

The North Fork Merchant Herald

The Digital Version of the Newspaper From the Valley That is Starting its Tomato Plants in a Sunny Window

Digital Edition
Volume 24 - Number 3
March 1, 2021

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Plus: Local Environment, Arts, and More

Paonia's Lead Issue, Marijuana, and the F-Word

By Thomas Wills

Paonia Town Council

The mayor and all trustees attended the Zoom meeting.

February 23, 2021

Lead Issue Possibly Caused by COVID Precautions

Town Administrator, Corinne Ferguson, gave an overview about the much-discussed issue of some six at-homes water tests (out of 20 homes tested) done in December came back showing elevated levels of lead. Previous home tests done in June showed no concerning

participating in the water tests. Public Works Director Travis Loberg, after being specifically questioned by Trustee Bill Bear, said that there was some lead in connections in the Town main water lines in the 200 and 300 block of Main, the 300 block of Orchard, but testing showed no problems (being below the 15 parts per billion maximum allowed).

Bottom line, the Paonia water is safe, but if you have older pipes (especially pre-1970s) in your home, where-ever it is located, it is always good to be cautious and run the water for a little bit to flush out accumulated contaminants before consuming. This is especially true if the home has been vacant for a while, or when using a



Freedom to express opposition political opinions, vs the use of certain words, is the issue at hand concerning banners at a Delta Avenue home. Photo by Nan Romane

levels of lead. The difference was that the June tests were done inside homes (and during outside watering season), while the December tests were taken exclusively from outside faucets due to COVID precautions. Since the faucets had not been used for a couple months, the water had been sitting in those pipes and possible accumulating lead leaching from old pipes or lead-soldered connections.

Ferguson said that the Town is now preparing (as of February 23) to retest the homes and anticipates that a second sampling will show no elevated levels of lead.

Ferguson noted that no higher levels of lead had been found in the general water distribution system, only at the six homes, among 20,

section of your house system, like the outside faucet, that hasn't seen regular use.

Commercial Marijuana Ordinance Review

The Council spent quite a bit of time reviewing the draft commercial marijuana ordinance on a page-by-page basis. They did make a few decisions to clarify some points such as how many marijuana businesses (recreational or medical or a combination) would be allowed. The decision was to allow six total retail cannabis stores in the commercial zone, but only one per block in the six blocks open to such businesses.

Continued on Page 22

UPDATES: High School Consolidation Vote Taps Hotchkiss County's COVID Dial Level Turns Blue

The North Fork Beagles? School Board Votes for Consolidated High School in Hotchkiss and K-8 Schools in each Community

By Thomas Wills

In what might be seen as one more school consolidation action following a long Valley historical trend, the Delta County School Board voted at their February 23 meeting to have a single North Fork High School at the present Hotchkiss High School and maintain separate K-8 schools in each community with a Paonia K-8 taking over the present Paonia High. The Paonia Elementary would then house just the School of Integrated Studies, the Waldorf-based facility.

The vote was a close one, 3-2.

COVID Level Down Again

In the period nearly a week between the time when we send the monthly on-paper version of the Merchant Herald off to the printer and when we send out the first-of-the-month digital edition, things happen. Between February 23 and March 1, The Paonia Town Council had a meeting (reported at left), the weather warmed up more, and the local COVID data continued to improve.

The State informed Delta County as of the first of the week that the local numbers allowed Delta County to move one more notch back on the COVID dashboard dial, from yellow to blue (Caution). This relaxed the allowed gathering numbers a bit.

With that lower level and with the positivity rate of tests dropping to 2.72%, down from nearly 15% in December, Pastor Josh Langille-Hoppe, who serves all three Valley United Methodist Churches, announced that inside, in-person worship would resume as of Sunday, February 28. Masks, social distancing all of the previous cautions were required.

Pastor Josh has spent the last several months doing virtual services on-line by way of Zoom and YouTube sermon posts. Communion was served as an outside drive-up sort of thing.

While the Methodists took the one of the most cautious approaches among the Valley's religious institutions, other local churches responded by doing such things as splitting single services into multiple ones to lower numbers of persons present. The local Jehovah's Witnesses ceased door to door visits and sent out personal letters instead.

From the O'Brien COVID-19 Report

Mostly Good News for February • Cases, Deaths, & Positivity Rate, Down

Deaths: DCHD reported two new deaths bringing Delta County's total to 57 COVID deaths and the State has added a 58th death that is not yet confirmed by Delta County Health.

Cases: February's average Cases Per Day is down to 5.4 cases per day. December was at 30.1 Cases Per Day. January was at 26.0 Cases Per Day.

Case Trend: Downward Trend with a 7-Day Cases Per Day of 3.5 versus the previous week of 6.0 Cases Per Day.

Vaccines: Delta, Mesa, Montrose and Ouray Counties have not received enough vaccination doses to complete Phase 1A and 1B.1 Vaccinations. Vaccine Dose Allocation, by the State, to the High Age 70+ Counties should be done immediately.

Delta and Surrounding Counties Vaccine Discrepancies Counties with High Age 70+ Populations									
Data from State's new Vaccine Dashboard that was launched on February 19, 2021									
Email tobrien@disc.com to receive email updates on Delta County COVID-19 Information									
County Population		Age 70+ Population		Doses Allocated (Shipped)		Vaccine Doses Needed for Phase 1A and 1B.1		Vaccine 2-Doses Needed for Phase 1A and 1B.1	
From Delta and State Dashboard		From State Chart Adjusted to Estimated Population		From New State Vaccine Dashboard Launched 2/18/21		This includes Health and Front Line Workers		Calculated by the Supplemental Dashboard	
Ouray (D)	4,952	Ouray (D)	911	Ouray (D)	1,100	Ouray (D)	1,658	Ouray (D)	558.0
Gunnison (D)	17,462	Gunnison (D)	1,479	Gunnison (D)	6,925	Gunnison (D)	2,692	Gunnison (D)	-4,233.2
Delta (R)	31,162	Delta (R)	6,027	Delta (R)	6,300	Delta (R)	10,969	Delta (R)	4,669.1
Montrose (R)	42,758	Montrose (R)	7,295	Montrose (R)	9,400	Montrose (R)	13,277	Montrose (R)	3,876.9
Garfield (P)	60,061	Garfield (P)	5,022	Garfield (P)	11,750	Garfield (P)	9,140	Garfield (P)	-2,610.0
Mesa (R)	154,210	Mesa (R)	20,949	Mesa (R)	33,700	Mesa (R)	38,127	Mesa (R)	4,427.2
6 Cnty Total (R)	310,605	6 Cnty Total (R)	41,683	6 Cnty Total (R)	69,175	6 Cnty Total (R)	75,863	6 Cnty Total (R)	6,688.1
Colorado (D)	5,763,976	Colorado (D)	555,043	Colorado (D)	1,100,309	Colorado (D)	1,010,178	Colorado (D)	-90,130.7

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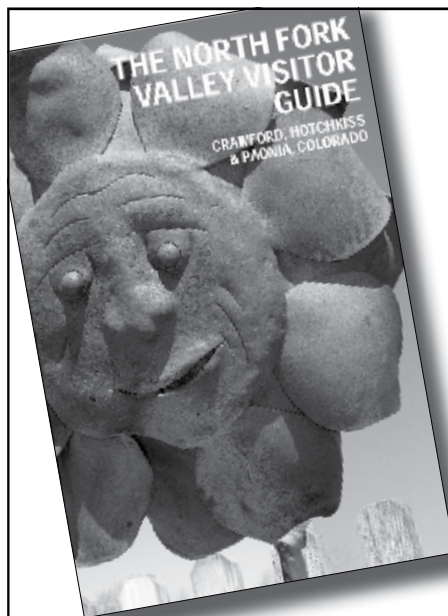


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MARCH 15, 2021

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 AND Feature Articles

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 Business Resources
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Local History: Valley Railroad Built Early Economy

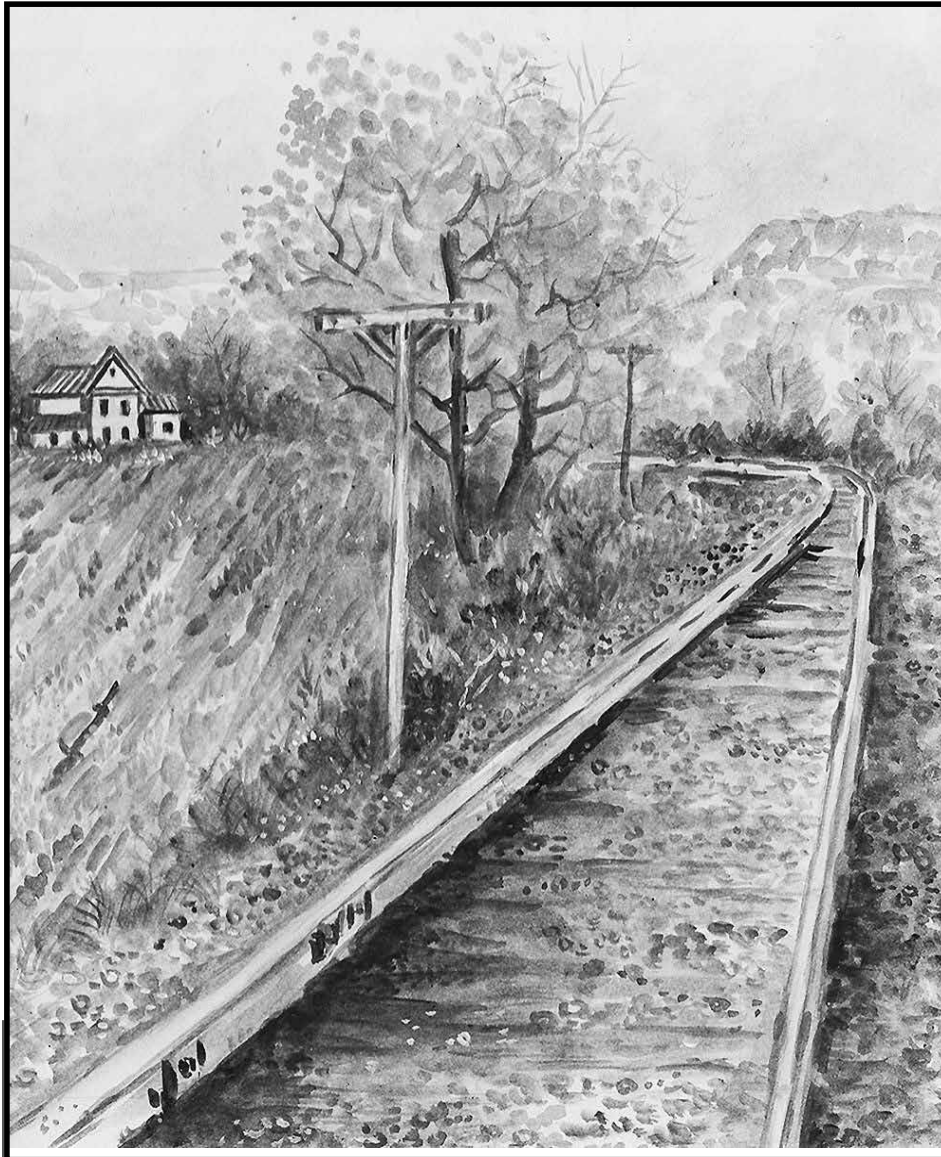
By Thomas Wills

The first Railroad Day in Hotchkiss began early on a pleasant Thursday morning on September 18 of 1902. The train started out from Delta at 8:00 a.m. with three full passenger cars full of people including some local residents who had traveled down to Delta the day before by horse and buggy in order to ride the first official train to travel from Delta to Hotchkiss over the newly laid tracks. The railroad had reached Delta twenty years earlier in 1882, a mere year after the former Ute lands were opened to white settlement, and when that city was just a few businesses and scattered homes and Hotchkiss was even less impressive.

In 1881, the Denver and Rio Grande tracks had been extended over Marshall Pass, arriving in Gunnison in August of that year, after the company purchased the toll road right-of-way owned by Otto Mears, who among other things had employed Enos Throop Hotchkiss to direct construction on a road from Saguache, in the San Luis Valley, to the mining camp of Lake City.

The train arrived at Hotchkiss just before 10:00 a.m. after having made a relatively slow journey by today's standards. A trip from Hotchkiss to Delta with a loaded wagon usually took two days with an overnight stop near Austin. The coming of the railroad was seen as a huge boon to the valley making the fruit and coal mining industries economically feasible. It was also an equal boost to the North Fork cattle ranchers who could now ship cattle out by rail. There were numerous other travel benefits including that in the case of medical emergencies a patient could be placed on a train and arrive at a Denver hospital in a day. The D&RG even operated their own hospital in Salida. *(Note: the writer was born in that facility in 1957. His family lived in Villa Grove in the upper San Luis Valley, south of Salida and just ten miles from Saguache, co-founded by Enos Hotchkiss.)*

Upon arrival at Hotchkiss, the passengers on the first train from Delta found a huge welcome and a



full and raucous day of activities taking place in a field at the Hotchkiss Ranch just south of town. Hotchkiss Mayor George H. Duke acted as Master of Ceremonies for the day. Speeches were made by a Congressman Bell and Hon. H.M. Hogg of Telluride.

After the round of speakers extolling the virtues of the railroad and the North Fork, everyone had dinner, which was served on the site. Everyone admired the display of locally grown fruit since it was at the height of local harvest season.

Then it was fun and games for the rest of the day which included foot races, horse races, rodeo events and a game of baseball played between Hotchkiss and Paonia teams. Paonia won. A boxing exhibition between two professionals imported for the occasion was stopped after a single round by the Town Marshal.

The celebration of Railroad Day in Hotchkiss continued for several decades.

The rails that reached Hotchkiss in 1902 were the less expensive narrow gauge. In 1914 the standard gauge tracks were laid.

That the D&RGW spur line was built from Delta to Somerset in 1902 was due to many factors, not the least was a determination on the part of General William Jackson Palmer, president of the D&RGW to beat any competition. Two other competing railroad routes into the upper Valley had been proposed at times. One could have been an extension of the Denver South Park and Pacific's (DSP&P) line to the coal mines of Baldwin and Castleton above Gunnison on over Ohio Pass. In fact, the first good roads accessing the Somerset area came not up the North Fork but east from Crested Butte over Kebler Pass. The D&RG had a railroad line that reached to and well above Crested Butte at the time.

Another rail route was proposed to come over McClure Pass from the Crystal River Valley where

there were also mines, many developed by J.C. Osgood the founder of Colorado Fuel and Iron, Company of Pueblo, Colorado. He also developed the marble mines near present town of Marble. At one time, Osgood proposed extending a rail line from the Crystal Valley over McClure Pass south into the upper North Fork to access the coal deposits there.

But with the Utah Fuel and Iron's (D&RGW's sister company) 1901 purchase of extensive coal mining claims in the Somerset area from shrewd Hotchkiss businessman/developer, John Edward Hanson, the railroad had the final economic piece in place on top of relatively easy access from their line at Delta. There was, as previously mentioned, enough agricultural development in the Valley by 1902 to make the line even more profitable.

Later. By mid-century, with automobiles, trucks and much improved roads, the Hotchkiss and Paonia railroad shipping/passenger depots were eventually closed and the North Fork spur of the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad was limited to the shipping of coal from the upper Valley mines.

Flash forward to 1974 when the Paonia railroad depot was officially closed. The depot had, for most practical purposes, been closed for many years since passenger service had been suspended in the early 1950's (a dedicated daily passenger train was stopped in 1931) followed by freight service except for hauling coal from the mines. Although the Hotchkiss depot had been closed and sold a decade before, some "railroad business" was conducted from the Paonia depot until displaced by modern technology.

Following the official closings both of the Town depots were removed. The Hotchkiss depot, located at about Third and High Street, closed in 1962, was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Harris Williams of Grand Junction in 1969, who, had the entire structure trucked some 55 miles to a site on Blue Mesa overlooking the lake where it became their summer weekend home.

Continued on Page 5

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FEBRUARY JOURNAL

First it was kinda warm and dry and then the jet stream and the polar vortex started swooping way south due to warmer temperatures in the Arctic due to us humans doing stuff. In mid-February it snowed more in the Valley than it had all winter and the mountain basin snowpack also got a nice boost. So we in the Valley may have benefitted some by the same weather that in Texas was a major disaster. But with every silver lining comes a dark cloud. See an Analysis/opinion piece of the subject by Cassidy Cichowicz on Page 18.

In the meantime, the winter COVID spike seems to be decreasing in the Valley and county as spring approaches and vaccines are given to many. By summer we should be in a better place. Fingers crossed.

And in another slightly weird trend, despite all that is happening, or maybe because of it, property sales (and prices) seem to be booming in the Valley. **The Herald's Realty Reality columnist, Mike Jackson**, delivers a short and sweet overview of the trend on page 14.

January 25 – More light snow overnight and in the early morning. An emerging sun melted much of it in Hotchkiss by mid-day.

January 26 – More snow in the mountains was welcomed while there was just a dusting across the Valley. Night time low temperatures are in the 20s. The February Herald went off to the printer.

The Paonia Town Council held their regular meeting on Zoom. It was relatively uneventful. It looks to be a couple months before anyone wanting to open a pot shop can apply to do so. The Council will be looking at a draft of proposed regulations at the end of February.

And, an anti-mask agenda man caused havoc at the Hotchkiss Library when he refused to both wear a mask or leave. Compounding this, the Hotchkiss police who responded were confused as to their powers to enforce the mask mandate (*which has the force of law under a declared health emergency*) and did not suggest filing simple trespass charges. They refused to remove the man. The Library then closed for the day to everyone.

January 27 – Night time temperatures dropped into the teens in the central Valley. Another dusting of snow overnight followed by clearing skies.

Libraries remained closed due to the anti-masking incident as legal options were explored. The Hotchkiss Marshal's Office researched and confirmed that they

Another Month in the Valley

*By Thomas Wills
Publisher - Editor*

could have either issued a citation to the man for failing/refusing to wear a mask in a public space in violation of the health emergency mandate, or for trespassing at the request of the library. The officers will know better next time.

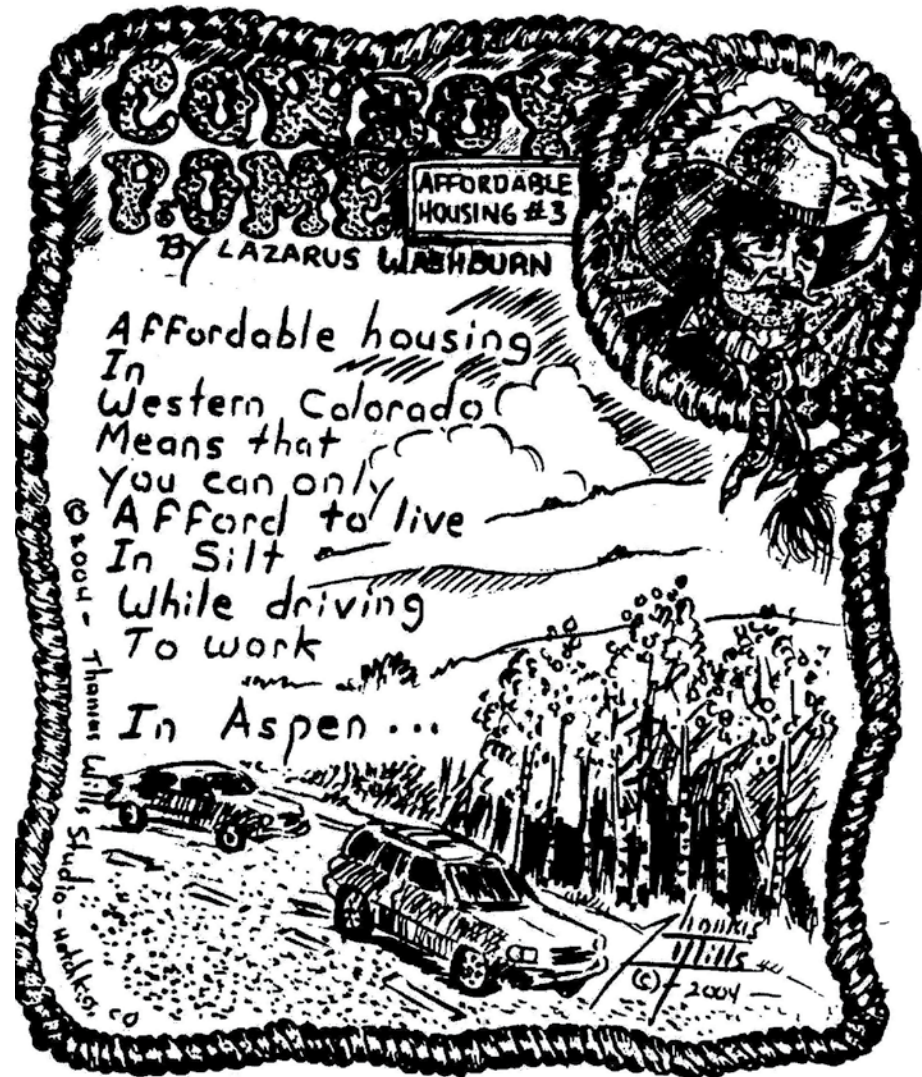
January 28 – Warming temperatures rose well above freezing in



relatively warm. With spring still in the future, mud season seems to have arrived.

February 2 – The thaw locally continues as the Northeast U.S. received over a foot of snow in places.

I stopped by the Hotchkiss Public Library, where enforced masking



Hotchkiss, with mud and water puddles emerging.

January 29 – Some more light snow fell across the Valley overnight. The Montrose Daily Press reported that it is still a dry winter and major late winter snowfall in the mountains is needed to avoid 2021 irrigation worries.

January 31 – Noticing that some lamb's quarter (native edible greens) plants were poking up inside my coldframe, I planted some snow peas just to add some early tastes of the coming season.

February 1 – Overcast but

and distancing protocols were firmly in place, to find that Hotchkiss Library hours have been further reduced to a single day, Tuesdays.

February 3 – Almost balmy during the day. Rain in the evening.

February 4 – A dusting of snow fell on Hotchkiss overnight. I reviewed the contents of a new Hotchkiss Downtown Improvement website and

was amused to find that results of a recent survey included the question: How does downtown Hotchkiss make you feel? The top two answers by quite a bit were: 1. Nothing in particular and 2. Nuetral. Maybe there should be new entrance signs that say: Welcome to Hotchkiss – Meh...

February 5 – A drop in daytime temperature and overcast. Mount Lamborn and the West Elks were shrouded in clouds and hopefully, snowfall.

Business in the bookstore was steady as I baked bread in the vintage woodfired kitchen range (in the cookbook/health section) and had a big pot of chili going. Stubby the Cat stayed busy greeting newcomers.

February 7 – Sunday. A pleasant, sunny day across the Valley. Nan reported that she had the first dandelion bloom of the season in a warm spot in front of her south-facing Hotchkiss Avenue home. I went over and looked at the very small pioneer of a new season.

February 8 – Another sunny day. I worked outside clearing the last of the 2020 seasons remains from my raised beds (actually, old orchard fruitboxes filled with created soils).

February 9 – The Paonia Town Council continued to meet via Zoom, an internet application for meetings that allows both the council and visitors to be visible and heard on computer screens.

February 10 – A light rain was falling at 5 a.m. when I let the cat out. The sun poked in and out during the mild feeling day. I'm seeing more and more tufts of green, hardy grass emerging.

February 11 – The Hotchkiss Town Council met "virtually" in the evening via Zoom. It was announced that Kris Hillman has tendered her resignation as Trustee meaning that the Town will be advertising for a replacement. Lots of discussion of water issues.

February 12 – A little light rain in the morning and hopefully some nice snow in the mountains. Gunnison Basin snowpack was up to 86% of median.

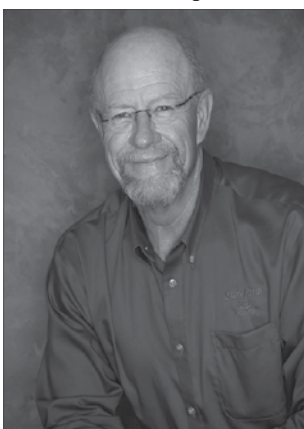
February 13 – Rain and snow depending upon where you were. McClure Pass was closed overnight due to danger of avalanches. Very good sales day in the bookstore the last two days after three extremely slow days. (I sold eight BookCards!) That's life in self-employed retail.

February 14 – A nice snow of several inches fell overnight as the Valley and region got a taste of the winter

storms that are affecting much of the nation. A gentle version for us, as some cities in Texas were brought to a standstill by about the same amount of snow and cold as Hotchkiss and Paonia received.

February 15 – A little more snow overnight; just a dusting but the roads were icy this morning. The sun came out for a while but after sunset it was snowing lightly again.

February 16 – More snow and colder temperatures locally as the polar vortex was pushed downward as far as Texas by warming



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Continued on page 15

Hotchkiss Trustee Resigns Water Issues Bob to the Surface

By Thomas Wills

Hotchkiss Town Council
February 11, 2021

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

Trustee Kris Hillman Resigns

It was announced that recently appointed trustee Kris Hillman had submitted her resignation due to health-related reasons. The Town is advertising for a replacement who will possibly be appointed at the March 11 meeting. Any applicant must be an in-town resident, 18 or older, who has resided in the Town limits for at least the past 12 months. The appointment will run until the April 2022 municipal election.

Terry O'Brien, who ran for a trustee spot in 2020, has submitted a letter of interest.

Irrigation Water Leases.

Water. That was the topic that drew the most discussion at the February Hotchkiss Town Council meeting. First the trustees considered bids to lease the Town's shares in the Fire Mountain Canal and the Overland Ditch and Reservoir. The Town purchased the water many years ago in anticipation of their primary year-round Leroux Creek water

source someday becoming inadequate in peak summer season. In order to keep the shares in use they are leased out for two-year terms.

The surprise this year was that, in a change from the usual single bidder on each, there were multiple bidders for both groups of shares. Of the three bidders for the Fire Mountain water, the present lease-holder, Baker Ranches LLC, had the winning bid of \$2,603.36 per year for two years for the Town's 848 shares, which comes to .58 cubic feet per second. Basic assessment charges for the shares have been \$1,240 per year most recently.

Trustees chose to reject all three bids for the 300 shares of Overland Ditch since the best bid only covered the yearly assessment costs and no more. The Town will readvertise for a new round of bidding on the water. Overland Ditch serves Redlands Mesa but crosses Leroux Creek at one point so the Town's water could, if needed, technically be transferred there and then onward to the Town's takeout on the Highline Ditch at the top of Rogers Mesa. That water, in a good year, comes to about 1.5 cfs., running from about June 1 to September 1. The 2021 snowpack at Overland, according to the USGS, is only about 72% of normal (30 year) median this year so far.



Back River Road Water Tap Request

Then, the trustees voted to reject a request from John Odle to purchase three out-of-town water taps on Back River Road. The line in question is only two-inches in diameter and already oversubscribed, resulting in very low pressure at times. Trustee Jim Wingfield questioned whether the Town should be selling taps on a line where proper water pressure cannot be supplied. Town attorney Bo Nerlin noted that the Town *could* sell taps there with a disclaimer attached about the reduced quality of service. Public Works Director, Mike Owens noted that 2021 appears to be yet another dry year and he wondered if it was wise for the Town to be selling *any* out-of-town taps in a year when in-town residents will probably be asked to conserve water?

The trustees agreed and denied the request although they had approved the sale of one tap on the line a few months previously while stressing that the Town would not guarantee adequate pressure. It was noted that Bone Mesa Domestic Water District, which also serves that area, has no taps available at this time.

Building Code Fees.

The Trustees approved a resolution to adopt building codes fees with new construction based on 80% of the national average building costs. That percentage is the general average for our region. The council had spent a couple of months going back and forth between 75% and 80% after adopting the newest 2018 version of the International building codes for the Town. The codes include a building inspection fee schedule.

Trash Rate Up Again

The trustees approved a request from the Town's contract trash hauler, Double J Disposal of Orchard City, to raise rates by 50 cents per account to cover the cost of a recent rise in the tipping fee charge at the Delta County dump at Eckert. Hotchkiss resident saw an earlier rise in trash fees as of the first of the year when the new contract with Double J went into effect.

Other actions and discussion:

Trustee Mary Hockenbery passed on news from the Chamber of Commerce's Kim Shay, that the planned electric vehicle charging station will be installed by Atlasta Solar at the Hotchkiss Crawford Museum sometime in March.

Mayor Wilkening reported that One Delta County (economic development) will have board meetings every other month and, among other things, they are looking at the opportunity zones within the county.

Valley Railroad History

Continued from Page 3

According to a 1974 story by historian/reporter Muriel Marshall, the Paonia Chamber of Commerce, under then President Ken Byers of Dependable Lumber, made an attempt to get the D&RG to donate the old Paonia depot to them and have it moved to a site where it could become a Chamber office. That effort was apparently unsuccessful.

Rio Grande purchased the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1988 operating as Southern Pacific, and then in 1996 Union Pacific and Southern Pacific merged under the Union Pacific name.

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HOTCHKISS MUNICIPAL COURT Junk, Speeders, and Failing to Show Up

By Thomas Wills

February 11, 2021

Judge Lynn French presiding:

Due to the pandemic, attendance at the Hotchkiss Municipal Court continues to be restricted to those directly involved in cases. This report is written from court results provided by Marshal Dan Miller.

Ezekeal Donte West pled guilty to a charge of operating a vehicle with an expired driver's license. A \$22 fine was assessed and a second charge of failing to provide proof of insurance was continued until the March 11 court.

Jared Nelson of 210 East Orchard pled not guilty to accumulation or garbage, accumulation of refuse, and junk vehicles on private property and will appear for a trial to the court on March 11. Generally, in such cases property owners receive a (red tag) warning and are give a few weeks to show some progress before a summons is issued.

Craig Mathew Blevins of

Hotchkiss, scheduled for pre-trial on an assault charge, saw the charge dropped and the case dismissed.

Wesley Ryan Ewert of Paonia pled guilty to failing to observe a traffic control device and was assessed a fine of \$111 plus \$50 in court costs.

In a case review, it was determined that Ryan William Cole of Hotchkiss/Hanson Mesa had failed to make arranged payment required after conviction on multiple vehicle/traffic related charges. He will be summoned to show cause as to why he should not be held in contempt of court.

Denise Ann Astbury of Westminster, CO failed to pay her ticket or appear on a speeding charge and her information was sent to the State.

Casey James Dagnan of Hotchkiss failed to pay a ticket, or appear in court, on a charge of failing to yield the right of way at an intersection. His FTA information was sent to the State.

Note: Charges are merely accusations and those charged should be considered innocent until they either plead guilty or are found guilty by the court.



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HOTCHKISS BOOKMAN: History, History and History

By Tom Wills - Wills' Gallery and Books
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In these turbulent historical times, I'm seeing a lot of interest in History.

One of the better stocked sections in my bookstore is the history section, which is divided into several separate areas: Western and Regional History, General History, Civil War, and Military History.

In Western and Regional History I try to keep the local, regional and Colorado-specific books together. These range from locally published books to general histories of the state. The section includes some pretty hard to find stuff priced at well below Internet pricing.

General History takes up one whole wall and includes recent literary non-fiction history books along with a wide range of volumes about American and world history.

There is an extensive Civil War history collection and I am in the process of reestablishing a general military history section after the previous area was taken over by the expansion of Western and Regional History.

The wall of biographies and autobiographies are also a source of good reading in the field of history. Many historical figures are represented.

Then there is also a separate section of historical fiction with some current literary historical fiction as well as things like Jean Auel's Earth's Children series, the Gears "People of..." series, and a shelf of historical sea adventure books like C.M.Forester's Hornblower series.

There are also quite a histocal themed books included in the Contemporary Literature section. Historical set mysteries have also been published over the years. And, of course, historical romance has been a staple for a long time.

HOTCHKISS MARSHAL'S REPORT

Anti-Masker at Library Results in Policy Clarification

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

of January.

For the month of January 2021 there were 110 logged incidents, some of which may resulted from single response calls. On the 110 items over half, 65, were vehicle or traffic related. Of those there were 41 traffic contacts, 20 Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) inspections that most usually take place when an out-of-state vehicle is reregistered in Colorado. There were also four traffic accidents that were investigated.

Other items included: one unlawful sexual contact, one assault (strong arm) that was family-related and involved "hands, feet, or fists", one shoplifting incident, two fraud incidents, one case of identity theft, one violation of court-ordered protection order, one harassment, one disorderly conduct, one criminal mischief, one theft of a vehicle, one suicidal threat, and one fugitive from justice was arrested.

Other minor issues included: three responses to alarms going off, three animal problems (usually dogs), nine medical assists, two agency assists, five welfare checks, one civil problem, three code enforcement actions, and one citizen assist.

No stolen property was listed as being recovered during the month of January. 59 home and business security check were conducted during the month



January 26 -Hotchkiss Library Incident: The Hotchkiss Library District reported: "On the afternoon of Tuesday, January 26, an individual entered Hotchkiss Library and refused to wear a mask. After several requests were made, library staff members asked the individual to leave the building. The individual refused to leave. At that time, and in accordance with the library district's current procedures, a library staff member called local law enforcement in to remove the individual. Upon arrival, law enforcement officers (Ed. Sgt. Chad Lloyd and a female deputy) questioned, but ultimately refused to remove the individual from the library." The library then closed and ushered everyone out.

Marshal Dan Miller later told the Herald that the officers were in error in not removing the individual for a State mask mandate violation or after inquiring as to possible trespass charges. The Department's policy, after extensive research and consultation with the Town Attorney, has now been clarified as to how to respond in such situations.

The District libraries, including Hotchkiss, were closed in response to the incident for two days and Hotchkiss reopened for a single day per week—Tuesdays for six hours. An employee at Hotchkiss Library said that the reduction in hours was due to a personnel shortage.



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Paonia Council Support Protest of BLM's Gas Development Plan Water Tests Taken From Outside Faucets Show Lead

By Thomas Wills

Lead Issue. According to notifications mailed to Paonia residents/ water users, and posted on the Town's website as of February 10, a routine testing of water directly from homes revealed elevated levels of lead in the water at some locations. Some residents found the wording of the information confusing and wondered if the Town was saying that the water was unsafe. Visions of the lead contamination issues in Flint, Michigan were still fresh in many minds.

In an interview to KVNF's Gavin Dahl a few days later, Town Administrator Corinne Ferguson tried to reassure Paonians that their water was safe and where they should and should not be concerned. The Town routinely tests water throughout their system on a regular basis and this includes some checks of water quality from *inside* homes.

First, tests done at homes in June 2020 showed no elevated levels of lead, Ferguson said. The difference between the June tests and recent ones were that that last round of home testing was not done inside from kitchen faucets etc. but rather from outside faucets that had probably not been in use for several months. In homes with older pipes that contain lead, or have lead in the connection soldering, that normally leaches out, but not at concerning levels unless the water has been sitting unused in a pipe for a lengthy period. Water in the pipes leading to the outside taps may have seen more leaching, thus the higher levels. It is recommended that if you suspect that you have older pipes with lead issues that you run the water down the drain for at least thirty seconds before using it, to flush out accumulated contaminants.

Ferguson suggested that homeowners/residents test their water for elevated lead levels if they are concerned. Tests run from low-cost DIY home tests to expensive laboratory tests. Regular testing of the water in the general water treatment and delivery system have shown no concerning levels of lead.

Paonia Town Council
February 9, 2021

**Western Slope Conservation Center
Requests Town Support
on Reversing BLM - RMP**

The new executive director of the WSCC, the Paonia based environmental issues organization, Tanya Henderson, asked the Paonia Town Council at their February 9 virtual meeting to consider sending a letter requesting Senators John Hickenlooper and Michael Bennet to support efforts change the mandates in the newly adopted BLM Uncompaghre Resource Management Plan (RMP). To that end, Henderson provided a pre-written draft letter. A majority of the Trustees (5-1) voted to support sending the letter.

The letter noted that despite previous input from the Town of Paonia, urged on by local farm/ environmental interests, the BLM-RMP did not include addressing the Town's concerns stating:

"In the Town's protest on the final plan, we noted that the plan ignores the input of the Town across the board and downplays the significant health and environmental risks associated with oil and gas development proximate to our community, fails to consider the impact on the local agricultural economy, and offers nearly the entirety of the federal mineral estate

within the North Fork Valley to development without adequately assessing the impacts on surrounding communities."

The draft letter goes on to note that there are multiple lawsuits challenging the RMPs focus on fossil fuel extraction, including one filed by the State of Colorado. The Colorado Senators are urged to help stop the direction of the current RMP concluding: *"We hope that you'll partner with us in finding a permanent solution to federal land management in our Valley that is aligned and in tune with the values of our community to keep the North Fork fruitful."*

Other North Fork organizations including Citizens for a Healthy Community (CHC), and the Valley Organic Growers Association (VOGA) have urged similar actions and have praised the Biden Administration's recent pause on the consideration of new oil and gas leases on federal lands. WSCC is part of the Keep the North Fork Fruitful initiative: KeeptheNorthFork.org.

**Public Comment
Versus a Public
Argument**

In the meeting packet Town Administrator/ Clerk Corinne Ferguson, asked that consideration of changes to meeting formats be deferred until the Council could return to in-person meetings. Also shared in the packet were article about how while Town Councils needed to listen to public input there should not be "back and forth" debates with the public. Trustee Dave Knutson had previously asked for a discussion of ways to have more open discussions among the trustees and public. But, at regular meetings even allowing multiple comments from usually only two of the more vocal local critics had begun to become unmanageable with the Mayor asking for only one comment per public member per issue.

In a shared article from the Jurassic Parliament

blog, it was noted that while Council meetings are held in the public eye, they are "not meetings of the public."

So, the issue remains as to how adequate public input can be allowed, received, and considered, while not bringing the deliberative work of the council to a grinding halt. Knutson suggested separate, more informal, work sessions.

Sales Tax Issue

In another issue there was a discussion of whether or not it was legitimate for the Town to charge sales taxes on the Town's DMEA franchise fee that is passed on to energy users each month via their DMEA bill. Former trustee Suzanne Watson brought up the issue previously and Trustee Bill Bear supported her objections. Treasurer Ross King thought the tax was okay.



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Paonia Discusses Water, ADUs, and Short Term Rentals

Paonia Water Advisory Committee Holds First Meeting

By Thomas Wills

There are 27 water (pipeline) “companies” some loosely defined as companies, that the Town of Paonia serves outside of the town boundaries. According to Town Administrator Corinne Ferguson at the meeting there is no documented history of the formation and history of many of the “companies.” She said that apparently at certain time the Town decreed that certain groups of out-of-town users were told they would need to become a water delivery company and a master meter for that particular section of line was installed. The reasoning was apparently to move responsibility for water line maintenance from the Town, to private companies, for sections of lines.

At the first meeting of the appointed Paonia Water Advisory Committee held on Zoom in late January the non-ex-officio members introduced themselves:

Phil Ceriani lives on Stucker Mesa, which is served by a private water system not supplied by the Town. He said that he is a retired physician but also has an extensive background in small local water systems and is a sort of “engineering geek.” He said he has worked with many small local water companies and many are struggling right now mainly due to supply issues related to drought.

Mike Drake lives on Stewart Mesa Road and had been on the board of Stewart Mesa Water Company for over a decade. He has a master degree in engineering with emphasis on aerospace.

Thomas Markle, citizen of the Town and husband of trustee Michelle Pattison, said that he has a bachelor’s degree in engineering that he hasn’t “put to good use.” He told the members that he does have a political axe to grind in that he would like to see the way the Town bills businesses that have multiple units in one structure, more equitably. Markle and his wife operate The Local Nomad hostel in Paonia.

Markle says that he also has had some experience in running small water companies.

In the early discussion, Ferguson suggested that perhaps looking at the possibility of one or two of the small water/pipeline companies being absorbed back into the Town-maintained system might be a priority. She also noted that local videographer David Jacobson would be filming a virtual tour of the water plants that will

be available for review. Committee members expressed interest in touring the facilities.

The current studies being done of the water system were mentioned. SGM is currently finishing up a mapping of both the water and sewer systems and an asset inventory. The committee members also expressed an interest in reading through the old water studies including the 1999 study that concluded that the Town had an apparent water supply deficit if all committed, but inactive, taps (some 400) were included. The Town, not liking the conclusions, attempted to suppress that study, creating some major controversy at the time.

Mike Drake noted that the Town needed to have year-round, year to year, dry and wet years, flow data from the Town’s various springs, something he said was lacking now.

Phil Ceriani noted that with the Town’s standpipe fill station temporarily off-line the Pitkin Mesa fill station was hit hard with new users. Paonia PW Director, Travis Loberg, noted that the Town was in the process of installing a new fill station and system that should be operational about two weeks into February.

Paonia Discusses Short Term Rentals (STR) and Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

By Thomas Wills

Governmental Affairs committee members Mick Johnson and Michelle Pattison hosted a public Zoom meeting on January 14 to take input from the public on options for regulating short term rentals (STRs) within the town. Johnson noted that the current Town land use code does not address the issue, which has risen to the fore with popularity of Internet sites like AirBnB and VRBO that allow homeowners to more easily run STR business in their home or property. The committee is exploring how other communities regulate STRs. The issue was brought up by residents as an issue during the Master Plan process.

One concern among some is that short-term rentals can, when they involve entire homes, have the side-effect of eliminating rental housing stock for long term residents at a time of a tight supply and high prices. Short term rentals also sometimes function as motels/hotels/B&Bs without collecting the County lodging tax or paying commercial property taxes like more formal lodging businesses. So, the issues become: should STRs be allowed and if so where, and under what conditions? While paying proper lodging and property taxes. And what about the difference

Continued on Page 9

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Paonia Discusses

Continued From Page 8

between absentee landlords renting whole homes as STRs vs someone just renting out an occasional spare room. Then there is the question of zoning since STRs could be seen as running businesses in neighborhoods that are not zoned for business uses. Should STRs be reviewed as home-based businesses?

In town resident Sharin Patterson questioned the need for regulating short-term rentals. She thought that it sounded like more government interference into private enterprise.

Two other residents said that they were renting rooms in their homes, one on AirBnB and the other to students coming in to study at Solar Energy International for a few days or weeks.

Activist and frequent commenter on Town affairs, Suzanne Watson, also questioned the need to regulate those who were resided in a home and rented out rooms short or long term. Should the Town interfere on roommate situations? (*Note: STRs are generally defined as rental units that are as a matter of course rented for less than 30 days to distinguish them from normal rental/roommate situations.*) Watson also argued that STRs might be better maintained than normal rentals since people would be looking at pictures on-line.

Susan Capps, who with her husband has recently rehabbed a Paonia house into a STR, gave an overview of the issues they have encountered over the past few months. Like a need to set house rules and enforce them so things like all night parties do not ensue.

All in all, those few commenting, some of whom had a dog in the fight, generally didn't like the idea of onerous regulation and there was some talk of a STR issue working group and/or coming up with some voluntary best-practice rules.

Johnson mentioned the STR regulations developed by the Town of Nederland, a Colorado municipality of about the same size as Paonia. The committee is also looking at other similar towns. In Hotchkiss, STRs are a use by review in some zoning and the owner fills out an application and essentially promises to mitigate any negative impacts as a condition of approval. Johnson emphasized that the Town hasn't chosen a direction and is currently just gathering information.

The committee is also looking at updating the Code in relation to accessory dwelling units (ADUs) like separate apartments within a home, above a garage, or in a separate backyard structure. This is seen as a way to add more housing stock to the town, but some might use such units as STRs as well.

Johnson and Pattison invite further input through their Town e-mail addresses listed on the Town's: townofpaonia.com website.



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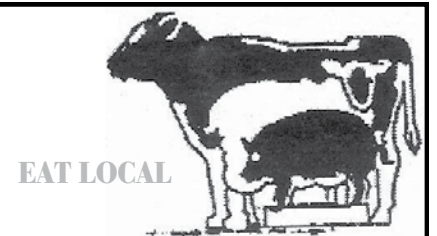


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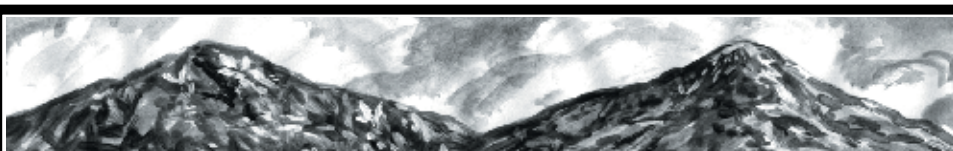
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Marla's Valley: Of Emerging Spring, Clotheslines, Tri-R Liquors, the Secret Kitchen Cabinet Project, and One Lone Bird

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

Springtime is on the horizon! Mud and wind to follow on the negative side, but much anticipated numerous positive bonuses come in the form of heavy snow, crocus in gardens down Valley, calves and lambs dotting the landscape, greenery popping up on the hillsides and in the fields and of course, a heavy dose of daylight after a dark winter.

Another thing I'm looking forward to in warmer weather is hanging clothes out on the line. In Colorado we can do that sometimes in the dead of winter but this year it's been too cold for that. I tried and came out to find some cartoon looking clothes, one-dimensional frozen items that couldn't bend until thawed out in the dryer.

I'm looking forward to putting shoes on my horse and riding until it's the hell hot of summer. I'm excited to grow some little micro greens in my elevated box that Rodg and Sherri made me last year. I'm counting down the days until I can put all the plants that used to live out on the deck back out on the deck. My living space wasn't meant for all of us. Now I say all this not to wish winter away but just to be in forward motion. Winter has been a good friend as far as a reason to wear one of my thousands of coats and sweaters. Winter has been a time to watch a million movies and make stacks of books that are begging to be read. Winter has been a good time to explore all the drinks I could make with eggnog added. This is a good place to give a shout out to all the ladies at the Tri-R Liquors. They laugh quite out loud at my limited palate and always know when I'm picking up some good stuff for others. That's a crew that is always there with a great attitude and always willing to go the extra mile when I roll up with dogs that need cookies and a request for a sweet wine, just pick one for me with a fun label. Thanks to each of you patient people!

Wintertime and COVID-time have been excellent times to start projects that I should have never started without professional help. One of these projects was to change my kitchen



View from horseback on a late winter's day. Photo by Marla Bishop

cabinets into cabinets that greet me with a smile. How can cabinets make me smile? I can't bring myself to talk about what I've done quite yet. I should amend this to say what I've been trying to do, but not completed. I heard on the radio that there are all kinds of projects started all over the world that shouldn't have been. It has

something to do with isolation and the feeling of endless time to get on with those visions that you had when there was no time. Stay tuned. Eventually I'll come to terms with the reality of the project—the reality that may have been just meant as a vision and nothing more. A fantastical idea like when you have a dream but it remains behind

when you wake up. Thanks Kim at Ace Hardware in Hotchkiss for not trying to talk me out of this. It's at least one more thing to write about.

COVID vaccinations are rolling out and to those that believe in taming this damn virus and qualify for the chance to do so with a simple injection, and one more for the best coverage, thank-you. To you who don't trust, don't believe in or don't want to go for the shots for any reason, please keep healthy and strong. Your friends and family need you. I have friends and family in this court and I'm tired of arguing with all ya'll, but love still rules.

Bird Story. There's been a little gray bird that sits on my rear view mirrors no matter where I park the vehicle. This has gone on all winter. This bird looks at itself in the window reflection and must live in the trees close by. It is a non-descript sort of being but I've ruled out any kind of dove as some have identified it from afar. It poops little brown cylinders that I have to wipe off the paint every single day. Has anyone else had this happening? It makes me sad but should it? Maybe it likes not hearing different points of view. Where is the flock or the mate? With spring in the making maybe, just maybe, it will join its society once again just as I hope to do.

Enjoy the rest of winter and when next we meet, spring will be in its full on glory. Get out those kites and keep your heads looking up towards those awesome North Fork clouds.

Marla Bishop has been reporting for the past decade and a half for the Herald from a remote corner of Fruitland Mesa where she resides with numerous dogs and other furred (and feathered) creatures. She always produces her column at the very last minute despite constant suggestions from the editor to build it throughout the month. The Herald thanks Dee B. of Carbondale and others who have contributed to the "Pay Marla More Fund" that allows us add a few dollars a month to Marla's meager compensation.

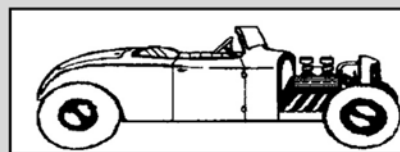
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Hotchkiss Cultural Facilities Plan for an Active 2021 Season

Hotchkiss Crawford Historical Museum Reopening One Day a Week

Notes from Karen Lacey - HCHS Board President

After being closed for a couple months the museum is reopening on Saturdays from 1-4 as of the end of February. Mask up and stop by.

Our museum is trudging away with projects that are adding to our already great collections of history resource materials. We are not just an object(s) museum as I mentioned to someone here lately. Besides the newspaper project that has been in the works for a couple of years, close to 100 cassettes of recorded oral histories of local people are being digitally recorded and saved for the future.

There will be a plan in place for copies to be made if you for a minimal fee in the future.

As usual we are on a constant search for volunteers to help with keeping the museum open on the weekends when we get back to our regular schedule.

It takes a village to raise a child and I say that with the museum in mind also.....We seriously need more helping hands, bodies and brains to continue what we've been doing for the past 45+ years.....There are/were ladies here who have been volunteering for 20 or more and it's time to get new help....please think about it, we have experts who will guide and educate all who come to help.

Volunteering is an opportunity to learn about the history of the North Fork, your family or your neighbors' family. Our museum is full of family history files, most things are cross referenced so it's easy to find out or see a picture of what you are looking for. It's an opportunity to learn about historic events and everyday happenings.

Western Slope Conservation Center's Annual Meeting - In Transition

Save the Date: March 21, 2021

(Submitted Press Release)

The Conservation Center's (WCC) annual membership meeting will take place Sunday, March 21, 2021 on Zoom. From the comfort of your own home, connect with our new Executive Director, Tanya Henderson, and learn about what we all achieved with your help in 2020. Join us in sharing a warm farewell to board members Chris Caskey, Ralph D'Alessandro, Allison Elliot, Tracy McCurdy, and Dave Noe and vote on incoming board members!

The agenda for our meeting will include: a special keynote speaker (stay tuned for the announcement), 2020 financial recap and accomplishments, 2021 plans, official business, and

Please consider becoming a volunteer or supporting member of the Hotchkiss Crawford Historical Society.

Membership is only \$15 for individuals and \$30 for the whole family, which gets you into the museum for free, puts you on the newsletter, information mailing/e-mail list and more. And you will be showing your support for the retention and curation of local history.

Mail your check to : Hotchkiss Crawford Historical Society P.O. Box 724, Hotchkiss, CO. 81419.

Creamery Arts Center Reopening on March 5

By Thomas Wills

Hotchkiss Creamery Arts Center administrator, Rich Powell, has announced that the facility's retail gallery will return from a two-month winter break on Friday March 5. Powell says that Creamery is looking forward to serving the community as well as local creative artists and students for another active season.

The hours for the new 2021 season will be the same as they were in 2020: Wednesdays through Fridays 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday hours of 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Drop by the Creamery to see what new work is being shown by the facility's stable of member creatives.

Powell also encourages everyone to become a member of the Creamery either as a supporter or as an artist/artisan who wishes to show their work in the galleries. The Creamery also has numerous volunteer opportunities and is in need of a grant writer.

The Creamery opened in the spring of 2006 as the big creative dream of Linda Tullis with help and encouragement from her sister Joanne Tullis. In a decade and a half the Creamery has become established as the arts anchor for Hotchkiss.

our annual Conservation Hero awards. WCC is a member-driven organization. While we yearn for the return of film and float festivals, we are excited to invite you to our virtual member meeting. No need to debate taking the drive to Paonia for a meeting close to our headquarters, this meeting is coming to you!

Stay tuned at westernslopeconservation.org for registration details, keynote speaker announcement, and other updates.

Not a member, but interested in what we do? This is the perfect event for you to hear from our staff, board, or other members. All are welcome to attend, but only members will vote so renew now on our website or email info@theconservationcenter.org.



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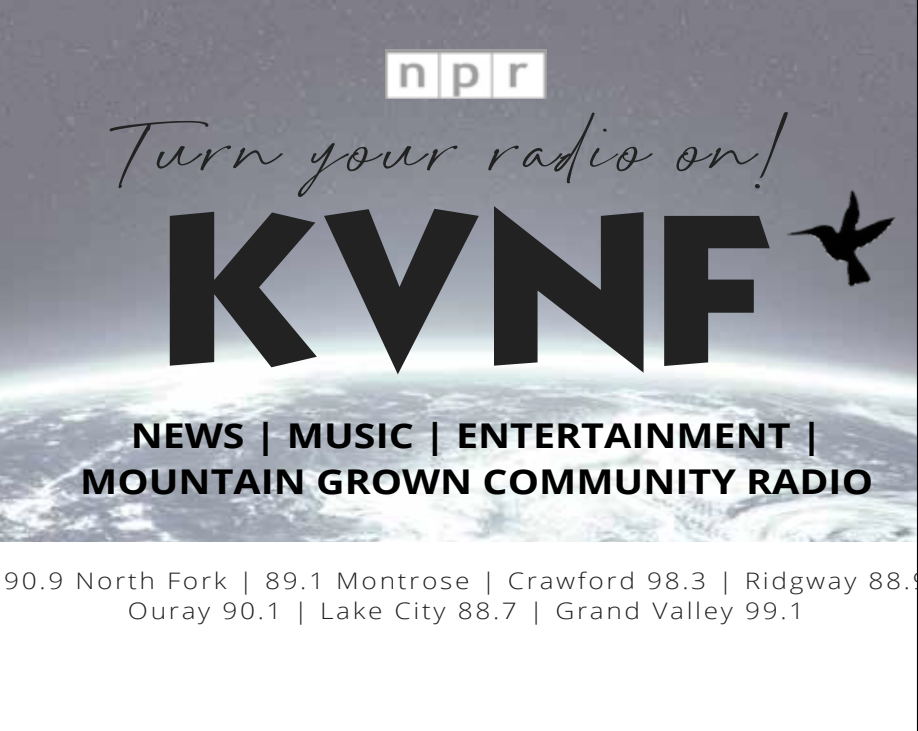
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VALLEY ARTS AND CULTURE

Blue Sage Center for the Arts: Violinist Midori: Performance and Master Class

(Submitted)

The Blue Sage Center for the Arts is honored to have been selected by Midori, Partners in Performance (PiP) to be a recipient of their 2021 program offering a Masterclass for students and a virtual concert.

Founded in 2003, Partners in Performance co-presents chamber music concerts throughout the United States with the goal of stimulating interest in classical music, specifically in smaller communities outside the radius and without the financial resources of major urban centers. Concerts by Midori, pianist Jonathan Biss, and musicians from PiP's Young Artist program aim to elevate local interest in chamber music, while attracting new audiences and new donors to the presenting organizations.

The Masterclass is scheduled for Saturday, March 13th. Any violinist interested should contact the Blue Sage Center for the Arts at 970-527-7243 or director@bluesage.org. This class will be limited enrolment.

The virtual performance will take place on March 30 from. The Zoom link to the performance is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89769266698>. You can also find the link on the Blue Sage website: bluesage.org. It is recommended for best listening that you do not use wireless but connect your computer directly to your router. Also having external speakers will increase your enjoyment of the concert. For help with Zoom, or any other questions please do not hesitate to call the Blue Sage at 970-527-7243.

In January 2021 Midori was chosen as a recipient of the 43rd Kennedy Center Honors. The other honorees are Debbie Allen, Joan Baez, Garth Brooks and Dick Van Dyke.

"The Kennedy Center Honors serves as a moment to celebrate the remarkable artists who have spent their lives elevating the cultural history of our nation and world," said Kennedy Center Chairman David M. Rubenstein. "With an international presence for over 35 years, violinist Midori combines graceful precision and expression for performances building connections between art and the human experience"

Acknowledging the honor from the United States's National Cultural Center, Midori said, "Artists have a singular responsibility, through our work and deeds, to echo and mirror our society and serve its needs. As a new chapter of life is about to begin for all of us, I especially feel the current moment's necessities and opportunities to explore a spring of new and preserved energies and discoveries, to play my part in seeking various avenues and forms of creativity and recovery. From an early age, I have been gifted with extraordinary experiences. I consider them to be my treasure and fortune that I might now draw upon. I wish to accomplish much going forward. My plans are to be making music again, in both pioneering and traditional ways, to sing out and to stir what lies within us, to describe mysteries, of the heart and of the mind. So, in the spirit of peace

and connectivity through this country and the world, I am thrilled to be a recipient of one of this year's Kennedy Center Honors, as we, together, reach toward renewed expression of the dreams and hopes that unify us all."

The 2020 Kennedy Center Honors ceremony, traditionally held in December, was postponed until May 2021 due to the



Midori - Photo by Timothy Greenfield-Sanders (c)

COVID-19 pandemic.

Kennedy Center President Deborah F. Rutter said, "2020 has shined a bright light on the impact of how art and culture speaks to our collective human experience. It can meet us at any moment—and sustain us during the most challenging days. Each of the 43rd Kennedy Center Honorees and their work continues to speak to American culture and our national fortitude. We are thrilled to be able to fete these cultural icons in a time where the world and the nation needs the arts more than ever."

For an article announcing this year's awards, Midori told *The New York Times* that the pandemic had given her a renewed sense of appreciation for performing in front of an audience: "It made me realize how precious the moments of being able to do things live are."

The Honors recipients are confirmed by the Executive Committee of the Kennedy Center's Board of Trustees

in recognition of their contributions to American culture through the performing arts. An Honoree medallion ceremony for the Honorees and a limited audience will be hosted by the Kennedy Center during the week of May 17–22. The Honors Gala will be recorded for broadcast in the United States on CBS television as a two-hour primetime special on June 6, 9 p.m.

ravages, so many careers, businesses and institutions have been threatened or badly damaged. I do not know of anyone who has not somehow been affected by all of this. Beyond this year's immediate health crisis, we continued to face violent greed and brutality, injustices and inequalities, as well as all manner of natural disasters. Under these conditions, can we have hope for our future, for this world our children will inherit? Can we truly make sense of what has happened and can we learn from it?

In the face of all of this, I find reason for some optimism. I never forget that throughout history, humans have demonstrated resilience as well as destructiveness. We find reserves of moral strength within ourselves. We retain the capacity for coming together, in powerful, regenerative ways.

I believe that it is such togetherness, and our love and respect for others, which will help us override the world's current crises. In my own case, in recent months I did experience some positiveness, and that kept me from losing faith in this life and world. It was certainly frustrating to be mostly limited to online connections with the people in my life — but through that, real warmth did come through from time to time, and I have never been more encouraged.

I hope that we will start a period of recovery in 2021. Along the way, I hope that we will have learned from all we have been through, leading to increasing mutual understanding and care. I look forward to a world which offers the possibility of people making meaningful connections among each other.

Midori

ET.

A Greeting from Midori

December 31, 2020

Dear Friends,

We are at the end of an incredibly challenging year. In 2020 there have been so many tragic losses – of lives, of the stuff of life. Through the pandemic's

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Annual Meeting

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6pm*

Invitation to be sent by email on Wednesday, March 10
if you do not receive please contact us 970-527-7243

Midori

Partners in Performance Master class

*Saturday, March 13
limited attendance*

To register: 970-527-7243 or info@bluesage.org

Midori Recital

*Wednesday, March 30
6pm*

Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89769266698>



***Support Local Arts
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COVID-19 in the Valley Journal:

DELTA COUNTY COVID-19 UPDATE:

Positivity Rate Drops and County Moves Back to Yellow Status

Delta, Colorado (February 11, 2021): COVID-19 Update from Delta County
(From Darnell Place-Wise - Delta County Public Information Officer)

Delta County continues to get vaccines at a steady rate; we are hoping to see an increase in the coming weeks with the Federal Government increasing their allotment to the states. Despite information circulating, Delta County Health Department does not currently "reallocate" vaccines to other vaccine providers. "We are not holding vaccines back," said Public Health Director Karen O'Brien, "We are literally using up every last vaccine as quickly as we are able to do so, as is Delta County Memorial Hospital." Each vaccine provider in Delta County receives their own allotment of vaccines, which includes Delta County Memorial Hospital, River Valley, City Market in Delta and Hotchkiss, as well as Safeway. A Kidz Clinic is planning to vaccinate all of Delta County School District, and Vision Charter Academy's staff and will also receive their vaccines directly, as will Walmart once they become a vaccine provider in Delta County.

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has changed the provider for the free mobile COVID-19 testing to Mako; updated links for the required pre-registration are below. The free mobile testing continues in Delta County every week through February, The testing will take place every Friday in Delta at the Lion's Pavilion from 9:00a - 4:00p; pre-register here: <https://mako.exchange/scheduler/registration/?location=2402>. Every Saturday, free COVID-19 mobile testing will take place at Delta County Fairgrounds in Hotchkiss, from 9:00a - 2:00p; pre-register here: <https://mako.exchange/scheduler/registration/?location=2413>.

Delta County has officially moved to the Yellow "Concern" phase of the State's COVID-19 dial framework; click here for additional information.

As of today, Delta County reported 8 new positive cases today for a total of 2405 with 26 active and 2324 recovered; we currently have 1 individuals hospitalized.

Delta County Call Center remains open every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9:00a -1:00p and can be reached at 970-874-2172. If you would like to get on the COVID-19 waitlist, and have access to the internet, please visit deltacounty.com/covid-19. If you do not have access to the internet, please call the call center to be put on the list.

Mental Health Assistance:

- Center for Mental Health: 970-252-6220 or text "Talk" to 38255
- A KIDZ Clinic: 970-874-2753 or Text: 970-901-0445
- Families Plus: 970-874-0464 or Text: 970-433-6835
- Colorado Crisis Hotline: 844-493-TALK (8255) or Text "Talk" to 38255

Delta County has two community test sites: Delta County

Health Department, located at 255 W. 6th St., in Delta. Tests are by appointment only on Tuesdays ONLY. Call 970-874-2165. You can also continue to get tested at North Fork EMS, located at 110 E. Hotchkiss Avenue, in Hotchkiss. Appointments are Mondays only. Call for an appointment at 970-778-7426.

Additional information on the COVID-19 vaccines can be found at <https://covid19.colorado.gov/vaccine>. For additional COVID-19 resources, See Delta County's COVID-19 resource page and the State's COVID-10 resource page.

COVID-19 Journal – February

COVID-19 vaccinations of the 1-A (health care related) and 1-B groups is continuing in Delta County. The 1-B group is those persons 70 or older. Getting vaccinated requires making an appointment at a vaccine site, showing up to get the first shot and then returning for an appointment for a follow-up booster shot three weeks later. The shots are available without cost regardless of insurance status. Lower age group vaccinations may begin by April.

Registration through the health department began in February for those 65 to 69.

Free COVID testing is happening from 9-3 each Saturday at the Delta County Fairgrounds.

January 25 – 15 new cases and three additional deaths bring the cumulative total to 48.

January 26 - An anti-mask agenda man caused havoc at the Hotchkiss Library when he refused to both wear a mask or leave. Compounding this, the Hotchkiss police who responded were confused as to their powers to enforce the mask mandate and did not suggest filing simple trespass charges. They refused to remove the man. The Library then closed for the day to everyone.

January 27 - Only 10 new cases reported in the last 24 hours but also 5 new deaths (53 total). Four current COVID cases in the Delta hospital.

January 28 – 10 new cases, 4 current DCMH COVID hospitalizations and no new deaths reported on the County dashboard.

February 1 - Only three new cases reported.

February 2 – Seven new cases, only one current hospitalization (DCMH) but two new deaths since January 27. Now a total of 55. The positivity rate has fallen to 9.62%.

February 3 – 14 new cases, 1 current CV hospitalization at DCMH, 2,358 cumulative cases since 3/20, 2,195 recovered and 102 active cases. Things seem to be looking better after a spike in January COVID deaths.

February 4 – Only five new cases and the positivity rate has dropped to 8.42%.

February 7 – With a dropping positivity rate and few new cases the State rolled Delta County back to the Yellow-Caution level on the COVID concern dial.

February 17 - Four new cases, four COVID hospitalizations at DCMH, 33 active cases and a cumulative total of 57 deaths in the county. The positivity rate is now 2.85%. There have been 5,684 deaths in Colorado due to COVID since March of 2020.

Early Spring in the North Fork Valley A Great Time and Place!

NEW LIBRARY HOURS

DELTA COUNTY LIBRARIES Beginning Friday, January 29, 2021

<p>Cedaredge Library Tuesdays & Fridays 10am-12pm & 2pm - 6pm 970.399.7674</p>	<p>Crawford Library Fridays 10am-12pm & 2pm - 6pm 970.399.7783</p>
<p>Delta Library Wed & Thu 10am-12pm & 2pm-6pm Sat 10am-12pm & 2pm-4pm 970.874.9630</p>	
<p>Hotchkiss Library Tuesdays 10am-12pm & 2pm-6pm 970.399.7781</p>	<p>Paonia Library Wed & Thu 10am-12pm & 2pm-6pm Sat 10am-12pm & 2pm-4pm 970.399.7881</p>

www.deltalibraries.org

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North Fork Senior Connections Free On-line Technology Classes Being Offered

North Fork Senior Connections to Offer Free Online Technology Classes

Mondays and Wednesdays, March 8 –
April 7 at 10:30 am via Zoom

Submitted by Linda McCone – North Fork
Senior Connections

North Fork Senior Connections (NFSC) and Region 10 Area Agency on Aging are launching a new program to help older adults in Delta County learn new skills, save money, get in shape and make new friends. In partnership with Senior Planet, a national nonprofit that harnesses technology to change the way older Americans age, NFSC will be offering classes and workshops about technology, health and wellness and socialization.

During Covid-19, older adults across the country are participating in online classes more than ever before. Through partnering with Senior Planet's Low-Density Communities (LDC) program, NFSC & Region 10 will begin to offer Senior Planet's proprietary curriculum online on Mondays and Wednesdays at 10:30 am beginning March 8th. The hour-long classes are free to older adults through zoom with coaching from knowledgeable instructors able to help with many technology questions that arise.

The course, LDS Virtual Program Series, will include the following informative sessions:

All Things Zoom – Learn how to use Zoom to chat with friends & family, and take virtual classes with Senior Planet! You'll learn about useful Zoom features available on a variety of devices (computer, tablet and phone). The instructor will also go over security considerations and give tips on how to look your best during a video chat.

Protecting Your Personal Information Online – This presentation will cover the ins and outs of how to protect your personal information online. We'll cover tips for staying safe in cyberspace, safe browsing, how to recognize online scams, and when it's OK – or not – to share your personal information online.

Online Shopping – Online shopping lets you buy products on the internet from your computer and have them shipped to your home or anywhere! Online stores often have larger inventories and lower prices, so you can quickly find the best deal. You'll learn how to search for products, make comparisons, and add items to an online shopping cart.

Online Health Resources – The internet can be an excellent source for learning more about your or a loved one's health. This presentation will introduce you to the topics and tools offered on two reputable websites, MedlinePlus and Mayo Clinic. You'll also learn how to evaluate health-related information online.

Telemedicine – Interested in having a virtual visit with your doctor? Or learning about types of telemedicine out there? This presentation provides an overview of telemedicine options and focuses on exploring virtual medical appointments with your doctor in real-time including how to prepare for a virtual visit, questions to ask your doctor and your concerns regarding connectivity, privacy, and insurance.

Mindfulness Apps – Mindfulness is

the ability to be fully present and aware. You can practice mindfulness through simple activities. This class introduces mindfulness and its physical and mental benefits, such as reducing anxiety, improving memory, and lowering blood pressure. You'll learn about popular apps that teach breathing and meditation techniques, as well as new technology like wearable breath monitors and smart yoga mats.

Introduction to Social Media – Social media sites make it easy to share content and connect with other people online. In this presentation you'll get a general introduction to social media and learn about some of the more popular social media sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

How To Spot Fake News – Concerned about whether internet sources are accurate? In the digital age, anyone can publish anything on the internet. This presentation will provide a helpful explanation of the increase in the use of the term "fake news", as well as give you some tools to evaluate news sources. We'll also review popular fact-checking sites.

Messaging Apps – Text messaging has become one of the primary ways we communicate. Learn about the most popular messaging apps that allow you to send texts for free when connected to WiFi. This class will go over the features of three widely-used apps: iMessages, Hangouts, and WhatsApp. You'll learn about sending texts and pictures, making voice and video calls, and how these apps keep your messages secure.

Drones – You've probably heard about drones. This presentation will cover the basics about drones: what they are, who uses them and why. We'll also touch on some of the exciting new ways drones are being used – from delivering Kindles and popcorn via Amazon Prime Air to delivering much needed medicine to remote areas of Africa.

To learn more or register for upcoming classes, call (970) 527-3482

Continued on Page 15

NORTH FORK REAL ESTATE REALTY North Fork Real Estate Market is Sizzling Hot Despite It Still being Winter

By Mike Jackson
WesternColoradoRealty.com
Offices in Hotchkiss and Paonia

"What goes up must come down" -
Isaac Newton.

Of course, the laws of physics don't apply to markets, but lately more folks have been asking when we might expect a correction in the local real estate market.

"Does it make sense to just wait and hope that prices drop?" asked one would-be buyer who was feeling a

little sick from sticker shock. Although the jump in local home prices is nothing like the meteoric rise of Bitcoin (from \$5,000 to more than \$55,000 over the past year) they do share something in common - strong demand, but a very limited supply. Of the 100 homes currently

on the market here in the North Fork, 41 are under-contract for sale (as of 2/22) with an aggregate value of \$16.6 million and ranging in price from just under \$100,000 to a bit over \$1 million. Along with that have come a few eye-popping standouts including a cute, 864 square foot home in Paonia offered for \$319,000 that found a willing buyer within days, and the 20-year-old, single-wide mobile home on twelve acres that was snapped up for something over \$600,000, or the just-listed 4100+



square-foot Craftsman style beauty in Paonia for \$695,000. Wait, what? Yes indeed, these are the times in which we live.

Normally we would expect that such strong demand and high prices should result in more development, but that's not happening, principally due to the lack of available water taps. Even if taps were available, the county has a moratorium on applications for new subdivisions until April 1st while they work on figuring out how to implement the new land use planning / zoning regulations that were recently adopted.

The main focus of those regulations is to protect agricultural land, not to accommodate new development/growth. Given these parameters, I suppose it's easy to understand why homes are

selling so quickly in the North Ridge Meadows Subdivision (east of Willow Heights in Hotchkiss) - the only local neighborhood where there's new construction, and most are going for about \$300K (but with lumber prices increasing so much, we'll have to see how long that lasts). So, while I can't foresee a reason to think prices will drop any time soon, it may be prudent to at least bid some time and see if more homes come on the market once spring arrives.

2020 was quite a year for climate change and climate-related events such as drought, floods, and wildfire in the West. And 2021? Climate Change due to human burning of fossil fuels, methane release, deforestation, cement manufacturing, farming practices, and more, is not a problem for future. IT IS HERE NOW - END CLIMATE SILENCE - TAKE ACTION

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Another Month in the Valley

Continued from page 4

in the Arctic. The plus for us is some nice snowfall in the basin's high country, which had been well below the 30-year median average for accumulation.

February 17 – the arctic temperatures continued but the sun also melted things off during the day.

February 18 - Sunny but still pretty darn cold.

February 20-21 - The weekend brought lots of sunny skies and warmer temperatures although it was still chilly. Ice and snow still lingers in north-facing shade in Hotchkiss.

Business News and Other Rumours

KVNF Public Radio announced on January 27 that they have hired Andrew Reed as their new Membership Manager. (*We got the first name wrong in the Feb. 15 e-edition – sorry about that, Andrew.*)

The Creamery Arts Center in Hotchkiss will be reopening on Friday, March 5 after a two-month winter break from having the retail gallery open.

Local realtor, Gary Hubbell, reports that **the Stahl Orchard property** at the entrance to Paonia has new owners. Hubbell said in a Facebook post that “the plan is to keep raising fruit on the orchard, and they have some interesting ideas for the horse pasture property at the entrance to town between Stahl Road and Samuel Wade Road.”

In early February the USGS snowpack maps showed our greater area (Gunnison Basin) in **extreme drought** with about 78% of the 30-year median (what is referred to as “normal”) in water content contained in winter snowpack. (*Update: after snow from the polar vortex snowpack rose to near 90% of normal.*) The North Fork snow test sites continue to show a little less than the basin average. And, the trend for decades has been a slow decline in that median/normal snowpack with science collecting growing overwhelming evidence that this is due to human-caused global warming, which in turn is causing the climate change.

In the arid West, the viability of agriculture at lower elevations is entirely dependent upon stored moisture at higher

elevations being available through the growing season. Making things even more complicated are interstate water compacts that legally require a certain share of what water there is to be allowed to flow out of the region.

Regional environmental groups, including Paonia-based, **Citizens for a Healthy Community (CHC)**, are excited about the Biden administration's initiative to pause leasing federal lands for fossil fuel development, something that may have a dramatic effect in the Valley region. This does not affect current leases for drilling and mining activity.

The action was part of a new policy to move the county away from burning fossil fuels in order to mitigate human-caused global climate change. The Biden administration also took action to rejoin with 97 other nations in the Paris Climate Accords, a voluntary agreement to reduce emissions over the coming decades. Scientific consensus, as determined by the periodic IPCC assessments, is that the world will need to eliminate human carbon emissions by at least 80% by 2050 in order to (maybe) avoid some of the worst impacts of climate change. Some major impacts are happening now, including a trend towards more frequent drought periods in our region.

The Delta County Independent of February 10 reported on the front page that former Hotchkiss Mayor **Wendell Koontz, now District 3 County Commissioner**, had been assessed \$700 in fines for violations of State campaign regulations that happened during his 2020 Commissioner campaign. Koontz failed to initially register a campaign committee in order to accept third party donations and disclaimer text identifying who financed certain ads and signs were sometimes improper or absent. Koontz admitted to not having made himself fully aware of the requirements.

Crawford News – February 12 afternoon. A car and driver went pole dancing: “Outage Alert: 2:52PM DMEA is experiencing a power outage in Crawford affecting 62 members. This is around Fir St, I St and G St. The cause is a car pole accident. DMEA crews are responding.”

North Fork Seniors

Continued from Page 14

or visit <https://nfseniorconnections.helpfulvillage.com>

Senior Planet, powered by OATS (Older Adults Technology Services), is a community of people 60 and older who are aging with attitude. Senior Planet's free programs online and across the country help older adults build technology skills to improve their health, make new friendships, save money, advocate in their communities, and thrive in the digital world. Learn more at <http://www.seniorplanet.org>

North Fork Senior Connections is a local nonprofit organization operating throughout the North Fork Valley on the Western Slope of Colorado with the mission of finding solutions to help seniors age in place. Learn more about us at <https://nfseniorconnections.helpfulvillage.com>, call us at (970) 527-3482 or email us at info@nfseniorconnections.org.

Stories From the North Fork Valley Continues Through March 31st *Free on Wednesdays at 4 pm through Zoom*

This interview and discussion series, co-sponsored by North Fork Senior Connections and the Blue Sage, is sharing stories from our older neighbors in the North

Fork through March on Wednesdays at 4 pm. Learn about your neighbors and what life was like here in the past and share your own memories in a short interview or as a part of the conversation. The zoom link to the weekly programs will be available at our Facebook pages or websites (see below).

North Fork Senior Connections will help with the process of connecting online in these Zoom events. Call us at (970) 527-3482 or send us an email at nfseniorconnections@gmail.com to request assistance in accessing the programs and for more information about sharing your own story.

Join us on Wednesdays at 4 pm and be a part of the celebration of the richness of life in the North Fork Valley. Blue Sage Creative Center for the Arts (970) 527-7243

Website: <https://bluesage.org/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/bluesagecenter/>

North Fork Senior Connections (970) 527-3482

Website: <https://nfseniorconnections.helpfulvillage.com/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/northforkseniors>



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Photo



North Fork History: The Ballad of Reuben Dove

Was the Hermit of Hubbard Creek a Train Robbing Outlaw?

By Thomas Wills

It seems that every area has a story of a hermit or mysterious anti-social character that lived apart from "civilization" and everyone seems fascinated with because no one understood him in his own time. In the North Fork this almost universal myth story has attached itself to the life of Reuben Dove.

Reuben the man wasn't particularly mysterious. He was a member of the pioneer Dove family which settled in the Crawford/Fruitland Mesa in the 1890's. He was born near Criders, Virginia on April 8, 1865. In 1888 he was reported in court records to be working in the Gunnison area as a timber cutter chopping trees and shaping them into railroad ties for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad.

According to the story related by Cyrus Wells (Doc) Shores who was Sheriff of Gunnison County at the time, the boss of the job cheated Reuben out of part of his promised wages and Reuben got even by setting a large stack of the finished ties on fire one night. One story says an inspector rejected about three quarters of the ties that Dove had made over a season and Dove had burned the culls, which the railroad had not paid for. Dove would have been only 23 years old at the time.

Shores says that he then pursued Dove up into the mountains and eventually caught and arrested him. Reuben then was convicted of burning the ties and served a sentence in the Gunnison County Jail.

After his release from jail, he reportedly came to the North Fork with, or just after, the main Dove clan's arrival. For some reason, he chose not to settle near his family but instead ended up in the upper Leroux Creek area. He would have been a young man in his mid-twenties at the time and he was described as "a big good looking fellow with hair down to his shoulders."

According to an account by Lee Gray (HCHS collection) of the Rogers Mesa pioneer family who was a small boy when Dove first appeared, Reuben spent his first winter in an abandoned sawmill cabin somewhere called Duke's Stomp in the Leroux Creek area.

Gray said that: "He had some tools, for he built a lot of bee hives out of the lumber that was left there when the sawmill moved."

"He came down the next spring and squatted on the Southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of section 21 T 13, 6 pri Mer 93 W. he fenced it and built a log cabin on it, about where they drilled the oil well (*the Duke Brothers and Ed Hanson*)." Gray goes on to say that Reuben had "2 or 3 horses and bunch or burros. The biggest I've ever seen." The cabin and 40 acres was located northwest of when the Hanson Castle (7X Ranch) is today.

From about 1891 until 1906,

when Hanson had Enos Hotchkiss nephews, Carl and Al Sherman, build his huge stone house, Reuben Dove was a beekeeper, hunter and small-scale farmer. In 1906, when Reuben would have been about 41, according to Lee Gray, Ed Hanson had a man named Red Morrison, negotiate with Reuben to buy his homestead. Gray says he sold out for \$800, not an inconsiderable sum in those days and was put on the train with a ticket to California.

If Reuben actually made it to California, he apparently didn't like it, for by 1909, or perhaps earlier, he was



back in the North Fork and in the Leroux Creek area living as a hunter and trapper. He had always been a loner, but now his behavior was more erratic. In the next 15 years from 1911 to his death in 1926 he went from a quiet loner who coped with a lonely life to a prematurely aged man who lived under a rock ledge on Hubbard Creek and went to unnaturally great lengths to avoid his fellow men.

It was about this time that Reuben became a curiosity, someone that everyone in the Valley had heard stories of.

According to Harley Orahood's 1989 self-published short pamphlet about Reuben Dove, one such story related that a farmer met Reuben walking down a road carrying a small wood burning cookstove on his back, presumably heading from Paonia back towards Hubbard Creek. When asked if the stove wasn't awfully heavy, Reuben reportedly said that it hadn't been too bad... until he had placed a sack of flour in the oven.

There were many stories along that vein that described Reuben as extremely strong and as sort of a North Fork Paul Bunyan at times. He was a large man, about six feet four inches to six eight, if "Doc" Shoes description is accurate.

One other famous story told about Reuben was probably the invention of a writer for the Denver Republican newspaper in 1910. The writer

claimed that then Secretary of State James Pierce had been told the story by a driver who transported him to Hotchkiss and back. The story, which sounds suspiciously like an adaptation of an Appalachian folk tale went thus:

"Reuben it seems, first gained fame when he discovered six bears asleep in a cave in the dead of winter. He entered the cave and made a thorough investigation. The snow was too deep and it would have been a hard job to get the bears to civilization if he should kill them, so he decided to allow them to continue their hibernation until spring. Fearing that their hides might

the horse and rode west.

About a week later we heard about the bank in Ouray being robbed and that a man on a white horse had been shot at with a shotgun as he crossed a bridge and that he had quit the horse.

About a week later, one night, we saw a (small camping-type) fire on the hill across the (Leroux) creek. The next night there was a fire on the side of Oak Mesa and this went on for about a week.

Dove came to our place to get some liniment. he said he had sprained his knee. In a day or two, my dad went down to Dove's (cabin) and found him in bed with his leg swelled up. They got Doctor Mickeljohn and he came up and took out seven or eight buckshot. he was never caught. There were two of them in the holdup. George Duke had to send to Ouray to get his horse back."

This would have happened, if it happened at all, before 1906, while Dove was still at his homestead on Leroux Creek.

Orahood's book has several different versions of the outlaw story including one that has Reuben robbing a train on Marshall Pass. One result of the bank/train robbing stories has been the creation of still other stories about buried gold in the Hubbard Creek area. Supposedly many people over the years have gone looking and digging for the buried loot but with no success, or, none that they reported.

According to Orahood's pamphlet, Walt Gilliam, the local forest ranger, and John Beezley found Reuben Dove near death under his ledge overhang home in late May of 1926. He had fallen desperately ill and had been unable to move from his bed of blankets and bearskins to get to much food or water. The men brought him fresh food and water but finally Reuben's nephew, Grant Dove, of Crawford, with the aid of several other men, carried the ailing Reuben down out of the rough canyon and eventually transported him to Grant's home at Crawford.

He died on August 25, 1926 at age 61 and, after a funeral service in the Crawford Methodist Church, he was buried in the Garden of Memories cemetery behind the church.

When all of the tall tales and hyperbole are put aside, Reuben Dove could maybe be best seen as the last loner mountain man in the North Fork, living well after the time of the mountain man trapper had passed. Every place need its mythical hermit and Reuben Dove was ours.

(Note: photos related to Reuben Dove, collected by Jill (Dove) VanDenBerg are on display in the kiosk in the Bernie/Fair Alley Park next to Pat's Bar and Grill in Hotchkiss.)

be worn out if they were allowed to sleep too long on one side, Reuben, it appears, arranged his affairs so that he could visit the cave every week and roll them over. This kept them in excellent condition and when spring came he slew them and tanned their hides."

The writer went on to claim that Reuben Dove regularly fought and killed bears with his bare hands; no pun intended. The writer suggested that Reuben be summoned to fight the then heavyweight boxing champion, Jack Johnson, who had won the title on July 4, 1910. The piece was reprinted in April 21, 1911 North Fork Times and one can imagine the reactions of Reuben's North Fork contemporaries.

Then, there was the tales that attempted to turn Reuben into a one-man Butch Cassidy gang. The most complete version of this story is the one by Lee Gray found in the Hotchkiss Crawford Museum collection. The Grey ranch was adjacent to Ed Hanson's 7-X Ranch on upper Leroux Creek.

Grey wrote that: "One day my brother went to town and brought back a letter for Dove in care of my dad. He was not home so she left word with Frank Arnold, who lived on the Hotchkiss place, to tell him she had a letter for him. This Frank Arnold had a white horse and George Duke had a mortgage on it. Dove got the word and borrowed Frank's horse to come up to our place and got his letter and went back out to the road and read it, got on

OTHER VOICES: Delta County Should Take a Lesson from Texas: What the Power Outages and Rolling Blackouts in Texas Reveal About Our Own Climate Readiness

Analysis/opinion by Cassidy Cichowicz – Citizens for a Health Community

In mid-February, Winter Storm Uri left millions of people across Texas without power or heat as the lowest temperatures in decades descended on the Lone Star State. As oil and gas wells, pipelines, and infrastructure froze, the system failure rippled through the natural gas market causing the price of gas to soar, impacting utilities across the country, including Colorado. In Oklahoma, spot gas prices skyrocketed from \$3 to \$999/MMBtu in just one day. As Texas residents clung to their quilts, cordless heaters, and candles, they were left confused and in the dark, literally, about the rolling electricity

blackouts that lasted more than four days, wondering what went wrong and inevitably who was to blame? How could the great State of Texas, which prides itself on rugged individual freedom and resisting the long-arm of regulation, have so colossally failed its people?

The answer is complicated, but boils down to a failure of leadership. As with all topics related to energy and the climate, debates over the dominant cause of the extraordinary power outages have become politically polarized; clouded by conflicting media articles and economic ties to the energy industry, which makes it difficult to grasp fully the true causes of the crisis.

What cannot be debated is that Texas was not prepared for the startlingly low temperatures that tested the resiliency of its utility systems and energy infrastructure. The freezing temperatures drove up the demand for electricity, while gas and oil pipelines, along with wind turbines, not winterized for single digit temperatures, became inoperable. The grid, unable to fulfill the demand, crashed, just short of total collapse.

Unlike Texas, we in the North Fork Valley are accustomed to freezing temperatures. But there are other climate-related risks. For example, Delta County has been lucky to date, escaping the devastating wildfires that have struck nearby and other parts of the State. Yet despite its extreme drought status, and being in the middle of a climate hotspot, Delta County still does not have a Director of Sustainability, does not have a climate action plan, and has not budgeted for climate adaptation.

Herein lies the question. Why was Texas so ill-prepared when scientists have warned of more frequent, extreme weather patterns caused by climate change for decades, while insurance companies have reeled from skyrocketing climate disaster caused property damage? Over the last 60 years, climate change has disrupted the Arctic jet stream, causing irregular weather patterns and, in this case, unseasonably cold temperatures in Texas. No one predicted this; however, given the 285 extreme

weather and climate disaster events since 1980 in the United States, which totaled over \$1.875 trillion dollars in property damage, leaders should have been more prepared.

To live with climactic instabilities and extreme conditions, we need physical infrastructure and policies designed to function under the impacts. After a winter storm in 2011 that shut down twenty-six power generators in Texas, legislation was passed requiring winterization of facilities. Not only did Texas leadership not provide for adequate winterization or climate hardening of its infrastructure, it didn't even have the contingency plans to import power from the rest of the Country because the Texas power grid is an island unto itself, separated from the two national power grids.

Climate disasters like what Texas just experienced, and so many other communities around the US have experienced from hurricanes, wildfires, derechos, and bomb cyclones, are ultimately what happens when climate action and climate adaptation are ignored or dismissed amongst

those in power—government and business.

This recent Texas catastrophe is yet another cautionary tale. How many more do we need before those with the power to set a different course take action? We are running out of time. Today's leadership can't hide behind the hope that disaster will not strike on their watch. The inaction taken today is tomorrow's guilt and responsibility.

It's time for climate action and readiness. Just like with Texas, if Delta County errs on the side of inaction, we will know what went wrong—and who to blame.

Cassidy Cichowicz holds a Masters in Environmental Management from Western University and is a Fellow at Citizens for a Healthy Community

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Read the Book - See the Movie Delta County Libraries/Paradise Theatre Presents C.S. Lewis' The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe

“The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” is coming to town!

Submitted by Tracy Ihnot, Delta County Libraries

Delta County Reads is a program that brings the community together to read a book and then watch the corresponding film. Delta County Libraries, the Paradise Theatre and the Blue Sage Literary Committee have expanded the program each year since it began in 2016.

Now in its third year as a countywide program, Delta County Reads is featuring the book *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis and the film *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Library patrons who check out the book from the libraries beginning March 16 will receive a free pass to an outdoor showing of the film in their community later in the spring. Families are encouraged to participate in the program together. Mass copies of the book are available for checkout and have been distributed to the five libraries. At the time of checkout, library patrons can take up to four movie passes with the book.

The Paradise Theatre is hosting an outdoor showing of the film

in every library community starting Friday, April 30 through Saturday, May 9, 2021. Movie passes given with the book correspond with the movie showing in the community where the book is checked out.

“The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe takes place in a magical world full of talking animals and mythical creatures that appeal to all ages,” says Sunshine Knight, director of the Paradise Theatre. “The story, told from the perspective of four young siblings who are transported to Narnia through a wardrobe, comes alive first in the imagination of the reader and then on the big screen.”

Delta County Reads is a rewarding program for all communities to embrace and offers all the makings for a fun transition into spring: a delightful reading opportunity for all ages in the final days of winter and the anticipation of an outdoor movie event in the warmer days ahead.

All movie showings have limited ticketing to ensure adherence to the approved capacities for each location and current COVID-19 health guidance for outdoor events.

For more information on Delta County Reads contact your local libraries or The Paradise Theatre.

LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION: Put Up a Backyard Clothesline

By Thomas Wills

In talking to a DMEA energy expert a couple years back I asked him about the practicality of installing solar PV panels. He encouraged it but his full answer was surprising. Before you do solar, he counseled, reduce your overall home electrical use with efficiency measures: **Reduce, and Then Produce.**

One of the biggest energy hogs in the home is the electric clothes dryer and probably the easiest to eliminate,

especially if you have a yard. Just do what everyone used to do; put up a classic clothes line. There are two basic types: the compact single pole rotating kind; easy to install and use, and the old fashioned two post with cross pieces kind that everyone's great grand parents had and I grew up with as a kid. And I have now.

Remember white sheets flapping in a spring breeze? Remember how they smelled like sunshine and fresh air. Why not take some easy climate action and recapture a nostalgic part of our self-reliant past? Yes!

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LOCAL HISTORY: Dr. W. Claude Copeland: Longtime Hotchkiss Doctor

By Thomas Wills: From a eulogy written by Kathleen Wheeler, who was an equally large figure in Hotchkiss history.

Longtime Hotchkiss doctor W. (William) Claude Copeland was born on February 6, 1876 at Spiceland, Indiana to Emma (Patton and Thomas Jefferson Copeland. He died on November 12, 1974 at the age of 98 plus.

In 1892, at age 16, he moved with his family, which now consisted of his mother and stepfather H.E. Woodward, to Aspen, Colorado where he attended high school. He also worked at an electric generation plant in Aspen for two years. Upon graduation he attended Grandview College in Lincoln, Nebraska for two years followed by four years at the American Medical Missionary College in Chicago graduating with a medical degree in 1903. He then interned at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, at Battle Creek Michigan. He was licensed



Leila Maude Roberts Copeland
Photo collection of the Hotchkiss Crawford Historical Museum

to practice medicine in Michigan that year and in Colorado in 1904. Copeland began his practice as a young doctor (age 28) in Hotchkiss in 1904 and continued until 1917(app.) when he entered the U.S. Army during WWI through its close in 1918. He then returned to Hotchkiss at age 42 and finally married in 1919. His bride was Leila Maude Roberts, a local girl and daughter of local pioneers Henry and Effie Roberts.

Copeland continued his Hotchkiss medical practice until the Depression. In 1934 he accepted a job as a Civilian Conservation Corps camp physician in Arizona and New Mexico. During this time the Copelands became immersed in the

Native American culture of the area and began a collection of artifacts. This collection was the seed that eventually became the Hotchkiss Crawford Historical Society museum. The Copeland's collection was at first displayed in the basement of the Hotchkiss Public Library at Memorial Hall in the 1970's and is a part of the permanent collection at the new museum.

The Copelands apparently went from the CCC camps to Denver where Dr. Copeland served for two years as a plant doctor at the Remington Arms factory in Denver during WWII. He would have been in his early 60's at that time. In 1945, the Copeland returned to Hotchkiss and to local medical practice until 1962 when he finally retired at age 86, passing the mantle to Dr. Woodrow Brown and other colleagues.

Copeland's career spanned the days of making house calls on horseback to the era of modern medicine. Despite his leaving the area several time Copeland spent a total of 37 years as a Hotchkiss doctor and sixty-two years in medicine.

Additional Historical note: The Delta County Medical Society announced in a meeting report of January 16, 1906 that Dr. W. Claude Copeland was admitted to membership. Other North Fork doctors present at the meeting included: Dr. H. W. Hazlett and H. W. Bushell of Paonia and Dr. J.J. Williams of Hotchkiss. (*Colorado Medicine Vol. 1-3 Page 53*)

Copeland was also a prominent stamp collector and is referenced in a 1928 edition of *The American Philatelist*.

The long time Copeland home was located on the southwest corner of Third and Orchard Streets in Hotchkiss.

VALLEY RADIO: Women Composers And Artists Topic on KVNF Radio Classical Program

(Submitted)

KVNF RADIO'S program, In the Classical Tradition, will focus on women composers and musical artists on Sunday, March 28th from 6 to 9PM as a part of a Women's History Month celebration. Although Women's History Month is a national event, proclaimed by the U.S. congress in 1987, the show will include women from other countries as well, since March is also the time for International Women's Day.

When did women first start composing music and performing publicly? No one really knows, but in the Western world in the 7th century BC, Sappho, the Greek poet, wrote

containing 82 melodies.

Highlights of the KVNF program will present other women composers of the past and also some of the many living today such as Swedish composer Karin Rehnqvist, born in 1957, and known for her work with the human voice and folk material.

Women musical artists are also numerous, of course. However, prejudice and social expectations, especially if they were married or non-white, restricted them until fairly recently just as women composers were.

For example, the first woman to be admitted to membership of the all male, 150+ year old Vienna



musical monody and choral poetry most of which is lost and it is known that she accompanied herself on a harp or the barbiton lyre, another stringed instrument. (Note: There have been attempts to recreate the sound of early Greek music, and you can hear some of these recreations by groups such as Daemonia Nymphe.)

Leaping forward hundreds of years, is woman composer Kassia (aka Eikasia, etc) who wrote liturgical and secular poems and Byzantine chant: she was born in 810. Then, there was the now famous 12th century nun and mystic, Hildegard von Bingen, who also composed poetry and monophonic music. She even wrote a morality play

Philharmonic Orchestra was Anna Lelkes, who had been playing harp for the orchestra for 20 years but never mentioned in the concert program until a protest on a tour made the orchestra give her official membership and recognition. The first black woman to break the Metropolitan color barrier was Marian Anderson.

To hear the music of women in the classical music arts, tune in to KVNF radio by streaming KVNF.org. or setting your FM radio dial to 90.9 Paonia, 98.3 Crawford, 89.1 Montrose, 88.9 Ridgway, 90.1 Ouray, 88.7 Lake City or 99.1 Grand Valley. Show host: Georgia Finnigan.

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FILM SERIES

Youth Rising Film Fest

FILM #1

Youth Unstoppable

April 14, 2021

FILM #2

I am GRETA

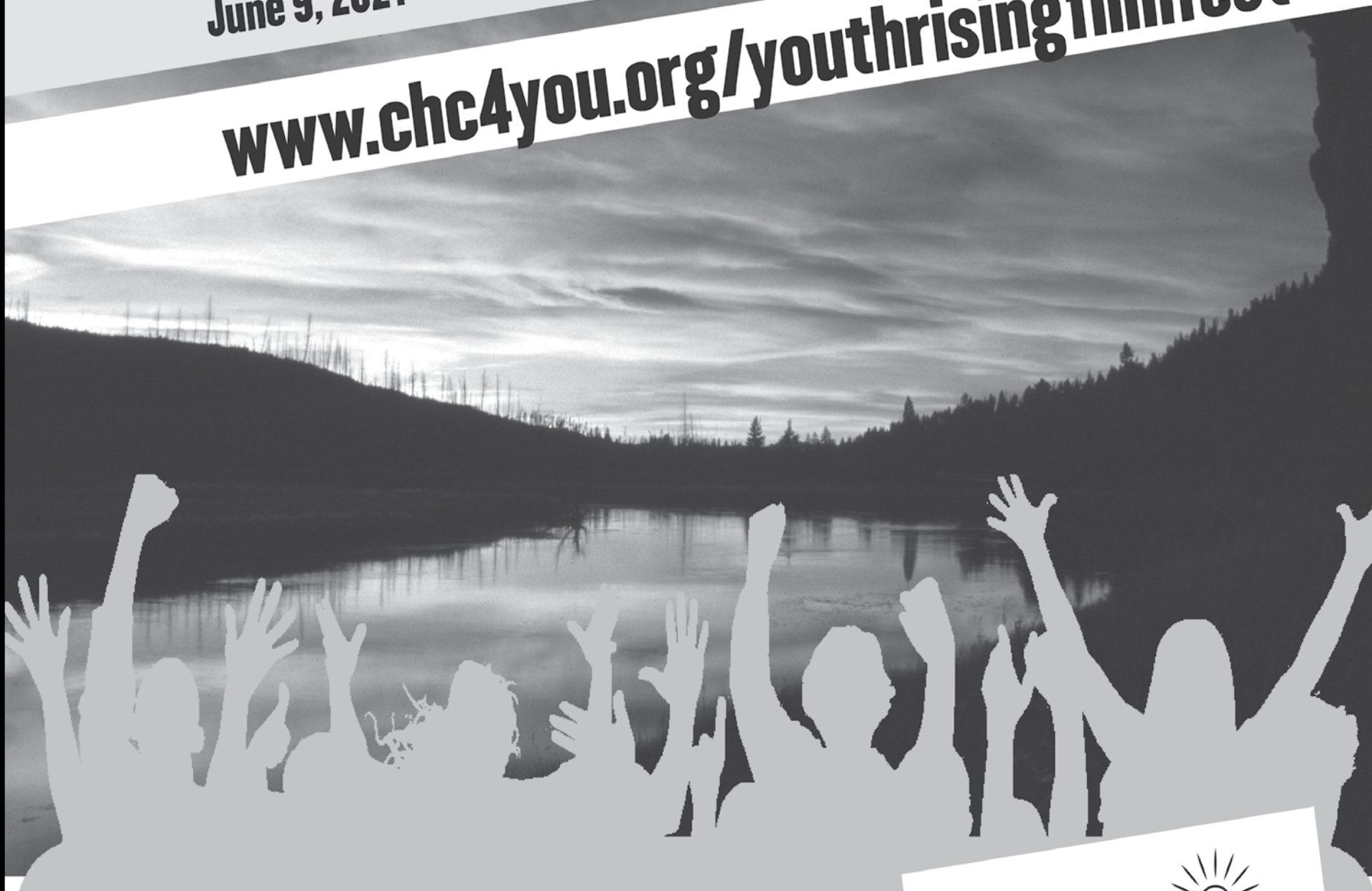
May 12, 2021

FILM #3

Youth v. Gov

June 9, 2021

www.chc4you.org/youthrisingfilmfest



All films screened online only at date and time specified. Discussion follows the film.

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Paonia Town Council

Continued from Page One

It was also agreed that deliveries would be allowed.

At the end of the review/discussion it appeared that there needed to be quite a few housekeeping/proofing changes needed before a final draft is ready for consideration. A vote to approve could happen in March, possibly at the second meeting.

Citizen, Paige Smith, pointed out that the draft ordinance used the word “establishment”, which has a broader legal definition in the State regulations beyond just retail sales of marijuana products. The Trustees agreed that the regulation should be clear in allowing only “stores” with no growing or manufacturing included, since stores are what the voters approved. The stores can be a combination of recreational and medical cannabis businesses.

There was also some concern that the transfer of licenses process might allow for speculation in licenses and the Council agreed that they wanted to prevent that from happening.

Free Political Speech, or Obscenity in Public?

The issue of numerous complaints that have been received by the Town and police department regarding political flags/banners displayed at a private home near Third and Delta Streets (407 Delta Ave.) were discussed during Police Chief Neil Ferguson’s report. One message in particular: “(F-word) Joe Biden and (f-word) you if you voted for him” particularly upsets nearby neighbors. Ferguson said that officers discussed the matter with the homeowner and he refused to “do anything” and said that more messages would be going up shortly.

Ferguson said that he has consulted with the Town Attorney regarding which things can be prohibited/regulated in regards to First Amendment rights. The commonly used four-letter word seem to be the crux of complaints, although some aren’t happy with the political signs being up some four months after the conclusion of the national election. Other messages on the banners include milder opinions of the new administration like: “Socialism Sucks – Biden Blows.”

Many municipalities enforce sign codes that limit the display of political messages to a period

overlapping elections, but it is now difficult to say when one election has concluded and another begun.

The resident in a post on the Facebook Paonia Message Board, has been unapologetic and cites his constitutional right to free speech.

Other Actions and Discussion:

Discussion of a draft ordinance addressing Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Short-Term Rentals was tabled due to the lateness of the hour and will be revisited at the first meeting in March on the 9th.

A resolution was approved to allow all businesses with liquor licenses (i.e., Blue Sage), not just restaurants and bars, needing outdoor seats to meet COVID density restrictions to be able to expand such seating.

A neighbor of the Paonia Laundromat on Second Street asked what her options were regarding what she regards as extra-noisy dryer vents on the back of the structure next to her home. Chief Ferguson advised her to call for a noise check as it is happening and they will respond, presumably with a sound-level meter in hand.

Former Trustee Suzanne Watson inquired as to why the Town was discussing applying for an EPA “Brown Fields” grant in relation to the old Twin Lakes sewer ponds site across from the Paonia Library since the site was previous cleaned up to the State’s satisfaction? Mayor Mary Bachran noted that there had been concerns from potential developers who wondered as to how clean it actually was. Tests funded with a government grant would answer that question once and for all. The Town of Hotchkiss will also be seeking the same funding to do tests on the property containing their old Town Shops prior to sale.

Administrator/Clerk Ferguson reported in her written report that the Town was continuing to talk with other municipalities in the County about establishing a “county-wide building department.” She wrote that there is a consensus to continue on the issue with a tentative date to institute the change as of the January 1, 2022. Paonia continues to use Colorado Code Consulting on a month-to-month basis. Hotchkiss uses an independent private inspector and Crawford has no adopted building codes. Unincorporated Delta County has no adopted building codes in place.

Obituary: Paonia’s Bill Bishop. Local Active Volunteer Had an Amazing Life and Career

William Peter Bishop

January 18, 1940 – February 12, 2021

William Peter Bishop, known as Bill, 80, died February 12, 2021 of complications from Parkinson’s disease and dementia, his wife, Sarah, by his side.

Bill was one of a kind, a true Renaissance man who lived a full life that was intellectually stimulating and physically challenging. Born and raised outside Cleveland, Ohio, to parents William H. and Ethel E. Bishop, he was introduced by his father to a life-long love of fishing. He also started collecting and reading science fiction, which eventually filled 30 feet of book shelves.

As the first Merit Scholarship winner in north central Ohio, he attended the College of Wooster, graduating with a BA in chemistry with honors. At Ohio State University he earned a PhD in chemical kinetics and radiation chemistry, and in 1963 he married the woman he discovered at college, Sarah Gilbert of Tenafly, New Jersey.

During graduate school, Bill and Sarah were introduced to Bluegrass music, which became an obsession, both to listen to and to perform on guitar.

Husband and wife played and sang together from then on. Bill hated camping, but loved the adventure that might come from it like floating the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon before that became popular, being among the first 75 people to float the raging Rio Bio Bio in Chile, and mapping caves in Mammoth and Carlsbad Caverns National Parks. The biggest adventure of all was two trekking trips to Bhutan with 50 nights in a tent, which he managed to survive without complaint.

After graduate school, Bill worked at Sandia National Laboratory in Albuquerque, NM where he conducted experiments underground at the Nevada Test Site. Again to balance the science he helped manage the Cave Research Foundation and move it from just an eastern organization to a national one.

Bill was recruited by the Atomic Energy Agency, then the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, followed by the Life Sciences Division at NASA (what did a Physical Scientist know about such things? Enough to earn him the Space-Ship Earth Award!), and finally the National Weather Service at NOAA.

Running the nation’s weather satellites was probably his favorite job as a federal employee, for which he was recognized with a Silver Medal. Soon the private sector beckoned followed by an academic position as Vice President for Research at the Desert Research Institute, a part of the University

of Nevada System. Back to Washington, DC and the Department of Energy, where he managed a contract with Los Alamos National Laboratory to develop a large accelerator for the production of tritium.

The final step in his life was moving to western Colorado, arriving in Paonia with Sarah and two cats on Halloween, 1999. Bill became very involved with various organizations and individuals in the community, who called upon him for his professional expertise. When asked what his rate was, he said, “I have two rates, exorbitant and pro bono.” He enjoyed helping direct the Grand Mesa Citizens Alliance, the Western Slope Environmental Council, the Paonia Rotary Club, and Mountain Harvest Festival. He often played the role of curmudgeon on Bill Tennison and Felix Belmont’s radio show, “Financially Speaking”. Outside of the area he served on the Boards

of Directors of the Keystone Center and the National Center for Atmospheric Research, and on various National Science Foundation advisory councils.

Bill was a good writer. He received a Meritorious Service Award from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for writing the definitive document on nuclear waste management. While honored by that recognition, Bill said he would have preferred the Equal Opportunity Employer award for the 17 women scientists and engineers he had recruited for the agency.

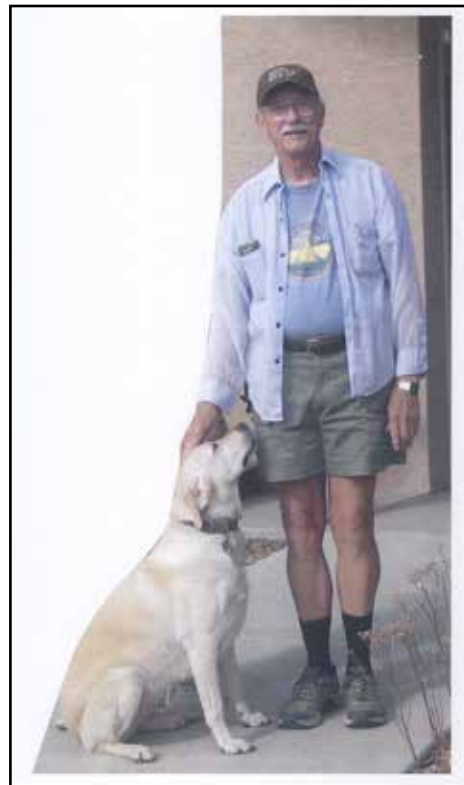
Best of all, Bill was a feminist before that word came into vogue. He encouraged his widowed mother to become a civic leader. He empowered his wife to accomplish things she was hesitant to try. He enjoyed the company of strong women.

Never one for all work and no play, when told by an old friend, “Bishop, you ought to form a bar band”, Bill and Sarah teamed up with Zach Mann to perform as ZBS NEWZ. Then Mike Gwinn took them under his wing to form the Gospel Project and started teaching them to sing jazz. Bill’s high tenor voice and instinct for three-part harmony served him well in these two trios.

Another artistic outlet was Bill’s doodles. Sitting in endless meetings throughout his career, he would draw a simple image. Of the thousands he kept, he turned more than a dozen into large drawings. A local art gallery hung his collection for a month as “Doodleworks”.

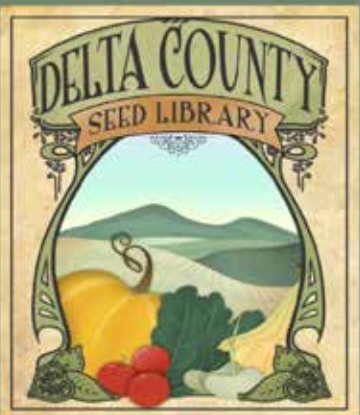
His was a life of accomplishment and service, a balance of work and play, a search for understanding to quench his insatiable curiosity. If there is life beyond, carry on, Bill, as you have in this life. Farewell.

Donations in the name of William P. Bishop may be made to Hope West, PO Box 24, Delta, CO 81416.



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