

Chuckwalla Valley Voice

July 2012



Mc Goo's Changes Ownership

It's a bittersweet day for Desert Center and its residents. Ken Statler, longtime resident and owner of Mc Goo's has sold his business to a group of investors from Washington. Escrow is expected to close the end of August.

Ken and came to the area in the mid 70's and from 1975-1982 he owned the Shopper's Mart at Eagle Mountain. The complex contained the Variety Mart, Beer Bar, Bowling Alley, Store, Café, Post Office, Bank and Hair Salon. He also had the Gas Station

and bowling Alley. In 1980 Ken bought what was then called The Oasis and renamed it Mc Goo's. I have often just assumed it was named after the cartoon character, but actually it was named for a milk salesman who walked with a cane and was nearly blinded after an accident, he was referred to as Mc Goo. He wanted to go in as partner with Ken. He got the placed named after him instead. Along with the bar, on Wednesday's and Saturday's Max Rodrigues set up shop and fixed the most amazing "slow cooked" Mexican Food dinners. I think we all have our Mexican Food Night stories, I know I have mine. When the mine



Swimming Pool Hours: Thursday through

Sunday 2-6 pm

Mc Goo's Cont.

closed in 1982 and the population dwindled; Ken realized there was more of a need for groceries than a bar, so he converted a portion of the building into a mini mart, preserving the bar exactly as it once was.

Mc Goo's has served the community in many ways. Not only for the obvious reason....the only place to get your groceries when needed, but since the closing of the café in Desert Center, it has served as the "information hub". Every community seems to have one and you could go into Mc Goo's and come out knowing more about the latest community happenings than you sometimes wanted to know. Mc Goo's



was where donation cans were placed and notices posted, jobs sought and help wanted found. Items sold and bought, friendships fostered and acquaintances reunited. You could pull up to Mc Goo's open the door and see any number of locals sitting on the make shift stool chatting it up with Cheryl, Dawn or our newest store attendant Jennifer. It was the classic "general store".

So the question we all have is what the new owners are going to do with the place. Ken believes they will be an asset to the community; "Very nice, down to earth people" were his words. Over the years many pets have been buried in the "pet cemetery" the new owners say they will keep that, along with a bench commemorating Connie Lemon. The plans are to add a gas station (audible sigh of relief) and a bar (a few "cheers" I'm sure) and according to Ken the mini mart will stay as well.

So it's a good day for the Desert Center area as far as amenities, but it's sad to see ownership change hands. Ken has been a part of many of our lives for nearly 37 years. Even though he had been relinquishing much of the day to day operations to Dawn, you could always hope to see his car parked out front. If you could get him to slow down long enough you could ask him a question about anything in the area and knew you would get a good story and possibly a tour of his many pictures and memorabilia.

As for Ken, when asked what his plans are, he says simply, "I don't know". He does have a trip in December planned for Belize to visit a friend, but after that.....well I guess the sky's the limit

CHEMEHUEVIS

The People of Corn Springs

Part II

Like The Sun That Rises, A Woman of the People

Life for me, Like The Sun That Rises, has changed forever. The day that I have looked forward to for so long has come. There will be games and music and dancing – and all for me! I have become a woman! My father, Chief Black Eagle, has arranged for the festivities with the Curing Shaman. Shining Crow will sing special songs known only by him and see that everything is done properly. I must be careful to follow his instructions. The Curing Shaman says I am potentially evil and must be protected against malignancy and evil.

There will be forty days of purification rites. My mother will thoroughly delouse me with plasters made of mud, adding a little dye to the mud. I may eat no meat or salt so I will appreciate my husband's provision of meat. For future health, I must keep warm during all that time, bathing daily in warm water. I must drink only warm water, and lie in the sun on hot sand. My deportment must be modest. I have to be 'hidden', covered and out of sight of friends and neighbors as much as possible. There are so very, very many rules. My nature and conduct forever afterwards depends upon my behavior during the next forty days.

Dreams are so very, very important to our people. I will do my very best to remember mine very exactly during my forty days of purification. The Dream Shaman will tell me what they mean. In

olden times, I would have been given a narcotic prepared from the Jimson Weed that grows nearby to help with my dreams. Our people no longer do that. Grandmother says she is well satisfied with our dream shaman's decision, since if a mistake were made in the concoction, I might die. We lose too many children as it is.

For my adolescent purification rite, I'll paint designs of many colors on my face with my fingers and wear my prettiest jewelry. Festivities will start at the end of the forty days. First, I must repeat my purification rites for six nights in a row.

After six days, the public adolescence dance will start. There will be a variety of games, the songs of Shaman Shining Crow, and long hours of dancing at my ceremony. There will be feasting with drinks of fermented juice from fruits and manzanita berries. Most of the music will be singing. Our people do not use drums. There will be a three or four-hole flute of wood or cane, baskets to scrape or drum, and rattles made of seashells, tortoise shells or gourds. There will be much dancing to the music until late into the nights.

A permanent new name will be chosen for me. I wonder what it will be? Soon I will begin to seriously learn to do grownup things. My family praised the little baskets I made while watching mother, but I know they were just being kind. Beaters, carriers and winnowers for seed gathering must be made skillfully. The conical caps that will protect me from being chafed by pack straps while carrying heavy loads must be carefully and well done. I will learn to make baskets for cooking, for storage, and for bearing loads.

CHEMEHUEVIS Cont.

family. I will be responsible for making all the sandals my family will wear.

Much of our women's work is done in a roofless rounded shelter attached to our one-room mud and brush house here at Corn Springs. The walls give us shade and protect us from the winds of winter. Here is the grinding stone we call a metate with its mano, a little stone we hold in our hands to rub over the seeds or grain on the metate to grind the food into edible bits. We also have metates and manos where we gather food as metates are much too heavy to carry far.

As an adolescent woman, I will wear my hair loose and parted in the middle. Perhaps mother will cut bangs for me with her sharp-edged stone. Tattooing hurts but looks so pretty. A design on my forehead and some straight lines on my chin will show all strangers I am a member of 'The People', a Chemehuevi.

How painful it will be when my nasal septum and ears are bored for rings and plugs! I cannot embarrass my parents and complain. It will be to wear my bead and shell pendants and rings. I will wear a short skirt of two pieces, a narrow apron in front and a back piece that will extend around my hips and maybe meet the front apron. The lower half will be fringed for greater freedom of movement. My skirt will be made of grass or any suitable material, perhaps the inner bark of trees that can be shredded. We wear clothing out of necessity, not out of a sense of modesty.

modesty. Sometime, perhaps I will make a skirt of woven fiber. For cold weather, I'll have my animal furs. When I dress for ceremonies, I'll wear a hawk feather or even an eagle feather in my hair. I will have a magical head scratcher.

I am looking forward to my adolescence with a feeling of excitement and awe. From now on, I will work beside my mother grinding food, building fires, cooking the food, carrying burdens, and working at the many, many things I must learn to prepare me for caring for my husband and children.

My childhood freedom is over – gone forever.

I am a woman!

This will be my last newsletter, but you can read the rest of the Chemehuevis Story on the Chamber Website at:

www.desertchamberofcommerce.com

Look under Mrs. Carney's Corner



Bruce McAllister

May 5, 1944 - June 27, 2012

On June 9th Bruce McAllister was airlifted to Eisenhower Medical Center with a heartbeat of over 200 BPM. He underwent heart surgery that lasted over 10 hours. The damage was extensive; they replaced his Mitral and aortic valves and did a triple bypass. His sister and many of his children and the Baptist pastor were all at his side seeing him through this ordeal. Ultimately the damage was too extensive and Bruce passed away on June 27th.

Bruce was active in the community serving as a member of the Lion's Club. He was a faithful follower and a member of the Gideon organization distributing Bibles and New Testaments. He was also one of the first people to step up when anyone needed to be transported to town for Dr. appointments and what not, he also taught adult bible classes. He worked as a security guard for Metropolitan Water District since 2005 and at times he also worked for the County in various capacities.



Bruce is survived by his sister, Barbara Norton, five daughters and two sons. A memorial service followed by a pot luck was held at the CSA Hall on July 1st. Coworkers, people from the church, friends and his family members came to bid farewell to one of our communities most beloved and involved members. I believe we can all take comfort in knowing Bruce is with his savior and resting comfortably.



August 2nd the Desert Center Landfill will be open for Bulky waste Collection from 8:00am to 4:30pm. Bulky waste includes stoves, refrigerators, water tanks, water heaters, washing machines, residential furniture and tires up to 4 per load.

**1st ANNUAL HARVEST FESTIVAL AND
EAGLE MOUNTAIN REUNION**

“Rock of Ages”

October 27, 2012

**Look for a day full of fun and festivities starting with
Harvest Festival**

Games, raffle, costumes local vendors and Artisans

Followed by

Dinner and a Dance

Featuring local performer Maggie Stiles!!

199 seats available.

Call Julie at 760/399-6213

and reserve your seat now!!

Adults: \$30.00 Children 12 and under \$7.00

For more information

Stayed tuned to your Chamber website

desertcenterchamberofcommerce.com or

Look us up on Facebook [eaglemountainrefugee](https://www.facebook.com/eaglemountainrefugee)

Royal Palms is providing discounted accommodations for those who wish to get a room in Indio, you can contact them by calling (760) 347-0911 and use promo code DC2012".



Moving away and moving on...but never gone

I always knew this day would come and it has finally arrived. The time has come for me to move on and at this time in my life, that means move away as well. I have lived in the Chuckwalla Valley all but 15 years of my life. My husband and I married and started our family here in 1981 but we moved to Borrego in 1997 because it offered employment. Reluctantly, we packed our things and left our home and memories behind. Fifteen years later, I once again find myself in the same predicament of wanting very much to stay but needing the employment opportunities bigger cities provide. So reluctantly...I change.

My husband always wanted to retire in Desert Center; it is truly where our hearts reside. Thankfully, he was able to spend his last 2 years here and we enjoyed every minute of it. When he passed away, I was skeptical that I would be able to earn a living in DC, but with the help of the RV Park last summer and my hair salon, I made it through a couple years, but as the seasons began to change and our winter visitors began to fly north, I found myself seriously having to confront the reality of the situation. As much as I love Desert Center, and as safe and comfortable as it has been for me during this tough transition, it isn't a place where I can stay. It pains me, and I can't tell you how difficult it was for me to make this transition, but I have done it. I have moved, for the first time in my life, to a "city"...to a place where groceries are 5 minutes away, and mail and recycling bins are picked up in front of your house and where seeing a movie doesn't mean getting home at midnight. I can even enjoy July 4th fireworks from my driveway ☺.

Gradually, I am developing a community of "people" but of course my friends and clients in Desert Center can never be replaced. This little oasis in the desert will always hold a special place in my heart as will the people who live here. But life happens and if I have learned anything over the past two years...it's that as human beings, we are tenacious and resilient...because we simply have to be.

As I write what will be my last newsletter, I look back over the past year (almost) and what this project has taught me. I learned about writing and publishing. It's a tough gig that takes a lot of time and requires tough skin. I learned more about the history of DC than I ever thought I would and was glad to be able to share that. I learned what a blog is, how to navigate it, and have appreciated all of the more than 2,000 hits the Chuckwalla Valley Voice blog has received since its inception just a few months ago. But most importantly I have learned first, how much I care for this little city and how much peace of mind it has brought me throughout my life and secondly, that we who live or have lived here share a unique history that we fondly enjoy revisiting again and again. Some have moved on and had great accomplishments and others have remained to rear families and build lives. Whichever group you happen to fall in, there doesn't seem to be any regrets...and that's the way it should be. I have enjoyed the reconnection to all of you and thank those who have shared great memories of their time here. I hope that through sites like the Eagle Mountain Refugees Facebook site, we will continue what we have started and remain close. It seems no matter how far from home we travel, our hearts belong to the Chuckwalla Valley.