



# The Hitchin' Post

Available on-line at [www.mountaintimes.net](http://www.mountaintimes.net)  
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February 2008

Patsy Ward, Editor

**A Community Oriented Newsletter for Weed and Surrounding Communities**  
**"If You're Lucky Enough to Live in the Mountains, You're Lucky Enough"**

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## Anniversaries, Birthdays, Comings & Goings, Get Well Wishes, Etc.

### Happy Anniversary to:

- ...John and Karen Braziel - 14
- ...Billy and Jean Weddle - 17
- ...Paul and Kim Comino - 20

### Happy Birthday to:

- ...Jeff Winkel - 2
- ...Lisa Crawford - 3
- ...Glen Adams: Shannon Walker - 6
- ...James Otts - 7
- ...Russ Wright - 9
- ...David Williams - 13
- ...Patsy Ward - 22
- ...Dallas Coder - 27
- ...Sergio Murillo - 28

### Congratulations to:

- ...H.B. Newell who has given up cigarettes!

### Thank You to:

- ...Joy Garrett for the donation to the Hitchin' Post

## Dates to Remember

- February 3** - Super Bowl Sunday
- February 5** - Democratic caucus (see p. 5)
- February 5** - Bookmobile, Weed Post Office, 1:15 - 2:30 p.m.
- February 5** - VFD meeting, 7 p.m.
- February 5 thru March 19** - Lenten Luncheon
- Devotionals (see p. ?)
- February 14** - Valentine's Day
- February 14** - Game Night, Pinon Extension Club
- February 18** - Presidents' Day (post office closed)
- February 25** - Weed Community Mtg., 6 p.m.

## Weed Community Association Achievements for 2007

Francis Newell, Sec./Treas.

The Weed Community Association (WCA) is a non-profit organization whose sole purpose is to provide services to this community. We encourage everyone to participate in these meetings so that we might better perform functions which best serve you and all members of our community.

The Weed Community Center consists of the former Weed school buildings which belong to Otero County. These buildings include a well-furnished kitchen, dining rooms, basketball courts, and an auditorium. These facilities allow us to perform many activities during the course of a year. During 2007, we hosted the following:

- |                |                           |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| Game nights    | Family reunions           |
| Anniversaries  | Christmas parties         |
| Gospel music   | Memorial services         |
| Dances         | Children's basketball     |
| Dinners        | Meetings                  |
| Square dancing | Annual Bluegrass Festival |

These buildings also provide rental storage rooms, library, and the "Weed-Mart."

Major repair of the buildings - such as the new roof, ceiling, paint, and new heaters - is done by Otero County. Minor repairs are the responsibility of the community and are paid for out of our funds and are done by volunteers.

The supplies we use during all our events are purchased out of our general funds or are donated. While we receive funds from renting storage, selling aluminum cans collected by the community, etc., our major fund raiser each year is the Bluegrass Festival. The 2007 festival attracted over 600 people, thanks to the hard work of our many volunteers.

The success off the Bluegrass Festival has led to a desire to use funds generated to begin scholarships that would assist community students in purchasing text books. This program is being established at this time, and any community input would be welcome and greatly appreciated.

Also, during the last year, we purchased two roadside signs to promote and provide information about community events. These signs belong to all members of the community and may be used for all types of information, i.e. community events, weddings, memorial services, or perhaps a birthday wish to your spouse. Contact a WCA officer, and you may use these signs if they are available.

While the officers and members of the community who attend our meetings and functions work very hard throughout the year, we cannot know what you as a community would like unless you attend meetings and tell us what you feel would improve our community. Please take the time to attend our meetings as we all have an equal voice and we would like to hear yours. THANK YOU!

## Piñon News \_\_\_\_\_ - Margaret Merritt

Hello Friends and neighbors! To bring you up to date:

Piñon is still a small, quiet village inhabited by more wild creatures than God's images. Bow season for deer was quite successfully completed, with all out-of-state licenses being filled and some local New Mexico ones filled.

My own young rifle hunters (Merritt Ranch private land hunt) admired their quarry a couple of seconds too long. Better hunting second try another year. Maybe even bigger antlers on same deer with a few less trees for the deer to find? One took home experience. Other took back ice chests of feral pig meat. Better shooting ....

Our coyote/varmint neighbors are highly present early and late. Coyote serenades can be enjoyed (?) Every a.m. to p.m. and sometimes visibly

in broad daylight. Chicken pens and family livestock look like lunch-on-the-foot to them. The Hibbard family's favorite dog is now DE-tailed due to a coyote attack. We are watchful always. Latest unwelcome visitor was a raccoon in the well-fenced yard. Quite at home and destructive. May the next trip be MY turn? We missed. Not enough moonlight.

As I write, a beautiful buck ambles up to check out some doe harvesting leftovers at the corrals/licking salt.

This ranch has a reputation for being a place of rest and fun and recreation on occasion. God created the unique combination of high desert mountains, clear skies with great star viewing rock roads, and VERY limited water. Most of Pinon water falls from the sky - that sporadically - so preservation is a life-long occupation of anyone who lives here comfortably. We as a family have been blessed by being able to develop livestock operations in this area for coming on to 100 years. Our doors have welcomed and sheltered folks from just about all walks of life for varying periods of time. Some grew up, moving on to another life. Some were rejuvenated to return to success in a chosen but worn dream before. Our struggle is to retain both the gift of God we found and peace and pleasure it affords, hopefully for many years to come.

Jane Merritt Murray came to visit Mother, enjoy some ranch participation, and get 2007 paperwork in shape. Browsing internet, she said "That's MY chicken house." "What chicken house?" I said. Further viewing produced clear pictures of Missouri tornado which scared the chickens considerably, removed the roof from their earth home, took the heat pump, chimney, and TV antenna. Husband Jim had replaced the TV antenna so Jamey could view the ball games, and had a crew lined up to replace the roof. Thankfully the power in the house only flickered, popped, and continued in service. Jim's advice: "We are doing fine. A crew of friends came to help clean up the house area debris (sheet roofing around trees and fences). No cows out. You stay to finish the job of paperwork there before coming home since Jodie's new baby is only threatening (not imminent today)! Jane stayed, got the papers done for the end-of-the-year monster. The new Great Grand Burns baby will be announced whenever. Thank you God for your care.

Dan Bell found a new way to travel to Alamogordo last week. Having a spell of flu-like miseries during the night, he ended up after sun-up taking a helicopter to Alamogordo for medical care. Our local EMTs (2 sets) and various local folks filled Pinon with vehicles getting everything squared away and cared for. Dan is back home, medicated; and Beverly is TIRED.

Jacob Hibbard had his birthday last week. Cherry Delight cake prepared on order by Aunt Sue was delicious and enjoyed by some 14 friends and family. Jacob enjoyed the cake and presents. Could have foregone the birthday spanking since Mr. Mike was not there to do that. Another year, Jacob!

Jesse Hibbard had his birthday yesterday. Aunt Sue baked his favorite chocolate cake which was enjoyed by all present, especially 2-year-old Sarah who can feed her own forks of cake, thank

you! Jesse enjoyed all his presents, including a lesson by Sue on how to count his money gifts. The Mr. Mike presence happened, so that helped with Dad's absence. Mitch was in Arizona on company business and couldn't get home until nightfall. A piece of birthday cake was saved for Mitch. Bet he ate it, too, even tho he is determined to do some re-calorie counting these days. Fathers and sons are special friends.

Waiting for rain. Enjoying sunshine. Adios, Margaret.

P.S. Ruth Tanner had a quiet birthday party at Beverly's home after Dan was back home. Happy Birthday, Ruth!

### **Piñon Community Extension Club News and Dates to Remember** - Elaine Wright

The Piñon Community Extension Club has planned a year of fun and interesting programs. Meetings are at the Piñon Clubhouse on the second Thursday of each month. All are welcome -- you don't have to be a member.

On February 14, join the ladies at 5 p.m. Bring a plastic-covered placemat (the quilted fabric type) and Julia Parker will magically turn it into a handy and attractive notebook holder. Extras will be made for the fund-raiser next October, so bring several placemats if you can.

Then at 6 p.m. on February 14, friends and neighbors will gather for Game Night, also at the Piñon Clubhouse. Bring snacks or finger foods to share and games you enjoy. It promises to be an enjoyable evening.

Watch this space for more dates and information about Piñon Community Events.

### **Water Matters**

The following letter was written by Stephen Cook on behalf of the South Sacramento Water Group (SSWG) as authorized at its January 10 meeting in Mayhill.

To: John Beese, BLM, District Office, Las Cruces  
Re: Public Comments on BLM Environment Assessment on Proposed Oil & Gas Well in Otero Mesa

Dear Mr. Beese:

The South Sacramento Water Group (SSWG) represents hundreds of families and many water associations in various Sacramento Mountain communities. Founded in early 2005, we are a non-profit corporation organized for educational and scientific purposes as related to water issues. The potential development of the groundwater resource in the Salt Basin--of which our Sacramento Mountains is believed to be the prime recharge area--is one of those issues.

Given the potential for oil and gas development in Otero Mesa to pollute the Salt Basin water resource, we are concerned about the contents of the BLM's Environment Assessment on the proposed oil & gas well in Otero Mesa. For starters, we feel this document is lacking in two ways and have suggested actions you should take to rectify these deficiencies as follows:

1) It does not contain a "no action" alternative.

suggested action: we urge you to formulate such an alternative that proposes no drilling / no oil and gas development in Otero Mesa.

2) The analysis in this Environment Assessment is not in compliance with New Mexico Oil Conservation District rules banning the use of waste pits in environmentally sensitive places like Otero Mesa.

suggested action: we urge you to redo the analysis so that it complies with these rules.

Until the scientific community better understands the water resource in Salt Basin (the amount, quality, origin, related hydrology and geology, potential for pollution, etc.), and until the public becomes better educated as to both this scientific assessment and issues related to using this resource, our group prefers the "no action" alternative mentioned above. Indeed, the last year has seen politicians from both parties and citizens with diverse backgrounds, occupations, and concerns seemingly reach a consensus on development of resources in Otero Mesa / Salt Basin. That consensus position is that the Salt Basin water resource needs to be more carefully studied before any development occurs, and that no oil & gas development in Otero Mesa should be considered until these studies have been completed and related concerns about the possible pollution of this water resource have likewise been addressed.

#### Cell Phone Tower?? - Larry Crawford

After receiving complaints from our campers because of no cell or wireless internet in this area, the Wehinahpay Mountain Camp Board of Directors asked me to contact Verizon to see about the possibility of installing a tower on the Camp's property. After several telephone conversations with Verizon, I made an application on January 2 for a site. They require an area 100 by 92 x 100 by 92 for a tower. As of yet, a reply to our request has not been received.

#### New Mexico Low Income Telephone Assistance Program (LITAP)

The LITAP is designed to make telephone service available at reduced rates to eligible residential customers. You may qualify for LITAP if you or someone in your household are certified by the New Mexico Human Services Department and receive either Medicaid Benefits or Energy Assistance.

Your basic residential local service rate will be reduced by approximately 50% per month with LITAP. If you are applying for your initial telephone service from PVT, installation charges will be reduced by 50%. There are other options that can help you save money, including free toll blocking and waived deposits with toll blocking.

#### End of an Era

The days of TV rabbit ears and snowy screens are coming to an end. Congress has mandated that, on February 17, 2009, the plug will officially be pulled on analog TV transmission, the technology used since television came on the scene in the 1930s.

The national switch to digital from analog transmissions is the biggest change in TV

transmission standards since the birth of color broadcasting in 1953. The change to digital will improve picture and sound quality and allows the transfer of more data to consumers. The change also frees up precious airwave spectrum space for the government to create a national public-safety frequency. The remainder of the spectrum will be sold at public auction to allow for future wireless expansion.

Many Americans won't notice the switch because they already have digital sets or cable or satellite service. But those who are still receiving analog signals on older sets are going to need to upgrade. The options are to purchase a digital TV set, subscribe to cable or satellite service, or purchase a digital converter box. To ease the transition for consumers, the federal government will be offering two \$40 coupons per household to help pay for converter boxes, also called tuners. The voucher program begins in January 2009 and will be administered through the U.S. Department of Commerce National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

PVT is available to help you through the transition. They will be glad to work with you - whether they provide you with a PVT solution or direct you to an alternative. Their toll-free number is 800-505-4844.

#### Democratic Caucus

The polling place for all Democrats in precincts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 in the upcoming February 5 Democratic caucus is the Cloudcroft Village Council chambers. This caucus is funded by the Democratic Party, not the state, and staffed by volunteers, so we can't have a polling site in every precinct. (Republican Party members will get to vote for their choice in the regular New Mexico primary on June 3.)

Precinct 9, which is halfway down the mountain, will vote at the La Luz Elementary School (in case of bad weather, we figured it is easier to go downhill to vote instead of driving up into snow.)

Polling hours are noon-7pm.

Ellen Wedum

Chair, Democratic Party of Otero County

#### February Observances

2nd - Groundhog Day

6th - Ash Wednesday

7th - Chinese New Year

12th - Abraham Lincoln's birthday

14th - Valentine's Day

18th - Presidents' Day (federal holiday)

22nd - George Washington's birthday

8th thru 14th - Love Makes the World go Round, But Laughter Keeps Us from Getting Dizzy Week  
American Heart Month

Black History Month

Spunky Old Broads Month

#### Sacramento Mountains Radio Club

- Linda Steinhoff

New officers:

Jerry Smith, President

Gordon Wyatt, Vice Pres.

Jayne Wyatt, Secretary/Treasurer

Meetings are the second Thursday of each month, James Canyon VFD, 7 p.m.

## Area Churches

Cowboy Church - Mike Burris, Pastor.  
Slack (Breakfast) - 9:15 a.m. Services - 10 a.m. We ain't fancy! Just come on in, kick off your boots, grab some coffee, biscuits & gravy and share the word of God with the rest of us cowboys, cowgirls and little buckaroos. We are located in Hay Canyon. God Bless and Happy Trails!

Mayhill Baptist Church - Norman Green, Pastor. Sunday School at 10 a.m., worship services at 11 a.m. Children and youth Bible drill and adult and youth Discipleship training, 5 p.m. Evening worship service, 6 p.m. Children and youth Bible study and adult Bible study and prayer meeting, Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. Men's breakfast and devotional, Thursday, 7 a.m.

Mayhill Church of Christ - Eddie Coleman, Pastor. Sunday Bible class, 9:30 a.m.; worship service, 10:30 a.m. Evening worship, 6 p.m., and Wednesday Bible Study, 7 p.m.

Piñon Baptist Church - J. B. Craft, Pastor. Bible Study, 10:30 a.m.; Worship service, 11:30 a.m.; 12:30 potluck.

Piñon Church of Christ - Bible Study, 10:30 a.m., Worship Service, 11:30 a.m.; potluck 12:30 p.m.; Wednesday Bible study, 7 p.m.

Sacramento Mountain United Methodist Church - Joy Garrett, Lay Minister. Sunday worship service at 10 a.m., Sunday School at 11 a.m.

Weed Baptist Church - Wade Maberry, Pastor. Sunday School 10 a.m., Worship Service at 11 a.m. Bible Study/Prayer, Wednesdays at 2 p.m. Potluck luncheon every third Sunday of the month.

Weed House of Prayer - Don Brown, Pastor. Services are held every Sunday in the Fellowship Hall. Prayer and singing at 10 a.m.; sermon at 11 a.m. Prayer service is held each Wednesday at 10 a.m. Wednesday Bible study class, 6:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall. Everyone is welcome to attend. Potluck luncheon the second Sunday of each month.

(If you have additional information you would like to include about your church, or if there are changes to the existing info, please let me know. Ed.)

## Lenten Luncheon Devotionals with Soup and Sandwiches

- Dulaney Barrett  
Beginning February 6 (Ash Wednesday), and continuing each Wednesday through March 19 at noon, the South Sacramento Mountain Ministerial Alliance is sponsoring a Lenten Season devotional. Less than an hour long, these services will include music, a brief devotional by a different church, and a soup and sandwich lunch.

These luncheons are provided by the different churches without charge. A freewill offering will be received for the Alliance's ministries. Each luncheon/devotional will be held in the Fellowship Hall of the Cloudcroft United Methodist Church.

The hope is that working persons can take their lunch hour and join in this event; however, everyone is invited to attend.

## The Difficult Hunt

- Jeff Winkel  
February 2007- fill out the application on line and provide your credit card number.

June 2007 - you are notified that you have drawn an Oryx depredation hunt number and your credit card is charged the requisite amount - a mere pittance for in-state hunter for an exotic species.

Late November - the state calls and announces that your lottery number has won an opportunity to go on the next hunt. I had to decline because I did not have a hunter safety course. (Not required for application). Fortunately the state did not put me on the bottom of the list. Still eligible for the next hunt.

Early December - the state calls again - would you like to hunt on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December or the 20<sup>th</sup>. I took the 20<sup>th</sup>.

December 19, John (our veterinary friend), Tom Ward and I check into Motel 6 for a little sleep. Contrary to their advertisement, they did not have the light on for us. We go to the motel so that we did not have to get up at 2 in the morning - we are mighty hunters.

4 a.m. the alarm goes off - the day is started. Breakfast at Denny's. Yum, it's food.

5:50 a.m. - arrive at the ron-de-vu at the White Sands Small Missile Range for our 6:30 check in.

6:35 a.m. - briefing is over. We were informed that this is a depredation hunt and that if the US Fish and Wildlife Guide thinks we are hunting a trophy head we will be escorted from the site and dismissed. At this point our guide sounds a little stiff.

After a 25-minute drive, we are at the place to begin hunting. Our escort/guide has been on the radio with a spotter and a guide for the other hunting party. The spotter has seen an Oryx and he is headed our way.

My guide puts me on a low ridge just under the skyline - just like on the hunting channel. See him coming over to our right? Get ready. Whenever you are ready, take him.

We are now about 20 minutes into our hunt - boom!, a hit but not down. Boom! another hit, not down. It is now time to put in the coup de grace. Boom! oops a little high - left horn gone. Boom! The coup de grace is complete.

Now the work begins. Tom and John direct me in the fine art of field dressing an animal. Tom and John pitch in. Our guide is busy on the radio arranging for the field pick up. Our guide has turned out to be very friendly, helpful, and a very good conversationalist.

About an hour later, the ATV with a rack on the back arrives. The ATV backs up, we roll the Oryx onto the rack and strap it on. The winch picks up the rack, I sit on the front of the ATV so the front wheels stay on the ground and the guide drives the quarter mile to the truck.

We slide the carcass from the ATV to the guide's pickup. Drive back to my truck, slide the carcass into my truck, then drive to a structure that looks like a water tower, and elevate the carcass so that we can skin it.

About 9:30 a.m., the Oryx is ready to go to the locker. At about this time the guide receives a call that the two hunters who kicked the Oryx to us have one down about 1.5 miles away, but they could use a little help.

We all jump in the guide's truck, a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton Dodge pickup, and go down the "road," through a

couple of washes, over the rock and through the brush, no we are not going to Grandma's house, and arrive where the other hunters are. Both of these boys are into their 70's but going strong. The hard part is that, before the bull they shot died, the bull fell over a 10' drop (straight down) into the bottom of a wash. While we are discussing how we are going to get the critter out, our guide takes off in his truck, goes up the draw a short ways, then comes down the wash. He took his truck in a few places that I would have avoided on horseback let alone in a truck. Five of us hoist the bull into his truck and proceed back to the structure so the others can skin their prize.

While the guides are doing their paper work for the hunts, we have a light lunch: roast beef sandwiches with gray poupon, lettuce and tomato, chips and cheetos, tea/Coke/water, and Louise-made cookies. A meal fit for a king let alone hunters in the field. Our guide and spotter decline lunch as they have tomas. They did, however, partake in the cookies. Guess they are smarter than they look.

We no sooner finish lunch and the guide is ready to escort us off the Missile Range. We leave the range at about 12:30 p.m. and head for our second ron-de-vou of the day - the butcher.

About 3:30 in the afternoon we arrive home, just in time to feed the animals, take a shower, and go the community Christmas dinner. It has been a tough day. Good thing I'm retired and can rest tomorrow.

### Coffee vs the Cups

A group of alumni, highly established in their careers, were talking at a reunion and decided to go visit their old university professor, now retired. During their visit the conversation soon turned into complaints about stress in their work and lives.

Offering his guests coffee, the professor went to the kitchen and returned with a large pot of coffee and an assortment of cups -porcelain, plastic, glass, crystal, some plain looking, some expensive, some exquisite, telling them to help themselves to the coffee.

When all the alumni had a cup of coffee in hand, the professor said, "Notice that all the nice looking, expensive cups were taken up, leaving behind the plain and cheap ones. While it is normal for you to want only the best for yourselves, that is the source of your problems and stress. Be assured that the cup itself adds no quality to the coffee. In most cases it is just more expensive and in some cases even hides what we drink. What all of you really wanted was coffee, not the cup; but you consciously went for the best cups... and then you began eyeing each other's cups. Now consider this: Life is the coffee; your job, money and position in society are the cups. They are just tools to hold and contain Life. The type of cup one has does not define nor change the quality of life a person lives. Sometimes, by concentrating only on the cup, we fail to enjoy the coffee God has provided us." God makes the coffee, man chooses the cups. The happiest people don't have the best of everything. They just make the best of everything.

Live simply. Love generously. Care deeply. Speak kindly. Enjoy your coffee!