogales Ranger Districts also shows a hill named South Squaw, a cattle tank named Squaw, and Squaw Flat Spring, but these names are little used, not labeled on other maps, and unlikely to even have signage.

In a recent email exchange, Tohono member April Ignacio wrote, “I find it necessary for some of the derogatory names of places and spaces to be eliminated, and I love that Lori Piestewa Peak in Phoenix has replaced one of those derogatory names.”

She also explained that in her Nation, there is a place-naming tradition that’s based on the abiding O’odham connection to the land. If you look at the horizon of what the dominant culture calls the Santa Rita Mountains, it’s easy to see the land-based connection to the range’s O’odham name To:wa Kuswo Do’ag, meaning “Turkey Neck Mountain.”

The renaming of a peak and a wash in the Patagonia area is a symbolic step toward atonement for the past abuse, enslavement, dislocation, and genocide of millions of indigenous residents of the continent. Switching out a couple of obscure signs could perhaps be seen as a tiny gesture, the tip of an iceberg, but it nevertheless addresses a cultural wound that festers through the generations.

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GROWING OLD TOGETHER



By Cassina Farley

Its 5:30am. I'm woken up by the sounds of my husband having a one-sided heated argument with the Amazon Alexa in the kitchen. For some reason she doesn't understand what he's asking for and no amount of yell-

ing will fix it.

The next sound I hear is him sighing loudly. This loud sighing is often accompanied with bellowing moans followed by gigantic yawns. We fight about him doing this in public all the time.

Seems to me, instead of getting older he's just getting louder. If you've run into Zach these past few months then I'm sure at some point he's mentioned his foot. He's telling everybody. I first heard about the foot issue back in July. In addition to me, he's told his mom, my mom, his brother, my brother, my sister, a 7-year-old, my sister-in-law's aunt, her husband, a nice old lady at the Fall Festival, his co-workers, my co-workers, people he meets at parties and just anyone else that will listen.

I looked up his symptoms and determined he had plantar fasciitis. We then explored all the remedies. The problem is, if it doesn't cure the

issue overnight the moaning and belly aching continues. We bought a foot massager, \$150 shoes, and insoles cut by an outdoor enthusiast to no avail. He keeps on complaining.

I made a doctor's appointment so that he could tell someone new about his foot and perhaps get some help. The doctor simply said "You're on the right track" and sent him home to ME!

This foot of his has caused fights in the car, the store and in our living room. I have threatened to cut it off in his sleep. I've told him that I hated his foot (Not my finest moment). We begin each day with foot drama and end each night with foot related grief. It has been exactly ZERO days since we talked about foot-related pain!

Don't get me wrong, I love the guy and I feel terrible that he's in constant pain. There are a few moments where we get a good laugh out of how many different people he tells in a day about his foot. I try to reassure him and support him through this terrible time (insert smirk).

If there is anyone out there with a cure, please contact Zach immediately. We will accept any form of cure: Magic, voodoo, herbal and unconventional.

Meanwhile in the peak of foot drama I'm on the cusp of 50 and that means sweating at night for no reason. I have patches of dry skin right next to oily skin next to a zit. I am mad most of the time except when I'm crying because I'm happy. I've gained weight drinking water and I can't sleep at night or during the day. As a matter of fact, meat gives me insomnia, dairy gives me gas and I can't watch the news anymore because it gives me anxiety.

When we met in our 20s, we nursed each other's hangovers and now I'm buying orthopedic socks for my beloved. We get our blood drawn together at the local clinic.

I guess this is growing old together. I don't know why I never expected fasting labs, hot flashes and foot pain.

Cassina Farley can be contacted at cassinaandzachfarley@msn.com

STINKY AND THE GIRLS



Artwork by Pat McNamara

By Pat McNamara

So a couple of mornings ago, when I went out to feed, I came across an apparent homicide in the chicken pen.

One of my poor, feathered layers-of-protein-filled-goodness lay stiff and headless under the nesting boxes. White feathers were strewn about like a Wisconsin blizzard and the rest of the flock were somewhat subdued as they waddled out for their day of paddock pecking.

I took the poor deceased hen out for a proper internment (tossed her in the nearby grasslands for the coyotes) and pondered as to who was the perp

of this heinous act of poultry assassination.

Raccoons would have eaten the evidence, not just the head. Coyotes couldn't have gotten into the 6' high chain link enclosure...and would have also dined on the poor girl. Mountain lion? There was one in the neighborhood a couple of months ago. Bobcat? Naw...same reason, and they would have finished off the whole flock. Are there weasels in SE Arizona?

As I got ready for bed the following night I was worried about a recurrence, so left the bedroom window open and kept my ear attuned to the chicken pen. Sure enough, around

midnight I was awakened to terrified squawking. Crap!! It's back for another chicken head!!

I leap—ok, roll—out of bed, throw my jacket on over my t-shirt and slip on my cowboy boots that are by the patio door. Pants? I don't need no stinkin' pants!

This is war and my undies will be good enough! So dressed, my 76-year-old, 113-lb. carcass high tails it out to the chickens armed with a flashlight and the determination to take on whatever is lurking and murdering my beloved egg producers! Mountain lion, bobcat, bear, whatever you are, I will destroy you with my...flashlight???

Screaming like a banshee, blinding whatever is in there with my high powered, beaming flashlight I throw open the door and there it is! A cute little, black and white furry ball of stench.

Now for the record, I am an old, peace-loving, do-no-harm vegetarian hippie. I open the door to let out flies! How can I actually kill this animal...with a flashlight, no less?

With my arrival, the poor, dear malodorous beast lets the chicken go (she was unharmed but will need counseling) and scrambles for a hiding place behind a couple of upright pallets I have in the pen. I race to the tackroom for a weapon to dispatch...yes, KILL the perp. Hmm, can't actually bludgeon it to death with a bridle, a saddle is a bit cumbersome, a screwdriver a bit short (don't wanna be THAT close to it as it sprays), brushes? Really, Pat?? Then, aha! A crowbar! That will work. Back to the pen I go with my newfound 'kill stick,' ready for battle.

Chasing a skunk around a pen in nothing but a jacket, cowboy boots and underpants while wielding a

crowbar now seems a bit odd, but hey, something had to be done. We do have a .38 in the house for rattlers but it hasn't been out of its box in years, and I didn't have time to read the instructions for loading and firing. Also, what would the neighbors think of a gunshot at midnight ringing out, even though the closest neighbors are about 1/4 mile away?

Around and around Stinky and I raced, the chickens quietly watching from their night perches while I attempted to bludgeon the killer. Finally, he/she (I didn't stop to check how it identified itself) was trapped, but in a place where I couldn't get a good swing for a final blow.

It got quiet. Perhaps I injured it enough that it will kinda die, hopefully soon and not too painfully. I'm slowly coming back to my 'do no harm' self and feeling guilty. I just left it alone, checked on the victim and hoped that Stinky would never return to the sight of the crime.

I came back to the house, leaving my stinking jacket, t-shirt and boots on the patio to air out and said to hubby, "I can't believe I just tried to kill an animal."

But then, the chickens are part of the family and a grandma must protect her own, right? Hubby agreed with me, rolled over and went to sleep.

I laid awake most of the rest of the night, asking the skunk god to please forgive me and please turn her creation into a vegetarian! This morning I went out to feed and there was no dead skunk, just its odor was left behind. I wish it well and hope to never see it again. The next time I will at least put on some pants before doing battle!

New Faces at Area Schools

By Dottie Farrar

Six new teachers have joined the faculties of the three local public school districts. Here are profiles of the two new teachers at the Elgin School and the four new teachers at the Patagonia public schools, all of whom have brought a wealth of experience and enthusiasm with them to their new roles.

Jennifer Cranston



"These kids are great!" said Jennifer Cranston, social studies teacher for Elgin School's sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. "I'm having a great time with them."

Cranston teaches her sixth-grade students about ancient cultures as part of World History. A recent topic was Mesopotamian Empires. The seventh-grade students are delving into a survey of world history, with the Enlightenment Period a recent focus. American Government and civics occupy the eighth graders, most recently focusing on the Bill of Rights.

Cranston came to Southeast Arizona from a small rural town near the Canadian border where she taught English, history, and social studies in grades six through twelve for the past 28 years. She and her husband moved to Patagonia from Washington State in July, in time for the 2024-25 school year.

"I grew up all over the country including Michigan, Indiana and Washington, where I graduated from high school," said Cranston. She then earned a degree from Western Washington University's Fairhaven College, where she designed her own concentration of English, history, and theater, which prepared her well for her teaching career path.

Cranston's husband, Nate, ran the photo lab and taught photography at Western Washington University. An avid road bicyclist, Nate would come down to Patagonia to train during the winter when conditions were unfavor-

able for cycling in Washington. He fell in love with the area. "You've got to come down here and see Patagonia and Santa Cruz County," he told his wife. "You would love it." And she did.

The couple decided they would not wait for retirement to make the move because they wanted to work in the area, make friends, and become a part of the community. They bought land and built a house, which has just been completed.

When she isn't teaching, Cranston likes to work with her hands. She knits, weaves, and makes things. Getting outside is important for her, and she likes to ride her bike and walk. She is feeling very welcome in the community and especially in the school where she says, "Everyone is so kind and helpful. And the kids are curious, they're interested, they're great."

Richard Graeme



"I just love my job! Right now, I'm bouncing," exclaimed Richard Graeme, middle school teacher at the Elgin School. Wearing a purple shirt and tie—Elgin School colors—Graeme extolled the overwhelming positives of his students and fellow teachers.

"This school is so awesome," Graeme said. "These kids work hard, and they are so capable. I'm not doing discipline—no need—and I am exploding as a teacher. This is not work. I teach, and the students are just sucking it in."

The sixth graders have just finished studying human impacts on the environment and have moved on to exploring the moon phases and how gravity affects the tides. At the same time students have begun learning about the various disciplines involved in preparing for the Science Fair.

Meanwhile, the seventh graders have been studying body systems, and having "way too much fun," according to Graeme. From pulling tendons on chicken feet Graeme purchased from Walmart, to exploring kidneys

from the Mexican grocery in Tucson, to studying the small intestine from a cow, the kids have had compelling hands-on experiences. "They had a love-hate relationship with the intestine, and it's now in a garbage can outside," Graeme laughed. "That was the one they didn't like. It smelled." The unit finished with fish and squid and involved cutting apart a fish eyeball.

Geological time, specifically the study of fossils, fascinated Graeme's eighth graders during October. Graeme drew a lot of charts and made them Elgin-specific. "All the fossils we focus on are local," he said. "I have a basket of fossils, and the students learned to determine the age and species of the fossils."

While Graeme focuses on labs and hands-on experiences for his students, he also makes his own worksheets.

"Arizona standards are so wonky that just one textbook doesn't work," he said. "Some schools use as many as eight textbooks, with just a few paragraphs from each one, so I make my own. I have altered my worksheets from my previous school to be Elgin-specific."

Graeme, his identical twin brother and two sisters grew up in Bisbee. His forebears had settled in Bisbee in 1883 and were underground miners. Continuing the family tradition, Graeme and his twin became miners after high school. Graeme's goal was to become a mining engineer, but when he was asked to teach a short mineralogy course locally, he realized he loved teaching and could become a school-teacher.

He took courses here and there, including several at the University of Alaska, finishing at the U of A with a degree in elementary education. He taught all grades beginning with kindergarten and decided he was at heart a middle school teacher. Graeme has taught for a total of 26 years with the last 20 years mostly teaching eighth graders in Sierra Vista, where he lives.

When not teaching, Graeme is very active in mineralogy and its history. He has written 11 books and articles on the subject, including "Forgotten Caves of Bisbee," co-authored with his twin brother Douglas, who is the manager of the Queen Mine Tour Company in Bisbee. Back in the '90s he did work with the Smithsonian. He has also done some consulting with Harvard and the Denver Museum of Natural History, which has a collection of azurite and malachite from Bisbee, and the American Museum. He designed the Bisbee Collection display at the Alfie Norrville Gem Mineral Museum in Tucson.

In addition, Graeme operates the Mineralogy Research Lab in Whetstone, which contains over 7,000 mineral specimens from Bisbee. Mainly U of A doctoral students use this lab for their research. Normally, Graeme spends about 20 hours a week at the

lab, but with his new teaching position requiring most of his time, his brother is picking up the slack.

"I am grateful to Mrs. Annette Koweek for introducing me to her classroom and spending so much time getting me acclimated," he said. "I also thank the students at the Elgin School who are so awesome and their families. Whoa! These families care, and they care a lot. These kids are valued."

Samantha Morriss Collins



"I am a homegrown Patagonia girl coming back," said Samantha Morriss Collins, Patagonia schools' new Speech-Language Pathologist and Pre-Kinder Coordinator. "I went to school on the hill before it was a museum and during my senior year in high school attended classes in the new school while it was still under construction."

After graduation, Collins left Patagonia to attend the U of A thinking she would major in photojournalism, but instead double majored in anthropology and speech-language pathology assistance (SLPA), the latter becoming her focus. Several members of her family had gone through speech therapy, influencing her choice of major and future career.

Upon graduating from the U of A, Collins looked for a position as an SLP in a school system with a strong community focus. She wanted to be outside the city but still be a part of Tucson. Vail appealed to her, and Vail Unified School District was her first choice for employment. She scheduled an interview at Cottonwood Elementary School and was surprised to be greeted by Patagonian Mollie Wright, school office manager. Collins was hired and spent the next 11 years there, starting with a caseload of 70 kids.

"The whole world of speech includes communication," said Collins. "Understanding language, and then putting it together to make sense—being able to express yourself, follow directions and request help when

needed.”

She and her assistants worked with students with autism, Down’s syndrome, multiple disabilities, specific learning disabilities, and traumatic brain injury. “I learned so much from my students and their families,” she said. “I love what I do, and have overwhelming gratitude that I’m exactly where I want and need to be, helping these kids”.

While at Vail, Collins attended the NAU summer school to obtain her Master’s Degree in SLP. Her time in Vail was followed by a year teaching in Sahuarita before the position opened up in Patagonia, and she jumped. Full circle now, back home in Patagonia where her parents and grandfather live, Collins is ecstatic.

At Patagonia, she has a caseload of 27 students: seven are in Pre-K and 20 in K-12.

“I really appreciate the same relationship-focused mindset that was here when I was a kid,” she said. “The mentality and culture of building relationships among kids, colleagues, and families.”

On Nov. 1, Samantha Morriss married Michael Collins at the Tucson Botanical Gardens with a community celebration at Cady Hall in Patagonia. The couple have four dogs and two cats, feed the birds, and love spending time outside. “I love to create—food, art, crafts. Michael and I both love live jazz of artists from all over. The Century Room at the Hotel Congress in Tucson and the Lumber Company in Patagonia are our favorite venues.

“Living in three different districts, growing up here, and now that I am back, I am very humbled by how everyone has their own story. My mantra is: Do what you can, where you are, with what you have.”

Maureen Dugan



When she moved from Maricopa to Patagonia this past May, Maureen Dugan was looking forward to retirement. It was time, she said, to “learn to slow down.”

Instead, she is now Patagonia

Elementary’s new Special Education instructor, a part-time position where Dugan teaches 11 children who are considered elementary students.

Dugan’s journey to becoming a special education teacher in Patagonia began in California where she was born and showed dogs as a little girl. A degree in computer technology and a master’s in organizational management didn’t keep her away from the family business of grooming and showing dogs. She was also involved in animal rescue, starting an organization in Northern California called Persian Cat Rescue which expanded to include horses, dogs, cats, llamas, mules, birds, and wildlife, all of whom found refuge with her on her three acres and a barn with enough climate control features to accommodate the animals.

Dugan married and moved to the Scottsdale area from the Bay Area 25 years ago. She ran several dog grooming facilities in the Valley and subsequently moved with her young daughter to Maricopa. But the severe economic downturn of 2008 ended her dog grooming businesses. One day she was talking to a woman who said, “You know, special education is pretty much recession-proof.” Dugan earned a degree in special education online through the University of Phoenix and then did her student teaching, working for three years with students in the Maricopa Unified School District who had severe and profound disabilities.

She was then offered a position in the resource room of her daughter’s school, Sequoia Pathway Academy. There, for seven years, she taught students with a wide range of disabilities, first in the elementary area, then middle school, then high school. Her next position was as a Special Ed teacher of middle schoolers at the Heritage Academy in Maricopa. She retired in May 2024 and moved to a casita in Patagonia two days later.

Dugan wanted to become a part of the community, meet people, and serve children, so she applied to the PUSD to be a substitute Special Ed Teacher. She received a phone call asking her to schedule an interview. To her surprise, her interviewer said, “Your resume shows that you’ve been a Special Ed teacher for years and have retired. Would you be interested in a half time position teaching in our elementary school?” Dugan considered and said yes.

“I do love teaching,” she said. “I love to get to know the students and learn about their individual abilities.”

Ann Gortarez, Special Educational teacher for the elementary, middle, and high school in Patagonia, was enormously helpful to Dugan as she settled into her new position. Superintendent-Principal Kenny Hayes was also key to her orientation.

“I am so impressed with the curriculum and the environment here, the

whole culture of the school—everything” Dugan said. “They are actually teaching me a lot. They do things here I’ve never seen on other campuses. It’s lovely. A feel-good place to be. I hope the students feel the same support that I feel. A lot of people here really care. I pinch myself every day that I am really here.”

Free time finds Dugan caring for the hummingbirds at her new home. This past summer she had 16 feeders and was filling them three times a day. She reads, plays drums for her own pleasure, and particularly enjoys the beautiful drive down to Nogales where she does her shopping.

“I would like to continue teaching here,” she said. “I can’t wait to see the students’ progress. I love their delight at being in school. I hope that I can give them the tools to deal with life when they are not on campus. To deal with life’s lessons. Meanwhile, I’m still dealing with the culture shock of being here after the stressful life of living in urban Maricopa. I’m still learning to slow down.”

Kimberly Franklin



“I came from a small school, and it’s nice to come to another small school,” Kimberly Franklin, third grade teacher at Patagonia said. “After teaching at Little Red for 13 years it was time for a change. Also, a huge incentive to come to Patagonia was the four-day week. I love the small class sizes here. You can really get to know the students well, all of them.”

Franklin has 14 kids in her class, 10 boys and four girls. “It is a very active group,” she laughed. The classroom is filled with light and features brightly colored posters, bookshelves lined with colorful books, and shelves filled with games and teaching materials. The desks are placed in a U shape. “I like that the kids are in contact visually,” she said. “They learn so much from each other.”

The school day begins with reading. Math comes next. Multiplication and division are Franklin’s favorite subjects to teach. She likes to read to the kids

at the end of the day “when they’re really crazy” to help them settle and relax before going home.

“Third grade is really such a great age,” she said. “They come in so young at the beginning of the year and there is so much growth by the end, such a maturity jump. They are old enough to begin to joke.”

Franklin spent her childhood in Amado, attended high school in Sahuarita, and then went to college at the U of A where she earned a degree in elementary education. She settled in Nogales right next door to Rio Rico where she taught for three years before moving on for 13 years at Little Red. She and her husband, Omar, have three children. The family enjoys day trips to Madera Canyon and Bisbee, and especially love visiting the grandparents Marty and Greg Scott in Elgin.

“I just open the car door when we get to their house, and they are off,” joked Franklin. Besides spending most of her free time with her kids, she listens to podcasts when driving and reads books, mostly about unsolved crimes.

As to working at Patagonia School, Franklin reflected, “I’m really excited for the opportunity to be here. It’s a great little community, and I look forward to continuing to be a part of it. Everybody has been super welcoming. The kids are so eager to learn and are very kind. I’m really proud of them because they’ve already made so much progress academically and personally.

I just want my students to continue to grow to be mature and respectful. I want them to be good students with academic skills as well as good, little humans.”

Aaron Gudenkauf



Aaron Gudenkauf, a substitute teacher in the Patagonia schools in 2023, was in the right place and time when the middle school science teacher position opened up. “And here I am,” he said. Gudenkauf not only teaches science to sixth, seventh and eighth graders, but is also the PE

See Teachers, p.22

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A Request for Civility

Oxford Dictionary: "Civility, n. Behavior or speech appropriate to civil interactions; politeness, courtesy, consideration."

While driving down Duquesne on Election Day, I saw a large flag displayed on a wooden fence in front of a home about 100 feet from where many Patagonians were exercising their constitutional right to vote.

This type of anonymous display featuring a four-letter word combined

with the name of the current President does not indicate any attempt at critical thinking. My personal take is that it was put there in an attempt to demean and intimidate Americans who have a differing opinion about the direction of our country.

Next time, instead of being combative, post your candidate's policies—their health care plan, for example. People may reflect on and learn from that type of civil discourse.

Tom Shore
Patagonia

Gratitude for Gala Support

A group howl to the rising Supermoon highlighted the Second Annual PARA Gala last Friday at the Patagonia Museum. Golden Ocelot Awards were bestowed upon three respected local environmentalists: Bob Proctor, Ron Pulliam and Francesca Claverie. These awards are PARA's way of honoring some of the many dedicated conservationists in this community.

Gratitude to everyone who joined in the evening's festivities, and especially to those generous enough to bid on our fabulous auction offerings, as well as the wonderful individuals, artists and businesses who donated such excellent experiences and items.

As Chair of Patagonia Area Resource Alliance, I wish to express my deep gratitude to the volunteer team that worked diligently for five months planning the Gala: Jessica Cheney, Nancy Coyote, Mary Tolena, and Anne Vogt. From vision to execution, these powerhouse women totally rocked this event, from theme to auction items to food, drinks and more!

Huge thanks to our volunteer "not auctioneers," Lars Marshall and Ben Shonkwiler, as well as the Tanagers band members who donated their time. Big gratitude to all the volunteers who helped with the event, including

several wonderful AmeriCorps volunteers, plus: Aastral Muench, Holly Stefanski, Cynie Murray, Cynthia Berk, Rebecca Meyers, Linnaea Saleem, Rick Golightly, Ash Jacobs, Emma Simonson, Terry Sanford, Gisa Kruger, Shannon Dudley, Michelle Marie, Rohan Sorta, Chris and Charlene Gardner, Eric Herman, and anyone I inadvertently overlooked.

We are very grateful for our event sponsors: Total Wine for a big wine and beer discount, Coyote for covering the wine and beer purchase, Laurie Cantillo for sponsoring food, Valerie Neale for sponsoring venue/décor/rentals, and Eric Herman for helping cover comped tickets.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I wish to thank Chuck Klingenstein for his thoughtful toast commemorating PARA's accomplishments over the years. We are grateful to have such a valued community influencer raising a glass for PARA!

We are buoyed by this wonderful demonstration of community support and vow to continue to hold mining operations to the highest standards of environmental protection. Water, wildlife and our nature-based way of life are worth preserving.

Joni Stellar
Chair, Patagonia Area Resource Alliance



Photo courtesy of PYEC

Guests at the PYEC fundraiser were served a meal made by the youths who attend the PYEC facility.

PYEC Thanks Community

The Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center hosted their annual fundraiser dinner on Nov. 2. The successful event was attended by approximately 100 people who enjoyed the homemade lasagna dinner and desserts made by the youth.

New to the fundraiser event was a wide variety of silent auction baskets and items, donated by local businesses and individuals.

The guests were entertained by familiar tunes performed by Candy and Joshua Carpenter of The Band Wanted.

The Patagonia weather was enjoyable, the conversations lively, and the youth did an amazing job of preparing and serving the dinner to their guests.

The PYEC board, director, staff and youth extend a heartfelt thank you to all who helped make this event a success.

Anna Coleman
PYEC Director



Photo by Anita Clovesko-Wharton

(From left) Catherine Hathaway, Emmett Lopez, Leviana Doles, Saulo Meuly, Logan Doles, Magali Santos, Charlotte Fernandez, Espen Hayes and Benjamin Krysz perform in 'Arsenic and Academics,' staged at the Tin Shed theatre on Nov. 12 and 13. Written by Kayla Miller, this campy murder mystery was directed by Anita Clovesko-Wharton and Kayla Miller.



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Lobos Head to Tournament on a Winning Note



Photo by Dave Lumia

Senior Diego Carranza and sophomore Kannon Shore head upcourt in the Lobos' victory over San Simon. Carranza led the Lobos with 15 points and scored the game-winning basket with six seconds left.

By Dave Lumia

And just like that, the five-and-a-half-hour bus ride to Williams for this week's holiday tournament became much more joyful and much less arduous for the Patagonia High School basketball program.

The Lobos' traveling spirits were lifted Monday night when senior Diego Carranza split the San Simon defense and banked in a shot with six seconds left to give Patagonia a 44-42 victory. The Lobos trailed by seven midway through the third quarter before rallying for the win.

"They showed heart and fought back," Lobos coach Nate Porter said. "After a two-point second quarter; we couldn't have played much worse. We couldn't make a layup. You have to fight through that adversity, and we did. These are the type of games that can define a season if you build off them."

The Patagonia boys hit the road with an official record of 3-0, although the record doesn't reflect the four games they split at the Boyd Baker tournament in Tucson prior to Thanksgiving. Both losses came against Class 2A schools: Willcox and Bisbee.

Porter is continuing to experiment with multiple lineup combinations to take advantage of the Lobos' depth. The deep roster has been needed, as several players have been out with seasonal illnesses, junior center Gavin Arbizio is sidelined with a knee injury and senior guard D.J. Castro is still working his way into game shape after recovering from his knee injury. Eleven players saw extensive action against San Simon.

"I think our fresh bodies made the difference," Porter said. "That's an advantage we have. We have a lot of 'OK' guys."

Carranza scored 15 points in Monday's victory despite battling through an illness. Junior Gus Varela added 10 points, and sophomore Kannon Shore scored eight.

"He (Carranza) feels horrible," Porter said. "Gabe (Nunez) wasn't feeling well. Kannon was just getting over a lung infection. We had guys who had to dig deep and fight."

Monday's game got off to a promising start for the Lobos, who jumped out to a quick 8-0 lead. But San Simon took over in the second quarter, dominating on the backboards and outscoring the Lobos 15-2 to take a 23-16 lead at the half.

"I knew it wasn't going to be easy," Porter said. "We never make anything easy."

Porter said his halftime message was a simple one. "I said you gotta find the heart. You gotta want it. They were pushing us around. We had to dig deep."

The early season has been more difficult for the Patagonia girls team, which lacks depth and experience after losing three starters from last year's state tournament qualifiers. The Lobos were outmuscled on the boards and struggled with turnovers in Monday's 43-27 loss to San Simon. Junior guard Emma Lewton led the Lobos with 14 points.

The girls' official record fell to 1-2, but they also lost all four games they played in the Boyd Baker tournament.

Next up for both teams is that joyful trip to Williams, where they will play five games over three days in the Coach Edgar Brown Holiday Basketball Tournament.

"The kids really look forward to it," Porter said. "It's a big deal for us."

Their next home game is Wednesday, Dec. 11, against St. David.

Bike Shop (Cont.)

wheels his "tool for freedom." He's got stories of world travels where he'd trade repair work for use of local bicycles.

Asked about the kinds of riding he likes best, gravel seems a favorite, though he's done plenty of road riding as well. He had an earlier phase of stunt riding on BMX bicycles. As evidence of that phase, he showed his banged-up and scarred shins.

The BMX years were a natural transition into running his first cycle shop, Cicli Noe, in the four years before the pandemic hit. Located in a South Tucson storefront, Cicli Noe was bilingual and repair oriented. Around the corner was a mural by Mencias' friend, muralist Rock Martinez, depicting a southwest street scene with the caption "Look out for each other"/"Hay que cuidarnos entre nosotros." Despite South Tucson's good side, Mencias is glad to have left the drug flow and government corruption.

At the Patagonia shop, there's a mural on the Third Avenue side of the shop, commissioned by the previous tenant, painter Kat Cudney, featuring a hummingbird medallion. Mencias is toying with preserving at least that hummer vs something new by Rock

Martinez.

The caring for each other that's such a deep part of the Patagonia community is a major attraction for Mencias. He's fascinated by the variety of people he gets to talk with, honored to have this shop which was previously the town's Visitors' Center.

Listening is central to Mencias' approach to the world—listening to people, and to the muses. He's inspired by the classic Chinese text "The Art of War," by Sun Tzu. From it he takes inspiration about self-knowledge and understanding the people he deals with. The book also has inspiration about making forward moves when the time is right, and this informs Mencias' approach to the evolution of his business. Not schooled in classical business planning, he does not use terms like "investment capital" and "targeted marketing."

Perhaps in line with "The Art of War's" recommendation to do the unexpected, Mencias is considering displaying art on the walls of the former gallery, and he is proposing to offer espresso in Patagonia Bikes' back room. Mencias wants to offer a single beverage, using beans from Tucson's Presta Coffee, with no elaborate beverage menu. His proposal is coming up for a Town use permit review in December.

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Dive Into '25 With the Patagonia Pool

NewsRelease

Did you know there's a Junior Olympic-sized swimming pool in Patagonia? That it's available to everyone? That currently it's free to children 12 and younger, to first responders and veterans? Did you know the pool has been on the grounds of the Patagonia High School since the 1980s?

Well now you do.

The beginning of December might seem like an odd time to talk about what an asset the Patagonia Pool is to eastern Santa Cruz County but it's the time to start planning for next year. Actually, the planning never stops. The work never stops. The fundraising never stops. And this year due to all that planning and work and fundraising, the swimming season hasn't stopped either.

There have been organizations and people throughout the life of the pool who have made sure it stayed alive and available to the communities of eastern Santa Cruz County. We're lucky they never gave up on the pool. The Town of Patagonia and the Patagonia School Districts have resisted the economic pressures to close the pool many different times. But they can no longer support the pool completely. The Patagonia Pool is a survivor.

The Patagonia Regional Aquatics Center (PRAC) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that has been doing more and more of the planning and work and fundraising for the last few years. So far we are a volunteer organization—and what volunteers! Whatever the problem, and there are always problems with an aging pool, they have found a solution and implemented it.

No lifeguards once the student lifeguards go back to school? Retired pool lovers trained, studied and got Red Cross-certified as lifeguards, and volunteer so the pool can open before

summer break and stay open long after the students return to school in August.

Can't afford a pool cleaning and maintenance service? Community members learned how to scrub, vacuum and clean the pool. And they do it several times a week. They learned how to maintain the pumps and filters and make sure the chemicals are balanced. That's why we have a sparkling clean pool for all to enjoy.

Need a heater for extended swimming seasons? Donors came together to provide a grant match and dedicated volunteers found and wrote winning grants, and then followed through to make sure the heater got installed and properly running.

Even with all these amazing volunteers, it takes a lot of money to run a pool: to train and pay for student lifeguards in the summer (a wonderful job opportunity for our high school students), to subsidize children's access, to pay for chemicals and utilities and for expertise beyond our own, to pay for needed upgrades—pool cover, vacuum, replacement filter media, safety equipment to name a few.

We have tireless volunteers who raise funds in a variety of creative and effective ways: our yard and bake sales bring in essential ongoing funds, grants from community partners are critical but limited, donors are generous, the Town and schools help as they can.

We need your help too. We need you to come and enjoy and use the pool. And we need your financial support.

Please give whatever you can. We need funds to dive into 2025, prepared to continue caring for our pool and making it available to all.

Visit our website at patagoniapool.org. You can donate there via PayPal or credit card.

Visit our Facebook page for up to date opening information and other announcements: facebook.com/PatagoniaPool/

Or send a tax-deductible check made out to PRAC to: Patagonia Regional Aquatics Center, PO Box 1052, Patagonia, AZ 85624

And thank you! Dive in, the water is fantastic.

News From the Mountain Empire Rotary Club

On Sept. 28 the Mountain Empire Rotary Club (MER) held another free Community Dinner at the Fairgrounds in Sonoita. These dinners are sponsored by the Club to bring awareness of food insecurities for those in the area and help provide food items to our local Food Pantry, located at the crossroads in Sonoita near the Post Office. Attendees at the dinner were encouraged to bring a non-perishable food item to the event to donate to the Food Pantry. Residents can also make a monetary donation to the Food Pantry. MER plans to continue to sponsor the community dinners to support the Food Pantry, so be sure and check the PRT newsletter, the MER Facebook page, or flyers that are posted for future dates.

Earlier this year, MER sponsored the purchase and installation of air conditioning in the Food Pantry, and is helping with installation of refrigeration units for fresh vegetables and fruit.

As part of our efforts to provide educational opportunities to students in our community, MER held their annual Career Fair for Patagonia High School and Middle School students, as well as middle school students from Elgin School, on October 24. Students were able to talk with a variety of representatives to gain insight into the work that is involved in their occupations, as well as meet with representatives from local colleges, vocational schools, and military recruiters. Some of the presenters worked in interior design, real estate, architecture, wildlife research, and journalism.

Wrapping up the event, the Rotary Club held a raffle where students had a chance to win an Amazon gift card, which is always a favorite with the students. Many

thanks go out to the vendors and the school staff members who made this such a success this year.

MER has also been continuing the Patagonia High School "Class of the Month" award program as part of our support for educational programs for the youth in our community. MER sponsors the monetary award for the class, chosen by the Patagonia School staff. The class is then allowed to spend the money on an activity of their choice. Congrats to all the winners this year!

MER has also been busy selling raffle tickets for a drawing to be held December 19. The Prize is a 5.0 cubic chest freezer filled with assorted cuts of local beef. Rotarians have been attending community events to sell the tickets, but they can also be purchased by selecting the QR code on the flyers posted around the community, on the MER Facebook page, and in the PRT. You can also purchase a ticket and get more information about the raffle by contacting Kati Spencer at kati@twistedunionwinecompany.com.

Keep an eye out for more MER news and events after the first of the year, the MER Club has a lot of events planned to support our community members and especially our youth. MER invites anyone from the community to attend our meetings and learn more about Rotary. We meet the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month from 5:30pm-7pm. There is always food and fun at our meetings.

And remember, if you have an issue in the community that you think Rotary can help you with, don't hesitate to contact MER. We are here to listen and hopefully help. If you want to know more about Rotary, or attend a meeting feel free to contact Keith Barth at judgebarth@gmail.com.



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Mearns Quail Hunting Ethics



Photo by Dave Brown

Belle points a covey of Mearns quail as a hunter covers her point.

Mearns quail season is set to open on Dec. 6, and quail hunters are optimistic about a rebound in the Mearns quail population, thanks to a decent but spotty monsoon.

This will result in an increase in quail hunters from across the country showing up in the Patagonia-Sonoita area to pursue this unique game bird. More tourists are a great boost to the local economy, as restaurants, gas stations, stores, hotels and guides will all be busy.

What's unique about the Mearns quail hunting experience is that, for

the most part, hunting takes place on public lands, namely the Coronado National Forest, allowing access to anyone willing to take on the challenge of hunting Mearns quail.

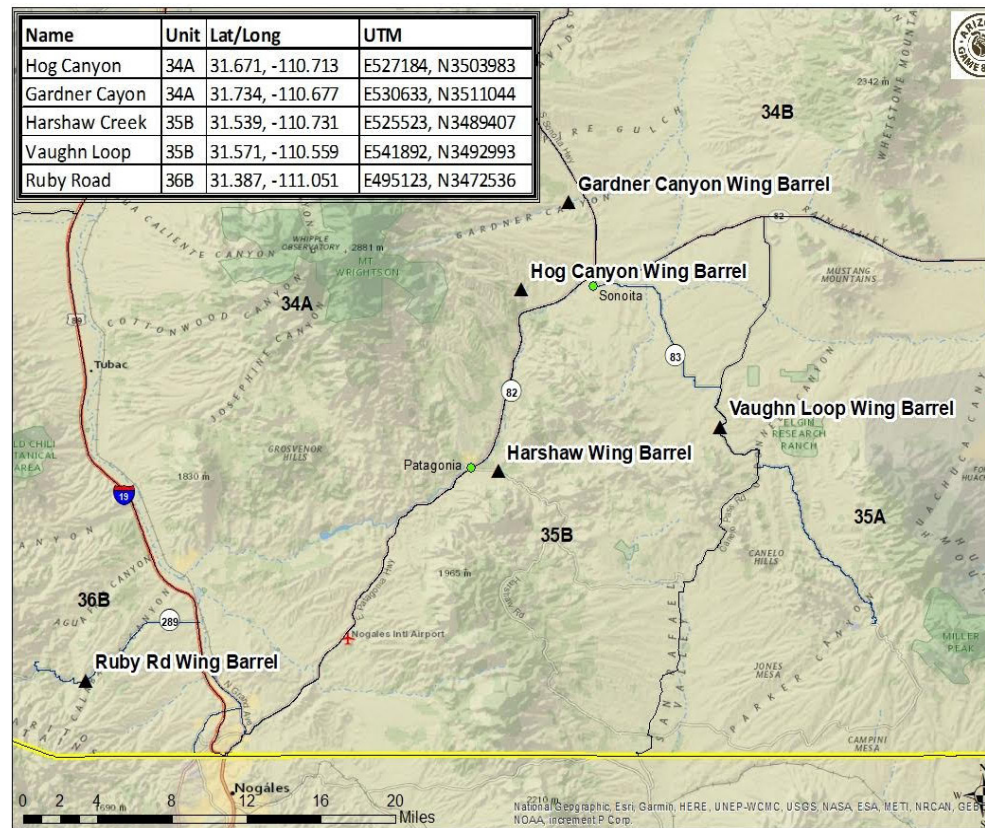
The onus is on the hunter to subscribe to their own code of hunting ethics and conduct, as there is no private landowner to suggest how he or she wants the hunting conducted on their property. Here are some take-aways from other public land Mearns hunters that for the most part are self-explanatory:

- Leave gates how you found them.

- Move around livestock so you and your dogs don't stir them up.
- Pick up your empty shells and pack out what you brought in.
- Picking up other peoples' empty shells and garbage results in good karma for you.
- If someone is hunting in the area you wanted to hunt, it's best to move on to another spot so as not to disturb someone else's hunt.
- If you are already on the ground and see or hear another hunting party, it's usually a good idea to move in a different direction.
- Mearns quail, or any covey bird, needs the security of the covey to survive. Ending your hunt by 4pm helps ensure they can covey up for the night.
- Driving vehicles off designated

roads or trails is against the law.

- A lot of hunters like to take a bird or two out of a covey and move on to find more coveys, making it a sport of covey finds with shooting birds thrown in.
- AZ Game and Fish (AZGFD) sets the Mearns quail limit to eight birds per day for a total possession limit of 24. Most obey it.
- AZGFD relies on wing barrels to collect harvest data. These are located along roads going into popular hunting areas. If you see one, take time to fill out the questionnaire.
- Enjoy the landscape. Mearns quail are found in a very unique area of the Southwest, take time to enjoy the area and don't eat too many tacos.



Map courtesy of AZGF

Locations of wing barrels in Santa Cruz County. AZGF relies on hunters to provide this harvest data which is used to set limits and seasons.

Notes From SEFD

Profiling Our Captains: Aaron Sapienza



By Eddie McArthur

Each of Sonoita-Elgin Fire District (SEFD)'s three captains heads a shift of four firefighters and manages the day-to-day function of that team. In addition, each captain has specific areas of responsibility.

All the department's captains are paramedics, providing the highest level of pre-hospital care. SEFD Chief Marc Meredith remarked that "it is a widely held belief that captains hold the most difficult position in the fire service, having to juggle the responsibilities of supervision and functioning as a line firefighter."

Captain Aaron Sapienza is the longest serving of the SEFD captains. Originally from Massachusetts, Sapienza was stationed at Ft. Huachuca from 1994 to 1996 with the Army.

Preferring our warm climate to the winters of Massachusetts, Sapienza took a job in Tempe after he left the Army. He's been a paramedic for the past 17 years. When an opportunity opened with the Whetstone Fire Department, he jumped at the chance and moved back to the area. Sapienza first joined SEFD as a volunteer in 2016 and became full-time as a firefighter/paramedic in 2018. He was promoted to captain in 2019.

Sapienza is excited about his job and about SEFD in general. He feels that the past few years have improved all aspects of working here and that the chief and Board operate with the best interests of the district and its people. The Strategic Plan, especially with its inclusion of all levels of per-



Photo by Eddie McArthur

Captain Aaron Sapienza has been a full-time employee with Sonoita-Elgin Fire District since 2018.

sonnel at the district as well as outside stakeholders in the planning process, has developed a sense of all moving in the same direction.

Sapienza holds numerous certifications. He is Instructor-certified, has a State Inspector Certificate, Safety Officer position, and teaches the Emergency Vehicle Operation Course. He also is working on issues regarding fleet management, building a more systematic way to handle repair and replacement of vehicles for the district. He was the individual sent to evaluate the new pumper/tender that is scheduled to arrive at SEFD soon.

Sapienza loves this area and most especially its people. He speaks of the community support that isn't always there in a more urban locale. His family still lives in Massachusetts, and Sapienza was able to return there to pin a firefighter badge on his nephew who now works in his hometown, happy to pass along the family tradition of firefighting.

Volunteers Serve Up Community Thanksgiving Dinner at Fairgrounds



Residents gathered at the Sonoita Fairgrounds for Thanksgiving to eat with friends, watch football and socialize. "There's such a need for community," Vine Church Co-Pastor Gardenia Moffat said.



"There are always people who don't have any place to go for Thanksgiving," Vine Church Pastor Tom Moffat said. "We don't want them to be alone." Moffat (shown here with his wife, and Co-Pastor, Gardenia) organized the dinner, which was publicized by local churches.



24 volunteers cooked and served 17 turkeys, ham and sausage, along with all the traditional Thanksgiving fixings. Pastor Moffat estimated that 175 dinners were served. Meals were also taken to Dollar General employees, and served to Border Patrol agents and SEFD personnel.

Photos by Marion Vendituoli

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Eating Our Way Through History

Pumpkin Cake: A Seasonal 'Roundup' Recipe

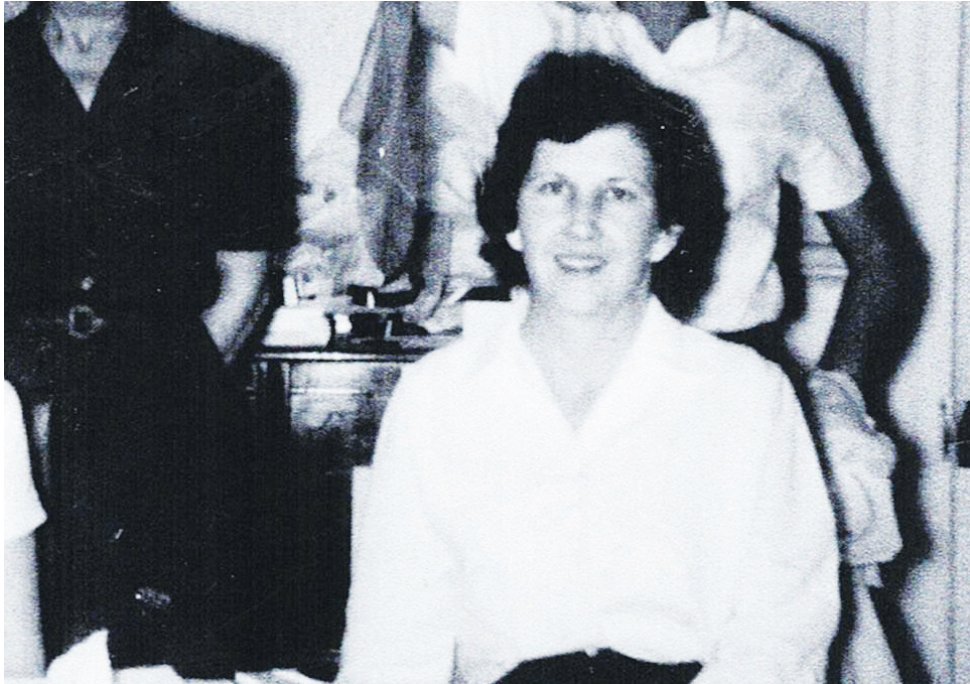


Photo Courtesy of Bob Bergier

Catherine Kuhn was known for her cakes, including those made in coffee cans.

By Carrie White

There are two things John (J.W.) Ambrose remembers about Catherine Kuhn.

Maybe three.

One: his grandmother's chicken and dumplings. "They were the best," said the Cochise resident.

Two: she loved to make popcorn balls at Christmas. "I remember her saying 'you have to get the thermometer up to 140° or 160°. I would sit there and wait. And she would remind me that a watched pot never boils.'"

Three: she played cards nearly every afternoon in her Patagonia home with good friend Laura Lewis.

2:30 p.m. Clockwork.

"Laura had the mail route for 42 years," said Patagonia resident Maureen De La Ossa. Returning from her mail run at mid-afternoon, Lewis would stop by the Kuhns' place on Harshaw Road for canasta and shanghai, their preferred games of chance. Since three players were needed for the latter, De La Ossa would sometimes be recruited and be rewarded for her participation with cookies and

milk. Kuhn's recipes for chicken and dumplings or that for cookies did not make it into the 1951 Cowbelle's cookbook "Roundup Recipes." But her pumpkin cake, a seasonal treat, did. Fall was a perfect time to celebrate the cooler temperatures and a seasonal mainstay—pumpkin. (FYI: squash is a suitable substitute.)

That Kuhn was a Cowbelle may seem a little surprising in a time when 50 percent of a household's income had to come from the cattle industry in order to qualify for inclusion. John Lee, Kuhn's husband, was a heavy equipment operator—the first in the area. But family members did own a ranch in Willcox, which was enough to get her a seat at the table.

"She was a real nice lady," said Bob Bergier of Patagonia, a friend of the family who lived a quarter mile from the Kuhn place. And while he too recalls Catherine's penchant for cards, he also remembers another fixture of her character—a desire to give back to the community as an election poll worker.

That those were probably her two "social activities" doesn't strike De La Ossa as particularly unusual. After all, there were limited organizations to which people—particularly women—could belong to at the time, Cowbelle being one of them.

Pumpkin Cake

- ½ cup shortening
- 1 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1 cup white sugar
- 3 cups sifted flour
- 2 eggs, well beaten
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ cup milk

- 1 cup chopped nuts
 - 1 teaspoon maple extract
 - Buckskin Frosting
 - 3 egg whites, unbeaten
 - 1 ½ cups brown sugar
 - Dash salt
 - 6 tablespoons water
 - 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Grease three 8-inch cake pans and line bottom with waxed paper. Preheat oven to 350 F.

Cream ½ cup shortening. Add sugars, flour, baking powder and soda to the mixture and combine well. Then add eggs, canned pumpkin, squash and milk. Fold in chopped nuts and maple extract. Combine well. Pour into pans and bake for 30 minutes.

In the meantime, prepare the Buckskin Frosting. In a double boiler combine the unbeaten egg whites, brown sugar, salt and 6 tablespoons water. Beat well with mixer and then get lower pan boiling rapidly. Cook 7 minutes, beating constantly. It's done when it stands in peaks.

Remove from heat. Add 1 teaspoon vanilla. Beat until thick and smooth. Ice cake.

A copy of "Roundup Recipes" can be viewed at the Bowman-Stradling History Center located at the Santa Cruz County Rodeo and Fair Association, 3142 S. Highway 83, Sonoita. Handouts of recipes printed in the PRT are free. The center is open Mondays through Fridays 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. For access, please visit the fairgrounds' office. For more information on the center, contact SonoitaHistoryCenter@gmail.com.

Carrie White can be contacted at CarrieWhitePRT@gmail.com.

What Is That??

Curios From the Patagonia Museum



Photo by Linda Shore

By Tom Shore

Metal Cork Press, c 1860s

This cast iron item, loaned to the Museum as part of the George Proctor collection, is a No. 2 cork press patented by J.M. Morris & Co. in August 1867.

Corks had to be shaped and compressed to fit the tops of liquor, wine and patented medicine bottles to ensure a good seal. This type of press was used in the bottling industry until the 1930s when it was replaced by new technology.

Fanning, Cont.

responded, "If you look at their track record in other countries, it would be difficult.

"I don't support the mine, but I know they're here to stay," he said. He stressed the importance of establishing the Community Protection and Benefits Agreement between South32 and the County, Nogales and Patagonia. "I want to be able to trust them. What can they do to ensure that the people, the plants, the natural resources, are not in any danger? What can they do to help this community be better than it is?"

Traffic safety concerns, the lack of affordable housing, and pressure from "overtourism" are also areas Fanning plans to focus on. Fanning said one of his priorities when he takes office "is to increase funding of the Sheriff's Department to have more law enforcement presence in eastern Santa Cruz

County. Parking an empty vehicle [to deter speeding] is just a band-aid."

Fanning pledged to continue County support for the Sonoita Fairgrounds at the present level or "more."

He is in the process of putting together a community advisory board, which would have three representatives each from Patagonia, Sonoita, Elgin, Tubac, Rio Rico, and Tumacacori. He envisions the group meeting monthly at different locations around the county to share concerns and ideas. "It's a way for me to find out what's going on in the county," he said.

Fanning hopes to be proactive as a supervisor. "I don't want to hear about something, I want to see it," he said. "I want to be in the eastern portion of the county at least once a week."

"I have a lot to learn, and I don't have a problem with that," he said. "I'm a fast learner and I'm not afraid to work."

LITTER IS PREVENTABLE!

Glimpses Into Our Past

Orton Phelps

By Alison Bunting

At the junction of Harshaw Rd. and the road leading to the Mowry Mine is a single gravesite for Orton Phelps.

Sylvester Mowry purchased the "Patagonia Mine Holdings" in 1860 and renamed the mine after himself. He expanded the mining operations and facilities, which thrived until the Civil War. The Union government arrested and imprisoned Mowry for treason. The charges were eventually dropped, but not before bankrupting Mowry. The mine was sold several times after Mowry's death in 1871; the last recorded owner was the U.S. Mining and Smelting Company. The town of Mowry was destroyed by the Apaches during the Civil War but came back to life in the 1890s. Mining was the main source of employment and the town also promoted its location and climate as a tourist destination. [American Pioneer & Cemetery Research Project].

Orton Phelps (1853-1916), and his wife Marietta (1863-1953) moved to Arizona from California around 1897. The couple had two children, Georgia, born in 1890, and a daughter born in Pima County in 1898 who lived only three months. In 1899 Orton opened a delicacy store and lunch counter known as the Breaker at 118 West Congress Street in Tucson. His newspaper announcement noted: "I will supply families with roast chicken, baked

fish, salads, baked beans, vegetables and homemade pies and cakes, coffee, milk, and iced tea." [Arizona Daily Star, 7/22/1899].

In 1900 Orton was working as a "hotel keeper" in Tucson. By 1902 the family had relocated to Mowry. Initially Orton operated a saloon but later established a group of "tent houses" for the tourist trade. "Mr. and Mrs. Phelps are the very pink of hospitality and do much to make the stay of their patrons both pleasant and agreeable. Fresh eggs, bread and milk can always be had, and these things go far towards making life in the wooded hills both healthy and attractive." [Arizona Daily Star, 10/2/1910]. The tents also provided longer-term housing for locals. Teacher Anna H. Fortune boarded with the Phelps during her tenure at the Mowry school. [Arizona Republic, 4/26/1953].

Orton was elected Justice of the Peace for Mowry in 1906 and served as the Mowry postmaster from 1907 to 1912. He was one of two Mowry election clerks in 1912 and testified in a lawsuit concerning the relocation of the designated voting place. [The Oasis, 2/24/1912].

In 1915 the Phelps sold their property and cattle and moved to the Mowry Mining Company's "house on the hill." Orton focused on managing Mowry Mining's extensive properties. [Border Vidette, 5/29/1915]. Orton and Marietta also owned mining property and operated a blacksmith shop.

In December 1908, Georgia Phelps



Photo Courtesy of Cami Schlappy

Orton Phelps' headstone sits at the junction of Harshaw Rd. and Mowry Mine Rd. outside of Patagonia.

met James Lester Cole, a machinist from Tucson, at a dance in Patagonia. They were married by Georgia's father four weeks later after threatening to elope. [Arizona Daily Star, 1/23/1909].

The marriage was short-lived and in 1913 Georgia married Samuel P. Boucher, a local miner who later became a deputy sheriff in Douglas. Boucher patrolled the highway between Douglas and Bisbee on his

motorcycle, enforcing the 30mph speed limit. [Bisbee Daily Review, 7/26/1919]. He was a regular participant in local motorcycle races.

Orton was 63 when he died in 1916 after a short illness; Marietta remained in Mowry until 1922 when she moved to Georgia. Sam and Georgia also relocated to Georgia about 1935 and later moved to Texas with Marietta.

Matus Morriss (Cont.)

Lifetime Achievement Award. In acknowledging the Patagonia resident's contribution, ASBA noted, "Like Mrs. Robey, Cynthia has modeled the vision, principled commitment, impeccable character, persistence, servant leadership, and generosity of spirit in all aspects of service to public education."

Locally, she has also worked with the Patagonia Museum, Friends of the Library and the Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center.

"Serving on the board is a challenging and yet very rewarding job," Matus Morriss wrote. "It is an awesome responsibility, and the decisions you make will affect students, parents,

staff and the communities. You will need the energy to learn a variety of issues about public education through individual study, through participation in programs and board training. Establish a good working relationship with the superintendent and know your role so as not to micromanage."

In one of her high school yearbooks, Adolfo Barela felt compelled to share these words. As brief as they may be, they are high praise from a man with high standards.

"To a fine student," Barela wrote.

To that, you might add "fine citizen."

Carrie White can be contacted at CarrieWhitePRT@gmail.com.



Contributed photo

Patagonia High School Future Homemakers of America Class of 1968. Cindy Matus (Morriss) is pictured in the front row, far right.

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LET'S GO GET STONES

Crushing It



By Keith Krizan

Human history sure has had its share of "Eureka!" moments.

Language development and our modern human migration out of Africa, both occurring between 50,000 and 100,000 years ago, seem to coincide. Maybe there were earlier attempts to expand into the domain of the Neanderthal that could not succeed until the "Eureka!" moment of acquired language had occurred. For certain, other moments followed.

Circa 40,000 years ago, during the Upper Paleolithic, humans began extracting red ochre from the earth and mining was born, perhaps from deposits like those found in Swaziland and Australia.

Around 10,000 years ago, during the Neolithic period, humans began mining flint for tools and weaponry.

The first known smelting of copper occurred around 7,000 BCE in what is now Turkey and may have been an accidental exposure of ore to heat, perhaps in pursuit of a colorful pigment for decorative purposes.

Recently, at the invitation of Lance Dean, a friend and fellow adventurer across this planet, we engaged in an effort to do some rudimentary smelting. The idea was to take some rocks that I suspected might contain minerals, break them down and subject them to intense heat to see what might be coaxed out of them.

Lance, a retiree living in Elgin, trained as a mechanical engineer, and has had an extensive career around the southwest having worked for mines in Colorado, Nevada, California, Idaho and Arizona. He has traveled every road, either by Jeep or by motorcycle, in Death Valley, with the exception of one because he did not think it an interesting route.

In Lance's well-appointed workshop, acetylene is the carbon fuel of choice to obtain the heat needed to induce a chemical change in the ore. The setup consists of the fuel tank and an oxygen tank side by side. Hoses feed the fuel that burns and the oxygen that accelerates it.

I crush the first bit of rock that I



Photo by Keith Krizan

Lance Dean at the forge.

have chosen with a ball peen hammer. The rock is from the waste rock pile at a former gold mine. I think that it might be promising because it has a quartz/limestone contact zone, with red staining that could be iron and I know that iron sometimes rides with gold. The crushed heap is on a thick 7" diameter round piece of heat treated steel. This will be our forge.

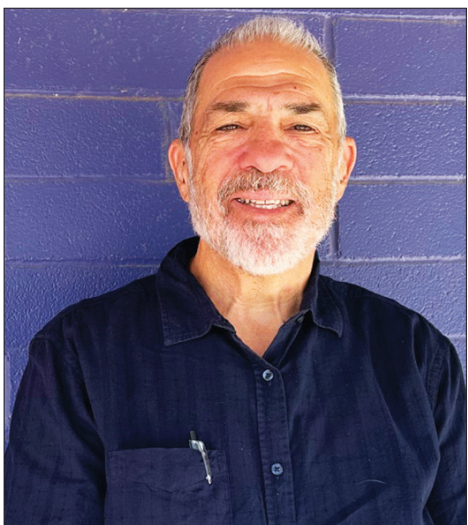
The acetylene valve that feeds the gas to the tip of the brass nozzle is opened. A spark lighter is squeezed

and a piece of steel strikes a flint, makes a spark, and a deep throated whoosh signals that a jet of gas has ignited. To get the flame focused and under control the compressed oxygen valve is opened and suddenly the wildly vacillating and black smoking flame becomes a cone with a point. Within the cone is another, smaller, more intense burning cone with a smaller tip and this is where the business will be done.

See **Crushing**, p.18

STARSTRUCK

Algol, the Demon Star



By Harold Meckler

It's fun to look for meanings when there are none. We do it all the time. We chalk up athletic victories to such things as aura and mystique. Chance meetings with old friends must be the work of fate, something "meant to be."

The list of variables willfully applied to any event can be so overwhelming that the 14th century English phi-

losopher William of Ockham suggested that "entities are not to be multiplied without necessity." Today, we call it Occam's Razor. In modern terms it means that the simplest solution is usually the right one.

The ancients of various civilizations, without any scientific tools to decipher what they saw in the sky, gave names to the stars that seemed to mirror life on earth. Why not? They looked at the sky and saw the same gods and monsters, creatures of the land and of the sea that seemed to fill their everyday lives. Sometimes, their interpretations aligned with that of others. Often, they didn't. Doesn't matter. We now have a mishmash of names—Latin, Greek, Arabic—for all of the objects far beyond our planet. That's fine; there's room for all.

Throughout December, almost directly overhead, is a star that has puzzled many from across the globe. It's in the constellation Perseus, a hero from Greek Mythology. The star is called Algol, an Arabic word for the head of the ghost, or ghoul. Some have labeled it the Demon Star. It is possibly the most well-known variable star. During a very stable cycle that repeats about every three days, it changes drastically to become three times brighter before dimming once again.

It wasn't until the late 1800s that

scientists were able to determine why the star acted so strangely. Before that, it seemed perfectly appropriate to attribute its rapidly altering appearance to something quite nefarious. But ultimately, astronomers came to the very sane conclusion that Algol wasn't one but, rather, two stars trapped by gravity in an eternal dance. One orbits the other. Occam's Razor indeed.

Every time the brighter of the two stars is eclipsed, or partially blocked from our view, by the other member of the binary system, the total light from both decreases. No need for mythology. No need for an occult tale. Does that make it more interesting, or less? When legend becomes fact, should we revert to the legend because there's comfort to be had in all of those "hand-me-down" stories that have helped to explain the unexplainable?

It's sometimes very hard to accept that something we've long believed in is simply not true, that all of the explanations that we've come to wrap ourselves within are no longer valid. There is nothing mysterious about Algol. That shouldn't make us turn away. I would argue that the scientific explanation is actually more fascinating because it unveils the wonder of reality without any embellishment.

We go through many challenging moments in our lifetimes, and we try

to find a semblance of reason and logic for each, though we sometimes fall short of that goal. In difficult times we may feel compelled to go beyond reason and logic. We certainly are experiencing difficult times right now with wars, famine, drought, and extreme weather, along with a wealth of disinformation about so many things.

That's why, I think, Algol provides a worthy lesson. Mythology tells us that Perseus decapitated Medusa, she with the head of snakes instead of hair. Algol is the ghostly remains of that frightful sight, the head of the ghoul. However, there's a lot more to that story including, at its core, themes of vanity, jealousy and revenge. Ah, the lengths we go to influence behavior, and the means we'll use to succeed at that quest.

As we discover more of the science behind what we see in the night sky, we're reminded, quite frequently, that truth can be hidden for any number of reasons. The men who discovered the answer to Algol's ever-changing brightness found that truth wound up being the answer that made the most sense. It was that simple. If we are looking to make sense of things today, truth can get us there.

Harold Meckler can be contacted at byakov54@gmail.com

Crushing (Cont.)

After a minute the heat source is removed. The remains, a combination of ash and glasslike orbs, are worked over with a paint scraper and the hammer. Everything crumbles into smaller pieces. Nothing solid is left, just dust.

The second rock that I chose to work on had been collected from the same waste pile. It has some very nicely formed quartz crystals stained with what appears to be yellow sulfides. We bust this specimen up and subject it to the torch. This rock pops and flakes with what looks like tiny sparklers going off. Lance notes that we may be igniting the sulfur. We are heating to what Lance guesses is over 2000° F, but nothing runs out. I again pound on our previously molten, but now cooled heap, and try to separate out any hard, non-crumbling bits. I see what I think might be pyrite but the pieces are too small to isolate. We decide to heat it again and this time I work the torch.

The reheat yields nothing of interest, but now I've learned the importance of welding goggles in keeping a persistent red dot from forming and obscuring my field of vision.

For my last try I go into my Planters Nuts can to retrieve some small rocks that I have hacked out of a mine wall. The mineralization is more obvious. The pieces are a combination of mal-

achite green and azurite blue crystals, indicative of copper.

I hesitate to sacrifice them to the fire-god at the tip of the brass-nozzled acetylene torch but I am deeply curious about what I have collected, about what I can discover. I decide to put this batch to the flame. The ball peen hammer strikes and crushes the blue sparkles into smaller sparkles.

This time we coat the sample with a flux of Borax which is meant to let the heat in but coat the mineral content to prevent it from oxidizing.

I strike-light the torch and bring it to the ore slowly, and from above. The sample gives off a different flame this time. It has a soft green hue.

When the firing ends, and the small bubbling rock cools, I take the hammer to it. This time there is a small glassy orb that when struck, shatters, but leaves behind a hard, spherical pellet. The pellet, when struck, does not crumble. When struck again, harder, it flattens a bit.

Lance, seeing this, exclaims, "By God, you've got a piece of metal!" I don't know Greek, but I think that statement can be crushed down to "Eureka!"

Keith Krizan can be contacted at therealkbkkbk@gmail.com.



Photo by Marion Vendituoli

Murphy Musick, with the help of Dick Klosterman and John Quirin, raises the flag at the Veterans Day ceremony held at the Patagonia Cemetery on Nov. 11.

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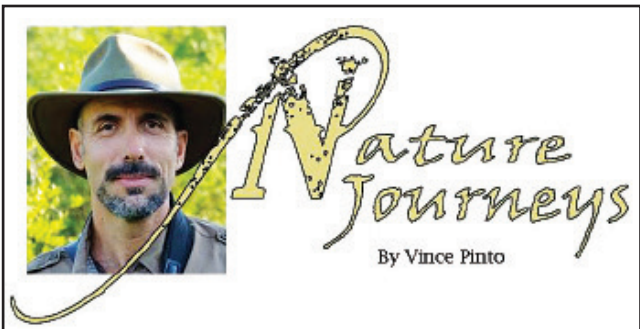
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Bucking the Trend

December generally ushers in the first true signs of winter in the Sky Islands region: cold, even bitter weather and—if we are lucky—gloomy skies portending a soaking rain. Long gone, or at least out of sight, are many of our iconic species. Good luck finding an elegant trogon, Sonoran Desert toad, morning glory, Sonoran coral snake, army ant or any number of other heat and/or moisture-loving species. The bulk of their activities are during the monsoons, when life literally swells from the previously parched earth. By comparison, December, and winter in general, is a more austere time in terms of our biodiversity.

Even in the midst of this decided downturn in life, there are still hints of more profuse times. Species can turn up, that—by the standards of their taxonomic kin—seem to buck the trend of their cohorts by their mere presence in winter.

One of my favorite “winter contrarians” is the long-legged ant in the genus *Aphenogaster*. It’s not hard to locate this rather large hymenopteran. They are fairly ubiquitous in the mid-elevations near Patagonia, can be found near homes, and are active above ground if temperatures are neither too cold nor too hot. Further, they tend to be rather bold and

aggressive, though they lack the capacity to sting—unlike our red harvester ants. Despite this deficiency in their armory they nonetheless have a trick or two up their myrmecine sleeves. Some researchers have observed long-legged ants dropping pebbles down the nest entryways of the harvester ants, presumably to slow them down and hence out-compete them for resources! Ants are weird.

Skipping to birds, many of our local flycatchers have long since vacated our local haunts, seeking more consistent invertebrate prey south of the border. Not so our Say’s phoebes. They are home-bodies that manage to eke out a living by snagging both winged and grounded invertebrates, despite the general dearth of such prey in winter. Not to be outdone, yellow-rumped warblers are generally the only wintering warbler species that can be consistently found in a variety of local habitats, though the occasional painted redstart, black-throated gray warbler, and other relatives may lurk here and there. Watch for groups of yellow-rumps hunting in small flocks near water, such as by Patagonia Lake. Some of the winged prey—many of them flies in the order diptera—that both the phoebes and warblers feast upon are themselves season-buckers that have evolved to hatch out in winter when not nearly as many birds seek them for food.

A few lepidopterans also manage to successfully make a living during winter or at least survive the worst challenges that cold weather has to offer. Any warmer winter day might



Photo by Vince Pinto

A mourning cloak butterfly spreads its wings to capture warmth from the sun at Raven’s Nest Nature Sanctuary.

see a few mourning cloak butterflies gracing our riparian forests. Many overwinter as adults even in latitudes much further north, making an unexpected local sighting a real possibility. Their predominantly dark brown wings act as efficient solar panels as they sun themselves on the ground or from a perch. Warming themselves helps to save energy, allowing them to survive until their critical spring breeding season. Viewed up close or through binoculars they reveal a dazzling array of colors and a shimmering iridescence.

Perhaps my favorite winter surprise comes in a rather formidable package—rattlesnakes! Though any number of reptiles—from ornate tree lizards to various snakes—occasionally make cameo appearances in winter, none is more eye-opening than the visage of a rattler placidly sunning itself in some secret corner. Mind you, I’ve only seen a handful of them

during our colder months over my many Sky Island decades, but all have been memorable encounters. Each has served as a stark reminder to always be aware, as we do, after all, live in a county which has the most venomous reptile species of any comparable area in the U.S.

So, if you heed my advice, shake off any winter blues by going out into nature on a scavenger hunt, searching for species of flora and fauna that seem to have no right to be out during our dark, frost-ridden months. They might just brighten your day.

Vincent Pinto and his wife, Claudia, run RAVENS-WAY WILD JOURNEYS, their Nature Adventure & Conservation organization devoted to protecting and promoting the unique biodiversity of the Sky Islands region. RWWJ offers a wide variety of private, custom-made courses, birding & biodiversity tours. Visit: ravensnatureschool.org

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Local Streets Named After Local People

By Carrie White

Our past is all around us, even on the roads we drive. In this word search you will be looking for the following names reflective of our local history.

C
J E Z
S E P A M
Q D T E R R Y
J M A Z O D N E M
L Z E Z S
O Q C A O J H
E D W L R P O I T
M L F S B Q L K N K J
Z P V O M C B C W D E H B
D Y O B A L R O O E I L L O C
U I O R E X P I E
G N O H K E L G U A N
C E K T C N O N E L L H P
X O K O M L W A H S R A H Q H
A M K R K B X E G B L A B O N F D
T X O T T A M V K I J K E L L O G G J
K
F
A

WORD LIST

- Ambrose
- Blabon
- Boyd
- Cline
- Collie
- Harshaw
- Holbrook
- Kellogg
- Lenon
- Mapes
- Mattox
- McKeown
- Mendoza
- Naugle
- Rothrock
- Terry

Stumped? See Solution, page 23

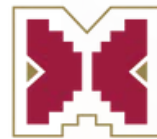
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TOWN COUNCIL NOTES

By PRT Staff Reporters

November 20, 2024

Heidi Rentz of Cyclists' Menu introduced a proposed new trail running event for February 28 and March 1, 2025, to be called the "Day Dreamer." Similar to the Spirit World cycling race, this event will have a 7am start, and three choices of route length. The event will include a fundraising dinner, and an auction. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Town's Recycling Program. More information is at daydreamer.com.

Karl Pennock, Rural Development Specialist with the Rural Community Assistance Corporation, presented a financial analysis of the Town's Water and Wastewater department. (Pennock's work is funded by USDA and other agencies, and is provided without charge to the Town.) Pennock has

concluded that the operating costs of the Town's water and sewage processes are not being met by the income from ratepayers, leaving the Town having to make up the shortfall of \$100-150,000 per year for both water and sewage systems.

Pennock shared his proposal to increase revenue, build system capacities and reduce the Town's contingency contributions. The rates would increase, depending on the year, from 5 to 17%, and would be discussed in a process including public hearings. At the 17% rate increase, the average household monthly rate for 6,000 gallons of water usage would rise from \$29.50 to \$34.52.

Mayor and Council approved a liquor license for Arnette Creek, leasing the former Ovens site at 277 McKeown Av. The business plan is in early stages, but would involve primarily daytime

operation and light food rather than full restaurant service.

Carolyn Shafer's resignation from the Town's Flood and Flow Committee was accepted, after service since 2015. She'd served as Secretary and Chairperson at the same time, and, it was added "she will be missed."

The Patagonia Community United Methodist Church was approved to use the town park's central gazebo for Christmas caroling from 4:30pm to 5:30pm on Friday, Dec. 13. The Church hopes this can become an annual event and requested waiver of park use fees.

The Mayor and Council approved the designation of a "NO PARKING LOADING ZONE" area from the Patagonia Arts Center at 304 Naugle Ave. to the corner of Naugle Ave. to the corner of Third Ave.

Zander Ault gave a talk reviewing the recent 4th

Annual Spirit World 100 event, which raised \$23,000 for the Arizona Trails group. He labeled the event "an awesome year," with 400 people in town, no injuries, and several organizational "partnerships." He added that South32 had contributed \$10,000.

Ault also detailed how the parking of five vehicles during race day evening on the helipad had happened, and how it could be avoided in the future.

Debbie Robinson's resignation from the Library Advisory Board was accepted.



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Spirit World (Cont.)

The Spirit World 100 is not the only event on Ault and Rentz's calendar. Last month they hosted the "Guajolote Gravel ride, a 48-mile loop and cook-out for 25 people. On March 1, 2025, they are organizing "Day Dreamer," their first running event. 100 participants can choose between a 50K, 30K, or a 10K race along the Arizona Trail outside Patagonia. This will be a fundraiser for the Patagonia Recycling Program.

On top of that, the couple operate the Cyclist's Menu, a guiding and outfitting company that, for the past ten years, has been offering cycling camps in the U.S. and internationally. "That's our bread and butter," Ault said. This year they are planning cycling camps in

Patagonia, California, Montana, Italy, Spain, and France.

The couple have been professional guides for the past 20 years. An addition to the crew is their two-year-old daughter Burch who travels with them on their trips, along with Rentz's mom who watches the baby while her parents are working.

In addition to running the Spirit World 100, hosting their cycling camps, and developing the Patagonia Lumber Company venue, Ault and Rentz have also bought a property in Patagonia that they converted into a small hotel that can accommodate up to 18 guests.

The 400 cyclists and guests in town for the Spirit World 100 rented out all available hotel rooms and B&Bs in

town, and camped on fields at the Patagonia High School, according to Ault.

Although events that bring visitors to the area are a benefit to local businesses, not everyone is happy with the increased traffic, noise, and the rise in the cost of housing. The cumulative effects of increased tourism, the buying up of housing for short term rentals, and the development of the Hermosa mining project have led to some hard feelings from longtime residents.

"We no longer get a choice as to whether or not we want to go to the city, the city comes to us now," Patagonia resident Cassina Farley said. "And all the city problems come with them: traffic, parking issues, litter and congestion."

"There will always be people who

don't want growth and development. They often feel threatened," Ault said. "We are incredibly sensitive to it, and we talk about it all the time. I have a two-year-old and I want to find a way of maintaining the beauty of our area that makes sense. The beauty [of the area] is an amazing asset. We are surrounded by the reason that people want to come here.

"These communities need to maintain themselves. How do we provide rural communities business opportunities that maintain the viability of our towns for the future?"

"We need to find a plan that isn't in the way of people's way of life," he added.

Social Club (Cont.)

down on the caps and then returns to the up position when the buttons are released.

Vern is working to my left. He is taking the full and securely capped bottles and putting them in boxes marked with the wine's name and vintage. As the reporter on the scene, I'm not doing much, just taking notes and stacking the full cases onto pallets in rows of 15.

The first six bottles to come down the line are dumped outside to ensure that there is no residual cleaning solution left.

We are up and running, ten people attending to our various chores. At 9:23am our first bottles are produced. Chris directs that these should go

into boxes marked "F&F", for Friends and Family. We work steadily and the bottles are rolling along until a glitch, of sorts, occurs and we have a couple of large cups of wine that cannot be reintroduced into the system. Under the dictum of "Waste Not, Want Not," those who are inclined help keep the wine from being spilled, uselessly, out. All the parts here need to be kept lubricated.

Music plays from the room's speakers. This is a mostly gray crowd, and we play a game of Name That Tune or Name the Movie That Tune Was Featured In.

Occasionally the remarks turn ribald. There is a lot of laughter.

In the half hour before noon, we complete our first pallet of finished

product: five stacks of 15 cases each, 75 cases of wine. "Against All Odds" by Oasis plays gently in the background.

At lunch we are treated to pizza from Papa Murphy's in Sierra Vista. The pie is delicious and served with a choice of the Harvest Moon that we spent the morning bottling or the Riesling that we will work with in the afternoon.

There is some nostalgia in the lunchtime conversation. Claudia recalls growing up in Tucson and the way that her mother kept the wine that was being fermented in the closet wrapped in Christmas lights to keep it at the right temperature. Someone else remarks about the cooperative nature of the Sonoita AVA: vineyards working with vineyards, sharing facilities, tech-

niques, insights, and labor in the cause of getting the wine out.

Lunchtime over, it is back to the proverbial salt mine.

The work is a little slower in the afternoon and that is to be expected, after all, the average age in this group is probably north of...50.

At last, the second vat holding the Riesling is emptied and clean up commences.

As we all head towards the exits we are offered some of the finest wine that Arizona has to offer. We nod, give thanks, and say, 'See you in the vineyard.' This session of A Sky Island Social Club is officially over.

Keith Krizan can be contacted at therealkbkkbk@gmail.com

Teachers (Cont.)

teacher for the elementary and middle schools.

The science room in the Patagonia Middle School campus is a large, light-filled space. Posters, charts, and colorful information sheets cover the walls creating an interesting, inviting learning environment.

This fall the sixth-grade students studied kinetics and potential energies, designing toys to demonstrate energies and how they exchange properties. The seventh grade investigated magnetism and electricity and built electromagnets. The eighth grade kids studied geology and earth's history, getting to know about rocks, rock stratification, and fossils. They used digging tools and broke apart rocks to study

them.

"I think the kids get curious when we're able to show them something right in front of them that sparks that curiosity," Gudenkauf said. "It's difficult for 13-year-olds to understand the concept of millions and billions of years ago. I recently attended a workshop at the U of A School of Mining and was able to build a working diorama to show how erosion and water affect the land. As soon as the water started flowing, the kids got real interested."

Gudenkauf was born in Germany. "My father was in the military, and I was a military brat," he said. The family moved to Nogales in 1992, where Gudenkauf went to local schools and graduated from high school, then majored in journalism at the U of A with

a minor in photography. He worked in Tucson for the next two decades, while continuing to take photography courses and earning a Masters in organizational psychology from the U of A.

Gudenkauf then took a position with the American Board of Radiology in Tucson, administering certification and overseeing development. It was here that he met his wife, Kristin, who still works there.

Ready for a change, the family moved to Sonoita. Gudenkauf was a stay-at-home dad for the next four years, until, in 2023, his father told him that "Patagonia is looking for subs." Gudenkauf was intrigued, and for the next year he subbed "wherever they needed me."

Gudenkauf is grateful to Kate Peake, English language teacher, who

has been his mentor. "She is a great resource," he said. He also credits former science teacher Randi Trantham. As a first-year teacher Gudenkauf has used Trantham's curriculum, making "a few minor tweaks here and there."

Gudenkauf and his middle school colleagues form a very close-knit team. "We coordinate across classes with daily interactions on topics and projects," he said. "We meet both formally and informally."

The 37 middle school students enjoy small classes. "Small classes allow direct contact with students," he said. "We get to know them much better. We are able to adapt a given lesson to any student's particular needs and help them succeed. Our goal is that no kid flounders, no kid struggles."

Photos by Dottie Farrar

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Prepaid admission is \$30 - adult or \$15 - student. Pay online (using your preferred credit/debit card or PayPal) or by sending a check to SCFPA PO Box 875, Patagonia AZ 85624. Tickets are \$35/\$20 on the day of the concert (if seats are available)

Dec. 20: 5pm -"Cheerful Sounds" A holiday concert featuring the Santa Cruz Singers and Friends.

Free. Donations always gratefully accepted.

Visit www.scfpapresents.org for more information

Solution for this Month's Word Search

Local Streets Named After Local People

C
J E Z
S E P A M
Q D T E R R Y
J M A Z O D N E M
L Z E Z S
O Q C A O J H
E D W L R P O I T
M L F S B Q L K N K J
Z P V O M C B C W D E H B
D Y O B A L R O O E I L L O C
U I O R E X P I E
G N O H K E L G U A N
C E K T C N O N E L L H P
X O K O M L W A H S R A H Q H
A M K R K B X E G B L A B O N F D
T X O T T A M V K I J K E L L O G G J
K
F
A

THE TIN SHED THEATER

DECEMBER 2024 Schedule

DEC. 10, 4:30pm: Patagonia Montessori School Holiday Concert
Free

DEC. 18, 6pm: Film -"A Christmas Story" - Hot cocoa and holiday goodies.
Free

CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS:

DEC. 8, 10am: Wreath making with Patagonia Plants
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DEC.14, 10am: Gingerbread House Workshop
\$25 (prepaid) per house. Includes all supplies for a 14" wreath. Call 520-394-9369 to register.

DEC.21, 10am: 'Spicy' Holiday Ornaments with Susan Corl
\$10 Adults, \$5 for kids. Call 520-394-2926 to register.

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.

KPUP Broadcast Schedule FALL/WINTER 2024

Mon: 5pm to 6pm: Swing Hour

7pm to 8pm: eTown repeat of Saturday's show

Tues: 10am to 12pm: World Jazz with Mark Berg

7pm to 9pm: Jazz and Blues with Fred Hansen

Wed: 5pm to 6pm: Swing Hour

7pm to 10pm: Sean Alexander show

Thurs:7pm to 10pm: Possibility Explorers. "Celebrating Mushkil Gusha, the Remover of All Difficulties." Hosted by Graves

Fri: 7pm to 9pm: Hook's Sunken Roadhouse

Sat: 12pm to 1pm: eTown - "Educate, entertain and inspire listeners through music and conversation"

6pm to 8pm: Acoustic Café. A bit of country, rock, blues, folk, pop"

8pm to 10pm: Folk Alley "Folk Music Radio from WKSU-FM in Kent, OH

Sun: 1pm: Sunday Classical Connection

Daily Shows: StarDate: 9am & 5pm/Best of the Oldies: 1pm to 2pm/
BirdNote: 6am and 10am/Growing Native with Petey Mesquitey: MWF at 7am, Sunday at noon/

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