

# UP BEAR CREEK | A Look at the Fruita Model of Combined Library/Rec Center

By Art Goodtimes | Posted: Thursday, April 10, 2014 12:00 am

**FRUITA** ... Got to tour the impressive facilities of this Mesa County outlier of 13,000 folks (40,000 service area) where the City co-located its new Community Recreation Center, Senior Center and Mesa County Branch Library adjacent the Hospital, High School and an Elementary. Norwood's librarian Carrie Andrews led a delegation of Wright's Mesa folks to explore the possibilities of just what such a facility might look like. While an order of magnitude larger than Norwood, Fruita had lots of things to teach its smaller sister community ... While a prestigious design team from Denver responded to the RFP, staff wasn't consulted and lots of little snafus have appeared – ceiling lights in a program room that doesn't allow overhead projectors, a too small preschool room, a library without one square corner in the building. Only minor annoyances at worst, but indicative of the importance of a design team that includes library and rec staffers. No design skills can totally replace local knowledge and first-hand experience ... Rob and Ture presided over a striking facility that included a full-size gym with a second floor balcony running/walking track, multiple exercise machine rooms, a pool complex with lap lanes, jacuzzi/hot tub, kid pool, toddler pool, slide and a wading river. An awesome center really. But the most interesting part of the tour was walking into the mechanical room and seeing the boilers, tanks, pumps, filtration system, chemical mixing station, etc. "What happens when things break down," I queried. They explained they had a full-time staffer in charge of normal maintenance and repairs. But for some of the more technical machinery, it meant flying in specialists – in one case from Canada. Those expenses were covered in the warranties for now, they noted, as the facility is only a couple years old. But it gave one pause to think of what kind of a reserve fund might be needed, in addition to normal O&M ... Giselle the branch manager noted that seniors and kids made up the greatest bulk of the patrons. In fact, she thought the kid's library should have been designed bigger or the adult section smaller to better reflect user demographics. Another lovely touch was the caliber of artwork hung around the library. It was like walking into a very reputable gallery ... Whatever future plans come to fruition in Norwood, memories of Fruita's rec/senior center with combined library will certainly inspire that reality.

**PAONIA RESERVOIR** ... Drove past the other day and was shocked at how dry it was. May as well have saved themselves the cost of storage, because there isn't any. Only a creek with rocks collapsing into the road and giant mud flanks of an erosion channel where a stream used to be.

**ZOEY BENALLY** ... Got blown away with my Diné poet friend from Crownpoint – Dr. Benally now that she got her doctorate in veterinary science. But she's still the unassuming if assertive non-conformist that first drew me to her work ... I'd talked her into coming up for Bonedale's poetry weekend, but forgot to warn her they charged for their open readings. She signed up Saturday night, but didn't pay. So they never called her name. All of us were bummed ... But Sunday morning we had a Gourds Circle at our Missouri Heights house and Zoey knocked all our socks off with three performance pieces. My favorite was "Navajo Zombie Apocalypse," which made short shrift of many current tribal council members for their unpopular

stances favoring development and resource extraction ... Hoping to bring her to town for Talking Gourds Poetry Club's first Tuesday in September.

**WHITE BUFFALO** ... It's been over 30 years that I've been buying fruit from pioneer Western Slope organic fruit farmer Wayne Talmage. He's got kind of old to run the orchards and friend Myriem Le Ferrand has been trying to find investors to keep the operation going, or someone to buy the farm. But meanwhile, it's getting hard to even afford bees to pollinate the trees. So they're selling shares in this coming year's harvest as a way to get a little front money to keep things going ... As the National Sustainable Agriculture Alliance has written, "Independent family farms, the mainstay of American agriculture and our rural communities, are in jeopardy" ... Help keep White Buffalo alive. Explored getting a CSA fruit share at [whitebuffalofarm.csaware.com](http://whitebuffalofarm.csaware.com)

## THE TALKING GOURD

*Alchemy*

*- for AA*

*In the blessing of another spring*

*Orvis' blizzard gust trades places*

*with nightsky's fully illustrated array*

*"Tony" I ask my Italian-American*

*friend of 55 years. "Will we ever*

*give up our Catholic guilt?"*

*Forget biretta & flock spurned*

*Let's start ornamenting with gilt*

*all that's given that we've got?*