Home Ownership Out of Reach for Many

by Trent Thomas

Homeowners in Vail and Corona see relatively high values when compared to the greater Tucson area. Corona homeowners average around $209,400 for their house. Homeowners in Vail average $302,000 of value per house. Among the hundreds of available homes for sale, there are numerous property amenities to choose from that range from private pools, golf course communities, gated neighborhoods, and even horse acreage for homesites.

Mixed within these high home values are working professionals that seek to live in homes while also trying to make ends meet. Lower paid professionals see firsthand the lack of affordable housing. There are no apartments, town homes, or condominiums for people to live in.

Teachers, church leaders, social workers, and culinary arts professionals consist of a few of the very lowest paying professional jobs in our area. The Vail School District is the largest employer in the area, employing 1,600 teachers and support staff. Not many will argue that our teachers are critical to our community. However, with the starting teacher salary at $35,981 per year, owning or renting a home in Vail is out of the question.

Most financial planners calculate that no more than 28% of a gross salary should go toward a mortgage. Finding reasonable housing options around Vail and Corona in the $700-800 range is a severe challenge.

I spoke with a teacher who is struggling to make ends meet in the Vail School District. Her story is no different than many others. The teacher did not want to use her real name, so I will call her Sue. Currently, Sue is renting in an apartment complex in Tucson that is one of the closest to her school. However, she still has about a 9 mile drive each way to work. The worst part of Sue’s situation is her salary to rent percentage. “It’s sad to me. I am spending about 58% of my salary on rent,” Sue reluctantly admitted. “I am not saving money. I can’t make a down payment on anything. After my rent is paid, my food bill, and expenses for my car,

I have nothing left,” Sue added. Further compounding Sue’s issues as a college educated working professional is that she is not able to pay off any of her college debt.

Are county policies stifling higher density living in Vail and Corona? Pima County governs itself with a document titled Pima Prospers. This 500-page document outlines how the county will grow by ensuring all levels of county government work together to encourage development. I spoke with a county spokesperson from Development Services who explained, “The county does not prohibit land owners from building higher density housing in properly zoned areas.” Referencing the Pima Prospers document, he added, “As long as the higher density housing is compatible with the plan, then it would be approved.”

The Vail School District has recently recognized the shortage of low cost housing for its teachers and staff. The associate superintendent, John Carruth, has been leading a committee since last May to

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Get Involved with SERC

Shortly after being elected as your District 4 Supervisor, our Greater Vail Representative Lucretia Free and I were touring the neighborhoods of Corona de Tucson with a constituent. During one brief stop, Lucretia asked me, “Have you ever envisioned a formal gathering of folks out here to help identify and determine community issues and solutions in the Vail/Corona de Tucson areas?” My eyes quickly widened, and I responded with a resounding, “Yes!”

During the election campaign, I became very familiar – and impressed - with the Green Valley Council (GVC) at the southwest end of our District 4. The GVC is an official, county-sanctioned and contracted representative entity whose membership is comprised of more than 70 Homeowners Associations, boasting the inclusion of some 12,700 roof tops. The GVC is very organized, active, with various topical committees to address local concerns within their community. The GVC Board of Representative meets monthly, steered by a committed executive committee, and supported by a small, paid staff. Some of the active committees within the council include Health and Human Services, Traffic and Arroyos, and Environmental. The GVC has partnered with other large community entities, Green Valley Recreation, and the Green Valley/Sahuarita Chamber of Commerce, and together they have collaboratively formed the Green Valley/Sahuarita Economic Development Committee to explore ways to create more economic growth and opportunities, business support, and tourism in their area. The GVC communicates directly and regularly with various Pima County departments and they command the attention of Pima County Administration. Pima County realizes such great benefit and value from the GVC’s activities that it actually contracts with the GVC to the tune of about $75,000 annually.

Though the Vail/Corona de Tucson communities do not have the substantial HOA presence that Green Valley does, the GVC can serve as a model of similar replication in our south east region. After several planning and start-up sessions over the last year, the first formal meeting of the South East Regional Council (SERC) was held recently at the Pima County Fairgrounds. Lucretia Free, who attended and observed several GVC meetings and conferred regularly with GVC officials called the first meeting to order on January 18, 2018, with more than 40 area residents attending. Also in attendance were Deputy County Administrator Carmine DeBonis, County Transportation Director Ana Olivares, County Flood Control Deputy Director Eric Shepp, County Development Services Planner, Principal Terri Tillman, Tucson Councilmember Shirley Scott’s Chief of Staff Teresa Olsen, Jeff Copfer Pima County Sheriff and Robert Chaplin of the Tucson City Police Department.

The citizens from our South East Region asked poignant questions of the government officials and the ensuing dialogue was robust and articulate. The response from those who attended was overwhelmingly positive. Most significant was the enthusiasm expressed by those governmental officials for the formation of the SERC.

The SERC is a terrific vehicle for our community to convey its collective concerns and issues to local government. The Vail/Corona de Tucson communities do not have the substantial HOA presence that Green Valley does, the GVC can serve as a model of similar replication in our south east region. After several planning and start-up sessions over the last year, the first formal meeting of the South East Regional Council (SERC) was held recently at the Pima County Fairgrounds. Lucretia Free, who attended and observed several GVC meetings and conferred regularly with GVC officials called the first meeting to order on January 18, 2018, with more than 40 area residents attending. Also in attendance were Deputy County Administrator Carmine DeBonis, County Transportation Director Ana Olivares, County Flood Control Deputy Director Eric Shepp, County Development Services Planner, Principal Terri Tillman, Tucson Councilmember Shirley Scott’s Chief of Staff Teresa Olsen, Jeff Copfer Pima County Sheriff and Robert Chaplin of the Tucson City Police Department.

Houghton Town Center

Development continues in Houghton Town Center! Inverse Jiu Jitsu is open for business as of this writing. Realty Executives and Jersey Mike’s are planned to open 2nd quarter. Hughes Federal Credit Union construction is well under way and will open later in 2018. Remember to support TJ Maxx, Petco and Ross. Stores like these are one of the important measures used by additional retailers we would all like to see locate here in our area.

Hampton Inn & Suites - Rita Road & I-10

Hampton Inn & Suites has begun clearing land at Rita Road and I-10. They will feature 104 rooms and plan to open later in the year.

Las Plazas Old Vail

Las Plazas Old Vail expansion has recently started again. Look for an announcement in February. Arby’s is one of the restaurants that will be locating in Phase 2.

Safeway in Vail

Progress is ongoing at the Safeway and gas station in Vail just across from Walgreens. Scheduled opening is scheduled later this year.

Covered RV Parking - Old Vail Road & Rita Road

Covered RV Parking is being constructed at 9040 E. Old Vail Road (close to Rita Road intersection). Five hundred covered parking spaces will be available for RVs. Space can currently be reserved and the opening will take place Spring of this year. Additionally, they have 200 storage units and will begin taking reservations in February with a Spring opening as well. For more information email: Wayne@ParkPlaceRVandStorage.com or call (520) 240-1210.

Saguaro Trails - Houghton Road near Bilby

Mattamy Homes has begun clearing land for their housing development on Houghton Road near Bilby. It is called Saguaro Trails and will feature master planned single family homes. Models are planned to be open beginning Fall 2018.

Do you have questions about construction in our area?

Email me at: lucretia@thecolumn.com

Due to email volume, I may not be able to respond to each individual email, but will address questions directly in this column. Thank you!
by Tom Howard

Wilmot and I-10

Work is underway to improve the bridge deck and driving surface. Traffic has been shifted to the shoulders for the preparation work. Speeds have been reduced to 55 mph. And lane changes in the work zone is prohibited. Stay aware and be prepared for slowing in this area.

Safeway Shopping Center

Improvement to the roadway around the new Safeway shopping center at Mary Ann Cleveland and Colossal Cave Rd has begun. Striping and paving is underway, and I anticipate further utility work as the center takes shape. Turn lanes and new signage will be part of this roadway improvements.

Houghton Road: Bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad

Construction on this project began in spring 2017 with Pulice Construction as the contractor. The first phase to construct a new three-lane bridge structure over the UPRR is nearing completion. Once this section is complete, all traffic will be redirected over this new structure, with this changeover expected to take place in early to mid-February 2018. Notification will be sent out in advance of the changeover. Once traffic is moved to the new bridge, the second phase will consist of removal of the existing old bridge and constructing another bridge structure in its place. Construction of the entire project is expected to take approximately two years to complete and is on schedule. The completed bridges will each have three travel lanes, with bicycle and pedestrian facilities on each bridge to match the rest of the Houghton Road improvement projects. The bridge deck had been poured and crews are preparing the paved surface to the bridge approach. The permanent concrete barrier will be poured next. We should see a traffic shift coming in the next few weeks. Stay alert and watch for equipment crossing the roadway.

Houghton Road: Valencia Road to Mary Ann Cleveland Way

Design on this segment began in mid-2017 and is at 30% completion. The new improvements will tie into completed intersections at Valencia Road and Mary Ann Cleveland Way/Old Vail Road. Primary design features will include six travel lanes, bicycle lanes in each direction, a pedestrian sidewalk on the west side and a multi-use path on the east side, drainage improvements, street lighting, and landscaping with native plants. The Rita Road intersection will have a new traffic signal and roadway widening. Design is expected to be complete in mid-2019, with construction beginning in late 2019. A public meeting is being planned for mid-2018, when primary design features will be well developed.

Houghton Road: 22nd Street to Irvington Road

Design on this project began in fall 2016 and is at 60% completion. Improvements will extend from just south of the 22nd Street intersection to immediately north of the Irvington Road intersection and will include the bridge at Pantano Wash. The project will include a PELICAN pedestrian signal and crossing at Secrist Middle School, along with bus circulation improvements. Widening, turn lanes and traffic signals are included at Old Spanish Trail, Golf Links Road and Escalante Road. A public meeting was held in September 2017, and information from this meeting can be found at houghtonroad.info/section-7. Design efforts are anticipated to resume in 2019, with construction anticipated to begin in 2022. In the meantime, traffic studies are being planned to determine whether signal lights at Old Spanish

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Thank you, Ms. Eaton

In our front-page article, Trent Thomas reports on current plans for the school district to build tiny houses for teachers. In part, this is a response to the difficulty of teachers not being able to afford housing in the communities where they teach. Underscoring this point is an article by Karen Schutte on page 5 where she writes that “This area is experiencing record high demand by the region's homebuilders due to the natural aesthetics, Vail School District, and the pace and pricing power over the past few years.”

The intersection of high housing costs and demand along with low teacher pay means that many teachers find themselves unable to continue teaching, not only in Vail but in all of Arizona. It is ironic that the quality of education and teachers in Vail draws home buyers that result in increased demand that ultimately raises prices that teachers cannot afford. As Stacy Winstryg reports (on page 13) “When Arizona voters were polled last year by Expect More Arizona... 86 percent believed that teacher salaries are too low.” Perhaps because of this, there will be increased education spending in Governor Ducey’s budget.

While this is good news for Vail and the school district, there are other ways in which we can support our schools and teachers, regardless if you support tiny house plans or not. Some of our well known area organizations already have programs to assist students in Vail (and this issue reports on some of these), such as the American Legion Post 109, Vail Parent Network, Cienega Rotary, Voyager RV Resort, Vail Preservation Society, and Resources Food Bank.

These organizations serve as a reminder of the positive impact like-minded individuals can have on a community. Additionally, as the Vail Parent Network, encourages, volunteering in the classroom is an excellent way to help teachers and students.

As Trent concludes in his article, regarding teachers, “It is only their positive attitudes and work ethic that keeps them pushing on in their careers.” This past week, I met with a school district employee and we discussed some of the above-mentioned concerns, with a focus on soliciting volunteers and substitute teachers. In our discussion, I shared the story of one teacher that I will always remember. Ms. Ruth Eaton was my 5th grade teacher. She tolerated no shenanigans or malarky, of any sort. She was firm but kind. She was tough, but went the extra mile to reach her students, finding creative ways to engage them. She was a senior citizen in my 5th grade mind, but years later when I looked at her photo, I realized she was in her mid-30’s. She had students pick a project for the entire school year. My project was on the NASA missions of the time, specifically, Project Gemini. At the end of the year, I received a certificate, (seen below).

In all honesty, that certificate meant more to me and impacted me more that the graduate degrees I later earned, especially so as I held back in the 2nd grade and was the first in my entire extended family to go beyond high school (after dropping out, as did all my siblings). In fact, there was a time when I had only this certificate on my wall in my office. It just might be my most valuable award. It was, and still is, a physical reminder that a teacher once believed in me and encouraged me. While it was not the last award or certificate, it was the first, and I will always cherish it and the teacher whose dedication and skill made a difference in my life.

Years later, when I was in my late 20’s, I wanted to find Ms. Eaton (I was unsuccessful). I wanted to let her know the value to me of this simple award. I wanted to surprise her with my other degrees and accomplishments. As time passes, and I have learned more about life, I suspect Ms. Eaton might not have been surprised after all.

To all the dedicated Ms. and Mr. Eaton’s, thank you.

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governments and officials with one unified voice. The Vail/Corona de Tucson community has not had – nor has undertaken – an organizational opportunity such as the formation of the SERC.

A representative entity such as the SERC has the potential to create and promote meaningful and productive discussions with local governing bodies and to convey a community posture of self-determination. I call it the best example of self-government at the curbside level. I encourage all residents in our Vail/Corona de Tucson neighborhoods to get behind the SERC and speak with one voice for common goals. For information on how you can become involved with the SERC, contact Lucretia Free 520.609.6233 or email Lucretia.Free@pima.gov.

Highways and Byways continued from page 3

Trail, Golf Links Road and Escalante Road warrant additional turn arrows in advance of planned construction.

Houghton Road: Union Pacific Railroad Bridge to Interstate 10

This project extends from Interstate 10 to the UP RR Bridge. This segment is approximately 1.2 miles long and will have six travel lanes, bicycle lanes in each direction, and a six-foot asphalt sidewalk on the east side. Construction is anticipated to begin in mid-2018 in coordination with construction of the bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad to the north, and take approximately 18 months to complete.

Trent has lived all over the country and several places in Europe while he was in the U.S. Army and later as an airline pilot and business manager. Trent and his family have lived in Vail since 2007.
Rincon Valley Fire District Concentrates on Service
by Anne Gibson

In January of this year, we agreed to an automatic mutual aid agreement, which benefits the homeowners of each fire district by pooling our joint resources, said Rincon Valley Fire Chief Jayme Kahle, referencing an agreement between the Rincon Valley Fire District (RVFD) and the Corona de Tucson Fire District (CDTFD). “By working together in southeastern Pima County, we all benefit,” said Kahle. As an example, the RVFD expanded its ambulance transportation services to the Corona area in 2015.

The RVFD currently serves 20,000 residents over a 50 square mile area. Its two stations are staffed 24-hours a day, 365 days a year with 39 full-time state certified fire fighters that are Paramedics or Emergency Medical Technicians.

Chief Kahle came as chief of RVFD in 2012 after 25 years with Northwest Tucson replacing retiring Chief Karen Lundberg and has continued to grow the district ever since.

In 2015, RVFD drastically lowered its ISO rating from a 5/8 to a 3/3Y. ISO stands for Insurance Service Offices that rates the effectiveness of a fire department with one being the best and ten the worst. In 2016, the Arizona Department of Health Services granted the RVFD the designation of Premiere Provider.

“We closely monitor the growth of the area to ensure that we can continue to provide quality services. Last year, we added one firefighter per shift to improve our effective response force. Rocking K Development recently annexed into the fire district and the influx of new residents will translate into the greater need of the fire district” Chief Kahle said.

While Chief Kahle is proud of the recognition RVFD has received under his leadership, he is quick to recognize the role of his leadership team. Administrative Manager Laura Buckin is invaluable with the complexities of operating a modern fire department and Logistics Manager Danny Lawson ensures that the facilities and various needed apparatus operate properly. We eliminated a single operations assistant chief and now deploy one battalion chief per shift to increase the number of emergency response personnel. Jacki Bisnar leads A-shift and our community risk reduction program; Eddie Cornejo leads B-shift and our training program; and Allen Yalen leads C-shift and our Emergency Medical Services, Chief Kahle explained. “I want to publicly thank these five leaders and all of our personnel that help us provide life-saving services to the public. Our folks all wear many hats and make it their mission to make Vail a safer place. At Rincon Valley, our focus is truly on the community,” Chief Kahle said.

Whittley “Anne” Gibson is a third generation Tucsonan and alumni of the University of Arizona. She has been an active community member in the greater Vail area since the late 1970s.

Vail Area in Tucson Seeing Record High Housing Demand
by Karen Schutte

Lennar Homes bought 160 lots at Rincon Knolls in Vail, Arizona before the end of the year for $3,024,125 ($18,900 per lot). The platted and fully engineered lots were sold by TTLC Rincon Knolls, LLC an affiliate of The True Life Companies-(Aidan Barry, Senior VP) in this Phase 1 of Rincon Knolls. True Life will have an additional 189 lots remaining to sell in the next phase.

Will White with Land Advisors Organization in Tucson handled the transactions with associate, John Carroll. “Rincon Knolls has been one of the most sought-after properties in the Vail area,” said White. “Lennar has proven to be strategic and proactive on its acquisitions in 2017 and this is another great example.”
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Calendar of Events
February Breakfast
Thursday, Feb 8
7:00 am - Hotrods Old Vail
Speaker: Mike Peel, Southern AZ Director Local First Arizona

Ribbon Cutting
Saturday, Feb 10
11:00 am - Inverse Vail
Houghton Town Centre
Training, Food, Drinks, Vendors

Visit www.greatervailchamber.com for the details

www.greatervailchamber.com

The Lennar Homes Dream Team
Lennar/Us Home has been building quality homes in Southern Arizona since 1978. They combine the buying power of the largest homebuilder in the US with a commitment to the local community.

Since 2001 Lennar has become known around Tucson as the home of "Everything's Included" and the "NextGen Home-Within-A-Home". Lennar includes many of the luxury features that are optional extras with other builders and provides a simple process where you don’t need to stress over option choices and costs. NextGen by Lennar offers 2 homes with 1 payment! From the outside they look like regular homes, but inside you will find 2 front doors, additional kitchenette, 2 great rooms, and 2 laundry areas with a door in between for the most of privacy or togetherness- your choice!

The Lennar Dream Team, Ben and Jill can help you own a Lennar Home throughout Tucson, Vail, Marana, Oro Valley and Sahuarita. Having sold over 500 homes in the Vail/Rita Ranch area, Ben and Jill offer a combined 40 years of experience in Real Estate at Lennar and tons of information about the Southeast side. Contact the Dream Team and make an appointment to view any Lennar community.

Benjamin Knauer
(520)444-4177
Benjamin.knauer@lennar.com

Jill Jones
(520)631-5912
Jill.jones@lennar.com

www.greatervailchamber.com
Senior vs Senior Valentine’s Day
by Destiny Martin

Valentine’s Day is all about love, new love, young love and old love. One interesting thing about the two is the differences in them. Young love is all about getting to know each other and going through the honeymoon phase and old love is all about just loving every moment of hanging out with your best friend.

When I spoke with two couples at my school they had similar answers. I asked Venezia Calderon how long she and her boyfriend John had been together, and they told me they had known each other for all four years of high school, but they had just started getting to know each other last year and have been dating for a year.

That seemed like a long time to me until I talked to Mr. Bob Koenig, who has been married to his wife (Mrs. Molly Koenig) for 29 years who also works at my school, but they had known each other for 31 years. I asked each couple how that time has felt together, and they both said it feels like its gone by so fast, Venezia said, “I feel like I could never spend enough time with him because he’s my best friend.” I braced myself for the excitement I would receive once I asked each couple what they liked about each other. In the beginning, they both said it would take awhile to narrow down the list, but once Mr. Koenig decided, he smiled and said, “Well to keep it simple, she puts up with me and that’s impressive at times.” When I asked Venezia, she got dreamy eyed as she said, “John’s kindness and willingness to help other.”

The final thing I had asked each couple was how they got through things they may dislike about the other or things they disagree on and they both agreed that when things cooled down, they would talk through it and not let it build up. I would like to wish both of these wonderful couples a Happy Valentine’s Day.

Destiny Martin is a senior at Cienega High School and works as an intern for The Vail Voice. Destiny’s career ambitions to attend Howard University and major in journalism while minoring in political science make her an excellent fit for the Vail Voice team. In her free time, she works with Bobcat TV covering sports at Cienega and live tweeting the Cienega football games. Destiny has lived in Vail since 2010.
The Geminids!

The Geminids are the most active, surprising, gorgeous, and wonderful meteor shower of the entire year. I recall first observing this meteor shower on December 13th, 1961 from Montreal. During observing session No.12E that night, I observed 15 meteors. Over the decades since then, I have counted thousands of Geminid meteors, all appearing to radiate from a point in the sky within the constellation of Gemini.

The Geminids are the richest meteor shower of the year, but the 2017 version was fantastic, even by its own standards. During session 20201RM2 on December 13, 2017 (I’ve had lots of observing sessions since 1961), over the course of about 90 minutes, I counted 64 meteors, of which some were so bright that I captured them on film. The attached pictures show two versions of the brightest meteor I saw that night. One includes a view of the sky over the Jarnac Observatory, including that wondrous shooting star as it scratched the sky; the other is a detailed view of that matter.

When we see a meteor we are not looking at the dust-sized speck that is encountering the Earth’s atmosphere. But as the speck races through the atmosphere at a velocity of 22 miles per second, it heats the surrounding air to incandescence, and that is what we see as a meteor.

All meteor showers originate from comets. At least we thought they did until October of 1983 when the Infrared Astronomy Satellite (IRAS) discovered an asteroid now known as 3200 Phaethon. This object may be an asteroid, but because it travels about the Sun in a long, looping orbit that takes it closer to the Sun than Mercury is, and then it swings out towards Jupiter before returning; Phaethon’s orbit is more like that of a comet than like an asteroid. In any event, the famous comet astronomer Fred Whipple, after studying the orbit of Phaethon, concluded that its orbit is the same as the orbits of the Geminids. Therefore, Phaethon is the “parent object” of this meteor shower.

I was actually observing atop Kitt Peak in October 1983. And ever since then, I have always wanted to see Phaethon. I had that opportunity this December 17th, but it wasn’t easy. Twice, earlier that evening, I thought I had detected starlike objects that would be Phaethon only to find them still plastered to the sky in their same stellar positions later. The third one was much fainter, but when I went out to check on it later, it had disappeared. It must have moved on, as Phaethon should have, and did. Phaethon has no evidence of a tail or even a coma (the envelope of particles around the nucleus of a comet when passing close to the sun) of dust surrounding it. If it was a comet once, it isn’t any more. But every December 13, debris from it encounters the Earth in a marvelous, unforgettable shower of shooting stars that tickle the sky.

David and Wendee Levy live in Vail. Together they run both the Jarnac Observatory and the National Sharing the Sky Foundation. You can meet David at the monthly Star Night at the Corona Foothills Middle School.

For more information you may write info.sharingthesky@gmail.com
Dear Too Old For Love,

First and foremost, you are most definitely not too old to start over. I don’t believe that anyone has ever been! You do, however, need to get into that mind frame before you will be ready to start over. A good place to start is by letting go of your feelings of wasted time. Through the time spent in your past relationship, you have learned and grown. Maybe things didn’t end up the way you had hoped, but I do believe they work out how they are meant to. Try to look at the past as building blocks to what will get you to the future you hope for. With that in mind, reflect on why things didn’t work out. Sometimes the circumstances are beyond our control, but there are times that we need to make some changes ourselves. Look at what is truly important to you in a partner. Think about what your long term goals are. Know yourself before you try to include someone else. When you feel ready, go out there and have some fun! Don’t live like you’re running out of time, live to love the time you get!

Fire at Old Vail Station

On Jan 7, the Rincon Fire Department was called to Old Vail Station Shopping Center. The fire was located in suite 280 at the vacant former location of the Edward Jones offices. Smoke was reported by an employee at Montgomery’s Grill and Saloon. Installed sprinklers controlled the fire, however, it continued to smolder and was completely extinguished within an hour. Water damage extended into Vail Realty, Montgomery and Bavilon Salon. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

I have observed friends and family struggle with complicated solutions when a simpler, but not necessarily easier response is called for. I am not a licensed therapist, so information is provided for entertainment purposes only.

Dear Heather,

For a long time, I have had a big crush on my good friend. I want to tell her that I like her and move out of the “friend zone” but I’m fearful of losing her friendship if she doesn’t feel the same. Can you help?

Fearful Friend

Dear Fearful,

Stepping out of our comfort zone and taking a risk is never easy. You should reflect on yourself and the current relationship that exists prior to making any type of move. You need to ask yourself if you are ready to accept just friendship if she doesn’t feel the same. You should also closely see if you detect a similar, interested vibe coming from her. So often our inner voice is spot on! If you can accept just friendship without harboring any ill feelings and if you feel you are ready to take on a new relationship if she does indeed feel the same, go for it! It would be unfair to always be living with the “what if” of never speaking up.

Dear Heather,

I got out of a long term relationship about six months ago. I am 29 and feeling like I wasted so much important time in my last relationship. I feel like I’m getting too old to start over. Is there hope for someone over the age of 22 in the dating scene or am I destined to become the old cat lady spinster in the neighborhood with the house the kids make up scary stories about? Please help.

Too Old For Love

thevailvoice.com
Keep the Fires Burning Safely

Do the chilly temperatures have you dreaming of cozy gatherings around a brightly lit fire? Whether your ideal winter retreat is in the warm glow of the family room fireplace or sitting by a fire under the stars, the Corona Fire Department says safety should be your first priority. Follow these helpful tips to keep you and your family safe when you use fireplaces and wood stoves: “Have your fireplace or wood stoves inspected before you begin using them each year,” says Fire Marshal Charlotte Herdliska. “Have the chimney cleaned to remove creosote, which can ignite and start a chimney fire.” Use a tempered glass or metal screen over the fireplace opening and or fire pits to keep sparks inside. Never use paper, trash or liquid fuel. Burn only wood in fireplaces, fire pits, and wood or wood pellets in wood stoves. Never use treated lumber!

Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from fireplaces, fire pits, and wood stoves. The openings can get hot enough to burn skin, so keep children and pets far away from them. When you’re finished with your fire, put it completely out before you leave home, go in for the night, or fall asleep. Be considerate when burning outside. Dry untreated wood will create less smoke and your neighbors will thank you for that. When you clean up, place the ashes inside a metal can with a lid. Store the can outside, away from the home, until the ashes are completely cold.

Follow these safety tips to prevent injury around a fire:

• Never leave children unattended around a fire.
• Prevent burn injuries by keeping children at least 3 feet away.
• Store matches and lighters out of children’s sight and reach.
• Never let children see you play with fire.

“Stay alert,” says Corona Fire Department, Fire Marshal Charlotte Herdliska. “Watch children closely. Help them if you are roasting marshmallows or hot dogs over the coals. And remember, once cooked they will be hot enough to burn a child’s skin.”

For additional fire safety information, Contact your local Fire Marshal: Corona Fire, Charlotte Herdliska (520) 762-9370 cherdliska@coronafire.org Rincon Valley Fire: Jackie Bisnar: (520) 647-3760 jbisnar@rinconvalleyfd.org

Corona Cares News

A whole-hearted thank you to those who donated walkers and transport wheelchairs to Corona Cares. They are being put to good use helping those in need. Assistance needed: We are searching for a volunteer to help one of our senior recipients who is unable to put her trash cans out. Would you be willing to assist this recipient, or do you know someone who would? We are looking for an individual who would be willing to move her trash cans out to the curbside Wednesday mornings and retrieve them Wednesday afternoon.

Are you prepared at home in the event of an emergency if you needed assistance from the fire department, but you couldn’t get to your locked door to let them in? How would they get to you to help? They would have to potentially break a window or door, but not if you had a Master Lock Box outside your home that stored your house key (like the units Realtors use). Be prepared and have peace of mind with a Master Lock Box where only the fire department would have access to your key. Corona Cares has three left for sale, cost is $25.00 each.

If you can help with either of these concerns, or if you, or someone you know is in need of assistance or would like more information about Corona Cares: Contact Ellie Abraham, Program Manager at 520-395-9327 or email: coronacares@cox.net. Check Us Out on Facebook facebook.com/Corona-Cares-989518767786048/?fref=nf

News From American Legion Post 109

Your local American Legion McCullough-Wagner Post 109 is a proud member of the Vail community, or as history would have it, Corona De Tucson. Our membership is made up of over 1,200 community residents from the surrounding areas to include Green Valley, Sahuarita, Sonoita, and Tucson. There are more than 2.3 million members of the American Legion, making it the nation’s largest wartime veterans service organization.

Post 109 is the proud home to the F-4e "Thunderbird" that you see sitting out front of American Legion Post 109. This aircraft was awarded to our POST by the United States Air Force and it is our responsibility to maintain the aircraft, which is done by our post members.

The Legion Family is made up of Veterans, Sons of The American Legion, Ladies Auxiliary, and American Legion Riders. Each of our entities are strong organizations that support the American Legion mission in their own ways. Membership is the key to our success followed by fundraising events that help fund outside non-profit charity groups like the VA Hospital, Veterans Home, The Arizona Fisher House as well as community schools and child welfare. Most recently, our members have been involved with support efforts for Camp Conklin Bravo Base, the veterans homeless camp in Tucson.
A near sellout field shared in over $35,000 in scholarships awarded in singles, doubles, and team divisions at the 2017 Junior Bowlers Tour’s Las Vegas Main Event, held at the incredible South Point Bowling Plaza.

Although bowlers from 23 states competed, Californians took a large share of the biggest spots. The coveted scratch singles crown was earned by 15 year-old Solomon Salama, Los Angeles, CA, who beat fellow Californian Nick Postag 246-237 in a very well bowled match. Salama, who is now by far the youngest to win the scratch event, earned $3,200 for first, while Postag added $2,000 to his scholarship total.

Girls scratch singles came down to the final frame, as a tenth frame open proved to not hurt champion Maranda Pattison, Redwood Hills, CA, who beat Crystal Elliott, Melbourne, FL, 187-179 for the title and $1,500 scholarship windfall, while Elliott settled for $1,000 for runner-up. Twelve year-old Kaitlynn Yukihiro tried for the singles sweep for the golden state, but Kristy Mace from Vail, AZ, won four matches in the finals including a 224-208 win over Kaitlynn in the finale, to win the handicap singles and whopping $2,500 top prize. Yukihiro of Yorba Linda, CA, earned $1,500 for her second place performance.

For the second straight year, a boy-girl team earned the scratch doubles title, as J.R. Mehlum's tournament high 801 series carried him and Saralyne Mace to the win. Washington bowlers Jacob Frazier and Lailani Wallin captured the handicap doubles crown with a 1433 total, the only team to crack 1400 in the division.

Salama also shot one of the event’s five 300 games, joined by two-time defending champ Wesley Low, and JBT stars T.J. Rock, Jacob Mullen, and Deo Benard, each earning $100 bonuses from both JBT sponsor MSC Inc and South Point. JBT’s title sponsor Ebonite awarded balls during each singles block, and our other terrific sponsors and vendors were integral in helping award the very large scholarship total.

Champions Maranda Pattison, Solomon Salama, and Kristy Mace (holding crystals), with runners-up Crystal Elliott, Nick Postag, Kaitlynn Yukihiro

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Huge thanks to everyone who took the time to participate in the biggest event on the JBT calendar. We hope to see you and many new faces at the 2018 JBT Main Event, December 26-30, 2018 at the South Point Plaza!
The Cut and Sewn Bra vs The Contour Bra

by Margo Hall

“Cut and Sewn” bras have 2 or more fabric pieces, sewn together with seams. By far, cut and sewn bras are the most supportive and shaping bra style you can have. The seams help shape and provide contour to your breasts. Another advantage of a cut and sewn bra is that it gives your breasts a beautiful shape and centers your breast tissue.

Most cut and sewn bras are either 3 or 4 part cups and most have a vertical side panel on the outside of the cups that helps pull breast tissue out from under your arms and keeps it front and center. This gives a thinner, more youthful silhouette. If you are a D cup or larger, you should consider cut and sewn bras.

Contour bras, also called T-Shirt bras have a molded, seamless cup with a layer of foam for shape and modesty. They are the perfect invisible solution to wear under t-shirts and other clingy or form-fitting clothes.

The contour bra is the best-selling bra style in America. However, it does have limitations in the larger cup sizes. When breasts get too large and/or too heavy, this breaks down the pre-formed breast shape in the bra’s cups and you can end up with a less-than-flattering bustline.

When you come into The Bra Spa, we will try a variety of bra styles and shapes on with you and make sure we find the right bras for your body and lifestyle!
Vail Parent Network Update: District Additional Assistance

by Stacy Winstryg

When Arizona voters were polled last year by Expect More Arizona, it was no surprise that 42 percent felt that education was the top issue facing our state and 86 percent believed that teacher salaries are too low.

With this information, Vail Parent Network expected to see significant increases in education spending in Governor Ducey’s budget released last month, and we saw just that. The main increase came in the way of District Additional Assistance, or capital funding. The governor’s budget calls for $371 million to be spent on District Additional Assistance over the next 5 years. These are funds that have been cut by 85 percent since the recession.

If the governor’s budget is approved by the legislators, Vail School District will receive $1.4 million in the first year and those funds will be available immediately for the next school year. Calvin Baker, VUSD superintendent, called the plan “a very significant step towards better funding and thus more opportunities for our students.”

The Vail Parent Network is pleased with this step and this is funding that we have been fighting for since our group was formed 3 years ago. We encourage voters to contact their legislators to ask them to vote yes for Governor Ducey’s budget.

With 2018 being an election year, VPN will be holding town halls and candidate events to help our community get to know who will be representing them at the capital next year. Please be on the look out for upcoming events so that you can come and ask your questions and make your voices heard. We encourage you to become engaged in your community and know who speaks for you at the state level. You have the power to decide who that is!

Join us for a community informational night on February 12th at 6 PM held at the district office. We will be discussing our candidates that are running for office this fall, the governor’s budget, and the new schools and the tiny teacher houses.
**The Tucson Medical Center Mega Raffle Kicks-off its Sixth-Year**

TMC Mega Raffle Tickets will go on sale to the public beginning February 8th, 2018. Participants will have one in 20 chances of winning more than 2,500 prizes, including an A.F. Sterling home package valued at $600,000, a variety of dream vacations for two, the newest in luxury vehicles, electronics, jewelry, and more. Enter by March 8th to be included in drawings for the two early bird prize packages, the two grand prize packages and all the remaining prizes. Tickets can be purchased online at www.TMCmegaRaffle.org or by phone at: (800) 395-8805.

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**Backpack Program Receives Check**

On behalf of the Vail Rotary Club of Vail, AZ, The Voyager RV Resort members, and with grants from our special friends at the Safeway Foundation, our club was able to present the Vail Food Bank (ReSources) with a check for $950. Our club started the Backpack program 4 years ago and Safeway stepped up from the beginning with annual grants for each school year. This past fall, the ReSources group expanded and graciously took over the Vail school district Backpack program. With both Safeway’s and The Voyager group’s approval, this presentation took place on Saturday, January 13th, 2018.

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**Vail Rotary Texas Hold’em**

Poker Player’s, the Cienega (Vail) Rotary Club’s 7th Texas Hold’em Tourney is Friday, February 16th, 2018! Come play, have fun and contribute to our ongoing local projects. This year it’s for our Vail Scholarship Program.

Food, drinks, and prizes will be awarded throughout the night. The winner receives a $250 Visa gift card.

The tournament runs between 6 –10 PM, February 16th at Hacienda del Lago, 14155 E. Via Rancho del Lago in Vail (Del Lago G.C.). The entry fee is $60 and seats are limited to 50 players. There is a $50 re-buy option for players who bust in the first hour. To reserve a seat, mail a check to: Cienega Rotary Foundation, P.O. Box 432, Vail, AZ 85641 or Call Fred Bruns 396-0555 no later than Sunday, February 11th.
Patriot Internal Medicine, Medical Health and Wellness Welcomes New Provider

Barbara C. Allen recently joined the staff of Patriot Internal Medicine, a Nurse Practitioner health care service in Tucson. Barbara graduated with honors from the Harbor UCLA Hospital Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology Nurse Practitioner Certificate Program in 2005. This accelerated program delivered two years of post-graduate level training in one year. She also earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Western Illinois University, Macomb, Ill; and three Associates Degrees in Nursing, Psychology, and Respiratory Therapy from Tulsa Junior College in Tulsa, OK. Barbara is also Board-Certified as a Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner and is licensed to practice in Arizona and California.

This is what Barbara has to say about her profession: “I grew up in a household of healers. My step-father was an Orthopedic Surgeon, so it seemed natural for me to carry on the family tradition of caring for people. I started my medical career as a Respiratory Therapist and then became a Registered Nurse. After twenty years as an emergency room nurse, I went back to school and became a Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner. Since then I have provided quality, caring, and non-judgmental care to women from all walks of life. I believe that every woman is entitled to the best compassionate and supportive care I can provide. I especially enjoy helping women with menopausal issues. I want my patients to live happy, healthy, comfortable, and productive lives.”

Welcome Barbara!
Be Your Own Valentine!
by Gaga Barnes

Loving ourselves opens our hearts and shifts our vibration. Self-love is the single most important healing practice one can master. No medicine is as effective, no other energy as powerful and no other process as simple. No matter who we are or what our life story is, learning to think of ourselves with warmth, generosity and nurturance adds a huge measure of abundance and joy to our lives and to the lives of those we touch.

The best place to start is by asking a very important question: “How can I love myself more and better?” And waiting for the answers.

Strangely, love that we receive from others if not supported by the love we have for ourselves, is merely another form of pleasure and addiction. It is neither satisfying nor fulfilling. It creates more craving for more love from different sources. Whether it shows up as longing for respect, recognition or acknowledgment, if not attended from the inside, will feel within like a never quenched thirst for more love.

Make sure you are your own perpetual valentine and check in with yourself on a daily basis. See what you feel and how you feel on all levels. Become aware of your physical discomforts, emotional pains, intellectual struggles and spiritual longings. Meet your needs with compassion and understanding.

Notice where you are doing your best and acknowledge it.

Pay attention, look for solutions, ask for assistance and try new approaches.
Do anything you can do, to love yourself more.

Be mindful and be aware of your complexity and your internal vastness.

On a daily basis care deeply for the most precious person, (you) and ask yourself:

“How can I be madly in love with myself?” And then give yourself all that you need to feel loved.

When you will remember to love yourself as a daily practice, your “love cup” will be full of unconditional self-love, infinite love for others, and the simple joys that fuel more love.

“By God, when you see your beauty, you will be the idol of yourself.” - Rumi

Gaga Barnes is an enthusiastic student of life, artist, life coach and Laughter Yoga teacher. She is passionate about supporting people in expressing their deepest truth, creativity and personal power.

She lives in the Del Webb community in Vail, AZ.
The Secret to 50 Happy Years of Marriage

by Kimberly Crossland, Owner of Savvy Copywriters

What’s the secret to finding the one? For Christa and Mert Reynolds, it was an invitation on a blind date. Mert, an American airman stationed at the Ramstein Air Base in Germany at the time, and Christa, a Berliner born in Nazi Germany, found themselves in an unlikely matchup that almost didn’t happen.

In 1958, Christa’s friend had to drag her away from Berlin and down to Ramstein. Her friend was meeting her boyfriend and didn’t want to go alone, so after some prodding, Christa reluctantly agreed to tag along on the blind date. It was then that she met Mert. Although she struggled to speak English, the two felt enough of a connection to keep in touch after the date ended. For a year, Mert and Christa wrote and visited whenever they could. It was through this correspondence that Christa learned English. At one point, Mert and Christa broke up. When one of Christa’s friends told her she was working in the American Legion in Kaiserslautern, she casually mentioned, “If you see Mert, say hi from me, please.” She didn’t think that would happen, but, that fateful night, it did. And when he heard that Christa said hello, their love story was rekindled.

As the two grew closer together, they decided it was time for Mert to meet her parents. When Christa showed up with an American soldier in uniform, her mother was a little taken aback because only a few years earlier, the Americans had been dropping bombs on her country. Still, Mert’s introduction was highly anticipated - so much so that Christa’s father bought an expensive bottle of cognac for the occasion. When Mert rang the doorbell, the cat knocked the cognac to the floor, so no one could imbibe the celebratory drink. This made for a less-than-joyous introduction. Still, the lovebirds continued to talk and eventually, Mert proposed. “Getting married to a foreigner was quite a routine back then,” Mert said. She had to go through rigid medical exams, background investigations, and more. When the wedding finally happened, it was without pomp and ceremony. They were married by the German equivalent of a Justice of the Peace on a Friday and Mert went back to work on Monday.

Mert was 23 when he proposed to Christa and for their first 14 years of marriage, they and their two children moved all over the world living in England, Taiwan, Hawaii, Germany, Maine, and more. They had two kids together during this time. Whenever they came back to the United States, they seemed to find themselves in cold parts of the country, such as Nebraska, Iowa, Maine, and Ohio. When Mert got assigned to Tucson, Arizona, he knew it was home. He was happy to have a warm assignment and he immediately drove his stake into the ground. They haven’t looked back since.

Kimberly Crossland is a mom, a Vail resident, and the founder/owner of the Vail-based marketing agency, Savvy Copywriters, LLC.
Ongoing Events

Every Monday
5:00 PM to 6:00 PM — Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) Chapter 0577 Vail. - Want to lose weight? Come to our weight loss support group which meets every Monday from 5-6 pm. @ Firehouse #1 Conference Room, 99 E. Tallahassee Drive, Corona de Tucson - www.tops.org - First meeting FREE. Afterwards, $32 annual membership, $3 weekly local dues

Every Tuesday
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM — The Vail Chorale weekly rehearsal @ Cienega High School, Room 218, 12775 E Mary Ann Cleveland Way, Vail. Contact thevaischorale@gmail.com; website www.thevaischorale.org

Wednesday, February 6
11:30 AM - Concert by Baba Marimba, with the irresistible rhythms and colors of world beat music, @ Arizona Senior Academy, 13715 E. Langtry Lane, Tucson - www.arizonasenioracademy.org - FREE
6:30 PM - Lifetree Cafe - “Whistleblower” - He participated in a crime that defrauded millions of Americans, but he also helped the FBI catch the company responsible. @ Hacienda Cafe at del Lago Golf Course, 14155 E. Via Rancho del Lago, Vail - View trailer at: https://vimeo.com/233001192 - FREE

Thursday, February 7
3:00 PM - Lecture by Lee Ryan, professor and head of the U of A Department of Psychology, “Age Related Changes in Memory,” @ Arizona Senior Academy, 13715 E. Langtry Lane, Tucson - www.arizonasenioracademy.org - FREE

Thursday, February 8
3:00 PM — Video on “The Waning of Pax Americana,” from the Foreign Policy Association’s Great Decisions series, followed by a discussion led by George Scholz, Academy Village resident and former U.S. Foreign Service Officer, @ Arizona Senior Academy, 13715 E. Langtry Lane, Tucson - www.arizonasenioracademy.org - FREE

Saturday, February 10
8:00 AM to 1:00 PM - Produce On Wheels With Out Waste (p.o.w.w.o.w.) @ St Rita in the Desert Church parking lot: 13260 E Colossal Cave Rd.,Vail - Cost $10. donation for 60 pounds of produce.
8:00 AM to 1:00 PM - Rincon Valley Farmers & Artisans Market - Master Gardeners 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM - Live Music by Johnny Bencomo @ Rincon Valley Farmer’s & Artisan’s Market - 12500 E. Old Spanish Trail, Tucson - www.rvfm.org.
9:00 AM to 11:00 AM - Two Trains One Track - 1903 Esmond Train Wreck - Presentations about the worst train wreck in Arizona history - Connect Past to Future on 1st Saturdays @ Old Vail Post Office, 13105 E. Colossal Cave Road, Vail - For more information: https://www.vailpreservationsociety.org/ - FREE

Ongoing Events

Thursday, February 1
2:30 PM — Lecture by Timothy Thomure, director of the City of Tucson’s Water Department, “Water” @ Arizona Senior Academy, 13715 E. Langtry Lane, Tucson - www.arizonasenioracademy.org - FREE

Saturday, February 3
8:00 AM to 11:00 AM - Produce On Wheels With Out Waste (p.o.w.w.o.w.) @ St Rita in the Desert Church parking lot: 13260 E Colossal Cave Rd.,Vail - Cost $10. donation for 60 pounds of produce.
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Thursday, February 22
3:00 PM — Video on “China and America: The New Geopolitical Equation,” from the Foreign Policy Association’s Great Decisions series, followed by a discussion led by Neil Kochenour, Academy Village resident and former medical director of the University of Utah Hospitals and Clinics, @ Arizona Senior Academy, 13715 E. Langtry Lane, Tucson - www.arizonasenioracademy.org - FREE

Saturday, February 24
8:00 AM to 1:00 PM - Rincon Valley Farmers & Artisans Market - Community SALE behind the Barn @ Rincon Valley Farmer’s & Artisan’s Market - 12500 E. Old Spanish Trail, Tucson - www.rvfm.org
10:00 AM to 12:00 PM - Project Go Wild Workshop – Camping 101 - Learn how to put up a tent, wildlife safety, fire building, camping activities, packing and meal planning. @ International Wildlife Museum; 4800 W. Gates Pass Rd. Tucson - (520) 629-0100 or TheWildlifeMuseum.org - $13/adult; $10/senior or military; $8/child ages 9-12; $3/museum member

Tuesday, February 20
11:30 AM — Violin recital featuring Linda Rosenthal @ Arizona Senior Academy, 13715 E. Langtry Lane, Tucson – www.arizonasenioracademy.org - FREE

Wednesday, February 21
3:30 PM — Lecture by Harald Saetren, professor of administration and organizational theory, University of Bergen, Norway, “The Nordic Governmental Model: Between Capitalism and Socialism,” @ Arizona Senior Academy, 13715 E. Langtry Lane, Tucson - www.arizonasenioracademy.org - FREE

Thursday, February 28
9:00 AM to 1:00 PM - Voyager RV Resort Market Daze/Farmers Market - Crafts, art work, jewelry, household items, smoked cheese, jam, jellies, honey, produce. No Pets @ Voyager RV Resort, 8701 S Kolb Rd, Tucson - www.voyagerresort.com - 520-574-6100 - FREE
2:30 PM — Lecture by Laura Berry, associate dean for academic affairs at the U of A Honors College, “The Life, Times and Novels of the Bronte Sisters,” part 1, @ Arizona Senior Academy, 13715 E. Langtry Lane, Tucson – www.arizonasenioracademy.org - FREE

Friday, March 2
3:00 PM — Concert featuring Moises Paiewonsky and the U of A Trombone Ensemble @ Arizona Senior Academy, 13715 E. Langtry Lane, Tucson - www.arizonasenioracademy.org - FREE

Saturday, March 3
8:00 AM to 11:00 AM - Produce On Wheels With Out Waste (p.o.w.w.o.w.) @ St Rita in the Desert Church parking lot - 13260 E Colossal Cave Rd.,Vail - Cost $10. donation for 60 pounds of produce.
8:00 AM to 1:00 PM - Rincon Valley Farmers & Artisans Market - Gardener’s Day - Master Gardeners 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM - Seed Exchange - Live Music by Johnny Bencomo@ Rincon Valley Farmer’s & Artisan’s Market - 12500 E. Old Spanish Trail, Tucson - www.rvfm.org

Wednesday, March 1
4:00 PM — Video on “Media and Foreign Policy,” from the Foreign Policy Association’s Great Decisions series, followed by a discussion led by Academy Village resident Laurie Sherman, @ Arizona Senior Academy, 13715 E. Langtry Lane, Tucson - www.arizonasenioracademy.org - FREE

Thursday, March 8
3:30 PM — Video on “Turkey,” from the Foreign Policy Association’s Great Decisions series, followed by a discussion led by Marna Broekhoff, Academy Village resident and former faculty member at the University of Oregon, @ Arizona Senior Academy, 13715 E. Langtry Lane, Tucson - www.arizonasenioracademy.org - FREE

Saturday, March 10
8:00 AM to 1:00 PM - Rincon Valley Farmers & Artisans Market - Community Information Day @ Rincon Valley Farmer’s & Artisan’s Market - 12500 E. Old Spanish Trail, Tucson - www.rvfm.org
10:30 AM - Vettes In Vail - Run to Globe. Depart @ the Lodge at Del Webb Rancho Del Lago 10264 S. Blendu Way, Vail - For more information contact Nancy at 520-730-3596.
Sabino Canyon
Volunteer Naturalists: A Powerhouse for Education in the Coronado National Forest

by Amanda Keith, Marketing & Communications Manager, Public Lands Alliance

Sabino Canyon in southern Arizona is a popular recreation site within the Coronado National Forest. The area sits at the foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains and encompasses a diverse range of environments, including desert plants, flowing creeks, and “sky island” vegetation at the high altitude peak of Mt. Lemmon. The area attracts visitors from Tucson and surrounding areas who hike through saguaro cacti, look for signs of local bobcat and mountain lions, and challenge themselves to mountain climbs, 9,000 feet high.

The canyon also has a powerful force of volunteers, through the Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists (SCVN), who serve to educate visitors, as well as K – 6 students in nearby schools. This year, the SCVN celebrates their 35th year running education programs for canyon visitors. The group started in the early 1980’s after funding for a forest service conservation education coordinator position ended, and volunteers felt the need to continue offering environmental education.

Since then, the group has trained thousands of volunteer naturalists and has led education programs for countless elementary school students.

Kenne Turner, President with SCVN explained that the volunteers are “one big family,” and that the time and energy they spend to educate visitors is their way of showing appreciation for the area, and to ensure that others appreciate it as well. “This is a dedicated group of volunteers that work out of their good will;” he said. In 2016, alone, 160 volunteer naturalists contributed 14,470 volunteer hours to the management and implementation of educational programming and stewardship, they led 7,000 students through school programs, and led an additional 5,000 visitors through public programs.

Volunteer Naturalists Commit to Rigorous Training Program

Turner explained that their group’s education success is a result of the rigorous training program they provide for their volunteers. Becoming a volunteer naturalist means committing to 15 weeks of training and roughly 12 hours per week of in-classroom and field experience, as well as required reading. “When we interview for our naturalist positions, we try to help them understand the total commitment involved. We want our volunteers to be able to go out, lead a program, and speak confidently about geology with 6th graders or explain the history of the Hohokam people to kindergarteners.”

SCVN Hike the Phoneline Trail in Sabino Canyon.
Photo Credit: Kenne Turner

SCVN Naturalist Becky Duncan leads Elementary Students on an interpretive program about Sabino canyon ecology. Photo Credit: Kenne Turner

For each K-6 program that SCVN leads, there are at least six trained naturalists so that the students receive individualized attention. They lead programs that align with core curriculum standards, and they vary the programs so that students receive an array of educational content based in culture, history and ecology.

SCVN Serves as a Strong Partner for the Forest Service

In addition to educational programs, SCVN leads hikes for the public and has led several awareness campaigns to help visitors understand how to use the canyon responsibly and stay safe in their activities. For example, last year, there was an incident where mountain lions were showing signs of potentially aggressive behavior to visitors nearby schoolchildren. When the Forest Service removed these animals, there was backlash from concerned citizens angry with the lions’ removal.

SCVN then stepped up and led a training program, staffed a call-in center and provided information on mountain lion ecology and safety, explained the current status of the situation, and referred callers to the appropriate resources for more detailed information. According to Heidi Schewel, Public Affairs Specialist with the U.S. Forest Service, this outreach would have been difficult without SCVN.

“We can’t say enough good things about Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists,” she said. “They respond when there is a need and they help us reach the public in emergency situations.” Sarah E. Corning, Visitor Center Manager and Partnership Coordinator with the Coronado National Forest also expressed her gratitude for SCVN’s efforts: “We see

To learn more about the Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists, visit their website at http://www.sabinonaturalists.org.

2017 Public Lands Alliance Partnership Award Recipient

The Public Lands Alliance awarded the Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists and the Coronado National Forest the 2017 “Public Lands Partner” Partnership Award at their 2017 convention in Arlington, VA. This award recognizes an exemplary partnership for a stunning achievement to protect and preserve our public lands and enhance the experiences of their visitors and users.

This article was originally published on the Public Lands Alliance website: http://www.publiclandsalliance.org/blogs/amanda-keith/2017/05/12/sabino-canyon-volunteer-naturalists-a-powerhouse-for-education-in-the-coronado-national-forest
Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists

Rita Ranch Storage Car & Dog Wash owner Mike Adams receives his graduation diploma from David Lazaroff, the founding director of Sabino Canyon Volunteer Naturalists, as well as the author of numerous books on Sabino Canyon. SCVN’s rigorous training program means committing to 15 weeks of training, comprised of roughly 12 hours per week of in-classroom and field experience as well as required reading.

For the past 30 years, SCVN’s have annually taught thousands of Kinder and Elementary students in Tucson/Vail, an interpretive program about Sabino Canyon and Sonoran Desert Ecology.
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If you grow your succulents indoors year-round, they won't notice much change in temperature unless they are right by the window. As a general rule, succulents like to be warm during the summer and cool during the winter. Need inspiration go and visit Civano Nursery.

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When your furnace circulates the air in your home, dust and dirt particles build up on the filter. Excessive accumulation on the filter can block the airflow, forcing your furnace to work harder to maintain a constant temperature. The harder your unit has to work, the more energy it uses. It’s a good idea to perform basic annual furnace maintenance each fall to make sure your heating system is running efficiently.

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February Sudoku
See the Solution on
Page 27 - No Cheating!

```
 1  5
 7
 5  3
 4
 2  9  8
 9  6
 6  4  9
 4  8  3
```

Place a Number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

February Word Search
Find the words that describe this time of year!
See the Solution on
Page 27 - No Cheating!

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

“Vettes in Vail” is a group of Corvette owners living in the Vail area who welcome all car enthusiasts to participate in the two social events we organize each month. On the second Saturday of the month with polished cars and lean running engines, we enjoy a day trip to points of interest in Southern Arizona and taste the local flavor at lunch. The last week of the month we drive to a local restaurant and enjoy dinner. We are not a club, there are no dues, officers or commitments. If you are interested in cars whether new or classic, enjoy driving, like stimulating conversation, and want to learn more about our group, contact Nancy Gray at spanishtrainkg@aol.com.
Honoring the Warriors
by Ed Conley

As I sit here in my comfortable home drinking my coffee, I can’t help but think about my nephew that is on his way to his first deployment to Afghanistan. He is the youngest of four brothers that have served multiple combat tours since the war began.

While I was visiting the family in Mesa last week, I was able to speak with his older brother who served 2 tours with the 10th Mountain Special Forces in the most dangerous zone in Afghanistan. He was wounded twice and survived four IED attacks while serving. Listening to him speak reminded me of myself in 1970 when I returned from my combat tour with the 1st Marine division in I Corps, Vietnam, feeling lost, confused, depressed and alone as well as in physical pain from my wounds. In our conversation, it reiterated just how one is traumatized by either witnessing or participating in horrible scenarios that causes extreme PTSD.

Unless one has personally witnessed such horror, it is impossible to fully understand the range of emotions churning through the veteran. The flashbacks, nightmares, sadness, guilt, inability to concentrate or relax, the sleep loss and the numbness they exhibit even to loved ones. Though close family members usually have the best of intentions when trying to help the veteran, they are ill equipped to do so and it is not uncommon for them to take the actions of the veteran personal and become frustrated or even angry with the veteran.

From my own experience, one of the biggest obstacles facing combat veterans is the rejection from society in general. The lack of compassion and understanding only further alienates the veteran from reentering the civilian world, and encourages the self-medication through drugs and alcohol and escaping through dangerous behaviors, and sadly many times results in suicide.

I would ask that people refrain from blaming veterans for these conflicts that they in good faith became involved in. Please, honor our warriors, just as the Native Peoples of our country do. Do what you can to welcome them home.


Most of his life he worked in the video production industry as a cameraman, director, producer and editor in television broadcast and news field as well as a producer of training and instructional videos for the Department of the Army. Ed is now retired and residing in his home in Vail where, he enjoys gardening, playing music and working with pottery.

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Obituary

A resident from Vail, Specialist Robert W. Jones, died January 6th while deployed to Kosovo as part of NATO’s peacekeeping force in Kosovo. Specialist Jones joined the Army in 2011 and was a dog handler based at Grafenwoehr, Germany with the 709th Military Police Battalion assigned to the 131st Military Working Dog Detachment. This was reportedly his first deployment. “The death is currently under investigation,” the Army said. Jones was a 2015 graduate from Cienega High School.

Resourceful Thinking

Furthering Your Reach by Aiding in Operational Efficiency

by Angela deVestey

This year, a national insurance company began airing commercials focused on community service, boasting a website to connect people to opportunities in their respective communities. One ad, in particular, features a man who appears to be haunted by the headlines surrounding him, and finds comfort in making a difference through volunteering with several non-profits.

The ad states “the season of giving is over, but the need remains.” Not only is this a brilliant marketing strategy - airing in January when our resolutions are still quite resolute - but it couldn’t be more true. Ten small words together encompass the struggles that plague most non-profits in the coming months during the “off-season” for giving. Food banks that were full to capacity are barren by now, and the operational efficiency of many non-profits will be tested during this time.

To increase operational efficiency at ReSources Vail Food Bank, consider donating items that are required provisions for each family in need. These items include peanut butter, cereal, canned meats, rice or pasta and beans. Another great way to expand your outreach is to increase the quality of your donations. As the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona (an affiliate of the Resources Vail Food Bank) states on their website, “food can and should do more than resolve immediate hunger - it should nourish, protect, and heal the body. An endless cycle of distributing unhealthy food doesn’t solve problems; in fact, it contributes to them.”

Providing your food bank with good quality foods improves the health and well-being of the recipients and aids long-term operational efficiency by decreasing medical and financial needs. Operational efficiency is ever-expanding at ReSources Vail Food Bank, and programs are expanding to match. Senior meal delivery is planning to double in size, the backpack program has grown, and The Vail Depot is expanding its hours this month as well.

Whatever your motive for volunteering, this is the season you are needed most. Check out www.resourcesvail.org for opportunities in your area.

The aforementioned website is www.neighborhoodofgood.com. Whatever your goals for service are this year, you’ll find plenty of ways to contribute in and around Tucson.

Even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.

— Will Rogers

Anyone who thinks that they are too small to make a difference has never tried to fall asleep with a mosquito in the room.

— Christine Todd Whitman

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Owner: Juan Gastelum
Edward ‘Ned’ Hillyard was born in Texas to parents who had been slaves in Alabama. He left Texas as a young man, riding herd on cattle headed for Walter Vail’s Empire Ranch. Fellow cowboys recalled a time “…wherein there were no fences, [and they] arise to recall that he [Ned] was that big tall black (cow) boy of Vail’s” who could “ride like a hellion and rope like the very devil.” Ned’s skill and dedication to his craft stood out to his contemporaries. Black cowboys made up about 25% of ranchers and ranch hands during the 1870s, ‘80s, and ‘90s. Their contributions were significant.

Ned’s skills earned him a reputation well beyond the Empire Ranch and Vail area. He was a “brush roper who could “dab a loop” on a speeding steer at 40 feet.” Ned’s skillful use of the riata was legendary and was often shared around the campfire. “…and Lord, how that black (cow) boy can heave a rope! He chucks that loop just like you’d throw a rock, and he sure hits what he throws at.” Lightning was not Ned’s only close risk. The funder found Ned breaking a horse to the saddle in the corral. Funding was approved. Mazanoche was the name of Ned Hillyard’s ranch, in beautiful Happy Valley, just east of Vail.

Ned never hesitated to let it be known his life. But, until his death in 1945, his injuries.

As the sun set and threatening clouds became a storm that took hold of the night, cowboys serenaded the herd, using their years of experience to keep the cattle calm. Ned had been in the saddle nearly 14 hours when the “straw boss” delivered the welcome news that he could head back to camp for some rest. The “straw boss” turned his horse quickly to ride back to camp just as a thunderous clap of thunder and flash of light split the sky striking Ned on the back of his head. It traveled directly down his back, pierced his saddle and went straight through his trusted horse. Slammed to the ground, Ned’s horse was killed immediately; Ned lay unconscious next to his horse throughout the night. The storm pelted them with rain until the morning when they were discovered by the other cowboys working the roundup. Ned was taken immediately by automobile to town and treated for his injuries.

There was no doubt that Ned would return to ranching, cowboying was his life. But, until his death in 1945, Ned never hesitated to let it be known that he had a fear of lightning. His 1919 experience justified his fear. His blush scar and saddle, pierced by the bolt of lightning that stormy night, supplied the physical evidence needed to support that fear.

At nearly 90 years of age, Ned was still working his own ranch in the San Pedro Valley. He decided to apply for a loan to expand operations. The funder, skeptical, decided a visit was in order to judge for himself if someone that age was a good loan risk. The funder found Ned breaking a horse to the saddle in the corral. Funding was approved. Mazanoche was the name of Ned Hillyard’s ranch, in beautiful Happy Valley, just east of Vail.

Heritage at Work – Connecting Past to Future with Vail Preservation Society

The 1908 Vail Store & Post Office rehabilitation will begin in 2018. This project is key to rekindling the heart of Vail Between the Tracks™ where our community began in 1880. The adobe is the sole remaining pre-statehood building left to tell our early stories. Our 1908 adobe is on the National Register, part of our national story, and connects us to our local heritage. We want every person in Vail to be able to say they were a part of bringing it back to life to serve present and future community needs.

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The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) invite you to attend a public open house about the replacement of the traffic interchange at Interstate 10 and Houghton Road in Tucson. There will be no formal presentation and the public may stop by any time during the open house (between 5:30-8 p.m.) to learn about the project and to share information that will help the ADOT design team. The project team will be available to answer questions and provide information.

**TIME:** 5:30-8 p.m.
**DATE:** Thursday, February 8, 2018
**LOCATION:** Empire High School, Dining Auditorium
10701 E. Mary Ann Cleveland Way
Tucson, AZ 85747

**ABOUT THE PROJECT**
ADOT is beginning the design process for a project to replace the traffic interchange at Interstate 10 and Houghton Road in Tucson. The interchange was included in a prior Design Concept Report for a larger section of Interstate 10 in the Tucson area and has been scheduled for replacement in 2020.

**QUESTIONS & COMMENTS**
Your input is important and will be considered during the design process. If you are unable to attend the open house, you can provide comments or ask questions in these ways:

- **Call the ADOT Project Information Line at:** 855.712.8530
- **Email:** Projects@azdot.gov
- **Mail written comments to ADOT Communications:**
  1655 W. Jackson Street, MD 126F, Phoenix, AZ 85007

**TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964 AND THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)**

Pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), ADOT does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability. Persons who require a reasonable accommodation based on language or disability should contact Sebastian Tonazzi at 520.268.5519 or at STonazzi@azdot.gov. Requests should be made as early as possible to ensure the State has an opportunity to address the accommodation.

De acuerdo con el título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964 y la Ley de Estadounidenses con Discapacidades (ADA por sus siglas en inglés), el Departamento de Transporte de Arizona (ADOT por sus siglas en inglés) no discrimina por raza, color, nacionalidad, edad, género o discapacidad. Personas que requieren asistencia (dentro de lo razonable) ya sea por el idioma o por discapacidad deben ponerse en contacto con Sebastian Tonazzi 520.268.5519, STonazzi@azdot.gov. Las solicitudes deben hacerse lo más pronto posible para asegurar que el equipo encargado del proyecto tenga la oportunidad de hacer los arreglos necesarios.
Havasupai

by Rob Samuelsen

The most remote community in the continental United States lies deep within the Grand Canyon. It has no cars, only ambulatory access (or helicopter), and is the only village in America in which mail is delivered by mule. It's also the gateway and namesake to the magnificent Havasu Creek canyon, carved out and sculpted by its mineral rich waters. Besides its stunning blue-green water, the creek's travertine creates stunning riff dams and flowstones to accent its ripples and waterfalls. The water makes the gloriously grotesque waterfalls glisten in the sunlight. There may not be a more beautiful place in the world.

The Havasupai tribe opens up their homeland valley to adventurous visitors based on an awkward reservation system. On the prescribed day, I called every five minutes on two different numbers in the hopes of securing my three days in their paradise. Three days later, my persistent lottery efforts were rewarded when a tribesman finally answered my call and booked my stay four months later.

On the appointed date, I drove 400 miles and hiked 9 miles down a steep switchback trail to the booming metropolis of Supai, the 208 person capital city of the Havasupai reservation. Marring the hike down are frequent reminders of the dangers of the tribe's rugged thoroughfare – dead equines memorializing the arduous journey. Lame beasts of burden are shot and burned trailside to keep the smell down. For that reason, I stepped carefully to avoid suffering the same consequence!

After paying for my reservation at the municipal office and buying an ice cream at the store, I backpacked another two miles to the isolated riparian campground. It's furnished with an ice cold spigot emerging from the canyon wall, port-a-potties flown in by chopper, and open camping with 300 of your closest “friends.” It's not luxurious or private, but this was my gorgeous base camp for three days.

After setting up camp, I basked in the natural pools to ease my tired legs and contemplated my good fortune. Exploring upstream was the picturesque Havasu Falls and downstream the huge 200 foot Mooney Falls and the cascading Beaver Falls. What makes these falls particularly unique are the ever-changing stalactite formations with its gorgeous blue green water pouring over the precipices' lips.

In addition, there are many other falls and pools to add beauty, variety, and water fun to the canyon. Beneath the powerful flow of each waterfall are inviting pools to tantalize the psyche and deadly undertows to haunt the soul. It's a magical place with a dark side.

Visitors have an irresistible urge to frolic in the enticing waters, myself included! I took every opportunity to wade, jump, flip, swim, and lounge in the waters. At the bottom of Mooney Falls, one of my hike mates barely escaped the sucking currents of the powerful water. Two weeks later, another hiker wasn’t so fortunate. Whether it is burnt donkeys or tragic drownings, Havasupai must be respected as much as it is appreciated.

Rob Samuelsen’s adventures are motivated by his lifelong wanderlust and interest in natural science. His trips are supported by his long-suffering and understanding wife, four children, and seven grandchildren. To fund his escapades, he works as a business executive having served as CEO, COO, and CFO of various entities. He's served on a number of community boards and operates a small business (www.backcountryexpressions.com) which sells some of his photographs.
for the erotic Greek ideal of youth, whereas the older man stands in for the brusque, masculine but idealized Adonis.

The director’s fascination with these old tropes of homosexual desire is puzzling, as I think we can all agree that the erotic ideal of the white male body (queer or not) has been explored to its absolute maximum. And unfortunately, that is what most of the film is made up of, spending tedious hour after hour looking at how hot Armie Hammer is. We’ve all seen the Social Network - a. k. a., we all already know how hot he is (hint, if you have an ounce of self-respect, he’s not that hot). But this brings me to why so many people (especially gay, older men) feel drawn to a film that features exactly zero gay men. The film is just open enough, blank enough, yet textured enough that it is exceedingly easy to place oneself into the film.

Call Me By Your Name gives its viewers the romantic Italian summer romance that they never had. The viewers don’t need to do anything besides passively let themselves be swept away with the idea of a hunky grown man lusting over their teenage bodies—and what teenager wouldn’t enjoy that kind of attention to some extent? The problem comes, of course, when it’s adults engaging in this kind of inherently exploitative relationship. And furthermore, I would challenge viewers who look at this film through rose colored glasses to consider the public reaction the film would have if the central younger character had been a teenage girl.

Jared graduated from NYU and is currently signed with an agency and living in Los Angeles.

In 2017, many Americans struggled to reconcile themselves with the current state of the country. Regardless of whether you fell to the left or to the right, much of America spent its year longing for a different time - be it when our country was “great,” or when it just had a different president. When we look at the films that critics loved this year, that yearning for a different time is almost universally present. In the critically acclaimed and mildly controversial Call Me By Your Name, the film’s central premise seems to be anchored in a sense of aching, desperate desire.

The film, which depicts a balmy, lazy Italian summer in the 1980s has struck a chord with audiences and critics alike, most of whom are moved by the film’s depiction of a short lived (truly the central relationship lasts no more than a few days) but deeply felt romance between a seventeen year old boy and a visiting graduate student. Surprisingly, in the age of #metoo and #timesup, and especially coming on the heels of Kevin Spacey’s long rumored allegations finally coming to the surface, the age difference didn’t bother most viewers. As for me, I found the film to be disturbing on several levels; first of all, that it’s incredibly boring, to the point where the two lead actors - who are for some unfathomable reason receiving acclaim, have absolutely no chemistry. They are cast to be icons; the younger boy standing in
The region’s Native Americans bound desert broom twigs together to make brooms and used the plant for preparing a wide range of remedies. Pharmacological studies have shown it to contain phytochemicals with anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and cholesterol lowering qualities. The woody branches of the desert broom were used as arrow shafts.

Desert broom has been used in the past in landscaping but due to its high pollen count and its proliferation and distribution of seeds, it is currently in disfavor.

For additional information on desert broom, conduct a web search using the scientific name Baccharis sarothroides.

Field observations and photographs for this article were based in full or in part from visits to the Cienega Creek Natural Preserve. A permit is required to enter the preserve. Please visit the Cienega Creek Natural Preserve web site (http://webcms.pima.gov/cms/One.aspx?pageId=1515) to learn more about the preserve and for how to obtain a permit.

John’s interest in nature began as a child while hiking in the mountains and playing on the beaches of his native Hawaii. Formal training in field ecology and tropical agriculture led to a global career in agricultural development. He has published both technical and non-technical papers and since his retirement observing, studying and writing on nature has become a hobby.

Desert Broom
by John R. Leeper

Insect activity around the blossoms of an unimpressive, spreading, woody shrub caught my attention in mid-October. Small shrubs were scattered on the flood plain while larger plants were common along the edges of the wash and around seeps. The shrub, native to the Southwest, is known as desert broom (Baccharis sarothroides). It also goes by broom baccharis, desertbroom, Mexican broom, greasewood, rosin-bush and groundsel. In Spanish, it is called “romerillo”, “escoba amarga” and “hierba del pasmo”.

*B. sarothroides* is deciduous and loses its leaves with summer droughts and winter frosts. All the plants observed had lost their foliage, leaving photosynthesis to be conducted by highly branching green twigs and branches. The plants growing along the wash edges were lush with flowers at the ends of most terminals and led to a discovery. The species is dioecious with male and female flowers on separate plants. The flowers of both sexes were small, unspectacular and appeared to lack petals. The male flower buds were slightly larger and more rounded with a pale yellow-green color (Photo 1a)

while the female flowers were white (Photo 1b).

I was first attracted to B. sarothroides by the plethora of insect species associated with the flowers. After repeated visits, I got the impression that the diversity of insects working the male flowers was greater than those attracted to the female flowers. Moths, butterflies, beetles, bees, wasps, and flies were actively feeding on the male flowers while the female flower feeders were primarily bees and wasps.

By the end of October, the male flowers had senesced and begun to take on a dull brown color. At the same time, female plants were opening their flowers to expose tiny mature fruits, called achenes, with short gossamer threads attached. The threads help disperse the seeds in even the slightest of breezes in what is called ballooning (Photo 2 and 3).

**B. sarothroides** is deciduous and loses its leaves with summer droughts and winter frosts. All the plants observed had lost their foliage, leaving photosynthesis to be conducted by highly branching green twigs and branches. The plants growing along the wash edges were lush with flowers at the ends of most terminals and led to a discovery. The species is dioecious with male and female flowers on separate plants. The flowers of both sexes were small, unspectacular and appeared to lack petals. The male flower buds were slightly larger and more rounded with a pale yellow-green color (Photo 1a).

while the female flowers were white (Photo 1b).

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Our Neighborhood Butcher

by Anthony Samuel

Before you know it, Valentine’s Day will be here and you will want that awesome dinner to go just right for your favorite guy or gal. So let’s take a stroll over to the meat department for some ideas to cook up for that perfect romantic meal!

Of course, the number one seller during the week of Valentine’s Day is usually the tenderloin steaks or better known as filet mignon. Having the most tender steak available on the market is great, but with quality comes cost. Be on the lookout at your local meat department for the “half in the bag tenderloins” usually on sale for the week of Valentine’s Day. This is basically the whole tenderloin, cut in half and cryovac sealed. You can purchase the half tenderloins and request your local butcher to cut it to your desired quantity and thickness. Again, it’s a bit pricey, but you cannot beat the taste and tenderness of a filet mignon to serve to your loved one.

Another great steak and my personal favorite for this lovely day is what we call a sweetheart steak, in the meat department. Let me explain. A sweetheart steak is a one inch cut, boneless ribeye that is butterflied down the middle and once laid open, after butterflying and a little trimming at the top of the ribeye, it takes on the shape of a perfectly shaped heart if done correctly. Now, in the end, it is always about the flavor and tenderness of a ribeye that is a winner every time; but having a heart shaped ribeye for your significant other just puts you a “cut” above the rest of the guys.

If the steak idea sounds good, but you want to kick it up a notch for that special dinner, how about a surf and turf dinner? I have discussed a few options on the steaks so let’s get to the surf side!

A great choice to go along with a great steak is 4 ounce lobster tails. It makes a perfect size in proportion to any surf and turf meal, along with being delicious and tender at the same time. Some people tend to over-think and over-cook lobster tails. In fact, it really is a pretty easy task when done correctly. Here is the easiest way to cook your 4 ounce lobster tails and have it come out as tender as your steak. You will want to boil your lobster tails. Set your pot of boiling water, you may want to run your 4 ounce lobster tails for about 5 minutes. After removing the tails from the boiling water, you may want to take some skewers to slide through the length of the tail. This will keep the tails from curling up as it cooks and will lay flat and even on your plate when done. You will want to add a bit of sea salt and boil your 4 ounce lobster tails for about 5 minutes. After removing the tails from the boiling water, you may want to run them under a little bit of cool, fresh water to keep it from overcooking. Once the cooking process is complete, the shell is easily removed while warm and just add your butter or sauce of your choosing. Now along with that steak, you will have an awesome surf and turf meal to enjoy for a wonderful evening!

If lobster tail isn’t on the menu for a surf and turf dinner, how about some large raw shrimp? Another great flavored meal that really doesn’t take that long to prepare. Use a medium size saucepan, fill it with lightly salted water and bring it to a boil, just add the shrimp (carefully) to the boiling saucepan for about 3 minutes. When the shrimp is cooked through, they should appear to be pinking white in texture. Remove the shrimp and run under fresh water for a few seconds and plate as desired with your butter or your favorite dipping sauce. I must admit, it doesn’t get much better than a juicy steak with a side of delicious buttered shrimp, toss in some garlic bread and you have a meal fit for a king...or queen!

My last suggestion for a great Valentine’s dinner would be a baked pork tenderloin. It takes a few steps but will be worth every minute once it is being served for dinner. You will need to pre-heat your oven to 425°, next you will need an oven safe skillet. Coat the skillet with olive oil and use medium to high heat on your stovetop to brown the outside of the pork tenderloin which will only take a few minutes. Once browned, place the oven safe skillet in the oven for about 15 to 20 minutes adding your favorite marinade or glaze to the tenderloin. Once cooked through, let it sit for about 5-10 minutes before slicing. Add a twice baked potato and you and your loved one will not be disappointed in this meal.

I hope to have shared a few ideas that you may use, be it for a great Valentine’s dinner or for another occasion, and from this butcher to the readers, I wish all of you a very special happy Valentine’s Day!
"Dear Claire,

I have this dream about running along a path or trail that is like a maze. It is in the wilderness, but, in a way, it is also like I am in some video game. There are lots of twists and turns on my way, and lots of paths to choose from. Some paths lead to dead ends, and some don’t. There will be things that block my way, like a big rock, and there will be things that pop out of nowhere like a weird animal snapping at my feet. The more dead ends I run into, the more lost I feel. And the more lost I feel, the more I start to feel anxiety and then start to run even faster. As I run faster and faster, I start stumbling and falling. Then, I get up as fast as I can and just start running again. I don’t know where I am running to; I am just trying to get out of this wilderness maze. The faster that I run to get out, the more that I can feel my heart pound. My heart starts pounding so hard that it hurts and feels like it is going to explode. Just at that moment, a huge, dark-blue bird comes out of nowhere. It swoops down and picks me up with its claws and flies me out of the maze. Could you tell me what the symbolism of this could be?"

Pathways, trails, and journeys in a dream are usually representative of pathways, trails, and journeys in life. Because mazes are just twisting and turning pathways, and are usually quite complicated and challenging, mazes can represent a tortuous, complicated, and challenging journey in life. The difficulties, dilemmas, and obstacles in a dream maze most likely mirror the difficulties, dilemmas, and obstacles in waking life. The above dream appears to be a classic example of this—and then some! Not only due to the fact that the dreamer is overcoming obstacles and attacks in order to “find a way out,” but also because he is racing against time and filled with anxiety while doing so. What further supports this analysis is the fact that the dreamer is not running towards a prize or a finish line—but is instead running towards an exit, which indicates that he is trying to make his way out of some difficulty or challenging situation in his waking life.

As to the “stumbling and falling” portion of the dream, control of the feet and steadfastness of the feet is most often associated with stability and a sense of being grounded in waking life; being firmly planted on the ground being symbolic of being firmly planted in life. This dreamer’s continual stumbling and falling most likely indicates that, at this time, the dreamer does not feel like he is in a stable or grounded place in life. Furthermore, falling in a dream often represents some type of “real world” decline in position or station, or a decline in behavior, morals, relationship status, or performance level. Yet, there are also times when falling in a dream can merely represent the fear of losing status or position—or the fear of not living up to set standards and the “fall” from grace which accompanies that.

The bird in this dream is extremely symbolic, as well, not only due to its ability to fly, but also due to its coloring. Dark-blue is a peaceful and tranquil color—the color of the sky at night, the ocean, and the symbolic color of sleep, night time, and the dreaming world. As a result, the coloring of the bird appears to indicate a desire for peace and tranquility and the fact that it swoops down and flies the dreamer out of the maze is especially significant.

Birds most commonly represent freedom due to their ability to not only fly away, but to fly off into the sky, towards the heavens. Furthermore, birds are often a symbol for heaven and/or the divine due to this closer proximity granted to them by their ability to fly. As a result, it is quite likely that the bird picking up this dreamer and carrying him out represents that dreamer’s wish for divine intervention - or a belief and/or desire that a higher power will eventually take control and “fly” the dreamer out of his difficulties in life and into peace and tranquility.

Life, for most of us, is a difficult journey - riddled with obstacles, complications, and conundrums. However, regardless of how difficult this dreamer’s journey is at this time, positive themes do prevail in his dream. The dreamer is able to stand up every time he stumbles or falls, and the dream ends with freedom and the promise of a positive outcome. In the final analysis, this person’s dream could merely be the reflection of his desire to escape trying times or it could be a message of perseverance and hope sent by the subconscious mind.

Please submit your dreams for analysis to:

dreams@thevailvoice.com

Of special interest is recurring dreams; otherwise, a most recent and remembered dream will work. Ms. Schild may need to establish contact with you for additional information. However, your name, email contact and shared information will stay anonymous and private. Feel free to use an alias.
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