

TELLURIDE DAILY PLANET

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SUNDAY

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Don't quote me but...

"I can't wait to be Mrs. Amy Laine."
—Amy Laine, of Austin, Texas

Calendar

Sunday

- 7th Annual Ride Festival: Telluride Town Park
- Meditation Workshop: Telluride Yoga Center, 1-3:30 p.m.
- Music in the Core: Mountain Village, 2-4 p.m.
- AA: Christ Presbyterian Church, 5:30 p.m.

Monday

- Music in the Core: Mountain Village, 2-4 p.m.
- AA: Christ Presbyterian Church, 5:30 p.m.
- Melodrama: "Big Trouble in Little Tomboy," Wright Opera House, 7 p.m.
- Vaudeville Show: Telluride Transfer Warehouse, 7 p.m.

Tuesday

- AA: Christ Presbyterian Church, 7 a.m.
- Music in the Core: Heritage Plaza, Mountain Village, 2-4 p.m.
- Punk Science: Mining Chemistry, Wilkinson Public Library, 5:15 p.m.
- Science Research Center Town Talk: Conference Center, 6:30-7:15 p.m.
- Telluride Gold Kings: Phoenix Bean, 6:30 p.m.

Weather

Forecast: Sunday is predicted to bring thunderstorms with a high of 69. Monday and Tuesday will be the same with highs of 70 and 71, respectively.

Muse: "A house without love ain't a home." —Merle Haggard

IN ORBIT:

Sunday Focus:
Business

Mountain Village's
Shake N Dog
Grub Shack

Wednesday:
Arts, Lifestyles
& Nonprofits

COMMUNITY

Striving for inclusivity

By SOPHIE STUBER
Planet Contributor

Local members of Telluride's community are taking action to ensure that the town becomes a more inclusive space for the immigrant and Spanish-speaking populations in the area. Several of the initiatives were described by such individuals in interviews with the Daily Planet earlier this week.

Tri-County Health Network is currently involved in several community coalitions that are "highly

Telluride's immigrant population faces cultural, language hurdles

collaborative," said Kody Gerkin, the network's community outreach manager. The first, the Alliance for Inclusion, works with members of civic bodies in Telluride, such as Town Council, nonprofits, govern-

mental institutions and organizations like Tri-County Health. The mission of this group is to help member organizations be as inclusive as possible. In the mission to increase awareness, the alliance teaches representatives to use similar language and think about

these issues with similar frameworks.

The second coalition, the Latino Advocacy Committee (LAC), is "more of a boots-on-the-ground operation. Folks that work directly with the Latino population on a day-to-day basis," Gerkin explained.

Claudia Garcia Curzió, who is heavily involved in LAC, first worked alongside Gerkin at Tri-

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Last Dollar Saloon co-owner Jay Raible is ready to welcome customers into the remodeled bar, possibly as soon as the second weekend in August. (Photo by Suzanne Cheavens/Telluride Daily Planet)

TELLURIDE

Cherished watering hole still receiving a facelift

The Buck inches closer to reopening, owners aim for early August

By SUZANNE CHEAVENS
Associate Editor

Sawdust permeates the air; saws whine and hammers bang. Stepping through the front door of the Last Dollar Saloon is like coming home, even if home is currently a construction site. And possibly by early August, we just might be able to come home.

"We've been told by the powers that be, right around the end of the month," said Jay Raible, one-third owner, along with Michael Lee and Moussa Konare, of the beloved local tavern. "Jazz festival is a long

shot, but I think there's a scenario where we could be open."

Despite the current state of upheaval, the markers of familiarity are evident, if new and different. The bar — now 2 feet further south and a bit taller — is coming together beautifully, as skilled woodworkers artfully sand, glue and install the finishing touches. Where the old stone fireplace loomed darkly on the west wall, there now resides a sleek, new one, clad in lighter stone. Of the most comfort of all is seeing the iconic, white glass-fronted beer cooler en-

scioned behind the bar. All it lacks are the myriad bottles of brews, wines and liquors, that, once liberated from the chill on a post-work evening, will slake the thirst of many a Buck loyalist (this reporter among them).

Raible was visibly excited and incredibly proud of how the Buck is morphing into its next iteration during a tour with the Daily Planet earlier this week. He knows the history of the 119-year-old building like he knows the recipe for his world-famous and potent margari-

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SAN MIGUEL COUNTY

'NOT AN OUTCOME WE HOPED FOR'

Search for missing hiker suspended after four days

By SUZANNE CHEAVENS
Associate Editor

In a four-day search fueled by optimism but laden with the challenges of weather, terrain and the ticking clock, San Miguel County Sheriff Bill Masters issued a statement late Thursday informing the public that the efforts to find local missing hiker Tim Cannon would be suspended.

Cannon, 55, went missing on a Sunday hike in the Iron Mountain area, where he'd informed his wife, Amy, that he would be for the day. When he failed to return, Amy's call to dispatch early Monday morning set in motion what officials called an "aggressive search" for the 30-year local and avid outdoorsman.

The sheriff's statement read, in part: "With careful analysis and sincere consideration of Mr. Tim Cannon, his family and friends, I am announcing the discontinuation of San Miguel Sheriff's Office's search and rescue efforts to locate him. After four days of an aggressive and extensive air and ground search utilizing the best resources available and thousands of manpower hours, I am confident we did our best to find Mr. Cannon."

The search area encompassed 24 square miles, the equivalent of 15,000 acres.

At the command center on Last Dollar Road Thursday afternoon, Masters acknowledged that the search party was losing the race against time. "The reality is, if we

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Children work on a banner at a June 30 Families Belong Together Rally in Telluride. (Planet File Photo)

Hurdles

IMMIGRATION, from page 1

County Health. As a cultural navigator, Garcia Curzió spearheaded actions to make the Telluride area more accessible and welcoming to the immigrant community.

Gerkin and Garcia Curzió work well together because they understand the contexts and cultures of these two places, they said. Gerkin served in the Peace Corps in Guatemala and Garcia Curzió is originally from Mexico. "That's why we worked together as a team, because we knew culturally what was needed and how sensitive to be and how to approach things" Garcia Curzió said.

At Tri-County Health, Garcia Curzió conducted a gap analysis to determine the inclusivity of services to Spanish-speaking community members. In her analysis, Garcia Curzió discovered that many of these services, including the post office, Town Council, the District Attorney's office and the DMV, did not have bilingual employees. Residents can schedule an interpreter, but this adds another layer to navigating the court system, health care or other civic services, such as obtaining a passport.

Thirty percent of Telluride's population is Spanish-speaking or of Latinx descent, according to the study. Garcia Curzió saw that she could help bridge the gap between community services and the town's immigrant population, which has been one of the main aims of LAC, which she calls "the backbone" of Telluride's inclusion operations. LAC plans community events and works on daily outreach and connection. It also has an electronic referral system to ensure community services such as translation and legal counsel are delivered as promised.

Though town and governmental organizations expressed a strong desire to be more inclusive, they lacked the resources to do so and did not know how to proceed. In a rural community, there typically isn't enough funding to hire someone who is bicultural and bilingual.

"I think interpretation is one of the biggest barriers in this town because more than half (of the immigrant population is) from Mexico, and the other half are Guatemalan. People from Guatemala, Spanish is

their second language. They use an indigenous language, so that's even a barrier for them as well, knowing that Spanish isn't their first language," Garcia Curzió said.

Ximena Rebolledo Leon, a nurse at Norwood and advocate, remarked on the recent increase in desires to make Telluride more inclusive.

"Since Trump became a candidate and then president, it's become trendy to care. I'm excited the backlash to xenophobia is to care," she said.

SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY, HEALTH CARE

Inclusion efforts also have been developing in Telluride's schools. Rebolledo Leon first noticed resource and treatment gaps when she taught math in the school district.

"It started to become obvious to me that we were doing a huge disservice to Spanish-speaking students," she said.

Now, Telluride offers bilingual programs, which empower the kids.

Another initiative is Somos Uno Telluride, a group formed by Spanish-speaking immigrants in Telluride, many of whom have lived in the community for at least 10 years.

"That group came together because they're kind of already some of the more outspoken leaders from the immigrant population, both undocumented and documented," Gerkin explained.

Sonos Uno is a leadership development program where members learn about community organizing, public speaking, coalition building and the design of local power structures, which are often different than in the countries from which immigrants are arriving.

The aim of Somos Uno is to empower immigrants to be comfortable voicing their own concerns, needs and desires.

"My job is to petition people in the immigrant community to come up with solutions and advocate for themselves," Gerkin said. "Solutions are both most appropriate and effective if they come directly from the community that is impacted."

Gerkin added that more accommodations to ensure that immigrant voices are heard are necessary. Many hold jobs that do not allow them to leave work to participate in Town Council or other community groups. This could be ad-

ressed by ensuring that there are always translators present and by making it possible to share board positions, such as Town Council seats, for example.

"There's still some work to be done from the traditional power brokers (of the town) to think better about how they can include those voices in ways that are more appropriate," Gerkin said.

As part of his work, Gerkin is involved with the Health Equity Advocacy Cohort, a statewide initiative that is part of the Colorado Trust. The goal is to invest money in building a health network across Colorado that operates with the same framework.

According to Gerkin, the purpose of health equity "is to better address the social determinants of health, which are things like transportation, housing, immigration law or immigration status. These are the things which aren't health issues, but have serious impacts on your health."

The Colorado Trust landed the Health Equity Learning Series events to better educate people about the barriers to health equity in their communities. The subject of the first event in Telluride will be Race in Today's Medicine July 30 at the Wilkinson Public Library at 5 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

Gerkin explained the value of community events like these. "We can create spaces where people who are the traditional powerbrokers in Telluride and San Miguel County, who are almost exclusively white people, probably upper-middle class to upper class, get into a room with a diverse cross-section of people from Telluride. People from the tourist sector economy and also a lot of Spanish-speaking immigrants," he said.

GOVERNMENT, ICE

During the June 12 Town Council meeting, members of Somos Uno proposed that Town Council sponsor implicit bias training and racial sensitivity training for town employees, including the Marshal's Department. Government officials cannot make fair decisions if members are not aware of their own implicit biases, Gerkin explained.

Last year, Tri-County Health launched an extensive analysis to better understand some of the biggest barriers to health and well being for the region's immigrant

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Hurdles

IMMIGRATION, from page 7

population. A 25-question social determinants of health survey in Spanish showed that the lowest cause of stress was violence and crime in the community, but the largest driver of stress was immigration and local police, since local law enforcement often assists U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

When ICE was in the area recently, members of the immigrant community reached out to Gerkin and told him that Telluride's community of advocates could do more to prepare for ICE's arrival, including educating the immigrant community about their rights when it comes to immigration enforcement. Somos Uno members had spent years attending "know your rights" workshops, and had discussed immigration rights and processes extensively. However, there was a greater knowledge gap in the general community, particularly for children.

"Children did not have the tools and skills to deal with what happened," Gerkin said. In response, Tri-County Health network is finalizing a youth training that includes ways to deal with stress, especially family separation, which will most likely be held by the end of July. Details will be announced soon.

MEETING BASIC NEEDS

In her time in Telluride, Garcia Curzió has seen significant improvements. However, she noted that there are many basic needs of the population that are still not being met, such as day care, housing and food. Without these problems being addressed, people are unable to take advantage of other free services, she said. She added there can be a lack of understanding why the Latino population is not always taking advantage of subsidized, or free programs, such as youth sports teams or free movies intended to include a Latinx audience.

Rebolledo Leon agreed, "It's Maslow's Hierarchy. If basic needs aren't being met, we can't expect a population to take advantage of these luxuries."

Garcia Curzió emphasized that this is not an issue that is exclusive to the town's immigrant population, but that there are certain challenges, such as legal status, that place greater stresses on this specific community. The Tri-County Health survey illuminated similar findings.

Affordable housing is federally funded, so it is a requirement to show proof of lawful presence. According to Garcia Curzió, a majority — more than half — of Telluride's immigrant population does not have legal status. Without legal status, immigrants do not have access to Medicaid or affordable housing. Thus, they are afraid to use social services, even when they're necessary. Even when the children are legal U.S. citizens, many fear collecting social security or receiving food assistance since parents can be denied legal status in the future if their children collected these government benefits legally.

HOUSING ISSUES

This is a national problem, and immigration reform presents a much greater issue. Because of current political and social situations, "The majority of people are coming from Latin America. They are crossing borders because they want a better life. So all the way

from the top, how do we fix immigration reform? And that's another thing that needs to definitely get fixed," Garcia Curzió said. "My biggest thing is educating people in the community and giving them the right information. I'm not going to tell you how to think, how to act and how to feel, but I'm going to give you the facts (about the rigorous process of legalization)."

Gerkin cited the housing crisis as "an example of how national policy plays out locally." Many immigrants without legal status had to leave Village Court Apartments in Mountain Village housing over a year ago when the group started enforcing these policies. Gerkin explained the dangers of this.

"From a social determinants of health perspective, that creates a much less safe community because those families now have to commute long distances to get to their jobs. There are kids who are seniors in high school whose family has to move to Montrose, and their parents have to drive them to town every day. If they're undocumented and don't have drivers' licenses, putting people like that on the road, it puts them at risk for deportation," he said.

However, Garcia Curzió offered some suggestions for Telluride to address some of these challenges at a local level. For example, a portion of affordable housing units could not be federally funded, but still subsidized through local taxes or measures. Rebolledo Leon also suggested that second homeowners make their rentals available to all people, regardless of legal status.

"Shelter is a basic need I think people could provide if they just opened their homes. They'll pay rent just like everybody else," she said.

ECONOMICS AND RACISM

Both Gerkin and Garcia Curzió emphasized that Telluride's Latinx population is an essential piece of the community.

"Quite frankly, Telluride's economy depends on undocumented immigrants. It wouldn't function were it not for immigrants, documented and undocumented. I don't think there's any question about that," Gerkin said. "If we create a situation where folks that our economy requires can't live here, I think we're doing the whole community a disservice."

Garcia Curzió also emphasized that most citizens in the town share similar histories. "I think one thing that people forget is that we all came here as immigrants," she said. "We're all here for the same reasons. We all came to the mountains."

People do not have to be fluent in Spanish, or any other language, to treat all community members as equals, Garcia Curzió noted. "You don't have to speak the language to be nice. A smile can say so much."

Gerkin noted that one problem in the nation as a whole, but especially Telluride's community, is a refusal to accept any personal responsibility for systematic racism or bias. Rebolledo Leon encouraged Telluride residents to take a more active approach and to do

things like contact their state representatives.

Gerkin elaborated on the issue, "I think a lot of people give themselves a pass, and nothing changes because of the structural issues, the structural racism, the institutional racism and classism that exists in this town, which is very potent in Telluride, extremely potent, doesn't change because the individuals have clean hands.

"Tri-County Health Network is trying to help people understand how they can be a part of the solution beyond saying they are not part of the problem," he added.

Community events helped bridge understanding and foster community inclusion. Rebolledo Leon described one in January 2016, following Trump's candidature, that enjoyed robust attendance. Over 150 people were present, including Telluride Mayor Sean Murphy and medical providers. Thirty percent of the crowd was Latinx, which is the approximate composition of Telluride's residential population as well. "It was such an amazing and symbolic event. It was so powerful. I walked away falling in love with Telluride again," she said.

FESTIVALS AND INCLUSIVITY

Festivals have taken steps to become more inclusive. The Mountainfilm Festival offered bilingual films and films based in Spanish. Telluride Yoga Festival organizers also have approached LAC. However, there are still steps to make the events more culturally inclusive, beyond language. For example, a Spanish-led yoga event in Town Park does not make sense because that's often not considered to be an activity that is appropriate to do outside, Garcia Curzió said.

Rebolledo Leon emphasized that inclusion goes beyond official government efforts. It requires all citizens in Telluride to welcome all populations into the community, to realize that the same people who work at popular restaurants also attend the festivals and community events. In Telluride, there is a high population of first-generation immigrant communities. Many came as adults without English language skills. "They came here with a very real cultural orientation that is not American," Gerkin said.

"I commend the yoga festival for taking the first step, but I hope they make the next step to really create inclusion," Rebolledo Leon said.

She added she wished residents in Telluride would spend more time engaging with the Latinx community. "People fail to recognize that culture exists here. You just have to open your eyes," she said.

She added that there are so many advantages to having an inclusive, diverse community. "We have the ability to bring kids up who appreciate different cultures," she said. "The Latino population is amazing and has gone through so much. Different perspectives make the community so much richer."

This is really where the peoples' power lies, according to Rebolledo Leon. "As parents we owe it to our children."

"People fail to recognize that culture exists here. You just have to open your eyes."

XIMENA REBOLLEDO LEON
Advocate



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