

Local Student To Compete at Nat'l Level

By Marion Vendituoli

Elgin School 8th grader Aiden Bronstein is headed for Atlanta, GA to compete in the National History Bee. This is Bronstein's second trip to this event, having qualified last year, as well.

Bronstein, along with three other Elgin middle school students, qualified for the regional competition, held in Phoenix late last winter, based on his performance on an on-line exam. In Phoenix, he finished in the top four students for the region, which includes Arizona, parts of Nevada and Utah, according to his social studies teacher, Nate Porter.

The top six students from each grade qualify for the national competition, which is a three-day event that tests the students' knowledge of both American and world history. "It is incredibly difficult," Porter said. He will be accompanying Bronstein and his mother, Megan Peterman, to Atlanta to see Aiden compete.

Bronstein is no stranger to academic competition, having competed in the state Geography Bee this year and finishing in the top 50 students. He also competed, with two classmates, in the Future City competition in Phoenix, a science and engineering contest. Bronstein feels that this exposure will help him be more competitive at the History Bee. "The first year, I was definitely more nervous," he said. "Now I can speak in front of a crowd and not be nervous."

Bronstein, who will be attending Salpointe High School next year, is also an active member of Santa Cruz County 4-H, and was on the football, baseball, track and basketball teams this year.



Aiden Bronstein and social studies teacher Nate Porter at the state geography bee in Phoenix last winter

Porter is proud of the accomplishments of all his Elgin School students. "I'm not aware of any other schools that have had students qualify for the State Geography Bee eight years in a row," he said. As for the History Bee, "We just started as a school last year, and we had more students qualify than any other school in southern Arizona," he said. "I think the educational value of these contests is to see students embrace the 'nerdiness,' to see the value of academics and learning," he added.

He is very pleased with Aiden's success. "Aiden obviously has an interest in history and geography," he said. "I think a lot of the credit goes to Megan. His older brother qualified for the state Geography Bee and his younger brothers were both in the school competition."

When Aiden was asked why he thought he did so well at these competitions, he replied, "I think I was just born that way." He also credits the community. "So many people have helped me so much. I live in a community that helps me achieve these things," he said. "I live in a great community."

AMI Seeks to Purchase Public Land

By Carolyn Shafer

Arizona Mining Inc. (AMI), a Canadian mineral exploration and development company, has recently submitted a Small Tracts Act application to purchase 14 acres of public land adjacent to their private patented lands on the east side of Harshaw Road, situated in the Coronado National Forest. The Forest Service, which has discretion to deny their request, is currently evaluating the application according to Daisy Kinsey, Sierra Vista District Ranger, Coronado National Forest. The Forest Service advised Patagonia Area Resource Alliance to file a Freedom of Information (FOIA) request in order to learn more about AMI's application.

AMI has about 20,000 acres of patented and unpatented claims approximately nine miles south of the town of Patagonia at the intersection of Harshaw and Flux Canyon roads. AMI acquired 152 acres of private patented land in 2006 and 300 acres in 2016 and has drilled 331 holes over the past ten years on these two pieces.

Environmental protections for private lands are substantially different from the protections required for federal lands. Those who oppose this sale of public lands may contact the Coronado National Forest at 5990 S Hwy 92, Hereford, AZ 85615 or email ckinsey@fs.fed.us.

Senior Center Looking for Volunteers

The Senior Citizens of Patagonia, Inc. has recently had a turnover following the death of former president, Mike O'Halloran. The board needs rejuvenation to continue its essential functions serving the Patagonia, Sonoita and Elgin communities.

The mission of the Senior Center is to provide nutritious meals at noontime to seniors and to those with disabilities five days a week. The organization receives half the necessary funds through a grant from the South-East Arizona Government Organization (SEAGO). The other half must come from individual donations and smaller grants. Last year, the Senior Center fell short by many thousands of dollars.

The Center also provides transportation services for seniors and disabled people, aided in part by a grant from the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT). This includes medical visits as well as shopping, entertainment and other outings. All drivers are unpaid volunteers. ADOT provides only half the necessary costs; the Senior

Center must come up with the other half through individual donations. Last year, there was a deficit of several thousand dollars delivering these transportation services.

The board of directors needs help to ensure that these services continue to be available in the community. They are considering establishing an endowment fund and need someone with expertise to chair a committee to consider the feasibility of such a fund.

The board also wants to establish a closer relationship with the people it serves through increased public relations, and is in need of more volunteers to drive the vans, especially once a third van goes into service in the Sonoita-Elgin area.

If you are interested in contributing in some way to this worthwhile endeavor, please contact board president, Gama Leyva, at 520-907-5829, or treasurer, Chuck Kelly, at 520-604-8087.

They need and welcome your assistance.

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