

Tombstone hosts Wild West Days

By Amanda Bodenstein
The Tombstone Epitaph

The Fifth Annual Tombstone Wild West Days, A Salute to the Men and Women of the Armed Forces, will be held March 15-16 on Historic Allen Street.

The Wild West Detachment Marine Corps League and city merchants are sponsoring the event.

The event was the brainchild of W.F. “Bronco Bill” Pakinkis, who said the event has raised \$6,750, all of which is donated to the Services Organization to support military personnel at home and overseas.

“I came up with the idea about having a weekend set aside to salute the USO and raise money,” Pakinkis said.

Pakinkis’ involvement stems from his past experiences. He is retired from the United States Marine Corps and worked five years for the Arizona National Guard.

He has traveled all over the world and Pakinkis said he considers the USO a “home away from home.” He had brought the idea about having a weekend set aside to salute the USO and raise money to the Marine Corps League Attachment.

In the town “too tough to die,” a third to two-thirds of the population are veterans.

“There is no city or town in the U.S. that sets aside a weekend to raise money for the USO, who support our troops at home and overseas,” Pakinkis said.

Tombstone Wild West Days

is sponsored by business owner Steve Goldstein’s Goldstein Family Ltd. Partnership which owns Big Nose Kate’s, The Longhorn Restaurant, Café Margarita and Shady Lady’s Closet. Goldstein is co-chair of the event.

From 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. March 15, there will be entertainment along Allen Street, followed by a USO Canteen Dance at American Legion Roy Fourr Post 24 at the corner of Second and Allen Streets at 6 p.m. Throughout the evening, there will be a silent auction.

At 11 a.m. March 16, the Fifth Annual Salute to the Troops Parade will take place in tandem with Tombstone’s Annual St. Patrick’s Day Parade, where wearing green is encouraged. The parade will start at the corner of Sixth and Allen streets and conclude at American Legion Roy Fourr Post 24.

The Marine Corps League Detachment will have an information and merchandising booth set up throughout the weekend at the corner of Fourth and Allen Streets. They will sell raffle tickets for a USMC KA-BAR that has an engraved quote by Former President Ronald Reagan. One-of-a-kind Wild West Detachment T-shirts, challenge coins and coffee cups also will be available for sale.

“If people don’t buy these coins, they are missing out on a great opportunity,” Pakinkis said.

You can sign up for the parade until March 15 and admission is free.

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If you go

What: Tombstone Wild West Days.
When: 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. March 15 with the USO Canteen Dance at 6 p.m.; 11 a.m. March 16.
Where: Allen Street and American Legion Roy Fourr Post 24, Sixth and Allen streets.
Cost: Free
Details: tombstonechamber.com/5th-Annual-Tombstone-Wild-West-Days or contact W.F. “Bronco Bill” Pakinkis at (520) 266-5266 broncobill@powerc.net Call Pakinkis at 1-520-266-5266 or e-mail him at broncobill@powerc.net for details.

Steampunk convention takes over Old Tucson this weekend

By Joey Adelman
The Tombstone Epitaph

The Wild Wild West Steampunk Convention III in Tucson next month offers a unique twist on the Old West, even for those whose lives are seeded in the genre.

On March 7-9, Old Tucson on South Kinney Road will be transformed into the world’s only Western-style steampunk theme park. Thousands of fans of the steampunk movement are expected to show up.

This is the third convention since Diana Given and Jason Drotman started the event in 2011 as part of the Arizona Steampunk Society. The couple didn’t host an event last year, and this year’s event will be revamped, they said. They have marketed the event more intensely this year and have gotten support from the national steampunk community.

In past years, nearly 3,500 steampunk enthusiasts have taken over Old Tucson for the weekend.

This year, Given expects the crowd to be bigger because word has gotten out about a non-conventional convention located in an old western theme park.

“Steampunk offers something for everyone,” Given said.

Givens added that the movement, which draws its roots to Victorian-era science fiction (think Jules Verne and H.G. Wells), offers people a chance to create an alternative historical timeline.

“The thing that sets Steampunk apart from anything else is that it offers participants a creative alternative to history,”



Photo courtesy of Diana Given of the Wild Wild West Convention

A family poses for a photo at the (third annual) Wild Wild West Convention. This year’s Wild Wild West Steampunk Conception takes place on March 7 to March 9.

If you go

What: Wild Wild West Steampunk Convention III
When: March 7-9, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Where: Old Tucson, 201 S. Kinney Road.
Tickets: Three day passes: \$59 for adults, \$54 for children ages 7-11
One day passes: \$37 for adults, \$31 for children ages 7-11
More info: www.wwwc3.com

Givens said.

This includes travel by sea or time machine and various gears and gadgets that you might find aboard a ship or early planes.

Choosing to celebrate this

fictional way of life instead of celebrating actual events in history’s past is cherished amongst Steampunk loyalists. This year’s theme raises the question: which side will

Tombstone resident addicted to thrills

By Anthony Victor Reyes
The Tombstone Epitaph

A whim.

That is all it took for Tombstone resident Jose Torres to decide to take two mules and walk from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean: sea to shining sea.

“Something pops in your head one day and it doesn’t go away until you itch it and go out and do something,” said Torres.

Traveling over 1,200 miles on foot with his mules, Rosita and Willow, this crazy idea was triggered when Torres was nearing his retirement from the California Fire Department and a friend asked him the question, “What are you going to do with your life?”

Torres always wanted to spend his life traveling the United States, but after his friend said that her dream was to walk the Pacific Crest Trail, Torres took her idea to the next level.

“Well everybody did the Pacific Crest Trail,” he said. “I would like to do something different, (something) no one has ever done. Something out of the ordinary, like walk with two mules across the United States.”

Torres started his trek across America in the fall of 1999 at Doheny State Beach in Dana Point, Calif., and ended in the spring of 2002 at the Coast of Pamlico County, N.C. With the help of his son and friends he met on the way, he completed the journey in less than four years.

“I took a jar and got some of the water from the Pacific Ocean and when I got to the Atlantic Ocean I filled up another,” said Torres, who collected \$5,000 in donations along the way to benefit children with lung disease.

From serving as a fire fighter for 30 years and kayaking from the headwaters of the Mississippi River to New Orleans, Torres has always craved new experiences and the thrill of adventure.

“I learned to read when I was young and there wasn’t much to do, so I would read about other people’s adventures, so that was always in my head,” he said. “If I wanted to try something new, I would read books on it then go do it.”

Aside from raising money for the American Lung Association of California, the thrill seeker said that the most rewarding



Anthony Victor Reyes / The Tombstone Epitaph

Thrill-seeker Jose Torres, known for fundraising for the The American Lung Association of California, sits on a bench in near the Tombstone Epitaph.

“It really is an addiction, I will stop going on adventures when I die.”

- Jose Torres

experience was meeting the people along the way.

“When you watch the news you just see the bad in people, but when you get out there and meet the people, there is a lot more good in people,” he said. “It makes you have trust in mankind again.”

Torres said that during his journeys, bystanders would see him walking on the road. The people would drop off food for him, offer him hospitality and share a conversation.

One situation really stuck out to Torres during his stop in Oklahoma. He needed to take a break, but his son told him that the next campsite was 10 miles away.

“This older fella came over and he said ‘I heard that you were looking for a place to put the mules.’ I said ‘Yeah, you know of any place?’ He said ‘Well I have a little house around the corner, you are welcome to stay,’ he said. “(The man) said, ‘I own a

bar, so why don’t you head up there when you are done setting up’. We set up camp and headed on over. Somehow music got on the agenda.”

Torres and his son ended up staying up all night at this stranger’s bar, playing music, laughing and sharing stories with this complete stranger. Torres played his harmonica and his son played the guitar.

“At the end of the night, when things were over, we put away all our stuff. (The owner of the bar) came over and said ‘I buried my daughter today, and she was about your son’s age. You guys were a Godsend. I didn’t know how I was going to make it through this night,’” Torres said. “Right then he gave my son a hug and said ‘if you are ever in Oklahoma, you come by and see us.”

According to Torres, sharing these moments with people is why his journeys are so unique and important to him.

But the reason he continues to go on these treks is because he is addicted to the thrill.

“It really is an addiction,” he said. “(I will stop going on adventures) when I die.”

Torres can be seen now, walking around the Tombstone strip, whittling on a bench and waiting for the next idea to trigger another great adventure.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 15: Spring Bazaar

One of the best bazaars in Sierra Vista will feature a wide variety of handmade items, Christmas ornaments, quilts and other handcrafted works from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Ethel H. Berger Center, 2950 E. Tacoma St. Details: Call Christina Swan at (520) 439-2300.

March 15: Kartchner Caverns State Park Monthly Hike

This hike is approximately 2.5 miles long and is rated moderate. Dogs are allowed on leashes six feet or shorter. Hikers will meet at the Discovery Center and the hike will begin at 3 p.m. Admission into the park will be \$6 per vehicle. (520) 586-2283, azstateparks.com/parks/kaca/

March 21-23: Tombstone the Musical

See Wyatt Earp, Doc Holliday and the Clantons come back to life in Arizona Rose Theatre’s “Tombstone the Musical.” Performances are at 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. Sunday at the Berger Performing Arts Center, 1200 W. Speedway in Tucson. \$10-\$15 by calling (520) 888-0509 or through arizonarosetheatre.com

March 21-23: 4th Avenue Street Fair

Some of the region’s best artists and craftsmen will sell their wares from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily along North Fourth Avenue between Ninth Street and University Boulevard in Tucson. fourthavenue.org/fairs

April 11-13: Rose Tree Festival

This year’s event celebrates the 129th blooming of the world’s largest rose tree. Details: Call Rose Tree Museum at (520) 457-3326 or facebook.com/pages/Tombstone-Rose-Festival/161074647337977

Compiled by Amanda Bodenstein and Joey Adelman