



## Knowledge is Power

By Walter Andrew

There seem to be two predominant views when it comes to a renewal of mining in the Patagonia area. One view is that Patagonia has always been a mining town and that the less affluent population desperately needs jobs-- which they believe the new mining operations will provide. The other view is that tourism has taken the place of mining as the sustaining industry in the Patagonia area, and mining will bring an end to tourism, will provide few long term jobs for local residents, and will devastate our environment.

There are a substantial number of residents in this community who are pro-mine, but are reluctant to express themselves publically. By the same token, there are many older residents who fear the environmental degradation that mining activity would have, but for various reasons have limited their public comments. Acknowledging the legitimacy of each other's position may be the only logical starting point toward a more civil discourse and intelligent discussion of the issues.

Although these opposing views are not delineated according to strictly socio-economic lines, many of those in favor of mining are from families who have lived here all their lives, while those in the forefront of the environmental opposition

are newer residents. Many of the older families believe that the newer residents cannot appreciate the hardships of chronic unemployment. They argue that mining created this town, and has provided jobs to many previous generations. The newer residents see that perspective as one that would sacrifice this area's tourism and, the ability of its environment to support future generations—for the sake of a few unskilled jobs.

How can these two groups begin to listen to each other's position, and to directly address the issues raised in a thoughtful manner? We can succeed in securing the future of Patagonia and our surrounding area only if we can stand together. Rather than perpetuating divi-

sion, we all need to adamantly pursue the answers to questions that can lead us to informed choice. We need to look at credible sources to determine the type and number of jobs that will be available to local residents during the construction and operation of these mines. We need to know what would be the financial cost to our economy were we to lose tourism. And we all need to know what effect each mine (or group of mines) would actually have on the quality of our air, and the quality and quantity of our water. Only by better informing ourselves can each of us to decide whether the proposed tradeoffs make sense for our community as a whole. Knowledge is power.

## Farewell to Betty Myers

Betty Myers, one of Patagonia's most prolific volunteers, has sold her house and is moving to Ashland, Oregon. Her services to the charitable and non-profit organizations in the Patagonia area are innumerable and include her years of service for the Senior Citizens, PRCF, CHOP, PRT and The tennis Fundraiser. Kelly Fleming says "Betty has been an important asset to the community and treasured friend, unfailingly good-natured and a terror on the tennis court." She will be sorely missed by all those who had the good fortune to know her. Here at the PRT, we are sorry to see her go, but wish her well in her new and very fortunate community. There will be a going away party for Betty at the Community Center on October 19.



Photo by Walter Andrew

## Letter to the Editor

Patagonia town government and management should refrain from involvement in issues outside of town limits, which are overreaching its boundaries, jurisdictions and authority.

— Will Stack, Patagonia



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