

# The North Fork Merchant Herald

**Digital Edition**  
**Volume 24 - Number 1**  
**January 1, 2021**

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## Paonia: Water Issues, Marijuana Regulation on Slow Track, and Recommendations for Extra Housing Units

**Paonia Town Council**  
December 15, 2020

*(Held via Zoom)*

### Water Advisory Board Formed as Tap Moratorium Continues

Appointments to a water system advisory board, that was formed partly as a result water system collapse of February/March 2019, were announced. The members are Public Works Director – Travis Loberg/Town Administrator Corinne Ferguson who will split one position, Tamie Meck – trustee will represent the Town Council, Thomas Markle- husband of trustee Michelle Pattison, will be the in-town at-large member, Mike Drake, a prominent critic following the 2019 water crisis, will be the out-of-town at-large member and Phil Ceriani will represent the out-of-town water delivery pipeline companies. One reason for the new volunteer advisory-only board was to allow regular input from out-of-town water users who make up a good share of the total. On the many pipeline companies that deliver Town of Paonia water, new homes/accounts, in order to receive water service, require both the purchase of a Town of Paonia out-of-town tap and a tap from the specific pipeline company.

Meanwhile the moratorium on selling new Town of Paonia water taps or otherwise expanding the distribution system is nearing its first full year in place after voter approval of the ban on January 7, 2020.

During the year, several subdivisions have either been approved or moved forward despite the moratorium on availability of new taps to serve them. It was noted in the December 15 meeting packet that the redesigned **Riverbank Neighborhood subdivision** is moving forward once a few engineering issues are ironed out. At the previous meeting, a subdivision, **Clark End**, with six possible new homes on north Clark Avenue was approved.

Lifting of the ban, according to the language of the ballot measure, will require:

“A report, bearing the seal of a licensed engineer experienced in domestic water supply systems, finds that the Town of Paonia has in operation sufficient infrastructure and associated water rights to serve all existing obligations for water into the foreseeable future, and;

(ii) A report, bearing the seal of a licensed engineer experienced in

domestic water supply systems, quantifies additional obligations, enumerated in the form of water taps, that the Town of Paonia can reasonably supply without the likelihood of adversely affecting the service to existing water tap holders.

(d) The Town of Paonia shall not incur obligations for more water taps than the number quantified in the report required by subsection (c) (I)(ii) above, unless another report meeting the conditions of subsection (c)(1)(ii) establishes a new limit.”

Water studies, aimed at

taps. *(See Real Estate Reality column on page 14.)*

Achieving the requirements for lifting the moratorium may require establishment of significant raw water storage to buffer the system during extreme drought years, something that may become more common as the trend of human-caused climate change for the region moves towards a hotter, drier climate with winter snowpack gradually declining long-term.

**Marijuana.** Town Clerk/Administrator Corinne Ferguson



answering the measure’s questions, had been planned during the year but no conclusions have been announced to date. A previous water study reported in 1999-2000 concluded that the Town’s spring fed water system had about 100 more taps on the books than it could serve during dry years. So far this hasn’t been a problem since over 300 obligated taps are not in service. Leakage on the system has also been reduced during the last two decades.

In the meantime, there has been something of a real estate demand boom in the Valley during the pandemic year with new construction being centered in Hotchkiss where there is no restriction on

reported that the work in finalizing an ordinance setting forth commercial marijuana regulations is progressing slowly: “Invitations have been made to individuals who expressed interest in participating in the Marijuana working group. (Ferguson) intends to schedule four work sessions to discuss each area of the ordinance. (Ferguson wrote that she) plans to have the Marijuana Enforcement Division review and bring a draft back to the Board no later than February.”

**Continued on Page 17**

*From the O'Brien COVID-19 Report:*

## Wishing all the People of Delta County and Especially the DCMH Hospital and First Responders a Happy and Safe New Year.

Vaccines are here/on-the-way for those who choose to be vaccinated. Just a few more months and COVID-19 should be mostly behind us. Please consider following the Delta County Health Department's (DCHD) and the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) mask, gathering, safe-distancing guidelines in support of the Hospital and First Responders. Either way, it should continue to remain a personal choice except in certain public areas such as Hospitals, Clinics, Schools, Government Meetings, etc.

*The O'Brien COVID-19 Report provides additional metrics, trends, charts, and graphs beyond the DCHD Dashboard, delivered by email so that individuals can make better health care decisions.*

Delta County COVID-19 Monthly Metrics							
Metrics Taken Directly from the Delta County Health Department (DCHD) Dashboard							
	Total New Cases	Daily Average Cases	School Cases (Age 0-17)	High Risk Cases (Age 65+)	Average Positivity	Totals Deaths	Metrics Ranking Versus Surrounding Counties
March through October Actuals	215	1.0	17	37	Not Avail.	3	Best of the 6 Counties
November Actuals	432	14.4	42	98	8.21%	8	Middle of the 6 Counties
December through 12/26/20	724	27.8	88	167	12.82%	12	Worse of the 6 Counties

November had 432 Cases which was more than twice the 215 Cases of the previous 8 months. November Transmission Risk was 10 times that of the shutdown  
 December was by far the worst month of the COVID-19 pandemic for Delta County with Transmission Risk 12 Times as that during the Shutdown.  
 Delta County has gone from having the BEST Scaled Metrics to the WORSE in the Six-Area Counties of Mesa, Montrose, Garfield, Gunnison, and Ouray.

This ad paid for by Terry O'Brien as a public service on behalf of the people of Hotchkiss and Delta County. Email [tobrien@disc.com](mailto:tobrien@disc.com) to receive free updates and detailed COVID-19 information.

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## Editorial: Support KVNF, NPR, DCI, Herald, and Normative, Factual Media

*Opinion by Thomas Wills*

We are living in strange times. Weird times. Scary, bizarre times. We live in what I have come to call a "post factual America."

On one hand I live with a world view, education, and life experience, that tell me which facts are indeed facts. I trust certain "normative" news and science sources and question others. I believe confidently that I can separate opinion from fact. I trust news organizations that I know follow basic journalistic ethics and where, if mistakes happen, corrections are made and sometimes heads roll. I don't respect quasi-news organizations that seem to promote one political point of view, spread misinformation, and ignore facts that clash with ideology.

On the other hand, there is a segment of the population, including a good number here in the Valley, that believe in a whole different set of information coming from sources that they believe more than "normative" news and science. They believe that all news sources that follow the rules of journalism, and science that follow the rules of science, as far as determining truth, are part of a giant conspiracy to mislead them. Anything

that doesn't conform with their perceived worldview must be "fake news."

The population is becoming siloed (there's a new term) into separate realities and I'm not sure what the solution is. One thing I am sure of is that we all need to support news media that values facts over ideology. In this I urge you to support local media like the Herald, the Delta County Independent, and especially KVNF public radio and NPR. For national news I rely daily on KVNF and NPR programming as a starting point in being informed of the facts. They are invaluable as a "normative" island in the midst of what is sometimes a maelstrom of tribal chaos.

If you take only one step to strengthen and make sure factual news reporting continues please take the time to become a supporting member of KVNF public radio. Subscribe to the Delta County Independent, and thank you for reading and supporting the Merchant Herald for Valley-focused news and features.

And Happy New Year.



# Hotchkiss Talks Possibilities for the Old Public Works Building

By Thomas Wills

Transforming the old Hotchkiss Public Works building into a going business, or businesses plural, is probably going to take a public private partnership, Danielle Campbell of Community Builders said in concluding a 90-minute Zoom meeting on December 2. The meeting was mainly focused on the property and its future.

The Town is planning to put the structure up for sale after an environmental assessment is done to determine if any hazardous materials mitigation needs to be undertaken. Then, they would like see a buyer come forward that would transform the less-than-attractive cinder block structure into a sales tax generating new anchor for downtown. But with commercial property in Hotchkiss being the slowest end of the local real estate market, that may be a harder sell if conditions are attached.

Over the course of the meeting there were a lot of opinions on what the building should ideally become, some practical and some (like mine) being over the moon visioning.

“It’s an opportunity!” Campbell enthused at the beginning of the meeting. She then tried to prime the creative pumps of those present by reviewing the seven principles of Hotchkiss downtown development that the group came up with at previous on-line meetings. The principles are aspirational statements like: “Downtown needs to reflect the community and highlight the character of Hotchkiss.” Someone joked that to truly reflect the character of the town new businesses would need go along with rolling up the sidewalks at five p.m. each day; a reference to Hotchkiss’ lack of night life.

The various suggestions for future uses of the building were reviewed. Things that duplicated businesses already in town (gyms, museum, restaurants, etc.) drew mild objections. Gloria Crank, who is familiar with real estate, said that that a future owner would probably be a landlord. Perhaps a renovation



Community leaders have all sorts of idea about how the old public works building could be used but it will really be up to whoever is willing to buy the building - Tom Wills photo

into multiple units with a variety of uses?

There was suggestion of a need for a place for youth, like a teen center. Adding things not offered by the recreation district, library, or other entities. Brian Cambria, who runs a tour company, suggested something where tours could stop and shop and use the restroom. And maybe wander around downtown from there.

I suggested an “energy transition demonstration center”, a building that would produce all its own energy, use cutting-edge conservation technology, and that would show and inspire how new buildings and people can transition into the low carbon world over the next three decades that we have left to accomplish it. The building would be so unique as to draw visitors in of itself and it could house a range of businesses. Okay... No one else seemed to know what to do with that and talk returned to restaurants.

Community Builders is looking to wrap up their project of generating some ideas and direction for Hotchkiss downtown by the end of December when their funding expires.

**Brian Cambria, who runs a tour company, suggested something where tours could stop and shop and use the restroom.**

An overlapping project being funded by a grant and some \$3,500 from the Town, that has the goal of producing a suggested plan/renderings of an improved downtown and highway corridor will wrap up by late spring.

The group of Hotchkiss Town and business leaders meeting virtually with the consultant non-profit, Community Builders, has come up with seven proposed principles for Hotchkiss Downtown / economic improvement.

The seven principles mentioned earlier

are:

1. Downtown needs to reflect the community and highlight the character of Hotchkiss.
2. Increase anchor businesses that attract residents and visitors alike.
3. Agriculture, outdoor recreation and art culture are major drivers in the community and should be expanded and incorporated more in downtown.
4. Expand availability and affordability of spaces to new and

existing businesses.

5. Improve downtown by increasing walkability, activating underutilized buildings, signage, increasing public gathering spaces, and façade improvements.

6. Capture through traffic on Bridge Street by creating a welcoming downtown environment that offers services for travelers.

7. Make downtown Hotchkiss a destination for residents, visitors, and businesses by increasing nightlife activities, dining and drinking establishments, locally made goods, and workforce housing.

A new mini-survey asking if people support the principles is on line with the link on the Town of Hotchkiss Facebook page.

**Position Announcement**  
**– Delta County Libraries**  
*Delta County Public Library District is seeking a District Director* to provide leadership, vision, and strategic-thinking for the future of the Library District, located on the Western Slope of Colorado. The complete job description and application is available at [www.deltalibraries.org/district-director/](http://www.deltalibraries.org/district-director/).

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**DECEMBER JOURNAL**

November and December, of seminal year 2020, were the months when the Valley and county finally saw significant cases of COVID-19 nine months into the pandemic, many hospitalizations, and nine additional deaths. Some businesses, especially restaurants, were worried that restrictions would soon stop indoor dining again. All of this while many “essential” businesses still allowed customers to enter without masks, and health-related misinformation and even denial that the pandemic is real and serious, was common on local social media.

The good news is that very effective vaccines for COVID are on the way and we (the general public) just have to be patient until April or May. Stay cautious until then, plan your 2021 garden, and plan for all of the nearly normal stuff that will be happening after the pandemic has been knocked down.

**November 23** – Mild temperatures had me outside working on preparing raised beds for next season and building the last of my soil pits, which is how I do composting and make organic-heavy soil for new raised beds at the same time, using brush, tree trimmings (on the bottom), garden and kitchen wastes, and leaves, layered with soil and sand.

**November 24** – Rain and snow, or snow and rain. Good snow in the mountains, a little in the Valley along with light rain.

**November 25** – Twas the day before Thanksgiving and the overnight temperatures dropped. Nan picked up the December Herald from the printers and did the distribution.

**November 26** – Thanksgiving. Larry Jakubiak and volunteers reportedly served some 150 to-go turkey dinners at the annual dinner at the Hotchkiss Town Hall – Senior Center.

**November 27** – Black Friday was a bit slow in the bookstore.

**November 28** – Frosty night, but a nice sunny Saturday across the Valley. I managed to get the December e-mailed, free pdf edition sent out to about 400 subscribers.

**November 30** – The Hotchkiss Town Council held a meeting to authorize use of the Town’s CARES money to the business pandemic impact grant program.

**December 1** – Lower temperature overnight, with an inch or so of ice on unheated outdoor stock tanks, and a mostly sunny but cold day.

**December 2** – The Town of Hotchkiss/Community Builders held a Zoom meeting to discuss the possibilities for the old Hotchkiss Public Works building. Lots of opinions were expressed but at the end of the day I suspect the Town will end

**Another Month in the Valley**

*By Thomas Wills  
Publisher - Editor*



up selling the building to whoever offers a fair price, but maybe the discussion will reach the ears of some well capitalized, visionary soul who will transform it.

**December 3** – This evening the Delta County Commissioners held a public hearing, including by Zoom, to take final comments on the new Delta

news today of some 53 new cases, 14 current hospitalizations, and a long list of outbreak sites in the county seems especially momentous.

**December 6** – Cold but sunny. The dry weather continues in the Valley with most of Colorado is momentous as

meeting moved on line to Zoom. Main order of business was adopting the 2021 budget and related documents.

**December 11** – There were about two inches of snow on the sidewalks in Hotchkiss this morning. Just after sunset some more light snow fell, just a dusting in the Hotchkiss area.

**December 12** – It started to snow in earnest in the late morning. About that time, I received a wonderful surprise when Vicki from Blue Sky Baking at Farm Runners delivered a small artistic masterpiece of a cake; a gift ordered by Peony Moon (KF) of Paonia. Wow! Yummy! Gingerbread with cream cheese frosting. Now I know what Marla is always raving about.

There are a couple of serious vehicle wrecks reported on Highway 92 on Rogers Mesa as the roads got slick during the day.

**December 13** – Although the church is closed to services due to the rise in COVID, the Hotchkiss Community United Methodist Church presented a living nativity scene on the church lawn. Other churches were careful but continued in-person services.

**December 14** – Light snow fell on and off during the day. National news of the day: the electoral college met and confirmed the certified election results.

**December 15** – A dusting of snow overnight in Hotchkiss. The feel of serious winter that began five days ago, continues. Even with both wood burning stoves going in the bookstore the place is a bit chilly. Stubby the cat’s favorite places are either my lap, being snuggled by a customer, or on the rug very close to the bigger stove.

**December 16** – Cold and overcast weather continues.

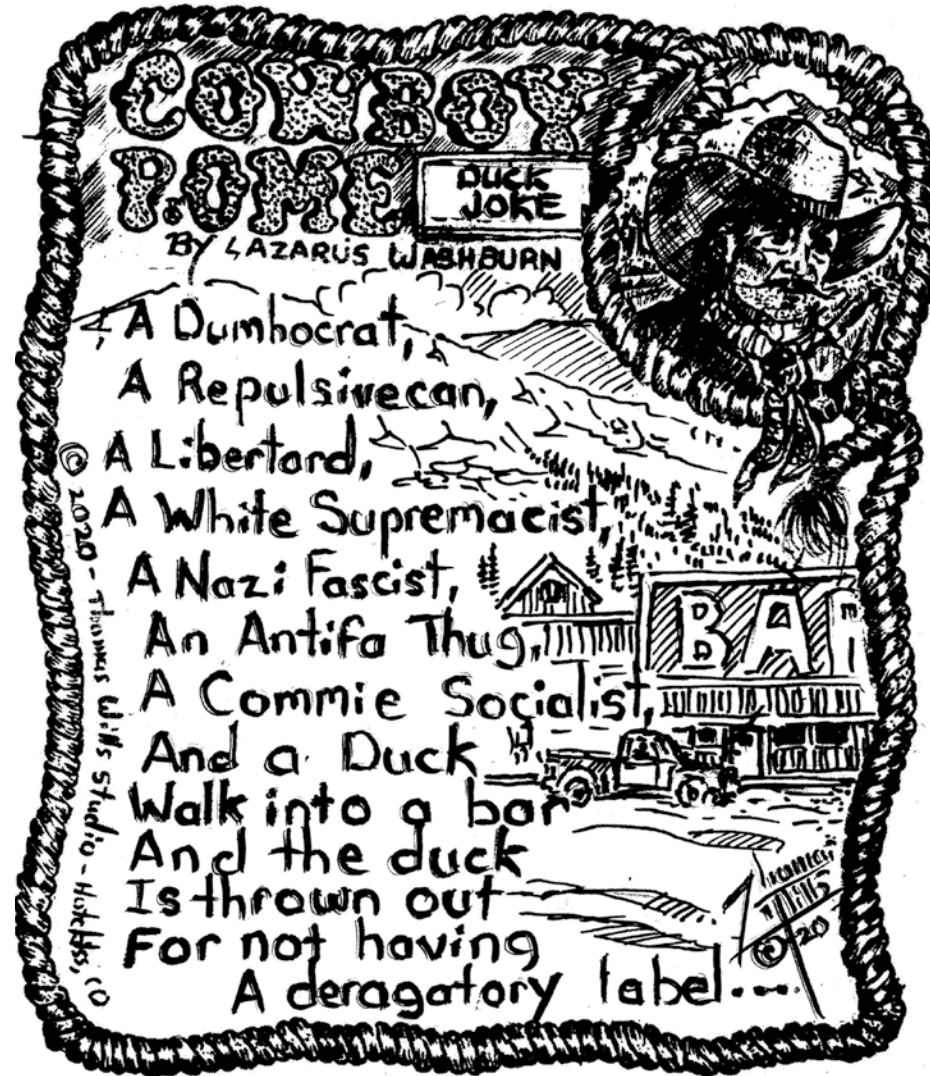
**December 17** – Despite a repeat of yesterday’s weather it was relatively busy at the bookstore. Pretty steady despite my “one person at a time or two from a household” policy. Booklovers appear to be cautious group.

**December 18** – There were a couple inches of snow on the ground in Hotchkiss before sunrise and some light snow drifted down during the day. “We can sure use some more snow,” people who come in the shop say, and we all look towards the West Elks. Next summer’s water bank account.

**December 19** – It was a busy day in the bookstore and it took some effort to make sure that no more than two people were in the shop at any one time.

The sun came out and melted off the highway and some side streets.

**December 24 - 25**  
Bright and sunny days with very cold nights. Another good turnout for the to-go-only North Fork Community Christmas Dinner in Hotchkiss.



County Land Use Code that includes the county’s first attempt to institute some zoning-based regulation after decades of resistance to even discussing the possibility.

**December 4** - Overnight temperatures dropped a little more and the day remained frigid if sunny. As usual true, winter around here begins around the first of December and extends through February, with an occasional weird thaw happening in January.

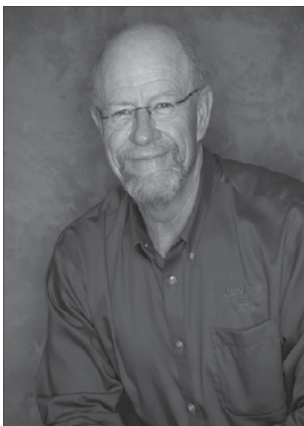
Although I have been doing a separate “journal” article about the day-to-day pandemic narrative, the

some level of drought, with our area near the highest extreme on the maps. Not good as we head into winter.

**December 8-9** – Sunny and relatively warm days with cold below freezing nights.

**December 10** – Clouds moving in with snow predicted tomorrow and Saturday, but started late this evening.

The Hotchkiss Town Council



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**Business News and Other Rumours**

The Town of Hotchkiss, following the lead of Paonia, has announced that they have allocated their CARES fund money to bolster the

**Continued on page 15**



# Hotchkiss Extends Disaster Declaration, Debates COVID Seriousness & Building Fees, Adopts 2021 Budget, and Moves Towards Saving Water

By Thomas Willis

## Hotchkiss Town Council

December 10, 2020

*Present (on Zoom): Mayor Larry Wilkening, mayor-pro-tem -Mary Hockenbery, Patricia Medina, Patrick Webb, and Jim Wingfield, Kris Hillman and John Marta.*

The December 10 Hotchkiss Town Council meeting, held on-line via the meeting app Zoom, was fairly routine for the bulk of the meeting, which mostly involved some year-end chores like adopting a series of measures related to the 2021 budget, approving the creation of a new fund dedicated to Hotchkiss's share of Back the Badge sales tax collections, and voting on giving the Town Clerk office staff Christmas Eve off. But a couple of topics drew some passionate, if polite, discussion.

### COVID Safety Rewards Program Draws Heat

"I respect your opinion one hundred percent, Mary," Trustee Jim Wingfield said. "But I would just ask you to respect mine." This came in the midst of an exchange regarding a proposal by Delta County to establish a voluntary program to reward businesses who achieve a certain level of pandemic safety compliance, with things like free publicity and advertising. Mesa County has a similar program that ranks businesses (like restaurants) for maintaining safety protocols.

Mayor Larry Wilkening had brought up the issue and asked the Trustees if the Town should support the program? Mary Hockenbery thought it sounded like a good idea, a carrot rather than a stick approach. She noted that COVID cases were spiking in the county.

Wingfield expressed his opinion on government COVID restrictions in general, noting that, early on, Walmart in Delta had lots of people in the store while restaurants in Hotchkiss were closed. He saw this as deeply unfair. And he wasn't fond of the facts being presented in the news media.

"I'm tired of the media," Wingfield said from his Barrow Mesa home.

Hockenbery noted that rewards program would be voluntary and was being proposed by the Delta County Health Department, not the "media."

Trustee Pat Medina, who owns a local restaurant, took some middle ground and related some of the financial challenges of operating an eatery during the pandemic. She didn't see such a program as being particularly helpful to her specific establishment.

Mayor Wilkening left the issue unresolved and said he would attend more meetings and bring back more information.

### Building Code Fees Revisited

Trustee Patrick Webb asked the council members to revisit the issue of whether the building code fee for new construction be based on 75% or 80% of the average per-square-foot U.S. home building costs. At the November meeting the council had agreed upon a reduced 75% figure despite most other regional municipalities using the 80% and a

resolution had been prepared for adoption reflecting that. Trustee Jim Wingfield, who is a builder, had been successful in arguing for the lower figure saying that the savings would encourage more construction in Hotchkiss.

Webb proposed in December to do the 80% figure and raise more revenue for the Town that could then be used for unrelated items such as donations to community projects.

The issue was tabled to the January meeting with a possible tip of council opinion towards the 80% figure.

Hotchkiss is experiencing something of a new residential construction boom with several homes currently under construction in the North Ridge Meadows subdivision. The Town has recently updated their IRC building code to the newest 2018 version.

### 2021 Budget and Mill Levy Adopted

The Trustees made short work, late in the meeting, in adopting three ordinances and a resolution related to the budget. One ordinance adopted the 2021 budget, one adopted 2021 appropriations, one adopted the property tax mill levy for 2021, and the resolution adjusted the 2020 budget by appropriating additional sums of money to balance things out. The Town of Hotchkiss estimates that the mill levy will result in receipt of \$79,198 in property tax for the 2021 year.

### Hotchkiss Will Contribute to Reservoir Headgate Project

At the urging of Public Works Director, Mike Owens, the council unanimously okayed spending up to \$10,000 as a share of installation of an electronically controlled headgate at the Carl Smith Reservoir where the Town's share of water is stored. The project is being proposed by the Leroux Creek Water Users Association, which owns and maintains a group of reservoirs in the National Forest at the headwaters of Leroux Creek. The Town of Hotchkiss has a Number 1 decree on a portion of Leroux Creek water.

Owens said that it was estimated that having an automatic headgate that could be closed and opened instantly via cellphone or radio could save up to 50 acre-feet of the Carl Smith stored water due to the time it now takes the Water Commissioner to drive the ten-plus miles from Hotchkiss when a change in the headgate is called for. Owens noted that, especially in a time of drought, saving that amount of water would be important to the Town.

### Disaster Declaration Extended

The trustees, following the lead of most other regional municipalities, voted unanimously to extend the COVID disaster declaration through the month of March 2021.

### Other Actions and Discussion

Kim Shay of the Hotchkiss Community Chamber of Commerce reported that the Chamber had raised their dues to help finance having a paid part-time administrator. Nathan Sponseller, who just stepped down as Chamber president, will be filling the

position. Shay also reported that Greg Pope had been hired as the administrator for the One Delta County economic development organization.

Jim Wingfield said he would consider being a Trustee member of the Planning Commission replacing Esther Koontz who moved out of town.

The trustees approved an out-of-town water tap for Mike Pitt for a property on Back River Road with an understanding that the Town does not guarantee a certain water pressure on the Back River Road, undersized water line.

Mayor Wilkening reported that the State Department of Transportation (CDOT) has the downtown portion of

Bridge Street/Hwy 92 on their 2022 schedule for either a complete reconstruction or a repave. If funding allows. The portion lacks proper underlying structure and is prone to potholes.

Terry O'Brien, who provides a regular, comprehensive supplemental analysis of local and regional COVID-19 data, asked if all of the Council was aware of the seriousness of the current situation. He also asked if all of the members agreed with a recent statement by Mayor Wilkening asking that the community observe all recommended precautions including masking in public spaces.

Adoption of a revised fine schedule for offenses in the Model Traffic Code was approved.

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Trustee Patrick Webb



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# HOTCHKISS MUNICIPAL COURT

## Court Still Observing Caution

By Thomas Wills

December 10, 2020

Judge Lynn French presiding:

Harmanjot Singh of Turlock, California pled guilty to careless driving and was assessed a fine of \$350 with the point assessment deferred.

Asa Shane Reed of Delta pled guilty to speeding 5-9 mph over the limit. A charge of failure to present insurance was dismissed. He was assessed a fine of \$91 plus \$50 in court costs.

Daniel G. Espinoza of Whitewater, CO pled guilty to speeding 10-19 mph over the limit and was assessed a \$162 fine plus \$50 in court costs. Charges of failure to present insurance and registration were dismissed.

Ryan William Cole of Hotchkiss pled guilty to two charges of disregarding a traffic control device, to failure to present insurance, and to driving without a valid license. He was assessed total fines of \$368

plus \$50 in court costs. He also received a deferred sentence for 6 months.

Austin Tucker Todd of the Hotchkiss area pled guilty to careless driving and was assessed a \$177 fine plus \$50 in court costs.

Tristram Acie Cunningham of Englewood, CO, pled guilty to possession of marijuana (under 21), no registration card, and careless driving. He was assessed fines totaling \$199 plus \$50 in court costs.

Antonio Alvarado Garcia, of Hotchkiss, pled guilty to having a defective headlight and saw charges of not presenting insurance or a valid license dismissed. He was assessed a fine of \$46 plus \$50 in court costs.

Three speeders failed to appear in court. Their information has been sent to the State as an outstanding judgement that will result in suspended driving privileges until they settle up with the Hotchkiss Court. The information is also shared with other states that have an interstate agreement with Colorado.



**Judge Lynn French**  
Town of Hotchkiss Municipal  
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## HOTCHKISS BOOKMAN:

### Thirty Years in the Book Business

By Tom Wills - Wills' Gallery and Books  
229 West Bridge St. Hotchkiss  
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Thirty years in the used book business in Hotchkiss! 2021 will be the 31st year. Forty-five years as an itinerant painter/artist. Twenty-eight years in semi-professional journalism and writing...

Books: After thirty years I still love books. I still get a little excited when someone drops off a few boxes.

"I hope you can find something you can use in there," they say. And most often I do.

The book business has changed a lot in thirty years and for the most part

I have resisted that change. General, cluttered, dusty, packed to the rafters used book stores like mine are getting rare. Most book dealers that have a brick and mortar presance sell mostly on line. I don't. Most bookstores specialize in antiquarian or collectible books of a certain type. I don't, but I do have some great collections:

A good Western and regional history section. A good spirituality/esoteric section that includes one entire bookcase of Buddhist topics. Pretty good science fiction and fantasy sections. A really good farming and gardening section.

Thanks to all of you that have supported the store during the last challenging year and over the last thirty.

# HOTCHKISS MARSHAL'S REPORT

## Vehicle Thief Nabbed

By Thomas Wills (using monthly report and additional information from Marshal Dan Miller.)

There were 121 total incidents logged for the month of November, a relatively quiet month with four officers on the job.

62 of the incidents involved vehicles: 41 traffic contacts, 15 Vehicle Id Number (VIN) inspections, and 7 traffic accidents were investigated.

One item that stood out was the recovery of a stolen Olathe vehicle, and arrest of the alleged culprit. According to Marshal Miller on November 2 at approximately 12:16 p.m. Sgt. Chad Lloyd was dispatched to the area of Farm Runners located at 235 N. 6th St. for report of a possible stolen vehicle.

The Department received a report that a witness had observed a Colorado Health Care LLC. van, reported stolen from Olathe Co. earlier this day, at Farm Runners occupied by a single Hispanic male.

Sgt. Lloyd responded to the area and found the vehicle and the driver of the vehicle. He made contact and confirmed that the vehicle was the one stolen out of Olathe. He was able to arrest Miguel Angel Ramirez-Gonzalez, of 209 Church Ave. Olathe, CO.

Ramirez-Gonzalez was issued Summons HS20-0158 for the following charges:

18-04-409(4)(b) Aggravated Motor Vehicle Theft F6

42-4-138(1)(a) Drove Vehicle When License Suspended.

The vehicle was later released to the owners. Miller also noted that Ramirez-Gonzalez was arrested several days later for stealing another vehicle out of Delta, Marshal Miller believes he was arrested in that case by the Sheriff's Office.

Also, although Ramirez-

Gonzalez was technically arrested by Lloyd, he was released after being issued a summons due to policy during the pandemic being to transport to the jail only Class 3 felony, or higher, suspects. Miller says that even in normal times there is a limit to those who are jailed due to the County Jail frequently being near capacity and a F6 (Felony Class 6) would have been issued a summons if a local resident.

In other items there were: two larceny thefts, one from a building and one from a yard; three DUI arrests, one marijuana possession, one possession of stolen property, one disorderly conduct harassment, five reports of suspicious persons or circumstances. There were also three civil problems but a rare month with no domestic violence reports.

On the lighter side there were: two animal problems (dogs usually), 11 medical assists, 7 citizen assists and 4 assists to other agencies. Thirteen security logs, checks of homes or businesses at the request of the owners, were done during November.

Miller and the Department keeps careful records of most things related to Town law enforcement. For example vehicle gas milage for the Department's vehicles, three SUVs and a sedan, averaged less than 10 miles per gallon.

Climate change experts and those focusing on how we can transition our use of energy from mainly fossil fuels to mostly low carbon renewables by 2050, estimate that the average internal combustion passenger vehicle is responsible for about one pound of emitted new CO2 per mile travelled.

The question for local police departments is when switching over to electric vehicles will be practical and affordable.





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# Delta County Sheriff Thanks Supporters of Back the Badge

*(Press Release)*  
*Delta County Sheriff -*  
*Mark Taylor*

Residents of Delta County,

On behalf of the entire Delta County Sheriff's Office staff, we want to thank the Delta County citizens for your support during this difficult year. 2020 has proven to be a year of challenges whether at a national level, state level, and even a local Delta County level. Nationally, the "defund" the police rhetoric is truly something I don't understand. Unless you are a criminal who preys on hard working individuals, I would bet law and order in your community is a high priority. Can we do better? Sure we can. Should there be police reform? Probably in some agencies, but defund the police? Absolutely not!

I have said it many times, thank God I live in Delta County; where the western Colorado way of life still thrives. Integrity, Compassion, and Respect still mean something here. Where the majority believes in Law and Order and wants a community where you can raise a family, and let your kids play in the yard or the park and know they are relatively safe.

I personally would like to thank each and every one of you who supported the Back the Badge Initiative and especially the hard working citizens committee who spent a ton of time getting the word out. These additional funds are earmarked 100% for not only the Sheriff's Office but also the Delta Police Department, Cedaredge Police Department, Paonia Police Department and the Hotchkiss Marshall's Office.

With the additional funding, the Sheriff's Office goal will be to add four (4) additional patrol deputies, four (4) patrol vehicles, and associated equipment for each deputy as well as provide quality training within the first year. We also plan to add additional 911 emergency dispatchers to help handle and dispatch emergency calls 24/7, upgrade equipment and much more. It's my hope the citizens of Delta County will see a dramatic

difference in response times, a reduction in criminal activity, and a strong progressive approach to the increasing drug related crimes in our county.

The MISSION of the Delta County Sheriff's Office is:

To serve the public in partnership with our community, to protect life and property, prevent crime and resolve problems in a fair, courteous and impartial manner. We will have the moral courage to recognize and adhere to the constitutional rights of all individuals. And we will ask ourselves every day; WHAT'S IMPORTANT NOW...

Respectfully, Mark Taylor-  
Delta County Sheriff

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**Max Scholle, MD**

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Service to the health of the greater community is of utmost importance today and always. During the pandemic, our caregiving teams have worked diligently to keep our community and program participants healthy, safe and connected to those they love---and at times, stepped in when family members could not.

Your ongoing support has been so appreciated. The patience, commitment and love you have shown to us during the pandemic is deeply moving and felt by our entire organization. We appreciate how special the holiday season is to you and your loved ones and we wish to make this year's holiday season as joyful and festive as possible.

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# Flavors of the Valley

## Soup From Within the Soul of a Winter Pumpkin

By Colleen Hansen

One of the great opportunities of living in a less densely populated area of our country is relative quiet, spaciousness, and abundance, of natural surroundings. In this darkest, visually bleak time of year, nature encourages us by example to go inward, reflect and feast upon the memories gathered during the more externally stimulating and abundant months of long, warm days: food growing in gardens and fields, relative ease of movement, and activity upon the land.

**Inspiration.** It was during a class on a cold, late autumn morning at

and what survives fresh long after more tender fruits and vegetables have been devoured, canned, frozen, or dried for later consumption, what better, more vibrant, offering than a sugar pie pumpkin to impart flavor, provide nutrition and best yet to be the vessel in which to cook delicious, exotic and warming flavors of a curried coconut soup?

I have enjoyed chunks of pumpkin in Thai curries before and have intended several times to use one of our stored squashes to recreate my own at-home version, but I had not considered cooking the soup inside the whole pumpkin. Resisting procrastination and energized by this article deadline and Winter Solstice in conjunction (maybe the Saturn and Jupiter conjunction as well!), I chose two beautiful remaining pumpkins from storage and commenced preparation.

When winter squash is a recipe ingredient, one must figure out the best, safest peeling method. The skin usually

is thick, so a veggie peeler may not be a sturdy enough tool, whereas a knife can be a bit intimidating; one false move and first aid may be on the menu instead! If you place the soup, partially cooked, inside the raw or partially baked pumpkin, then finish the entire dish in the oven, you still get to eat the squash but without the effort or danger of peeling; simply scoop some from the inside of your cooked, orange, edible pot when you serve the soup Brilliant!! Plus, you get the highlight of a glorious visual presentation.

### The Soup.

Well, with the end in mind as referenced above, let's return to visions of flavor profiles, ingredients and methodologies to accomplish desired visions of grandeur. I started

with Indian curry powder, fresh garlic and ginger, some Kafir lime leaves and lemongrass (as used in Tom Ka Gai), onion, dried, whole red peppers, a fresh serrano and jalapeno (multiple heat sources for a more complex heat profile) all sauteed in coconut oil to draw out the flavors before adding sliced mushrooms, green beans and carrots (*another fresh, longer storing vegetable from my garden*).

To the aromatics and briefly sauteing veggies, I added coconut milk, homemade chicken stock (*from tasty and healthy chicken parts raised at Gray Acres Farm in Paonia*), a bit of brown sugar (sweet), lime juice (acid), tamari (salt as well as...salt) and before pouring the partially simmered soup into the hollowed-out



Soup from inside a Pumpkin. Photo by Colleen Hansen

the Yoga Tree in Hotchkiss when I was physically inside and being encouraged to go energetically *inside* by studio owner and master yoga teacher/trainer, Nancy Stechert, that inspiration for this month's article arose. The image I created, or that came to me in my "relaxed and purified" state, was one of warmth, warming, inside and out, temperature and flavor, held in a sturdy and beautiful natural cauldron that could bring both gastronomic pleasure, visual delight and soulful peace to mind and body alike while kindling an inner spark of comfort and hope in this season of short days, cold nights and uncertainty. All during a yoga class and to be manifested in a meal?

A bit lofty, I realize, and quite verbose, but remembering vestiges of my summer garden, fall harvest

Continued on Page 9



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Contributing Writers: Marla Bear Bishop, Mike Jackson, Colleen Hansen, Blue Sage Center, North Fork Senior Connections and others.



## Pumpkin

Continued From Page 8

pumpkins, I adjusted flavors and added generous amounts of fresh basil leaves.

**Pumpkins.** Since the soup preparation took a while, and one recipe I referred to said to bake filled pumpkins for an hour and a half, I placed the empty, but topped, pumpkins in the oven for a short time before adding the soup to prevent over cooking the soup, but allowing enough baking time for the flavors to meld and sufficiently cook the squash.

Once the pumpkin was soft to the touch but still had structural integrity, I knew our divinely inspired Solstice meal was ready to eat. Well... almost. Garnishes almost always add an extra visual flare as well as complimentary flavor boosts that provide a bit of variation to every bite. Over complicated, perhaps "over the top"? Precisely, well, ON top! Toasted cashews, fresh cilantro and basil leaves and a couple lime wedges added "la touché finale" to the plated meal.

Blessed by beeswax candlelight, fresh ever-greenery, a warm and satisfying home-cooked meal with ingredients from both near and far and, of course, each other's company, we could not have felt more fortunate.

**Mission accomplished,** and the great news is that anyone with creative expression, as in ANYONE, can manifest a vision, large or small, through what he or she is passionate about and gift the world and oneself in the process. Just like the holding and wisdom of our Mother Earth in concert with the vastness and intelligence of the cosmos, may you have rich and nourishing meals that satisfy all your senses, meals from the kitchen and from the universe, from the opportunity of quietude presented to us this past year and from this particular season. It is at this time we sow inner seeds for the coming year and can harvest innate knowledge from the hibernating earth and vibrant cosmos that surround and support us.

I wish for you deep communing and thoughtful sowing for the days ahead. Please remember to add a strong dose of levity and unmeasured gratitude for all we have and who we have with us, those who have passed and ones yet to come. *Bon Appetit and Blessings until next time.*

## Climate Change Action and Home Heating

By Thomas Wills

Another winter in the North Fork and it is pretty cold so far. Back in the early days almost every home was heated with wood. Then, as local coal was developed, that became the fuel of choice and technology, and electricity and coal stokers, made heating with coal more convenient.

In the 1960's natural gas piped right to home became the new thing locally and most homes were converted to gas along with some electric heating. No dust or muss and no clinkers to remove each day or coal hoppers to fill.

Now, a half century later, we are still burning natural gas for winter heating but are thinking more about climate change caused by human burning of fossil fuels, even from relatively clean natural gas. What comes after natural gas?

Most experts point to electric heat pump technology that extracts heat from either the air (air source) or the earth (ground source, as being the answer.

So, if you are planning a new home, besides PV solar panels, and active/passive thermal solar, look into heat pumps.



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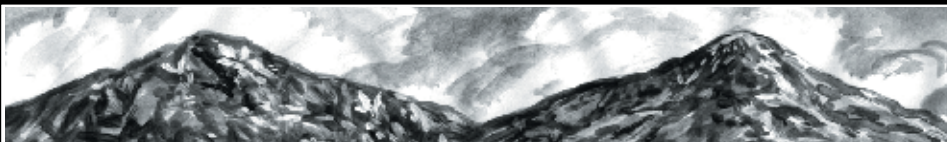
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# Marla's Valley: A Gift From Santa Paws, New Years Resolutions, Coming Events, and Reminders.

All by Marla Bear Bishop – Fruitland Mesa, Crawford Country and beyond correspondent

January! So glad to be rid of 2020 and all its challenges. Finally, a new year is upon us. Here we stand, ten months into the pandemic, still dealing with a difficult political divide not to mention all the worry and trouble that occurs naturally in our own individual small worlds with health, finances, family, friends and neighbors. What can we do with all the stresses going on in and around us? *We can be thankful for what we have that's going right.*

My New Year's resolutions will be a list of what I promise to not forget, all that is good in life. I'm going to put out of my mind that a mouse made a house in one of my boots.

Or this... On a recent blue cold night as is customary in winter, I awoke to the most eerie of noises in the house. Not the scurrying sound of mice but something unfamiliar and unpleasant like being at the dinner table with those who eat without manners. I managed to sit up and gather myself together to go investigate. At the end of my bed one dog had something hidden beneath his personal blanket and he gave me the stink eye. At first, I thought this to be his displeasure at a light in the night. No. He had a deer's hoof. Disgusting. On the floor other canine companions had a rib, one each. I'm fairly sure I was screaming because there was a lot of scrambling and showing of teeth as I gathered this mess with a now gloved hand. How these treasures went unnoticed at bedtime and how everyone had a share in the booty is a mystery. Oh boy, this is how we enter a New Year around here. Always a mystery to be pondered.

I'm going to be grateful that I have many skirts to wear, as my pants no longer fit from eating so many of Hannah's **Blue Sky Bakery** treats. If you too, have some bulky clothes to fill, join me and indulge in some deliciousness at **The Farm Runners Station** in Hotchkiss. Brandt is there baking dishes such as jalapeno mac and cheese, delicious soups, and a plethora of daily menu items all made with fresh organic ingredients. Customer service is generous and outstanding. If you don't want to mask up and go in, they will do curbside service. Just call in advance. Easy!



**Ice and Wind Equals Natural Art**

Photo By Marla Bishop

I'm going to rejoice that at this point in time my knees are still my own even as they are cranky and unstable. A lot of us are cranky and unstable, thankfully for me; it's just my knees. That is, I think it's just my knees.

I got a call from that sweet and talented man, Robin Nicholoff, reminding me about a fundraiser for Paonia's **Blue Sage**. This involves local wines from in and around the Valley. One can purchase a case of wine

and the proceeds go to the Blue Sage. When Robin was telling me this I had to stop him and laugh. I can only say that if Robin really knew me he'd not have called because there isn't anyone who knows me that would suggest a case of wine should be mine under any circumstance. It takes me at least 8 days to go through one bottle and that is because I can add the last flat part into spaghetti sauce.

So, as not to waste Robin's time

I'm putting it out there for all or any of you wine drinkers, please support the Blue Sage venue in Paonia by looking into this great fundraiser. I do believe it happens the first week of January but if you read this later, don't let it stop you from investigating. Call the Blue Sage or even Robin for details. Thanks to all the participants who donated the bottled fruit of the vine!

Paonia is where it seems to be for creative socially distanced fun. You can take a few friends or your family, masked up of course and rent the **Paradise Movie Theatre** for \$20.00 an hour! Time to watch something fun on the big screen...that's a good price for a small private party in a large space! Concession stand open!

I haven't experienced any over the top excitement at City Market lately and for that I'm both sad and somewhat grateful because I should be doing my shopping and moving on. That's truly been the extent of my social life, those aisles full of friends and acquaintances, some masked, some unmasked. Weird times for everyone, everyone in the world—hard to wrap one's head around the enormity of it.

As COVID continues on its path sickening a growing number of those we know, and yes, bringing death to some in our community, I'm aware that being careful, masking up to keep others safe from me in case I'm a carrier, washing my hands often and abstaining from close contact with those I previously close contacted with. *(I never until now fully realized how many of you there are and what a contact player I am!)* These are the steps necessary for at least a few more months. I will get in line for the vaccine. There is a light at the end of this worldwide, dismal tunnel. I'm looking forward to a future of being with my loved ones and I know that sweet times are ahead. I put that wish in my heart for all of us.

A glorious shout out to the most intrepid terrier, our wonderful friend CGH who has come through a long battle quite victorious and full of life! Bravo dearest one, you are an inspiration and the truest example of grace.

Be smart ya'll, be safe, not just virus safe but also don't-slip-on-the-ice safe. Keep some humor in life. Please don't hoard toilet paper, but maybe tea and sweets in case of an emergency such as a much-needed serious snowstorm.

Happy New Year to one and all!

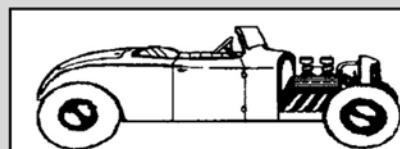
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# Paonia Delays Adoption of Marijuana Regulation Ordinance Clark Avenue Six Home Development Approved

By Thomas Wills

Paonia Town Council  
December 15, 2020

**Marijuana.** Town Clerk/Administrator Corinne Ferguson reported that the work in finalizing an ordinance setting forth commercial marijuana regulations is progressing slowly: "Invitations have been made to individuals who expressed interest in participating in the Marijuana working group. (Ferguson) intends to schedule four work sessions to discuss each area of the ordinance. We plan to have the Marijuana Enforcement Division review and bring a draft back to the Board no later than February."

**2021 Budget Adopted.** The Trustees adopted the 2021 Town of Paonia budget along with setting the 2021 property tax mill-levy.

**Building Inspector.** Town Attorney BoNerlin reported that Colorado Code Consultants, the Town's building inspection contractor, had not replied to a notification that the Town was not automatically renewing their contract, which expired as of the end of 2020.

The redesigned **Riverbank Neighborhood subdivision** is moving forward once a few engineering issues are ironed out.

(More items in expanded January 1 pdf - e-edition.)

Paonia Town Council

November 24, 2020

Present: Mayor Mary Bachran, Dave Knutson, Tamie Meck, Mick Johnson, Michelle Pattison, Bill Bear, and Karen Budinger.

## Marijuana Regulation Ordinance Draws Discussion and Confusion

An ordinance regulating retail marijuana sales in Paonia was presented for discussion and possible approval with an eye towards having the law in place by the first of the year so that the application process could begin.

In discussion concerns were raised that the number of licenses for shops needed to be limited so as to not end up with too many. Karen Budinger moved that the Town limit the number of licenses to two saying that such shops could sell both medical and recreational cannabis. Trustee Tamie Meck said she would rather see the free market decide the number of shops and was concerned that the two shops would be recreational only, which would then preclude a separate medical marijuana shop.

Michelle Pattison suggested that the number of shops could be limited by establishing minimum distances required between cannabis shops.

Several prospective cannabis shop license applicants and others chimed in and offered to help fine tune regulations. These included local industry consultant, Jere Lowe. Ultimately it was decided that the Trustees needed to sleep on it and have some work sessions, form a working group, and take adequate time to study the options. The matter of the regulations was tabled pending more discussion.

The Paonia 2021 budget includes income of \$25,000 in taxes/fees from retail marijuana shops.

## Clark's End Minor Subdivision

### Approved

The Trustees approved the Clark's End minor subdivision of three lots with six possible residences, after a redesign was done of the proposal.

The subdivision on North Clark Avenue was first proposed on the R2 zoned property, by owner Lynn Mattingly as a major subdivision with eight possible residences in 2019 and was denied despite apparently meeting the requirements of the subdivision regulations. Neighbors and others were concerned about increased traffic on the dead-end street. In the meantime, the Town approved the nearby Edesia Community Kitchen facility, also on Clark in the same area, to operate with multiple business uses, including retail sales, and as an events center.

The proposal was then redesigned as a minor subdivision and re-submitted in 2020. There will be three lots with up to two single family homes, or one duplex, per lot. Six total residences.

### Other Actions and discussion:

In the first in a new round to Council meetings held on-line via Zoom Mayor Mary Bachran cautioned everyone that the COVID case in the county were trending upward sharply and care should be taken including: masking, social distancing and handwashing etc. She noted that while the County has been moved up to the yellow "caution" level the county is trending towards the red level with 71 new cases in just three days.

Trustee Dave Knutson, who follows oil and gas issues closely, reported that the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) had concluded their rulemaking with much stronger regulations related to protecting the environment as mandated by SB 181 passed in early 2019.

Citizen activist and former Trustee, Suzanne Watson, alleged that at a November 3 Work session the Council improperly took a vote and made decisions regarding utility rate increases. If correct this was a violation of the Colorado Open Meetings Law notifications requirement. (The increases were formally approved by resolution on November 10.) Apparently, minutes of the work session were taken but were not available for review.

Town Administrator/Clerk, Corinne Ferguson, announced that the Town's municipal code on municode.com had been improved with access to new posted documents including budgets and resolutions.

Police Chief Neil Ferguson reported that there were some major investigations underway regarding juveniles but offered no general details. He also noted that some of the signs that had been put up with COVID masking information had been vandalized and would be replaced. One trustee inquired as to the possibility of security cameras being installed near the signs.

Tamie Meck, of the Water and Sewer Committee, reported that the Town is moving ahead on correcting deficiencies in the water system identified by State inspectors in a "sanitary survey." She also noted that public works director, Travis Loberg, needed to have higher certifications in order to be the water and sewer plant operator. He is working towards those, Meck said. She stressed that despite the inspection issues the Town's water plants have continued to produce safe water and the Town has not failed any water tests.



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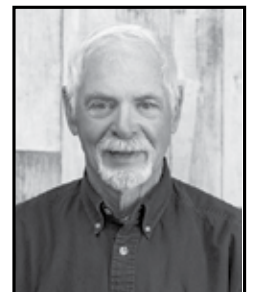
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# VALLEY ARTS AND CULTURE

## Blue Sage Center for the Arts: Virtual Black Eyed Pea Jubilee Winter Wine Events

(Submitted)

The Blue Sage is finding ways to keep us all engaged during the next few months of winter. The year will start off with a virtual Black Eyed Pea Jubilee. Thanks to David Jacobson, community members will be able to log on to our website where you can view music performances by many of our local awesome performers. And thanks to Rick Stockton and Thomas Smith there will also be a retrospective of "bands past". A link to the Black Eyed Pea will be available from bluesage.org and a link will also be shared on Facebook and through an email blast.

A virtual wine tasting and discussion series will start on Friday, January 8 at 6 pm and happen for 6 consecutive weeks. This is an alternative fundraiser for the art center thanks to 12 Colorado wineries who have partnered with the art center to bring a livestream virtual event featuring 12 signature wines. Included in this event is a case of wine, six virtual tastings, live discussions with vintners, and a talk with local geologist-expert Dr. Dave Noe. Starting on January 8, and for 5 additional Friday night's, participants will join the virtual event via a Zoom link. Each week the tasting will feature 2 wines. Zoom is a user-friendly platform where folks can connect in the safety of their home. The virtual wine tasting zoom sessions will include a short, pre-recorded video of each winery in their winery/vineyard. After the video there will be a tasting and discussion with the vintner. Participants will be able to interact with the wine maker and with everyone else who participates, making it a great happy hour event. The Blue Sage will also be available to help participants navigate how to join the meeting. The case of wine would normally retail for \$300. Participants are also encouraged to split the case between a group of friends. Cases of wine can be delivered to most of Western Colorado. People can also participate in just the virtual tasting for \$40 a session. Contact the Blue Sage if you missed the deadline and for more information.

The participating wineries and featured wines are: Alfred Eames Cellars - 2017 Tempranillo (red), Black Bridge Winery -2016 Breaker Row Red, Carlson Vineyards -The Wren Quinn Project (red), Colterris - 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon, Endless Endeavor - 2019 Petit-Petite (red), Mesa Winds - 2016 Meunier (red), Qutori Wines - 2018 Cabernet Franc (red), Sauvage Spectrum Sparklet Rose', Stone Cottage Cellar - 2018 Gewuerztraminer, The Storm Cellar - 2019 Dry Riesling, Whitewater Hill - 2019 Zero Below (Chardonnay), and 5680 Winery - 2019 Chardonnay.

On Tuesday, January 12, at 7 pm, increase your knowledge for the Virtual Wine Tasting event by joining local

geologist and tour guide, Dr. Dave Noe, for a presentation on *North Fork Geology and Viticulture: The Gift of the Valley*. This Zoom event will be an hour-long, armchair investigation of the relationship between land and wine, an illustrated story about the geology of the North Fork Valley and its vineyards. What does it take to grow wine grapes here? And are there places where the grapes grow best, or not at all? Dr. Noe's audiovisual journey will lead you to a new appreciation of the West Elks AVA wineries, and of the wines you will be enjoying at the Virtual Tasting! Dr Noe is a fourth-generation Coloradan. He currently lives in Paonia, Colorado, where he co-owns an educational and scenic guided tour company, Colorado Detours, and is a past board member with the Western Slope Conservation Center. Dr. Noe is a graduate of the University of Northern Colorado, University of Texas at Austin, and Colorado School of Mines. He is retired from the Colorado Geological Survey (CGS), where he made geologic maps of parts of western Colorado, including the North Fork, Delta and Montrose areas. This event is being sponsored by NextFifty Initiative and is free to participants of the virtual tastings and to those over 60. We ask others for a donation. Links to the meeting will be on our website, Facebook and sent in an email blast. To learn how easy it is to connect to Zoom please contact the Blue Sage. It could be a long winter and we have several events planned so learn about Zoom and connect with your neighbors.

To round out the month, the Blue Sage Annual Meeting will happen on Thursday, Jan 28th at 6 pm. A link to the meeting will be emailed to all 2021 members. There are several ways to join the Blue Sage membership; log onto our website [www.bluesage.org](http://www.bluesage.org), email us at [director@bluesage.org](mailto:director@bluesage.org) or give us a call 970-527-7243.

As always a huge thank you to our Gold Sponsors whose support is greatly appreciated: The Bross Hotel, Eames Winery, Ollie's Ice Cream, Remax Mountain West, and United Business Bank,

## CREAMERY ARTS CENTER Become a Member/Supporter

By Thomas Wills

The Hotchkiss Creamery Arts Center retail gallery will be taking their usual winter break during January and February of 2021. The winter break will give the facility, board, and staff time to recharge up some energy for a brand new season of creativity after a challenging 2020.

Like many arts-oriented organizations and facilities, the Creamery is being deeply stress-tested by the pandemic, the health related restrictions, and changes in how people interact with the arts. At least the first half of 2021 will be more of the same, or so is the best guess of the experts.

If you are a local artist/artisan or lover/supporter of the arts, the next couple months might be a good time for creative contemplation.

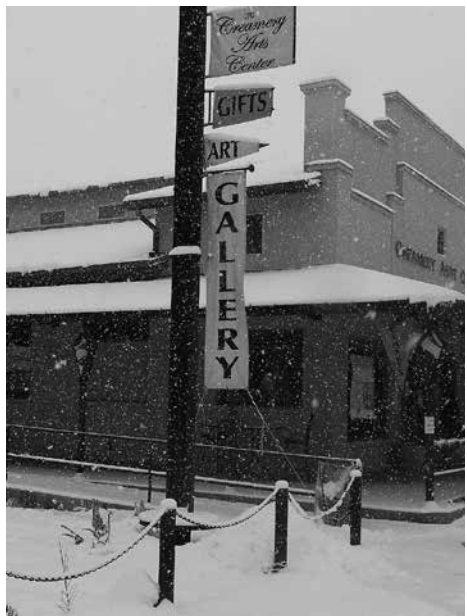
As the Town of Hotchkiss

discusses planning for economic revitalization, a process that will continue on into the new year, the Creamery should be part of the conversation. Retaining an existing treasured facility should be as important as any other goal.

Do you value the Creamery Arts Center. How much? If you are a Hotchkiss resident or business owner what do you see as the role of the Creamery in the community? What is the value of having such a facility that draws both visitors and area residents to Hotchkiss?

If you agree that the continued community access to the arts, and arts education through the Creamery, is of vital importance please consider becoming a member, or otherwise help support this valuable arts-anchor to Hotchkiss and the Valley. For information check out the CAC's website at [www.creameryartscenter.org](http://www.creameryartscenter.org)

Leave a message for Creamery manager, Rich Powell at the gallery at (970) - 872-4848. [Rich@creameryartscenter.org](mailto:Rich@creameryartscenter.org)



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# COVID-19 in the Valley Journal: Vaccine, Case Spikes, and Caution

By Thomas Wills

*Note: The sources for information are Delta County Public Information Officer – Darnell Place-Wise, Delta County Memorial Hospital District, the Delta County COVID-19 Dashboard, the State COVID-19 website, and the (Terry) O'Brien Report- supplemental Delta County/Regional dashboard data charts, analysis, commentary, and related correspondence. CDC for national information and guidance.*

The month of November saw Delta County's and the Valley have its first real wave of COVID-19 cases after a quiet summer and early fall. There were eight additional deaths reported during the month with one cluster a result of an outbreak at the Horizons Care Center, a nursing home in Eckert.

This trend continued during December, more outbreaks, hospitalization and more deaths, but the week before Christmas local healthcare workers received the first shots of the first vaccine to receive approval. A second (Moderna) vaccine was then approved, which should greatly increase the vaccine supply.

**November 23** – I made a before-Thanksgiving run to the Hotchkiss City Market at about 8:30 a.m. hoping to miss any crowds. There were shoppers there but probably about half as many as during my mid-afternoon trip a week ago. Despite reports of better mask enforcement there was no employee at the door encouraging masking as reported, but I saw only one shopper in the store without a mask. Directional one-way signage was back on the floors in center aisles.

**November 24** – Thirty-three new cases were reported as of yesterday. As the O'Brien Report noted today this was the highest one-day case count in Delta County in the entire nine months of the pandemic. O'Brien also noted there were 65 COVID deaths in the State yesterday, but none in the county. DCMH C-19 hospitalizations stood at 3. So far, the hospital is not being overwhelmed. The two-week test positivity rate stands at 9.66% with the numbers of tests being done increasing significantly.

O'Brien's analysis: *"Weekly case totals below show a disturbing steep upward trend. Mitigation is needed, especially in County offices and messaging. Messaging continues to be mixed by County leaders and some Town Councils and ineffective in communication to the Delta County masses."*

**November 25** – 12 new cases from yesterday and the most alarming number, 9 hospitalizations. The Delta County Independent devoted their front page and a lot of space to informing the public about the rise in local COVID-19 cases. Publisher Dennis Anderson wrote an editorial in which he pulled no punches in urging caution and mask wearing.

False and misleading pandemic-related information continues to be spread on local social media, much of it politically partisan.

**November 26** – Thanksgiving. Larry Jakubiak and volunteers served about 150 to-go meals from the Hotchkiss Senior Center kitchens/facility.

**November 27** - 30 new cases, 11 COVID hospitalizations currently, and 10 cumulative deaths with seven of those from the last month. Delta County reported that they would be going from yellow-caution level to orange-alert level on Monday.

Terry O'Brien noted in an e-mail analysis today that there had been over 40 school-age infections reported during November.

**November 29** – 35 new cases (a new local record day) and one new death.

15 student age cases reported over past four days.

**November 30** – 20 new cases, 11 cumulative deaths, and 8 current hospitalizations. Terry O'Brien added a countdown to May 2021 when a vaccine is expected to be available to the general public. O'Brien, extrapolating from the current trend, predicts over 600 new cases in December. November total was 432.

**December 1** – 26 new cases.  
**December 2** – As of today major outbreak site in the county include Delta State Correctional Facility with 22 cases and Horizons Care Center with cases involving 16 residents, 18 staff members and resulting in 6 deaths.

17 new cases reported in today's update.  
**December 3** – 24 new cases and 14 current hospitalizations. 714 cumulative cases with 250 active. Still Orange on the State meter – high risk but trending higher. Delta County has gone from a calm spot in the region to a hotspot.

**December 4** – 53 new cases were reported, a new local daily high number.

**December 7** – 11 cases reported with 8 in the hospital.

**December 8** - A new county-high of 67 cases were reported. 9 current hospitalizations. The O'Brien Supplemental Dashboard noted that Delta County's metrics were now the worst in 6 county immediate region although Garfield County now has an average of 48 new cases per day compared to Delta County's 29.75 cases per day. However, Delta County so far appears to be doubling their case numbers over November while Garfield's percentage increase is less.

**December 9** – 35 new cases.  
**December 10** – 34 new cases.  
**December 11** – 52 new cases.

The headline in Wednesday's Delta County Independent was "Delta County tops 800 COVID-19 cases." By Friday, the County has now nearly topped 1,000 cases with 17 cumulative deaths, 6 during the week. Hospitalizations holding at 7.

**December 12** – The State COVID website reported 49 more Delta County cases and the 17 cumulative deaths. The County reported 51 new cases as of 5 p.m. during the preceding 24 hours. There have been some minor data cleanup/conflicts between the State and County over the last couple days. There were two big free testing events today, one in Hotchkiss at the Fairgrounds, and one in Delta.

**December 13** – Crawford United Methodist Church, with the church closed by order of the regional bishop, offered "grab-and-go" communion on the front steps.

**December 14** – During my every few weeks trip to the Hotchkiss City Market today, at about 2:30 p.m., I saw only two customers in the store without masks in the store. An employee near the entrance was offering hand sanitizer and masks. Some people were not observing the one-way aisle floor markings but that may have been unintentional.

KVNF reported that vaccine doses were received by the Delta County hospital today, targeted specifically for health care workers working with COVID patients in the facility.

**December 15** – 39 new cases.  
**December 16** – 19 new cases and 14 current COVID hospitalizations; the latter a new high for the hospital.

**December 17** – 22 new cases reported plus one new death bringing the cumulative county total since March to 20. Hospitalizations rose to 17, three more that yesterday's record.

**December 18** – 29 new cases were reported as well as a new outbreak at a Delta area nursing home. The Delta

County Health Department urged people to stay with live-in family for Christmas and avoid crowded stores.

**December 19** - People continue to share doubts and misinformation about the vaccines on local social media pages while an 87 year old acquaintance reported that she had contracted COVID but was lucky to have only mild symptoms while quarantining at home.

December 21- 34 cases reported

today.  
**December 22** - 12 new cases and some continuing confusion between the State and County numbers.

**December 23** - 12 cases reported by the County.

**December 24** - 29 cases reported by the State for Delta County.

**December 25** - 26 cases reported by the State.

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<p><b>Hotchkiss Library</b> Tue 10-12 &amp; 2-6 Wed 10-12 &amp; 2-4 970.399.7781</p>	<p><b>Paonia Library</b> Wed &amp; Thu 10-12 &amp; 2-6 Fri &amp; Sat 10-12 &amp; 2-4 970.399.7881</p>

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## North Fork Senior Connections: Seniors Staying Connected During the Winter of Covid-19

Submitted by Linda McCone –  
North Fork Senior Connections

Humans are social beings who survive and thrive through our connections to others. Aging seems to decrease our social connections as children move away, spouses and friends pass away and health problems keep us closer to home. This year, the coronavirus pandemic has intensified the isolation, but there are ways to reach out and remain connected through the technology of computers, smart phones or tablets. At the end of this article you can find links to assistance with getting connected and free classes online.

North Fork Senior Connections conducted a survey of 44 of our members earlier this year to find out how and where people connected with our community and how technology could help maintain those connections. We learned that, previous to the pandemic, more than half of our members participated in and connected with others at local grocery stores (35), the library (33), other local merchants (27), local restaurants (27), The Blue Sage concert & classroom venue (26), and The Paradise Theater (25). Some of the other locations on our survey included Delta County Hospital and Clinics, senior centers, and churches.

Our second question had to do with civic organizations or local events in which, previous to the pandemic, our members may have participated, with a similar goal in mind. Using the same measurement of the top scores for 22 or more of those surveyed, the top organizations were: local publications, such as the *Merchant Herald*, *High Country Shopper*, etc., (38), North Fork Senior Connections (33), the Cherry Days Festival (29), KVNF (26), the Mountain Harvest Festival (24), and the Pickin' In the Park concert series (23).

Our aim, with this survey, was to determine the value of social media (message boards, websites, teleconferencing apps, etc.) in recreating or partly replacing some of the functions of these institutions. The questions is: how effective is social media in lessening social isolation for seniors and other vulnerable populations? What we learned was that a majority of respondents either own or have access to a computer or a smartphone which might give them access to the Internet and to apps such as Zoom or Facetime, and most of them have used either the computer, a cellphone, or a smartphone to communicate.

A recent AARP Colorado Livable Communities conference highlighted rural communities' use of technology to improve connections for older residents. The Partnership for Age Friendly Communities in Larimer County found that people were more likely to try social media when it connected family and friends or when it offered a way to participate in a class or event they were interested in. Organizations like Older Adults Technology Services (OATS), Senior Planet and GetSetUp provide instruction and support in digital technology that is both engaging and easy to understand.

Agencies including Region 10 Area Agency on Aging are partnering with these organizations to connect older adults, especially in rural areas, with experiences and information on the internet. In addition to help using software such as zoom and facetime and help with computers and smart phones, Senior Planet and GetSetUp offer classes, exercise programs, and social events. Eva Veitch, Community Living Services Director at Region 10, explained that social isolation, long a health concern for aging adults in rural areas, has become more of a problem with the corona virus pandemic. To help reduce

the impact, Region 10 has a pilot program with GetSetUp to provide free classes and technology support through February. The website can be accessed by computer, tablet or smart phone at the following website: <https://www.getsetup.io/partner/Region10>. Some of the classes offered live include "Get Started with Zoom", "Explore Your Genealogy", "How to Convert Music CDs to Digital Files", "iPhone Basics" and various "Social Hour" group meetings on a variety of topics.

Senior Planet is another organization providing classes, help with technology, and events online. Senior Planet Colorado, in particular, is working to expand programming to the rural areas of the state. Classes and events on that website are free to users at: <https://seniorplanet.org/locations/colorado/>. Region 10 is also partnering with Senior Planet to train volunteers to help seniors with technology once the pandemic is under control and face-to-face meetings can be held safely. Classes offered through Senior Planet include "Morning Stretch" and "Fit Fusion Workout", "How to Choose a computer", "Money Matters", Book Club discussions, "Mindfulness apps" and "Colorado Connects", a social discussion session. It's free! How can you beat that?

It appears that physical isolation will continue to be the most effective way to combat Covid-19 throughout the winter and beyond until vaccination rates limit the spread of the disease. However, these online programs can ease social isolation. While not the same as in-person interactions with friends and family, connections through on-line classes, discussions and events can help fill the gap.

North Fork Senior Connections (NFSC) is a local, independent non-profit dedicated to helping our elder neighbors to age-in-place. We do that by connecting seniors with volunteers who can help with small chores and errands, and through educational and social events that bring community members together, alleviating the social isolation that is often a problem for those who live alone. For more information about our organization or to access our online programs, visit our website at: <https://nfseniorconnections.helpfulvillage.com/>, or call us at (970) 527-3482.

## NORTH FORK REAL ESTATE REALTY 2020: It Was the Best of Times (In Local Real Estate)

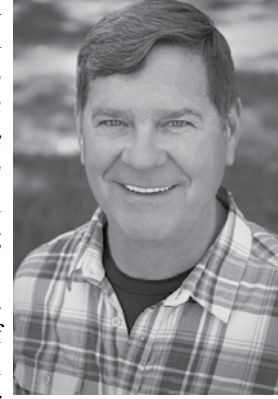
By Mike Jackson  
WesternColoradoRealty.com  
Offices in Hotchkiss and Paonia

Whew! I sure am glad *that's* behind us. I think it's safe to say that, having endured 2020, most everyone is looking forward to the new year with hope of better things to come—or even just a return to "normal." However, when it comes to the local real estate market, 2020 was one for the record book, with prices and transaction volume both increasing significantly. Who saw that coming? Obviously not me.

The irony and naiveté of what I anticipated for the coming year in this column last January, "... you could say it's *'steady as she goes'* with no sign of icebergs on the horizon," serves well to confirm the folly in making predictions.

I'll provide a statistical break-down of last year's Delta County real estate sales next month, after all the data is compiled, but suffice it to say: I think it was the best year ever. To double-check that suspicion, I spoke with the county assessor, Debbie Griffith, who agreed. Although the official tax-valuation statements won't arrive until next May, it's already safe to say they're going to go up—based upon transaction data from July of 2018 through June of 2020, she said. She was particularly taken by how many high-priced properties had sold and confirmed that the rate of appreciation was highest in the North Fork area (as it also had been for the prior two years). A year-to-year comparison by looking at MLS sales shows a 13% - 17% average value increase in the Delta and Surface Creek areas and a 26% - 31% average rise in the North Fork - roughly double! Unsurprisingly, the difference is attributable to the principle of supply and demand - with the North Fork, and Paonia in particular, being the most sought after location, while also being the area with the fewest homes for sale.

It's been said that the pandemic sped up changes to the economy that were already underway, though probably none more so than the remote-work scene. We've had folks moving here to get away from the city for decades. Heck, I'm one of them! But the ability to move, and bring your job along, has taken it to a new level. And, of course, it's not just here... Idaho, Montana, Vermont, particularly places with clean air, outdoor recreation, and a good internet connection. We've got that! So, you could say the demand-side of the equation kind of took care of itself in 2020.



Then there's the supply-side. As more homes sold and fewer came on the market, inventory levels plummeted county-wide, but nowhere has it been more pronounced than around Paonia where there is a void of new construction. Hotchkiss, on the other hand, has enjoyed a resurgence of new home building in the North Ridge Meadows subdivision. After sitting mostly idle for roughly a decade, there are currently six homes under contract or in construction with six more new, or resale, closed last year. Selling for just under \$200/sq. ft. they're comparably priced to an early 2000's home in Hidden Valley (a subdivision east of Paonia - ed.) or a modestly remodeled older home in Paonia.

Similarly, homes in Cedaredge's golf course community, often 15+ years old, are selling in the \$200/sq. ft. range, and comparable ones are just a bit less, about \$180-\$190, in Delta. Now, with the cost of building materials soaring and shortages of some components, it will be interesting to see how market activity is affected going forward. Continued super-low interest rates should help take some of the sting out of higher prices and a thriving front-range market will surely keep providing incentive for more folks to come this way in 2021 and beyond.

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# Another Month in the Valley

Continued from page 4

second round of a program that provides grants to businesses that suffered a loss in revenue due to the pandemic and/or had pandemic related expenses during the March - October 2020 period. The payments can be up to \$10,000. Contact the Town or go to the Region 10 website for an application and more details: [Region10.net](http://Region10.net)

**Solvana Therapy** has announced its opening in the Paonia Laundromat building on Second Street in Paonia. It is a herbal/holistic medicine/wellness store specializing in CBD products and locally made things.

A couple of landmark Hotchkiss area businesses are listed for sale: **Zack's BBQ** the iconic locals' hangout home of hearty food and amazing pies is looking for a new owner to continue the long tradition, and **High Country Gardens** – the great bedding plant and garden supply center on Rogers Mesa is also available.

**The Wearhouse Thriftshop**, run by volunteers from the HCUMC Peace Circle in the basement of Memorial Hall in Hotchkiss, will be closed during December and January due to pandemic concerns. They are not accepting donations during this time.

The **Hotchkiss Creamery Arts Center** retail gallery will be on hiatus during January and February for their usual winter break. Some other educational activities will continue. Artists and supporters are encouraged to become members for the upcoming year.

And if it's not one thing it's another. The State has noted that a lot of Colorado is into deep drought, especially over the fifteen weeks prior to early December, including our area, which is included in an "extreme" drought region. The State has instituted a program to urge and help municipalities to plan for a dry 2021. Our area was previously noted as a "hotspot" for global warming in the continental U.S. Pray for snow.

And **Solar Energy International**, the Paonia-based leader in training solar industry leaders/workers, has announced that administrator Kathy Swartz, who has headed things up since 2012 will be stepping down as of May 2021. The organization has seen an impressive amount of growth and success during Swartz's tenure.

**Steve Ela of Ela Family Farms on Rogers Mesa** was elected to a second year as chair of the National Organic Standards Board at the end of October. Ela says this is his last year, of five, on the board. It is under USDA and is a very active advisory board to the National Organic Program. The board reviews and suggests changes to substances allowed in organic production as well as policies for organic production.

**The Hotchkiss Community Chamber of Commerce reported the results of their annual holiday lighting contest:** The first-place winner in the business category was the Hotchkiss Fire Station. Hotchkiss Ace Gambles came in second place. The first-place winner in the residential category was a surprise, a home located across from Big B's and the K-8 School, near the corner of High Street and 4th Street. The second-place winner was the home of John and Billie Marta in North Ridge Meadows, who have been repeat winners for many previous years.

I missed this before but the Black Canyon Regional Land Trust has combined with the Mesa Land Trust to form the **Colorado West Land Trust**. "With

120,000 acres conserved in 6 counties (Delta, Gunnison, Mesa, Montrose, Ouray and San Miguel), Colorado West Land Trust seeks to meet both local and regional conservation needs." More info: [www.cowestlandtrust.org](http://www.cowestlandtrust.org)

**Kim Shay of Hotchkiss Community Chamber of Commerce and Ace/Gambles** and a leader on the town's economic development front tells the Herald that Hotchkiss has been approved for a grant to install an **electric car charging station** at the Hotchkiss Crawford Museum. Installation should be done in four to six months, if not sooner. The State is putting a big push behind transitioning transportation to electric vehicles and helping to install charging stations for travellers.

This will be the second public electric car charging station in the Valley, the first being in the secondary Town of Paonia parking lot on the west side of Main Street just south of Third Street.

The Hotchkiss installation will be done by Atlasta Solar who also did the Paonia facility.

**SK Bikes' Scott Shishim** tells Herald columnist Mike Jackson that he is purchasing the building on the northwest corner of Second and Main Street for a more roomier location. It's great to hear of a local business that is expanding, and that the Valley supports energy efficient biking.

## CRAWFORD AREA NEWS:

### Sponseller Named Volunteer of the Year, Hitching Post - Business of the Year

The Crawford Area Chamber of Commerce has announced their annual awards for 2020 honoring outstanding businesses and individuals.

Business of the Year is the iconic, picturesque Crawford business anchor, The Hitching Post Hotel and Farm Store.

Volunteer of the Year is Nathan Sponseller, proprietor of the Stonehouse Inn, co-founder of the Merchant Herald, familiar local banker with First State Bank and now Delta County Federal Credit Union, former Crawford Town trustee, with 25 years of service to the Hotchkiss Community Chamber of Commerce, including being president for 17 years.

Teacher of the Year is Jennifer Chavez at the Crawford Montessori School.

The Non-Profit of the Year is the Hotchkiss Lions Club, which prior to the pandemic had been splitting its meetings between Crawford and Hotchkiss since a good number of its 15 active members reside in the Crawford area.



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CRAWFORD, COLORADO

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134 Grand Ave.  
970-527-6223

WESTERN COLORADO  
**REALTY**.com  
WesternColoradoRealty.com

HOTCHKISS  
116 W. Bridge St.  
970-872-2230



Mike Jackson



Bob Pennetta



Dave Mitchell



Myles Roberts



Joe Young



Jocelyn Wiggins



**WELL-ESTABLISHED BUSINESS**  
since 2006. Top condition from the foundation to roof. In-floor heat (snowmelt) in sidewalks & wash bays. Building incl. an office, apartment, laundromat, storage room and 2 carwash bays, 1 indoor & 1 outdoor. Room for growth from an automated carwash bay to a liquor store.  
#776959 \$390,000 Bob Pennetta 234-2232



**COMMERCIAL SPACE**  
recently upgraded on Bridge St in Hotchkiss. Zoning of C-1 Core Mixed Use provides for many commercial, office, or residential uses. 1,661 sq ft. is bright and well-lit by fluorescent lighting, and has a 1/4 bath.  
#776890 \$99,500 Dave Mitchell 234-4046



**THE WHITE CRANE CONDOMINIUMS.**  
1903 Hotchkiss landmark brick building with 2 units and zoned 1-CM for mixed use. Downstairs is totally redone w/hardwood floors, original stamped tin ceilings, mezzanine & more. Upstairs is 2 bdrm, 2.5 bath, kitchen to die for, built-in vacuum system, spa tub, and an elevator. Each unit may be bought separately.  
#776841 \$550,000 Dave Mitchell 234-4046



**CUTE LITTLE HOME**  
with a convenient location close to downtown Paonia and Elementary School! The lot is spacious and fully fenced, with a storage shed included. The outside of the home was recently painted. Not many places like this available at this price.  
#TBD \$154,900 Jocelyn Wiggins 765-5251

**LIVE ON THE SMITH FORK OF THE GUNNISON RIVER IN CRAWFORD.**  
Great 35 acres with every type of wildlife you could imagine in the Western Rockies. 5 irrigated acres to raise a little hay. Wooded hillsides, a little waterfall and a pond to soak your feet in.  
#771437 \$265,000 Bob Pennetta 234-2232

**BEAUTIFUL LOT JUST UNDER 5 ACRES LOCATED ON FRUITLAND MESA.**  
The property has scattered cedar trees and wide open space filled with grass. A corner of the acreage shares a seasonal pond. Views of the West Elk Mountains. Water tap is paid and electric is on property. #772972 \$115,000 Joe Young 787-0734



## County Commissioners Hold Public Hearing on Final Version of Land Use Code

By Thomas Wills

On Thursday, December 3, the Delta County Commissioners, or at least two of the three, held a public hearing on what may be the final version of the new Delta County Land Use Code, which includes the County's first attempt at zoning based on lot sizes, uses, and proximity to municipalities. Commissioners Mark Roeber (District 3 – North Fork) and Don Suppes (District 2 – Surface Creek) were present, while commissioner Mike Lane (District 1-Delta area) was absent.

Some thirty people attended on-line via Zoom according to CHC's director, Natasha Leger, who attended and presented critical comments. She noted in an e-mail report that many comments focused on the code being completed during the 2020 pandemic year when many are distracted. Leger is urging members and supporters to ask the Commissioners to "remove



the exclusion for refining activities in the definition of Oil and Gas Support Services from the draft Land Use Code." Adding that: "These activities need to be regulated along with all Oil and Gas Extraction and Support Services in separate Oil and Gas regulations which meet the requirements of SB181 to minimize adverse impacts. Refining activities allowed by right in a commercial/industrial zone is against the law."

Other comments came from those unhappy with the county's ban on marijuana growing, confined animal feeding operation (CAFO) setbacks, and the regulations being push through while many are distracted/limited during the pandemic.

No decision was made after the hearing and it was stated that action on adopting the regulation would be considered in two or three weeks.

The Code, among other things, divides the unincorporated portions of the county into zones: A35 (35-acre minimum lots), A20 (20-acre minimum lots) A5 (5-acre minimum lots), Commercial/Industrial Zone, and UGA (urban growth areas). UGA zones are areas closely adjacent to municipalities into which the towns may expand in the foreseeable future. However, the towns and county will apparently need to work out conflicts between existing Growth Management Areas (GMAs) previously established

between the Towns and County by intergovernmental agreement with the same purpose, or there will in effect be yet another overlapping zone *not* acknowledged in the land use code. The UGA zones for both Hotchkiss and Paonia do not include significant portions of their GMAs.

Hotchkiss Mayor Larry Wilkening has noted that the UGA zoning will have the force of law, while the IGA instituted GMA maps are policy. He also reported at the December Hotchkiss Council meeting that the Town and County would be working on a new GMA-IGA based on a template being formatted by Delta City Manager Elyse Casselberry, who directed the County planning process.

In dealing with subdivisions in the unincorporated county in the A-35, A-20, and A-5 zones, developers may be approved for lots as small as 7,500 square feet if they are clusters in design that utilizes non-agricultural lands "designed to protect

significant agricultural, natural, scenic, or archaeological resources on the subject property." In such clustered developments the "stewardship" of the open space/agricultural lands may be held in common among the parcel owners.

On Monday, December 14, the Delta County Commissioners held a work session to discuss comments received as a result of the public hearing. According to coverage from the Delta County Citizens Report, it did not appear that any further substantive changes are being considered before adoption. They did agree to have a December 21 executive session briefing with the County Attorney to address oil/gas refining language that Citizens for a Healthy Community had comments and objections on as noted previously.

Possible adoption of the code may be considered by the Commissioners at their January 5, 2021 meeting. This will be followed by a moratorium on accepting new subdivision/land use applications during January and February ostensibly to give the staff time to get prepared to institute the new regulations and procedures.

The certified version of the Delta County Land Use Code and zoning maps are available on the Delta County website.

## VALLEY HISTORY: D.R.C. Brown, Scenic Mesa, and the Aspen/Hotchkiss Connection

By Thomas Wills

In the early, and later, and present history of the North Fork there have been a steady stream of affluent people from the Roaring Fork Valley who have taken a liking to the Valley and invested money and entrepreneurial energy here on the other side of the West Elk Mountains. One big draw was, and is, the lower elevation and milder climate.

Some of the Aspen/Roaring Fork investors have been people who lived in Aspen or environs *because* they had money, and there were some who made their money in the Aspen area and were reinvesting it. In the second camp was D.R.C. (David Robinson Crocker) Brown. Beginning in the early 1880's Brown was among the founders of the city of Aspen and its early mining industry. He made his money in silver mining there but the price of silver went up and way down over the early years and he apparently was a guy who paid attention and avoided the impacts felt by other mining investors. Brown began as a partner in the hardware/mercantile business with his father-in-law H.P. Cowenhaven in Black Hawk and then in Aspen in 1880. Brown was smart enough to diversify into banking and utility companies serving Aspen, and more while some of his mining contemporaries lost everything in the silver crash of 1893. And he invested in cattle ranching in the North Fork.

D.R.C. Brown may have been the last of the large-scale cattle barons in the North Fork/Smith Fork, following after John D. Morrissey, Sam Hartman/Ed Kreighton, and a not-very-successful attempt by Ed Hanson and his 7X Ranch.

Sometime after 1900, Brown and several relatives, including his brothers and their wives, staked out homesteads on Scenic Mesa south of Hotchkiss, the sprawling, sloping bench of land between the Smith Fork Canyon and the North Fork. Over time, according to an account in Laura S. Clock's comprehensive history of the Upper Valley high country, *Cabin and a Clothesline*, Brown eventually owned over 5,000 acres of land on Scenic Mesa and Fruitland Mesa.

According to Clock's account, Brown, who lived in Aspen and Denver, continued to show his business acumen in the North Fork. Being new to the cattle industry he avoided mistakes made by some early cattlemen by hiring people to run his operation that knew the industry. He began by hiring a friend with extensive experience with cattle, Pete McCabe, also from the Roaring Fork Valley. McCabe, as general manager and foreman, and his family, moved to the Brown lands on Scenic Mesa in 1913 where multiple extensive homes and barns were being built. The operation eventually had 5,000 head of cattle, 5,000 plus acres at the Scenic Mesa headquarters, land on Fruitland Mesa, and other properties throughout the North Fork/Smith Fork region including in the upper Muddy country.

A major part of the operation was trying to grow enough hay to winter-feed that number of cattle and despite Brown's extensive holdings,

producing adequate winter hay for 5,000 head could never be achieved. And winter range in the area proved to also be a bit thin. Clock repeats an old claim that early overgrazing had depleted the "dobes" from having adequate winter forage to almost none at all. The facts were apparently that the dobe plant cover had gone from thin to way thinner; the lower Valley being a high desert. Despite having a better operation than some in the past, Brown's herd also suffered winter losses due to inadequate feed.

But generally, D.R.C. Brown's North Fork cattle empire that lasted from 1913 to 1929 and from the 5,000 head to a final, more manageable, 600 head, was very successful. Brown, according to Clock, got back his initial investment in only three years, thanks to a boom in the cattle/beef market brought on by the American entry into World War I. Over the years Brown provided employment and money to many in the North Fork. He also pushed the local cattle industry forward and is credited with boosting smaller farmers/ranchers into entering the dairy industry, which was a mainstay in the Valley for many years. In 1915, according to the March 18, 1915 Paonian newspaper, Brown collaborated with a committee of farmers wanting to establish a creamery in Hotchkiss. He extended loans of some \$10,000 to local farmers to buy dairy cattle, which was credited with being the jumpstart that the early dairy industry needed.

After leaving the cattle business in 1929 Brown grazed sheep in the upper Valley for two years. Most of his lands and the sheep were sold off at the time of his death in 1930. He was living in Denver but was buried in Aspen as a pioneer of the town.

His son by his second wife, D.R.C. Brown Jr., continued ranching in the region with brother-in-law Robert Perry until 1951 when he sold his interest to Perry. Brown Junior, also known as "Darcy", was also busy in Aspen and is counted as a co-founder of the Aspen Ski Corporation in 1946. He leased the company his father's old mining claims and served on the first board of directors. He was also president and general manager for 22 years. He died at age 95 in March of 2008. His wife, Ruth, died in 2011.

In the mid 1990's when Julia Ferry Littlefield of Aspen purchased the Scenic Mesa Ranch, she referenced the history of D.R.C. Brown Sr. at the time. She established the region's first large bison ranch there and spent a lot of effort on restoring the ranges of Scenic Mesa using the bison as a regenerative tool. She, like Brown, was also a significant booster of Hotchkiss, restoring the Taylor Furniture building, first as an art gallery and then as her Buffalo Collection (bison leather furniture) store. She was also responsible for the construction of a new Hotchkiss Crawford Museum.

Her father, James Ferry, came to Aspen in 1948 and co-owned Aspen Airways. She died at age 71 on April 1, 2016.

**Sources:** Aspen Times (D.R.C. Brown Jr. and Julia Littlefield obituaries), Laura Clock – *Cabin and a Clothesline*.



### Paonia Council

Continued from page 1

#### Committee Recommends Allowing Additional Dwelling Units

The Governmental Affairs and Public Safety Committee of the council had drafted recommended changes to the Town's land development regulations that would allow for additional dwelling units (ADUs) in R-1 zoning. The idea is allowing things like converted garages or additions (of no more than 500 square feet or 25% of the existing residential floor space) that would expand the Town's housing at a time when affordable/adequate housing is a challenge. The recommendation also suggested that, according to a review by the Town Attorney, some ADU units could be added despite the Town's moratorium on new water taps. Such units would normally require a new full or partial tap fee, and would increase impacts/usage on the water and sewer systems, although the recommendation suggests that a new ADU could just use the current tap and just add a separate meter if the tap pipe size was adequate and only have to buy a tap if the existing tap size was inadequate to serve the both dwelling spaces.

The committee recommended that such ADUs not be allowed to be used as short-term rentals like AirB&B etc.

The trustees were asked to comment before an actual ordinance incorporating the recommendations was drafted and presented.

#### 2021 Budget Adopted.

The Trustees adopted the \$4.5 million 2021 Town of Paonia budget along with setting the 2021 property tax mill-levy.

**Building Inspector.** Town Attorney Bo Nerlin reported that Colorado Code Consultants, the Town's building inspection contractor, had not replied to a notification that the Town was not automatically renewing their contract, which expired as of the end of 2020. The Town had planned to renegotiate its contract with the private company with one goal being to reduce costs and move towards the building department being more self-supporting.

#### Other discussion, actions and items.

The Council accepted and certified the results of the combined November election including the passage of the commercial marijuana approval as well as Back the Badge that will benefit the Paonia Police Department to the tune of about \$168,000 in additional funding annually.

The Delta County Independent's Lisa Young reported on December 23 that Paonia Elementary School had receive the honor of being one of a possible 100 schools nationally to be named as a National ESEA Distinguished School. Up to two schools from each state receive the honor.

## Climate Science Action Depends on Moving the Issue Beyond Tribalism

Opinion by Thomas Wills

One additional negative impact of the current political climate is its effect on climate change action. Not only have we become divided along rough political party/tribal lines, but public acceptance of some aspects of science is also seen as belonging to one side of the divide or the other. People are picking and choosing which scientific facts, as we best know them, they will accept or reject based on whether they fit into their personal tribal narrative. This has been demonstrated currently by the mask/no-mask debate in which science overwhelmingly has shown that universal masking can make a significant difference in slowing the spread of the COVID virus. Despite every major health organization and State and local health departments, urging masking, some in our area still persist in sharing conspiracy theory YouTube videos and misrepresented studies as evidence that the experts are all lying. They stubbornly go to the grocery store maskless to demonstrate their belief in this conspiracy.

One wonders that if a significant portion of the population cannot be convinced to show respect for science and their fellow citizens during a health crisis when the effects are readily apparent, what hope is there that these same people will be willing to take or accept action on climate change mitigation, which is an existential long-

term crisis, and which is happening very incrementally, and where avoiding major future impacts is dependent upon everyone taking action now? Acceptance of climate science, and with it some principles of basic physics, seems to be also somewhat divided along ideological/political lines.

The question for all of us is how do we return to a time when everyone agreed on what basic facts are and shift the debate to about how to deal with those facts from very different points of view. For example, with climate change, once everyone agrees on what the facts as we best know them are, one side might argue for free market solutions like a carbon tax that is rebated to consumers, and the other side might argue for more government control of energy markets like massively subsidizing renewables and having a carbon tax that would help pay for that. In an ideal world a compromise would be reached and thoughtful action would move things ahead.

The current status quo seems to be a situation of facts on one side and a good measure of misinformation on the other and little room, at least on the federal government level, for thoughtful debate. The result is most real action on climate is happening within utility companies, industry, business, and State and local governments.

And with individuals.

## Delta County Has Gone From Least COVID Impacted to the Most in the Six County Region

By Thomas Wills

(Update: After the print edition of the Herald was sent to press, it was reported that a man in his 20s living in Colorado, near Denver, has been confirmed as the first U.S. case of the new, more virulent strain of COVID that was first detected in Great Britain. The mutation is up to 5 times more infectious but apparently no more deadly.)

Retired CPA, Terry O'Brien of Hotchkiss, who has been producing an independent supplemental report on the ongoing COVID-19 statistics and data for the past several months, notes in his recent charts (See below) and analysis, that Delta County has gone from having the lowest number of cases and infection rates in the six county region to the highest when scaled to evenly compare populations. The reasons for this may be several: Delta County has a more rural population, Delta County has had mixed compliance with health department/CDC recommendations - particularly on masking and social distancing, it took a while to ramp up adequate levels of testing, plus there were few early outbreaks - especially in nursing homes.

Beginning in November, Delta County was part of a national trend of having a second fall and winter COVID-19 surge that hit rural areas especially hard. Areas that had seemed somewhat buffered from the effects that were hitting more dense urban regions. By late December the number of cases in Delta County seemed to be declining somewhat, although there were up and down days and the number of tests being administered also went down. The two most important numbers: COVID hospitalizations and deaths remained in serious territory, with the former straining the Delta hospital's resources.

The conclusion to be drawn from all of this is we are not being cautious enough. In the next few months, while we anticipate general distribution of the vaccines, everyone needs to stay focused. Terry O'Brien notes that things are much worse now than they were prior to or during the April shutdown. Mask up, social distance, take recommended sanitary measures, and avoid large gatherings. And try to keep your sense of humor.

(See page 2 for more O'Brien report info.)

### Delta and Surrounding Counties Metric Rankings - Highest Metrics (Worst) to Lowest (Best)

O'Brien Report Graphic Data from the State ONLY as of 12/26/2020 after 4:00 PM

Two-Week Cumulative Incidence (SCALED)		Seven-Day Cumulative Incidence (SCALED)		Two-Week Average Positivity		December To Date Cases (SCALED)		Cumulative Deaths (SCALED)	
From State Dashboard		Verified w/ Harvard's Map		From State Dashboard		DCHD's Metrics Scaled		DCHD's Metrics Scaled	
County/Unit	Metric	County/Unit	Metric	County/Unit	Metric	County/Unit	Metric	County/Unit	Metric
Delta	1,260.7	Delta	129.7	Delta	13.00%	Delta	2,666	Mesa	82.0
Garfield	1,095.3	6 Cnty Total	64.1	Montrose	10.90%	Garfield	2,395	Montrose	67.8
6 Cnty Total	974.7	Garfield	62.9	Garfield	10.80%	6 Cnty Total	1,984	6 Cnty Total	67.7
Montrose	834.8	Mesa	57.1	Mesa	6.50%	Montrose	1,978	Delta	67.4
Mesa	826.8	Gunnison	55.5	Colorado 7d	6.19%	Mesa	1,831	Colorado	66.8
Gunnison	754.5	Montrose	51.8	Gunnison	5.30%	Gunnison	1,109	Ouray	60.8
Colorado	659.6	Colorado	42.2	Ouray	2.90%	Ouray	649	Garfield	43.2
Ouray	364.8	Ouray	20.3	6 Cnty Total	N/A	Colorado	615	Gunnison	28.6





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*January 2021*

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Fridays Jan 8—Feb 12

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 970-527-7243*

experience 12 Colorado Wines

\$400 includes

Case of 12 unique wines

6 virtual classes & Dr. Noe Discussion

## North Fork Geology and Viticulture: the Gift of the Valley

with Dr. Dave Noe

Tuesday, Jan 12

7 pm

*Zoom Link  
[bluesage.org](http://bluesage.org)  
 Facebook  
 Email Blast*



Armchair investigation of the relationship between land and wine, an illustrated story about the geology of the North Fork Valley and its vineyards. *Free to over 60 & Wine Tastings ~ donations asked from others*

*Call for info  
 970-527-7243*

## Annual Meeting

Thursday, Jan 28 ~ 6pm

Zoom link emailed





# THE BOOK OF THE NORTH FORK: Paleo and Archaic Americans - 10,000 BC to 1650 A.D.

By Thomas Wills

(The following is a draft excerpt from a book I am working on tentatively titled: *The Book of the North Fork*. The goal is to produce a local history book that includes a narrative overview of the big picture history of the Valley region including the basics of geology, geography, wildlife, plants, and human habitation and impacts.

The *Book of the North Fork*, if successful, will be a single volume reference especially aimed at newcomers and those that want to know about the history of the Valley region from a broad perspective.

We should all wrap our heads around the fact that all humans come from the same African beginnings including the ancient Americans who emigrated here via Asia/Siberia and were present in this Valley at least 12,000 years ago and possibly longer. Their relatives, mostly Northern Europeans, only arrived in the Valley as residents only 140 years ago and in America itself only 500 years ago.

I begin with first Americans and their world.)

In the beginning. About 1.8 million years ago the northern hemisphere of the planet began to enter what is known as The Ice Age or Pleistocene, a series of freezes and thaws occurring on a roughly 100,000-year cycle. The freezes were very long compared to the relatively brief thaws (inter-glacials). Currently we are in such an interglacial thaw period (Holocene) and have passed the mid-point where the Earth should be gradually recooling towards the next glaciation. But, for good or bad, modern humans seem to have reversed this due to adding massive amounts of fossil carbon manufactured greenhouse gasses back into the atmosphere and earth system. This dramatic change is being called a new geologic age, the Anthropocene – the age of humans.

During the freezes (glaciations), an ice sheet, sometimes a mile or more thick, extended from the north pole south into what is now the north-eastern and central U.S. These glaciation periods also cooled the climates over the rest of the planet. The cause of the Ice Age cycles is a complicated combination of back-and-forth variations in the Earth's orbit and tilt as it moves around the sun, combined with geologic changes that had removed a measure of carbon from the earth system.

In the latter part of the last (Wisconsin) glaciation period modern humans (*homo sapiens*) who had first evolved in Africa, and had slowly spread northward, crossed from Asia to North America via a land bridge that then existed between present day Russia and Alaska. This was possible because during glaciations a lot of the planet's water was locked into ice resulting a lowering of the sea level by some 300 feet. The first human crossings would have happened about 40,000 years ago since there have been

found traces of humans in Texas and Nevada that carbon date over 35,000 years old. We don't know exactly when, but if they crossed by the land bridge that is probably the right time frame. Even in warmer times the straits between Siberia and Alaska freeze over in deep winter allowing passage over the sea ice.

Some of the former Asians, transformed by geography into new Americans, headed south for obvious reasons. Humans reached the southern tip of South America some 10,000 years ago.

The Earth gradually emerged

west of Roger's Mesa, was continually occupied seasonally from about 12,000 years ago until the recent past when Utes used the area. According to BLM archeologist, Glade Hadden, the shelter is one of the oldest of the discovered human occupied sites in North America and possibly the oldest one with a history of *continuous, if seasonal*, regular human habitation.

At the same time, during the end of the last glaciation, the animal and plants of the area began to change due the warming climate and other factors including the arrival of the Paleo-Indians. At home on the

being stressed and challenges from several directions at once. And a decline over a couple thousand years or so is a relative long time in modern terms.

The Paleo-Indians are generally divided into two groups based on the types of flint/stone arrow heads and spear points they made: Clovis (who hunted mammoths/mastadons) and Folsom (who hunted giant bison). The Clovis came first and the Folsom are seen as their descendents. After them, or probably as the same culture changed, there was the Plano culture, also based on the style of projectile points. They were also more communal and tribal, working in larger groups. This began about 10,000 years ago.

As the region's climate changed, the Paleo-Indians diet changed from mega-fauna to smaller animals and plants, nuts, seeds and berries. About seven thousand years ago things changed enough for archeologists to divide the Clovis/Folsom/Plano cultures from a new category called "Archaic Indians".

Due to learning to utilize a greater variety of foods the Archaic populations grew larger, travelling in bands just large enough to be sustained by the available resources. They also apparently came together occasionally in larger gatherings. Culture was becoming much more sophisticated.

Although still nomadic hunter/gatherers, they also began to develop a limited form of agriculture, replanting the seeds of useful plants so they would be there for use in the future. Corn (maize) that had been domesticated from grasses in South America or the highlands in Mexico found its way north. According to Joe Ben Wheat's *Prehistoric People of the Northern South West* there was primitive corn being grown in New Mexico about 2,000 BC. Types of beans and squash followed completing the "three sisters" of southwest Indian agriculture.

Archaic Indians in the Southwest are also divided into three general cultures: Hohokam (centered in central/southern Arizona), Mogollon (centered in central western New Mexico and eastern Arizona) and Basketmaker/pueblo (roughly the Four Corners area including southwestern Colorado. Early Archaic Indians that travelled in and out of our area probably can be seen as part of the "basketmakers."

This culture continued to develop between about 2,000 years ago and 1540 to 1700 when the Spanish arrived from the south and changed everything. Prior to that, periods of drought, including one that lasted a quarter century for about 1276 to 1300 or so, devastated the more populated, agriculturally oriented, centers of Basketmaker culture including Mesa Verde and Chaco.

Beginning about 1650 to 1700 a *tribe*, consisting of many bands of Indians, utilizing new technology, horses, entered the Southwestern Colorado mountains from the east. The Utes.



from the last glacial period about 12,000 to 14,000 years ago and climates began to change, becoming warmer and for a time, wetter, due to melting glaciers. While Colorado and this region was not covered with ice during the glaciation there were extensive permanent glaciers in the mountains above a certain elevation. The top Grand Mesa was probably under such a glacier. Then, everything began to melt seasonally, the regional glaciers gradually disappearing.

The new Americans, now referred to as "Paleo-Indians," were in Colorado and the North Fork region as much as 12,000 years ago. The excavation of the Eagle Rock Shelter near Hotchkiss has produced extensive archeological evidence of this. The shelter, an area beneath an overhang of the river cliffs just south

Colorado Plateau area prior to the arrival of humans were: mammoths and mastodons (elephant family), camels, giant sloths, bison, tapirs, short nosed bears, horses, and more. Coincidentally, or not, many species of large animals, disappeared about 11,000 years ago, about a thousand years after the hunter-

gatherer humans arrived in the region.

Scientists, being scientists, are careful not to draw what may seem to be an obvious conclusion: hunter meets prey, kills prey, and eats it. They say that there were probably many factors in the relatively sudden disappearance of the region's more interesting mega-fauna not the least of which was a climate changing from a wet (montane) environment to a drier (xeric) one. In other words, our Colorado elephants, camels, giant sloths, and horses were

**While Colorado and this region was not covered with ice during the last glaciation there were extensive seasonally permanent glaciers in the mountains above a certain elevation.**



## OTHER VOICES: We Are All Relative Newcomers and Need to Collaborate

Opinion by Kate Linehan –  
Hotchkiss area

Upon reading a recent opinion piece titled “**Brotherhood of Local Coal Miner’s Helped Keep the Valley Agricultural.**” (December 2020 Herald – Ed.) I felt moved to share another perspective.

The piece focused on our valley’s coal mining history and the need to respect coal miners, especially because many people are still powering homes and buildings with coal.

But what struck me was the author’s short-term view of time. While it is true that white settlers in the late 1800’s established the

mining and agricultural tradition in our valley, it is also true that the native peoples who had been living here gracefully for many thousands of years were forcefully removed or killed to make way for this tradition.

So, who exactly are the ‘newcomers’, bucking for a new way in our valley today? I was born 37 years ago, about 60 miles from Paonia as the crow flies and have spent the majority of my life in that radius. It seems logical to me that on a broader spectrum of time, if you and/or your family arrived here in the last 150 years, you are a ‘newcomer’. And I am saddened that our community has so few elders whose lineage reaches

back much further to teach us the deeper human and natural history of this special place.

I respect the men and women who risk their lives to mine coal, and I respect the woman working on the front lines to protect the irreplaceable wild lands in our back yard. Both statements are true for me: While I don’t live in a home tied to the electrical grid, I do frequent businesses and homes that are tied to it. And these mountains have forever embedded their wild and magical beauty in my heart, just as I am sure they have for many who mine coal, graze cattle or grow food here among other occupations.



Instead of digging a trench to defend against perceived “newcomers”, as the author has done, wouldn’t it be nice to build a bridge that encourages all of us to engage in respectful conversation about our collective future? Our economy and culture is changing and that is a good thing. Every day I see men and women on the front lines of building a future that will necessarily be less coal based and more focused on regeneration, one that acknowledges the irreplaceable importance of wild land and clean water and air.

With mutual respect, we can forge a future that is forward-looking while not forgetting the past.

## Start Your 2021 by Expanding Your Horizons With Delta County Library Services

### Realize your Resolution at Delta County Libraries

Submitted by Tracy Ihnot - Delta County  
Libraries

In a recent study by Inc., a common New Year’s Resolution is “Learn Something New,” coming in at number four on the top ten list. “Save Money or Spend Less” came in at number three and “Read More” at number six.

The good news is that patrons of Delta County Libraries can achieve all three of these goals by taking advantage of library services in 2021. Along with the more obvious access to books and other materials, public computers and internet, and programming for all ages, there are some lesser-known resources that can make learning something new and saving money in the New Year possible.

Those who dream of traveling abroad, advancing career possibilities, or simply having fun by learning a new language need look no further than Delta County Libraries’ online library. Mango Languages offers online courses in 72 languages and opens up a world of possibilities for users. Whether you want to enroll in one of their most popular courses

like Spanish, Chinese, or French, or you are looking for something less common like Swahili, Icelandic, or American Sign Language, Mango Languages will help you meet your goal.

If learning a new language is not on your bucket list, then Universal Class might be more suited to help you meet your New Year’s Resolution. Universal Class is also available through the online library and offers over 500 continuing education courses. Courses in accounting, office skills, business, parenting, career training, auto mechanics, alternative medicine, web development, real estate and many more are available for free with a library card.

The resolution-setters of Delta County have many options to consider this year. Library resources, like Mango Languages and Universal Class, are opportunities to make those resolutions a reality, without reaching into your wallet for anything other than a library card.

“I really believe the libraries hold something of value for everyone,” says Leah Morris, Collections and Systems Administrator for Delta County Libraries. “I would love to see our patrons take advantage of these resources, not only as a New Year’s Resolution but year-round.”

Visit the online library at [deltalibraries.org](http://deltalibraries.org) to get started.



## Volunteers of America’s Annual Scholarship Recipients Announced

(Press release)

**MONTROSE, Colo. Dec. 31, 2020** – Volunteers of America National Services Foundation is pleased to announce seven Volunteers of America employees in the Western Colorado region have received scholarships to further their education.

This year’s awards recipients are Mary Beard, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, Senior Community PACE, Erin Berge, Regional Marketing Director, Elizabeth Edmonds, Regional Dietitian, Jed Kovach, Behavioral Health Counselor, Senior Community Care PACE, Rafael Nieto, LPN, Valley Manor Care Center, Daniel Overmeyer, Social Worker, Senior Community Care PACE and Brittany Urguizo, LPN, Valley Manor Care Center.

The purpose of the annual scholarship is to support and encourage employees to pursue learning opportunities through education and training, as this is a core value and a strategic initiative within the non-profit organization. Awards range from up to \$2,500 for training in fields including accounting, leadership or supervisory, social services, computer training and other specialties and up to \$5,000 for clinical nursing or therapy

education. All awards are to be used for tuition and books related to the education or training.

This year’s cohort will use the scholarships in a variety of ongoing educational tracks. Mary Beard, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist for Senior Community Care PACE will be completing five modules for certification in Integrative and Functional Nutrition through the Academy of Nutrition And Dietetics, Commission on Dietetic Registration.

“I have a Master of Science degree in foods and nutrition and have been working as a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist in the geriatric arena for 18 years,” Beard said. “My goal with completing this continuing professional education is to advance my skillset for providing medical nutritional therapy to improve symptoms of chronic disease.”

Erin Berge has enrolled in a Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Management course for an executive certificate in Digital Marketing Strategies, which will focus on digital-centric consumer behaviors and teach methods on incorporating digital data, automation and analytics into marketing plans.

Elizabeth Edmonds will apply her scholarship to a course certified by the Commission on Dietetic Registration in Training in Obesity for Adults. This course will equip her with the knowledge and skill set necessary to help manage obesity in clients at any age and enhance her ability to practice evidenced-based counseling interventions for clients of all ages.

Jed Kovach will use his scholarship to rejoin the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) for training, information, and other membership involvement. A majority of his scholarship will go towards ongoing training to sustain status as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in the state of Colorado, taking coursework to refine his clinical skills with issues related to vulnerable older adults.

Rafael Nieto received a scholarship to Colorado Mesa University to continue his education under the LPN-BSN Nursing program. His long-term goal is to become a Registered Nurse.

Dan Overmeyer will use his scholarship to continue his education to receive his social work license. “There are two separate examinations required; one can be done online and the other is the actual licensure exam,”

Overmeyer said. “Unfortunately there are no testing facilities in the local area and will require travel to the Eastern Slope or Salt Lake City. The scholarship will help with cost of the examination and travel to the required location. My long-term goal is to continue serving Volunteers of America as a Licensed Social Worker.”

Brittany Urquizo received a scholarship to Colorado Mesa University to continue her education under the BSN Nursing program, which she will complete in December of 2021. Urquizo’s long-term goal is to become a Registered Nurse.

To qualify for a scholarship, the employee must be employed for no less than six months, be in good standing, possess a satisfactory performance review, and the education assistance requested must be work related. Applicants must complete a detailed application packet and be recommended by a supervisor. Recipients are also responsible to work one year after graduation for Volunteers of America, stay in good standing, and remain an active working employee at a minimum of 24 hours per pay period.