

The Digital Version of the Newspaper From the Valley That Will Spend August Thursday Evenings at Paonia Town Park

Digital Edition
Volume 25 - Number 8-E
August 1, 2022

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Repeal the Paonia Water Tap Moratorium? Darks Skies Lighting Ordinance Adopted Update of Paonia Building Codes Delayed.

By Thomas Wills

Paonia Town Council
July 28, 2022

(Virtual-only meeting due to COVID)
Absent: Trustee Dave Weber.
All others present

The July 28 regular meeting was held virtually only via Zoom, and live on YouTube, reportedly due to a couple of members recovering from a new variant of COVID. At one point there were 49 people on the Zoom meeting.

Several Paonia citizens have expressed concern on the legality of the virtual-only meeting noting that previous Zoom meetings were held while the Town had a declared medical emergency in place due to the pandemic.

Brunners Propose to Repeal the Water Moratorium

Bill and Jen Brunner have submitted a citizens initiative petition that would have the citizens vote on repealing the water tap/system expansion moratorium that was approved by voters in January of 2020. The initiative petition has been approved as far as form and Brunner is awaiting final approval before beginning to gather signatures.

On the day before the January 28 meeting Bill Brunner discussed the initiative and other matters with the Herald. Key takeaways: Brunner is not opposed to a water tap moratorium and in fact thinks it should continue but believes that the Council should write and adopt their own moratorium and enforce it. He feels that the Town has not enforced the moratorium as he wrote it, specially as far as the development of downtown apartments is concerned, although the Town Attorney disagrees.

"I want my name off it," Brunner wrote in a subsequent e-mail. "It's a failure, unfairly used to hammer the hopes and dreams of many while a few get to add load to the water system as they like. It's not the developers' fault. It's the Administration's fault and the Town is no closer to addressing the underlying issues."

Brunner says he is also considering a second citizens initiative

that would repeal the Town's zoning code. He feels that the zoning code also has not been enforced evenly or fairly.

Banner/Flag Policy Draft Presented

Streets Committee chair Thomas Markle and member John Valentine presented the recommendations of the Streets Committees regarding a draft policy regulating banners and flags displayed on public property including the DMEA light poles. The draft policy explains how and when official US and Colorado flags should be displayed and then addresses special flags and banners, the subject of the past controversy:

"1. Any person or organization wishing to display ceremonial, commemorative, or special occasion flags as a street flag shall submit to the town manager:

a. Completed standardized Street Use Form and Petitions for all residents of the affected streets

b. An example or illustration of the proposed display

c. A management plan including dates and times for the placement and removal of the display

d. Proof of a general liability insurance policy in a minimum coverage equal to that specified in Section 24-10-114, C.R.S., which names the Town, its officers, agents and employees as additional insureds for claims arising out of the placement and removal of the display."

Audit Presentation Cancelled

The presentation of the 2021 Town financial audit, originally scheduled for July 20, and scheduled for the regular meeting was cancelled. The Town's auditor firm is Chadwick, Steinkirchner, Davis & Co., P.C. of Denver.

Town to Move Ahead on Hiring New Town Administrator

The Council reviewed an advertisement seeking applications for a new Town Administrator. According to the draft information applications would be accepted through mid-September with an eye

towards conducting interviews, identifying a finalist, and having a new person in Place on the first of the year in 2023.

Present Town Administrator/Clerk, Corinne Ferguson's contract expires at the end of December. After that, she would remain as Town Clerk, a position to which she was appointed until the April 2024 election. Coincidentally, Ferguson's tenure will be as long as those of the two experienced "professional" administrators prior to her service: Ken Knight and Jane Berry. Both left under clouds of controversy.

The free-standing Administrator position will pay \$75,000 to \$80,000 annually (depending on experience) in salary plus about \$20,000 in benefits, etc.

Dark Skies Ordinance Adopted

"AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF PAONIA, COLORADO AMENDING THE PAONIA MUNICIPAL CODE TO WITH THE ADDITION OF CERTAIN SECTIONS TO CHAPTER 16, ARTICLE 7 REGARDING OUTDOOR LIGHTING REGULATIONS" was unanimously adopted by the Council after a public hearing was held to receive final public input regarding the long -in-progress outdoor lighting regulation championed by the Dark Skies Paonia group aimed at reducing unnecessary outdoor lighting and directing needed lighting efficiently downward rather than diffusing in all directions including the night sky.

According to regional Dark Skies advocate Robert Grossman of Ridgway, Paonia now becomes the sixth "Dark Skies" municipality in the State joining Nucla and Ridgway in this region. All public comments were in support of the ordinance.

Updating Town Building Codes

"AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE

Continued on Page 22

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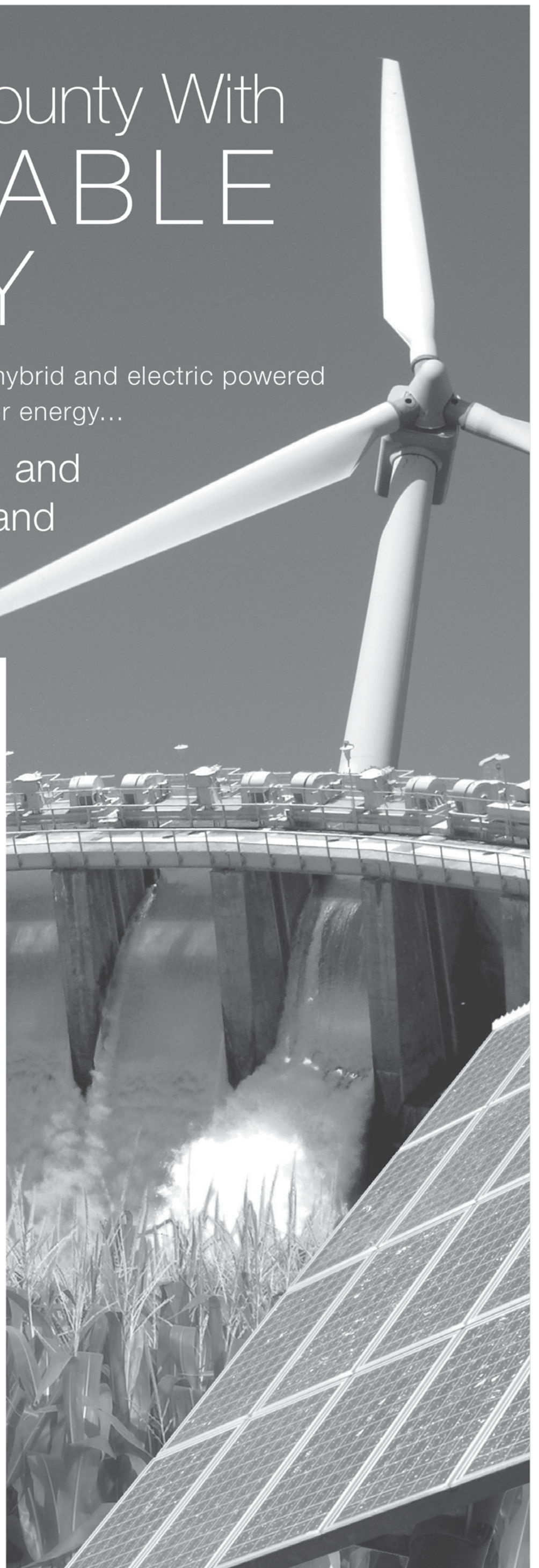
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THE HOTCHKISS PROSPERITY PLAN THREE YEARS LATER

Study Led to More Studies, No Action by Town Yet

Private Owners Take the Lead

By Thomas Wills

In 2018, thanks to representatives from Region 10 (a regional economic development non-profit) who wrote a grant to the State on behalf of the Town, Hotchkiss ended up with a consulting planning firm doing an economic assessment of the town and immediate area. RPI, of Durango, which had also done a new Master Plan for Delta County, began the process in November of 2018 and delivered a document in July of 2019. Although the goals of the assessment were less than clear to some, the result for what was eventually called the Hotchkiss Prosperity Plan was to collect a lot of basic economic data, demographics and facts, and then analyze it all to come up with some directions the Town and business community could take to improve things.

The document identified five areas of focus that were themselves a little fuzzy, some straight-forward and some not:

1. Readiness for Light Manufacturing
2. Center for Visitor Supplies and Services for Recreation, Local Food, and Agricultural/Heritage Outings
3. Readiness and Recruitment of Retail Serving Both Locals and Visitors
4. Downtown Physical Improvements
5. Build Capacity for Entrepreneurial Support and Existing Business Support

To gather data RPI did several things: Conducted a “market assessment” looking at retail business and base industries along with the service area for the town; conducted a mostly in-person survey of some 60 local businesses, and then produced a “work plan” putting forth some suggested actions. Appendixes include a synthesis of several Hotchkiss and County planning documents and a listing and categorization of most of the businesses in the Hotchkiss area.

The market assessment included deciding that the North Fork was the main core market for Hotchkiss but noting that about half of retail sales were to local and regional customers and the other half to visitors from other areas. Census data about population, income ranges, etc., number of local jobs and number of longer distance commuters were examined. For example, only 29 persons who worked in Hotchkiss lived within the town while 290 people who worked in Hotchkiss (schools, etc.) lived outside the town and 210 Hotchkissians commuted elsewhere to work.

The assessment also noted products/services that were not available locally and thus resulted in “leakage” of dollars out of the community.

In the spring of 2018, the Town of Hotchkiss Planning Commission completed a second update of the Hotchkiss Community Master Plan, (begun in 2016-17) adopted it, and the Town Council signed off on the update.

Back to the focus areas and

suggested actions:

Part II: Community Builders Readiness for Light Manufacturing

It was decided after early discussion that the establishment of “Light Manufacturing” would be a nice thing for Hotchkiss. Ideally this was envisioned as a Bridge Street store having retail up front

3. Agriculture, outdoor recreation, and art culture are main drivers in the community and should be expanded and incorporated more in downtown. (How, by whom? Are they really “main” drivers? In the business economy?)

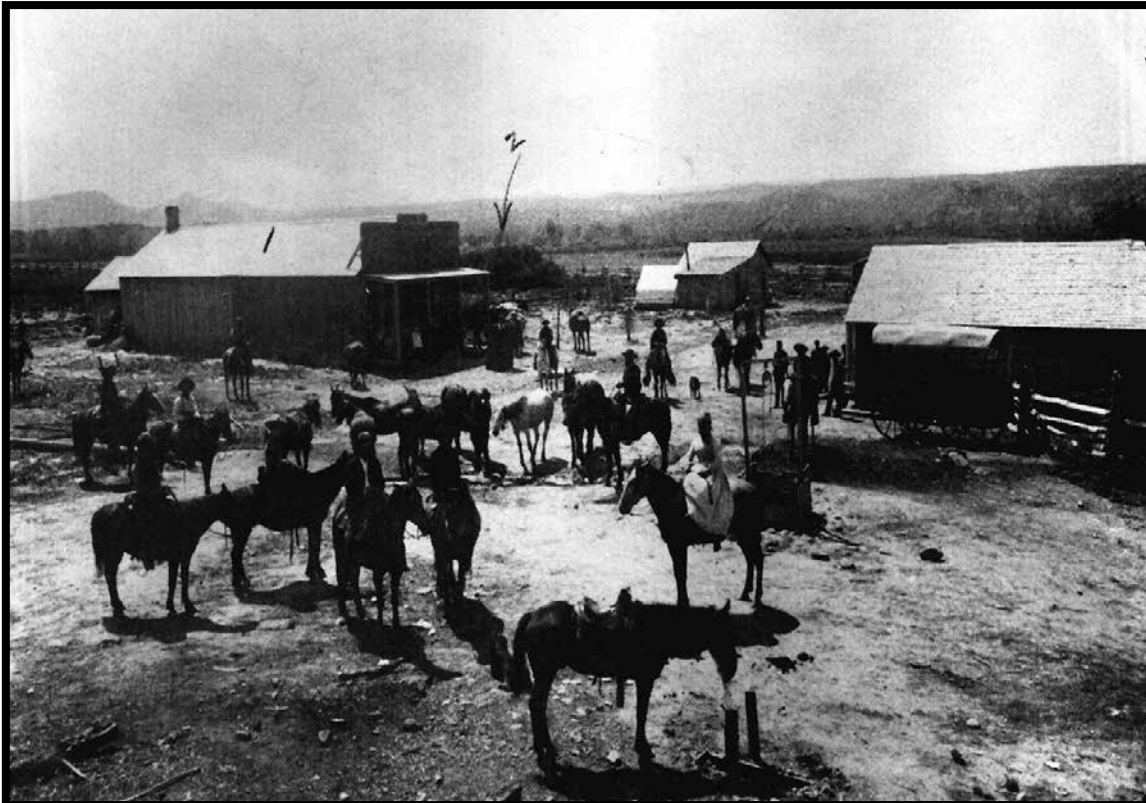
4. Expand availability and affordability of spaces to new and existing businesses. (How, by whom?)

(adding needed/appropriate) signage, increasing public gathering spaces, and façade improvements. (Walkability could be improved through Town projects and implementing existing Sidewalks and Trails Improvement Plan (incorporation of 2022 sidewalks status survey) along with public gathering spaces and signage. Funding to private business for façade improvements?)

6. Capture through traffic on Bridge Street by creating a welcoming downtown environment that offers services for travelers. (EV charging was a step toward this. Signage could also help. A lack of interesting retail and lack of summer shade is an issue.)

7. Make downtown a destination for residents, visitors, and businesses by increasing nightlife activities, dining and drinking establishments, locally made goods, and workforce housing. (Unclear as to the steps in accomplishing each part since much would be dependent upon private enterprise and investment. How to proactively encourage this?)

Despite the certain lack of clarity and specificity pointed towards at future implementation, the Hotchkiss Trustees voted unanimously on January 14, 2021 to adopt the Seven Principles. There was no discussion of what they meant or how to move forward at the time. Rather, the main discussion at the meeting on the item concerned the future sale of the old public works building, something the Town



Downtown Hotchkiss in 1887. Intersection of First and Main Street in the foreground. Ten years later, the business district was in the process of migrating south to Bridge Street beginning with the construction the Hotchkiss Hotel building.

Copy of photo is in the collection of the Hotchkiss Crawford Historical Society.

and some sort of manufacturing in the back. Another idea was “makerspaces” hip-talk for a sort of shared manufacturing facility combined with a business incubator (more hip-talk) that would give new businesses a lower cost place to start out, establish a firm business model, and then head out on their own.

During 2020, a second follow-up study on light industrial maker-space feasibility was conducted by the non-profit consultant Community Builders. The study was eventually given an impressive planning-speak title: “Rethinking Economic Priorities in the Midst of a Global Pandemic.” The second study was also funded by a grant written by Region 10 on behalf of the Town at a cost of \$28,000 received through the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA).

With the arrival of COVID much of the study was done via Internet meetings with some locals, including Mayor pro-tem Mary Hockenbery doing a lot of on-the-ground data gathering.

At the end of the process, all of the surveys, Zoom meetings with Town officials, public input, and more resulted in the writing of “Seven Principles of Hotchkiss.”

The principles appeared to some to pose as many questions as stating any clear goals. Some of the seven “principles” are action statements lacking explanation of how they might be accomplished and others are vague aspirational goals like the first. I have added comment after each.

1. Downtown needs to reflect the community and highlight the character of Hotchkiss. (Define community and character? Is there a consensus?)

2. Increase anchor businesses that attract residents and visitors alike. (How? Town should be proactive in support of Creamery Art Center anchor. Gambles/Ace is the prime commercial anchor or downtown.)

5. Improve downtown by increasing (improving?) walkability, activation of underutilized buildings,

Continued on Page 10

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JULY JOURNAL

County Okayed for CDOT Grant for Hotchkiss to High School Trail

For Hotchkiss the biggest news was the County's announcement that they had received a grant for \$1.415 million from CDOT for the long planned trail from the Fairgrounds to the High School/Crossroads complex. Kudos to our County Commissioner Wendell Koontz, Recreation District, the Nature Connection, Town of Hotchkiss, and everyone who helped push this forward.

According to a County press release, the funding will include a new pedestrian/bike bridge over the river at the Fairgrounds. The new trail will fit nicely with plans for trails at the Fairgrounds and creating a trail connection between that facility, the main town, and Crossroads/North Fork High.

The area to the south of Highway 92 through which the new trail will pass has been identified as a prime future growth area for the Town of Hotchkiss.

While the project had long been in the Master Plan of the Town of Hotchkiss since 2006, and Town had a couple of aborted attempts to begin the project, it took subsequent efforts by the Nature Connection and Recreation District to get the ball seriously rolling. With former Hotchkiss Mayor Wendell Koontz as County Commissioner, the project found a strong advocate and leader at the county level with Koontz taking the ball and carrying it across the finish line.

Other Stuff:

"The Taliban are the only people building back better." Rep Lauren Boebert in a Tweet.

"Man has no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity" Eccl. 3:19

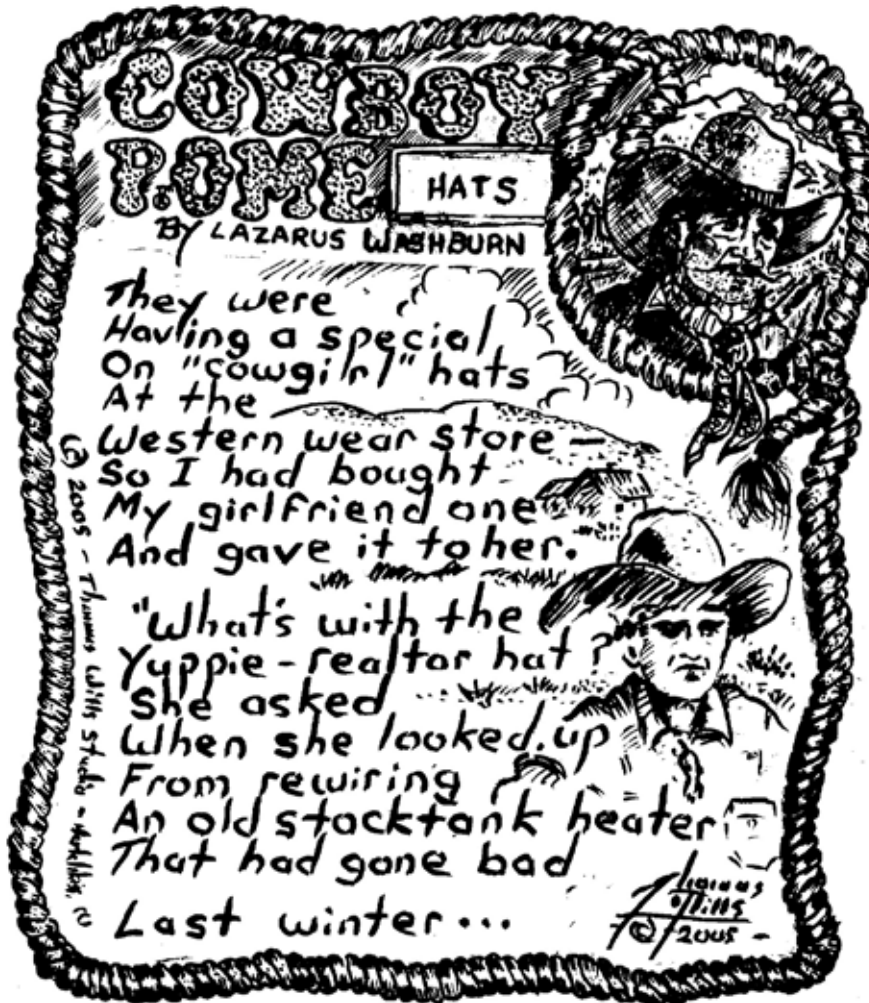
July across the Valley was pretty busy in a lot of quarters. Local farmers were extra-active with irrigation and early harvests as the monsoon rains arrived and didn't provide much in the way of useful moisture, but did cool things down for a few weeks.

Paonia Cherry Days seemed to rebound well after the pandemic challenges of the last two years and the Delta County Fair and Paonia's Pickin' in the Park is coming up in August.

June 28 - Paonia Planning Commission met with County Planner to talk about what the County and Town is

Another Month in the Valley

By Thomas Wills
Publisher - Editor



willing to do as far as regulating lands close to town.

July 1-2 - Sun and clouds producing only light rain in the Valley. Cherry Days kicked off in Paonia with lots of fun stuff.

July 3 - Overcast off and on with a sprinkle of rain here and there. I cleared out a bed of snow pea plants to be replanted in greens, and surprisingly managed another bucket full of rhubarb harvest.

July 4 - The Cherry Days festivities appeared to be back in near full force on the Herald's staff's visit today. The parade was well attended and lively with especially notable appearances by the Crawford Indivisible Water Canaries (promoting water conservation) and the sizable turnout/marching mini-demonstration by the Delta County Democrats who expressed displeasure regarding the recent Supreme Court

reversal of the constitutional right to abortion.

The Republicans float featured a large Boebert banner.

Also, in an indication of "the times they are a changing," three of the four Cherry Day royalty had also appeared at the June 22 Delta County School Board meeting to express displeasure with how LGBTQ students, and students of color, have been harassed and discriminated against in the district and particularly at the present and past North Fork High Schools.

July 5 - A little rain fell in the morning in an apparent continuation of the mid-summer monsoon. Bridge Street reconstruction resumed in Hotchkiss. Humid.

July 6-7 - Hot and humid. High

winds and some sprinkles late in the day. This week has continued a recent trend of receiving a LOT of donated books at the store. Business sale are still down for this time of year due to the construction but it's nice to see new, and longtime, local people finding their way in.

July 8 - More of the same.

July 9 - The heat ramped up a bit more with temperatures in the Valley reaching the high 90s.

July 10 - Sun and heat but then pleasantly overcast with some breezes in the late afternoon and evening. As I was reading an Alice Munro story collection in my backyard garden, I did feel a raindrop or two. Literally. A pot of chili beans in my solar oven managed to barely get cooked to the edible stage before the clouds moved in.

I made my once every two weeks shopping run to City Market for staples and did note some dramatic price increases on some things. The cheap coffee I buy was up 30% from \$5.99 to \$7.99. Canned cat food is also up dramatically. Other things seemed to still be reasonable.

July 11 - I attended the monthly meeting of the Hotchkiss Crawford Historical Society which, under the leadership of Carl Clay, has been steadily raising the Museum's public profile through outreach and collaboration efforts. There was an interesting presentation by Dan Hilleman regarding how the museum's efforts fit into residents developing their own sense of place.

Asbestos removal was underway at the old public works building in Hotchkiss.

Sunny and hot.

July 12 - 13 - Not cooling off as much at night.

July 14 - Both Hotchkiss and Paonia held their regular Town Council meetings. Hotchkiss had a couple of lengthy discussions including placing retail marijuana businesses on the November ballot. Mosquito control was also discussed.

In Paonia much of the meeting was wasted in a discussion of how to review, and add conditions to a development (Hays/Kennedy Building) that had already been approved and mostly completed. The lawyer said move on and plug holes in the code, but some trustees seemed to dwell on retribution and micro-management. Sense sort of prevailed eventually.

July 15 - A nice soaking rain fell for a few minutes in Hotchkiss and other areas of the Valley in the evening. Of more psychological benefit than physical. The heat and winds dry things out very quickly.

July 16 - I spent an inspiring hour with Paonia gallery owner/artist Lucille Lucas who, like a number here, has bounced back and forth between the North Fork and Crested Butte since the 1970s.

I ate the first few cherry tomatoes from my orchard box garden.

July 23- I attended the very interesting History of North Fork Water lecture by Aaron

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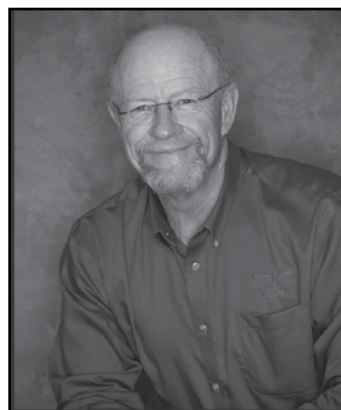
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ON PAGE 19

Hotchkiss Retail Marijuana May be Headed for November Ballot

Town Getting Closer to Offering Old Public Works Building for Sale

Ferguson Resigns from Police Department

By Thomas Wills

Hotchkiss Town Council

July 14, 2022

Present: Mayor Jim Wingfield, mayor pro-tem – Patricia Medina, John Marta, Sven Edstrom, Tricia McFarland, and Patrick Webb. Absent: Custer McLeod. Staff: Town Clerk – Ginger Redden, Deputy Clerk – Karen Laing and Sandy Dix (in training), Police Chief – Scott Green, Public Works Director – Mike Owens, and Town Attorney Bo Nerlin.

Marijuana Petition for Vote Submitted

With the mayor and four of the five trustees present more or less in favor, and Trustee John Marta reluctantly also agreeing after expressing reservations, the Council voted unanimously to take the first steps in placing a citizen-initiated measure on the November ballot that would allow retail recreational and medical marijuana businesses in Hotchkiss in commercial zoning. The Delta County Clerk's elections department will be notified that the Town will probably have a measure on the general election ballot. In the meantime, the petition signatures gathered by former Trustee Mary Hockenberry, mayor pro-tem-Pat Medina and others will be examined for sufficiency by staff. If at least 31 in-town signatures are valid the Council will then vote to approve official ballot language at their August 11 meeting.

Marta expressed concerns that allowing marijuana stores would increase availability of the drug in the community along with negative effects. He acknowledged that many Hotchkiss residents grow their own cannabis and noted the skunky smell in his neighborhood.

Hotchkiss voters defeated a previous commercial marijuana proposal, also submitted by Hockenberry, in 2016 by a relatively narrow 6% margin but approved establishing an additional sales tax on marijuana products in a range of between 2% and 10%. That measure remains in place. This year's proposal pares down the 2016 proposal by leaving out growing and manufacturing cannabis products, focusing only on retail sales. Hockenberry also urged the Council to earmark 50% of the new tax revenue, if the measure passes, to downtown improvement projects.

If everything proceeds and commercial marijuana is approved by voters, Hotchkiss will join Paonia in the North Fork and Cedaredge in Delta County as the third municipality in the county to approve retail recreational marijuana. Paonia now has three cannabis stores open and Cedaredge has two.

The Town will have until June of 2023 to write and adopt regulations for the businesses.

Draft Terms for Sale of Public Works Building Presented

Former mayor Larry Wilkening and former mayor-pro-tem – Mary Hockenberry, acting as a sort of unofficial working group carrying over work done

by the previous Council, presented a draft request for proposals (RFP) regarding the long-planned sale of the old public works building on the northwest corner of Oak and West Bridge Street. The RFP was developed with help from non-profit planning consultants Community Builders. The idea is to favor/encourage purchasers who would develop the property in a way that would benefit downtown and the Town, ideally by generation of new sales tax revenues and creating jobs.

Wilkening noted items that need to be clarified in the RFP by the Council including: setting an asking price, setting timeline for proposals to be received, and deciding whether further remediation (removal/replacement of doors with lead-based paint) should be done. In-progress asbestos removal from the structure was estimated to be complete by July 18.

The Council will consider a final draft of the RFP at their August 11 meeting with the items added. The building could be officially for sale shortly thereafter.

Hotchkiss area resident, Jon Hickam, spoke during the public comments period (after being refused an opportunity to speak during the specific agenda item discussion) saying that he and several others have an interest in purchasing the property. He suggested that any purchasers could deal with the building as is.

Ferguson Resigns From PD, New Officer Sworn In

Things are still in a bit of a flux at the Hotchkiss Police Department. New officer Cody Prentice, fresh out the Delta Police Academy, was sworn in by Chief Scott Green. At the same time, he noted that Neil Ferguson had resigned from the department and he was seeking to hire another new officer. Prentice, a Hotchkiss area native and 2015 HHS graduate, replaced police clerk Joann Katzer (who is back with the Town of Paonia) as the Town's fifth officer.

As of that moment the HPD consisted of Green, veteran officer Brian Berger, and rookies: Prentice and Kaden Heiniger. Prentice and Berger both live in the town with Heiniger close by. Green lives in Crawford.

Green told the Herald during a break in the meeting that he was pleased with the group of officers he has. The Department is busy with planning for the upcoming Delta County Fair.

Mosquito Control Discussion Reveals Lack of Understanding

Trustee Patrick Webb had prepared to come to the meeting to demand that fogging for mosquitos within the Town cease, but after having a talk with the field manager for the North Fork Mosquito Abatement District (NFMAD) his attitude had abated somewhat. Webb related that (even the relatively environmentally friendly) pesticide used by NFMAD for occasional targeted spraying could be dangerous to bees and other pollinating insects but noted that NFMAD tried to

Continued on Page 7

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Paonia Council Resists Following Legal Advice Mountain Harvest Downtown Only?

July 14, 2022

Present: Mayor Mary Bachran, mayor pro-tem – Thomas Markle, John Valentine, Paige Smith, Dave Weber, and Dave Knutson
Absent: Rick Stelter (COVID)

Issues on the agenda for the July 14 regular meeting of the Paonia Town Council included a discussion of how there could be a special review for the apartments being renovated/created in the old Hays Drug and Masons' buildings downtown when the project were administratively approved over a year ago. The council's resistance to accepting legal guidance on the matter may have been a deciding factor in the exit of the new Town Attorney.

The only real issue for the Hays Drug apartments seems to be where residents would park since there are no spaces on the property.

The other looming issue stems from the decision to have the Town Clerk and Town Administrator be two different people rather than continue to have a combined Administrator/ Clerk position. The Council also appears to be poised to want see a new Town Administrator as early as January 2023. Corinne Ferguson, the current Clerk/Administrator was re-appointed to a new two-year term as Town Clerk in June but her Administrator contract expires as of the year's end.

This all poses several questions. 1. Can the Town afford to fund the positions separately at a new increased cost of somewhere in the \$80,000 range? (*Full package for stand-alone Town Administrators in the past have been approximately \$100,000.*) 2. Will a quality Town Administrator candidate be found who will be willing to enter the hornet's nest of political intrigue, lack of decorum, and micro management that the Paonia Council has created/ allowed?

The Council discussed what the goals of Town Administrator/ Clerk Corinne Ferguson should be for the remainder of the year. Her contract expires at the end of December and the trustees have voted to put out a call for applications for a new Administrator.

The Ship (Apartments) That Had Already Sailed

The council voted 3-2-1 (abstention Markle), with Mayor Mary Bachran voting to break a tie, to *not* go through with a previously approved formal Special Review of the Kennedy and Mason's building apartments which were allowed to proceed over a year ago by the Administrator and building official.

Trustee Dave Knutson

noted that the Town Attorney had advised that if the Town attempted a Special Review of the Kennedy or Mason's building resulting in after-the-fact new requirements, it was opening itself to legal liability for damages. He moved that the Council abandon the idea of a formal review and was seconded.

Dave Weber alleged that the workers had dumped toxic asbestos materials into a public dumpster during the building renovation and suggested that the issue could be used in court as a cudgel to defeat a lawsuit. Attorney Jeff Conklin noted that the asbestos issue was not relevant to the Special Review issue and he thought that a judge would agree.

Thomas Markle thought that a Special Review would waste money but thought that the Town should look closely at any issues or mistakes that were made in the initial approval. Perhaps code language needed to be clarified to prevent future misinterpretation?

Paige Smith then reiterated that her main concern in advocating for a Special Review was her opinion that the new apartments should have fallen under "multi-family housing" and that a need for new off-street parking should have been addressed. Administrator Ferguson stated that there was no prohibition in code that keeps people from parking in the Town lot overnight. Trustee Weber claimed that there was "traditionally" such a prohibition. Overnight parking is prohibited on Grand Avenue in the downtown core.

Attorney Conklin advised that if there as the problem with interpretation of the ordinances in a way that Smith (or Markle or Weber) saw it, and the Council agreed, then the codes should be changed to prevent future misunderstanding.

The discussion than wandered and zig and zagged well off topic despite Knutson's, and Thomas Markle's, efforts (in lieu of parliamentary action by the mayor) to bring it back on topic. A motion to call the question failed and the claims and counter claims continued, including from the public. Bill Brunner claimed that allowing the new apartments had skirted a strict interpretation of the water tap moratorium.

Round Two: In an attempt at an end run around the Special Review legal problems, a motion was made by Trustee Weber to deny *occupation* of the Hays apartments until the water tap moratorium was lifted. It was then noted by Ferguson noted the apartment project *did not* require a building permit and thus requires no occupation permit so

Continued on Page 13

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Hochkiss Council Continued from page 6

minimize such impacts by doing needed fogging in the evenings after pollinators have mostly retired for the day, but when mosquitoes are most active.

NFMAD generally relies on an aggressive program of larvaciding with an organic product and working with landowners to eliminate mosquito breeding areas. Fogging is done only when their scientific trapping and testing program reveals either the presence of West Nile virus or an unacceptably high level of adult mosquitoes.

The Town of Hotchkiss is included within the North Fork Mosquito Abatement District (NFMAD) of some 50 square miles and is a property tax funded special district overseen by an elected board. The Town budgets some \$1,500 a year to help pay for extra treatment within the Town. In the past this has included such things as doing a pre-event treatment of the Delta County Fairgrounds area to reduce adult mosquito numbers.

Other Actions and Discussion:

It was noted that Sandy Dix has been hired to take over as Deputy Town Clerk when Karen Laing leaves her post. Ginger Redden continues as Hotchkiss Town Clerk.

Lissa Pabst, whose family owns the old Coyote Drive-In, reported that plans for the property had changed but that she was retaining the liquor license. She said the company name had changed from Blue Spoon to The Barn at Blue Spoon reflecting that she plans to develop an event venue at the Blue Spoon Ranch, which will be included in her State/County liquor license.

Pabst said that plans for the Coyote property are once more up in the air with "nothing formalized." Previously the plan, with a former business partner, was to develop a butcher shop and bar in the old drive-in.

A boundary adjustment between 727 and 735 Aspen Lane was approved, moving an odd piece of property from one parcel to the other and straightening out the dividing property line.

The trustees approved 3% wage raises for the staff contingent upon job review results.

At the urging of Mayor Wingfield, trustees also approved doing research into having a municipal wage study done to determine if Town wages were in line with other comparable municipalities.

Transparency/Public Comment

Mayor Wingfield made a statement at the beginning of the meeting reiterating his unilateral decision to not allow public comment during "every agenda item" but welcoming public comment during the designated public comment period with a five minute per person limit. At the previous meeting Wingfield had refused to recognize the press even to ask a clarifying question about a bid amount that was not stated during discussion.

Wingfield did appear to be willing to allow public comment during the presentation of the Marijuana business petition although there were none. There were two public hearings where public comment is required be heard according to State law and Wingfield complied properly with that requirement.

Transparency. The packet provided to the press contained more than at the previous meeting, when only an agenda was given, but was still incomplete and did not contain such things as the draft RFP for the public works building or any written staff reports.

Analysis: State law does not *require* the Town Council to allow any public comment outside of public hearings although the Colorado Municipal League (CML) does recommend allowing reasonable public comment on items of business of interest to the public within set time limits and rules of decorum.

The current unwritten, unofficial policy instituted by the mayor without Council discussion is problematic in that citizens are unable to comment and contribute possibly vital information to items of business *before* a decision is made on such items. Since many agenda items frequently lack descriptive detail, citizens have no idea whether a before-the-fact comment would be useful until the Council discussion actually takes place and facts are presented. Commenting on items only during a "public comment" period is less than useful in many cases since either a decision has already been made or a discussion explaining an agenda item has not yet taken place.

There is obviously some citizen-friendly middle ground between Wingfield's policy of no comments allowed outside of a set period and the free-for-all that frequently takes place at Paonia Council meetings. Excessive public comment has never been at problem at Hotchkiss Council meetings.

Lunar Roots Apothecary Offers Health Care Alternatives in Hotchkiss

By Thomas Wills

Hotchkiss acupuncturist and herbalist, Amanda Holley, is love with the North Fork Valley. Both her and her husband have roots in the Roaring Fork and she attended college in Gunnison so when came to put down some roots in a place to raise their family the North Fork seemed perfect.

“This is a wonderful place to raise kids!” she says.

Holley, on top of receiving a bachelor’s degree in Fine Arts from Western Colorado University, is a graduate of a comprehensive four-year program at the Colorado School of Chinese Medicine in Denver. She opened a Bridge Street office in Hotchkiss last year and has been grateful at the welcome reception she has received so far. She says that while she holds a diploma in *Oriental Medicine (Traditional Chinese Medicine)*, the courses included studying basic Western medicine as well, with which TCM can be used in a complimentary manner. Her website notes that “TCM offers a holistic approach to primary

healthcare, examining natural patterns and restoring the balance of the body, mind, and spirit.”

Her practice of TCM includes acupuncture, and herbal medicine specializing in Chinese herbs, along with a range of less familiar practices such as fire cupping and mugwort firing. Acupuncture is frequently used in conjunction with Western medicine especially for pain relief and other issues. It can lessen the need for sometimes dangerous pain relieving drugs.

Holley has enjoyed meeting, treating and helping a wide range of patients ranging from cowboys to alternative types of folks. Something that many who come to her have in common is that Western medicine may not have provided needed relief from their problems and they were willing to try something new, or in this case something pretty ancient, 3,000 year old Chinese traditions.

Amanda can be contacted at: lunarrootsapothecary@gmail.com 970-987-2576. The office is located at 285 East Bridge St. next door to Duckworks Auto Parts.

Hotchkiss Chamber Shuffles Board Members & Administrator Two Vacancies Need Volunteers

By Thomas Wills

The past month has seen some changes at the Hotchkiss Community Chamber of Commerce (HCCC). There are two vacancies (and possibly three) on the Chamber Board and the organization is seeking member volunteers who are willing to serve on the seven-member board that oversees Chamber activities and services. Currently the Board meets once a month on the last Thursday of each month at 8:30 a.m. Those interested should contact Board Secretary Tom Wills at: hotchkisschamber@gmail.com or (970) 872-2664 or by submitting a letter of interest to HCCC at P.O. Box 158, Hotchkiss, CO 81419

Executive Director Nathan Sponseller has decided to step back, at least in part, from his duties with the Chamber as of the end of July after some 28 years of service including a long term as President of the Board, before accepting the position as the organization’s first executive director, and generally being core anchor and heavy lifter of the organization. Sponseller and wife Lara are very busy in Crawford expanding their Stone House Inn business with the addition of an adjacent retail tourist focused business.

At the same time, Secretary Tracy Ihnot, representing the Delta County Library District, has also retired from the board after eight years of very active participation. Vice-President Shelly Ware has also exited. This leaves two vacancies (with a possible third) on

the Board at a time when two previous vacancies were just filled in May with the appointment of Kelsi Buhr (Bank of Colorado) and this reporter - Tom Wills (Merchant Herald/Wills Gallery and Books). Wills was appointed as the new Secretary at the June 30 Chamber Board meeting.

The HCCC board currently consists of President -Kim Shay (Ace Gambles), Treasurer-Terry O’Brien, Secretary -Tom Wills, and members Lenore Cambria (North Fork Pool Park and Recreation District) and Kelsi Buhr (Bank of Colorado). Elections for the Board, as well as voting on policy or bylaw changes, will take place at the organization’s annual meeting in November.

At the Board’s June 30 regular meeting held at the Hotchkiss Crawford Historical Museum, one main order of business was shuffling tasks among the remaining board members while moving forward and discussing ongoing items such as the Colorado Grand vintage sports car rally lunch stop in September organized by the Chamber in September. The event is a major fundraiser for the Chamber and the Colorado Grand also makes a major scholarship available to a graduating senior from North Fork High School.

Community volunteers will be needed to help with the event.

The passing of long-time former board member Robbie Winne was sadly reported during the month.



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Salvador Dali Meets Paonia: Lucille Lucas' Back Alley Gallery

International Scope Print Collection in Paonia

By Thomas Wills

There has been a lot of discussion around Paonia concerning the recently renovated Kennedy Building (old Hays Drug), which now features multiple interesting businesses (Cirque, Refinery, etc.) and offices and newly renovated apartments upstairs. Not enough people may know that an internationally acclaimed art print collection is also in the building—Lucille Lucas Fine Art - Back Alley Gallery.

legacy of being the first North American publisher of Salvador Dali lithographs by personal arrangement with Dali himself beginning in 1964, and who became a family friend. Lucille shows me her framed high school graduation picture that bears Dali's signature.

But the collection of prints goes well beyond Dali. Abstract to classical. Woodcuts, etchings, to lithographs.

"We have something for everyone," Lucas says and she pulls out drawer after drawer. "People come and spend hours digging through the drawers."

She considers the collection something of a visual museum of graphics



Lucille Lucas Invites You Into a Back Alley Downtown Photo by Tom Wills

I meet Lucille in the "back alley" entrance to the gallery in the back of the Kennedy building on a sunny Saturday morning and note that the entrance has an uptown urban feel framed by a fire escape and interesting gritty detail. The ambiance echoes the origins of the art print business begun by Lucille's father, Hungarian immigrant, Sidney Z. Lucas who established one of the largest antique print businesses in New York City and possible the nation, The Lucas Gallery.

Lucille Lucas Fine Art carries on that tradition of an international level print gallery, but instead of New York, the business is located in Paonia, Colorado. Inside the gallery space, art, both original, original prints, antique prints, and vintage posters line the walls and seem to be stacked and binned everywhere. Stored in carefully-labeled and categorized flat file drawers are over 150,000 prints of all types and categories. There are antique prints including rare Audubon prints valued in five figures, to contemporary art prints from well-known southwestern artists. A colorful contemporary William Hook print caught my eye immediately. Want something with a Shakespeare theme, birds, dogs, horses, original posters from the early ski industry, or whatever? Lucille probably has it.

What may draw art or history lovers from all over to Paonia, besides just the amazing scope of the collection, is the fact that Lucas carries on the family

from the 1700s to the present and invites people to visit and get immersed in creative history. Lucas, 75, is passionate guide through the details of the collection and is also a natural storyteller. *She had lunch with Dali when she was 15!* And don't be scared off by the prices on the high-end things. Items begin in the \$20 range.

While Lucille no longer does framing herself, she is quick to recommend a new frame shop opening in Paonia, Leann Canty Moore's *Leann's Rendezvous* in downtown Paonia. Moore has recently moved her business from Ridgway to Paonia. Buy a great print and have a great local framer make it perfect for your space.

Lucille may be familiar to many in the North Fork since she was a local pastel artist and printmaker and operated a frame shop and gallery in Hotchkiss in the 1990s before opening Lucille Lucas Gallery and Old Print Center in Crested Butte. Actually, that was a sort of reopening since she had had a previous gallery in the resort town from 1978-82 having moved west to Crested Butte in 1971. Now she is back in the Valley.

If you are local, Lucille encourages you to drop by or make an appointment. If you read this in our e-edition from far away but with plans to visit, well here is another reason to come to the Valley. Dip a toe in by visiting her on-line and LucilleLucasGallery.com. Her regular hours are 11:30 -5 Thursday thru Saturday. 970- 275-3770.



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Series of Hotchkiss Plans Await Action - Continued from Page 4

did have some control over. The Mayor (Larry Wilkening 2018-2022) suggested that the Town could use price flexibility as a way to reward proposals that would result in something related to economic revitalization. The thought was that the Town would prefer a new owner who would use the building for something that at least in part would generate retail sales tax and ideally also result in new local jobs.

A year later the building is still in Town hands, empty, and in roughly the same condition. 2022 will probably see Town try to creatively unload the building following \$11,000 worth of asbestos remediation work that was contracted out as of June 2022.

The Town Council will consider a request for proposals (RFP) from prospective purchasers at their August 11 regular meeting. (See story on page 5)

Part III: University of Colorado (Denver Campus) University Technical Assistance (UTA)

Pretty Pictures: Finally, in a project that cost the Town about two thousand dollars in grant match money, architectural students from the University of Colorado's Denver campus finished up what is essentially an illustrated idea document on theoretical improvements that could be made in downtown Hotchkiss, both to public spaces and to the facades of existing commercial buildings. Since the work was done during the COVID pandemic the students did not actually visit Hotchkiss but relied on the Town to supply photographs and maps to work from. Mayor pro-tem Mary Hockenbery (who left the Council in April 2022) was instrumental in doing a lot of the heavy lifting during the process both in photography and data collection.

The project focused in the Hotchkiss C-1 - Commercial Core Mixed Use Zone that extends from Oak to Third Street but also including ideas for the previously mentioned old public works building property. The UTA project was largely aspirational since in the end the students' presented visions of possibilities for mostly privately owned properties and structures without any buy-in from the owners. But, during the process one building in the downtown core, identified as needing some work, was purchased by entrepreneur Mike Arbany and a facade renovation was done similar to the suggested one. The structure, a prior quilt shop that was being used for storage for an adjacent business, is now the home of a new art-related shop, Flaming Heart Arts operated by (who else?) Mary Hockenbery. The old Coyote Drive-In property is subject to an in-progress interior renovation, as is the old Tucker's, which will become (and probably is by the time you read this) Black Cat Pizza.

The public works building property: To open, the UTA group stated a goal of: "Our concepts will propose a framework for the Public Works Building to become a symbol for the growth of Downtown Hotchkiss, as well as a local gathering place to celebrate the unique culture of Hotchkiss."

The exterior visual concept UTA came up with for the old public works building is striking and a definite improvement on a stark, deady dull cinder-block structure. The students envision the addition of vertical wood siding in the front, along with banks of windows taking the place of the garage doors. The accompanying text suggests retaining the mural (painted by Tom Wills - this reporter) and having the building containing several creative uses including a restaurant, with an enclosed outdoor

patio, and the remainder being multiple artists' studios. Space for a farmer's/artist's market was suggested.

Facades: General suggestions for improving facades in the plan are not overly ambitious and include historic preservation/renovation of existing architectural detail. Buildings/facades along Bridge Street were divided up into three categories: good architectural character, limited architectural character, and deteriorating architectural character.

In the "good architectural character" category: Hotchkiss Hotel and Creamery Arts Center along with the Coal Train Coffeehouse, the Shadescapes/Taylor Furniture building, and Mike Barber Shop. In limited character category: the old public works building, The Bridge fitness building, and the Hotchkiss Business Center (historic First Nat. Bank). In the deteriorating examples: Bank of the North Fork building (Second and East Bridge),

Fair Building (next to Pat's Bar and Grill) which has been undergoing interior renovation, and the aforementioned old quilt shop building, which has since had the facade redone and an awning added.

Suggested improvements include either removal of paint from masonry (Bank of the North Fork), or painting/repainting in a certain range of colors, restoring siding, adding interesting detail, and adding new lighting fixtures.

Placemaking and Beautification Plan

A 172-page Placemaking and Beautification Plan (plus two additions), finalized in the spring of 2022, is the core of the work done by the UTA group. Generally, it is a survey of the current status of the downtown/highway corridor area that then, like the facade survey, suggests a range of possible improvements. It is intended to give the Town and business community a place to start when considering future improvements.

Something visual to look at.

The document begins with a survey of existing conditions, the details have which have changed somewhat even in the short time during which the plan was being done. Some improvements have happened during the process like tree trimming and street bench installations. The current CDOT Bridge Street reconstruction, which could have included dramatic improvements (i.e., curb extensions etc.) to the downtown streetscape with more aggressive Town/State collaboration, did result in more handicap friendly ramping and street crossings.

Ideas include improvements to the two pocket parks, old east-west alleyways,

that the Town had previous designated as the Bernie Fair Pocket Park (next to Pat's Bar and Grill) and the Julie Littlefield Pocket Park (between

Continued on Page 12

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Riverwalk Yurts Hellman Motor Co Katie Gnauck Red Globe, Inc. Colorado Farm & Food Alliance The Paradise Theatre

Three Women of Anthracite During the Summer After the Virus

By Lazarus A. Washburn Jr.
Anthracite, CO

Edited by Thomas Wills

Pastor Amanda

Oh God, you have cast us off and broken us

You have been angry

Oh, take us back to you again...

Book of Common Prayer

It has been one hell of a two-year period at the Anthracite United Methodist Church but is getting back to near normal. Sort of. Mostly.

Pastor Amanda Susan Water is two years older. Now thirty-five and maybe a little wiser she thinks as she sips iced raspberry tea while sitting at a spool table in the pastorage back yard, laptop open in front of her. A couple pounds heavier too. She nibbles at a raisin oatmeal cookie. Just one. If she wants another she will have to go back in the house and get the step stool to reach the high shelf of the cupboard over the stove. *Looking back* is the theme of a sermon in progress—with a little *temptation* leavened in.

A small, smudged white bird leaves the eaves of the church building to her right, drawing an arc across the newly green lawn and then up and away, under the telephone and electric lines in the alley. Wesley, her surgically adjusted, overweight, orange tomcat, looks up from his nap on the table, makes a few choppy mouth motions in the direction of the departing bird and then lowers his chin back down. Too hot for more.

Amanda writes: *Over one million dead from COVID in just the U.S. Some of those from the town and this valley. Millions more suffered greatly in the hospital, including several of our*

older members. Two of our own from this congregation have died. How do we respond to that as Christians? Have we done enough as a nation, or as a church? As families and individuals? As ethical human beings? Were we unkind at times? Have we sometimes denied the truth for convenience? Looked away as a shadow passed. Could we have done better?

Some days I have thought of this as a sort of a stress test. A global trials of Job. Were we being tested and challenged to see if we could rise to our best selves and put the health and welfare of the least among us above our own discomfort? How did we do? How did I do?

She is thinking about the two elderly members who have died of COVID in the past two years. A half dozen more who spent more than a few days in the hospital from the virus. One is in the Grand Junction St. Mary's right now. Despite this, a few of the congregants, mostly older like most of the victims, have resisted wearing masks and had stubbornly clung to views that the whole thing was blown way out of proportion. Is a Democrat thing. Or, "God loves me more than the person I hardly knew on the ventilator," they seem to be saying.

Amanda Sue wants to shout at and shame the few. Corner them as they walk to their cars. Albert with his mask loose and below his nose. Wake the hell up! God does not save you from your own foolishness. Mary, who survived cancer and should be at home. She keeps the message gentle, but it takes a soul-deep effort.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow—while allowing nasty viruses, or a tumor, from time to time.

On early Monday morning after spending Sunday doing the moderately well-attended services, a potluck and an evening book study group, Amanda's throat feels a little rough. By noon she has a persistent cough.

Phaedra

Phaedra Elkspirit and her housemate of the past two years, Ruth "Rue" Theadey, are in their kitchen making mint chocolate marijuana brownies to "gift" to their mostly elderly Cannabis Care clients. Both being vegans now they are using coconut oil instead of dairy butter, which Rue has finally admitted does an equal to, or better, job of extracting THC from the massive amounts of dried

trim they collect from the cannabis plants that they care for at their client's homes. They have both been tasting the batter along with the crusty edges from the pans of finished product.

Before Rue moved in with Phaedra in 2020 when she was rendered unemployed by the pandemic, she was a vegetarian of the ovo-lacto variety—dairy and eggs. Maybe a little fish. Phaedra's strict veganism, passive-aggressive comments, and just the inconvenience of cooking separate dishes at meals gradually wore Rue down. The brownies are also eggless, which makes them a bit dense and chewy despite the addition of applesauce and whipped tofu.

"Maybe just a touch more mint extract," Phaedra says. The THC level seems about right but there is a faint hint of weediness still present.

"Just a touch," Rue agrees

Continued on Page 12

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BREAK BREAD WITH COMMUNITY

Anthracite Women Continued from page 11

licking batter from her fingers, her eyes gray and wide behind his glasses.

Phaedra has just turned seventy and Rue is only a couple years behind.

The Bongs Away dispensary in Anthracite, still the only one in town due to zoning restrictions, has been back up and running for a year and a half, after being closed for several months in the early days of the pandemic. Phaedra and Rue supply some of their brownies to Jim and Edna's business who pretend officially that they were produced in the dedicated, on premises, commercial kitchen they are licensed for. They in-turn supply the women with quality flower bud but women use extract from home grown trim and pass the bud itself on to their few clients who prefer smoke to the edibles. So everything balances out in Bongs Away's log books and everybody is happy. The clients get the finished product of choice for a reasonable monthly personal services fee, Phaedra and Rue get a steady supply of trim and flower from the plants they care for in the clients' sunrooms and occasional greenhouses, which essentially adds up to a sort of semi-legal distributed grow operation.

"Close to perfect," Phaedra proclaims after the batter is tweaked with more mint and a squirt of rum extract. Anything their clients would call "funny tasting" seems fully masked.

LaPorte

West Elk Bugle editor LaPorte Freeman-Smoot is in her office upstairs over the West Elk County Museum. The Thursday issue of the paper is mostly together in the InDesign template except for a few holes here and there. Ad revenues aren't great but are holding steady. She drops in a couple of small public service announcements from the Health Department. COVID is still here, if a less deadly strain that will still nail you if you have existing health issues. And so on...

To fill one of the larger blank spaces in the template she writes a rah-rah editorial about shopping locally in the midst of high gas prices and rising inflation, carefully giving mentions of local businesses that advertise in the Bugle. Save gas—shop locally. And think of all the time you waste going to Sam's Club in Grand Junction to fill up the freezer with meat that came from God knows where just to save a few dollars. Could be from China. You get what you pay for.

Down at Nash's Mountain Grocery (formerly the Grubstop) all the offered meats come from the locker plant. Local beef, pork and mutton. Goat even. So you are supporting local ranchers and keeping local people employed out there on the land, and in the locker plant, and at the grocery store. What goes around comes around. And when your house catches on fire next winter or you need a fire truck and ambulance, who is gonna come? Somebody from Sam's Club? Not hardly. It is gonna be volunteers that

Continued on Page 19



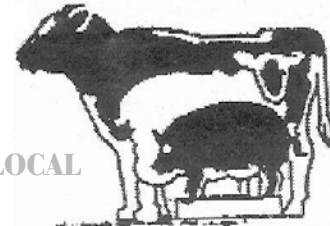
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Hotchkiss Planning: Continued from Page 10

Shadescapes and the old Rexall Drug).

A “Streetscape Package Addition” to the plan includes more ideas for the pocket parks as well as some for the Creamery Arts Center Park, and a privately owned empty lot at the southwest corner of Bridge and Second Street. The addition also presents concepts for gateway arches at the town entrances and “wayfinding” signage. The Town of Paonia, with the help of consultants, has developed a signage plan similar to the UTA suggestions.

The plan discusses at length “placemaking” another common urban planning-speak term defined roughly as creation of areas when people are drawn to congregate and spend time at. This would include the pocket parks or even just a shady bench in a busy area. In many towns and cities, the core downtown can be seen as a unified “place.” The core Main Street area of Grand Junction developed in the 1960’s can be seen as an exception success at this sort of effort as can the more recent efforts in Cedaredge’s downtown.

Funding Sources

As with previous downtown improvement efforts funding is an issue. The Town has traditionally been unwilling, or just non-proactive, about spending funds on major downtown improvement projects. It has funded the annual planting of flowers, local manufacture and placement of creative benches and other standard benches, funding of two locally

made creative bike racks, partial funding of timber planters, and a funding match of an Orton Foundation grant for construction of the Bernie Fair Pocket Park kiosk. Some projects like planters were eventually scaled back due a too-heavy dependence on volunteer maintenance.

The plan lists sources of grants and other funding that may or may not require matching funds from the Town.

Another possible source of reliable ongoing funding for downtown improvements might be if Hotchkiss voters approve retail commercial marijuana stores in Hotchkiss. Mary Hockenbery, the organizer of that initiative effort, is encouraging the Town to earmark 50% of the new revenue to downtown improvement efforts something that may get the plan ideas moving forward. (See story on page 5)

Master Plan Due for Revision

The last update of the Hotchkiss Master Plan began in 2016-17 and was adopted in 2018. The Master Plan mandates that a review and update be done every five years. With the previously highlighted planning documents in hand along with the 2022 status survey of sidewalks, along with data available from the 2020 U.S. Census, the Master Plan revision process should begin soon. Discussion at the Planning Commission and Council has not yet taken place.

Paonia Town Council

Continued from Page 7

the motion would be meaningless and unenforceable. At the end of more circular discussion the motion was tabled until it could be confirmed that no building permit was required. (Note: another case of the ship having already sailed on the issue and this reporter having teethmarks on his arm again.)

The Attorney reiterated that if the Council wished to have a different outcome for a similar project in the future, they needed to make an ordinance adjusting the code to make that happen.

In the end the trustees approved a motion to conduct an investigation of the full narrative regarding the approval of the apartments without a Special Review by the Administrator. The who, what, and when of such an action seemed a bit unclear, but most of the narrative has been publicly presented over the months.

Mountain Harvest Festival – September 23-25th - Grand Avenue Street Closure

A request for a Grand Avenue street closure for the 2022 Mountain Harvest Festival was removed from the agenda at the last moment due to some festival representatives being unavailable. There was some questioning/controversy of the proposed downtown-only venue by those who favored the previous shady Town Park venue for most of the outdoor events.

The Mountain Harvest Festival begun in 2001 by Rick Stockton and Thomas Smith and others primarily as a showcase for local musical talent, has evolved over the years into the

community’s broader, autumn, end of the summer season, festival.

For 2022, Mountain Harvest changes management from the previous Mountain Harvest Creative non-profit to being put on by the North Fork Creative Coalition with a Festival team consisting of Amy DeLuca – Director, Rob Miller – Music Director, Judd Kleinman – Festival Operations, Shawn Larson – Food and Beverage Coordinator, Susie Kaldis – Marketing Coordinator, and Mary George and Kasper Keil (from NFCC Board).

The festival, as proposed, will be held September 23-25 in the downtown core two block of First to Third Streets of Grand Avenue with the street being closed to traffic for portions of the three days including all day (8 a.m. to 10 p.m.) on Saturday. As presented in writing to the Town Council, the event will feature 63 arts and crafts etc. street vendor booths in the 200 block plus food/beverages and farmers’ market in the 100 block of downtown. The entire two blocks of downtown are also the subject of a Special Events liquor license request.

Other Actions or Discussion:

It was mentioned that the consulting cost for the search for a Chief of Police was about \$17,000. An area resident noted that the Chief hired was moved up from within the department.

The Council voted to have a Special Meeting on July 20 at 5 p.m. to review the 2021 Town audit as well as a discussion of moving ahead on advertising for a new Town administrator.

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North Fork Senior Connections

NFSC Welcomes New Program Director

by Laura Lee Yates for North Fork Senior Connections

Call it luck or call it karma: either way, good things **do** happen. North Fork Senior Connections is thrilled to welcome Medaina Ryan as our new program manager.

“Elders are essential stewards of a community,” the Crawford resident states. “My own elders have always played an active role in my life and helped shape my values and pursuits. Their depth of wisdom is invaluable.”

Currently an EMT with the North Fork Ambulance Service, Medaina Ryan brings an extraordinary skill set to the table. Named after a family friend, Medaina grew up on the East Coast, where she pursued degrees in Experiential Education & Comparative Literature & Philosophy. She

completed her Master’s in 2016, addressing the needs of vulnerable populations through social and ecological justice. She served as a program director for at-risk youth, as a wilderness guide in Utah, Montana, and the Adirondacks, has worked in environmental education and recovery communities, as well as community organizing at both the state and national level.

Lured to the North Fork Valley in 2019 by two of her closest friends, Medaina is also passionate about wilderness, local food systems, and sustainability—sound like she’s come to the right place? As an outdoor adventurer and artist, she has a wide array of interests including rockhounding, pickleball, backpacking, swimming, wild crafting, and ceramics. She has recently embarked on the journey of becoming a quilter.

“The North Fork Community is poised to maximize its agency,” Medaina speculates. “We are supported by community leaders, local organizations, and an engaged citizenry dedicated to bettering the lives of our residents and

the region.”

Articulate, dynamic, and solution-oriented, Medaina believes prevention is as critical as intervention. She exudes positive energy coupled with a gift for collaboration. “Working together to improve quality of life through community connections and engagement is quite simply one of my favorite things. We do have the capacity to create lasting positive outcomes for one another.”

North Fork Senior Connections is currently reviewing our Strategic Plan, and it will be Medaina’s responsibility to help manifest

these changes. Forefront in our endeavors is continuing to facilitate meaningful community engagement and personal connection opportunities for our members and volunteers. Likewise, NFSC recognizes that it is important that seniors be able

to age in place as desired while continuing as active participants in life here in the North Fork. To that end, North Fork Volunteers are the heart of NFSC and Medaina looks forward to enabling their good works and community stewarding. We look forward to a better future for all.

North Fork Senior Connections is a 501(c)3 non-profit that enables community collaboration on behalf of its seniors for the shared purpose

of improving lives across generations. NFSC builds social bridges throughout the community by fostering healthy intergenerational responsibility via volunteerism, providing events, programs, and assistance for the Seniors of the North Fork Valley. People interested in becoming members or volunteers are encouraged to call (970) 527-3482 or visit our website: <https://nfseniorconnections.helpfulvillage.com/>



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Back row (Left to Right) Tristen Todd (970)589-3344, Tim Gonzales (970)361-4597, Eli Sawatzky (970)589-2112, Brady Todd (970)361-5154, Liz Heidrick (970)234-5344, Custer McLeod (970)209-0696 **Front Row** (Left to Right) Bree Pearce (970)201-5705, Randia Rule (970)366-0033, Marsha Brezonick (970)361-6305, Betsy Fernandez (970)201-8714, Karri McLeod (970)640-8022 (Not pictured) Paula Olsen (970) 424-2124

Blue Sage Center for the Arts: Sage Alley is the Place to Be • New Art & More

Submitted by the Blue Sage Center for the Arts

It looks like the dog days of summer are here and Friday happy hours at Sage Alley seems to be the spot to cool off, relax, and enjoy some local vibes. This sweet outdoor venue behind the Blue Sage is hosting local musicians on Friday nights from 5-7pm for no cover charge. It feels really good to see longtime friends reconnecting, new comers blending in and the rest of us just chillin'. A circus tent, swamp coolers, and a full bar providing delights from cold brews to chilled margaritas makes taking a break easy. The lineup for the next few weeks: July 29th Sam Heart, August 5th Pam and Dan Music, August 12th Christi Gubser & John Whooley, August 19th John Riger, and August 26th John Hutchison & Justin Hess. Stop by and enjoy some music and libations!

Writers don't forget submissions for Harvest of Voices is August 15th. Email submission to info@bluesage.org. All original works and all topics and genres will be accepted, but bear in mind that the piece needs to be read in 6 minutes or less. This guideline is strictly adhered to. Persons submitting also must be able to read on the evening of Thursday, September 22nd. For more details please go to bluesage.org or call 970-527-7243. The Harvest of Voices event will be held in Sage Alley which has proven to be a magical place for performers and audience alike.

The Sage Gallery hosts "Jill Knutson, Cedar Keshet, & Patti Kaech for the month of August. They will be sharing their joy and love of location through their creativity in three different media. Their opening reception will be on July 29th from 5-7. Stop in to see this unique exhibition!

July 29th actually is a great day to stop by the Blue Sage! Not only do we have Sam Heart out back serenading us at Happy Hour and an amazing opening gallery exhibition, but we also are hosting a jewelry trunk show from 5-8. A plethora of beautiful creations from local artists await!

The Blue Sage is committed to providing engaging cultural experiences to our community. Please consider joining our mailing list or checking out our website to stay up to date on our many classes and events.

We are so grateful to our grantors, our sponsors (especially the **Bross Hotel**), our volunteers (we are always in need of more!), and to you in the community who support our efforts by attending Blue Sage events and supporting the local artists in our gift shop. A great way to help support the Blue Sage is to make a tax deductible donation of your old unwanted car to CARS. (Charitable Adult Rides & Services). For more information on this and anything

else we mentioned please give us a call 970-527-7243, go to bluesage.org, or stop by anytime Tuesday thru Saturday 11 -4.

Thank you and see you at the Sage, where anything can happen!



The Shamanic Arts Center invitation to
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2022

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Creamery Arts Center Farmer's Market Gifts/Art/Classes

By Thomas Wills

Creamery More Accessible as Construction Concludes

With Bridge Street reconstruction pretty much done at the end of July, the Creamery should see a sharp increase in visitors and sales during August and September.

So, come visit the Creamery and make sure to bring your out-of-town guests to get a flavor of the Valley's art scene from the Hotchkiss end of the Valley.

Saturday Farmers Markets Get Seasonally Serious

As summer progresses so does the greater selection of local foods and crafts available at the Creamery Park Saturday Market each week from 10am to 1 pm.

The range of produce available at the market expanded during July although there were still challenges due to the Bridge Street reconstruction. The construction has now pretty much wrapped up allowing for people to stop and shop more easily.

Make sure to pencil in a stop at the Market on Saturdays as produce selections explode.

Teachers Wanted

The Creamery continues to send out a message to all of the teaching artists in the Valley and region. Why not come teach a class at the Creamery and support the Center while making a few bucks? Also, teaching from time to time is a good way to hone one's own skills.

The facility has nice-sized, well equipped upstairs classroom to use and they offer a very good deal. According to manager Rich Powell the Creamery asks for 20% of the teaching fee for the class with artist retaining 80%. Other special arrangement such as a venue rental may also be possible. Call Rich at the Creamery at 970-872-4848 or stop by during regular hours.

Delta Fine Arts Show Scheduled for September Main Hall Exhibition

The Delta Fine Arts Show that usually appears at the Creamery in July of each season has been rescheduled for September. The show always features some of the best of regional artists' work.

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Hotchkiss Crawford Historical Society Museum: Developing a Sense of a Place Includes its History

By Thomas Wills

CSU Professor emeritus, Dan Hilleman, and the members of the Hotchkiss Crawford Historical Society are thinking about the term “a sense of place”.

Everybody has their own definition, and that’s wonderful, and everybody’s right,” Hilleman told those gathered for the monthly member meeting on July 11 at the museum in Hotchkiss. He noted that developing a sense of place, like understanding what the Valley is about, involves connecting the past, present and future. Where we have been, where we are, and where we may be going. The work being done by the HCHS is a key piece of people in the Valley developing a true sense of the place they live.

Hilleman, 86, gave a PowerPoint illustrated lecture that included his long personal history as a teacher and facilitator in Colorado and abroad. He began as a professor of journalism and then evolved into a sort of documentarian/listener and videographer who sought to effectively listen and let people tell their own stories usually as a part of some sort of problem solving or planning effort.

During his career, and well before retiring and moving to Hotchkiss six years ago, Hilleman, made several working forays into the Valley beginning in 1981 and becoming very familiar with the New West issues of the region.

Hilleman pointed out that the future vision of the Historical Society/Museum could be “information seeking” as well as just collection and dissemination.

HCHS board president and museum curator, Carl Clay, is himself a retired teacher and school administrator, as well as a Hotchkiss native, and his ideas echo Hilleman in that he has a vision of the museum as not just a storage space for artifacts and old newspapers, but as “a living institution” that actively reaches out to the community. At the July 11 meeting he pitched the idea of HCHS members coming together for a workshop session to envision the future of the society and museum.

History of North Fork Water Presented

A July 23 Memorial Hall presentation, focusing on the history of water is the North Fork since homestead settlement beginning in 1881, was given by Hotchkiss native and well-known water attorney and expert Aaron Clay. The event was a collaboration between the Hotchkiss Crawford Historical Society and the Delta County Library District summer “Oceans of Possibilities” program.

Aaron Clay, who is the younger brother of HCHS president Carl Clay, began by telling a crowd of about sixty people of the history of the legal regulation of water ownership beginning with the ancient Roman “rule of capture”, which is similar to Colorado Water Law’s “first in time, first in right” basis for establishing senior and junior water rights.

In the early history of “white” settlement in the Valley, the settlers who established the first irrigation ditches and put the water from the river and tributary streams to use, were seen as having “senior”, or the oldest right to that water.

For the first few years arguments about water were apparently few since there was ample water and relatively low numbers of settlers competing for it. By the late 1880’s disagreement had been surfacing frequently enough that the government, and the courts, saw a need to intervene.

Clay noted that the first mass adjudication (by court order) of water rights took place in 1889 when everyone claiming such rights from the North Fork/Smith Fork, and some adjacent areas, were summoned to court to officially establish when and where their water rights had begun. First in time, first in right. The court, with evidence gathered by a “referee” then sorted out the various claims and rendered judgement. Thus, the first rights were defined on legal documents.

Ten years later many more

people, including new farmers and ranchers had moved to the Valley, and made claims on previously unclaimed water resources while sometimes competing for existing ones like the main river. Existing ditches had been expanded and more land was being irrigated, making expanded claims on water beyond the 1889 established rights. In 1901 another mass refereed adjudication before the court took place to bring everyone up to speed on who really had a legal right to what.

Several more early “mutual ditch companies” had been established and many reservoirs constructed to capture high spring runoff volumes. This all further complicated how the legalities of water works.

There was another court water adjudication event in 1903. As time passed the procedure changed from doing a large number of water claims at once to doing them on a case-by-case basis as we do today.

The oldest, most senior, water rights in the Valley date from 1882, the year after non-Indian settlement began.

The most senior water right on the Gunnison River downstream from the Valley, the Redlands Power Canal at Grand Junction dates from 1912 and thus Redlands Power could put a call on rights junior to 1912 if they were not receiving adjusted water volumes. This could result in a reduction of water available to junior users in the Valley beginning with the most junior decrees made after 1912.

Something similar could happen if Colorado fails to deliver a certain percentage of flows to the lower states in the Colorado River basin like Arizona and California. This could happen as Lake Powell and Lake Mead continue to fall as the 22 year (so far) mega-drought, due at least in part to human-caused climate change, continues. Clay noted that 2022 by be the first year that releases from the reservoirs may

not make up from drought-reduced inflows. If this continues for a decade, or more, we will feel the impacts in the Valley beginning with junior water right holders.

Future water history for the region may include water speculators buying up local land with senior water rights with an eye towards selling that water down the river (literally) at a significant profit.

The Valley’s water history continues.

A Railroad Photographer Visits the North Fork in the Age of Steam Trains

By Thomas Wills

Reviewing and commenting on the book and photographs in: *George L. Beam and the Denver and Rio Grande* – by Jackson C. Thode – 1986 – Sundance Publications

Between 1898 and 1934, George Lytle Beam, while working various positions for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, also was the official photographer for the company documenting infrastructure, engines, rolling stock, special events, and most importantly towns and cities served by the rail lines along with related landscapes. This included at least two sessions of photography in the North Fork Valley including panoramic portraits of the town of Hotchkiss in 1925 and Paonia in 1912 and 1925 along with Delta, Olathe, and Montrose. Beam was also present to document such historic regional moments such as the 1916 pre-Blue Mesa dam Ellsworth Kolb boat expedition into the lower Black Canyon, and the September 23, 1909 visit to Montrose of President William Howard Taft who was there to help celebrate the opening of the Gunnison Tunnel, which brought irrigation water from the Gunnison River to the Uncompaghe River basin. Beam also accompanied and photographed a 1905 visit to the Colorado D&RG lines by President Theodore Roosevelt.

The 1986 book of Beam’s photographs was assembled by and with accompanying text including a short biography, by Jackson C. Thode who was a retired chief budget officer for the D&RG and, being a photographer himself, had worked with Beam’s original glass plate negatives for over 25 years. Thode’s book brought the work and name of Beam out of obscurity and revealed his importance as a Colorado historic photographer.

Beam apparently visited the North Fork several times, if not more.

Continued on page 17

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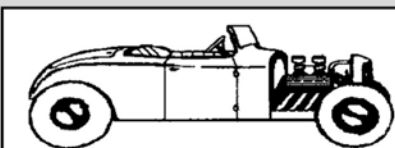
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Western Slope Conservation Center

John Welfelt & Steve Lewis: A Quiet, Steady Kind of Conservation

By Tanya Henderson
Executive Director
Western Slope Conservation Center

“They say the best time to plant a tree is 30 years ago,” says John Welfelt standing in front of a towering row of cottonwoods he planted at just the best time. He had moved to Delta in the 1980s. A few years later he and his friend Steve Lewis bought land. It was in the midst of a recession, and times were hard, but land was available. The friends said to each other, “This is the best time we’ll ever have in our life to be property owners out here,” so they borrowed everything the banks would let them to purchase 160 acres with a couple hearty springs and a mile of Uncompahgre River frontage. And they planted trees.

They had a vision to create not only habitable space for themselves, but for all sorts of creatures furred, feathered and finned. They started by digging ponds to ensure water for fish which was more their speed than putting it toward other beneficial uses



as they both had other full time jobs — jobs that allowed them to start with 20 ponds. Welfelt explained that Lewis had a trackhoe for his orchard, and as a machinist Welfelt could fix it. It was an ideal working partnership for spreading water over the land, rewilding it from its pasture days.

After a few years and more improvements, they put the land into a conservation easement achieving more permanent protection. That could have been the end of major land projects, but their shared love of wild places, and their realization that their land could be made a richer, more diverse habitat which could make up a little for the loss of habitat in other spaces, kept pushing them to do more. They kept finding ways to make their land more productive for conservation. They’ve worked with both North Delta Ditch and Uncompahgre Valley Water Users ditch companies on habitat mitigation projects that have cleared acres of impenetrable Russian olive and brought in over 1,000 native trees and shrubs to add diversity in food resources for birds and other wildlife.

The transformation of the land is more than they could have

imagined at the outset. It has been a 30 year labor of love as they found ways to get work done in the hours off the clock, and between river trips and other outdoor adventures. “Never a moment wasted” was demonstrated by Welfelt as he paused to pull weeds from the restoration rows, saying with a shrug, “You have to be fanatic, I’m busier than I’d like to be, got too many things going on - but it keeps me away from the TV.”

A deep involvement in conservation stemmed from parents nurturing a “get up and go” attitude of adventure and exploration. Places were explored by running rivers, but ideas were explored and nurtured by engaging in early Western Slope Energy Resource Council meetings as the need to hold a line against the whole western slope becoming a national sacrificial zone for energy development became apparent. And so he stays involved and now supports others connecting to the natural world that they care enough about to steward and protect.

He continues to work at his day job, now running Welfelt Fabrications in Delta where his 45+ years of welding experience are put to use on projects for farm and ranch purposes, custom residential projects, and traveling throughout the west to work on power substations. A small part of his business is building custom river raft frames, but not a large part. As much as Welfelt loves the rafting world he admits, “I’d

be sleeping under a bridge if I had to make a living off rafts.” It’s a way to encourage others to find the joy in nature that he has found. One of his custom frames could be yours if you win the Hyside Mini Max being raffled off on August 9th. Which is yet another way he helps support conservation, by making a raft available to WSCC to raffle off. The contribution is two-fold, someone gets a raft and an avenue to explore the rivers around them, and WSCC is able to raise much needed funding to support our work.

John Welfelt and Steve Lewis have accomplished much on the land in 30 years, but they are still looking to the future, still contemplating and working on projects, which are never “done,” but are already so much more than they imagined at the outset. Welfelt is full of encouragement for others to do what they can with the space they have. Not everyone can transform 160 acres rich with water resources, but front yards are a place to start “if everybody does a little it can add up. Every little bit helps when we are losing so much habitat. Grass doesn’t do much, put in a few bushes for the birds.”

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Thursday Lunches Return at Paonia Senior Center:

by Linda McCone
for North Fork Senior Center

Thanks to financial support from Region 10 Area Agency on Aging and the North Fork EMS, seniors can gather weekly at the Paonia Senior Center to enjoy healthy, locally-sourced meals they may not otherwise be able to afford. These nutritious lunches, served every Thursday, are provided by local caterers and restaurateurs in town. To date, seniors have enjoyed meals prepared by Flying Fork Café, Chrys Bailey, A Simple Café, Pam Peterson, The Blended Table, Lea Petmezas, Root & Vine Market and Berg Harvest.

“These lunches are an opportunity to meet people we don’t normally see at the Senior Center,” said Bobbie Selk, the organization’s treasurer. “I like the chance to try meals from restaurants I’ve never been to—now I want to go and sample some of their other dishes.”

In the past the Paonia Senior Center was the main site for ‘Aging Creatively’, a collaborative effort with the Paradise Theater, Elsewhere Studios and North Fork Senior Connections. The seven-month series of weekly programs featured exercise, art projects, game days and the senior movies at the Paradise along with a catered lunch for participants. “Attendees always looked forward to the gourmet meals,” explained Laura

Lee Yates, Program Assistant for North Fork Senior.

When Aging Creatively ended in March, Senior Center board members searched for funding to enable the Thursday lunches to continue. The North Fork EMS provided the first grant as a part of their support for seniors in the Valley, along with a defibrillator installed at the Center and the popular fall prevention exercise S.A.I.L. classes (Stay Active and Independent for Life). Region 10 recently awarded an additional \$2,000 to the Senior Center to continue the Thursday meals, as well as support for additional programs such as Monday morning Koffee Klatch get-togethers and regular art classes. Region 10 also funds the CommUnity Meal Program provided by the Volunteers of America on Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays and making vouchers available for seniors riding on All-Points Transit.

Paonia’s Thursday Lunch program is open to residents in the North Fork Valley who are aged 60 or older. Meals are limited to the first 20 folks to reserve their spot by calling the Senior Center at (970) 527-3435 or emailing scmspaonia@gmail.com. The suggested donation is \$4. If you are interested in helping this program to continue by volunteering to help serve and clean up or by sponsoring a meal for seniors, please contact Linda McCone at the Paonia Senior Center at the above phone or email address.

Local History: George Beam • Continued from page 16

during his career. In the book are three exceptional local photographs including two panoramas of Paonia- one from 1912 and the other from 1925. Both were taken from points above the town on P-Hill or Lamborn Mesa heights, the older shot taken from further east than the later. The text acknowledges that Mt. Lamborn was named for one-time D&RGW vice president, (Robert) H. Lamborn although Thode uses the first name Charles.

Interesting detail from the 1912

photo include on the north side of the street: The Fair Variety Store (Everything Bought and Sold), a small billboard in the lot next door announcing a show by the Beck and Walker Colored Minstrels, the post office on the northwest corner of Bridge and First (diagonally across from the present PO built in 1962, the original two-story First State Bank building, and one block east on the north east corner of Second and Bridge is the then two story Bank of the North Fork building. Both brick bank buildings



Steam locomotive and train at Paonia in about 1911.

Paonia picture shows outhouses in yards and next to the fruit packing sheds along Second Street. They seem to have mostly disappeared by 1925. The 1906 Opera House, an impressive two-story masonry brick structure that is located on the northwest corner of Second and Poplar Streets, was a sort of architectural jewel of the time and is prominent in the photos. The earlier frame, 1890s opera house can still be seen on Grand located roughly where the Town Hall is now.

The two-story old brick Paonia High School can be seen in both pictures with the site being near the river on a line with about Grand Avenue.

The third North Fork specific photograph is of the Bridge Street in Hotchkiss in 1925 looking east showing a dirt street with wide concrete sidewalks with occasional concrete walks crossing the street serving as mud-free crosswalks. The photographer apparently set up his large tripod view camera in the center of the road in front of what is now (2022) Pat’s Bar and Grill. Beam’s photograph was a reference used for the 1994 mural I painted on the east side of the old public works building at Oak and Bridge Street.

Details from the two-page spread

had their second stories removed in the 1960s due to some instability. Commercial buildings still featured retractable canvas awnings and mostly high banks of window in the fronts constructed in the earlier days to let in more natural light.

On the south side there is a Hotchkiss Hotel sign on that building and one can make out the fire bell tower, and shed at its base, where the PO is now (2022), then the two-story original Reich and Sons livery stable that in 1925 had become the Crescent Theater showing movies. There are quite a few cars parked at the sidewalks and two horses and riders can be seen heading east.

Other notable regional photos in the book include several of the early quarry at Marble, and early roads and railroad through Glenwood Canyon as well as shots of Palisade and Grand Junction.

George L. Beam was born on May 18, 1868 at New Paris, Ohio and grew up from age five in Lawrence Kansas. George and his father moved to Denver in 1889 and he began work for the D&RG as an office clerk in 1890. Beam died in 1935 while the era of steam powered locomotives was still its heyday. He was laid to rest back in Lawrence, Kansas.



Paonia Downtown in about 1925. Grand Avenue with present Louie's Pizza building, at Second and Grand, from top right.

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Welcome Summer Visitors to the Valley!

Another Month in the Valley • Continued from page 5

Clay at Memorial Hall this morning.

July 24 - Overcast much of the time but the rumour of rain in the Valley did not materize in any dust-settling way.

July 25 - The CDOT contractor doing the Bridge Street rebuilding in Hotchkiss loaded up the last of the concrete dividers making it easier to cross the street on foot without taking a full block detour.

Business News and Other Rumours

Early in July the **Hotchkiss and Crawford public libraries** reduced their hours to one day (Tuesdays - Crawford and Wednesday - Hotchkiss) per week due to staff shortages. The library district is advertising job openings.

For the historical record, **gasoline prices in the Valley** during July have been hovering at just less than \$5.00 /gal. for regular making it tough on the large number of residents that drive out-of-Valley to work.

In Passing: The Town of Paonia reported that former **longtime Town Administrator and Public Works Director, John Norris**, has died after a long struggle with bone cancer. The affable, very competent, Norris presided over a long period of stability in Town administration. After his retirement, the Town's administrations have struggled with turnover and other issues.

News Department Changes at KVNF – KVNF is seeking a new News Director and was taking applications through the end of July. Present news director, Gavin Dahl, who is moving on to a radio station in Salt Lake City, has raised the bar significantly over his two years

with the station leading the department to winning many statewide news awards and establishing a high level of professionalism. Dahl was based out of the Montrose studio. North Fork based reporter, Kate Redmond, previously left her post in June and will be taking a radio job in the Four Corners area, so you will be hearing some changes all around.

Paonia' Third Street Grill popped up again for a weekend July 22-24. They may be returning for some regular hours. Lots of food choices in P-Town.

Thanks to **Barbara Sibley**, wood media artist and a delightful regional history resource, for sharing a couple issues of the **Saguache Crescent** and some great conversation. The weekly Crescent, in its 141st year, is unique in that it is one of the last papers in the U.S. typeset and printed on old hot lead linotype equipment. The publisher/editor is Dean I. Coombs.

I have a connection to Saguache, being born while my family lived in nearby Villa Grove in the Upper San Luis Valley in the 1950s. Coincidentally, Enos T. Hotchkiss once lived in Saguache (pronounced saw-watch - Spanish phonetic spelling of a Ute name for the nearby mountains) and was a co-founder of the Town, which appears to be creatively lively at the moment.

Enos Hotchkiss worked as the engineer building the road from Saguache to Lake City where he was involved in mining. From there he came to the North Fork in 1881.

Saguache is also well known as the site of the first Alferd Packer murder/cannibalism trial in the 1870's.

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State Climate Plans Miss Greater Warming Impacts in Delta County

What Hazard Mitigation Plans Tell Us About Climate Change

Opinion by Natasha Leger – Executive Director - Citizens for a Healthy Community

Local government and state hazard mitigation plans take climate change into consideration. While the purpose of these plans is mainly to unlock federal dollars for planning and disaster recovery, it's important to think about climate change from a hazard prevention and mitigation perspective. The State of Colorado in the last ten years has experienced a number of *billion-dollar* disaster events—droughts, storms, wildfires, and floods--totaling \$18.6 billion.¹

The Colorado Hazard Mitigation Plan and Colorado Climate Plan assumes an average State warming of 2 degrees Fahrenheit (1.1 degrees Celsius), and 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit (1.4° Celsius), based on a 30-year and 50-year warming model, respectively.²

Here's the problem: The Western Slope has warmed disproportionately. Delta, Mesa, Garfield, and Rio Blanco County saw some of the most extreme warming in the state over a 125-year period, possibly some of the most extreme across the Continental US.³ Delta county has seen winter warming as high as 2.9 degrees Celsius, and Mesa County as high as 3.2 degrees Celsius, with averages of 2.1°C and 2.3°C, respectively.

Now let's do some math. One degree of Celsius warming is the equivalent to 1.8 degrees Fahrenheit. 1.5°C becomes a 2.7°F rise; a 2°C rise is the equivalent of a 3.6°F rise. That means Delta and Mesa County winter warming is 5.2 degrees Fahrenheit and 5.8 degrees Fahrenheit, respectively. The state climate assumptions for the purpose of planning for local impacts and modeling the extent of hazards and economic damage from climate change can be misleading.

What kind of economic damage can we expect from drought, flood, and wildfire in Delta County? The 2018 Delta County Hazard Mitigation Plan projects damage in the range of \$5.4 billion for flood, wildfire and drought. And this doesn't include the human toll and impact of extreme heat on human health. Delta County is one of the most vulnerable populations for extreme heat exposure.

The introductory paragraph to the 2018 Colorado Climate Plan states:

Colorado has warmed substantially in the last 30 years and even more over the last 50 years. Future estimates project temperatures rising an additional 2.5 F to 5 F by 2050, meaning the warmest summers from our past may become the average summers in our future. With increasing temperatures come shifts in snowmelt runoff, water quality concerns, stressed ecosystems and transportation infrastructure, impacts to energy demand; and extreme

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IN HOTCHKISS w/mountain views. 1,340 sq.ft, 2 bedrooms. New paint inside and out; new flooring, electric oven, fridge, dishwasher, a real wood burning stove in the living room. Need only one bedroom? Go back to the den/home office floor plan. Surrounded with big shade trees. #796070 \$249,500 Dave Mitchell 234-4046

CUSTOM WOOD-SIDED HOME in the trees on hill above Crawford overlooking the Town and valley. Well kept/maintained. Lg living and dining rms, lots of cabinets-storage space. Spacious master suite. Lg covered deck. Spectacular mountain/valley views. Attached sunroom/greenhouse and garden areas. #795898 \$399,000 Myles Roberts 234-3391

TIDY TWO-BEDROOM, one-bath home on dead-end of Niagara Ave. in Paonia. Beautifully landscaped w/automatic sprinkler system w/park-like yard. Douglas Fir floors, newer windows and furnace, a small/ stylish kitchen and tiled bathroom. Large storage shed on the alley, all just a short walk into the heart of P-town. #795815 \$335,000 Mike Jackson 234-4427

PAONIA IN HIDDEN VALLEY SUB-DIVISION with a walk-out deck w/views of Mt. Lamborn. Master suite w/walk-in closet. Walk-out covered patio puts you into the middle of the landscaping. The 2-car attached garage in the front has an infrared sauna and the 30'x 40' detached finished garage. Outside is tastefully landscaped. #795732 \$725,000 Dave Mitchell 234-4046

PANORAMIC MOUNTAIN VIEWS from this ten-acre property with privacy and convenient access to Paonia. 250 shares of Fire Mt. Canal and Res. irrigation to farm the gently sloping south-facing fields, and high-fenced orchard area. The 3bed /1bath home has good bones but some deferred maintenance, it's ready for you to make it your own! #795571 \$760,000 Mike Jackson 234-4427

VERY NICE SINGLE-LEVEL NEWER-CONSTRUCTION home in downtown Paonia that is walking/biking distance to downtown. The home and yard were designed for low maintenance, quality living. 2 bed, 2 1/2 baths with spacious rooms, Great Room, large laundry room and an oversized, attached 2 car garage. #795836 \$499,900 Myles Roberts 234-3391

Continued on Page 20

Anthracite:
Continued from Page 12

run and work at local businesses unless those people had to be laid off, or close up shop, and had to go get out-of-town jobs or move to make a living, and the few that are left don't manage to get to your house until it's too late. Too bad. So sad. Don't say I didn't warn you about the dark road you are heading down when you sell out your local businesses for twenty pieces of silver.

LaPorte pauses, runs a hand through her short-cropped silver-white hair. Too blamey? A little hypocritical since she still buys things from WalMart and Amazon, though way less than she used to? Having Bob around has changed her food buying habits? Bob gets a steer each year as part of his pay for feeding cattle and other ranch stuff. That was quite a bit of meat for only two people, filling one whole large chest freezer in the garage. And last summer and this they had a sort of running date on Friday evening to go to the hippie Farmer's Market held in the park behind the Town and County building. With all that and Bob's gardening and the canning they did together, any outside of county buying usually wasn't food.

She softens a couple of adjectives in the editorial and calls it good. More honey, less vinegar.

Pastor Amanda

Amanda uses one of the at-home tests from the federal government that the Health Department has been giving away for free and it turns out she has a case of COVID. Dr. Singh at the hospital/nursing home runs another, better one, that confirms it. They meet outside on a shaded patio.

"Yup," he says. "You got 'er." Singh, after over two decades in Anthracite, has only a trace of a Indian/Pakastani accent remaining and sprinkles his speech with Westernisms: shoot, dang, heck, got yer, and so on.

"Do I get mono-clonal antibodies or something?" Amanda asks.

"Nah," Dr. Singh says. He is a dark-eyed, handsome man of about fifty with full graying black beard and a turban, which Amanda thinks adds a certain measure of gravitas. "Not

necessary. You're young and otherwise healthy. Stay home for a week or so. Don't cough on any old people. Call me if things seem to get worse than a bad flu." He smiles a smile that she can only see in his eyes and laughs, a little hoo-hoo-hoo sound from the back of his throat. He wears a face shield along with the bulky sort of mask that snugly encompasses the borders of his considerable beard.

"Right," Amanda says. The word *unclean* pops into her mind. *Thou art unclean*.

The COVID doesn't progress beyond the mild, if irritating cough, and her feeling a little run down for a couple of days. The timing causes her to miss two Sundays of in-person church and limits her attendance at events over the long. Fourth of July weekend. She breaks quarantine in a limited way when she masks up and watches the parade while trying to stay well away from everyone. She imagines herself carrying a leper's bell.

By the next Sunday, the symptoms have receded other than a drugginess that seems to thinly varnish everything she does. The new tests come back negative on Saturday but she decides to do another You Tube sermon from home. Just to be safe.

Amanda, LaPorte, and Phaedra meet for lunch at the Chicken Abortionist Cafe. The special on the sidewalk chalk board is a Vegan Chicken Fried Steak with mashed potatoes and cream gravy over both, with a mixed green salad from one of the hippie farms. Rhubarb pie.

"How you ladies doing," Lisa Redbird asks pouring out glasses of iced Town water with a slice of lemon and a sprig of mint in each.

"Hotter than hell out there," LaPorte says. "Thank God for swamp coolers."

"Specials all around," Amanda says and locks eyes with LaPorte, daring her to be contrary.

Phaedra laughs a bit loudly and her eyes look a little funny. "Extra mashed on mine with diced raw onion on top," she says.

"Jesus Christ," says Lisa Redbird.

Lazarus A. Washburn Jr. is the fictional manager of the fictional

Singing Angel Ranch in the fictional West Elk County, located roughly halfway between Paonia and Crested Butte, where people have always made things up as they go along. His Anthracite stories (as edited by the semi-fictional Thomas Wills of Hotchkiss) have been appearing in local and regional publications since 1994.

Pickin' in the Paonia Town Park Features Eclectic Talent

By Thomas Wills

Pickin in the Park, presented by Paonia's own Pickin Productions, at Paonia Town Park returns for the 15th annual outing for four Thursday nights in August. So what's Pickin' in the Park if you're new to the Valley? It's a series of free concerts presented on four consecutive Thursday nights at the Paonia Town Park. Again, FREE.

So bring the family, lawn chairs, blankets etc. and maybe some mosquito repellent. Promoter Rob Miller has been absolutely amazing over the run of the yearly event in booking a wide range of national musical talent that has something for nearly everyone. Shows begin with two opening acts, including some local favorites at 6:00 pm.

August 4 – Black Joe Lewis and the Honeybears: openers Linsey Lou, and Paris West

Austin, Texas based, Black Joe Lewis and the Honeybears are a tight, way danceable blues rock/soul band that will have you up and moving.

August 11 – TK and the Holy Know-Nothings with openers: Chatham Rabbits, and Haley Scher and Amy Pexton.

Portland, Oregon based TK (Thomas Kingman) and the Hold Know-Nothings sometimes sound a lot like mainstream country Americana (except when they don't) until you focus on Kingman's lyrics which are smart, literate and edgy. Example: *"The sun set swollen like the Devil's nose blowing his brains out It was*

dripping off the sky filling up a cup I had left out So I sat on the porch just to watch that sunset rain down Then I crossed my chest and I laid my head on the ground" From Serenity Prayer. And it just gets weirder and more wonderful from there. Highly recommended.

August 18 – Big Richard. Openers: Amy Moss and the Nightshades, and Ben Bentele

Big Richard is, despite the name, a four piece, all female not-so-traditional bluegrass band with great energy and stage presence. One of the non-traditional parts is there is no guitar or banjo. Mandolin, standup bass, cello, and fiddle for a unique sound. Sometimes, during an instrumental you hear a classical quartet sneak in a few licks.

Then there are Amy Moss and the Nightshades for some great moody, blusey, pieces that sort of hit me as Norah Jones meets the Be Good Tanyas, with Moss's gorgeously slurry delivery.

August 25 – Eli Paperboy Reed. Openers: The Secret Six, and Mama Lingua.

Eli Paperboy Reed offers full throated white-boy soul with MotoTown-like arrangements and instrumentation. Sharp stuff.

To preview most of the great acts for this year's Pickin in the Park just do a quick search on Google or You Tube and pick your have-to-go-see favorites. Not that choosing will be all that easy. Just block out your Thursday evening in August and head on up to Paonia.

Climate Change Mitigation Continued from Page 19

weather events that can impact air quality and recreation. The challenges we face will affect everyone, and require collaborative solutions. The Delta County Hazard Mitigation Plan references climate change assumptions from the Colorado Climate Plan.

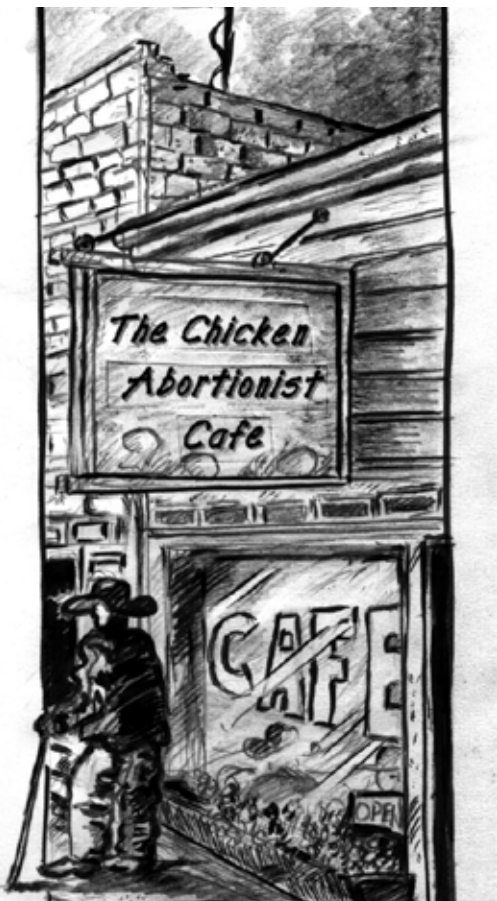
Folks, we are already there. Current hazard mitigation plan assumptions appear to underestimate climate change. The potential climate

disasters we are facing may be significantly worse. Our future will most certainly be one of change and adaptation, where proactive land use planning and local climate action are necessary imperatives.

(1) NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) U.S. Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters (2022). <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/>, DOI: 10.25921/stkw-7w73

(2) 2018-2023 Colorado Hazard Mitigation Plan, at 48. 2018 Colorado Climate Plan, at 3.

(3) 2°C: Beyond the Limit, Washington Post Pulitzer Prize winning series, which analyzed warming between 1895 and 2019. Data available at: <https://github.com/washingtonpost/data-2C-beyond-the-limit-usa>



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For more information on the North Fork Valley Buy Local Resource Campaign and where to find local and organic food visit <http://northforkvalley.org/> or call 970-399-9700.



Paonia Council - September 28 Mountain Harvest Dodges a Bullet Continued from Page One

TOWN OF PAONIA, COLORADO, AMENDING CHAPTER 18 OF THE MUNICIPAL CODE AND PROVIDING FOR THE ADOPTION OF AND AMENDMENTS TO THE INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE, THE INTERNATIONAL MECHANICAL CODE, THE INTERNATIONAL FUEL GAS CODE, INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CODE, THE INTERNATIONAL EXISTING BUILDING CODE, THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION CODE, AND THE INSTALLATION HANDBOOK FOR MANUFACTURED HOMES AND FACTORY BUILT HOUSING."

A public hearing was held on adoption of updated International building and related codes. The Town has been working with the City of Delta to share building inspection services.

Smith Tries to Torpedo Mountain Harvest Festival and Blame it on Administrator

After a lot of discussion, and opposition from Trustees Paige Smith and Thomas Markle, the Council finally approved a variance allowing Mountain Harvest Festival to close the 100 and 200 blocks of Grand Avenue for all day on Saturday, September 24. The proposal required a variance since the code only allowed administrative review approved closures up to five hours on a Saturday. The Festival will happen exclusively downtown this year with Grand Avenue being closed all day Saturday and Sunday the 24th and 25th.

Smith and Markle insisted that the ordinance didn't allow exceptions to the five-hour administrative limit. Town Attorney Jeff Conklin explained twice that that was not the case and that the code related to what the Town Administrator could and could not approve independently. Administrator Corinne Ferguson explained that since the request exceeded her authority

to approve, she had told the applicant that they need to appeal to the Town Council for a variance. The Council also received advice from Conklin in an Executive Session on the ordinance issue.

Smith and Markle did not accept the Attorney's public advice direction and tried twice, unsuccessfully, to scuttle the Saturday closure. Smith in particular was harshly critical of Ferguson's handling of the issue. Smith failed to get a second on a motion that would have denied the closure and the two of them lost a vote on

reducing the Saturday closure to five hours.

"I take exception with being called out during public meetings," Ferguson said in a rare defensive comment in reaction to Smith dressing her down, after which she explained the administrative review and variance procedure.

Some written comments noted that there are now so many events at the Park that it is having a steady impact on park neighbors. Others wished that the event could be mostly at the Park. While most downtown businesses are for the new change and signed a petition of support, a couple, have expressed second thoughts on social media.

The event began as a downtown one in 2001 but eventually expanded and divided events between the Park and downtown venues.



Most municipalities have updated to the 2018 codes and the State strongly recommends the new codes and may require them to qualify for some grant and insurance programs.

Paige Smith stated that she could not support voting for the update due to some limited availability of paper copies of the Codes at Town Hall. Attorney Jeff Conklin noted that he had looked into the issue and found the availability of the Codes sufficient but reversed that when Suzanne Watson testified that she had visited Town Hall to "examine" a new code book and found none.

The adoption of the code was continued to the first August meeting to allow those who wish to examine the codes.

Hotchkiss Chamber Plans for September 13 Lunch Stop of Colorado Grand Vintage Sports Car Rally

(Unapproved Draft Minutes)
By Thomas Wills

Hotchkiss Community Chamber of Commerce

Regular Board of Directors Meeting
Thursday - July 28, 2022

Present: Board - President - Kim Shay, Treasurer - Terry O'Brien, Secretary - Tom Wills, and Kelsi Buhr. Absent: Lenore Cambria. Also: HCCC Executive Director - Nathan Sponseller, and member and longtime former Treasurer - Sue Whittlesey.

The Minutes of the June 30, 2022 meeting were approved as written with the clarification from Secretary Tom Wills that, due to recent changes in the by-laws there is only a "Secretary" although previously the job was divided into Recording Secretary and Communications Secretary positions.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Terry O'Brien had e-mailed the bank statements for the checking and savings accounts to the Board. The checking account balance as of July 11 was \$6,621.89. The savings account (money market (account stood at \$16, 515.70 as of the end of June We've received 82 cents in interest on the account funds so far in 2022.

O'Brien moved (Wills seconded) that the Board approve an expenditure for \$73.80 (including shipping) for the purchase of a new Chamber banner to be displayed at the Delta County Fair where the Chamber is a sponsor of the Kidz Zone. All were in favor. The Chamber had previously approved a \$500 donation.

(Note: the old banner, with an older logo, was located after the fact so the Chamber now has two banners for use during events.)

Member and former Treasurer, Sue Whittlesey, requested a financial statement from the Chamber in addition to just the monthly bank statements. She noted that, in her experience, other local non-profits provide a monthly on-going P & L statement detailing paid-in, paid-outs, and even expenditures in relation to budget to date.

O'Brien said that the Board had allowed just bank statements to be presented as monthly reports but will produce a financial statement to be sent to the Board for approval before being sent to Whittlesey. It was noted that the Chamber's finances are open to inspection by any member.

Executive Director Nathan Sponseller also shared a critique of the Treasurer's performance.

O'Brien assured the Board that he would try to do better in the future.

An unauthorized expenditure of a plaque for retiring local business owners was discussed and agreed to be a procedural learning experience.

There was a discussion of options to possibly save the Chamber money on a post office box where rates have recently gone up dramatically. The Chamber's P.O. Box now costs \$160 per year. Shay will negotiate with the P.O. concerning options including possibly having our own free delivery route box installed at the Visitor's Center.

Executive Director/Colorado Grand

Kelsi Buhr reported that she and Lenore Cambria had met with Executive

Director Nathan Sponseller to discuss plans for the Colorado Grand and had been given a box of material related to the event.

Wills moved, and Buhr seconded, that Buhr and Lenore Cambria be the Colorado Grand Committee working with Sponseller to make the final arrangements and make sure the execution of the event goes smoothly. All in favor.

Executive Director Sponseller announced that, although he had previously resigned his position as of the end of July, he was now willing to continue his full duties through the September 13 Colorado Grand lunch stop at the Fairgrounds.

Wills moved (Buhr seconded) that Nathan's job be extended through the Colorado Grand with the thought that, besides assuring the success of the Colorado Grand lunch event, this would also give the board additional time to recruit new members and otherwise make decisions on how to move forward after Sponseller's departure.

Discussion ensued. The motion was eventually approved by all.

Bylaws Committee

After discussion it was agreed that the existing by-laws committee of Wills and O'Brien will meet in person and try to reach consensus on proposed bylaw changes/updates for consideration at the August meeting. On some items two options may be offered for the board's consideration.

Proposed changes include: defining the quorum at the annual meeting, eliminating the requirement for proxies, and better detailing Special Meeting procedures. (After Meeting Note: discussion of requiring meetings adhere to some level of Roberts Rules of Order.)

Policy Committee

The policy committee of Wills and Lenore Cambria provided the board with a draft internal Board e-mail policy to read carefully and consider input, tweaks, changes etc. The policy, proposed to be added to the existing Communications Policy, will be considered at the August meeting for changes and possible submission to the membership at the November annual meeting.

Board Vacancies

Two vacancies remain on the Board and it was agreed that a call be sent out to the membership seeking volunteers to fill the positions. Two applicants remain from the previous Board vacancy call but neither are current members and would need to rectify that. Shay will contact those applicants.

Applications will need to be submitted by seven days before the August 30 Chamber meeting.

Meeting Time/Date

Shay proposed that the date and time of the Chamber's monthly meetings be changed to accommodate a prospective new board member. Kim moved (O'Brien second) that meetings be now held on the last Tuesday of the month at 8:30 a.m. at the Hotchkiss Crawford Museum. All in favor.

The next Chamber Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, August 30, 2022 at 8:30 a.m. at the Hotchkiss Crawford Museum. Open to members and public.