

Patagonia Regional Times



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New Youth Cycling Program Gains Speed



Photo by Rob Broadfoot

(From left) Damian Nunez, Ryan Egan, Steve Watts, Leo Nunez, and Cheridyn Egan explore roads in Stevens Canyon on a Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center ride last spring.

By Mary Tolena

Last spring, Patagonia neighbors Steve Watts and Rob Broadfoot discovered they had similar passions for helping young people get more involved with sports and outdoor activities, particularly bicycling.

Before moving to Patagonia in 2021, Watts helped develop a nationally recognized cycling-based education program that he implemented in several states and the Navajo Nation. He and his wife were drawn to Patagonia after enjoying winter cycling in the Tucson area since the early 1990s.

Broadfoot and his wife arrived in Patagonia in 2017 after 45 years coaching soccer and alpine skiing at high schools in New England, and training young Olympians at the National Sports Academy.

After retiring, he was recruited by a former student to lead cycling tours in the Tucson area, which is how he discovered Patagonia. He quickly got involved in youth activities here, starting the soccer programs at the middle and high schools, and joining the Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center (PYEC)'s board of directors.

Wanting to further support local youth, Watts and Broadfoot contacted Anna Coleman, director of PYEC, about starting a bike-riding program for its younger members in early 2024. She enthusiastically agreed, welcoming new biking activity at the Center.

Coleman's husband, Steve, had led a bike program there several years ago where youth built BMX bikes and covered basic maintenance. "Participants learned to ride with safety and respect for themselves, others, the bikes, and the trails and environment," Coleman said.

"I have always been concerned with how my athletes can stay active and have a healthy lifestyle beyond school team involvement," Broadfoot said. "Given Patagonia's growing cycling scene, it seemed like a natural progression to help Patagonia youth get more involved in this lifetime sport."

Fifth grade and middle school is the "sweet spot" to build kids' enthusiasm and skills for biking, according to Watts. "They are ready—physically, emotionally, and socially—to take the next step with cycling. They are moti-

See Bikes, p.12

Districts Deal With Gutfahr Embezzlement Fallout



Photo by Nisa Talavera

Liz Gutfahr walks out of court on Nov. 21 with her attorney after pleading guilty to embezzlement, fraud and money laundering.

By Marion Vendituoli

The Sonoita Elgin Fire District (SEFD) and the three local school districts—Sonoita, Patagonia Elementary, and Patagonia Union High School—have been advised by officials they can expect to eventually recover approximately 20% of the funds stolen from their accounts by former Santa Cruz County Treasurer Liz Gutfahr from 2012-2024.

At its Dec. 16, 2024 meeting, the SEFD Board of Directors heard reports from the County's forensic accountants, as well as attorneys representing the District and the County, outlining the losses incurred by the district, recovery efforts and possible next steps.

CPA Chris Linscott, whose firm has been conducting the forensic accounting of Gutfahr's embezzlement, told the board that SEFD can expect to recover approximately \$7,000 from the \$34,000 that Gutfahr stole from the district over 12 years, for a net loss of around \$27,000. For perspective, SEFD's budget for its current fiscal year is \$1.66 million.

The three local school districts are looking at much larger losses.

Gutfahr stole a total of \$516,833 from the Sonoita School district during her time as treasurer. The district can expect to recover around \$106,000, giving it a net loss of over \$410,000. The district's annual budget is \$3.22 million.

Gutfahr stole a total of \$528,989 from the Patagonia Elementary district over 12 years. The district can expect to recover \$109,000, giving it a net loss of around \$419,000. The district's current annual budget is \$1.68 million.

She stole a total of \$815,697 from Patagonia Union High district over ten years. The district can expect to recover approximately \$167,000, giving it a net loss of around \$649,000. The district's annual budget is \$1.96 million.

The amount of money that the County calculated each district lost is based on the amount of money that had been held in a savings account during Gutfahr's tenure, Linscott explained. According to Courtney Henson, an attorney from Snell and Wilmer, the law firm representing the County, SEFD's losses were lower than the school districts' because, of the

See Gutfahr, p.22

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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Submissions

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 idea to editor@prtnews.org

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Local journalism can't exist without reader support.



By Marion Vendituoli

We're kicking off 2025 with a bit of good news: Thanks to readers like you, we have raised over \$40,000 during our year-end NewsMatch campaign! \$15,000 of the funds raised will be matched by NewsMatch, a national organization that supports nonprofit newsrooms.

These donations ensure the future of the PRT and will be used to help us continue to bring you the local news that you depend on us to deliver. They fund your community news services—the printing of the paper; the hardworking staff; and the PRT website, the weekly e-newsletter and breaking news alerts.

In 2025, it will be more important than ever that our readers have access to factual, nonpartisan, accurate local news. We will continue our work to build a sense of community, encourage civil

discourse, and promote local businesses, events and nonprofits.

Stories you can expect to see in 2025 include coverage of actions at the county level that might not otherwise be publicized in our area, the impact to our local schools and fire district of the Liz Gutfahr embezzlement case, concerns surrounding the effects of mining development, school sports, the lack of affordable housing, and the impact of the growth of tourism in the region.

In 2025 we will also be implementing a robust breaking news and emergency alert system to better inform our communities about wildfires, accidents, law enforcement updates, road closures etc.

Our staff works hard to deliver our unique local news stories. We continue to work to improve our digital footprint, and to develop new tools and skills to support our evolving technical resources.

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

Our dedicated Board members continue to work on our long-term goals and strategic planning to ensure that the PRT will be a viable news organization for years to come.

Our PRT family members include not only our writers, our board members and staff, but also all of you that have supported us this year. We thank you for kicking off 2025 in the best way possible, especially as we emerge from the challenges of the past few years. Thank you for your investment in the future of the PRT because, especially in these tumultuous times, local news matters!

From Our Readers

I appreciate all the people working at PRT to keep our local COMMUNITY informed. - Carolyn S., Patagonia

Love to know what's going on in Patagonia/Sonoita - Karen C.

The best paper in the world! - Heidi and Zander A., Patagonia

I value staying current with Patagonia news, even when we are elsewhere for many months each year. - Deborah L., Elgin

Well, we love and appreciate OUR paper! - Penelope C., Patagonia

The PRT equals community! - Bekki J., Patagonia

The PRT is an awesome newsroom. It provides up-to-the-minute local news, helps me know my fellow citizens. I always look forward to all PRT publications! - Mollie W., Patagonia

Appreciate quality reporting on matters of local interest - Avril F., Nogales

This newspaper is a treasure. Articles and stories by and about our community helps to define what and who we are and gives us a sense of place and connection to it. - Tina H., Sonoita

A local press fosters democracy. - Donna L., Alaska

I enjoy reading stories written by local residents about local happenings. - Anette D., Sonoita

I believe in the importance of what the PRT does, is & stands for. - Rosanne C. - Sonoita

Fire Chiefs Review 2024, Discuss Challenges for 2025

By Dottie Farrar and Eddie McArthur

Although 2024 was a relatively slow year for fires in eastern Santa Cruz County, Patagonia Volunteer Fire and Rescue (PVFR) Chief Zay Hartigan and Sonoita Elgin Fire District (SEFD) Chief Marc Meredith are not complacent about the challenges facing their departments.

"These are economically challenging times," Chief Hartigan said in a recent interview with the PRT. In a separate interview, Chief Meredith concurred. "The economics of fire service overall are out of control and are particularly challenging for small, rural agencies," he said.

Meredith sees challenges in the fire service as universal rather than simply local. Competition for staff is ongoing as fewer people elect to work in fire services. Cost of equipment continues to rise, and expectations versus reality continue to trouble many agencies.

"Upkeep, from apparatus to buildings, is complicated by both our weather and our roads," Meredith said. "Rough roads literally shake things loose on trucks, while sun and heat are hard on our buildings...Our fleet of vehicles is aging, causing increased maintenance costs and the need to replace equipment."

As of Dec. 10, 2024, SEFD had responded to 698 incidents for the year. Surprisingly, wildland fires had totaled just 20 compared to 82 in 2023—"a trend that cannot last," Meredith said. "There is no longer a wildfire season, it's 12 months of the year. Timing has changed, with the largest wildfire this year occurring in October and three roadside fires in one week in December. All of this makes staffing a challenge, as it is impossible to predict needs."

Hartigan concurred, "We have been very fortunate this past year. The fire season is now year round. In 2024 we had a lot less fire calls, and the only structure fires we had were false alarms. We did provide mutual aid to SEFD, which had more wildfires and motor vehicle accidents than we did. Around 85% of our calls continue to be medical."

There are currently 35 members of the PVFR, which is an all-volunteer organization. 21 members are classed as firefighters, four are EMTs, and 18 are Basic Life Support CPR-trained.

Four of the members attended the State Fire School in Phoenix this fall. PVFR also hosted the annual Wildland



Photo by Tricia Flaherty

Sonoita Elgin Fire District Chief Marc Meredith

Refresher Course, which they co-led with Coronado National Forest staff. The rest of the training was held in house.

"We are dealing with the challenge of fitting firefighting training into peoples' lives," Hartigan said. "Our firefighters are extended in their work lives. Thursday night training works for some people and weekends work better for others, so we are doing both."

"We are also seeing rapid advances in emergency medical services, and we are not as caught up as we would like to be," he said. "Today there are advances in all emergency services, including fire, rescue, medical and technology usages. We continue to constantly upgrade and update our structure. Our current training officer is devoted to this work."

Meredith pointed out that SEFD is the first responder for over 50% of Santa Cruz County for ambulance and transport. Currently 50% of the call-outs for SEFD are medical and 5% motor vehicle accidents. The department provides ambulance service to Patagonia.

Both organizations provide mutual aid when requested. Meredith praised cooperation among the various fire agencies and county departments who meet together to train and plan. "Everyone is facing the same challenges, and we all need each other," he said.

For larger incidents, such as October's fire, support also comes from other agencies, including Whetstone, Rio Rico, Rincon Valley, Forest Service, BLM, Arizona State and Fort Huachuca. But this does not happen quickly. "We often look at a three-hour response time for things like air support," Meredith said.

Tourism, the mine, and traffic:

"With South 32 ramping up, there is an increase in traffic," Hartigan said. "We are working with the mine and neighboring agencies updating information. The mine has their own EMT/paramedic, but we do respond to calls



Photo courtesy of Zay Hartigan

Acting Patagonia Volunteer Fire and Rescue Chief Zay Hartigan

to the mine and provide support. We also help route the ambulance—not all the EMTs on the ambulance are local, so we help route them to the scene and provide support. There can be multiple incidents requiring care, and we can provide routing and initiate patient care."

Hartigan said PVFR is anticipating growth in local mass recreational events in 2025. "We provided care during the Spirit World Bicycle Race this fall, and there are plans for a [new] trail race in March," he said.

Meredith said that increases in tourism to the area is a trend SEFD is also dealing with.

"Despite public perception, census data reveals that our local population has not grown significantly," he said. "What has increased are commercial establishments with more wineries and tasting rooms. Increased outdoor tourism in the area brings people from cities who bring with them city expectations and increases in traffic, especially on weekends. While the amount of traffic has increased, so far that has not led to an appreciable increase in the number or severity of accidents."

"While there have not been a significantly larger number of events, more are happening concurrently. For instance a year ago the Patagonia Fall Festival and a major bike event were the same weekend. This really taxes available personnel and equipment."

Planning for the future

Continuing and increased support for the national Firewise USA program is a local trend Hartigan noted.

"I am very happy to be working with both the Nature Conservancy and Tucson Audubon," Hartigan said. "Both have stepped up and are helpful and engaged. Audubon has received a \$2.5 million dollar grant over the next five years for fuel reduction programs and road enhancement for their Sonoita Creek property adjacent to the Paton Center. South32 is also engaged, paving the helipad and giving several

grants to PVFR for equipment. Borderlands [Restoration Network] is also working on the firewise program on their parcel."

SEFD is in the middle of implementing a new Strategic Plan, with financial stability as the main goal along with dealing with an aging fleet. Meredith expects that within two years SEFD will need to increase its staffing and/or change its staffing.

"It is difficult to attract and retain firefighters here," Meredith said. "Some thrive in this rural atmosphere and some don't. Pay scales are better in larger agencies, as are advancement opportunities. The universal decline in interest in fire service only exacerbates that challenge."

"Our biggest need is for more EMTs," Hartigan said. "Like every small community in the country it is hard to find people. We do have a couple of EMTs in the pipeline which makes us happy. We also want more younger members who are fit and physically capable. Right now we are lucky to be getting some good, younger folks, but we always want more."

Community involvement

"We want to be there for our local people in whatever ways they need, and we are doing all we can to accomplish that," Meredith said. SEFD supports activities at the Elgin School including Safety Day and a fire drill. They are present with an ambulance and medical staff at the Rodeo, Empire Ranch events, the Fourth of July parade and the Santa Parade.

Hartigan said PVFR, likewise, was looking forward to many community events in Patagonia in 2025. "We staff the high school graduation bonfire and are happy to send staff and trucks to the Career Fair at the school," he said. "The Steak Fry and the Burger Burn are our big fundraisers. And we love hosting the Fourth of July fireworks and the parade. It is just a big party."

Lobos Look to Carry Positives Forward



Photo by Dave Lumia

Senior guard Johnny Fields has stepped forward into a leadership role for the Lobos.

By Dave Lumia

The good news for the Patagonia Lobos boys basketball team is that they've figured out what it takes to be successful.

The tricky part will be carrying over and building upon those lessons as they take on the meat of their schedule in January.

The Lobos entered the holiday break on a high note, putting together

perhaps their best performance of the season in a 49-31 victory at Valley Union on Dec. 19. The Lobos were without two key contributors—Noah Gallardo and Kannon Shore—due to illness, but senior Diego Carranza returned to the lineup after missing multiple games with illness and scored 16 points to lead the Lobos. Senior Sebastian Padilla added eight points for Patagonia, and junior Gus Varela scored seven.

"We really increased our defensive intensity, applied more ball pressure," coach Nate Porter said. "We showed more patience on offense, which we hadn't been doing. And it really helps to have Diego Carranza back and fully healthy."

Junior center Gavin Arbizo also returned to the court for the first time since suffering a knee injury in the preseason. He teamed up with junior Jaxon Yslava to provide some needed muscle inside. "Gavin adds some physicality and interior defense," Porter said. "Having Jaxon and Gavin in the middle helped us control the boards."

The victory came after back-to-back losses to St. David and Hayden and a 2-2 record in the Coach Edgar Brown Holiday Basketball Tournament in Williams. The tournament games are not factored into AIA season records and rankings, so Patagonia officially entered the holiday break with a 4-2 mark after beating Valley Union.

"It was a game we needed to win," Porter said. "We're right where I thought we'd be going into the break. It was a really, really good way to go into the break and build some confidence going into the second half."

Porter said the Williams tournament was a positive experience for the Lobos, even with Carranza and Arbizo unavailable. It identified some areas in need of adjustment—handling defensive pressure, executing the offense more efficiently—that have since been put into practice.

Varela has emerged as a secondary scoring threat to complement Carranza, but the Lobos will need to continue relying on their overall depth to achieve their goal of qualifying for the state championship.

"Every game we have to be able to figure out as coaches which players are meeting our measurements that particular day: defensive activity, offensive execution, not having unforced turnovers," Porter said. "We're never going to be a high-scoring team, so we're looking for guys who bring the defensive effort and defensive intensity."

Porter praised senior guard Johnny Fields for stepping into a leadership role. "He's really grown into that role," he said. "I wasn't sure he was a player who had that in him, but he's really stepped up. I've been really pleased to

See Lobos, p.18



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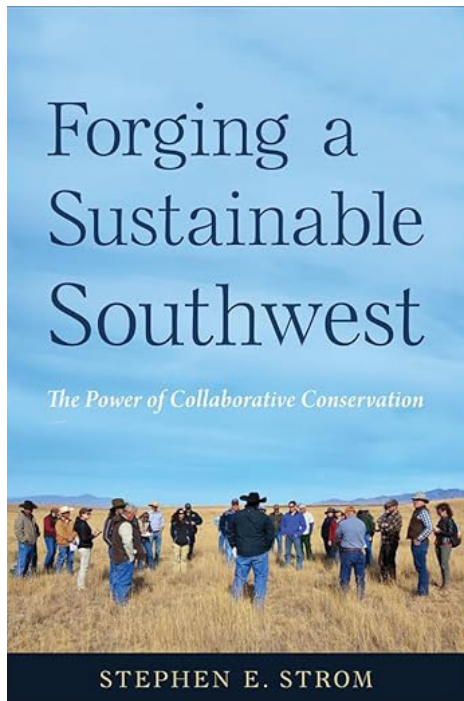
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New Book Celebrates Regional Restoration Efforts



“Forging a Sustainable Southwest” by Stephen E. Strom (University of Arizona Press) \$35.00, Kindle \$33.25

By Harold Meckler

Stephen Strom’s “Forging a Sustainable Southwest” provides the backstory, the science and a wealth of photographs and graphics that describe the efforts—beginning in the 1980s—to address and restore the historical and diverse landscapes of Southern Arizona and adjacent regions. But, much more than that, the book zeroes in on one crucial element: the need for collaboration between all stakeholders. We are in this together, and the path to success is finding common ground.

Strom, who lived in Sonoita from 1998 to 2022, is an astronomer whose research was focused on studying the formation of stars and planetary systems. He is also a well known photographer whose work has illustrated several books. While living in Sonoita, he collaborated with ecologists Jane and Carl Bock on “Sonoita Plain: Views of a Southwestern Grassland.”

In “Forging a Sustainable Southwest,” Strom states that “over the past two centuries in particular, the rapid growth of human populations and advancements in technology have reached a point where the environment has been impacted on all scales.” Solutions, he posits, can be found when a “community begins to take collective responsibility for what all its members share in common.”

He takes the reader through the collaborative efforts that led to the establishment of four conservation areas; the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, the development of the Malpai Borderlands Group, the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan and, finally, the ongoing environmental restoration of the 80,000-acre Cienega Ranch that rests between the Dos

Cabezas and Chiricahua Mountains.

The impetus for such work was the torrential rain and subsequent flooding that ultimately caused the deaths of 14 and injuries to nearly 1000 amid the widespread destruction of infrastructure and property in Tucson in 1983.

The book takes you behind the scenes to the people—public and private—that were, and continue to be, committed to what Strom calls a “large landscape perspective.” Well-known figures like former Arizona governor and interior secretary Bruce Babbitt and Congressman Jim Kolbe were key players, but no more so than Bureau of Land Management and Nature Conservancy staff.

Strom spends the most time discussing the Las Cienegas National Conservation Area (NCA) and its lifeblood, the Cienega Creek. He traces the flow of water from its birthplace in the Canelo Hills to Elgin and Sonoita and finally into Vail and Tucson. On its way, it feeds the Pantano Wash, the Rillito and, lastly, the Santa Cruz River. Strom delves into the history of the region, explaining the crucial role of Cienega Creek over thousands of years, and how it remains crucial today.

Mining, agriculture, and ranching, he points out, fueled by the arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad, accelerated population growth and brought environmental changes to the Sonoita Valley. When the deadly flood of 1983 crashed through Tucson, it was clear to leaders like Pima County Regional Flood Control Director Chuck Huckelberry that “if you can preserve upper watersheds you have a better ability to withstand future flooding.” That meant all eyes were turned to Cienega Creek.

The book shines brightest as Strom provides a detailed look at those who understood that “by restoring riparian areas to their natural function, they became better ‘sponges’ for floodwaters, as well as providing more favorable habitat for mammalian, avian and amphibian species.”

As he highlights the people and many organizations that played a vital role, he also gives equal importance to local groups like the Sonoita Crossroads Community Forum.

It took 17 years of meetings and perseverance before the 42,000-acre NCA became a reality in December of 2000, and Strom goes to great lengths to show just how many were involved in its creation and in the generation of ideas for a broader vision of the Sonoita Valley.

Local ranchers, environmentalists and many others all helped form the backbones to each of the endeavors. Strom points to the work of Bill McDonald, one of the founders of the



Photo by Marion Vendituoli

Stephen Strom chats with attendees after his presentation on his new book at the Patagonia Library October 26.

Malpai Borderlands Group, quoting him extensively. McDonald explains the rationale behind his group’s mission: “We ranchers were concerned about what the future of this landscape would be, not just for the sake of ranching but also for the sake of wildlife, the open-space values that are here.”

At nearly one million acres on both sides of the Arizona and New Mexico border, the Malpai Region had reached a point in the 1990s when it became clear that the potential of housing developments, a steady decline in forage for livestock and decreasing wildlife diversity could no longer be ignored. A founding document of the Malpai Borderlands Group spelled out exactly what was needed. “Where a community agrees about its conservation principles and how to implement them, it can enact its land ethic as the law of its land, formulated in conservation covenants.”

Again and again, Strom points the way to healing the land. The Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan is the most ambitious, covering an area of nearly six million acres. It isn’t just about wildlife. The far-reaching agreement certainly protects biological corridors, but also seeks to protect working ranches, mountain parks and cultural sites.

Finally, Strom focuses on the 40-year effort of Cienega Ranch owner Josiah Austin to show that “economically viable working ranches represent one of the best options for protecting open spaces and wildlife habitat.”

Each of the parts of Strom’s book highlight “collaborative conservation,” an approach that “integrate(s) human and environmental needs...while creating a positive social context for long-term cooperation among stakeholders.” He pulls no punches, though, about the struggle still ahead. Climate change and population growth, along with the threat of corporate interests, will require the ongoing diligence of all of us.

For all of the data contained in this book, “Forging a Sustainable Southwest” flows easily and propels the reader onward. It is both informative and satisfying, appealing to all who care about who we are and the land we inhabit.

For Strom, our future in this diverse and beautiful place comes down to this question: “Can our society rediscover shared purpose in protecting and cherishing these masterpieces [of evolution], stewarding our endowment, and in the process, restoring the commons?”

“Forging a Sustainable Southwest” is his answer, and it’s a good one.

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State Issues Lower Grades to Local Public Schools



Photo by Carrie White

Students at Elgin Elementary School take time to understand citizenship through the Pledge of Allegiance at their daily morning assembly.

By Carrie White

A “snapshot in time” is how Daniel Erickson, the superintendent/principal of the Sonoita School District, describes the annual “grades” the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) issues for state schools.

And while everyone wants an “A”, there is more to consider than a score garnered from a week of testing, said Erickson.

Grades recently released from ADE show Elgin Elementary falling from “A” to a “B”, Patagonia Union High School falling from an “A” to a “B”, and Patagonia Elementary School falling from an “A” to “C.”

Kenny Hayes, Superintendent/Principal of Patagonia Elementary School District #6 and Patagonia Union School District #20, acknowledged disappointment with scores. He said he is committed to focusing on improving all aspects of the school community.

“I use one metric to consider our success during the school year,” Hayes wrote in response to an inquiry regarding the grades. “That is the College and Career Readiness Index (CCRI) score—it only counts for the high school, but that number is the most important number that we need to improve or maintain. It is the culmination of everything students achieved during their school years in getting them ready for life after school.

“That number cannot be maintained or improved if the hard work is not done at all levels of the school. Our CCRI score is always between 19.5 and 22.6, which is considered highly proficient. The students at Patagonia School District are very prepared for life after they graduate according to this metric, and it does not even consider every service that we provide in that area for our students.”

Every spring Arizona students take different tests based on their grade level. Grades 3-8 take Arizona’s Ac-

ademic Standard test (AASA), which assesses English and math. Grades 5, 8 and 11 take the Arizona Science Test (AzSCI), which measures student progress toward achievement on standards adopted by the Board of Education in 2018, according to the ADE website.

High School juniors take the American College Test (ACT), which covers knowledge in English, math, reading and science, with an optional writing test. Freshman take ACT Aspire, which assesses strengths and weaknesses in English, math reading and science. It is designed to help students and parents track progress toward college and career readiness.

But there are other factors that figure into the state’s grade formula. One is “growth toward proficiency.” Consequently, if a school has a red-letter testing year, it is difficult to get to the next level the following year, noted Erickson.

According to ADE, there are no specific controls built into the system to compensate for school size or socio-economic status. But what does figure into the formula are things like “sub-group improvement” (students of military families and minorities) and absenteeism. Absenteeism is an is-

sue for both Elgin and Patagonia, a function of rural living.

“Let’s say the family dentist is in Tucson,” Erickson said. For youth in an urban setting, that may mean a couple hours or half-day away from the classroom. In a rural setting, it’s a whole day away from school.

Administrators say it is important to recognize other opportunities schools provide that don’t figure into “the formula,” like access to music and the arts, sports and clubs.

And then there are lessons baked into a culture that teach intangibles like citizenship, a morning assembly that includes the pledge of allegiance; the importance of giving back, demonstrated by food drives; the value of a firm handshake, eye-contact; and, courtesy, opening doors.

“While we are excited about the recognition that should come from being an ‘A’ school, we recognize that continuous improvement is always our priority,” Hayes said.

“Our first core belief is that all students can learn. We work hard every day to ensure that happens at Patagonia School Districts.”

For the 2023-24 school year, 1,367 traditional K-8 schools and 235 traditional high schools received grades, according to the ADE website. Other schools graded by the ADE include traditional hybrid schools, which combine in-person and online learning; and, al-

ternative schools, which serve specific populations of students who are at risk of dropping out.

Of the 1,367 traditional K-8 schools, 479 were awarded an A, 520 got a B, 277 received a C, 58 got a D and four received an F. Twenty-nine schools were unrated due to insufficient data.

In Santa Cruz County, four were awarded A’s, seven got B’s and seven got C’s. Francisco Vasques De Coronado Elementary School in Nogales and Little Red Schoolhouse outside of Nogales are examples of schools awarded A’s.

Coatimundi Middle School in Rio Rico and Desert Shadows Middle School in Nogales are examples of schools earning B’s. And Calabasas School in Rio Rico and A.J. Mitchell Elementary School were given C’s.

Of the 235 state high schools scored by ADE, 112 were awarded an A grade, 92 received a B, 19 got a C and four received a D. Eight schools were unrated.

In Santa Cruz County, Nogales High School got an A, with Patagonia and Rio Rico each receiving a B.

Home and charter school students are not required to take achievement tests prescribed by the Arizona Board of Education.

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

Sonoita Teen Riding to Success



Contributed photo

Addie Tomlinson, shown here holding Smooth Cat Voo and VE One Hired Gun, shows her horses across the Southwest in reined cow horse competitions.

By Pat McNamara

Not a lot of grass gets a chance to grow under 18-year-old Sonoita resident Addison (Addie) Tomlinson's feet. A high honor student at Tucson's Salpointe Catholic High School, Tomlinson successfully manages her studies while assisting her family at their Vera Earl Ranch and working with her performance horses, getting them ready for competitions throughout the southwest.

Addie's great-grandfather Burton Beck founded the Vera Earl Ranch in 1968. The ranch grew to be a successful horse and cattle operation, breeding and training many performance horses, along with continuing their successful beef operation. As the horse venture became less productive it was discontinued until 2012 when 5-year-old Addie became enamored with the horses and became the catalyst for the rebirth of the Vera Earl Ranch performance horses program.

"I always knew horses were in my heart from a young age," Addie said. Participation with the local 4-H added to her equine experience as she grew into a talented young horsewoman.

When Covid hit and closed her school, Addie found herself 'cowboying' horseback and helping the ranch hands with the herd. The experience of riding different ranch horses as they worked the cattle on the vast ranch added to her riding ability.

Addie has grown into a serious competitor. She has participated in National Reined Cow Horse Association (NRCHA) competitions all over the southwest with a great deal of success. Her most recent win was at the December show in Cave Creek, AZ where she won the Arizona State Cutting Horse Association \$15,000 Amateur Rider award, riding her horse Blu Masterpiece. Earlier this fall, Addie and her 8-year-old mare, Smooth Cat

Voo, whom she has worked with for a year and a half, won reserve champion in the 18 and under non-pro division of the reined cow horse competition in Montrose, CO. In typical humble, horse lover fashion she stated, "It's more the horse than me."

Competitors in reined cow horse competitions are judged on their performance in three areas: herd work, rein work, and cow work. Herd work is where the horse and rider approach a small herd of cows in the arena and separate a single cow without disturbing the rest of the herd. Rein work, the only phase that does not involve a cow, is sometimes likened to figure skating. Speed and finesse in these maneuvers are the goal. Cow work, also called fence work, is the final phase. A cow is herded along a fence line at speed and then 'turned back' by the horse and rider, demonstrating the rider's control of the cow.

Having competed in events in California, Colorado, Texas, and Arizona, Addison has amassed a lot of experience and successes in her young life.

"I've always enjoyed working with my dad on the ranch and riding horses," she said. "I have enjoyed competing and as I have done it more, I don't appear to get as nervous."

"I've known I wanted to be involved in agriculture and the ranch was always a straight path for me to achieve that. I would like to win a world championship at the NRCHA Celebration of Champions sometime in the future. I am looking forward to attending the U of A and expanding my education and horizons."

Tomlinson plans to attend the School of Finance at the U of A with the goal of one day taking over the business side of the Vera Earl Ranch. With her drive and love of horses and cattle and ranching, that would appear to be a perfect career for her.

Former Stuntman Building Local History Library



Photo by Sally Reichardt

Bunker de France, holding a box of Christmas cookies, visits with guests at 'Christmas at the Empire Ranch on December 14.

By Pat McNamara

Among the vendors at 'Christmas at the Empire Ranch,' held on Dec. 14 at the historic Empire Ranch in Sonoita, was Bunker De France, co-host of the "Old West Radio" podcast.

84-year-old de France has been volunteering at the Empire Ranch for more than a decade, serving on the board of directors of the Empire Ranch Foundation from 2012 to 2018.

A former Hollywood stuntman, he has shared his experiences working on western movies at several Empire Ranch Foundation film showings, and he has been a fixture at the Empire Roundup events, held in November to highlight western heritage and the history of the Empire Ranch.

De France's current project at the Empire Ranch is to establish a library focused on local history. He calls himself "The Empire Ranch Foundation Library Foreman," admitting that this is "a self-imposed title." He has so far collected approximately 200 used books from library book sales, second hand stores and wherever else he can find them, which are stored in a small room at the Foundation's Visitors Center at the ranch. He's always looking for donations and for more books on local history and hopes to expand the library in the future when and if the Visitors Center moves to a new location in another building at the ranch.

De France's wish is to have people "relax, laugh and have a good time and experience the idea of a library and eventually build that library," he said. "It's about getting people engaged and interested and reading again, too." De France's goal is to have people walk away from the ranch with a sense of the history there and the importance

of preserving this "wonderful gift we have here," he said. He emphasized the importance of knowing about not only the Empire Ranch, but also acknowledging the many ranches in the area, preserving their history and recognizing their contributions to the region.

De France has a charm and a soft-spoken nature that draws people in. As he manned his post at the Christmas at the Empire event, he engaged attendees and encouraged them to learn more of the history of the area. Many were surprised to learn about the many western movies that had been filmed in Sonoita and Elgin.

De France's career as a stuntman began after he left the Navy at age 22. He decided to settle in Tucson and found a job at the local racetrack. Having spent time at the racetrack in Ruidoso, NM as a youngster and being a self-described "country boy" he had ample horse experience, which gave him a leg up for his future as a stuntman.

In 1965, he heard that "they were going to make a movie in the area, and I thought to myself, gee, I oughta be in the movies! I found out where they were making the movie and being a dumb old country boy, I drove out to the set where the construction workers were and told them I was an actor, something that just popped out of my mouth out of nowhere."

"They directed me to the Santa Rita Hotel, where they were hiring, and to see a fella named Earl Jones who was doing the hiring." De France worked his way past the "long line of cowboys. Like I say, I'm just a dumb old country boy and walked right in to see Earl

See Bunker, p.15

DELICATE



By Cassina Farley

You never know how the outside world sees you and never is this more apparent than when you receive a gift. Last Christmas my sister gave me

a sweater. The sweater was multiple shades of maroon and swirly pink with a metallic pink thread woven into the background. It was a beautiful sweater. As I held it up against my torso, she lovingly stated that when she saw it, it looked just like me.

Huh. Just like me. Now every time I put it on, I can't help but think, "what about this sweater screams 'Cassina'?" Surely not the metallic pink thread? Or is it the color? Maroon and pink swirls and stripes? The whole time I wear it, I think about this sweater that looks just like me.

Fast forward to this year's Christmas morning. Early in the morning, by the light of the Christmas tree lights, I opened a gift from my husband, Zach. Beneath the kitty cat wrapping paper and bubble wrap was a small porcelain statue of a pure white geisha. I wrinkled up my nose and looked at him curiously. He smiled at me and asked if I liked it.

Of course I liked it but why a geisha and why me? Zach, looking a little hurt, said "because it reminded me of you." I laughed and then said, "Why?" Zach then said the most perplexing statement ever: "It reminded me of you because it's delicate like you."

I'm sure everyone reading this who knows me even remotely would not use the word delicate to describe me. I even told my aunt and mother the geisha story, and when I told them about Zach calling me delicate they laughed. I don't think in all of my 49 years there has been a single soul living or dead that has referred to me as delicate, but Zach insists.

After I had a good laugh, I thought of all the things I have been called throughout the years: loud, obnoxious, big-mouthed (goes with loud) sarcastic, emotional, hot tempered, know-it-all and probably a few hundred other things behind my back. One thing for sure I know without a doubt, the only

person to ever call me delicate is Zach. Later that day I decided to press the issue and ask Zach why he thought of me as delicate. His response was simple, "I called you delicate because of your heart. You have a fragile, big heart."

It's ok to swoon. I did. There you have it. Beneath my sarcastic, big-mouthed exterior, I have a big fragile heart and Zach sees it every day. So now, when I look at that small white porcelain statue, I too can be reminded of how he sees me and why I married him.

Get you a Zach in whatever form you can, and a sister that sees maroon and pink and thinks of you. Don't waste your time on anything else.

Happy New Year and thanks for all the foot-related advice. My readers are the best. xo

Cassina Farley can be contacted at cassinaandzachfarley@msn.com

Ranch and Roundup Foods

By Carrie White

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

Food doesn't have to be complicated to be delicious. These were favorite dishes made by area Cowbelles in 1951. They were featured in the cookbook *Roundup Recipes* by Bonnie and Ed Peplow, a copy of which is available for viewing at the Bowman-Stradling History Center, Sonoita. Note: No spaces between titles were used in the wordsearch.

Word List

- Son of a Gun Stew
- Hopping John
- Roundup Pie
- Tamale Pie
- Chili Con Carne
- Spanish Rice
- Sopaipillas
- Empanadas
- Ranch Slaw
- Corn Fritters
- Shovel Flapjacks
- Saddle Snacks
- Pompadour Pudding
- Cowboy Potatoes
- Head Cheese
- Oyster Meat Loaf

Stumped? See solution on page 23

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Migrants Should Be Treated With Kindness

President-elect Trump is well advised to act with caution in any steps toward deportation of migrants. American people meant to selectively deport bad people, not the good people that we know and work with.

The people of the Patagonia area should take the opportunity to talk with their Border Patrol neighbors to

urge them to exercise respect, patience and kindness to each person in managing the security of our borders and their food, shelter and education.

Treat them with the same dignity that we would want, in future, when we are in the position of migrants, seeking better lives for our children.

Larry Spears
Sonoita



Photo by Amy Ijams

Samantha Morriss, daughter of Ron and Cindy Morriss of Patagonia, and Michael Collins were wed on November 1, 2024 at the Tucson Botanical Gardens, followed by a celebration at Cady Hall in Patagonia. The couple are living in Patagonia.

TOWN COUNCIL NOTES

By PRT Staff Reporters

December 18, 2024

The first item of New Business was a presentation by Jim Usevitch of the results of the audit of the Town's books for fiscal year (FY) 2024. The eight summary pages of the journal continue to show progress, with this most recent FY putting the town \$350,000 better than last year.

Valley Telecom was approved for the use of the Town's Central Park for a public ribbon-cutting ceremony on Jan. 21, 2025 to mark the start of construction to connect new residential customers to the company's fiber-optic line for internet service.

The Pac Tour bicycle group was given approval to use the parking area at Section 'C' of the Town Park for an R-and-R stop for 30 cyclists doing fundraising for ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). The event will take place on March 10, 17 and 24. At the group's request, use fees were waived. They will make a donation to the Town.

A special event permit was approved for the Daydreamer Run, a foot-race to be hosted at the Patagonia Lumber Company on Feb. 28-March 1, 2025.

Town Manager Robinson was

approved to contract with KG & E Construction for emergency repairs, on the sealant and corrugated seals at the perimeter of the Town's reservoir, and draining and cleaning the reservoir for a contract amount of \$21,437.

A use permit was finalized for Noe Mencias to add a small coffee service to the back room of the Patagonia Bikes shop at the corner of McKeown and Third Aves. Philip Brister inquired if there would be music, because of his past annoyances with loud music that comes from the Lumber Company venue next door. Mencias assured him not.

A second use permit application was considered, for Jose Delgado's proposed multi-purpose retail and residential complex on a half-lot on Smelter Ave. After extensive review and discussion at its Dec. 3 meeting, Planning and Development had recommended denying this application, and the council and Mayor, with one realtor abstention, voted to agree with the denial.

Lastly, Manager Robinson was approved to contract with CPE Consultants for design, drawings, specifications and structural calculations for replacement of two aging cabanas at Beatty Lane.



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(520) 375-8159 or
mfish@courts.az.gov



The Patagonia Regional Community Fund will begin accepting scholarship applications January 1, 2025. Scholarships are available for high school seniors or adults returning to school at community colleges, four-year universities and career or technical schools. Apply by March 1. Through one application, you will also be matched to any of the other ACF scholarships for which you qualify.



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LUCY VALENZUELA MIHALIK
AUGUST 20, 1927 - DECEMBER 2, 2024



It is with great sadness that we announce the peaceful passing of Lucy Valenzuela Mihalik, 97, on the 2nd of December 2024, with her devoted children by her side.

Lucy is survived by her children: Denise Heiss (Jac) of Patagonia, Cliff Mihalik (Karen) of Springdale, WA, John Mihalik (Cathy) of Healdsburg, CA, Ann McGuire (Michael) of Patagonia, Cathy Sotomayor (Fernando) of Nogales, and Stephen Mihalik (Polina) of Fairview, NC. She leaves behind 8 grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

Lucy was preceded in death by her parents, Virginia and Antonio Valenzuela, and all her nine sisters and brothers. She was also preceded in death by her husband Paul, her son, Paul Mihalik, Jr. and grandson, Jesse Mihalik.

Lucy was born on August 20, 1927 in Patagonia in the adobe home built by her parents. Sadly, her mother died when Lucy was only six years old, but she always praised her father, brothers and sisters for their love and support growing up.

Lucy was so proud of her pioneer family who gave so much to the Patagonia community and for her uncles', brothers' and sisters' military service in WWI and WWII. While she endured the painful loss of her siblings over the years, she was always a source of comfort to all the extended family. She was the last of her great generation and a storyteller sustaining the Valenzuela family legacy.

After high school, she moved to Phoenix and after a tough start, landed

a secretary job at Williams Field, Az.

She met Paul who was in pilot training and after a short romance, they married and began their life together. As a military spouse, she took care of their seven children during 21 years of Paul's military service. She enjoyed the adventure as they traveled the world in the Air Force and later their religious pilgrimages to Europe.

Ultimately they came back to Arizona to be close to her father and she spent most of the remainder of her life in the house in Patagonia where she was born.

Lucy was smart and adventurous, funny and kind, humble and giving. Lucy dedicated herself to God, her husband Paul of 74 years of marriage, her children, family, friends and the St. Theresa's Church community. Her boundless love and simple faith brought joy to others wherever she went and in whatever she did! Her light shone bright for all of us both at our happiest and most difficult moments; her unwavering and unconditional love lives on in our families.

The family wishes to thank the entire staff at the Prestige Assisted Living and Gentiva Hospice for their excellent care and affection for Lucy. We also want to thank her friends for their love and support during this difficult and sad time.

A funeral mass will be held on Saturday, Feb. 1 at St. Theresa's Catholic Church in Patagonia, Az. A private burial will be held immediately following the mass.

FRANK "PANCHO" HEDGCOCK
APRIL 13, 1927 - NOVEMBER 2, 2024



Frank "Pancho" Hedgcock was born April 13, 1927, in St. Louis Missouri and passed away peacefully on November 2, 2024 at Pepi's House Hospice in Tucson surrounded by family.

After serving in the US Navy, Pancho settled in Sonoita, Arizona at his parent's guest ranch, Hacienda de Los Encinos, working as a ranch hand and cowboy.

Pancho was introduced to his future wife Joan by his sister Sara Jane's friend Rachel Burkholder. Pancho and Joan were married in 1958 and were together for 46 years until Joan's death in 2004.

Pancho retired from civil service at Ft. Huachuca in 1985. He then moved to Tucson where he and Joan enjoyed a few years of retirement. Both Pancho and Joan loved people and hard work, so both transitioned into volunteering.

Pancho volunteered with the Empire Ranch Foundation from 2004 to 2007 and served on the ERF advisory committee until 2024. He also volunteered with the City of Tucson and was subsequently hired part-time working in public housing as a locksmith. Their "Key Man" retired from the City of Tucson after 27 years at age 90.

Pancho was a true gentleman, as all who knew him will attest. His love for people, kindness, and good humor drew many to be good friends. Pancho was preceded in death by his wife Joan and son John, and his close friend Ellie Bouley. He is survived by his son James (Judy), and granddaughter Jennifer who miss him dearly.

A celebration of Pancho's rich life is planned for April 12, 2025. Details to follow.

LEE WHITTREDGE KATZENBACH

JUNE 10, 1942 - NOVEMBER 21, 2024



Lee Katzenbach was born in New York City in 1942. He always thought that was amusing since his life was so far removed from busy urban life. He was happiest in the presence of nature - birds insects reptiles, skies, oceans. He moved to Patagonia from Port Townsend, WA with his wife, Ann, because he also loved sunshine and the northwest doesn't have a lot of that.

He might have been an architect were it not for his dyslexic brain that could barely do simple arithmetic. However, during his life he designed and rebuilt many homes, studios, and small buildings. Unfortunately the house he designed in Patagonia was on Harshaw Road.

He lived in Massachusetts while he was single, and when he met Ann, they decided to buy property on the small island of Carriacou in the West Indies. They opened a small hotel and after four years of being hospitable 24/7, they sold the property and moved to Port Townsend, WA in 1992. There Lee continued to design and remodel houses, sheds, chicken coops, a pizza oven and a meditation hut. He was part of a cooperative gallery and a popular

artist.

When he began to search for sunshine after the winter of 2013, he discovered Patagonia—a perfect fit for his unconventional art and love of nature. Every day he watched the skies change over Mount Wrightson and Red Mountain. He had many friends and hiked with a group of mountain explorers on Sunday afternoons.

But the trucks, the noise, the brazen wheeling and dealing of mining capitalism, drove him and Ann away in 2017.

After some more moves (Philadelphia, coastal Massachusetts) Lee and Ann moved back to Washington and because Lee was showing signs of dementia, a family curse, they moved to a supportive retirement community where he died on November 21, having decided to stop eating and drinking before his dementia overtook him.

The desert, with its wonderful skies and creatures and weather delighted this New Englander. He did some of his best work here in his enormous studio—a series of small boats that rocked in the wind, many watercolors, drawings, sculptures and a house.

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We Lost a Good One

Remembering Lee Katzenbach



Photo courtesy of Ann Katzenbach

Lee Katzenbach stands in the doorway of his Patagonia home in 2014.

By Lynn Davison

Hopefully, you were among those in Patagonia who knew Lee Katzenbach. My spouse Judy and I were, and we feel so lucky to have known him.

Lee was a wonderfully unique individual. Every element in his being was creative, prolifically creative. He made drawings and watercolors and sculptures large and small. He designed several amazing houses with no formal training in architecture. He built evocative structures from found objects. Lee was a natural artist with remarkable gifts that he shared generously. His curiosity fueled all his pursuits and was a source of happiness for him.

Lee also was a complicated guy. He was not a big talker except when he was! He made good friends and yet spent a lot of time alone. Lee's gifts were huge but he had challenges too. He could be a bit of a curmudgeon at times. And when something upset him, he did not let it go. A part of Lee always remained a little mysterious. What was going on inside that head?

I have many good memories of times spent with Lee and Ann (Lee's wonderful wife and former PRT editor) in Patagonia and the other places they have lived since then.

We watched the World Series on their tiny TV, especially if the Red Sox were in the hunt. We shared a number of Christmas dinners with Ann and Lee and their dog Lucy.

Lee was a regular member of the Sunday hiking group. He always found some-

thing worth looking at on those hikes.

Judy and I were patrons of his art and spent numerous days perusing his big studio next to their house on Harshaw Road for treasures.

When all the Little Free Libraries were being commissioned and sold, Judy and I bought the one that Lee made. It still sits on the corner of 3rd and McKeown, an ongoing memory of Lee.

When the coming of the Hermosa Mine was too much for Lee, he and Ann moved east and then west again. Judy and I visited them on the coast of Massachusetts where we stayed in another "home by Lee," an amazing conversion of two pole barns.

Our last visit with Lee and Ann was in September of this year in Port Townsend, Washington. It was the Wooden Boat Show weekend. As a big-time sailor, Lee was in his element. We are so grateful to have spent the time with them both.

Lee followed his own path. Those of us who knew him are fortunate it intersected with ours along the way.



Photo by Lynn Davison

A reader selects a book from the Little Free Library in Patagonia designed and built by Lee Katzenbach.

Finding Fun and Joy in Exercise

By Carrie White

Funny thing about physical activity: as kids we called it “play.” Then we grow up and it’s exercise. And a chore.

So, Christina Wilhelm doesn’t—necessarily—want you to think about ‘Zoom Bachs’ in a quantitative way, the potential to improve your numbers. Rather, focus on the qualitative qualities of fun and joy. And, hey, learning about music from the maestro.

“It’s a community within a community,” said Wilhelm. One that’s been together since August, 2020. Participants may come and go and come back again, a reflection of the area’s winter visitor population. But, other than great music and friends, there are other things Zoom Bachers can count

on. Smiles, being in nature, the courtyard of Patagonia’s Bendorly-Kendall Opera House, moving at their own pace, no choreographed moves, and listening to the likes of Bach, Chopin and Mozart to name a few. What’s not to like?

Zoom Bachs is not unlike the community created at Donna Brollier’s yoga classes held weekly in Patagonia and Sonoita. In these sessions, locals come together looking to restore body mind and body in a safe environment: Pioneer Hall in Sonoita and the Senior Center in Patagonia. The classes draw from classical Hatha and occasionally Kundalini yoga. Modifications are offered.

“When one is not focused on ‘nailing’ a pose—which implies an ego

cling, benefits can grow far beyond the time spent pedaling. Over their years with youth cycling programs, Watts and Broadfoot have consistently seen reduced screen time, improved confidence and social skills, and increased participation in other types of sports and activities among participants and their families.

Biking programs can tie in with schools, too. Patagonia Middle School recently gave the go-ahead for Watts to apply for a grant to bring Riding For Focus, a research-based, 14-lesson program, to the school’s PE classes. If awarded, the grant would include specialized brand Rockhopper bikes, helmets, curriculum materials, and training for two instructors.

Then there are the academic and career benefits that can grow with a student’s interest. Bikes need repair and maintenance, and offer hands-on examples of engineering, industrial design, problem-solving, and practical applications of math and physics. Particularly with rising needs for e-bike service, bike technology is both a growing career path itself, and a doorway to other fields like auto mechanics and electric vehicle (EV) maintenance, avionics, and engineering in general.

There are high school programs that offer further study. Professionally, Watts is Program Director at Project Bike Tech, a national non-profit that developed an accredited curriculum

driven practice—we open the space for joy and acceptance,” Brollier said. “Therein lies the beauty and fun of a heartfelt yoga practice.”

A different iteration of “joy” might aptly describe what attracts free-spirited runners to the “triathlon of indulgence,” planned for May 3 in Patagonia. This event, combining beer, tacos and running, is being put on by Soleful Training.

“Things don’t have to be a rigid workout plan,” said Adam Boyd, the founder and CEO of Soleful Training. “Our goal at Soleful Training is to make wellness enjoyable and easy.” Throw into that mix “connection” and “community”.

So, start training now and pick your preference. Participants can choose from one of the following events, all beginning and ending at the Patagonia

Lumber Co. 295 McKeown Avenue.

- Taco Trio: run 3 miles, eat 3 tacos, drink 3 beers (\$90/pp)

- Nacho Average Beer Run: run 5 miles, eat 5 tacos, drink 5 beers (\$100/pp)

- Team Option: 4-member teams will run a total of 12 miles, eat 12 tacos and drink 12 beers (\$360)

Race time will be 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Pre-race activities are scheduled to begin at 5 p.m. on May 2 and include breathwork, cold exposure and stretching. These activities will be held at Terra Sol, 542 Harshaw Ave., Patagonia.

Post-race frivolity, May 3, will include more beer, more tacos, no running and music To learn more/sign up visit runsignup.com/Race/AZ/Patagonia/BeerTacosandMiles

Bikes (Cont.)

ated by biking’s benefits for transportation, independence, and doing things with friends. It’s an important age for developing life-long interest in all kinds of outdoor activities, not just biking.”

With startup funds donated by local supporters of cycling and youth programs, and bikes provided by Bob’s Free Bikes for Kids in Phoenix, Watts and Broadfoot piloted the program with three rides last spring. They rounded up bikes for the riders, packed up snacks, and headed out on Patagonia’s roads and trails. Upon returning to PYEC, they celebrated each successful adventure with a cookout. The program’s bikes are kept at PYEC between rides.

Safety is paramount, of course, and developing riders’ safety awareness and riding skills are key parts of the program. Mountain bikes are best for this age, said Watts, as “they are rugged, responsive, and easiest to control in all conditions.”

Routes are chosen for fun, variety, and moderate challenge that fits riders’ skill levels. They include stops for “sessioning” where they pause for repeat practice going over tricky spots, like rocks, sand, and washes. Watts and Broadfoot saw riders’ confidence and enthusiasm grow with each ride.

Broader benefits

Once youth are introduced to bicy-



Photo by Mary Tolena

Steve Watts (left) and Rob Broadfoot, organizers of the youth cycling program at Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center, display two bikes recently donated and refurbished by Patagonia residents.

called Bike Tech in Schools. The program uses bicycle mechanics to teach Common CORE and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) elements. Students gain skills to work as a professional bicycle mechanic, and get exposed to career possibilities in engineering, fabrication, marketing and more. Watts and Broadfoot hope to bring Project Bike Tech in Schools to Patagonia High School some day.

Next step: PYEC Spring Program

Watts and his buddies from the Prodigal Dog Band recently held a fundraiser at Patagonia Lumber Company which got things rolling to cover two months of insurance.

There is also the challenge of finding suitable bikes in a range of sizes, because accessibility is key to the whole program. Two more bikes were donated to the fall fundraiser by local residents. Patagonia bike mechanic Astral Muench got them refurbished, tuned up, and ready to go, along with five little kids’ bikes from Bob’s Free Bikes to give away for Christmas presents.

Best of all, on December 23, Coleman was notified that PYEC had been awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Community Foundation for Southern

Arizona and the H.S. Lopez Family Foundation. The grant will cover a year of insurance, plus parts and snacks. “Christmas came early!” Steve Watts exclaimed.

Developing a biking ecosystem

“We want to add value to the community based on what the community values,” Watts said. “That includes healthy kids who are engaged and active, and see future career and lifestyle paths for themselves.”

It takes a multi-layer ecosystem to support youth cycling over time. First are the young participants themselves. Next comes the trails and paths to ride on. Bike techs are needed for repairs, and to teach riders basic maintenance steps. Coaches, mentors, influencers and role models spark encouragement and enthusiasm. The community contributes unused bikes to turn into free bikes for kids.

Luckily, all of those things are happening in Patagonia, and will continue to grow with community awareness and support. For more information, or to donate money or a mountain bike to Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center’s Spring Cycling program, contact Steve Watts at stevanup@gmail.com.

Thank You, PRT Donors!!

Local journalism can't exist without reader support.



Winter Exercise Options

By Carrie White

The health benefits of physical activity vary with each individual. It is recommended that you consult with a physician before starting any exercise program. If you know of other group classes that should be included on this list, contact carriewhiteprt@gmail.com.



Photo by Rob Broadfoot

Damian Nunez (left) and Sylas Lattanzio wait while Steve Watts closes a gate on the trail.

***NEW Biking:** Group Ride: 8-9 a.m. Sundays, Gravel Church, 299 McKeown Ave., Patagonia. Contact: Contact: Astral Muench, aastralmuench@proton.me. Benefits: Joint mobility, sleep, weight management, core strength, balance. Cost: Free. Other info: These rides are geared to intermediate and expert rides with gravel and mountain bikes welcome. Mileage is 30-80 miles. Helmets and water are required.

***NEW Bird Walks:** 8-11 a.m. Saturdays through May 31, 150 Blue Haven Road, Patagonia. Contact: Aaron Mrotek, aaron.mrotek@tnc.org. Benefits: Stress management, cardio, immunity, enhanced creativity and focus. Cost \$8, or \$5 for Santa Cruz/Cochise county residents and TNC members. Free for Patagonia/Sonoita/Elgin residents and children under age 17. To sign up visit The Nature Conservancy's Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve website.

Circuit Training: Anytime. Patagonia Public School Campus, 200 Naugle Ave., Patagonia. Benefits: Strength training, weight management. Cost: Free. Other info: 10 strength-training stations engaging all muscles of the body.

Gardening: Sunrise to sundown, seven days a week. Patagonia Community Garden, 4th and Duquesne avenues, Patagonia. Contact: Mary Sky Schoolcraft, maryskyschoolcraft@gmail.com, 520-510-2851. Benefits: Handgrip strength, balance, flexibility, stress management, blood pressure. Cost: \$5

per month/per container (water, compost & tools provided plus assistance from other gardeners). Other info: Volunteers helping with garden tasks always welcome.

Gratitude Drum Circle: 4 -5:30 p.m. Tuesdays. Gazebo, Patagonia Park. Contact: Lori Carroll 520-490-4991 (text please). Benefits: Stress management, blood pressure, motor skills, social-emotional resilience. Cost: Free. Other info: If you have a drum, please bring it and a chair. Some of both available. Beginners welcomed.

Kayaking: Local Yokel Yacht Club: 8 a.m. meet up. Wednesdays beginning in March. Meet at TerraSol, 542 Harshaw Ave., Patagonia. Contact: Astral Muench, aastralmuench@proton.me. Benefits: Cardio, balance, endurance, strength. Cost: Free. Other info: Bring sunglasses, sunscreen, long-sleeve shirt, hat, snacks, water and, or course, a kayak. Kayak donations welcomed.

***NEW Games in the Garden:** Bocce, Croquet, Table Tennis: 3-5 PM Wednesdays (or by appointment), Patagonia Community Garden, 4th and Duquesne avenues, Patagonia. Contacts: David "Zorro" Fain, radarfain@gmail.com (put bocce inquiry in subject line), 928-380-6570. Benefits: Mentally stimulating, decreases stress and depression, low impact, social. Cost: Free.

Holistic Organizational Wellness: On demand. Patagonia. Contact: Adam Boyd 330-221-2014. Website: solefultraining.com. Organizational offerings include the Wim Hof Method, Breathwork, Holistic Resilience and Organization Wellness. Benefits: Stress and inflammation reduction, mental resilience, cardiovascular health and boosted immunity. Cost, depending on service, from \$25 per person for a single breathwork session to \$125 per person for workshops.

Lap Swimming: Spring Season: 10:30-11:30 a.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays tentatively beginning the week of March 17, Patagonia Regional Aquatics Center, 200 Naugle Ave., Patagonia. Contact: patagoniapool1@gmail.com. Benefits: Cardio, endurance, blood pressure, weight management, increased lung capacity, stress management, sleep. Cost: \$5 daily pass (age 18 and up). Free for children, students, veterans and first responders. Summer season hours and season pass information coming soon.

Open Swim: Spring Season: 5-7 PM Wednesdays & 1-3 PM Fridays tentatively beginning the week of March 17, Patagonia Regional Aquatics Center, 200 Naugle Ave., Patagonia. Contact: patagoniapool1@gmail.com. Benefits: The health benefits of open swim depend on how you use your time in the pool. A few lanes for lap swimming will be available. Cost: \$5 daily pass (age 18 and up). Free for children, students,

veterans and first responders. Summer season hours and season pass information coming soon.

Personal Training: Simplify Fitness at the Duquesne House. By appointment. 357 Duquesne Avenue, Patagonia. Contact: Rick T. Jaynes, 310-993-7425. Benefits: Balance, empowerment, sleep, bone health, strength, weight management. Cost: \$50 an hour/private lessons or \$35 for sessions with 2-3 people. Other info: Outdoor garden is used for sessions when weather permits. Coming soon: Pilates.

Tai Chi: 9-10 a.m. Mondays. Gazebo, Patagonia Park. Contact: Molly McClure, 520-591-2422, or Beth Martin, 520-559-1391. Benefits: Balance, flexibility, bone health, stress management. Cost: Free. Other info: This is a wonderful activity for individuals with arthritis. Chair tai chi is also available.

Tennis: Courts open Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays through May 22. From May 23 until the first day of school (July date TBD) courts will be open seven days a week. Patagonia Public Schools campus, 200 W. Naugle Avenue, Patagonia. Contact: Roxanne Skinner, 520-394-3000. Benefits: Cardio, balance, strength, flexibility, bone health. Cost: Free.

Water Aerobics: Spring Season: 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays tentatively beginning the week of March 17, Patagonia Regional Aquatics Center, 200 Naugle Ave., Patagonia. Contact: patagoniapool1@gmail.com. Benefits: Strength, endurance, flexibility, stress management, weight management, blood pressure and social engagement. Cost: \$5 daily pass. Free for veterans and first responders. Summer season hours and season pass information coming soon.

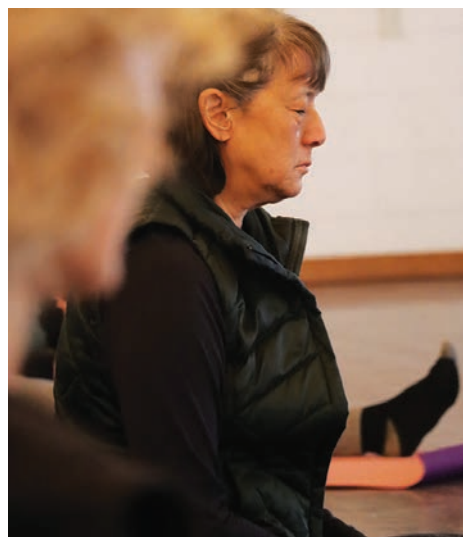


Photo by Carrie White

Valerie Hing in a peaceful pose at Donna Riley Brollier's yoga classes held Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Yoga with Donna (Patagonia): 2:30-3:30 p.m. Tuesday at Patagonia Senior Center, 100 Quiroga Lane, Patagonia. Contact: Donna Riley Brollier, 760-219-2090. Benefits: Stress management, balance, flexibility, range of motion, blood pressure. Cost: \$12/class or 10 sessions for \$100. Other info: Please bring a mat.

Yoga with Donna (Sonoita): 8:30-9:45 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Pioneer Hall, Santa Cruz County Fair & Rodeo Association Fairgrounds, 3142 S. Highway 83, Sonoita. Contact: Donna Riley Brollier, 760-219-2090. Benefits: Stress management, balance, flexibility, range of motion, blood pressure. Cost: \$12/class or 10 sessions for \$100. Other info: Please bring a mat.

***NEW Yoga for Healthy Aging:** 10-11:15 a.m. Saturdays through March, Thurber Hall, 387 McKeown Ave., Patagonia. Contact: Nancy Coyne, 207-751-7109. Benefits: Stress management, balance, flexibility, strength, weight management, blood pressure. Cost: By donation or \$20 per class. Other info: Please bring a mat.



File photo by Carrie White

Zoom Bach group leader Christina Wilhelm describes the mood of the next musical selection.

Zoom Bachs: 9-9:30 a.m. Thursdays through May, 8-8:30 a.m. Thursday June through August. Santa Cruz Foundation for the Performing Arts, 348 Naugle Avenue, Patagonia. Contact: Christina Wilhelm, 617-645-4239. Benefits: Stress management, flexibility, mobility, balance, bone health, blood pressure. Cost: Donations accepted. Other info: In addition to movement, these classes increase access and appreciation of classical music.

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LET'S GO GET STONES

Destination or Journey?



By Keith Krizan

What is more meaningful, the journey or the destination?

On Black Friday, I chose to forego the crowds of shoppers and instead elected to head for the hills. Specifically, Coronado Cave in the National Forest at the south end of the Huachuca Mountains in Cochise County.

The bustle of consumerism has its time and place, but I needed to slide and shuffle my way up a mountainside, where you have to pause and think about what is immediately around you. A close relative had received a bad diagnosis and I was some distance away. Unable to offer anything except moral support, what I wanted was some sun-

shine and exercise therapy.

What is currently the Huachuca Mountains was the floor of a shallow sea during the Paleozoic Era from 541 to 252 million years ago. For millions of years trillions of sea creatures lived and died in this sea, and their calcium carbonate skeletons and shells, or calcite plates, fell in an unceasing rain to settle on the sea bottom. There they underwent lithification, the transformation into rock through compaction, cementation and the seemingly endless passage of time.

The collision of the Farallon Plate with the North American Plate caused this area to rise and dewater. Volcanoes ensued and a mountain building event, known as the Laramide Orogeny, occurred from 80 to 50 million years ago.

Once this limestone seabed was lifted into place, the slightly acidic groundwater could go to work dissolving underground waterway passages and carrying it away to form the calcite deposits called stalactites, from the top, or stalagmites from the bottom, that we can view underground today.

The drive to Coronado Cave travels south through Sierra Vista on Hwy 92, where you make a turn onto South



Photo by Keith Krizan

Audrey Sheffield and Eric Bowling meet up with the author underground in Coronado Cave.

Coronado Memorial Road, just past Kings Ranch.

This is a very pretty slice of Arizona. The BLM lands here are not overgrazed, and they are somehow lush even in the dry yellow hue that they bear through the winter. A long view here yields the US-Mexico border wall. From this distance it looks like the teeth of a sinuous brown zipper, stand-

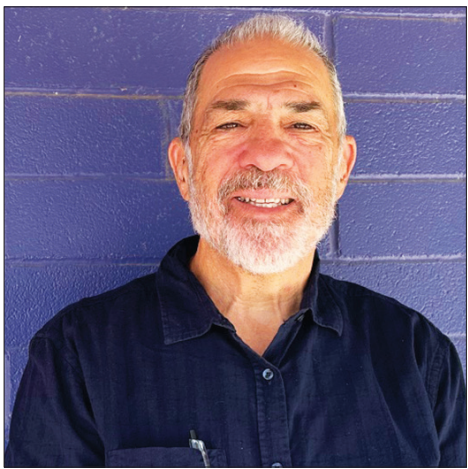
ing up on end, snaking its way through the valley between the Huachuca Mountains of the US and the Sierra de San Jose Mountains of Mexico.

In the National Forest there are a few cars in the parking pull-off for Coronado Cave. I grab gloves, flashlights, water, and a walking stick and

See Journey, p.17

STARSTRUCK

Henrietta Leavitt's Cepheid Stars



By Harold Meckler

I have to stop taking stuff for granted. At a recent star party, I was asked how it was first determined that what looked like one of the many nebulae within the Milky Way Galaxy was actually something much, much farther away. How did it come to be known as the Andromeda Galaxy? I gave a mumbling answer that satisfied neither myself nor the questioner. In my laziness, I've simply always accepted that someone, somehow, just plain figured it out.

Annoyed with myself, that night I went home and looked it up online.

Here's what I found out.

Well over 100 years ago, a group of women—the Harvard Computers—were hired by Edward Pickering, the director of the Harvard College Observatory, to organize and analyze the countless photographs he and his colleagues took of the night sky. One of the women, Henrietta Leavitt, came upon a remarkable discovery in 1912 while studying the characteristics of some very unique stars called Cepheids.

Their name derives from a star in the constellation Cepheus, that was observed to pulsate in a very predictable manner. That star, it was learned—and all others like it—undergoes a period of expansion and contraction of their surface that manifests not just in a change in diameter and temperature but, most significantly, in a marked change in luminosity.

Leavitt realized that there was a direct correlation between the brightness, or magnitude, of Cepheids, their periods of stability and change, and their distance from Earth. The equation she developed—the Period-Luminosity Relation—was used some years later by Edwin Hubble to prove that ours was not the only galaxy.

It was Hubble who calculated that Andromeda was too far out in space to be part of the Milky Way. That quickly led astronomers to understand that



Courtesy of Wikipedia

A Cepheid variable star

the universe was even more immense than anyone had yet imagined.

Relying on Leavitt's work, Hubble was able to show that the universe itself was increasing in size. Jump forward about another 100 years and astronomers, now standing on both Leavitt's and Hubble's shoulders, proved that the rate of expansion of the universe was actually accelerating over time.

It all began with Henrietta Leavitt, a graduate of Harvard's School for Women (now Radcliffe) who took her first astronomy class as a college senior.

With jobs for women hard to come by, she volunteered at the Harvard Observatory. Only later was she paid for her highly detailed work, earning a whopping \$0.35/hour. She stayed at

See Cepheids, p.15

Glimpses Into Our Past

The Putnams of Sonoita

By Alison Bunting

In 1880 the household of Dr. Charles Putnam and his wife Catherine in Malborough, MA, included five adults and seven children. The adults were the couple's eldest son Herbert (1844-1896), Herbert's wife Julia, their daughter Lelia (1848-1919), and their youngest son, Fred Lincoln. The children were six of Herbert and Julia's children, including their eldest son, Charles Otis. Uncle Fred and nephew Charles were only eight years apart in age and about 1912 both moved to Sonoita to homestead adjacent acreage on today's Curly Horse Road.

Fred Lincoln Putnam (1861-1945) was 51 years old when he moved to Sonoita with his wife Carrie Augusta Hall (1865-1970) and daughter Dorothy Ingraham (1900-1984). Daughter Lelia Isabel (1888-1955) remained in Pasadena with her husband Horace B. Hall.

In Massachusetts, Fred worked on his father's farm and as a teamster. About 1905 the family moved near Carrie's parents in Pasadena, CA, where Fred farmed and Carrie taught piano. Fred's arrival in Sonoita was noted by the local press: "Putnam's brought with them considerable fine stock, and they have...thoroughbred Jersey cows which are beauties. Their

Bronze turkeys and Rhode Island Red chickens are just about the finest that are to be found anywhere. Major Putnam is a man of ideas, and he will prove a factor in development of this great region. He has commenced already agitation of the subject of inauguration of a county fair to be held in this valley every year." [The Oasis, 9/21/1912].

Fred became a noted poultry farmer in the area: "Uncle Fred Putnam, he of the stubby mustache, is shipping quantities of dressed poultry to Nogales these days." [Nogales International, 6/15/1925].

Carrie died in 1920, a few months after their daughter Dorothy's marriage to Lyle Sprung, son of another Curly Horse Rd. homesteader, Herman Sprung. Fred married again sometime before 1930; his second wife Anna was 29 years younger. By 1919 Lelia had followed her family to Arizona where she married Elmer Hoy; they lived near Nogales and Elmer managed the city water plant. Fred died in 1945, age 84.

Charles Otis Putnam (1869-1954), age 43, moved to Sonoita from Massachusetts with his wife Zula Babcock (1873-1924), and son Kenneth (1908-1987). In Massachusetts he was employed at a shoe store and was a competitive bicycle racer. Charles



Photo Courtesy of the Bowman Stradling History Center

Charles O. Putnam (standing) with son Kenneth, 1930s.

raised poultry and cattle and participated actively in the Santa Cruz County Fair for many years: "The poultry exhibit, where Charles Putnam's work in getting together exhibits has provided one of the largest shows of any county fair in the state, occupies the entire second building on the fairgrounds." [Arizona Daily Star, 10/20/1935]. He had grazing leases with close neighbors, such as Irvin Douglas. He also invested in oil and gas exploration and entered into a lease agreement with the Arizona Pacific Exploration Company for exploratory drilling on his property.

Zula was only 50 when she died of

breast cancer in 1924; Charles never remarried. Kenneth helped on his father's ranch and during the Great Depression worked for the Civilian Conservation Corps. He was also a lookout on Mt. Wrightson in the Santa Rita Mountains, where he worked with his cousin Dorothy's husband, Lyle Sprung. He married Gladys Whitehouse Lewis in 1936, and they had one son, Charles Kenneth, born in 1938. By 1950 Charles Otis was living with Kenneth and his family on a ranch along Highway 82. He died in 1954, age 85.

Alison Bunting can be contacted at alisbunting@gmail.com.

Cepheids (Cont.)

the observatory for 30 years, passing away at the age of 53 in 1921.

Sadly, Leavitt died before she and everyone else realized just how important her discovery and equation were to the field of astronomy. Today, she is revered.

As for Leavitt's Cepheid stars, there are quite a few. Perhaps, the most well-known is Polaris, the North Star. Like all Cepheids, it is massive and very bright, approximately 2,500 times brighter than the Sun. It marks the end of the handle of Little Dipper and always points the way north because it is positioned over the North Pole. Located about 450 light years away, Polaris is part of a triple star system, one of three stars forever bound together. Unfortunately, even though it grows more luminous over its four-day period, the change is still too slight to be seen with the naked eye.

I've never given Polaris much thought, other than using it to confirm the direction I was facing. I never knew it was a triple and certainly never knew it was a Cepheid. I also never knew anything about Henrietta Leavitt,

or the other women at the Harvard Observatory who did all of the behind-the-scenes work for the all-male astronomy staff.

It's so easy to take so much for granted, to reap the benefits of someone else's genius, persistence and devotion without ever pondering how an invention or a mathematical formula or even a perfect loaf of Italian bread come to be.

So, to whomever it was that asked me that question about Andromeda—thanks for the push. Thanks for reminding me to be mindful of the people and the histories behind the miracles that become all too commonplace over time. After all, I learned that Henrietta Leavitt is as awe-inspiring as her discovery.

Harold Meckler can be contacted at byaakov54@gmail.com

Bunker (Cont.)

Jones."

When Jones met him, he said he didn't need any more actors but needed someone who could ride. De France said, "Well Mr. Jones, you're in luck because I'm a better rider than I am an actor," and he got the job.

De France went on to have a long career as a movie extra. He worked in over 200 productions, including Little House on the Prairie, Rambo III, and Lethal Weapon, as a horseman and stuntman in various television series, commercials, and even some stage work.

His time spent filming the westerns was the most fun, according to de France. "Playing cowboys and Indians, you're gettin' fed, you don't have to grow up," he said. "I was, I guess, in my fifties before I had to start growin' up and I didn't do a very good job. I'm still workin' on it."

He is passionate about his work as "Library Foreman" and historian and has no intention of slowing up anytime soon, despite his age. He described the challenges of aging, saying that his mind is "like a teenager driving that pickup too fast down the road, but my body is that pickup with the parts falling off."



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Young Filmmakers Shoot Murder Mystery in Patagonia



Photo by Simon Peaslee

Director Oscar Labovich (red shirt) directs cast members (from left) Ted Piper, Bruce O'Brien and Luke Van Buskirk.

By Carrie White

Cadbury Creme Eggs, Les Blank, and a telephone exchange.

What's the connection? "Goodnight, Operator," a movie made locally by two 23-year-old, newly minted graduates of the University of Texas.

Kate Mansberger and Oscar

Labovich, producer and director respectively, spent 14 days, from Oct. 25 to Nov. 10, filming in and around Patagonia. Mansberger hails from Portland, OR, and Labovich from San Francisco, although he's spent time here with grandfather, Quentin Lewton of Sonoma, and uncles, Patagonia residents.

When a location was needed for their mystery/murder movie, what

better place than the Sky Islands? Dramatic landscapes. Crystal clear skies. And near perfect weather –more on this later.

"Goodnight, Operator" is based on an original script upon which the two collaborated. Their seven-member cast included family, friends and a local, Ted Piper, of Patagonia. The budget: \$30,000, raised from family and friends. Mansberger's grandmother, Wendy Benjamin of Queen Creek, stitched the costumes. Her uncle, Rio Rico native Rick Feeny, erected sets and built the switchboard. The '55 Belairs were borrowed. Labovich's sister, Sidney Pippin, plays the lead. Mansberger's cousin, Luke Van Buskirk, is in the cast. All actors performed gratis.

Now to the storyline:

Time: October 1961. Place: a telephone exchange. Protagonist: Barbara Liebowitz, a woman who is as physically closed off at work (one room with a switchboard) as she is in life, polio limiting her mobility. The event in question is the murder of a friend, which she is determined to solve.

To that end, the streets of Patagonia become the backdrop. What cars were parked in and around her friend's house at the time of the killing? What did the neighbors see? Barbara uses cords and switches to do something her legs cannot-track down a murderer.

Eighty minutes later, thanks to the magic of film, the case is solved.

"We're probably the youngest people who know how to use a switchboard," Mansberger chuckled in an interview conducted at a Patagonia eatery.

As director, Labovich borrowed from actors he watched with his father as a boy—Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton and Lon Chaney. And he brings that knowledge, along with his academic experience, to "Goodnight, Operator," especially in tight-action scenes, which a switchboard lends itself to. Shots of hands yanking and plugging are accentuated by lights rigged to that board.

"We planned out everything," said Mansberger. Important for a production with no financial backing from a major studio. And that planning went deep, down to the unexpected.

Josh Kuzo, who was connected to their college program, served as director of photography. "He was a new friend we met through the project," Mansberger said. "It was amazing to work with him and learn from all of the wisdom he has gained."

Also on hand for the shoot was Harrod Blank, son of the late documentary filmmaker Les Blank and also a filmmaker in his own right. Harrod, who lives in Southern Arizona, was connected with Mansberger and Labovich

See Film, p.19

Patagonia fiber internet Ribbon Cutting



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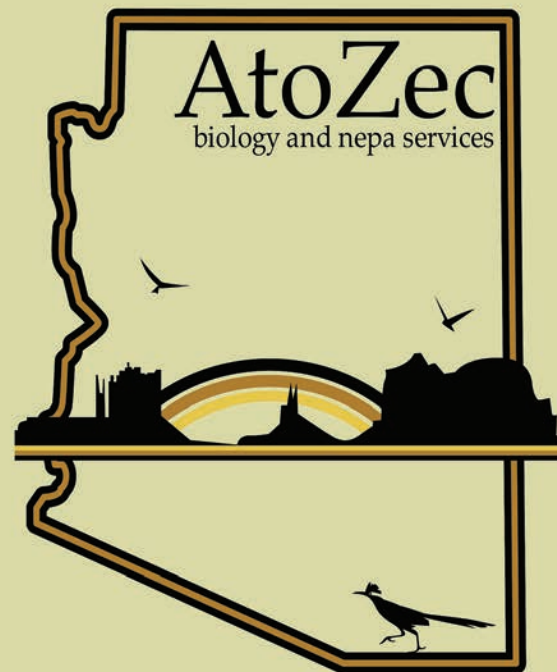
Patagonia Town Park Gazebo
Across from Senior Center 100 Quiroga Ln, Patagonia, AZ

Customer Relationship Specialists will be available at the Cady Hall after the ribbon cutting until 5pm.

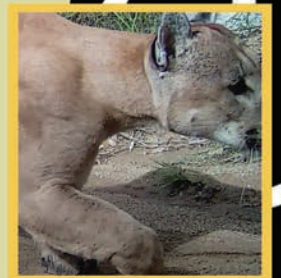


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OUTDOORS WITH DAVE BROWN

Tough Times in Quail Land



Photo by Dave Brown

Jenny, the bird dog, points to a covey of quail.

There is some grumbling amongst the quail hunting fraternity. The thoughts are that this should be a good year for Gambels and scaled quail. However, hunters in S.E. Arizona are not seeing that in the field. The same holds true with Mearns quail and, of course, there are a lot of theories out there on why. Biologically speaking, the stars aligned for what should be a banner year for Gambels and scaled quail and, given the monsoon that we witnessed, a projected recovery on Mearns quail.

What's going on?

Personally, I think quail numbers are better than what's being reported. I have had some good days seeing desert quail and a few decent days on Mearns. I have also seen Mearns coveys outside of their prescribed habitats.

Are the quail numbers really down? Or is it a case of the lack of humidi-

ty causing scenting conditions to be tough, making it at times almost impossible for the dogs to smell and then point birds?

Yesterday we ventured out into an area that has produced lots of quail contacts this season. This spot is home to numerous Gambels and scaled quail coveys with a few Mearns coveys thrown in.

The coveys ran up and over the ridges with Andy, myself and dogs in hot pursuit. Andy got a few shots off, but for the most part the quail won as the dogs were unable to stay connected and relocate with the running coveys.

Time will tell, as each day we get closer to rain. Here's hoping that when that happens we all have great days afield and the cloud of dust that looms over top of our bird dogs goes away. In the meantime, keep at it. After all, it's hunting and nothing is guaranteed.

Journey (Cont.)

set out. It is a slow go. The trail is only a half-mile long but it gains 500 feet in elevation.

My first encounter on the trail is with John and Lois Chapman who are descending the trail. They had already hiked up to the opening with their children and grandchildren, but Lois has decided not to enter the cave today.

They have been to this cave many times. John describes the easy walk through the cavern once you scramble down the first 50 feet of slide rock that gets you inside a high ceilinged room. From there, a series of narrow passages lead to other high-roofed, wide rooms that have stalactites and stalagmites.

I ask Lois, who grew up near Bisbee, if she was aware of there having been a zoo on Double Adobe Road east of town. She confirms that is true, and she recalls the time that zoo's monkeys escaped to her childhood home and the ruckus that followed in their recapture and return.

My next encounter is with a group that includes some young kids. The first one is a boy who looks to be 8 or 9 years old. He has the look on his face of someone who has just hit a hardball a long distance and is rounding third base and heading for home. His eyes meet with mine and he proudly declares that he has been up to the cave, down to the floor and all the way to the end and back.

I reach the cave entrance, survey the jumble of rocks, and proceed in. Here it is all about controlled contortion. Lift a leg. Get a grip. Shift that weight from one butt cheek to the other. Slide a little. Find a foothold and do it all again.

I peer down to the cave floor,

beyond the jumble, and I see a couple wearing helmets with miner's lights on. I shout my hello and they return my gesture with one of their own. They swing their lights my way to ease my passage down to them.

Eric Bowling is a design technician who works for an engineering company. He is from Douglas. His girlfriend is Audrey Sheffield, a second year student at the U of A working towards a Bachelor of Science degree in applied geology.

Eric's first time underground was with Audrey at Kartchner Cavern. Audrey's first time underground was at Peppersauce Cave in the Santa Catalina Mountains when she was 11 years old. That adventure sparked a lifelong interest in geology and rocks.

Audrey does the prep work for their outings on Mindat and Google Earth. Eric packs the equipment he feels is necessary.

We trade the names of some places to explore and then I push on. I go from one large room to a narrow passage to another large room with a standing stalagmite. I shine my light on the ceiling and walls. There are many grays but other, more ethereal colors are reflected back at me too. The air is warm and fresh enough, if just a little bit damp.

The afternoon is getting late and I decide not to go to the end. I want to experience the rest of the cave as a walk with somebody else who has never seen it either, so we can both ooh and aah at the same time for the same reason, our expressions of wonder echoing in unison. Besides, I think that I have found what I was looking for. It was the journey.

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

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Check It Out at the Library



Photo by Summer Smith

Cami and Celine Schlappy work on a puzzle at the Patagonia Library.

By Summer Smith

What is the purpose of a library? According to IloveLibraries.org, libraries are community hubs. Connecting people to information and people to people. Patagonia Public Library is more of a heart for this town than a hub, though. It is where you go that everyone knows your name and your dog's, too. It's a place to connect with your community.

Check out our bulletin boards with library and community offerings. You can check your email, read a magazine, join in the latest puzzle, peruse the selection of Friends books and DVDs for sale, skim our new and growing selection of books, or sit quietly in the Southwest room.

Our library staff can offer you book and movie suggestions based on your interests. If we don't have the book, we can order it through our interlibrary loan program. Ask a clerk for more information. Our staff can assist you with technical help on our public computers. We offer fax and copy services. We can help you scan documents to a USB (please bring with you).

We have added new magazines to our collection, available in February. We are building a gameboard section.

These will be available for play in the library beginning in January.

Beginning in the new year the library will be launching a new program series, "Conversations with Living Treasures," which is near and dear to our hearts and we hope yours too. This program will be offered two Saturdays per month. We will showcase individuals or a panel of people who are experts in their field. If you have a great story to share or know of someone who does, we want to hear from you.

Also available in the new year, the library will have available a private room to rent for small meetings by the hour. Fully equipped with wifi, a laptop, a camera and TVs for your meeting's convenience. Call the library for more information.

One final note: If you are having issues with Kanopy, our free video streaming service, please log in, scroll all the way to the bottom of the page and click "Contact." A series of questions will appear. Answer all of them and submit. This will alert Kanopy that something is wrong with their system. Thank you for helping us with this.

Check out our website for all our program offerings at patagoniapubliclibrary.org and like us on Facebook at Patagonia Public Library.

Lobos (Cont.)

see that."

The Lobos return to action Thursday, Jan. 9, at San Simon. Their next home game is Friday, Jan. 17 vs. Baboquivari. They have 12 games remaining in the regular season, six of those at home, and Porter expects they'll need seven or eight more wins to reach the state tournament.

"It's probably going to take 11 or 12

wins to qualify for state, so we need to put together some victories," he said.

The Patagonia girls team will be looking to get healthy and gain some needed experience when it returns from the break. A young roster (only one senior), a lack of depth, and an unfortunate run of injuries have contributed to a rough start for the Lobos, who fell to 1-5 on the season after a 48-19 loss to Valley Union to close out their December schedule.

What Is That??

Curios From the Patagonia Museum



Photo by Linda Shore

New Era Rope Machine c 1907.

By Tom Shore

The New Era Rope Machine was patented on Nov. 12, 1907, by Draper-Carlisle-Johnson Co., Salt Lake City. It braided three strands of twine into a rope by cranking and pressure.

This unit was donated to the Museum as part of the Schupp family collection, but we're willing to bet you might find a working model still in use on some old homesteads in our area.

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- Bird Cleaning
- Police Dog Demo
- Falconry

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****No Fee/All Ages Welcome****



Location: Las Cienegas National Conservation Area, Empire Ranch/Airfield Site (north of Sonoita, AZ)

Time/Date: Saturday, March 1, 2025 (8:00am - 1:00pm)

For additional info contact:

Tony Valentino | 520-465-6569 | avalen18@aol.com
Zack May | 520-301-8135 | zmay@comcast.net

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LITTER IS PREVENTABLE!

PARA Claims Watershed Protections Victory

PARA News Release

In a victory for the Sonoita Creek watershed and all who depend on it, the AZ Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) has agreed to strengthen long-overdue protections for Upper Harshaw Creek, Alum Gulch and Three R Canyon.

ADEQ has agreed to update Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) surface water protections for these key waterways, as required by the Clean Water

Act. The TMDLs reflect the maximum amount of a pollutant a body of water can receive and still safely meet water quality standards, according to the EPA.

The state hasn't updated TMDLs for Harshaw Creek, Alum Gulch, and 3R Canyon for more than 20 years. PARA successfully advocated that the state's failure to identify and track surface water pollutants was in violation of Arizona State Statute 49-234(J), which states: "the department shall review

the status of the protected surface water at least once every five years to determine if compliance with applicable surface water quality standards has been achieved."

"PARA and our partners are delighted with this hard-fought development," said PARA Mission Coordinator Carolyn Shafer. "It will provide scientific data on the health of our waterways so that the water can be protected to the fullest extent of the law from proposed discharges by South32."

The Australian mining company estimates it will treat and discharge up to

6.48 millions gallons a day, not including runoff from tailings facilities.

For years, PARA and partner organizations have been demanding updated TMDLs. Many of our partner organizations (Friends of Sonoita Creek, Friends of Santa Cruz River, Sky Island Alliance, Tucson Bird Alliance, Borderlands Restoration Network and The Nature Conservancy) have been actively monitoring the quality and quantity of our waters. All are eager to work with the ADEQ environmental science specialists on these long-overdue protections.

Film (Cont.)

through a family friend, and ended up making a cameo in the film. "A lot of productions have some interesting person" who makes a cameo, Labovich said.

Harrod also generously offered the use of his camera but Mansberger and Labovich declined, preferring to use their own equipment to make the

16mm film.

Film editing should be done by late February. Sound work by late April. Which means the movie will be rolled out in May or June. Then comes submission to film festivals. And hopefully, viewings on areas screens—Benson, Patagonia and Cochise. Also, The Loft in Tucson.

Back to the weather and Cadbury

Creme Eggs. Being on a tight budget means limiting takes and days spent on location. On the first day of production, Labovich ate a Cadbury Creme Egg and everything went swimmingly – particularly the weather.

But on the 13th day, Labovich forgot to consume the candy, and let's just say the weather wasn't good. With only one shot needed.

The crew, good sports all, endured the cold and wet, with umbrellas dispatched for human and equipment protection.

And at the end of the day, the film was in the can on time and on budget.

That's a wrap.

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



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Acid mine drainage from historic World's Fair Mine into Alum Gulch.

Photo credit: Robert Gay

PROTECTING OUR WATERWAYS: A Major Win for Sonoita Creek!

PARA has secured long-overdue protections for Upper Harshaw Creek, Alum Gulch, and Three R Canyon. After 20 years without updates, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) has agreed to strengthen pollution safeguards under the Clean Water Act. These new protections will help preserve our water quality and defend against proposed discharges by mining company South32.

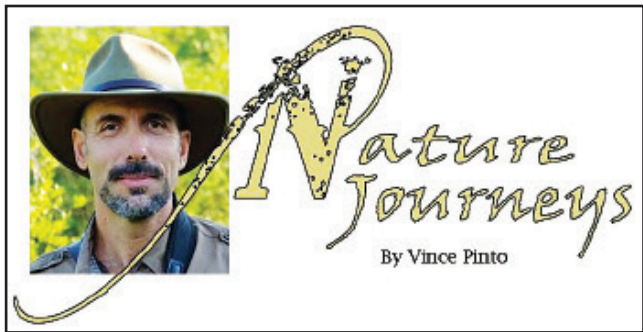
Clean water is vital for our community, wildlife, and future. Together with our partner organizations, PARA is committed to keeping our waterways healthy and safe.

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January Winter Wonders

January has arrived and with it potentially frigid temperatures—at least by local standards. Whether the coldest month on average in the Sky Islands lives up to its billing or instead continues the balmy, La Nina-driven trend witnessed in December is anyone's guess. Regardless, many of our iconic, heat-loving Madrean species are generally nowhere to be found during the biodiversity nadir of January. Still, even the seemingly slim pickings of winter can provide a memorable feast for the curious naturalist.

Venture to the proper habitat and you may even find a few wildflowers adorning the landscape. I'm not talking about our mercurial spring blooms, but rather several species of shrubs that throw all caution to the wind by producing flowers in the dead of winter. You can find two of them at Patagonia Lake, as well as along Sonoita Creek.

The flashier of the two is *Barkleyanthus salicifolius*, a member of the aster family with no widely accepted common name. Look for it in riparian areas fringing both the lake and the stream. You can distinguish it from its look-alike cousin, seepwillow, by the fact that *Barkleyanthus* has at least yellow flower buds or even a few blooms this month.

The main flowering period for the species is from January through March. During this time, seemingly by magic, a good handful of butterfly species emerge to partake in the nectar at this winter-flowering shrub. Some of the same lepidopterans also visit the rather mundane-looking flowers of arroyo willow, which often grows near *Barkleyanthus*. Both

species, along with their attendant butterflies, add beauty and vitality to an otherwise somewhat denuded winter landscape.

Not to be outdone, the local birding scene is still hopping in January, despite the absence of many neotropical migrants. Sparrows are among the groups of birds whose ranks swell in winter, in terms of the number of species as well as sheer volume. Visiting a grassland such as the San Rafael or those at Las Cienegas can net you a slew of species, some resident, others merely wintering here.

If you have never sorted through various types of sparrows, you may well pass them all off as "LBJ's" or "little brown jobs." This would be a shame since a careful study of them will reveal many differences in appearance, behavior and choice of habitat.

Some, such as our wintering white-crowned sparrows may well have migrated here from the Arctic. Others, including our handsome black-throated sparrows inhabit our local arid habitats year-round.

Enjoy them all, keeping in mind that the Sky Islands harbor more species of sparrows than any place on Earth—over 30 types. Add a few winter rarities—such as the red-throated loon



Photo by Vince Pinto

The Arizona gray squirrel is more retiring than its cousin the eastern gray squirrel.

at the lake and rufous-backed robins in local woodlands—and you begin to fathom the joys of cold-weather bird-watching.

Finally, we shine the spotlight on mammals. January is a stellar month for observing some species that become far harder to find once the vegetation leafs out. Watch for Arizona gray squirrels in winter as they seek sustenance in both riparian and Madrean evergreen woodlands. Whether they are retrieving hidden tidbits that they cached during fatter times or gleaning other wild calories, these handsome rodents generally are quiet and retiring. This stands in stark contrast to their close cousins, the eastern gray squirrels, who require little provocation to launch themselves up a tree to verbally abuse you for minutes on end.

One hypothesis attempting to explain the lack of such vociferous behavior by Arizona grays is that it might just net them an attack by a vigilant hawk, hence their more retiring nature in a region renowned for its preda-

tors. Fortunate observers may witness pre-courting behavior, with one or more males chasing a female. The real fray ensues in spring, but idling hormones can sometimes make the frisky males jump the gun. Surprisingly, Arizona hosts more tree squirrel species than any other state—four or five in all, depending on which taxonomic authority you cast your lot with.

With the many other winter wonders that are on display in January one need not fret about the general downswing in our biodiversity. Life still thrums here even during our most austere season—a time when each species comes even more into focus in lieu of their warm-weather cohorts. Enjoy!

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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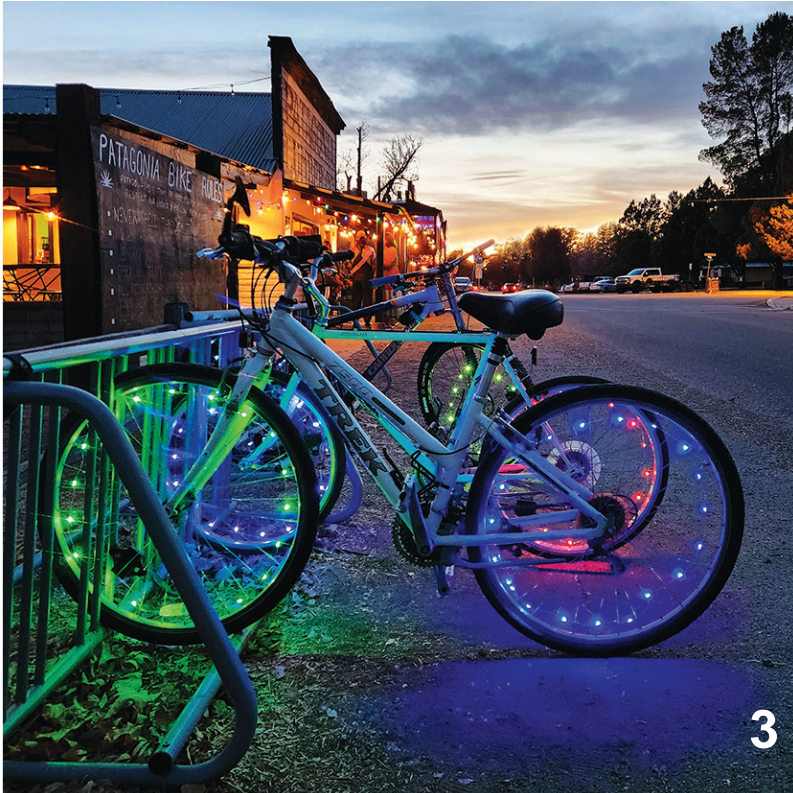
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ROBERT E. KIMBALL

News To Die For
by local author Robert E. Kimball
is available at The Patagonia Trading Post
and at Amazon.com

HOLIDAY SCENES 2024



1. Christina Wilhelm leads the Santa Cruz Singers, Vox Kino, and the Patagonia Minstrels in a holiday concert at the Benderly-Kendall Opera House on Dec. 20.
2. Santa chats with a young boy at Sonoita Small Town Christmas at the Fairgrounds.
3. Decorated bikes are parked outside the Patagonia Lumber Company after the holiday bike parade.
4. A young decorator shows off his gingerbread house.
5. Kids scramble for candy at the dedication to the Virgin of Guadalupe at the Patagonia Community Garden on Dec. 20.
6. Cowboys visit with the Grinch at the Ugly Sweater Community Party at the Sonoita Fairgrounds.
7. Participants display the wreaths that they made at the wreath making workshop at the Patagonia Creative Arts Assn.
8. Lights dance on the outside of a house on Duquesne Ave.

Photos by Marion Vendituoli, Robert Gay, Cassina Farley, Mary McKay and Linda Fong

Gutfahr (Cont.)

199 fraudulent transfers Gutfahr made, 198 came out of a savings account held at Chase Bank that did not hold much of the Fire district's funds.

"The fire district had far less [funds] being held in the account that she was stealing from," Henson said.

In total, Gutfahr stole over \$38 million from the Santa Cruz County bank accounts that held funds belonging to the local districts.

In an Oct. 21, 2024 report, Keith Bierman, the court appointed receiver, estimated that between \$11 and \$13 million of those funds will be recovered through the sale of Gutfahr's 17 real estate properties, vehicles and other personal property. Through the end of 2024, receivership costs were \$478,000, leaving a net recovery, before legal and CPA fees, of between \$10 and \$12 million.

Linscott estimated another \$2 million would be paid to the attorneys and accountants, dropping the estimated net recovery to \$8 million,

which would then be divided equitably between the various entities that had been embezzled.

Linscott added that there was no allocation estimated for financial compensation associated with the County's pending lawsuit against the State Auditor General for that office's failure to discover Gutfahr's embezzlements in its annual audits of the County's finances.

Each district has until Feb. 28 to decide whether to file a "notice of claim" which would preserve their right to sue the County for losses suffered due to Gutfahr's embezzlement.

At its Dec. 16, 2024 meeting, the SEFD board deliberated whether it made sense to incur more expenses by filing the notice of claim. The district has already spent \$3,000 in legal fees as of November, according to Fire Chief Marc Meredith.

"\$3,000 and we're only getting \$7,000?" Board member Ruth Ann LeFebvre said. "Do we want to continue with this?"

"To me the overriding issue is that the Sonoita Elgin Fire District doesn't have that much skin in the game," the SEFD's attorney Thomas Benevidez advised the board. "I know that you're talking about public money and that is all-important, but having lost approximately \$35,000 over a ten-year period, it's hard to justify paying more attorneys' fees to go after that... You'd have to hire a law firm to do litigation, plus you'd have to hire your own expert witnesses. You're talking about a lot of costs to try to pursue a litigation option at this point."

In an interview with the PRT, Patagonia Schools Supt. Kenny Hayes said that the schools would not be filing a notice of claim on the advice of their attorneys.

Sonoita School District Supt. Dan Erickson told the PRT in a Dec. 29, 2024 email that a decision had not been finalized about whether the school district would file a notice of claim. "Our board is represented by counsel that is working on next steps," he wrote.

Courtney Henson, from Snell and Wilmer, the attorneys representing the County, made the case for a Common Interest Agreement between the County and the affected districts, instead of each district pursuing legal action against the County, saying, "The purpose of a common interest agreement is so that we can effectively communicate openly and work to pursue our common interest together in a way that tries to maximize the recovery on behalf of all victims rather than having us try to go each his own way."

At its January board meeting, the SEFD board will make a decision whether to go ahead with filing the notice of claim, and will discuss the cooperative agreement that the County's attorneys have drawn up.

Gutfahr, meanwhile, is scheduled to be sentenced in federal court on Feb. 6. She faces a maximum penalty of ten years in prison for embezzlement, 20 years for money laundering and five years for tax evasion, as well as restitution to identified victims for all losses.

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January Schedule

Jan 5: Cynosure Piano Trio Artists Yue Sun (violin), Charly Akert (cello), and Eduard Zilberkant (piano) come from Fairbanks Alaska to perform Beethoven's Piano trio in D major Opus 70 #1 and Tchaikovsky's Piano Trio in A minor Opus 50

Jan 19: Ear Palace Trio We are pleased to present Sara Fraker, oboist, Cassandra Bendickson, bassoonist and Mari Tomizuka, pianist to the Benderly-Kendall Opera House. Program details to follow.

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)

Visit www.scfpapresents.org for more information

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FILMS:

JAN 18, 2pm: "Van Gogh- Poets and Lovers"
\$5 suggested donation

JAN 20 (MLK DAY), 6pm: "Selma"
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Dates and Times Subject to Change
If you would be interested in sponsoring upcoming events, please contact Cassina Farley at 520-394-9369.
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KPUP Broadcast Schedule WINTER 2024-2025

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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/
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