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SEPTEMBER 2020

A SOCIAL PUBLICATION FOR THE RESIDENTS OF SINGLETREE



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publisher's note

HELLO

Singletree Residents!

September has arrived! Truly my favorite month of the year with the mountains ablaze with brilliant yellow aspens...

You may know the O'Neill family as they have been in the neighborhood for 30 years! Bill and Beth raised their children, John and Allison, in one of the first homes built on Charolais Circle. Here, John takes us on a trip down memory lane while pounding out an 18 mile run over the roads of Singletree. Since those days, Noah Bender has joined the family as husband to Allison and together, they have brought Clementine June into the O'Neill fold.

Speaking of grandkids, this is a very special month in Singletree as we are celebrating Grandparents Day on Sunday, September 13. There is so much love and joy on these pages... it makes you want to be a grandparent!

We are deeply honored to pay tribute to Thelma Rubinstein, a long time resident in the neighborhood at age 96. Thelma enthu-

siastically shares her story back to her northeastern upbringing, her encounter with one Herb Rubinstein, soon after to become her husband, her careers and her family life.

We are introduced to Shelby, a 9-month-old Border Collie puppy, who in her opinion, is educating her 'hoomans', Melanie Bartlett and Brandon Hill, as to who really runs the roost. That being said, she was very thankful for Mom's rescue from a juvenile mountain lion attack this winter. And when it comes to giving animals a safe home, no one knows better than Donna Griffin, who has fostered more than 50 animals during her tenure as a volunteer for the Eagle Valley Humane Society, an important organization that offers care for the abandoned and neglected animals in the valley.

As a seasoned traveler, Andrea Eddy has visited more than 100 countries. When asked to share one of her favorite adventures, she chose her journey to Northern Iraq as one of her most memorable experiences. It's a fascinating read about an unexpected turn in events during her stay in this fascinating part of the world.

All this and more in this issue. Read on, my friends... and enjoy! Happy September!



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I have just sold my home and want to move to Singletree. I see that the real estate market here has been very active this summer. Are the best properties already gone? Should I wait for the market to cool down so there is more inventory?
Signed, Always-late-Lucy

Dear Lucy,
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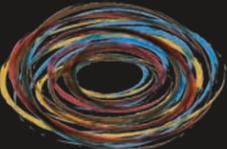
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Many many thanks to our contributing grandparents recognizing Grandparents Day on Sunday, September 13. This mini-gallery of grandparents with their grandchildren is heartwarming, entertaining and true to the spirit of the holiday. Thank you for participating in this special neighborhood celebration!

Your neighborhood publication is not possible without your active and enthusiastic participation – we welcome and appreciate your involvement in *INSIDE Singletree*! To feature your family, kids, pets, athletic endeavors, volunteer activities, travel adventures, or social happenings, please email holly.proctor@n2pub.com to contribute to an upcoming issue of the magazine.

Don't forget to like and follow both our *INSIDE Singletree* Facebook and Instagram pages! Tag @insidesingletree to be featured on our page!



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John O'Neill and
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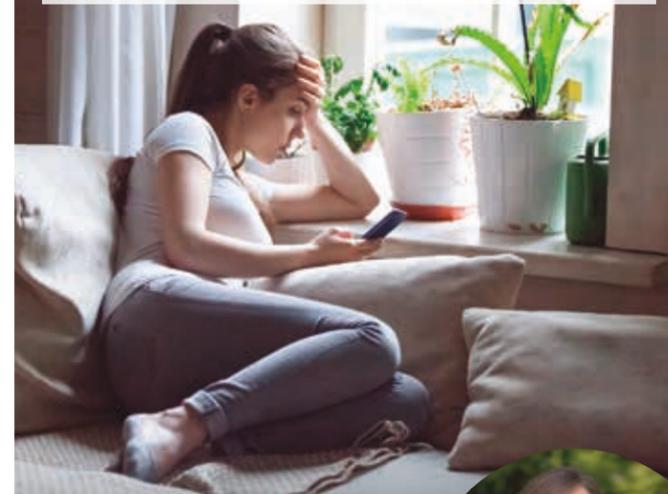
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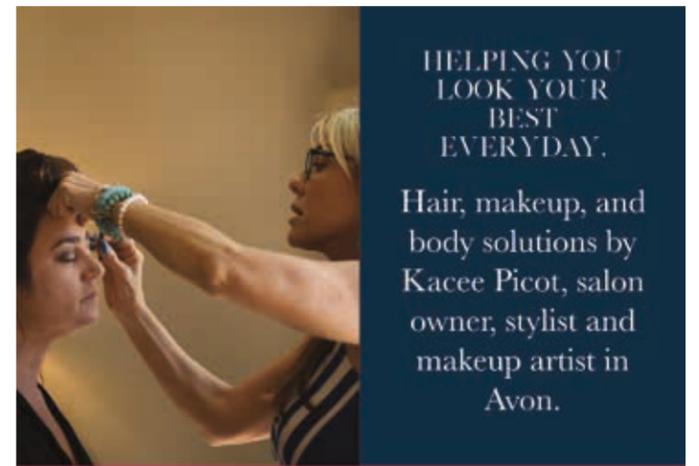
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meet your neighbors

Contributed by John O'Neill and Ali O'Neill Bender
Photography by Olga Barron Photography, Inc.

A RUN AROUND *the* NEIGHBORHOOD

2020 Marks 30 Years of Living in
Singletree for the O'Neill Family

When I was at home in Singletree, I woke up one late March morning in quarantine and decided to run every street in Singletree. I was determined to hit each named road in its entirety while optimizing the route for the shortest possible distance, which really means not doubling back on too many streets or having to stop at home for water. It took me 18 miles, 1700' of elevation gain and about 2 hours and 10 minutes.

I fully realize quarantine makes us do strange things, so I wouldn't recommend this as a regular jogging route. However, it was something to do at the time and in the face of a global pandemic with an upended American economy, it was nicer to reminisce on childhood memories than it was to watch the news. It also made me think. Mostly about how lucky we were to end up at 670 Charolais Circle, but also this – even though I now live in Connecticut, when people ask me about home, I always bring up the Vail Valley. Why is that?



Our story starts in 1975 when my Dad, Bill O'Neill, decided on a Christmas break road trip to Vail with Chris Longworth and his sister, Sue, that the skiing was a whole lot better than it was in New York. My mom, from Denver, followed in the summer of 1980 with her best friend Mary Beth Maddox (Harvey) with not much more than a few suitcases in the back seats of their matching light blue Porsche 914s.

It was obvious back then when a few cute girls moved to town. Luckily, my dad knew how to go about doing things and between



Little did she know, in November of 1990, they would call this new neighborhood – a long distance phone call from Vail at the time – home for the next 30 (and counting) years.

My sister and I grew up both in and with the neighborhood. I remember waking up to the full-throated roar of hot air balloons landing in the vacant lots nearby. Only once did a balloon botch the landing and dunk their basket of Texas tourists into the pond, and only once did one land in our back

yard and offer my sister and me a spot in the basket for a quick ride around the sky.

All my childhood friends – Elliot and Oliver Ristow, Todd Walker, Ryan Hedrick, Alex Dolan and so many more - were only a hop over the hedge or a walk across the golf course way. The same was true for my sister who spent her summer days trekking around to see Ashley McDonald, Liz Gladitsch, Lauren Mutter, Anna Himmes and others. As a younger brother, I remember feeling very cool when my newly licensed, 16-year-old sister picked me over her friends to take on her very first drive around the neighborhood without a parent. We listened to a NOW CD and kept the windows rolled down the entire way.

Our family had countless dinners with the Seiberts, Banners, Jacobs and Tellings. As kids, our goal was to keep the shenanigans out of sight from the parents and the HOA. We were successful most of the time. In the winter, my dad took seriously his role of maintaining the Charolais Circle pond for hosting ice skating parties while my mom pioneered now popular sledding hills. We spent summers camping in our pop up and playing on the Charolais Circle playground until dark.

My sister went off to play soccer in college at Chapman University in California in 2005 after a successful high school career under Battle Mountain coach Dave Cope. Like her, I had three years of the house to myself before taking off for a track scholarship at Colorado State University following four years of running under Rob Parish also at Battle Mountain.

Allison would end up traveling the world on Semester at Sea, living in Costa Rica and road-tripping the perimeter of the US before landing back in the valley teaching special needs at Battle Moun-



her job cleaning condos at night and skiing during the day, and his shifts remodeling homes with George Shaeffer, they took their first date at Cyranos, were engaged at the Ambrosia restaurant and then married in 1984 at St. Patrick's Church in Minturn. My parents moved from East Vail to West Vail to Eagle Vail where my sister, Allison, was born in 1987. To her delight, I arrived three years later. While living in Eagle Vail, my Dad took my Mom to a Christmas Party at Ken Fox's house in Singletree. Staring out the car window, she had made it just west of Avon before asking, "Who the hell would want to live way out here?"

tain. She met Noah Bender - who runs The Northside Kitchen Restaurant Group - adopted a dog named Blu, got married in 2015 and welcomed a third generation to the valley when my niece, Clementine June O'Neill Bender, born in 2019. I've managed to leave a handful of times - traveling the world as a professional tri-

athlete, for a job in Seattle and Denver and, most recently, for a job in Connecticut with Priceline.com in Business Development.

Through it all, our parents and our house at 670 Charolais Circle have been there. My dad retired from George Shaeffer



Construction Company in 2012 after 32 years. My mom retired from Battle Mountain High School in 2019 where she subbed for 10 years following a career as an escrow officer around the valley. She and my dad continue to attend soccer games and running races between trips in their RV to Fruita, Arizona

and really wherever they please to go. It's often the case that someone will ask when they'll sell their home and travel in the RV full time or downsize without kids. If you listen closely, you can hear the memories beneath their words when they say, "We don't know. We love our home."



To us, the house that my dad built has been a launching pad from which we could explore the world. It is still a place we can be together - to celebrate birthdays and holidays, to quarantine, to visit when new snow is in the forecast or recharge with family and friends. We've clearly had some good luck to find a corner of the world so warm with beauty, friendships and memories. Even during a global pandemic, going on a run around the neighborhood you grew up in makes everything fall away to what's important: a home made and maintained by the closeness of family and their community.

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singletree
tribute

Contributed by
Thelma Rubinstein
as told to Tim Swift,
Singletree Residents

Thelma...

by Thelma

Our community is enriched by residents hailing from all parts of the country, both full and part time. Each brings a unique story with them and one of a myriad reasons why they ended up here, but, I venture to say, no story quite as unique as our own Thelma Rubinstein, a resident of Charolais Circle since she and her husband Herb arrived in 1997. Sadly, Herb passed away two years ago at the ripe young age of 97, but Thelma has maintained the Rubinstein presence in Singletree with a unique verve, sense of humor, and energy that I feel safe in declaring is unmatched by any 96 year old. Ever. If you have had the pleasure of sitting with Thelma and hearing her story as I did recently, you will know what I mean. If you haven't, I strongly urge to do so.

I met Thelma in her home in the company of her daughter, Andrea Klein, and her neighbor, Beth O'Neill, with the intention of interviewing her for



this story. What actually happened was very different and thoroughly delightful. As soon as we sat down I opened my notebook and took out my pen. Thelma waved her hand, popped a grin a mile wide, and promptly dismissed my yet to happen note taking as unnecessary. She then proffered three pages of classic longhand script which she announced she intended to read. What follows is her story in her own words, only minimally edited. Hopefully you will be as delighted as I was. An editor's note – She wrote her history in the third person and I have chosen to respect her choice. I have also kept her punctuation intact.

“Thelma Rubinstein was born in 1924 to her immigrant parents. Her mother was from Latvia and her father from Poland. Despite her father's troubles, (he arrived at age 12) he encouraged her progress in many areas. That, and her own personality are responsible for the good fortune that has characterized her long life from Buffalo to Brooklyn and New York City, Long Island, and Colorado. She married Herb Rubinstein in 1948. He was a combat veteran of WWII surviving the Battle of the Bulge. Herb died here almost two years ago (he was 97).

“Their life in Colorado, before and after their purchase of a home in Singletree, brought them and their family, who visited them often, happiness...ten-



nis, golf, skiing, concerts, good friends, wonderful neighbors, Vail Club 50, and book clubs. The list goes on.

“Thelma's careers were gratifying! In her senior year at Brooklyn College (free!) she was editor-in-chief of the college weekly, the Brooklyn College *Vanguard*. She still has the editorial she wrote when Franklin Roosevelt died.

“After graduation – several years before she met Herb – she worked for the Newark *Star Ledger* (a New Jersey daily) as a reporter. One of her assignments brought her to Pier 44 on the Hudson River in New York City where she saw a tugboat pulling a huge ship carrying WWII soldiers returning home. One of the soldiers threw a beautiful red compact for TR to catch! The guards questioned her immediately, but allowed her to keep her gift. She also met a ship of war brides and a ship of injured soldiers, one of whom she knew! Her reporting acumen brought her to Ft. Benning, GA where she interviewed several generals and was convinced to take her first ride in an airplane, a Piper Cub, and she maneuvered it in the air!

“Shortly afterwards she returned home to Brooklyn where she first met Herb at a local gas station which neither of them had ever used before! A year later, in 1948, they married. She had Andrea and Jan in the next two years. While Herb babysat in the evening, she returned to college; Adelphi on Long Island, where

they lived. Three years later she achieved a Master's in Education and became a teacher of English at East Meadow High School where initially she taught all levels of senior high school. Before long she taught Advanced Placement and developed other courses. She was asked to coach women's tennis but refused. After 28 years, in 1981, she retired to play tennis and golf, and she adored skiing in Colorado. In 1997 she and Herb moved into their home in Singletree.

“For many years, Thelma's family has made her home a reunion compound. Now Covid-19 has interfered! Nevertheless, her daughter Andrea and her husband, retired Rabbi Norman Klein (who is continuing his Zoom meetings here in Singletree), drove 18 hours from Champaign, IL to help their aged mother. They trek through the mountains with Vail Club 50, and enjoy the pool in Avon along with the totality of the beautiful Colorado Summer.

“Despite her advanced age, Thelma still enjoys her book clubs and the Singletree ladies. She still meets with the members of the Great Books Club but, these days, mostly on Zoom. Her neighbors in Singletree have been a great boon!”

I could not have said it better had I labored for days. I did manage to ask her one question, however. I inquired as to how she and Herb decided on the Vail Valley as their home. Her answer was delivered with that unmistakable twinkle in her eye... “We were playing golf at the public course in 1996, and on a par three I hit a tee shot that landed three feet from the pin and I said to Herb, ‘I could live here.’” That is probably a much better reason than many of us have.



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KACEE PICOT
FACE. HAIR. BODY.



Kacee Picot knows how to make people feel good about the way they look! She has been a licensed Cosmetologist since 1986 and has been rockin' in the Vail Valley for over 25 years. This has been a crazy year so far... as a cosmetologist, hair stylist and makeup artist, Kacee has seen a lot over the 34 years. But this! 6 weeks closed and the looming threat of closing up shop again? Despite her current frustrations, Kacee continues to focus on how to grow her business to meet the health and wellness needs of her clients.

Kacee has been offering full-service hair and makeup services, specializing in high-end destination weddings, since moving here in 1994. Over the past few years, she has been researching new devices that are proving effective in anti-aging and maintaining youth. She is currently focusing on beauty from the inside out, recently adding a state-of-the-art service called Cryotherapy. It's called Selene, by CryoOne, a hand-held wand that freezes unwanted fat. Permanently. It's based on the science of CoolSculpt; it is entirely painless and results are evident quickly, in only a couple of minutes, days, weeks, instead of over several months. It is a process of thermal shock, biohacking, that heats, freezes and heats the treated area, killing fat cells. Selene also offers additional settings that tighten skin and drain lymphatics, which is how the fat and dead cells are expelled.



Kacee recently started offering custom airbrush, spray tans and magnetic lashes, as they are among the biggest beauty trends in 2020! Spray tans are completely safe, especially compared to UV sun exposure. Did you know? UV sun exposure is more closely linked to skin cancer than smoking is to lung cancer. Soon, you will be able to have either a custom airbrush spray tan or a private automated (coming soon) booth tan.

struggle with chronic pain, MS, post-surgery healing, Lyme Disease, depression, inflammation, carbon monoxide poisoning, mold toxicity and collagen production, among many others. Be sure to research the medical effects of HBOT on healing the body as a possible remedy for your health issue.

Additionally, Kacee now carries the line of Iso-tonic vitamins and supplements to promote better health and weight loss through a very effective delivery system.

Kacee has been inviting clients to bi-monthly wellness webinars that explain the need for supplements as well as weight management. If you would like more information or to schedule a consultation or appointment, visit www.cKaceeGo.com.

The next device will be an HBOT (hyperbaric oxygen therapy) chamber, arriving shortly! HBOT is effective in helping a multitude of conditions, not the least of which is altitude sickness. There are years of medical studies touting the incredible health benefits of healing oxygen. With her medical director, Kacee will be able to help improve the health of her clients who



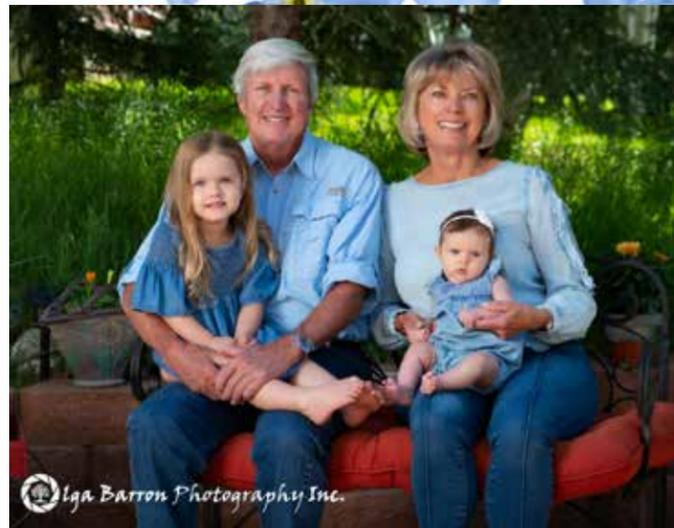
THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A GRANDPARENT IS...

Grandparents Day will be celebrated this year on September 13. Are you wondering how this holiday came to be?

In 1970, Marian McQuade launched a campaign to establish a national day to honor grandparents. For the next eight years, she raised awareness about senior citizens and, in 1978, President Jimmy Carter declared the first Sunday after Labor Day to be National Grandparents Day.

Did you know? Grandparents Day has both an official flower and song. The official flower is the forget-me-not, and the song is Johnny Prill's "A Song for Grandma and Grandpa." Both of these designations were chosen by the National Grandparents Day Council.

Here, we wish all the grandparents in Singletree a most wonderful and memorable 2020 Grandparents Day! Curious who's who? All grandchildren's names are listed left to right for each photo.



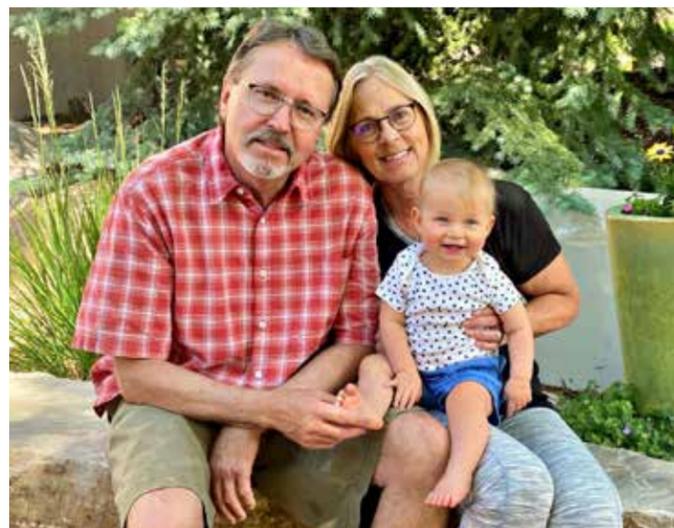
BILL AND CONNIE WELCH with LAINA AND DEVON

Laina Welch is our 3-year-old granddaughter and Dylan is our 3-month-old granddaughter. The best thing about being grandparents is getting all the hugs we get, especially when they run up and hug your leg. The weekly playtime sessions are also very special for us. Our favorite memories are sharing holiday and birthday celebrations, like a horse-drawn sleigh ride at 4 Eagle Ranch at Christmas.



GALE VARMA with BROOKE AND WES

The best thing about being a grandmother is giving out the love and getting so much love back from my grandkids! My favorite thing to do with my twin grandchildren is rockhounding. It skipped a generation but these two love finding cool rocks!



GARY AND JULIE HERR with PEYTON LEE

The best thing about being grandparents is the ultimate joy Peyton brings to all of us. She is the happiest baby you could ever hope for. You can't help but smile when you're with her. We are so blessed. Our favorite memory is the day she was born and the way her parents were in such awe over her. We were too!



BILL AND BARBARA GOLDY with JAY, WILL, SEAN, BRENT AND COADY AND BROOKE, MORGAN, BRIDGET, GEORGIA AND GRACE

When our ten grandchildren came into our lives, we believed we would make each of their worlds bigger. Instead, they have broadened our world as they take us along on their adventures and journeys in life. Fast forward twenty-four years and three grandchildren are now entrenched in their work careers or graduate school, four are in college, one is entering high school, one is in middle school, and the youngest is in 3rd grade. We have the luxury of enjoying these special chapters in each of their lives as we observe the wonder of life through their young eyes. We adore our

grandchildren and thank God that they are healthy, happy and love to be with us. We also appreciate their parents' dedication in fostering solid family values, commitment to each other, and strong faith.

Recently, our entire family was on the dance floor at a family wedding. Later, when the twenty of us were together, the younger children showed us how they dance to contemporary music and intimidated both their parents and grandparents. They were hysterical and it is a favorite memory!

GARY AND KAREN QUINN with GAIA

For "Poppi", the best part of being a grandfather is the joy Gaia brings me seeing her happy and healthy. And my favorite memory is holding her when she was born!



For "Lolli", the best part of being a grandmother is being able to be part of her life! Watching her grow from a little baby to a little person. And my favorite memory, as well, is being there at her birth and to continually be blessed to come visit her every few months from Michigan.

JACK AND KAREN RYAN with WREN AND FALLON

The best thing about being a grandparent is... living close to them and having the time to spend with them as we watch them grow up. Our fondest memories are... OUR TRAVELS WITH THEM, especially to New Orleans, where they can spend time with their other grandparents and great grandmothers and meet all of their cousins.





MARV AND FELICIA with NOA AND CHARLIE

The best thing about being grandparents is you can spoil them and send them home! Our best memories are our Christmas weeks away each year as a family.

TRYRONE AND LINDA THOMPSON with HENRY AND HUDSON

The best thing about being grandparents is being able to go home and sleep through the night. Our favorite memory (so far) is looking at the babies through our kitchen window on Easter during Covid-19.



ROBERT GRAUER with BRAXTON

The best thing about being a grandfather is summer and winter fun and keeping me young. My favorite memory is teaching Braxton how to ski and all our fun adventures whenever he visits!



MARV AND FELICIA with NOA AND CHARLIE

The best thing about being grandparents is you can spoil them and send them home! Our best memories are our Christmas weeks away each year as a family.



THE NEVIN FAMILY I: SVEN, BETSY AND DIRK (grandparents), SELMA, ANNE (Mom) and Son ERIC



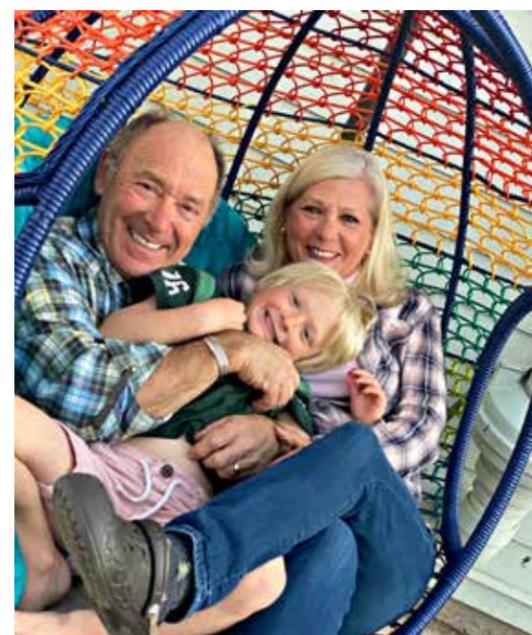
THE NEVIN FAMILY II: DIRK (grandfather), IAN, Daughter KATIE, BETSY (grandmother), JOHN (Dad), ALAYNA and MAX

The best thing about being a grandparent is how proud we are of how our son and daughter are raising our four amazing grandkids! I will say how jealous we are of grandparents with grandchildren nearby since ours are in Alaska and Norway. But that being said, some of our favorite memories are reading books to the grandkids before bed when they were young, playing cards or dominos around the dining room table until late at night, and teaching them to ski while now we have to meet them at the lift!



BUDDY AND BONNIE SIMS with JAMIE, Son JAMES and Great Grandson JAMISON (front)

The best thing about being a grandparent is watching them grow up and finding their own way in life. Our most memorable moments with our grandchildren has been sharing skiing and snowboarding on Vail Mountain.



DAVID AND JODY LEACH with KAMERON

The best thing about being grandparents is sharing memories with our grandsons. One of our favorite memories is the time, at 8 months, he “found his voice” in a very loud restaurant and chimed in one octave above everyone else - bringing total silence to the whole area!



SUZETTE NEWMAN with SYDNEY AND HAZEL

The best part of being Nana (grandmother) is teaching them the wonders of this world and watching them grow up into fabulous young girls. My favorite memory is our trip to Hawaii with my son Kent, my daughter-in-law Karen, the girls and the other grandma, Bonnie.



DAWN GAEDE with NIXON AND BROOKS

My favorite thing about being a grandmother is playing with them outside and teaching them about nature. My favorite memory was when Brooks and I were at the hospital and we got our first glimpse of new baby brother Nixon.



THE RUH FAMILY: (FRONT) Carol (7), Indie (5) and Laurel (4). (BACK) Grandfather JIM, older than dirt, Grandmother BOBBIE, older than Jim, Daughter Marika (Mom of Carol and Indie) and Daughter Lexie (Mom of Laurel).

The best thing about being grandparents is having all the fun and none of the responsibility.

Our favorite memories are vacations in May in Hawaii with the entire family. We go every other year to one of our Marriott timeshares in either Maui or Kauai; sadly we had to cancel this year because of COVID but hoping to be able to do it in December if the virus abates...



INGRID AND CRAIG DAMPIER with JACKSON AND JUSTIN

The best thing about being grandparents is watching the grandsons grow up and sharing so much time with them. Our favorite memory so far... are the family vacations we have shared.



BILL AND BETH O'NEILL with CLEMENTINE JUNE

The best part of being grandparents is seeing her smile every time she sees us or hears our voices! Our favorite memory (so far!) is our trip to Mexico with her. And Grandpa's favorite is watching her frolicking in the unicorn swimming pool he bought her for her first birthday.



BOB AND LORI BROWN with OLIVIA AND AVERY

Our experience as grandparents is different than most as our daughter Britney, son-in-law Matt and granddaughters, Avery (3 years) and Olivia (5 months) have lived with us since December 2017. Although chaotic at times, we feel privileged to have the opportunity to share our daily lives with all of them and love hearing the pitter-patter of little feet traveling through our home. With their boundless enthusiasm and zest for life, you can't help but be swept into the chaos. They remind us what it means to be children - to be carefree and curious, to explore without hesitation or self-consciousness; spending time with grandkids offers a wonderful reminder of the pleasures of life.

Our favorite memory is EVERY DAY, every day that we get to spend loving, spoiling, exploring and cuddling them. We revel in the unique and meaningful one on one time, family time and all the love and affection that we get to share with them. They bring us enormous joy.



THE RIMEL FAMILY: KAIYA, Daughter WENDY, Grandfather LEE, KEEGAN, Son BRENT, Mom LINDSEY, and CHASE

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Andrea with members of the Syrian refugee family

travel tales

Contributed by **Andrea Eddy**, Singletree Resident

An Unexpected Visit in KURDISTAN

Having traveled to over 105 countries, I have found that the most memorable trips turn out to be the ones where something unexpected happens. Thus was the case when I planned an independent trip to the Kurdish area of Iraq with a private guide. I had read about how this independent area of Iraq was coming into its own after being under the rule of Saddam Hussein. Besides the historical sites, I had read that there was great trekking, delicious food, and a generous people. However, my trip took a different turn with an experience that still sticks with me to this day.

known as Kurdistan). I left the comfort of my plush suite at the Divan hotel in Erbil to see how I could help a Syrian refugee family. At that time, there were about 150,000 Syrian refugees in the Kurdistan area of Iraq where I had been visiting for the past 5 days.

On my journey, I had been to Sulymania to visit the Red Security, one of Saddam Hussein's infamous prisons and torture chambers, as well as to Halabja where Saddam gassed 5,000 of his own people. My guide Balin Zrar, a Kurdish refugee who spent three years trying to flee Saddam's grip before he landed in London, had yet to put his story on paper. His escape, which took the hour drive from Koya to Suly to tell, including a stay in an Iranian prison and riding for days curled atop a spare tire under a tractor trailer, had moved me and caused me to ask about the Syrian refugees in Iraq.

Syrians were crossing the border in the northwest part of Iraq and were mostly located in a large UN camp before either being moved to a smaller camp or heading out on their own. At my request, we visited one small camp between Sulymania and Halabja, and immediately children came running to our large Toyota Land Cruiser thinking we were bringing aid. Sadly, I was just being a tourist. I wanted to go get some food or water to bring back to them, but Balin explained that it was better to visit one family in Erbil than to bring supplies here since the UN was supporting this camp.

It was May 11, 2013, and my last day in the Kurdish area of Iraq (also



Welcome to Iraq



Children's street art



A children's art close up

So on my last day, I set off from the Divan with my hotel laundry bag full of 15 apples, oranges, plums, and nectarines from my VIP fruit basket to take to a family, and then to see what else they needed.

As families were getting discouraged in the camps, they were wandering into the cities in search of work and a change of life. Work meant having small children sell chewing gum at intersections as had begun shortly before my arrival in Erbil. In Kurdistan, the locals were empathetic as they had ALL experienced this when trying to escape Saddam's rule.

Balin knew where there was a family "squatting" in an unfinished building. They were in a suburb near



Locals selling fresh fare at the market

his sister's house, and builders were allowing Syrian families to live in unfinished buildings either at no cost or for a nominal rent which in Erbil was \$400. This amount did not seem nominal to me, but Balin said if you dig in Kurdistan, you will find one of three things: bones, artifacts or oil. With its shiny new international airport, Erbil had become the base for the new oil bonanza which I learned on my flight over.

I had been the only woman in 32 business class seats on my flight into Erbil from Frankfurt as the rest were men in the oil industry. My seat mate was from Baton Rouge and worked for Exxon. He was staying at my same hotel on the 6th floor that Exxon had rented out for their "rotators" that were on 28 days straight, and then home for 28 days. A 12 month gig like that fetched a cool \$200,000. Expats for many companies were housed in the nearby million dollar mansions that were springing up near our hotel. Across the street was going to be a new Marriott, and a new Hilton and Kempinski were also expected.

My seat mate told me that I was brave for traveling on my own to Erbil. They were not allowed outside the "compound" without Kurdish security detail (their office was conveniently located in an attached building of the hotel). Balin told me that it was very safe everywhere in Erbil, and I heeded his advice, since he was a local Kurd not paid by big oil, and went running every day in the rose garden lined paths of Abdul-Rahman park, across the street from the hotel.

My squatters were from Halab which is the state that contains Aleppo, Syria's largest city and one of the oldest continually inhabited in the world. Without a television, I wondered if they knew that the Umayyad Mosque, the famous mosque in the walled part of their city, had recently been destroyed and the minaret toppled. Aleppo was my favorite place in Syria when I visited shortly before the Arab spring started, and I was wearing the gold Arabic script "name necklace" I commissioned from an artisan goldsmith in the famous al-Madina souk there.





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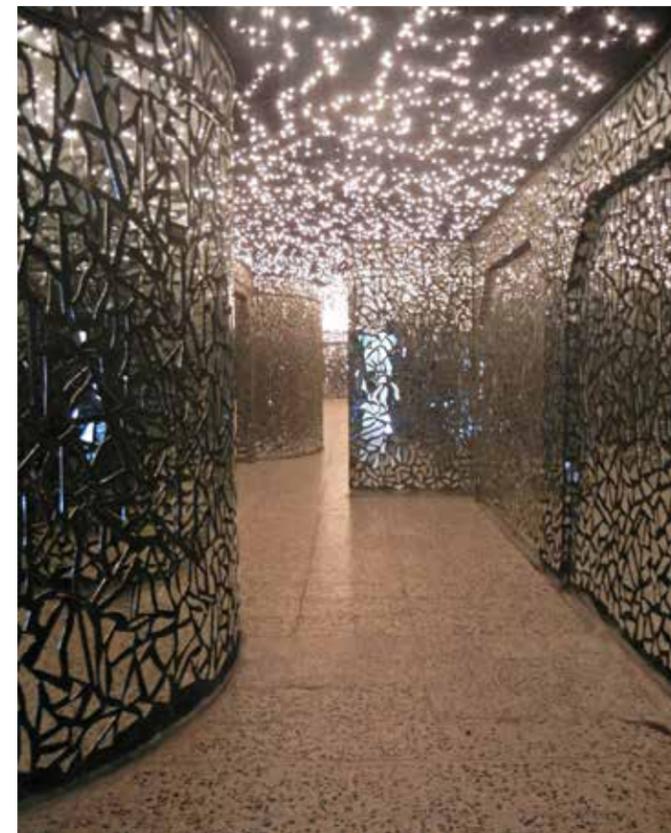


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411 Longhorn	Duplex	3	5	2,529	Unfurnished	\$800,000	\$316	16	\$610,000	\$241	6/29/2020
110 Stetson	Duplex	4	3	2,078	Unfurnished	\$799,000	\$385	96	\$750,000	\$361	7/10/2020
210 June Creek	Duplex	4	4	2,003	Unfurnished	\$790,000	\$394	74	\$770,000	\$384	7/10/2020
1110 June Creek	Duplex	4	3	2,420	Unfurnished	\$875,000	\$362	31	\$870,000	\$360	6/17/2020
48 Charolais	Duplex	3	3	1,954	Unfurnished	\$935,000	\$479	6	\$905,000	\$463	7/1/2020
40 June Creek	Duplex	5	4	2,710	Unfurnished	\$996,000	\$368	89	\$966,000	\$356	6/11/2020
310 Longhorn	Single Family	4	4	2,436	Unfurnished	\$1,025,000	\$421	2	\$1,000,000	\$411	6/23/2020
30 Foal	Single Family	4	5	3,914	Unfurnished	\$1,290,000	\$330	72	\$1,240,000	\$317	7/1/2020
110 Latigo	Single Family	4	5	3,688	Unfurnished	\$1,295,000	\$351	2	\$1,295,000	\$351	7/8/2020
261 Foal	Single Family	5	7	7,434	Unfurnished	\$1,590,000	\$214	307	\$1,475,000	\$198	6/5/2020
141 Pinto	Duplex	4	6	4,460	Furnished	\$1,695,000	\$380	120	\$1,495,000	\$335	6/15/2020

**Properties bolded were listed or sold by Happy Power.



Hall of Mirrors at the Red Security

...

It was 95 degrees outside in Erbil at 11:30 a.m., and the family was lying on blankets in two side by side confined empty rooms with tarps for roofs. Inside one was a small refrigerator, and inside the other one a small fan. Besides that there was not much but some stacked up mattresses that someone had donated, and a tricycle. There were two related families there totaling eight people.

Balin and I lingered in the car for a few minutes trying to think what would be the best thing to buy them. I wanted to just ask them what they need, but Balin wondered about my budget as they needed so many things. I decided not to worry about a budget at that moment, and I got out of the car and presented my Divan laundry bag full of fruit. Balin asked them what they needed and they said they would be grateful for anything. A grade school age boy popped his head out and said another refrigerator and a fan. Balin looked at me and I said sure...how much could these be in Erbil?

A small refrigerator for a dorm room in the US is about \$50, and a small fan less than that. We had passed something called "Modern Store" on our way and I suggested going there. He said we shouldn't buy new, as they will likely be moving on when a job or better living location was found, so we should buy second hand. I wondered where we were going to go for second hand appliances, and we ended up at the bazaar under Erbil's main tourist attraction, the Citadel. I hadn't been able to visit previously as it had been under UNESCO reconstruction and considered too dangerous without hard hats.



Old Town Erbil



Kurdish Country

When we had walked past the Erbil bazaar the other day, I had thought it contained the same things unfortunately most bazaars do around the world these days: rows of mass produced Chinese goods, food staples, tacky tourist souvenirs, and repair shops. However, we wandered to a section Balin hadn't even been to, and we found a row of stalls selling second hand air conditioning units or what they call coolers. He said this was much better than a fan as the fan just blows hot air. This unit, like a unit you would see outside a home in the US, needs to be filled with water every four to five hours and will sit outside the squatters' makeshift shelter and blow cool air inside. We tested it and it appeared to be working. We continued walking and found a medium-sized refrigerator. My tab was \$200 for both appliances through negotiation and discounting for Syrian refugees. The Kurds, having been through this themselves, are empathetic and generous.

Then I realized we had a problem. Since we had a large fan/cooler and a medium-sized refrigerator, these items would not fit in the back of Balin's Land Cruiser. Not a problem. In the middle of this area of the bazaar were about 10 pickup trucks with drivers just waiting for someone to hire them to take their purchases somewhere. One could be had for \$15 without an appointment or delivery date. Home Depot should take a lesson.

The truck followed us to pick up the "cooler" and refrigerator, and then Balin told the driver where to meet us for delivery since

...

...

we had to go back to our car. On the drive over, three times I stopped myself from asking him what would happen if they drove away with our goods. But each time, I reminded myself that we were in Kurdistan, and these people had been through the same thing, so they are paying it forward.

We arrived back at our squatters' location just as someone was pulling up and bringing the family two boxes of food. The family came out, and one of the men seemed excited about what we had brought, but also embarrassed at our generosity. It didn't seem appropriate to ask them about their life back in Syria as they may have become humiliated that they had had a proper life, and now they were squatting while strangers were being so kind. So I didn't ask.

I wanted to tell them how much I loved visiting Syria, and that I felt a kinship to them. But that didn't seem right either. Instead, I asked Balin about extension cords to tap into the electricity and clean filters for the cooler, and he said that a nearby shop would give them what they need. There were no more words, just an acknowledgement of what had transpired on both sides. I teared up as we were walking away.

We were quiet in the car until Balin asked where I wanted to go to lunch. He was able to switch gears faster than me, perhaps not wanting to dredge up memories of his own struggle as a refugee seeking asylum. I still had no words, and he said we were going to a local place called Sultan. He joked and said he ate there a lot in the hopes he would become a Sultan one day, an option my squatters will likely never have.

Author's Note: While there were only 150,000 Syrian refugees in Kurdistan in 2013, that number has nearly doubled in that area, and worldwide there are now about 5.6 million Syrian refugees, as well as another 6 million Syrians displaced within Syria.



Typical market offerings



IT IS NOT TOO LATE...

Fall is the time to care for your home's exterior

- Exterior paint is a way to protect and prolong the life of siding and trim
- Roof repair or replacement can prevent cold and ice from aggravating existing issues
- Driveways and walkways should be repaired because freezing can cause small cracks to expand
- Lawn care should include raking, aerating, and fertilizing
- Gutters should be clean and repaired before the snow falls



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www.singletreetoday.com

precious
pets

Contributed by
Shelby, Brandon Hill
and Melanie Bartlett,
Singletree Pet
and Residents



shelby's
DEBUT

Hello new friend! If we haven't met, my name is Shelby and I'm a 9-month-old border collie who lives on Charolais Circle. Most men think I'm named after Carroll Shelby because I'm so fast, but my name actually originates from Steel Magnolias. I was born in the Colorado plains on October 14, 2019 and Melanie and Brandon (my hooman parents) brought me to the mountains in early January. I quickly became obsessed with this wonderful thing called snow and couldn't spend enough time playing in it. When I was only 5 months old, I survived a juvenile mountain lion attack in our backyard thanks to Mom chasing the cat away – what a day that was! I was told I was very lucky to walk away without a scratch.

If you're not familiar with border collies, most people know us as the Frisbee dogs. We take our job as herders very seriously and become intensely focused on the task at hand. We're recognized as the smartest breed, so sometimes we think we're smarter than our hoomans, and can become very destructive

without proper structure. I think I'm doing an excellent job of training my hoomans, but they seem to think they're in charge for some reason. When you meet me, I'll let you decide who runs our household.

I am working so hard to be a good girl, but I still have plenty of moments when I decide that I don't have to listen to my commands. Who doesn't love to chase a deer or prairie dog?! Sometimes bikers and joggers are just too irresistible not to herd (that is my job anyway), but when I try to put them in their place it oddly does not make my hoomans happy, so I'm still figuring out my job in life.

When I meet new people, I'm a little shy, so don't be offended if I don't warm up to you right away. But if I decide that you're my friend, I'm a sucker for a nice long belly rub. I will also work for treats if you have any handy in your pocket!

Mom works from home, so she and I spend most days together, but then this thing called quarantine happened and lucky me, Dad was home all the time



too. I don't quite understand why we can't play all day every day, but my hoomans tell me that they need to do this thing called work to put kibble in my bowl. So I usually nap under mom's desk and patiently wait for her to put her computer away, although sometimes I need to squeak my toy when she's on important phone calls (this helps her with work I think).

Everyone says I'm super smart, and I'm working hard to learn as many commands as possible to expand my vocabulary. I'm still getting the hang of fetch and I have a Frisbee that I'm learning to catch, but other times I'd just rather run around with my toys in my mouth (I prefer to carry 2 toys around at the same time). My favorite pastimes are hiking (you might see me on Mesquite Trail), playing with my friends, helping with yard work (rakes are my absolute favorite to bark at and attack), and soaking up the sun on our patio. I can't wait to meet more friends now that so many people are outside enjoying the beautiful Colorado weather. I do miss the snow and hope we see the white fluffy stuff again soon, but the grass and sunshine aren't so bad.

My hoomans take a lot of pictures of me and I'm told I have an Instagram account [@shelby.the.border.collie](#) (whatever that is), if you want to follow my adventures as a mountain dog!



who's making a difference



Eagle Valley Humane Society

Contributed by Donna Griffin, Singletree Resident, and Char Gonsenica • Article Written by Tim Swift, Singletree Resident

A Singletree Foster Mom Helps Speed Animal Adoptions

I was fortunate to have spent the last four years of an eight-year hiatus in Florida prior to returning to Singletree in 2015, as the director of development of the Humane Society of Vero Beach and Indian River County. Those four years taught me the importance of animal welfare and the positive impact that it can have on a community, so when I was given the opportunity to profile Char Gonsenica, the Executive Director of the Eagle Valley Humane Society, and Singletree resident Donna Griffin, a long time volunteer and animal foster mom, I jumped at the chance. What I learned in the course of interviewing Char and Donna was that the commitment to animal welfare is just as strong in our Singletree neighborhood today as it was in my Florida neighborhood despite the differences in the two organizations.

The Humane Society in Vero Beach was huge. We had a 38 acre campus, a full time staff of over 40 and a volunteer corps of over 400. The Eagle Valley Humane Society has a full time staff of only two and their volunteer corps is a mere 40 committed souls, but the difference in size in no way diminishes the importance of our local humane society, their commitment to animal welfare, or their value to the quality of life here in Eagle County. If anything, their small staff only serves to enhance their importance.

Char Gonsenica has been the Executive Director of the Eagle Valley Humane Society for 21 years! Her commitment to animal welfare began when she and her husband and daughter spent a brief period in Iowa after



Executive Director Char Gonsenica with canine pal, Buddy

moving from Omaha where her father was posted there during his Air Force career. It was there that she first became aware of how mistreated animals could be, and she became committed to doing something about it, so she started rescuing strays. In 1999, she and her family came to the Valley to visit an old friend of her husband's. Like so many others among us, they fell in love with Colorado and decided to stay, renting a house in McCoy. Her daughter was entering kindergarten and Char was looking for some part time work when their friend showed Char an ad in the *Vail Daily* looking for a director for the Humane Society. She applied, was hired and the rest is history.

Since getting hired, Char has not only served the Humane Society, but the broader animal welfare community in Colorado as well. She has been a major player with the Colorado Veterinary Medical Reserve Corps, and in 2005 she was commissioned as a Bureau of Animal Protection Agent by the Colorado Bureau of Animal Protection. Both those organizations are charged with responding to emergencies, both natural and man-made, that have resulted in the endangering of animals. She has traveled the country responding to these emergencies and participated in countless rescues of endangered companion animals. In addition, she has conducted numerous training sessions for animal welfare advocates most recently focusing on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on animals, and how to best address the challenges the virus presents to pets and the families that love them.



Char also works in close collaboration with the Eagle County's Animal Services staff and oversees the operation of the Humane Society's shelter in Eagle. Over the years she has established strong relationships with numerous local vets to assure that every animal that is adopted has been fully vaccinated as well as spayed or neutered prior to adoption.

In the course of her tenure with the Humane Society, Char has worked hard to establish a network of foster parents for endangered and abandoned animals. The importance of this network cannot be overstated. Due to size limitations, most animal shelters cannot care for all the animals it receives; that is where the foster system comes in. Volunteers open their homes and their hearts to animals in need and provide a safe, nurturing environment to re-socialize mistreated animals, litters of puppies, and abandoned pets. They do all this without pay or recognition and at their own expense. Needless to say, the work of any shelter's efforts to save animals would be a dismal failure without this all-volunteer foster system, and Singletree's own Donna Griffin is an integral and dedicated part of this system.

Donna first met Char when she volunteered to walk animals at the Humane Society shelter in 2007. They became friends and Char eventually recruited Donna to be a foster mom. Since then, Donna estimates that she has fostered as many as 50 dogs. A litter of puppies usually stays with her for a week or two. During that time, she is performing essentially the same job as the parent of a newborn. She gets up two or three times a night to feed the little ones and cleans up literally pounds of puppy poop daily. In addition, she breaks up sibling rivalries all the while showering them with human love and affection.

Adult animals usually stay with Donna for three to four weeks depending on the amount of re-socialization needed to get them to the point where they can be adopted. Many of the animals she fosters have been subjected to terrible abuse and neglect to the point where they have a deep-seated fear or mistrust of humans. Were it not for Donna and thousands like her throughout the country, many of these animals would have to be euthanized. When I asked Donna why she has done this for over 13 years her answer came without hesitation, "When you're an animal lover, it's just FUN!"

The neglected, abused, and abandoned animals of Eagle County owe a tremendous debt to Char, Donna, and so many like them who have dedicated their lives to rescuing animals and placing them in homes that love them, but they cannot continue to do this



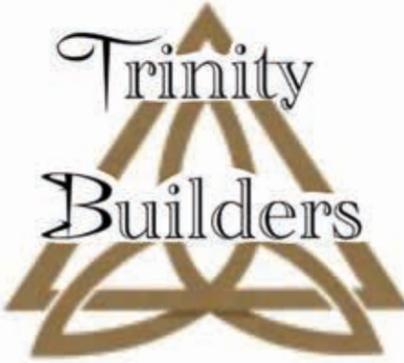


without help. July and August are the Eagle County Humane Society's giving months. A generous donor has offered to match any gift up to \$10,000 received during these months, so your \$10 gift becomes, in fact, a \$20 gift. If you want to help in this effort and would like to see your gift doubled, you can go to the Humane

Society's website, www.eaglevalleyhumanesociety.org and click on the "Donate to EVHS Today!" button in the top right hand corner of the landing page. The animals of the Eagle Valley will love you for it.



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