

COMING SOON

*1st Annual
Eagle Mountain
Reunion and Har-
vest Festival!!!!*

*Coming
Oct. 27th-28th
2012.*

*Reserve your room
now at Royal Plaza
Inn 760/347-0911 use
the promo code
"DC2012". Dry
camping will be
available as well.*

*Parade, Harvest Fes-
tival, Local Vendors,
Tours, Dinner and
Dance.*

*Look for the event
page on Facebook,
Eagle Mountain
Refugee Site or the
Chamber of Com-
merce site.
More details in the
coming months.*

*For more
information
contact*

*Julie Smiley at
760/399-6213
Or*

*Renee Castor at
760/485-8060*

Chuckwalla Valley Voice

FEBRUARY 2012

CSA Meeting Surprise Visitor

The 3rd Thursday of each month the CSA holds its general meeting. On Thursday the 19th John Benoit sent Joe Pradetto to give a presentation to the board regarding the Solar Fee's and how they will be distributed to our community and the guidelines for how the money is used. As I understood it, the money will come to our area through the CSA, as it is the only governing body in the area. In the meeting it was decided to broaden the scope of the advisory board to include advising the county on how the solar money gets spent. All ideas and plans need to fall within Riverside County's general plan. As a community we need to have a strategic plan in place so we can demonstrate to the County that we have a need and a plan for the money. The Chamber of Commerce is currently working on a Strategic Plan. They will make recommendations to the CSA Advisory Board, who will then make recommendations to the County. To get involved in this planning process, you can let the Chamber of Commerce know what it is you would like to see in your community in a couple of ways. You can call a board Chamber of Commerce Board member, you will find our names on the Chamber Website, www.desertcenterchamberofcommerce.com email us at dcareachamber@gmail.com, attend the meetings which are held the first Wednesday of each month at the CSA



Cont. on pg. 7

Taco Potato Dinner

Each Year LTDR sponsors the Taco Potato dinner to help raise funds for the Hospitality Committee. This year's event was a whopping success. One hundred and eighty nine tickets were sold at \$7.50 each they and brought in \$1417.50.

The CSA hall was packed to near capacity. After 20 years of putting this event together, the ladies from the resort have it down to a science. Snaking our way through the crowded hall in an orderly fashion, we found our plates and stacked them high with a baked potato, topped with



Paul Williams, entertainer

Cont. on pg. 7



Lynn Coffee

Dual Memorial held for two long time Community Members

On Sat, January 12th a memorial service was held at the Baptist Church for Lynn Coffee and Coy Hamby. Lynn has grown up in Eagle Mountain. He married his high school sweetheart and together they had two boys, Brad and David. He was working in Parker when he became very ill. He was sent to Tucson where he was diagnosed

with Leukemia. He lived there to be close to the hospital for treatments and was cared for by his son David. When things too a turn, he came to California to live with his sister, Stacy Overson (formerly Comer). He had only been with her for a short time before he passed away on December 11th, 2011.

Coy Hamby came to Eagle

Mountain after his military service in 1954. He started working for Kaiser as a shovel operator and ended his career as a lead man. He raised 4 children, Coy Sr., Pauly, Jimmy, and Darla. He was living in an assisted living facility in Loma Linda and passed away peacefully in his sleep on Dec. 18th 2011.

Cont. on pg. 6

CSA Manager Steve Jones suggests a 5% rate increase across the board. He is soliciting ideas to reduce cost and increase revenue.

Hundreds meet new owner of Desert Sunlight

First Solar recently hosted a community barbeque for all local residents to thank them for their support and introduce the new owners of the Desert Sunlight project – NextEra Energy Resources and GE Energy Financial Services. The barbecue, held on January 26 at the Lake Tamarisk Community Center, drew a crowd of about 250 for good food and conversation.

Laura Abram, Director of Sustainability & Community Affairs for First Solar, welcomed everyone and introduced Greg Johnson, the new community liaison for Desert Sunlight. Community members showed Greg real Desert Center hospitality, introducing their friends and

families, telling stories over good barbeque and even setting up tee times and poker games. Greg will work with the community to keep them informed about the status of the Desert Sunlight project. His goal is to keep open lines of communication between residents and the Desert Sunlight team.

Jennifer Chaney, Project Manager of NextEra Energy Resources and John Nutter, Vice President for GE Energy Financial Services, talked about their companies, their new roles as owners of the Desert Sunlight project and highlighted their dedication to both renewable energy and the local community. They explained that First Solar no longer owns the project, but is still constructing and operating it. Dave Pappicco, First Solar's Construction Manager for Desert Sunlight, gave an update on the status of project construction, then community members had a chance to get to get know everyone better and have their questions answered.

A special thanks to Dawn Rettagliata who organized the barbeque, as well as her team of community helpers including Patty Bell, Harold Foster, Brenda Reid and Betty Reece; Steve Jones for providing the clubhouse and of

course Big T's BBQ and his crew for cooking up the delicious food.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Desert Sunlight project, please do not hesitate to contact Greg Johnson, community liaison at greg.johnson@firstsolar.com or 760-625-5519.



Lions Club Hold Fundraiser for Richard Delashmidt.



Richard Delashmidt feeling grateful

On Aug. 27th, 2011 Richard was away visiting relatives when his mobile home caught fire and burned to the ground. He lost everything. Richard has been our local handy man for many years. If you needed something fixed, usually the first guy you called was Richard. Richard not

only lost his home his cat and all his belongings, but more importantly, he lost his tools, which were his livelihood. In true Desert Center fashion, the Lions Club stepped up to the plate and sponsored a Spaghetti Dinner, all proceeds going to Richard. I asked Jerry Gray how many tickets were sold and at that point they had sold 119

Continued on page 6

Bingo!!!!

Monday Nights

at 7:00pm

Sponsored by the

Residence

Association

Friends of the Library Hold their Annual Meeting

Cont. on Pg. 7

Friends of the Library held its annual meeting on January 25th. Elections were held and Julie Smiley (that's me J) was nominated for President, and since she was the only nominee, She/I am/is now the new president of Friends of the Library. Royleen Scoggins will remain as secretary, Fern Huffman will stay in her position as Fund Raiser, Suzi Ru-



da is our Education specialist and Monica Engler handles Membership for the group.

Helen Woods has been president since 2004 and is stepping away from the position to allow for new blood. She and her husband have been wintering in Lake Tamarisk for 17 years, and she has been president of Friends of the Library since 2004 and is credited with the library being as successful as it is today.

VISIT THE BLOG AT CVVVOICE.WORDPRESS.COM



Bruce Mc Allister , Mark Butler

And Steve Jones

**“There are only
58 National
Parks in the U.S.
and one of them
is in your
Backyard”**

Superintendent of Joshua Tree National Park visits Lake Tamarisk

It was a while in the making, but after many attempts, the Lions Club managed to entice Mark Butler, the Superintendent from Joshua Tree National Park to visit Desert Center and give a presentation on the Park. Mr. Butler comes to us from Yosemite National Park where he served as the chief of project management and is a 34 year veteran of the National Park Service. Mark has been working for Joshua Tree National Park for the past 11 months. He chose a topic that was a bit different than what you might expect, but we all found it very interesting. Capitalizing on the symbiotic relationship between the

park and the “gateway” communities surrounding the Park, was the emphasis of his talk. The gateway communities provide the accommodations that the park is lacking. Within the park there are no, restaurants, motels, gas stations, or grocery stores. The town of Joshua Tree and Twentynine Palms have benefited tremendously from the tourism provided by visitors to the park. He is hopeful Desert Center can benefit as well. He encourages our community to work with the park. He feel, together we can accomplish a great deal

Joshua Tree Nat. Park encompasses 800,000 acres, 75% of that is wilderness. The boundaries of the park have not changed significantly since 1994 when the Desert Protection act in-

creased the acreage by 100,000 acres. One of the facts gleaned from the MGM (Money Growth Model) report is that the number 1 value experience people hope to find at the park is wide open, undisturbed, expansive and undeveloped views. There was a time you could say that about our valley, but we will quickly lose that attraction as solar continues its relentless creep onto our desert floors.

During the answer and questions segment of the presentation, community members expressed confusion over the unmarked boundaries of the park. The community member explained when you are out Off-Roading you sometimes find yourself in park boundaries when you may have thought you were on a perfectly legal road. Mr.



Skull Rock, JTNP

Butler explained the boundaries are marked frequently, but the signs do not last long. They are stolen, or removed as quickly as they are placed. And as you can imagine, defining the boundaries of an 800,000 acre park might be a bit challenging. He suggested working with a liaison from the park to resolve these issues. There was some discussion on how we might be able to establish an entrance to park from our valley. Mr. Butler mentioned the possibility of utilizing the

CSA Superintendent cont. from page 4

Black Eagle Mine Road which would connect with the Pinto Basin Road just north of Cottonwood Springs Campground. Another questioner was asked about the possibility of increasing the number of camping sites. Mr. Butler agreed, we need more, but with 75% of the park designated wilderness area, it makes it challenging. One community member expressed hope that one day he would return and give a talk on the flora, fauna and wildlife of the park. This got giggles from the audience. I feel the effort made to connect with our community speaks volumes. Hopefully, he will return one day with an interpretative talk on the Park.

Desert Tortoise Specialist, Eric Green, speaks for FOL

On January 25, the Friends of the Library invited Independent Biologist Eric Green to speak at their annual meeting.

Mr. Green works for Ironwood Consulting, who is contracted by First Solar and whose job it is to "interface between construction and the Natural Resource Oversight Staff". The project is built entirely on BLM land, which belongs to us. Eric works as an independent biologist, meaning he doesn't take direction from First Solar. His directive comes from the documents that were drawn

up during the EIR phase. Those documents are meant to protect our natural resources.

Eric special interest is the Desert Tortoise and he has spent 21 years studying the tortoise and its habitat. Four tortoise have been identifies and successfully trans located from the projects site. Initially the project was going to impact a densely populated tortoise habitat so, on the recommendation of Eric Green and his associates, the project was moved South East of the original footprint.

Eric Green Cont.

Aside from learning about the project and the extreme measures First Solar is going through to insure as little impact to the area as possible, Mr. Green also shot a few holes in some age old beliefs and concepts regarding the Desert Tortoise. I guess I was not the only one from around here who grew up believing if you ran across a tortoise you should

NEVER pick it up because it would pee on you and die! Well, evidently that's not true. Eric explained to us that if you find a tortoise on a roadway and feel it's necessary to get him to safety, grab his hind end first, this causes him to ...well you get the picture, then place your hand under the neck and walk him a ways off the road, in the direction he was heading. Place him in some shade and

you have done a good thing. He did assure me later that if you **do** pick up a tortoise and he **does** pee on you, he will more than likely survive. Which is good to know. Mr. Green also pointed out the two greatest threats to the survival of the tortoise are roadways and a tortoise flu.



Richard Delashmit cont. from pg. 3



tickets, but many folks donate more than the \$10.00 required to purchase a ticket. Jerry was blown away by the generosity of the community.

Richard was truly touched and wanted to thank everyone involved. We all wish you the best Richard.



**Room For Rent
Or
Bed and
Breakfast**

Come for a weekend and let me serve you breakfast in bed, or if you need a place long term, call Julie Smiley 760/399-6213

Dual Memorial cont. from pg. 2

The meal following the service was held at the CSA Hall and turned into a mini Eagle Mountain Reunion. It is part of what makes our community unique. We band together in tough times and hold dual memorial services as if it's the normal thing to do. Every-

one there knew both Lynn and Coy and shared stories that made us laugh and cry. Jimmy Hamby suffered a double whammy that week, he not only lost his father, he also lost his best friend, Lynn. Our hearts go out to all of you.



Coy Hamby's Tribute Table

Community Appreciation Banquet

There are many unsung hero's living among us and the Chamber of Commerce would like to take an evening to let you all know how much this community appreciates and recognizes all you do. We have a very involved Winter Visitor population that goes above and beyond to contribute to this community, we want to thank you. We also have locals who

quietly go about volunteering and offering assistance without ever asking for any recognition. This is our way of letting you know you have not gone unnoticed.

This is a free dinner open to the community. February 22nd at the CSA Hall, beginning at 5:30.

**CERT
(Community Emergency Response Team)
Training coming to the Valley. Call Fire will be sponsoring a training seminar that will run March 9th, 10th and 11th. At the CSA Hall. To register call 951/955-4700**

Private entrance, Private bath with a walk in shower.



CSA Meeting *Cont. from pg. 1*

Hall at 6:30pm or you can Blog us at <http://dcacoc.wordpress.com/>

Other items discussed were the shortfall in the current budget and a possible 5% increase in fees across the board. The CSA continues to run at a deficit even though our income was up from last year thanks to the money earned by renting our CSA Hall to First Solar as they got their infrastructure up and running. They paid the hourly rate of \$15.00/hr. In addition to that income we have been selling water to the companies who are building the Power Lines and Sub Stations. We sell water in bulk to them for 1 cent a gallon. Over the course of the

year we earned far more than we had anticipated off these companies.

The Service area continually runs at a deficit. We are subsidized heavily by Kaiser, and our special assessments which amount to \$529.00/yr. per lot. The suggested price increase is the only one we have had in 3 years. CSA Manager, Steve Jones noted we need to pay for what we have. What we currently pay does not fully pay for what we are privileged to experience. Our water rates, our golf, our sewer is all much less than you might pay in a larger city. And we get to enjoy all this without the crowds, pollution and crime of the larger cities.

If the rate increase goes into effect, Our CSA Bill would increase \$5.00 and Annual Golf fees for a couple would increase by \$50.00. The vote on this matter is scheduled for the next meeting. If you would like to comment it is suggested you attend the next meeting.

The County Service Advisory Board meets the Third Thursday of each month at the CSA Hall, 7:00pm

Taco Potato Dinner *Cont. from pg. 1*

taco meat, lettuce, cheese, sour cream, mushrooms and salsa!! Having never had a Potato Taco, I was a bit skeptical, but soon discovered what a great tasting meal it is. The evening concluded with songs from the one and only (let's hope it's the one and only) Singing duo, Willie Nelson/Waylon Jennings-Willie Nelson/Julio Iglesias. One man singing in stereo using the voice of two different artists, dressed half in one character, half in the other,

trust me you had to be there!!

Margit Eskew and friends have been in charge of the event for 5 years. It got its start in 1992 when Norma Ward, Dorothy Very, Shirley Mc Kay, Pauly Engle and Mrs. Kinglier came up with the idea. Sixty Nine tickets were sold at the first event for \$1.00 a piece. Over the years the event has morphed into this very successful fund raiser for the Hospitality Committee at the Park. After paying for the expenses of the production, they will use the remaining funds to make improvements to their clubhouse, focusing on sound reduction!! Last night Margit announced she has enlisted the help

of Leslie Peders who will come on board and learn the ropes. We know where you're going with this Margit, don't think you're getting off that easy.



Friends of Library *cont. from pg. 3*

I had the privilege of attending the Friends of the Desert Libraries meeting in Indio. I met a handful of dedicated souls, working to improve and help out in the libraries in their areas. The Friends of the Desert Libraries includes Palm Springs, Indio, La Quinta, Thousand Palms, Coachella and Desert Center and the purpose of the organization is to maintain an association of persons interested in books and libraries and to focus public attention on library services, facilities and needs.

1st Annual Eagle Mountain Reunion Coming Oct. 27th 2012. Reserve your room now at Royal Plaza Inn use the promo code "DC2012". Parade, Harvest Festival, Local Vendors, Tours,

Support your local library or risk losing it.

If you haven't already, I would encourage you to join The Friends of the Library today!! Membership is very affordable.

Students and Seniors: \$3.00 Organization/Business: \$25.00

Sustaining: \$20.00 Patron: \$50.00

Life: \$100.00 Individuals: \$4.00

The funds go to the Friends of the Library who use the money to buy books, offer programs, speakers, buy DVD's and help to fund other small improvements to the library. If you haven't been to our local library in a while, I suggest you stop by and check out a book. Our library stays in business as long as we can prove it is being used. The way we do that is through the number of books, DVD's etc. being checked out, and programs being offered. It is literally one of those "use it or lose it" things. I don't know if you know this, but we have a rather large selection of DVD's, and since the nearest "Red Box" or Blockbuster is a rather long drive, this is a valuable and appreciated service. Thanks in part to the Friends of the Library andthey're FREE!!!

Chuckwalla Valley Voice, How it got it's start

My name is Julie Smiley, and this is my fifth newsletter. I grew up, graduated, married and started my family in this valley. I recently returned after a 12 year leave of absence. When I returned I began working for the Lake Tamarisk Desert Resort and one of my projects was to help get their newsletter out each month. About the some time I was elected Public Relations Officer for the Chamber of Commerce and started working on the Chamber website, with one of the additions being a newslet-

ter. The scope and mission of the Chamber didn't always allow for some of the stories I thought it would be interesting to cover, so I decided to strike out on my own. And so the idea for the Chuckwalla Valley Voice was born. The intent is to create a local newsletter. It



isn't a new or novel idea, we have had several newsletters in the past. My hope is to keep the community linked together through shared experiences, history, storytelling and information. If you have a story to share or a piece of news you want to get out, please use the information below to contact me.

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www.cvvoice.wordpress.com

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P.O. Box 473
Desert Center, CA 92239

February 2012

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

			1 <i>Chamber 6:30 CSA Hall</i>	2	3 <i>AA 7pm</i>	4 <i>Lions Breakfast 7*9 FOL Book "Sale"</i>
5	6 <i>Line Dancing 3-4 Bingo 7pm</i>	7 <i>After School Reading Pro- gram 1:30-3</i>	8	9	10 <i>Ladies of the Lake 11:30 AA 7pm</i>	11
12	13 <i>Line Dancing 3-4 Bingo 7pm</i>	14 <i>After School Reading Pro- gram 1:30-3</i>	15	16 <i>CSA Advisory Board 7pm</i>	17 <i>AA 7pm</i>	18
19	20 <i>Line Dancing 3-4 Bingo 7pm</i>	21 <i>After School Reading Pro- gram 1:30-3</i>	22 <i>Community Ap- preciation Ban- quet 5:30 CSA Hall</i>	23	24 <i>AA 7pm</i>	25
26	27 <i>Line Dancing 3-4 Bingo 7pm</i>	28 <i>Lions Presentation from Salton Sea State Beach 6pm After School Reading Pro- gram 1:30-3</i>	29	<i>CERT Training coming</i>	<i>March 9- 10-11 CSA Hall</i>	<i>951/955- 4700 To register</i>