

Over 13,000 Attended Fall Festival

By Ali Morse

Over 140 vendors filled Patagonia's expansive park October 7-9, attracting over 13,000 visitors, according to the Fall Festival's manager, Bonnie Maclean. Young and old enjoyed a variety of entertainment. El Jefe, the Jaguar, roamed through the crowd as the mascot for the Patagonia Area Resource Alliance, serving as a reminder of the unique biodiversity of our local environment and the precious natural balance of this place we call home.

Audiences listened to the Patagonia High School marching band and professional performances in the SCFPA's Concert Haul by the LoBros, Danny Brito Latin Jazz, Nota Bene, Mariachi Plata, and Puppets Amongus, to name a few. Some watched

performances by the Cochise Community College Dancers and demonstrations by the Krikorian Karate students.

Far View Alpacas and Circle Z's lovely old surrey provided photo ops. A new addition to this year's festival was the Kid's Corner, with children's activities operated by the Patagonia Youth Enrichment Center.

In addition to the sales tax revenue generated by the event, the town made over \$1,500 from the vendors' special event permits. Maclean said a donation will be made to the park fund. She added that SITA (Sky Islands Tourism Association) netted more than last year and monies collected will support SITA activities. Almost \$100 generated from

donations at the festival's information booth will help support the Regional Visitors' Center, now operated by SITA (see page 11.)

Thanks to the Town of Patagonia's Park Maintenance Crew who assisted with installing the infrastructure for Wi-Fi. With the new system in place, Wi-Fi was accessible throughout the park. A big thanks also goes out to the Santa Cruz County 4H for their help in keeping the food courts clean. Overall, it was a very successful event and the weather cooperated beautifully, with only a light sprinkle of rain on Saturday—enough to cool us down but not enough to disrupt this fun three-day event.

