

The North Fork Merchant Herald

The Digital Version of the
Newspaper From the Valley That
is in the Mood for a Double Crust
Cherry Pie

Digital Edition
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Cherry Days! Pg. 9

**Hotchkiss May See
November Vote on
Allowing Marijuana
Businesses
• Page 6**

**Paonia Town
Attorney Quits •
Page 9**

**Paonia to Look for
New
Administrator
Page 6**

**A New Crawford
Renaissance •
Page 3**

**Fiction:
The Rhubarb
of Anthracite
Page 10**

**Hotchkiss'
'Classic
Hardware Store
Page 8**

**Hotchkiss
Prepares to Sell
Old Town Shop
With Asbestos
Removal Project •
Page 5**

Town of Paonia and Delta County Open Discussion of Updated Growth Management Inter-Governmental Agreement • Town's Master Plan Plans

By Thomas Wills

Paonia Planning Commission

*Present: Temporary Chair – Trustee
Dave Knutson, Mayor Mary Bachran
and Barbara Heck. County Planning:
Carl Holm – Planning Director;
Audience: James Sorenson- Price Road
and Christina Patterson – Price Road
(both out-of-town), Sharin Patterson (in
town),*

The June 28, 2022 Paonia Planning Commission meeting had two major items on the agenda: a meeting with Delta County Planning Director – Carl Holm, to open a discussion on updating the growth management intergovernmental agreement between the Town and Delta County, and a discussion of updating the Town's Comprehensive Master Plan. Previously the County had unilaterally and drastically reduced the Town's growth area in the agreements map. The idea of the GMIGA is for the county and Town to collaborate on regulation areas close in to the Town that might be subject to development and annexation within the near future. The County left the IGAs in place but at the same time established an Urban Growth Area (UGA) zone that allows down to 7,500 square feet per lot, about 1,000 square feet more than a standard Town residential building lot. Something that small would require Town sewer and water.

According to State Statute, the Town has the right to be informed of, and comment on, development in the unincorporated county within a three-mile radius around the town. The growth area is a much smaller area.

Holm began by giving a basic overview of the IGA and the growth management overlay zone along with the County's recently adopted lot-size/use zoning. He noted that the County is looking at tweaking and updating the code, something that will affect the areas close to municipalities. This may include adding additional lot size zoning for one-acre minimum lots and 2 ½ acre minimum lots along with the UGA and A-5 (acre minimum) zones.

"We're trying to find the right balance near the town," Holm said.

Holm said the Planning Department is improving by trying to catch problems like building in easements, etc. early by asking for site plans when people come in for septic system and road access permits. Doing this may be more critical close in to

towns. The County requires no actual building permits and has adopted no building codes.

Questions Holm has for the Town: "What's the Town's expectation for growth around its borders?" and "Where would you be wanting to connect sewer and water if a project came in—be willing to?"

He noted that the County requires new homes/subdivided parcels within 400 feet of Town sewer to hook on/buy a tap but if the municipality doesn't want to hook them up or can't, and/or doesn't want to annex, or can't, then then a one-acre minimum size lot in the growth area would be required for a septic system.

The issue of the County having no building permit, codes, or building department came up and Holm seemed to be suggesting that the County would be willing to authorize the Town to regulate construction of building that utilize Town services under the Town's own code and inspector.

James Sorenson and Christina Patterson of the Price Road area adjacent to the Town said they didn't want to be annexed. They claimed that former Town Administrator Ken Knight wanted to annex their area along with the already annexed adjacent Riverbank Neighborhood.

Mayor Bachran wanted to see a definition in the new IGA of a "small" confined animal feeding operation that would be allowed in the growth area or nearby.

Dave Knutson brought up the Town's prohibition on corporate chain stores such as the Family Dollar that was proposed on Samuel Wade Road at the Town's Hwy 133 entrance a few years ago. He wanted Holm to be aware of the Town's wishes in that regard. The Town prohibited such businesses in the downtown core and didn't want to provide utilities regardless.

Commission member Barbara Heck noted that the Town of Paonia had previously sold out-of-town water taps allowing for one tap for a home on a property and one additional tap for stock water only for a single property. Heck claimed that the latter restriction is being widely violated with homes being built using the stock water taps.

"If you drive from Slate Point Road into town there are nine properties in violation of this," Heck said.

There were no conclusions from the discussion other than it appears that the Town needs to come to firm plans for how it would like to see areas

immediately outside of its boundaries develop or be regulated. A new Master Plan process could clarify many of these questions.

Comprehensive Plan Discussion

The second item on the agenda was a discussion of the long in-progress Paonia Comprehensive Master Plan update.

The last Paonia master plan was adopted in 1996 and is woefully out of date and has been mostly ignored. State law tasks municipal planning commissions with writing and adoption of Master Plan although the actual physical writing is usually done by planning consultants.

An update was begun under the previous administration of Ken Knight with assistant administrator/intern Evan Bolt making a pretty good start on the document before he left the employ of the Town.

The Town has now budgeted \$70,000 to hire a consulting firm to produce a completed update of the plan. Administrator Corinne Ferguson noted that there was a "grant opportunity" for \$25,000. The work done by Bolt and by the staff in the future could bring the price down further.

Mayor Bachran noted that the idea of the discussion was to broach the subject of what it will take for the Town to move ahead and issue a (RFP) (request for proposals) to complete the plan.

Dave Knutson was reticent in getting too far into the issue with only three of the five commission members present.

But there was some discussion of general wishes. Both Knutson and Bachran would like to see a reader-friendly, compact plan.

"We don't need a 200 page plan," Bachran said.

Some Master Plans also include brief executive summaries that hit all of the high points in the plan but usually also include a lot of detail and data for future reference in the larger document.

Bachran and Knutson seemed to be suggesting that something less than a full job by a planning consultant might be acceptable. Having a technical writer and a professional moderator was mentioned. There was a mention of favoring the hiring of local qualified people to help.

Bachran emphasized that the Town needed to move ahead and not just continually push this off into the future as they have done during the past two years of the pandemic.

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A Third Crawford Renaissance

By Thomas Wills

Crawford, Colorado: the little cowtown on a hill and “Crawford Country” in general that includes portions of both Delta and Montrose Counties, has had a lot of ups and downs over the years, mostly having to do the multiple reasons of fluctuating agricultural markets and advancing technology and infrastructure like better roads and faster, more reliable transportation that drew business away.

The North Fork’s smallest incorporated town now appears to be having something of a commercial renaissance with multiple new businesses and more on the way. Some are being made possible by progress in such things as the availability of high speed internet service and related benefits such as enhanced marketing opportunities.

Over the last 25 years there have been two upward cycles in Crawford, the first beginning in 1997-98 (when the Herald was still the “Hotchkiss” Merchant Herald) with the development and opening of the Mad Dog Ranch Fountain Cafe and Bakery in the center of town, renovating and expanding the long vacant Hagie General Store. Owners Pam and the late Joe Cocker (British blues and rock star) also purchased a lot of the adjoining real estate and heavily promoted their new business throughout the region. They especially encouraged high-end touring motorcyclists to the Mad Dog and Crawford as a fun destination.

Other businesses opened that took advantage of the publicity and higher visitor numbers over the next few years. Crawford saw the return of having an in-town bank.

Pam Cocker also began a tradition of having a Parade of Lights at Christmastime and even offered to put up lights on other businesses at her expense. There was a little grumbling, but the Town generally really appreciated the shot in the arm that the Cockers provided.

Another big plus during the period was the redesignation of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument as a National Park.

With the exit of the Cockers as downtown business drivers, the Mad Dog was sold, the location struggled with less glamorous proprietors and finally closed—hopefully temporarily. Other businesses took a hit as well.

Round Two:

While the 2020’s may not be the new roaring Twenties growth-wise yet in the North Fork, the trends seem to be pointing that way. Real estate prices are at an all-time high

and all-time housing availability is at a corresponding low. The now, almost in the rear-view, COVID19 pandemic has sent a new wave of urban refugees fleeing to bucolic, less populated places with Crawford Country and the Valley fitting that bill.

At the Stone House Inn, a three-story establishment with a European feel, echoing its name,

whose sister, Julie Mock, founded and runs the popular Lazy J. The larger of the structures, which was the original 1890’s Ong General Store sports old west detail including a Livery Stable sign on one side. The property, like the Stone House compound, is exceptionally landscaped. In the June 11 Crawford Pioneer Days Parade the three businesses were all represented

along with a reinvigorated post-pandemic spirit.

Across the street from the old Mad Dog Café is the sort of anchor or downtown Crawford Hitching Post combination of general store, feed store, hardware store, and motel all with a classic Old West look.

Around the corner is Wild Country Keepsakes with arts and crafts and all sorts of great gift stuff.

Then there is Joe’s Restaurant (and bar) (another Joe) across Hwy 92 from the Stone House. Formerly Diamond Joe’s and before that the landmark Boardwalk Restaurant and Bar, it continues a lengthy tradition in town.

The Lazy J Coffeeshop, Crawford Creative gallery, and the Open Door all have Facebook pages. The Hitching Post has a website and Facebook page. The Stone House Inn information and room booking is available at stonehouseinn.



The June 2022 Pioneer Days Parade in Crawford featured, among other things, a unique cowboy mounted on what looked to be a longhorn steer.

Herald Photo by Tom Wills

located just a few yards from the two-lane Highway 92 on the southeast edge of town, the Clipper Ditch burbles peacefully by below the historic stone structure. Owners Nathan Sponseller and his wife Lara are busy expanding their extremely charming business from a two-unit bed and breakfast into three units, an adjacent future visitor’s-oriented shop to be called The Lucky Horseshoe, and a new living unit for Lara’s retired mom.

The Lucky Horseshoe and new apartment will be located in an adjacent building being built using part of a former real estate office and greatly expanding on the footprint. The pandemic has had mixed impact on the owners of the Stone House Inn. Related supply issues have delayed the construction works since it took many months just to get delivery of things like new windows. On the other hand, the Inn was very busy during the pandemic as more visitors chose scenic rural places to vacation rather than say—Disneyland. Room bookings have dropped off a bit this season, Lara says.

But, as Nathan and Lara look around their Town and plan for a Lucky Horseshoe opening in the fall or spring, they are hopeful and even enthusiastic. Just up the hill from them three new businesses have opened in a couple of historic buildings between the Stone House and the old Mad Dog building: The Lazy J Coffeeshop, Crawford Creative gallery, and the Open Door Bookstore. The buildings are owned and were renovated by Steve Mock

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JUNE JOURNAL

In the national news as of late have been a series of tragedies; racist and mentally ill people making new blood-marks in the record of how much evil we humans are capable of doing to one another. Internationally, the Russian invasion of peaceful Ukraine is another such smear across the face of history. In both cases I have been struck by talk in the media of impacts on "small towns" like Uvalde, Texas and "small towns" and some cities in Ukraine characterized as "small".

Uvalde has a population of some 15,000 people, bigger than Delta and a little smaller than Montrose, and I wonder what certain media would classify Hotchkiss (about 950) and Paonia (about 1,500) or Crawford (403)? Micro-towns? Hamlets? The entire population of the North Fork is less than that of Uvalde. So, what's the point? Just that living in this Valley, in these towns, this place, is existing on a different scale and all the more precious for it.

May 24 – The June Herald went off the printer today with some last second scrambling to update a couple of late appearing ads and make a correction I happened to notice.

Week two of the Bridge Street reconstruction in Hotchkiss is moving along with the asphalt in my side of my block (Cedar to Oak) still being torn up. The first block in five blocks of the project. It is estimated that it will take three to four weeks to complete one side. That seems optimistic.

May 25 - What a beautiful day. I have irises blooming in the bookstore planters and poppies and more at my cottage. Bridge Steet construction noise has moved into the next block-Oak to First.

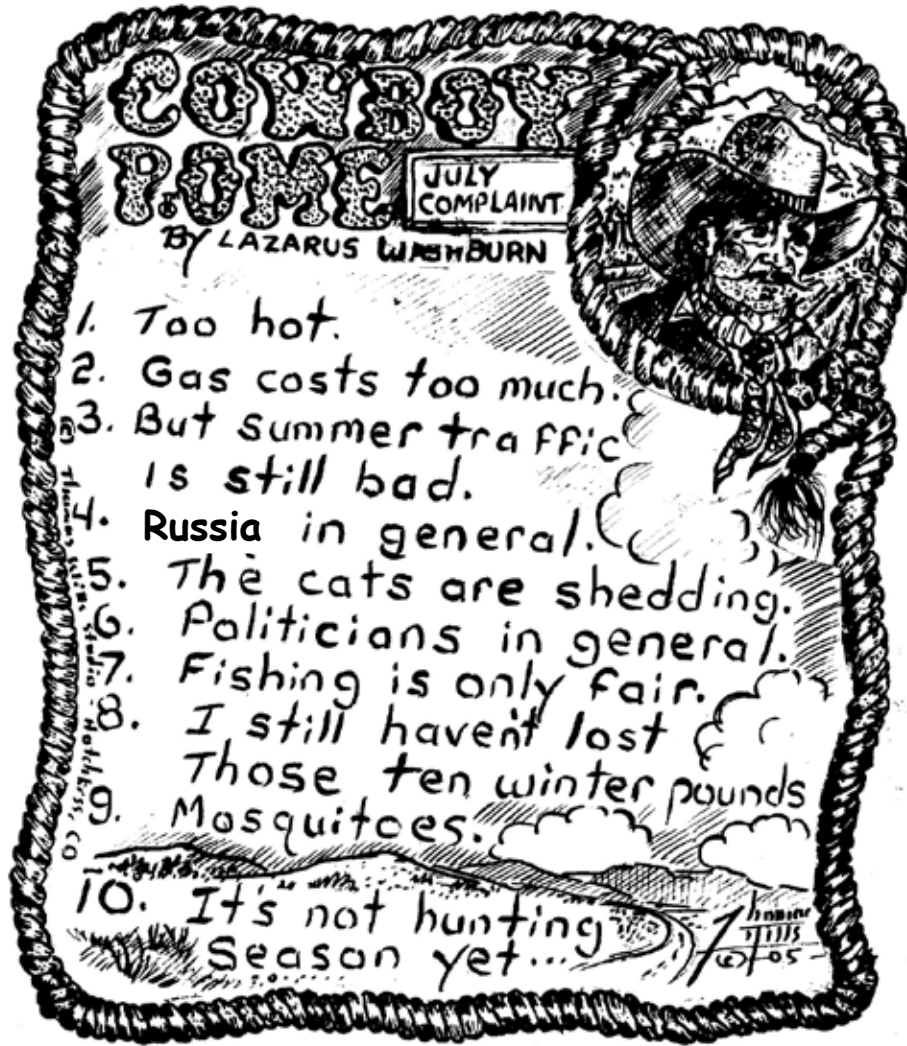
May 26 – I attended the Hotchkiss Community Chamber of Commerce meeting this morning and was, along with Kelsi Buhr (Bank of Colorado), appointed to fill the two vacancies on the board until the November board elections.

Nan began distribution of the June Merchant Herald.

The Paonia Town Council met for their second "regular" meeting of

Another Month in the Valley

By Thomas Wills
Publisher - Editor



length to just over three hours.

May 27 – Hot, sunny day. Had my first appointment with Dr. Lebsack at the North Fork Clinic concerning my sudden severe arthritis. One sharp doctor, and a preliminary diagnosis of *poly myalgic rheumatica* and I now have a hopeful plan, or at least a path forward.

May 29-30 – Rain fell during both day across the North Fork. Not a lot but what there was nice. Cooler temperatures. Historical note: the original Wolfenbarger Garage located immediately east of the Hotchkiss Town Hall was demolished on Sunday.

June 1 –

June 3 – Toasty warm and sunny. Paonia has part two of their last May meeting and spent long stretches of time debating such important topics

daughter (revealed as the anonymous donor) should be allowed to provide free food to the public for a Town meeting about strategic planning. Sigh...

June 4 - The first Hotchkiss Creamery Saturday Farmer's Market of the season was a little sparse due probably to the competing WSCC River Fest event in Paonia.

June 6 – A few drops of rain fell in the evening.

June 7 - Hot and sunny across the Valley.

June 8 – Hot and sunny with a high in Hotchkiss of over 90 degrees. Hotchkiss message Board post of the

day: "Very Large pig running down (Highway) 92 near the lumberyard (sawmill)."

June 9 – Had a wonderful early morning chat with Kim Shay of Ace/Gambles and the Chamber. Strong women rule! Another unseasonably hot day. Hotchkiss and Paonia held dueling Town Council meetings this evening with Paonia being another drama-fest and Hotchkiss having a bit a yawner.

June 11 - The Herald staff attended Crawford Pioneer Days. Nearly back to normal as true Crawford style goes. The guy riding the longhorn-looking steer really got my attention. Well-trained, but one wondered about the sharp horns right next to horses. Visited with Nathan and Lara at the super charming Stonehouse Inn and their in-progress, Lucky Horseshoe store. (See Crawford Renaissance on page 3.)

Another hot day with some mild rain late in the day. Very mild, as in five drops—and done. Received ten boxes of donation books at the bookstore in the afternoon.

This evening, in honor of Pride Month, there was a drag show at the Paradise Theatre sponsored by Delta Pride and The Learning Council.

June 12 – My bed of snow peas are all blooming and the tomatoes are growing like crazy after only being transplanted for a couple of weeks. Last two back-up pepper plants put into the beds. The earliest self-seeded Arugula has been fully grown and blooming since mid-May. Last rhubarb harvest before the heat knocks it down.

Since I recently developed PMR auto-immune arthritis I'm really appreciating my three-foot-high, orchard fruit box raised garden beds.

I cooked a pot of pinto bean chili in my solar oven so as not to heat up the cottage.

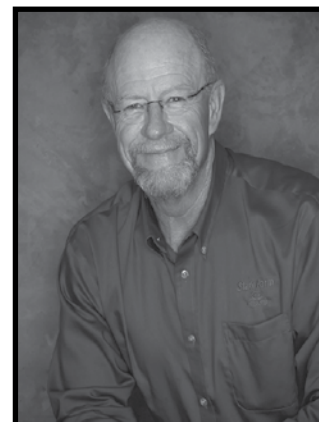
Big B's Delicious Orchards at Paonia hosted a celebration of the life of Elisa Greco, wife of KVNF's Jeff Reynolds, mom of Willis, and a steady presence behind (and in front of) a lot of things over the years. What a great life and person! She was 71.

June 13 – Hot and a bit windy at times. High fire risk weather. Today

Bridge Street reconstruction got near Fourth Street, the fifth and final block, in the excavation and refill portion. Re-paving should begin soon. Next week I hear.

Smoke from the Arizona fires caused the full moon in the evening to be tinged red.

June 14 - The Town of Paonia announced that the Pride flags on Grand Avenue were taken down today in honor of U.S. Flags for Flag Day but would return for



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CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

Hotchkiss to Spend \$12,000 for Asbestos Removal from Old Public Works Building

Water Supply Okay So Far, But...

By Thomas Wills

Hotchkiss Town Council

June 9, 2022

Present: Mayor Jim Wingfield, Patricia Medina, Tricia McFarland, Patrick Webb, and John Marta. Absent: Custer McLeod (family emergency) Staff: Town Clerk - Ginger Redden, Deputy Town Clerk - Karen Laing, Public Works Director - Mike Owens, Police Chief Scott Green and Town Attorney - Bo Nerlin via Zoom.

Hotchkiss Meetings/Information Restricted

The June Hotchkiss Council meeting was the polar opposite of those in up-valley sister town Paonia in that it only took a half-hour and transparency was a near minimum. Also, while Paonia allows public comment for three minutes per person on every single agenda item, new Hotchkiss Mayor Jim Wingfield did not allow even questions from the press asking for clarification. Hotchkiss does have a five minute-per-person public comment period but with only the press present (the Herald and DCI reporter Cassie Knust) there was no public input. Also, while Paonia provides complete on-line meeting packets to the public, the Hotchkiss Town Clerk offered only the agenda for this meeting despite several other items being provided to the Council members including staff reports, bid information, and a draft ordinance.

Hotchkiss meetings are also streamed via Zoom and this month featured a new projector and screen installed at a cost of \$5,372 (5.12.22 meeting figure). Town attorney Bo Nerlin, attending from his Ridgway home, was the lone Zoom participant.

Asbestos Will be Removed from Old Public Works Building Prior to Sale Offering

After some discussion the Trustees voted unanimously to accept a bid of \$11,930.70 from XTract Environmental Services of Grand Junction to remove asbestos building materials from the old public works building at Bridge and Oak streets. The building is no longer being used and will be put up for sale once the asbestos remediation is completed.

"It's time to get this done," Trustee John Marta said. (We need to) sell the building or something."

"We have to get it done, and done right," Mayor Wingfield agreed.

The public works building was replaced recently with a brand new, much larger structure on a Barrow Mesa property adjacent to the Town's lower water tank above the Clara Vista subdivision. Environmental testing of the old downtown property was recently completed. It was reported at the April meeting that interior air tests at the building had revealed elevated benzene levels, too high for residential use but acceptable for commercial. Removal of the asbestos will de-complicate the sale of the building on the 175ft (Bridge Street frontage) by 125 ft. deep property.

According to discussion by the

previous council, the Town would like to find a purchaser for the property who will institute a use that would generate sales tax and jobs for the town.

The bid amount was not included in the motion to approve XTract's bid over one other company's offer (and the mayor refused to allow a press question). The Town Clerk provided the number and other information after the meeting. The two bids, the other from a Front Range company, were relatively close, with XTract's being slightly lower.

Town Water Supply Okay, but Not Great

Public Works Director Mike Owens reported that the Leroux Creek Water Users are providing shareholders with 70% of their allocated per share volume, which is better than it was last year at the same time. In the meantime, June temperatures were above average rising well into the 90s speeding mountain snow melt and evaporation/transpiration rates. According to experts, the region has been in a climate change driven mega-drought since about 2000, the longest lasting one since roughly 1,200 years ago that was the largest factor in the collapse of the Anasazi culture.

The Town has previously discussed options of supplementing its Leroux Creek water with seasonally (summer) available water they own from either the Fire Mountain Canal and/or from the Overland Ditch but has taken no action. To use either source to give supply boost at the height of summer would require measures be taken adding treatment infrastructure (Fire Mountain) or taking legal action on establishing domestic rights (Overland.)

Owens also reported that he is waiting for the best options on the planned replacement of filtration membranes at the Town's Horse Park water treatment plant. The Town received a grant to help with that project.

Other Actions and Discussion:

The Council was reminded of an upcoming trustee training session scheduled for June 23 at 6pm at Town Hall.

Police Chief Scott Green reported that he had hired a fifth police officer. Cody Prentiss (sic?) joined the department as of June 1. Green noted that the department has been issuing tickets for traffic issues during the Bridge Street construction. The area of Park Drive between the Fairgrounds and Third Street has been made a one way, west to east, causing some enforcement issues.

The trustees accepted the first reading of Ordinance 2022-02 TDS Franchise Agreement. The ordinance renews TDS's (local landline phone and internet provider) 10-year agreement with the Town to allow them to use Town-owned rights of way for their business. The agreement also charges TDS a fee, which is then passed on to consumers via their phone bills. A public hearing, second reading, and possible ordinance adoption will take place at the July 14 council meeting.

An older Chevy Silverado pickup from the Public Works, put out to for public sale bids by the Town, was sold to Ted Hotchkiss for \$2,175. He beat out three other bidders.

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Paonia Citizens Complain About Pride Flag Display Town Will Seek New Administrator

Paonia Town Council
June 9, 2022

Just the facts... "Community members came in support and in opposition of the Pride flags downtown." Draft June 9, 2022 minutes.

Homo-phobia, Religion, Tolerance, and Gay Pride Flags

A decision by Town Administrator Corinne Ferguson to allow a display of Gay Pride Month flags resulted in controversy from those that either opposed homosexuality, opposed the flags on public property, or attacked the decision by Ferguson to allow them.

Out-of-town resident, Dawn Ullrey, spoke in protest to the Town honoring Gay Pride Week by allowing banners to be displayed along Grand Avenue. This included rainbow flags and across the street banner that proclaimed "You Are Welcome" referring to LGBTQ folks. She said she found the expressions of inclusiveness "very offensive." She later qualified her earlier comments by saying she, "was not against gay people," just "treating them special."

Dick Ullrey then pointed to a recent Supreme Court case that suggested that since the Gay Pride flags were allowed, other flags perhaps expressing offensive symbols or sentiments would have now also be allowed. He mentioned the KKK.

Another in-town resident quoted Old Testament scripture condemning homosexuality. Yet another town resident spoke in support of the displays, seeing them as not necessarily about homosexuality but rather about the support of a "wide range of people".

Former Trustee Michele Pattison echoed those thoughts in support of the flags but also thought that a Town policy, as mentioned by Trustee Paige Smith, about such displays on public property would be a good idea. Smith's proposal to discuss a policy for such displays on public property will be on the June 23 meeting agenda.

Others expressed no animosity towards the flags content but questioned the decision by the Town Administrator to allow their installation. Permission was also obtained from all of the Grand Avenue businesses in front of which the flags were placed.

The Pride Month displays and the June 11 *A Matter of Pride* drag show event at the Paradise were sponsored by The Learning Council in collaboration with Delta Pride. On the show poster it stated: "Protesters. No need to sign a release. You will be a star. Smile for the cameras."

Better Deal Sought on Engineering Work
After some discussion the trustees voted 5-1, with Dave Knutson opposing, to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for engineering services for the Town and specifically for development

of standard operating procedures (SOP) manual for the water and wastewater treatment plants. Up to that point SGM of Glenwood Springs has been providing engineering help but some trustee expressed concerns about costs and asked to see if there was a better deal out there.

Council Retreat Cancelled

After a discussion with a divided council, it was voted 3-3 to cancel a planned board "team building" retreat paid for by the mayor. In a surprise decision the mayor broke the tie in favor of cancelling the event expressing respect for those that opposed it. Opposition opinion ranged from not seeing a clear purpose to just generally seeing such exercises as worthless.

Mayor Bachran, who saw value in trying to bridge differences, has a degree in clinical psychology.

Executive Sessions Examine Legal Issues Related to Special Review After the Fact and Officer Appointments

The Council recessed into closed to the public executive session at mid-meeting for an hour and 24 minutes to get legal advice from the Town Attorney on:

- (a) employment law issues related to officer appointments; and
- (b) enforcement of special use review for Grand Avenue properties.

A second separate executive session was to discuss a personnel matter.

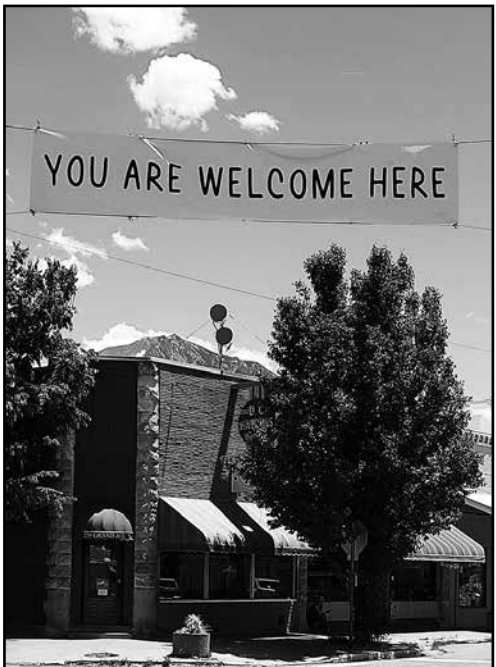
After they emerged from the session no action was taken but Dave Knutson registered a protest that a portion of the discussion had wandered too far from the legal issues related to the Grand Ave. apartments and had been too wide ranging. The purpose of that particular topic was to receive legal advice, not debate the details of the past process.

Other Actions and Discussion

Mayor Bachran reported that a representative from CDOT has told the Town that the work on the Fifth and Grand intersection cannot be begun until next year due to the timeline needed to get a contract and contractor in place. The Town had been approved for a CDOT grant to rebuild/realign the intersection due to safety concerns.

The trustees approved a United Health Care – Silver plan for employee health insurance coverage. The Town pays 90 percent of the premium as an employee benefit.

The meeting, as have the last couple meetings was continued to a Special Meeting. On June 22 at 6 p.m. the Council will meet to finish up the June 9 agenda and will then have their regular second meeting on the following day. It appears that the divided up meetings are taking an even cumulatively longer periods than the old late-into-the night



Hockenbery to Present Commercial Marijuana Petition to Hotchkiss Council Asking for Ballot Question

Report/Analysis by Thomas Wills

According to former Hotchkiss trustee and local businesswoman, Mary Hockenbery, she intends present a petition on July 14 requesting that the Town Council place a measure on the November General Election ballot asking the voters of Hotchkiss to allow retail recreational and medical marijuana businesses within the Town limits. The measure will be a downsized version of one submitted by Hockenbery in 2016 that was narrowly defeated by only 6% of Hotchkiss voters. At that time, voters approved placing special taxes on marijuana and marijuana product sales but rejected the approval of the businesses themselves. Thus, Hotchkiss already has the tax measures in place, something that simplifies the future question.

Hockenbery's petition requests, but doesn't mandate, that a suggested 50% of the new funding, if approved, go to Downtown Improvement projects identified in recent studies.

Analysis/Opinion

We here at the Herald supported the 2016 measure and do this one as well. (The writer was a member of the Town Council at that time and Ms. Hockenbery joined the Council in April of 2016.) The reasons the Herald stated then still apply now along with some updates:

1. Home growing of cannabis is already legal within the Town and County, so marijuana and any impacts

are already here, including from the black market, with the Town bearing some enforcement costs but receiving no revenues from it.

2. There are already recently opened marijuana dispensaries in Paonia and Cedaredge and further afield that draw revenue and jobs away from the town,

3. Commercial marijuana taxes would contribute significant funds to the Town that could pay for such things as sidewalk repairs, trails and parks, as well as downtown improvements.

4. Convenient, legal access to cannabis would seem to fit well in the Hotchkiss and Valley, which is establishing a brand as a destination for Agri-tourism drawn to wineries, organic farms and orchards, and farm to table dinners. It would add one more piece to a transitioning local economy

Finally, with many municipalities in Colorado having already worked out the kinks in having local cannabis businesses, the answers to many concerns have been answered and approving these legal businesses would seem a piece of low-hanging fruit in efforts towards economic development. The Town of Hotchkiss and its business community will benefit from well-regulated cannabis businesses. We thank Ms. Hockenbery for her efforts, and the Town Council in advance for seriously considering placing the question before the Hotchkiss voters this November.

DOWNTOWN HOTCHKISS IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS DURING BRIDGE STREET RECONSTRUCTION

Thanks to all of the locals and visitors who have made a little extra effort to visit Hotchkiss Downtown Core businesses during the construction. This disruption will wrap up by the end of this month and businesses on the north side of Bridge Street would especially benefit from your continued kindness during July.

DOWNTOWN HOTCHKISS - WORTH THE WALK AROUND THE BLOCK

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Continued on Page 12

Paonia Double Murder Suspect Held Over for Trial

Pot Money and Animosity Cited as Motives

By Thomas Wills

According to the regional reporting from the Montrose Daily Press and other media, Paonia's double murder suspect Mark Bradley Burns, 65, of Idaho, formerly of Paonia, will continue to be held without bail pending a future trial late this year or in early 2023. That was the decision reached by Judge Steven Schultz at the conclusion of a three-day hearing in late May to determine if there was enough evidence tying Burns to the crime. Schultz ruled that there was.

Burns was quickly arrested in Idaho and transported back to Colorado about two weeks after Michael Arnold, 69, and Donna Gallegos, 65, were discovered on February 2, 2022 shot to death in their Black Bridge Road home north of Paonia. Burns was charged with two counts of first-degree murder, along with counts of aggravated battery, burglary, and menacing. Both victims were shot several times. Burns had previously rented the home on the property but had been evicted last year after some animosity happening; Burns had testified in a 2021 civil trial involving Arnold's former girlfriend, whom Burns had been dating.

The key evidence presented at the hearing included the fact that Burns was shown to have returned to the area at the time of the killings, had motive and opportunity, and was allegedly identified from surveillance footage from cameras on the property despite attempts to conceal his identity. The videos, as described in reports, show a man, identified as Burns by witnesses, with his face partially obscured,

wearing covering clothing, gloves, and carrying a gun, The murder weapon, which was left at the scene, was traced back to having been purchased by Burns and the box for the weapon was found in his Idaho garage.

Burns was also shown to have contacted a person in Idaho after his arrest and instructed them to retrieve some \$16,000 in cash that had been buried on this property there under the snow. The money was retrieved by investigators. Investigators testified at the hearing that Burns had only a few hundred dollars in the bank prior to the murders and was apparently living on Social Security.

Prosecutors pointed to the theft of money as the prime motive for murders since it seemed to have been known to Burns that Arnold had considerable funds in cash allegedly from an apparently illicit marijuana business and Burns had even been involved in a previous plot that discussed stealing that money, the revelation of which apparently resulted in Burns' eviction from Arnold's property. During the investigation some \$326,000 in cash was discovered in a hidden safe in the victim's home along with "considerable" dried marijuana, but only about a dozen plants.

Burns, who denied all charges, was represented at the hearing by two public defenders. The attorneys argued that it was not clear the Burns was the person in the security camera video and that there were other people who knew about Arnold's marijuana business, the cash, and had reason to dislike him.

Cherry Days Looks to Be Better Than Ever for 2022

By Thomas Wills

No Dogs at Town Park. "The (Cherry Day Committee asks that you leave your dogs at home. We have had several dog fights in the past and it puts people in harm's way."

Paonia Cherry Days, back in full force this year, will be held July 2,3, and 4 (Saturday, Sunday and Monday) this year with the parade on Monday the Fourth. A handy three-day weekend for all. The Grand Marshalls of the July 4 parade this year for will be champion volunteers over the past three decades – Jim and Rita Lang of High Country Printing.

July 1 - Events will begin on the evening of July 1 as this issue is being distributed. Music with *The Mother Hips* and *Liver Down the River* will be happening 5-8 at Delicious Orchards. Then from 7:30 to 9 it will be the Paonia Players Summer Follies at the Paradise Theatre. Seniors and other generations presenting a lot of humor and fun.

There will be a Cherry Days 5K

on Saturday July 2 starting and ending at Apple Valley Park with registration beginning at 6:30 am and the race at 7:30 am when it's still nice and cool.

Saturday is also Downtown Day with live music, booths and activities on Grand Ave.

Down at Town Park the vendors booths and WOW Factor rides and music will be kicking off.

In the evening there will be another performance of the Summer Follies at the Paradise as well as bronc and bull riding at the Rodeo Arena.

July 3 – Sunday. A day to relax at the Town Park and enjoy music, vendors, lots of food, and the WOW rides.

July 4 – Pancake Breakfast at 7:30 at Town Hall and the Parade at 10 a.m. Everything continuing at Town Park including a full day of contests and entertainment. And don't miss the Ute Trails Car Club in the parade as up close in an exhibit at the Town Park at the end of the football field.



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Ace Gambles Continues Small Town Tradition in a Big Way

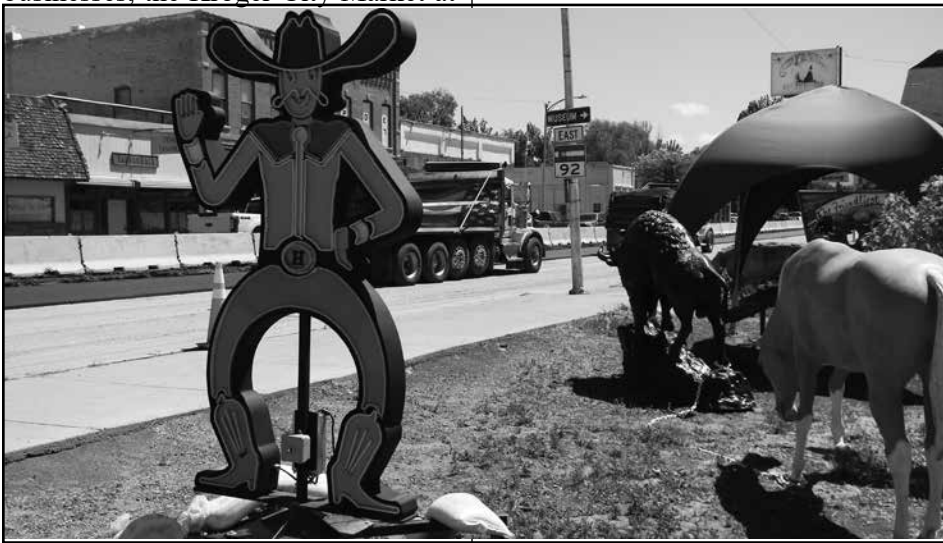
By Thomas Wills

Downtown Hotchkiss is fully open for business as the Bridge Street reconstruction wraps up by the end of July in time for the Delta County Fair.

Many small towns have a single business or two that everything revolves around, a universally useful place where every one goes. In Hotchkiss there are two such businesses; the Kroger City Market at

early 1900's but the core purpose of having a local center to supply local day-to-day needs is pretty much the same.

The "Gambles" in the name is also a nod to history. Shay's family originally bought the Gambles Hardware store, coincidentally located next to the Elks, in the 1990's from longtime proprietors Gavin and Marjorie Spore who had filled the commercial gap left



Ace Gambles Neon Cowboy by Bob Williams Photo by Tom Wills

one end of town and Kim Shay's Ace Gambles Hardware in the center of downtown next to the post office.

Shay's Ace Hardware is a little different than the standard Ace just like residents of the Valley are a little different. Things the store carries go well beyond the standard things you might expect. Along with nearly every hardware need you can think of there are unusual things like a rack of local and regional history books and a great selection of high quality organic garden seeds. Quality electric bicycles are a very new addition. Shay explains that she always pays close attention to what local people ask for and then does her best to find it. And, of course, service is something that sets her store well ahead of any faceless big box down the road. If you need help and advice there is always someone in the store who can line up all the pieces you need for your project.

Shay's densely filled store continues a tradition in Hotchkiss that began in the 1890s with the Duke Hanson Mercantile that eventually occupied what is now the Elks Lodge a block away. It was a huge store for its day that for many years anchored the downtown business district as Shay's Ace does today. Duke Hanson sold a wide range of things including buggies, wagons, and farm equipment. The stock has changed a lot since the

by Duke Hanson when in closed in 1950. Shortly thereafter, the business became an Ace Hardware and moved to larger quarters across the street in a brand new building constructed as part of a downtown revitalization project done by the then First State Bank of Hotchkiss. The bank also constructed two other business buildings in the downtown core as part of the same project.

Shortly after the move, Shay took over the business from her brother, John Williams, and steadily improved and expanded it. An addition was constructed and a few years ago an outdoor sales and storage area was added that allowed the business to more landscaping and gardening items. In front of the outdoor area is a small park in progress that always has interesting displays happening including expansive Christmas displays. Recent additions include a classic 1950s-motel-style neon (LED) cowboy sign, built from scratch by Shay's talented brother, Robert Williams, waving a friendly howdy to passers-by.

During the remainder of Bridge Street reconstruction patrons are reminded that there is ample, convenient parking located off the alley behind the store. Hotchkiss Ace Gambles is open 7 days a week including 9-4 hours on Sundays.



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New Businesses, Great Longtime Businesses and Yes, Some Bridge Street Reconstruction and the August County Fair. Take the time to look at downtown Hotchkiss more closely including the Abel Arts Gallery offers original art and fine etched glass gifts plus creation of stone memorials.

Paonia Town Attorney Quits New Flags and Banners Policy in the Works

By Thomas Wills

Paonia Town Council

June 23, 2022

Present: Mayor Mary Bachran, mayor pro-tem -Thomas Markle, Rick Stelter, Dave Weber, Paige Smith, John Valentine, and Dave Knutson.

Town Attorney Resigns

Paonia has lost a Town Attorney for the second time in six months as the evolving Council has presented certain unique challenges for someone attempting due diligence in that position.

Near the end of the meeting Town Attorney Jeff Conklin announced that he would be resigning as of the end of the month. He said that he had made the decision following a June 9 executive session during which he had offered confidential legal advice regarding a move to do a special review of construction at the Kennedy building and Masons Building after they had already been approved and nears completion, and questions related to Town Officer's appointments. Also, a separate session regarding a "personnel matter" On request for Mayor Bachran, Conklin then agreed to extend that deadline to allow the Town to have enough time to seek and hire another attorney.

Previous Town Attorney, Bo Nerlin, left his post near the beginning of the year. Although neither attorney gave specific reasons it is reasonable to assume that their decision came at least partially as a result of chaos within the council.

Flags and Banners Controversy Part II

"It doesn't take a genius to tell you this is not natural." Homophobic commenter who drew some applause.

"I'm disgusted by what I'm hearing." Subsequent pro-inclusiveness speaker.

In an effort to honor Pride Month *The Learning Council*, a locally-based progressive educational organization, asked and was granted permission to place Rainbow banners on the light pole brackets and place banners across the street that proclaimed "You are Welcome Here." The rainbow banners were taken down for Flag Day, but were then reinstalled. During the month many area residents expressed both opposition and support for the Pride Month display. Opposition ranged from frankly homophobic, to religious and political based views.

The discussion began with new trustee Dave Weber making a motion that any flags or banners flown on Town owned property be the U.S. Flag and the State flag. This brought a round of applause from the audience.

Then the complications of this were pointed out. What about holiday, festival, Creative District, and seasonal decorative banners? Was there a legal difference from the Town installed banner brackets on DMEA-owned poles and the Town flag poles at Town Hall and Poulos Park etc. even though all are in the Town-owned rights of way? Would ban in the motion apply to the DMEA poles? On the other hand, as highlighted by Trustee Paige Smith, would allowing such things as the rainbow/Pride banners on Town property open the Town to having to allow other flags that might also be divisive. Confederate flags being an example given.

Comments from the public were wide ranging from questioning transgender choices, equating homosexuals with pedophiles, to just expressing support for display of the American flag, or supporting

inclusiveness, but only occasionally touching on the issue at hand formulating a clear, thoughtful policy that would avoid some conflicts in the future.

The motion failed due to a stated need to have a clear policy in advance of any broad bans, and that the motion was too simplistic and would ban things like Cherry Days' banners. Dave Weber agreed, noting that he had intended only to allow discussion to begin, and suggested that the newly reconstituted streets committee draft a suggested policy and bring it back to the full council.

Trustee Smith than attempted a motion to allow only Town-approved banners and signs on the DMEA light poles.

Continued on Page 12

COVID-19 Less Deadly, But Still a Concern for the Non-Vaccinated and Health Challenged

By Thomas Wills

Colorado and other states saw an uptick in COVID cases in June while hospitalizations and deaths remained relatively low. There was one reported Delta County COVID death is late July, according to CDPHE reports, the first in about two months.

But, even with the less deadly, if more infectious, currently predominant COVID strain, danger remains for health challenged individuals and experts recommend continued precautions (*masking in public spaces etc.*) for them.

It's been a long weird trip since the early months of 2020 when we all became aware of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has also been a time of learning beginning with

great uncertainty and lack of facts as scientists and health experts swung back and forth of what procedures should be followed. Impacts were late arriving in the North Fork and county but when they did 140 (to date)Delta County patients died over three years and hundreds were hospitalized.

Amazingly, safe and effective vaccines began to be available in early 2021 and eventually over half the county's population was vaccinated with at least one dose. Many have now recieved a second booster shot.

Masking was mandated and then relaxed while evolving from cloth, and loose paper, to high tech N-95s. During June Delta Health facilities returned to requiring masking in all their facilities.



76th Annual Paonia Cherry Days

SATURDAY - THRU - MONDAY • JULY 2-4

FRIDAY – JULY 1
5–8 PM DELICIOUS ORCHARDS
 Music with The Mother Hips
7:30–9 PM PARADISE THEATER Paonia Players Presents
Summer Follies: A Musical Comedy Revue

SATURDAY – JULY 2
6:30 AM PAONIA K-8 REGISTRATION - Cherry Days 5K
7:30 AM PAONIA K-8 START - Cherry Days 5K
9 AM–12:00 PM PAONIA K-8 Cherry Days 500
 RC Car Race, at the track behind PK-8

DOWNTOWN DAY
10 AM–3 PM Booths & Activites on Grand Ave.
2ND STREET STAGE - LIVE MUSIC
11 AM–12:30PM Helen Highwater & Tim Veazy
12:30–2 PM John Hutchinson & Justin Hess

TOWN PARK
11 AM–9 PM WOW Factor Attractions
11 AM–9 PM Beer & Wine Garden Open
3 PM–9 PM Vendors Open

GAZEBO STAGE
3 PM–4:30 PM Mama Lingua
5 PM–6:30 PM Music from Devon and JoeAlan
7 PM–9 PM Music from Little Giant

RODEO GROUNDS
7 PM–9 PM Broncs and Bull Bash

PARADISE THEATRE
7 PM–9 PM Paonia Players Presents Summer
 Follies: A Musical Comedy Revue

SUNDAY – JULY 3
TOWN PARK
11 AM–9 PM Vendors Open
11 AM–9 PM WOW Factor Attractions
Noon–9 PM Beer & Wine Garden Open

GAZEBO STAGE
10:30 AM - NOON Non-Denomenational Church Service
12:30–2:00 PM Music by Cowboy Corral
2:00–2:30 PM Music by North Fork Choir
2:30–4:00 PM Music by ISO
4 PM–4:15 PM Paonia Players Songs, Dance, Comedy
4:30–6:00 PM Music by Union of None
7 PM–9 PM Music by Williams Brothers

MONDAY – JULY 4
DOWNTOWN PAONIA
7:30–9:30 AM Pancake Breakfast at the Town Hall
10 AM Independence Day Parade; P Town Mofos
1–4 PM NF Historic Society Ice Cream Social at Museum

TOWN PARK
11 AM–9 PM Vendors Open
11 AM–9 PM WOW Factor Attractions
11 AM–9 PM Beer & Wine Garden Open
12:30PM CONTEST REGISTRATION at Cherry Days Booth
Cherry Pit Spit, Wood Splitting, Cherry Baking Contest, Costume Contest

GAZEBO STAGE
11:30A-12 PM Karate Demo with Sensei McGavin
12 PM Opening Ceremony-Presentation of Colors by Civil Air Patrol, National Anthem Sage Moore, Royalty Coronation
12:15-2:00 PM Music by Bracken Creek
1:30-2:30 PM Cherry Pit Spit Contest
2:30 PM Costume Contest Judging
2:40–4 PM Live Music with Clifton Hanger
4–5 PM Woodsplitting Contest
5–6 PM Paonia's Got Talent Show, *Michael Zimmerle host*
6–6:30 PM Zumba with Christy Eller
7–9 PM Music with A Mac and the Height

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Stalking the Rhubarb of Anthracite

Sort of fiction By Lazarus Washburn Jr. - Singing Angel Ranch - Anthracite, CO

Edited by Thomas Wills

"It ain't spring in the Rio POCO until you have cooked up your first batch of rhubarb. That and asparagus. And the lilacs have finished blooming." Leslie Cross - Anthracite resident 1928 - 2020.

"The plant is really pretty in the spring, with the big giant leaves and all, but plain rhubarb, even sweetened up, is kind of slimy and stringy. I give all mine to the neighbors." Georgina Hargrove - West Elk County Sheriff - Anthracite, CO

"You can think of it as sort of the first fruit of the season. Tastes kinds fruity and tangy even though I'm not sure what the hell it is." Bald Bob Ardmak - carpenter/ranchhand - Anthracite, CO

"Injuns never had no rhubarb. It's American." Junior Buford - Realtor - Anthracite, CO

Desert Special!
Strawberry Rhubarb Pie - On the sidewalk chalkboard at the Chicken Abortionist Cafe. - Anthracite, CO

Spring starts a little later in Anthracite, Colorado (elevation 7,300 feet) than in other places in the region, like the lower North Fork Valley to the southwest where they have already planted their gardens. Up here no one sets tomatoes and peppers out in the open until mid-June and most gardeners with a sense of history have cold frames or hoop frames in most of their garden space.

The season begins with growing lettuces, greens and then peas under cover and then, as temperatures warm, moving the glass frame sashes (if you're old fashioned) or plastic covers around to protect more tender things while fully exposing others. In late August or early September, the process is reversed until everything is back under cover for the last few weeks. There are quite a few full-out greenhouses in town.

Mayor Zima Hydryk was taking a few Monday afternoon hours away from her Chicken Abortionist Cafe to work on her new garden. Since the 1990s she had lived in a twelve-foot wide trailer in Paradise Acres where the snug spaces in the cottonwoods

near the river had not allowed for much more than a driveway, storage shed, and a postage stamp lawn. In the fall of the last year, she had finally managed to get a loan to buy an old 1920's vintage house on Rice Street one block west of the business district on Albert Street. It needed a lot of work and the garage-shop had burned down (*Editor's note: After an accidental explosion involving some outdated dynamite had killed the former owner, Leslie Cross, 90, in 2020*) but it had the advantages of being directly behind the Chicken Abortionist and, after she had cut down one large, overgrown Chinese elm, a sunny back yard. The property also had a well that wouldn't have been legal to drill now since it was only about seventy-five feet deep, hitting, not a proper aquifer but the water table fed by the river and irrigation systems north and east of the town.

Bald Bob Ardmak, who lived next door with West Elk Bugle editor, LaPorte Freeman-Smoot, in the looming three story, ginger-breaded Victorian, and had gotten the well pump working previously, had been friends with the late former owner, and had been gardening in the yard himself for the past three of four years. Keeping the place up for the last owner, Jimmy Cross, a nephew who lived in Denver. The yard's one real treasure was an extensive patch of rhubarb nestled up next to the east side of the house.

"The well pipe had corroded out but quite a few plants here were still alive from the water off the back eaves. I dug some up and divided them a few times," Bob said. "Pretty much everything else was weeds and dust. Little elm trees that had come up all over, but I took out a lot of them."

"I really appreciate the work you've done here." Zima and Bob were harvesting crimson-tinted rhubarb stems, filling a small, galvanized washtub that had what looked like bullet holes in the bottom. Tossing the plate-sized leaves

into a pile for the compost pit.

"I appreciate you letting me sort of keep on sharecropping over here." On a small table that Zima had brought from the front porch, Bob started chopping stems into inch-long pieces and tossing them into a large stainless-steel soup pot half-filled with rinsing water. "LaPorte likes lots of summer shade in our yard. Not good for growing much." Bob had had his long, blonde going to silver, hair tied back in a ponytail.

"I really need the help," Zima said. "I haven't had a garden of my own since I was in high school growing up here. I really, really want a nice one but I'm gonna have to work even more

**"Injuns never had no rhubarb. It's American."
Jr. Buford - Realtor - Anthracite, CO**

Continued on Page 11

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BREAK BREAD WITH COMMUNITY

Rhubarb

Continued from page 10

hours at the restaurant to cover the mortgage. And I'm still paying on the business."

"Business. Strawberry rhubarb pies," Bob said. He waved his knife at the sky.

"Yup," Zima said. "Smothered in whipped cream or ice cream on top. Gonna be the desert special for the next few weeks. One of the hippie farms with greenhouses already has some really nice strawberries. People are already donating a lot of rhubarb from their yards that they don't want to see go to waste.

"You either love it or hate it," Bob said.

Business was back to near normal at the Chicken Abortionist after two years of COVID. The virus was still around but, as far as Zima knew, no one had died from it in months. A few people always in the hospital and nearly everyone she knew claimed they had gotten the Omicron variant over the winter, whether they had had an actual positive test or not. The only people still wearing masks were severely health-challenged, overly paranoid, —or the leftier Democrats.

Lunchtime on a Tuesday was pretty busy at the Abortionist and about half of the diners had the strawberry rhubarb pie or, for the purists, the rhubarb tart/turnover heated in the microwave with homemade vanilla ice cream on top. Zima had even made up a dozen turnovers that left out the cinnamon, just rhubarb, sugar, and a little cornstarch to stiffen things up.

Baba Eagle Bear asked to leave off the whipped or ice cream on his pie. "Lactose intolerant vegan," he said.

Phaedra Elkspirit suggested Zima use soy yogurt to make a nice topping for the pie and bought a couple of the plain turnovers to take home. "I ate all of the rhubarb in my yard in a couple quick batches and I'm still hungry for more."

"What this town needs are a year-round rhubarb dispensary," Baba said as he alternated between bites of the pie and his deluxe black-bean veggie burger. "All sorts of edibles."

Zima had a sudden inspiration. Rhubarb sorbet! Just freeze the cooked sweetened rhubarb and then run it through the Vita-mix. Maybe for the weekend when there were more tourists in town.

Conversation at the community coffee table in the back was about the weather and politics—in that order. Rhubarb came in third.

"I think my great grandparents planted the first rhubarb on our place," Junior Buford (*Amon Buford Jr – Ed.*). He had two scoops of vanilla Butterfinger Crunch ice cream on his double slice of pie. "1890s."

"That right?" Lisa Redbird who had delivered the pie ala mode and snagged his plate of well-gnawed pork ribs. He'd even eaten every bit of the accompanying coleslaw. "You sure the Utes didn't leave a patch for

Continued on Page 19

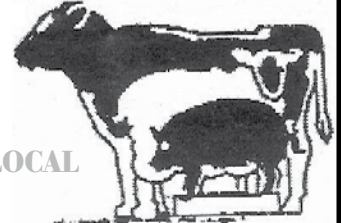


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Paonia Council: Continued from Page 9

There as then discussion about what “Town approved” meant. Some thought that the Council should approve each banner. Trustee Rick Stelter reminded the Council that in this case their job as to establish policy and not micro-manage the Town Administrator. Administrator Ferguson pointed out that the current code leaves banner approval to the administrator and she had been applying that code language during the approval. Changing policy would apparently require an ordinance changing the code. It was then suggested that the Streets Committee also be tasked with coming up recommendations about the DMEA poles as well as other Town property as previously mentioned.

Susie Lowe of the Paonia Creative District then reminded the new trustees that the Town and Creative District had received State funding for a signage play for the Town that included newly designed banners for the light poles promoting the Creative District. It was now about an hour and twenty minutes into an ultimately three-hour meeting and very little had been dealt with beyond the flags and banners issue.

The motion was then approved and the matter also referred to the Streets committee apparently to recommend an actual code change. The Streets Committee consists of Thomas Markle and John Valentine. The committee meetings will be open to the public.

Town Cops Dump Problem Guy Off in Somerset

During public comment a Somerset woman reported that she had been at the Ragged Mountain Fire District office in Somerset on June 14 at about 2:10 p.m. and observed Paonia police officers drop off a man on the highway nearby and drive off. The man appeared possibly inebriated and/or somewhat disoriented and the woman was concerned he might be struck by a vehicle. She was later told that the man had just been released from the hospital. The woman reported that her efforts to find what had happened, via a CORA request, from the Town Clerk’s office and Paonia PD had been less that successful at first and wished the Council to know of her difficulties.

She said she had finally received Paonia police reports as of the day of the meeting. Apparently, the man had been causing a disturbance in Paonia “yelling at people (near) the ballot box” (Town Hall) and more, and officers then took him to Somerset (in Gunnison County) and dropped him off, possibly at his own request. The woman saw this as Paonia passing a possible mental health issue off on another county.

Paonia Council - June 9 and June 22 Continuation Continued from Page 6

meetings.

Markle New Mayor Pro-Tem, Tries to Muzzle Mayor Again Ferguson Reappointed As Town Clerk But Council Will Look for New Administrator

June 22, 2022 –Part II

Okay, if parts one and two of the meeting that began on June 9 are combined, they total almost seven hours. As far as a quest for more efficient meetings go the Paonia Council appears to be losing ground. And for the week of June 20-25 the Town had three meetings, Two Council meetings and an all-day strategic planning session on Saturday.

Corinne Ferguson Re-appointed as Town Clerk

The sound was off for the Zoom recording until a point some two hours into the meetings when the first audible motion was by Paige Smith to appoint Corinne Ferguson as Town Clerk. All voted in favor. Ferguson herself has suggested that it would be a good thing to have a separate Town Clerk and Town Administrator, but that the affordability of having the two separate positions be considered during the 2023 budget process that should begin in the early fall.

A motion was then made by Dave Weber to begin a search for a Town Administrator. The motion as seconded as Dave Knutson returned from the bathroom. Thomas Markle noted that Administrator Ferguson’s contract expires in December and the search could be in anticipation of that. The motion passed unanimously.

In a bit of a surprise, the Council voted Markle to serve as Mayor pro-tem, replacing Dave Knutson who has filled that role. All were in favor with Markle voting no but accepting the position.

Then, Markle, as he had attempted in the past, made a motion to muzzle the mayor or other chair from commenting or expressing an opinion unless the Mayor or chair would be voting for a question, unless there is a tie vote. Markle then spoke at length trying to frame an argument.

“I have a First Amendment right,” Bachran said in opposition. “Just like everybody in this room has a First Amendment right.”

The motion failed on a 1-5 vote with Markle being the only one for it.

Robert’s Rules of Disorder?

Then, as if things couldn’t get more challenging, Paige Smith motioned that the Town should hire a professional parliamentarian to run two meetings in September. Markle seconded. After some discussion and some agreement that some training on Robert’s Rules could be helpful, Smith withdrew her motion. Markle then moved that the Town “price out” the cost of having a parliamentarian to run a meeting. The motioned passed unanimously. (Analysis Note: While the Council could have a parliamentarian on hand to appeal to for procedural questions, or do a training session, it is legally questionable if an outside non-elected parliamentarian could officially “run” a meeting as chair.)

Paige Smith then volunteered to be the one to do the research on the costs.

Sidewalk Repairs Delayed

The Trustees agreed with the Administrator to buildup the sidewalk fund until next year and then do a larger, more economical project.

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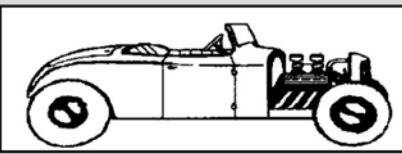
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Hotchkiss is Happening!
Worth the Walk Around the Block!
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Citizens for a Healthy Community

CHC Helping to Monitor Faulty Gas Wells in Area

Citizen Enforcement Aid Important

Report and opinion By *Natasha Leger*
 – Executive Director – Citizens for a Healthy Community

When an oil and gas operator tells you that they operate responsibly, how do you trust them? When a regulator, such as the Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) or the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) tells the public that strong regulations exist to protect public health, safety, the environment and wildlife, how does the public know those regulations are being properly enforced? It is important to note that the oil and gas industry is self-regulated. That means that it submits forms, notices, and reports to regulators on production, operations, and accidents.



Once a facility is permitted by the federal government, state or local government, power shifts to the operator in many instances, due to the lack of regulatory resources. For example, the COGCC has six inspectors for the 20,000 wells operating on the Western Slope. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), the primary state regulator for air pollution, rarely investigates complaints on the Western Slope. Facility inspections in the North Fork Valley are an average of every three years, and can be more often on private land than on more remote public lands.

These concerns led Citizens for a Healthy Community to partner with Earthworks in a citizen monitoring and enforcement program. Periodically throughout the year citizens, armed with a standard industry-approved thermal imaging camera, monitor publicly accessible well sites for emissions. Wells, separators, produced water tanks and any other facilities on the wellpad should not be leaking emissions.

In the Fall of 2020 CHC filed complaints with the COGCC and CDPHE for fugitive emissions detected at three well sites. In June 2022, CHC and Earthworks filed complaints on three well sites for fugitive emissions and rusty equipment. A pattern appears to be forming at one site. To COGCC's credit, upon receiving the

complaint in 2020, within three days an inspector was dispatched and the leak detected from a faulty dump coil in the separator. If CHC had not filed those complaints, how long would those leaks have gone undetected, spewing toxic chemicals into the air? We are still awaiting a response from our most recent complaints.

Public lands in the North Fork Valley have been a target for natural gas extraction. Thankfully, no federal oil and gas leases have been issued in the Valley since 2013. This is in large part because of actions taken by CHC members. However, with the BLM's revised resource management plan approved in April 2020, and the 100,000 plus acres of existing federal oil and gas leases, there is still the possibility that some 1,200 wells could be drilled in the future. So far, the watershed only has several active gas wells, on private and public lands. But the effects of those wells are not restricted to the physical footprint on which they occur.

Operators insist that they are good neighbors and operating responsibly and safely, but when citizens start to audit their behavior, a different picture emerges. The importance of citizen enforcement on the Western Slope is further evidenced by the 27 complaints for fugitive emissions and faulty equipment in Garfield, Rio Blanco, Routt and Jackson County that Earthworks recently filed with the COGCC and CDPHE.

Due to citizens groups' efforts across the state, regulations have been strengthened requiring more frequent monitoring and leak detection. However, that still does not seem to be enough to prevent greenhouse gas emissions from these types of operations. Delta County is located in one of the hottest climate hotspots in the USA, and climate scientists have been able to attribute most of this heating to the greenhouse gases being added to the atmosphere by fossil fuels.

to be proactive about monitoring and repairing their equipment in our airshed and watershed, and to prevent climate change-inducing emissions. While we appreciate that the complaint process worked last time, it doesn't solve the problem. It is time for responsible land use regulations that consider climate and water impacts in determining approval of such operations, because once a well is permitted it appears that we are stuck with long-term citizen monitoring and enforcement to ensure that the least damage is inflicted.

Operators cannot be trusted

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



Blue Sage Center for the Arts: Comedy, Jazz, and Other Music

Submitted by the Blue Sage Center for the Arts

The summer is heating up and the Blue Sage has just the thing to cool you off. Check out our Friday night Sage Alley Happy Hours, 5 to 7. Free music, full bar and cooled off with exterior swamp coolers. What more could you want to start your weekend off right.

July brings music from David Star, Ellen Staphenhorst, David Snider, Tony Soto and Sam Heart. The end of the month brings a special concert on Saturday, July 23 with Cary Morin and Ghost Dog. Described as “one of the best acoustic pickers on the scene today,” Cary Morin brings together the great musical traditions of America like no other. With deft fingerstyle guitar and vocals that alternately convey melodic elation and gritty world-weariness, Morin crafts an inimitable style often characterized as roots-infused Native Americana with hints of bluegrass, folk, blues, and rock. He has performed at renowned venues across the globe, including the Kennedy Center and Lincoln Center, and is the recipient of numerous awards and accolades. This event is made possible thanks to Next Fifty Initiative. People over sixty have free admission and a donation is asked from others.

The Blue Sage Loft is getting a face lift. Thanks to donations from Blue Sage supports and grants from the Hagen Foundation and the Bacon Family Foundation, the apartment above Curtis Hall is receiving much needed repairs and maintenance. The floors have been refinished, and interior storm windows are being installed and are sure to help with heating and cooling the historic space.

The Blue Sage is happy to announce we received 2 grants from the NextFifty Initiative. The Blue Sage Engage Series, bringing free cultural events to older adults has received funding to continue this lively program where not only older adults but everyone in our communities are able to enjoy theater, speakers, music and more for free. The grant enables us to build collaborations with other organizations and bring these programs not only to Paonia but also to Cedaredge, Montrose and other communities in rural Western Colorado.

A second grant we received from the Nextfifty Initiative is to make Sage Alley a permanent structure ensuring we are able to continue bringing outdoor events to our community. Thank you Nextfifty Initiative and donors who specifically donated to make sure this project came to a reality. Sage Alley is available to rent along with other spaces at the Blue Sage.

We will be spending our summer working on the Blue Sage 2023 concert season and the 2022/23 Engage Cultural Series. We are up for suggestions so contact us

if you have some ideas. Our Gallery and gift shop are open Tuesday through Saturday, come on by and support local artists.

Grants for the Blue Sage cover some of our costs for many of

our programs, but they do not cover everything. Community donations are still very important to our survival. Thank you to everyone who supports the Blue Sage. We could not do it without you.



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

By Thomas Wills

Teachers Wanted

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

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

Construction:

July should see the Bridge Street construction move to the north side of the street in front of the Creamery, which should help with access some since you, and travelers, can just turn at the next corner and park more easily, including in the parking lot behind the Creamery Park.

Tim Veazey Music on July 16

The Creamery shows off its great acoustics as a intimate music venue on July 16 when local/regional musical Tim Veazey returns for an encore show in Hotchkiss.

Members' Show Featured for July Main Hall Exhibition

The Delta Fine Arts Show that usually appears at the Creamery in July of each season has been rescheduled for September, which gives the Creamery gallery members a chance to once again strut their stuff and bring out some new pieces that have been shaping up in the studios.

Saturday Farmers Markets

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

The Shamanic Arts Center invitation to
Traveling Shamans Camp 2022
Fairgrounds in Hotchkiss
Friday AUG 26TH 2022 | Shamanic Culture
Gathering of shamans, artists, & wisdom teachers for ceremony, dancing, drumming, & talking story
More info at ShamansCamp.com

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Hotchkiss Crawford Museum Very Active in May and June

History of North Fork Water Presentation Scheduled for July 23

Hotchkiss Crawford Historical Society (HCHS) Board President, Carl Clay, reports that the Society and museum volunteers accomplished quite a lot as the summer season approached and July will continue the trend.

History of North Fork Water Presentation Scheduled for July 23

On Saturday, July 23 from 10:30 a.m. to noon at Memorial Hall, attorney, legal water expert, and Hotchkiss native, Neil Clay, will present a History of North Fork Water. The presentation is being arranged and sponsored by the HCHS in collaboration with Delta County Library District. With water being one of the hottest topics in the Valley and region this talk approaching local water resources from a historical perspective is especially timely and should be very well attended. Make sure to put it on your calendars. The presentation continues a series of historical talks presented by HCHS in collaboration with the Library.

Though it has been a bit more complicated to get to the museum during May and June due to the historic Bridge Street reconstruction, in July the traffic lanes will move to the south side of the street and visitorship and convenience for locals will be greatly improved.

In an e-mail to members, Carl Clay reported that activities and accomplishments for May included:

- Establishing and expanding the meeting room at the Museum into a records, resources, and research room which includes obituary files, family history files, school yearbooks, club and organization "scrapbooks", the binders that have been produced by the Newspaper Research Project team consisting of Lois Cotten, team leader, Janice Ruble Cooper, Elaine George Violet, Sherrie Wilkening, and Katie Gnauck.
- Continuing to host Museum visitors (in expanded hours) on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10-2 and Saturdays from 1-4
- Continuing to take inventory of technology needs that will help our volunteers be even better at being the best! Leigh Ann Hunt and Dan Hilleman have really stepped up to help us in that effort.
- Activating the service that allows us to accept credit card payment for books and other items offered at the Museum. Mary Jacobs has headed up that effort, and already we have found that capability to be invaluable.
- Hosting a tour of the Museum for 15 pre-school youngsters from Ms. Twila's class at Hotchkiss K-8.
- Entertaining a group of "older folks" at the invitation of Seniors Activities Director for the Montrose Recreation District, Cindy Phillips Marino, daughter of David and Nancy Douglass Phillips. Cindy asked us to bring a program from the Hotchkiss-Crawford Historical Society for a Seniors group at the Pavilion in Montrose on Monday May 23rd. We chose to present "Some Little Stories About a Little Part of Montrose County", and Lois Cotten, Shirley Ayer Cotten, and Orval Cotten did a fabulous job of taking Maher, the Gould Reservoir, and Onion Valley in Montrose County across the Black Canyon to Montrose!

- Completing a Veterans Exhibit in the Exhibit Hall of World War I and World War II memorabilia, thanks to Gwen Carpenter and Karen Emmons, new members of the Historical Society and leaders of the Black Canyon Veterans Auxiliary.
- Beginning collaboration with Sarah Smith, Library Manager for the North Fork Libraries, in preparation for the Saturday July 23rd presentation by Water Law Attorney Aaron Clay concerning the history of water in the North Fork Valley. This program is scheduled to be presented at Memorial Hall from 10:30 a.m. to noon, and both the Hotchkiss

Clay reported that they have 93 individuals or families who are current members, and the better news is that 21 of those 93 are NEW MEMBERS this year. The not-so-good news is that 31 individuals or families who were members in 2021 have not yet renewed. Clay believes that several in that group have simply not printed and completed the membership form that should accompany the appropriate fee. If that describes your situation, and you can't locate the form from previous correspondence, please call President Carl Clay at 970-209-5535 or drop by the museum during their regular hours



In 1941 when the Gun Toter's Day parade was held Bridge Street was still a dusty gravel road. . Photo Hotchkiss Crawford Historical Museum collection.

Library and the Hotchkiss-Crawford Historical Society Museum will be open to welcome visitors afterwards.

- Arranging for a monthly spotlight on the Historical Society featured in Tom Wills' *North Fork Merchant Herald*, which began with the June issue.
- Working with Mary Hockenbery as the administrator for the HCHS Facebook posts that have attracted considerable attention both locally and beyond. Be sure to "like" her posts!

Clay then highlighted thing that had happened in June and that were in progress.

- Already we have had visitors from Virginia and Michigan searching our records for the Will VanEngen family and others from the Fruitland Mesa Dutch Colony.
- The ladies, who for the longest time have offered books from our bookstore at special events, were at the Pioneer Days celebration in Crawford on Saturday, June 11.
- Our regular monthly meetings are on the second Monday of each month at 1:00 p.m. at the Museum, and we encourage members to attend as we consider the things that make the Society a valuable part of our community. "It's through membership that HCHS can continue to pursue the theme "A Sense of Place" and all that that might embrace. You are wanted, needed, and appreciated," Clay wrote.
- The HCHS wrapped up their annual membership drive and

(Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-2 and Saturday 1-4 and ask for the form.

"It is through your membership that we are able to achieve our mission: *preserving the past for future generations!* And we thank you for that!" Clay says.

Local History: Movies in the North Fork

By Thomas Wills

In many small towns in the West's early days the local entertainment venue was frequently called "The Opera House" although they rarely saw presentations of operas as such. The name was simply an effort towards proclaiming that a civilization of high culture had arrived despite the reality of mud, dust, and a certain lack of many amenities.

In Hotchkiss in the 1890's The Hotchkiss Opera House, located on the north side of the East 100 block of Main Street at mid-block. A rather standard, false fronted frame building it contained the town's dance floor, venue for traveling entertainers and well as a gathering place for other community events.

With the arrival of silent movies, a theater dedicated to them, The Artex, opened in Hotchkiss in 1908. It was succeeded by the Crescent Theatre located in a large brick structure, the former Reich and Sons Livery Stable located on what is now the site of Ace/Gambles Hardware. A slight odor of equine origin lingered in the structure for its remaining life according to reports from movie-goers. The building later burned.

In 1936, despite the Great Depression, the Princess Theater opened in a brand new unique wooden framed Quonset hut style building at the site of what is now the Creamery Arts Center Park. The first movie shown there was a romantic comedy entitled *Lady be Careful*. The Theater later closed (1970s?) and became an antique store. The building was demolished in 2000 after the Town of Hotchkiss threatened to condemn the structure.

In the 1950's a drive-in movie theater opened on Rogers Mesa and finally closed about two decades later.

Continued on page 17

Community Giveback City Market

Horizons is now part of the City Market Community Rewards Program. City Market will pay up to \$400,000 to participating organizations when their supporters shop City Market using their enrolled loyalty cards.

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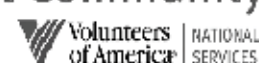


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Western Slope Conservation Center

Sen. Bennet Looks to Protect Land in the North Fork Valley

By Ben Katz - Public Lands Program Director
Western Slope Conservation Center

In early May 2022, Senator Bennet introduced a discussion draft of the Gunnison Outdoor Resources Protection Act, legislation designed to protect critical areas of Gunnison County through designations like special management areas, wildlife conservation areas, recreation management areas, and designated Wilderness. Born out of the working group Gunnison Public Lands Initiative (GPLI) and grounded in an extensive multi-year community vetting process, this draft legislation – the Gunnison Outdoor Resources Protection Act (or the “GORP Act”) – was released for public review and comment until July 19th.

The Gunnison Public Lands Initiative (GPLI) is a coalition of stakeholders from ten community groups with interests including ranching, water resources, motorized recreation, conservation, mountain biking, hunting, and angling. In 2019, after years of discussion with these groups and the public, the GPLI released its community proposal that provides a carefully vetted, deliberative vision for the future of local public lands in and around Gunnison County. The Western Slope Conservation Center, while not part of this coalition, has played a supporting role throughout the process, and is supportive of the work the coalition has done thus far.

You may not realize it, but over half of the North Fork of the Gunnison River watershed actually falls in Gunnison County. Special areas in our upper watershed like the Clear Fork of Muddy Creek drainage, which is the main source of water for Paonia Reservoir, and the Pilot Knob Roadless Area, a critical wildlife area threatened by oil and gas development, most recently the North Fork Mancos Master Development plan, both lie over the county boundary. Within the GORP Act discussion draft lie a few “in discussion” areas, meaning Sen. Bennet has not decided whether or not he should include them in the final legislation. Three of these areas are in the North Fork watershed, and include Clear Fork and Pilot Knob, as well as Black Mesa area outside of Crawford. It is now that Sen. Bennet must hear from the communities of the North Fork Valley to insist that he keep these areas in the bill. To show your support, and to get more information, please visit <https://westernslopeconservation.org/gorpact/>.

WSSC Celebrates 20th Annual River Improvement Celebration

by Tanya Henderson - WSSC Executive Director

The first weekend last month saw Western Slope Conservation Center hosting our 20th annual celebration of the North Fork of the Gunnison at RiverFest in Paonia River Park. In twenty years we’ve come a long way! From a casual gathering and informal float directed at

particular river improvement projects over the years to what we were able to put on last month with a professionally guided fundraising float between Paonia and Hotchkiss. The work that has gone into improving the fourteen miles of the North Fork of the Gunnison has been a long effort that countless hours of service from community volunteers have made possible over the years. To even safely navigate the North Fork was almost impossible before our parent organization, the North Fork River Improvement Association, rallied resources, expertise and the will of the community to make the river safer for recreation while also restoring riparian habitat by changing river patterns and combating invasive species.

Now here we are in 2022 with a wonderful stretch of river that can be enjoyed by all and is even a featured run (Heart of the Valley, aptly named!) of our own new local recreation business Western Slope SUP. It is Western Slope SUP that now helps make our fundraising float possible. All are welcome to come out and float the day after the gathering in the park, but not everyone has all the equipment or experience to feel comfortable on the water by their own design. For those, we work

over half of the North Fork of the Gunnison River watershed actually falls in Gunnison County.

with Western Slope SUP to provide seats on rafts manned by professional guides. These guides generously offer their services and boats and WSSC charges a nominal fee (to cover organizing costs and bring a bit back to the organization). All this enables folks to see the valley from the river’s perspective and help support conservation efforts at Western Slope Conservation Center while they are at it. Next year, we aim to hold a few seats open to community members who are devoted to and inspired by the river, but the financial barrier is prohibitive. If this might be you or someone you know, please be in touch (director@theconservationcenter.org) and we will work to find a way to get you out on our next RiverFest float.

We also know that some folks are happy to appreciate the river from a bit more distance. And so, a few years back we started bringing in music and other activities to accompany the float. This year we were pleased to hear the North Fork Community Choir, Bracken Creek, ISO, DJ Positive ID, and DJ Dust Drops play in the park from 2pm through just about dark. We were happy to host an assortment of local artisans and food vendors. Thank you to all who were able to come and celebrate the work we do and the place we live! Thank you to all those who bid on Silent Auction items and all those who donated them! And to the generosity of our sponsors: Tipi Haven, Alpine Bank, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, Delta County Tourism Board, Delta Health, The Learning Council, Solar Energy International, High Country News, Joslyn Creative, Western Colorado Realty, Valley High Dispensary, First Colorado National Bank, Dependable Lumber, Pack Shack, and Redwood Arms.

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COVID is still present. The CDC and State and local health departments recommend that you wear a good mask (N95 or KN95 ARE BEST) in indoor public spaces if you are infected, health challenged and otherwise vulnerable. Good masks, worn properly work dramatically in slowing the spread of COVID.



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NORTH FORK SENIOR CONNECTIONS:

The T-Word: Getting Help With Embracing New Technology

by Laura Lee Yates
for North Fork Senior Connections

Tech is a 4-letter word. For some older adults it's cause for cursing and hair-tearing. I still don't have a cell phone of my own: at home I use a vintage rotary-dial model that still bears a sticker with its (303) area code from the time when Colorado had a single area code for the whole state.

Yet technology can make our lives easier, keep us in contact with loved ones, save time, entertain, and keep us aware of what's going on in our community and the wider world. In 2004 a group of volunteers started OATS—Older Adults Technology Services—with a mission to help older adults thrive in the digital age. In March 2013, OATS launched the Senior Planet Center in Manhattan—America's first technology-themed community center for older adults—under the motto "Aging with Attitude." Now Colorado has its own Senior Planet—in Denver, of course—but because of its digital focus their services are available throughout the state. They give any senior with Internet access the chance to learn new skills, save money, get in shape, and make new friends—without spending a penny on gas.

Want to join a Book Club from the comfort of your own home? (Of

course you can be part of our North Fork Senior Connections group that meets monthly in person—now we're reading fiction or nonfiction that deals with "Fire.") Or perhaps you'd enjoy "Strength and Stability" led by Sally Saenger, a 66-year-old competitive athlete. You can join a Pride discussion group, ask questions of Senior Planet's columnist on "Sex at Our Age," or learn about drones—it's your choice.

If you're interested, Senior Planet has a great website. They also offer a Colorado Tech Hotline: [720-328-0875](tel:720-328-0875).

Or did you start to balk at that first 4-letter word? Don't despair—North Fork Senior Connections is working toward a program of coordinating "Tech Buddies." Our local students grew up with devices that mystify many of us, and some of them are willing to share their skill with a senior partner. If you could use help negotiating the tech world, let us know—and if you are a student who'd be willing to help an older adult navigate the digital world, we'd love to hear from you! It would look great on a college application....

North Fork Senior Connections is a 501(c)3 non-profit with the goal of finding local solutions to enable senior neighbors to age in place. People interested in becoming members or volunteers are encouraged to call (970) 527-3482 or visit our website: <https://nfseniorconnections.helpfulvillage.com/>

Local History: Valley Movies • Continued from page 15

According to research done by Kathy Addams McKee and Marilyn Tate of the Hotchkiss Crawford Historical Society (*the primary source for this article*) there was also an Opera House in the unincorporated town of Lazear for a while beginning in 1910 where it hosted a Grand Ball that year.

In Crawford the opera house was, less pretentiously, called The Old Theater, which began life as a dance hall in 1906. By 1916 a stage, screen, and

aficionado, in about 1992. Perkin's Paradise Theatre revived a tradition of the local movie theater as a general entertainment venue hosting many musical and live theater events. But running a movie house in a small market continued to be a challenge and three subsequent owners gave it a good try before moving on to other things, the last being Jason and Regna Jones. Then, after being inspired by the Orton North Fork Heart and Soul community planning project in 2012-13, a non-profit Friends of



The first Paonia Opera House, probably in the 1890s, located near the present Town Hall and across Grand Ave. from the present Paradise Theatre. A second more impressive, masonry Opera House was constructed in 1906. Neither structure survives.

projector had been added and silent movies joined the repertoire of dances and other entertainments. The building also served as a sort of community hall hosting elections, roller skating, and more and even became a pool hall for a while. The building was torn down in 1955.

The town of Paonia had the most impressive Opera House in the Valley in the early days and the early silent movies were probably first show there. The Poulos Theater, later the Bear Theater, and then the Paradise Theater since the early 1990s was built in the 1920's as talking pictures began to be the norm.

The Bear Theater closed in the 1980 but was purchased and revived by Danny Perkins, a builder and movie

the Paradise Theatre was formed by Elaine Brett and friends to save and run the theatre as a community-owned resource. This continues to the present day as the Paradise, the Valley's last movie theatre, shows first run movies, documentaries, as well as being a venue for a wide range of entertainment and community events.

Paonia also had a vintage 1950's Drive-in theatre located just west of town on Highway 133, a location now occupied by Farnsworth Construction.

(Sources: North Fork Heart and Soul column by Robyn Morrison – Jan. 2013 – Merchant Herald citing research by Kathy McKee Addams and Marilyn Tate – HCHS. And Herald historical coverage/files)

Hotchkiss Fairgrounds Shaman's Camp Will Include Visionary Art Show at Creamery

(Press Release)

HOTCHKISS, Colo. - June 16, 2022 - *PRLog* -- A spiritual and visionary art show is scheduled to be on display at the Creamery Arts Center for the month of August in conjunction with the Traveling Shamans Camp 2022.

The Traveling Shamans' Camp will be held August 26-28th at the Delta County Fairgrounds in Hotchkiss and is a shamanic culture preservation project designed to preserve and exchange shamanic practices and artwork in this traditional gathering format. The camp features ceremonies, dance, song, and drumming circles as well as art workshops, panel discussions, and exhibits both in-

person and online.

Please submit photos of your artwork to the Visionary Art Show. The \$20 deposit will be returned after delivery of the artwork to director, Julia Widdop, for hanging, or if your entry is declined. Visual artists & performers wanting to gift a performance to the camp apply at Artsignup.com.

The Shamanic Arts Center in the Western Colorado mountains is a small, cultural preservation 501c3 non-profit that supports the preservation of shamanic practices.

Contact:

Julia Widdop@travellingshamans.com or shamanicartscenter@gmail.com

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THANKS FOR SUPPORTING LOCAL VALLEY ENTERTAINMENT

Another Month in the Valley

Continued from page 4

the balance of June's Pride Month. Controversy continued between the division of the Town's cultures. Hug it out guys.

Cooler and windy at times.

June 15 – Cooler overnight.

A very good day in the bookstore despite people having to walk around the block to get here. Sold books, four hand-painted BookCards, and a small painting. Construction preparing for paving on southside while pouring concrete sidewalk ramps at PO and Hotchkiss Hotel.

Great to see Karen (Stein) Sartain visiting from Arizona with hubby Jeff. Former Hotchkiss business entrepreneur.

June 16 – Cool night in 50s.

Rain predicted for weekend that may lower fire risk.

June 17 - A little rain in the evening. The south side of Bridge Street is mostly prepped for paving next week.

June 18 - The Hotchkiss Creamery Saturday Market had a few more vendors but the Farm and Food Forum was also happening at the Town Park in Paonia.

June 19 – The gentle monsoon rain continued across the Valley.

Juneteenth, the new holiday commemorating the day when slaves in Galveston, Texas learned, months after the fact that they were now free. They were close to the last told by Northern troops. The locals hadn't bothered to mention it.

June 20 – The Juneteenth federal holiday. The road contractor in Hotchkiss celebrated by beginning paving from Cedar to Fourth. Looks like it will take about three days to do several layers of asphalt.

June 22 - Act two of the last Paonia Council meeting. More dumb stuff. Sigh...

June 23 - And the beginning of yet another Paonia Council meeting performance piece. This time the community joined in as a chorus opposing and supporting the rights of the gay community to be acknowledged in public spaces, even obliquely, in regards to those happy rainbow banners on Grand Avenue. And I thought I might gnaw off my left arm from the psychic discomfort of trying to listen to the meeting. On par with the "worst poetry in the universe." And the Town attorney announced his resignation. He didn't mention arm gnawing but might as well have.

Trustee Thomas Markle did make a very eloquent mini-speech in support of tolerant inclusiveness.

Blustery weather and sudden rains in some areas resulted in the North Fork Pool experiencing a flood that muddied the pool.

June 25 - Some pleasant monsoon sprinkles.

June 26 - A really nice soaking rain in the afternoon.

June 27 - Sunshine returned to the Valley

Shortstop reopened in mid-June but only to open the pumps to sell fuel. The property is no longer open to be used as an unofficial parking lot, or least not so as to block the pumps.

The new owners of the historic **Hotchkiss Hotel building** are looking for a new operator of the **fully equipped restaurant** in the building. The former leasee, Peter Knapp, of PJs Pub sadly passed on to the great kitchen in the sky a few months ago. The restaurant is ready for the next chef to create local cusine history. A niche is open in Hotchkiss for an intimate fine dining experiance. E-mail: Contact@HQInvestmentsLLC.com 720.608.0672

We are Just Passing Through:

I was a bit shocked to hear of the death of **Brian "Kip" Kipling Farmer, 60, Hotchkiss/Valley sheep rancher.** Cancer was reported. Brian had taken over as head of **Hotchkiss Ranches Inc,** upon the retirement of his mentor and uncle, John "Johnny" Hotchkiss, who then passed a while back. Brian was the son of Lee "Chuck" Farmer (also gone recently) and Mary (Hotchkiss) Farmer. Condolences to his mom, family, and many close friends in the community.

Kip Farmer had continued a tradition in the Hotchkiss Family with sheep that began when Enos Throop Hotchkiss began raising the multi-benefit animals back in the 1880s or 90s.

Congratulations to Beverly and Chuck Shelden, my Hotchkiss cottage neighbors, on their 50th wedding anniversary in mid-June. Great neighbors and folks.

And congrats to **Donna and Gill Saunders** of Crawford on their 40th wedding anniversary.


Lots of stuff is happening in Paonia at the old Hays Drug building also known as The Kennedy Building. The **Cirque Boutique and Gallery** is open as well as the **Lucille Lucas Gallery** in back with an entrance off the alley. **Refinery Paonia,** home of Elizabethan eco-fashion and lots more is also up front in the building.

We All Scream for Ice Cream. **TLC (The Learning Council) kitchen ice cream shop** is officially open! 138 Grand Ave. In the old Ollie's building. Open Thursday 2-8pm, Friday and Saturday 2pm until 10pm and Sunday 11am until 8pm.

The Senior Lunches prepared by Chrys Bailey will take a twist with some **Seniors on Farms** – outdoor farm lunches scheduled. This month the lunch will be held on Friday July 29th at beautiful ZEPHYROS Farm, Paonia 11:00-1:30. Cost is \$25. Text or call Zoe at 970-683-9844.

Historical note: The **United Country real estate office** in the Third Bowl Ice Cream building has moved out of the space. Things are certinly active in downtown Hotchkiss.



Historical note: **Gas in the Valley** rose to the five dollars and above range, the bite depending upon which flavor your beast ingests. Time for that electric car.or truck.




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Anthracite:

Continued from Page 11

them when they were kicked out.” Lisa was the only person in town with an Indian sounding name that was actually “Native American” rather than just a hippie-new ager like Baba and Phaedra. “You sure they didn’t culturally appropriate our rhubarb?”

“Culturally what?” Junior said with his mouth full. “Injuns never had no rhubarb. Its American.”

“Like corn? Never mind,” Lisa said. “Just you never mind.” She had grown up in Cortez with relatives on both the Ute Mountain and Apache reservations. Beside waitressing at the Chicken Abortionist three days a week, she was the lone reporter for the West Elk Bugle weekly paper, writing occasional columns on the Ute heritage of the area with titles like *Why Nathan Meeker Had It Coming* and even ones that were critical of Ute history interpretation. *Why Chief Ouray Was an Asshole* being her title for a recent one although her boss, LaPorte, had changed it to *A Critical View of Revered Ute Chief Ouray*. They’d had a debate over that.

These days Zima divided her time between waitressing, cooking, doing the books, and dashing back and forth across Albert Street to the Town and County building to attend to mayoral Town business. After the lunch rush had died down, she delivered a piece of pie to her cousin, Deputy Tomyris Justice, who was at her desk in the Sheriff’s office.

“Fantastic!” Tomyris took the plate and fork and dug right in. The ice cream had melted a little on the way over.

“I would have brought some over for Georgina but she...”

“I hate the stuff,” came the near baritone, but very female, voice of Sheriff Hargrove from around a corner. “Slime with strings in it.”

“We can’t all appreciate the best things in life,” Tomyris said, her voice very near the register of her boss. “God, Zima I remember you and I eating a whole pie by ourselves when we were like twelve. Double crusted with cinnamon sugar glaze.”

“Oook,” said the invisible Georgina.

“Yumpf...” said Tomyris as she chewed.

Zima remembered the incident. It had been one pie of a half dozen made by her mother for a bake sale of some sort and they had purloined it and had taken it to their favorite place, the cemetery across the river, to devour, washing it down with Dr. Pepper. Tomyris Ellen Justice had been much different then, skinny, tall and Nordically blonde. Other, more significant, differences. They had both filled out over the years, Tomyris leaving and returning transformed. Muscles, and curves where none had previously existed. A degree in criminal justice and semi-bizarre new name. Zima remaining and discovering herself in a another, if related, way. The two women now strongly resembled one another so much that newcomers assumed that they were sisters. Twins even. Both very tall, but Tomyris taller by three inches, both prone to wearing their hair long in single braids down their backs.

“I’ll be over for some lemon meringue as soon as I finish up some government data filing crap,” the Sheriff called as Zima passed her open office door. “Hold the rhubarb.” Georgina had her reading glasses on and was frowning at a computer monitor. She waved the back of one hand in greeting.

Back at the Abortionist Zima found Pastor Amanda Water, Phaedra Elkspirit and LaPorte deep into a conversation. Lisa Redbird emerged from the kitchen and met Zima at the cash register. “P r e a c h e r lady just brought in whole half-bushel of rhubarb, beer box tight full,” she announced. “Wants to trade it in for a pie for the church potluck.”

“Deal,” Zima said. She moved on back to the community table and sat down next to Amanda. A North Fork anthem, *Stand Up* by Honey Don’t, was wafting out of the kitchen along with the smell of rhubarb and cinnamon. Amanda was finishing a turnover, chewing slowly with her eyes closed.

“Pies are in the reach-in,” Zima said. “Take one with you when you leave.”

I can’t believe how much rhubarb people have dropped off at the parsonage,” Amanda said, pausing to swallow a last bite. “And I don’t really cook.”

“Really?” Zima smiled. “I guess you *do* come here a lot.” Then she looked at the other two women. “What were you all discussing when I can in? Looked serious.”

“Politics, guns, COVID. You know,” LaPorte ran a hand over her own close-cropped grey to white hair. A plate with a wide zig-zag smear of blood-like translucent red and an abandoned fork was in front of her.

“Nothing as important as fresh rhubarb,” Phaedra said.

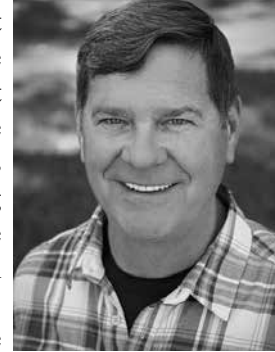
Lazarus A. Washburn Jr. is the fictional manager of the fictional Singing Angel Ranch in the fictional West Elk County, located roughly halfway between Paonia and Crested Butte, where people have always made things up as they go along. His Anthracite stories and Cowboy Pomes (as edited by the semi-fictional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

North Fork Realty Reality

The Real Estate Price Party May Cool, and Some Capital Gains Thoughts

By Mike Jackson -
WesternColoradoRealty.com -
Offices in Hotchkiss and Paonia

Boom! Just like *that* and it’s July. As much as the first half of this year felt like a continuation of the last two epic years as far as the local real estate market is concerned, I have a feeling that the second half of the year will proceed much more soberly.



I’m reminded of the old saw that the job of the Federal Reserve is to take away the punch bowl just as the party is getting going, but this feels more like cops busting up the party. Of course this is just a humorous metaphor for the Fed not so gently ramping up interest rates to combat inflation and the bloody havoc which has befallen the stock market, crypto-currencies (because their prices adjust quickly) and, to a lesser extent, the residential real estate market (because prices adjust slowly). Beyond higher interest rates, the Fed is also reversing its policy known as quantitative easing whereby they purchased billions of dollars worth of mortgage backed securities to provide liquidity (money) to the mortgage industry. Instead, the Fed will begin selling them, sopping up funds - putting additional upward pressure on interest rates.

Boom! Just like *that* the party’s over. Please don’t take that to mean we’re doomed to repeat the housing crash of 2008-2010, we’re not. However, the combination of historically high home prices and the return to “normal” borrowing costs means that the white hot market will begin to cool, and that’s exactly the Fed’s goal.

Recently I met with a person who was trying to decide whether or not to sell a house that had been owned by her parents for years as a rental. When her father passed and her mother couldn’t manage it, the job fell to her. With an already full plate, selling it made sense but she was concerned about the tax implications for her mom. This is where I pause to disclose that I am not a tax expert (duh) and that the information I’ll share is to the best of my knowledge, consult your tax advisor, your actual mileage may vary.

As an investment held for longer than a year, the profit from a sale is subject to a long-term capital gain tax of either zero, 15% or 20% depending on one’s income. The gain (profit) is the difference between the adjusted cost basis and the net selling price. Since they didn’t pay a lot for it, and had taken a deduction for depreciation over the years without making significant improvements their cost basis was quite low - subjecting most of the money to taxes (including depreciation recapture). But wait, there’s a catch! “*Step-up in basis.*” When a person dies, certain categories of their assets - including real estate, receive what is known as a step-up in basis. That is to say, the cost basis is adjusted to the current market value. Then, if the asset is sold within roughly one year, there is no gain... and therefore no tax (on his half in this case).

The same goes for their primary residence. The cost basis of the descendants’ interest will get a step-up. Suppose that “grandpa” died ten years ago and now “grandma” is going to sell the house. In order to calculate the gain, she’d need to know the value of the house back when “grandpa” died. But, in the midst of grieving, who thinks to get an independent, professional valuation of their home? This is obviously not a rare or unusual occurrence but one that is often overlooked and presents a not-enviable task when someone calls to ask how much their house was worth a decade or more ago.



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The South Side Bookstore Blues

Highway re-construction began on West Bridge Street in Hotchkiss on May 16 beginning on my side of the street. This meant that the south half was excavated and traffic moved to the north half, which was converted into two tight lanes. All of the parking on Bridge St. was eliminated. Not good for a bookstore that depends upon about 50 to 60 percent of summer business coming from passers through. By the time you read this I hope that the traffic



lanes have moved to the south side and people can more easily get to me. I will have one off-street parking space available when that happens. Everything should wrap up by the end of July.

But, while business hasn't risen to normal May and June levels I have had enough local and regional customers and even a few travelers who have found their way through the maze to my door, to keep a semblance of cash flow. And the arrival of book donations and trades has even been above normal with several good sized deliveries from estate arriving in my back yard. Especially delightful were the books collected by a late old acquaintance, Hotchkiss bison rancher/business woman and community sparkplug, Julia Littlefield. In unpacking and sorting her books I felt like we here having yet another delightful conversation or reading her intellectual autobiography. I'm definitely become a sentimental older guy.

Another estate book haul came from a gentleman who had a passion for gems and minerals and jewelry made from them.

So in a single week I accept about 40 boxes of books of which about 10% or less will make it into stock. The rest are divided into donations to various thrift shops and library book sale piles when possible.

What I've Been Reading:

First, I discovered a writer named John Casey who won the National Book Award in 1989 for *Spartina* a brilliant book about a regular blue-collar Rhode Island fisherman trying to achieve his dream of self-employment since he has a real problem with authority. The quality of the writing is just jaw-dropping. Casey had not produced a lot of writing over the years and I read both of his major works *An American Romance* (1977) and *Spartina* (1988). While admiring both books, I enjoyed the first more for its unvarnished look at artsy/intellectual relationships in the 1970's when I was in the same generation as the characters.

Those books highlight the value of used books store in finding older works that have long since been accessioned by the local library. You

can just dig around and read covers and first pages and find something you had no idea existed.

I also have picked up a couple of old science fiction anthologies like the *Best SF of 1980* and have read a few wonderful stories in those including one from George R.R. Martin who wrote SF and horror before he moved to fantasy.

Rereading. I am also rereading here and there including William Least Heat Moon's amazing deep history/ecology geologic/anthropologic invocation of one county in eastern Kansas in *Prairie Earth*. The book very nearly defines the much used/abused term "sense of place." The book came back to me after a conversation on the subject with retired CSU professor Dan Hilleman who spent decades helping communities look at themselves in the mirror.

Painting. Besides producing a few hand-painted BookCards every week I have been working on some larger pieces and have been gratified to had sold a couple of the new pieces through the Creamery Arts Center in Hotchkiss as well as through the bookstore. My theme these days seems to be entropy and its effects on the works of man. Also, some pieces seem to be all about that sense of place thing as it relates to the Valley.

Hotchkiss Chamber Shuffles Board Two Vacancies Need Volunteers

By Thomas Wills

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

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

At the same time, Secretary Tracy Ihnot, representing the Delta County Library District, has also retired from the board after eight years

of very active participation. Vice-President Shelly Ware has also exited. This leaves two vacancies on the Board at a time when two previous vacancies were filled in May with the appointment of Kelsi Buhr (Bank of Colorado) and this reporter - Tom Wills (Merchant Herald/Wills Gallery and Books). Wills was appointed as the new Secretary at the June 30 Chamber Board meeting.

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

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

Business Community Will Provide Old Fashioned Carnival at County Fair • Volunteers Needed

The 2022 Delta County Fair begins July 28 and run through August 6. Fair Board member and Hotchkiss Chamber President Kim Shay is in charge of the Parade and booths/vendors in the Park. She has been working hard on making many free kids "Old Fashioned Carnival" games/booths available on July 29 and Aug. 4, 5 and 6. This will include a free climbing wall. Carnival games and booths with feature lots of prizes. If you can help volunteer for the Carnival, please contact Kim Shay at Ace/Gambles in Hotchkiss. gamblesacehardware@gmail.com

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