

THE SENIOR CONNECTION MEET OUR MEMBERS

Mary May Potter

Mary May is the real McCoy—a native Idahoan. In fact, aside from a brief time when she made her first appearance into this world in the Wendell hospital, Mary May has lived her whole life in the Wood River Valley.

The oldest, with three younger sisters (Jolene, Elizabeth Ann and Debbie—all of whom also live in Idaho—Gooding, Jerome and Moore, respectively), Mary May had an all-American childhood.

Her mother and father owned Neyman Chevrolet in Hailey, and she and her sisters attended public schools and enjoyed the outdoors—especially swimming in the summer. She worked various jobs, including clerk at Chateau Drug in Ketchum and cashier at the Opera House in Sun Valley. It was a wonderful place to grow up. As Mary May remembers, “We never locked our doors. You could walk anywhere at any time, and you knew everybody.”

One day, while at the Star Café in Hailey, a man walked in. His name was Max. Mary May knew who he was, as her friends called him “uncle.” Her first thought was he’s not as old as she thought, for aren’t uncles always a generation older? At the time, Max and his family owned the Deer Creek Ranch, where they raised hay while raising cattle and sheep. Mary May and Max started seeing each other, and after Mary May spent a year at college in Pocatello, they married and moved to Hells Canyon, where they lived for about a year while Max worked construction on the dam.

Returning to the Wood River Valley, Mary May and Max ran Sun Valley Motors (located where Argyros theater presently sits) and built the first home on Timber Way, where Mary May lives to this day.

Whether by luck or plan, Mary May and Max had three children—each three years apart. Their oldest, Melody, is a nurse, lives here in Hailey and has provided Mary May with seven grandchildren (five girls and two boys), all of whom have graduated from college. The second daughter, Ellen, lives in Boise with her husband, while their son Mark lives in Ketchum and works for Thornton Wine Imports. Two more generations of confirmed Idahoans!

Max, the love of Mary May’s life, died nine years ago. He was a hard worker and, as Mary May describes him, “a man with a great sense of humor and someone whom everyone liked.”

After the children were grown, Mary May and Max did venture out of Idaho to many faraway places, on organized trips and with friends—to Hawaii and Alaska, Spain, Hong Kong, South Korea, Panama, Peru and Thailand, to name a few.

If there is one place Mary May would like to see, it is England—the land of her ancestors.

In the meantime, there are family events, such as an aunt’s 100th birthday party in California, and a family reunion near Arco last summer of over 70 relatives on her father’s side.

Today, Mary May spends lots of time at The Senior Connection. She plays bingo and cards, participates in the exercise program, attends the Diner’s Club dinners and all of the wonderful events offered by the center. When asked what she enjoys the most, Mary May says, “I love everything—the people, the food—and everybody is so very kind and helpful.”



the **SENIOR CONNECTION**

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COFFEE CHATS WITH KIKI

KIKI TIDWELL

Why Arizona Utility Has Shifted To Batteries

This week I am going to spotlight a recent article by Julian Spector, who has visited the Wood River Valley for the Sun Valley Institute conference, and who is a top researcher into battery storage energy trends.

Julian wrote about a utility similar to ours, Arizona Public Service, which also killed net-metering in their state, also made it difficult for renewable projects to be built (remember Idaho Power’s anti-wind-energy campaign and moratorium on PURPA projects?), also expensively lobbied legislators (Idaho Power sends political donations to every legislator, I believe) and paid for huge campaigns to elect public utility commissioners. (Our PUC commissioners are appointed, but in previous political campaigns many of our commissioners have received significant \$ donations from Idaho Power.)

“APS spent millions of dollars on statewide regulator races in 2014 and 2016. Though not strictly illegal—the Supreme Court has ruled that corporations are people, with all the same rights to political speech that personhood entails—this influence campaign did not look good, and it ultimately justified public skepticism about Arizona’s utility regulatory compact. If the monopoly picks its regulators, how regulated is it?”

But here is the good news:

“It’s happening: Arizona Public Service doesn’t want to use fossil fuels anymore.

The utility that two years ago planned on gigawatts’ worth of new gas capacity decided last week it would achieve 45 percent renewable power by 2030, exit coal power by 2031 and stop emitting carbon altogether by 2050.

APS committed to 100 percent carbon-free because it became sufficiently confident in its ability to accelerate solar deployment and integrate it using energy storage. It arrived at that point by starting small, testing storage technology in a scoped and scientific way, and liking the results. This is exactly how utility pilots are supposed to work.

Back in 2016, APS finalized a pilot whereby it would stick two 2-megawatt batteries, supplied by AES Energy Storage, onto feeders with ample rooftop solar. They would use the batteries to balance the power quality. Experience with those batteries helped APS move ahead with its first commercial application: the Punkin Center proj-

ect, in which the battery offset a traditional wires upgrade to a remote but growing community; the battery cost less than half what the conventional solution would have, saving ratepayer dollars.”

Not surprisingly, this shift by the Arizona utility happened after a change in the utility’s CEO. Idaho Power’s CEO, Darrel Anderson, gets paid almost \$4.5 million a year (total 2019 compensation \$4,474,464). But he wants to stick small ratepayers and Blaine County residents with a \$65 million bill to build a transmission-line-to-nowhere here. Instead, we could spend that money on a pilot project for a real solution for us that provides battery backup power and solar generation in a power outage.

Julian notes that the Arizona utility was pushed by a Tom Steyer-funded ballot initiative in Arizona state and gives us here in Idaho this advice: “Any ambitious clean-energy plan is a fiction until it isn’t. Notions that seemed unrealistic a couple years ago have now

entered a major utility’s plan of action. That’s worth remembering for policy discussions in other states: Even if an idea fails to pass, like Steyer’s ballot initiative, it can push the conversation forward.”

Anyone interested in a ballot initiative campaign?

https://www.greentechmedia.com/squared/storage-plus/energy-storage-paved-the-way-for-arizonas-largest-utility-to-pledge-carbon?utm_source=splusnewsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=gtm2&tpcc=splusnewsletter (all quotes in this column reference this article)



Darrel Anderson’s total 2019 compensation was \$4,474,464.



SUN VALLEY INSTITUTE

CLIMATE CHANGE

Youth Forum Teens Focus On Action

BY LEXIE PRAGGASTIS

SUN VALLEY YOUTH FORUM COORDINATOR

“We live in a strange world. But it is the world my generation has been handed. It’s the only world we’ve got. We are now standing at a crossroads in history. We are failing but we have not yet failed. We can still fix this. It’s up to us.” —Greta Thunberg

It’s 3:54 p.m. on a Sunday afternoon when the Sun Valley Youth Council members start to arrive for our meeting. The rest of the Valley is settling in to their après activity of choice after another spectacular day.

The quiet of the Sun Valley Institute office evaporates as the room fills with the energetic buzz of teenagers. Many of our attendees join through video conference and their backdrops tell a story. These dedicated teens check in from dorm rooms, family living rooms, and from bright childhood bedrooms to work to create a more sustainable future. Despite the gravity of our work, we always begin with something playful, and today it is, “What is your most-used emoji?”

When I was 16, climate change was not my main concern. The youth in the room today don’t have that luxury. They are concerned because their future is at risk and the generations’ still to come futures

are at risk. That is what has brought us all together on this particular Sunday, as we plan our upcoming event.

The Youth Council was formed one year ago to host the first Sun Valley Youth Forum—a conference created by high school students focused on empowering themselves and their peers to find their voice in the face of an uncertain and increasingly unsettling future.

This year, the focus of the Youth Forum is on action, because inaction is no longer an option. Join us as we work to build a better future!

For more information, please visit sunvalleyforum.com/youth or email youth@sunvalleyinstitute.org.



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