



UTE COUNTRY NEWS

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December 2023

P.O. Box 153, Divide, CO

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utecountrynews.com

Vol. 15, No. 12

Welcome to Ute Country

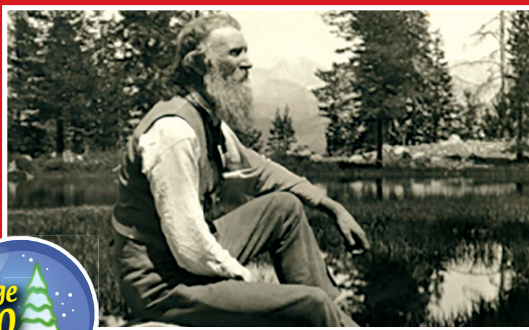
"Just because you're different doesn't mean you can't be a part of something special."

— Rudolph

PEEK INSIDE...



Autumn's Attic



Conservation versus preservation



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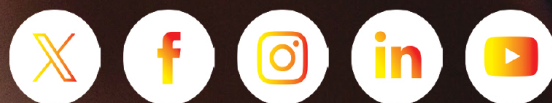
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On Deck

Jeff took our cover photo back in December of 2021 as we were watching the floats line up for the Christmas parade in Woodland Park. Each year so many organizers, volunteers and city staff work cooperatively to provide the opportunity for folks to enjoy this incredible Christmas Parade. Each person plays a part and all are necessary for success. We felt the quote from Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer to be rather fitting and inspiring!

As you read through our December issue, you will find many examples of how our differences make for a more interesting world. *A Look Inside the Artist: "Linda Lowman"* is a great example of how using various mediums satisfies that creative urge to manifest a variety of artwork. You will want to read both "Changing up the boring routine this year" and "Tweeds Holiday Home Tour" to see what festivities are happening in Woodland Park. To get the scoop on Victor, check out "Victor Holiday Events Calendar unveiled for a festive season." "NoFloCo — fighting fires" shows how this local group has made a tremendous difference in our area and how they are willing to share their novel ideas with others at a conference. "The Gift from the Heart" reminds us that thoughtful handmade gifts are truly special. "Popsicles, Puddles and Butterflies" is a poem that reminds us how to shine our individual light to brighten this world. "A New Year's Resolution that works" offers insight on how changing one word can open unseen doors.

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Will you take any photos of your pets over the holidays? Give them a shout-out by sending them to us for Critter Corner. Please email them to utecountrynewspaper@gmail.com, bring them into Shipping Plus Monday through Friday, 9-5:30 p.m., or snail mail to Ute Country News POB 753 Divide, CO 80814.

Thank you,
— Kathy & Jeff Hansen

A special thanks to all listed here for their professional work and time to make this issue possible. If you have any questions please contact the publishers.

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A Look Inside the Artist Linda Lowman, ceramicist

by Mary Shell

Once again, I am seeking out the unknown artists in our area. Not all artists are outgoing, animated or social... most are quiet and keep to themselves. Their creations are personal and emotional and getting them out into the public is not always the case. I recently met Linda and immediately liked her. She is honest and open... and creative. She works mostly in clay, but my interview is based on her paintings. Some people think artists work in one medium, as if switching from painting to ceramics is like learning a new language. Not so, it's just another way of getting your expressions out the best way. I, myself, am guilty of moving from painting to sculpture or ceramics, sometimes out of a need for change.

It's not unusual for artists' intentions in creating art is to make others happy, to see joy knowing that you were the catalyst. Some create purely for the enjoyment of self-expression. Some create to stir up emotions in others. Why humans create art has an endless list of answers... we just do.

How long have you been painting?

I've been painting just about all my life on and off. I had a real dry spell for a while I am now enjoying the freedom to create again. I'm trying all kinds of new media.

What is your favorite medium?

My very favorite medium at the moment is pottery. I love exploring organic looking or porcelain looking but every day it's a new idea and you say things so much differently, that's what an artist does.

What other mediums do you like?

My next favorite medium is painting. I love lots of bright colors big shapes, crazy shapes, whatever peaks my imagination that day is usually what I go with it's different all the time.

What is on your wish list to create?

I'll have to think about this one.

What was your most difficult painting to make?

The bridge. I made it too Avant Garde and over mixed the paint.

Who is your favorite artist?

Why Mary Shell, of course, Georgia O'Keeffe, I like Johnny Depp's paintings, Salvador Dali, and so many to name... Picasso's paintings in the blue period.

What is your favorite subject?

I really love art deco, and mystic things, fairies, and whimsy. I'm always looking



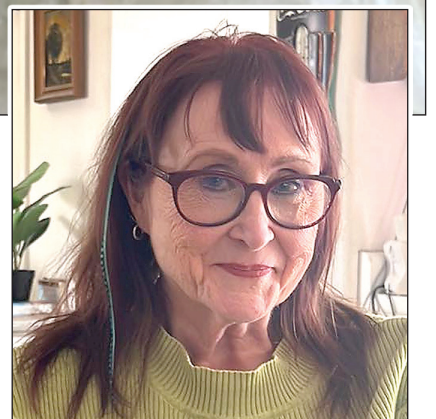
for inspiration as an artist. A quote from Oscar Wilde, "no great artist ever sees things as they really are, if he did, he would cease to be an artist."

What's the secret to your method?

Madness. I've learned to slow down, think with my hands, close my eyes, and just feel the clay. Clay can be so unforgiving. I start with an idea in my head and think it through to figure out how I would build it and hope it goes the way I want it to. Sometimes it doesn't, and it ends up being something totally different; that's art.

What's in the future for you?

I want to create pieces that others enjoy. Sometimes a piece just feels good, you don't know why, but you really like it. I hope I can keep expanding my imagination



tion and skills so I can reach for the stars.

You can find more about Linda on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/Linda.Lowman.79219>

Are you an artist and would like to be interviewed for this newspaper, please contact me at creatingfromthesoul@yahoo.com or at www.MaryShellArt.com.

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Autumn Grimshaw in her shop, Autumn's Attic.

Autumn's Attic

by Flip Boettcher
photos by Flip Boettcher

If you are looking for that unique, unusual, special item, whether it is for a Christmas, holiday, anniversary, birthday gift, or something for yourself, the place to visit would be Autumn's Attic.

Autumn's Attic is located at 431 Main Street in Cañon City's historic district on the northwest corner of Fifth and Main Streets in the historic Apex Building.

With 75 different vendors and over 2800 square feet of unique items, home-made gifts, antiques, clothing, pet CBD, food items, vintage candy, vintage toys, metal art, collectibles and much, much more, there should be something to please everyone on your list.

Autumn's Attic, named after the owner Autumn Grimshaw, started in Florence in a very small space devoted mainly to antiques in 2017, but moved to a larger space in Cañon City in 2019. This family owned business is now looking to expand again in 2024, according to Autumn.

The shop is clean, organized and has large open walkways making it easy to ac-

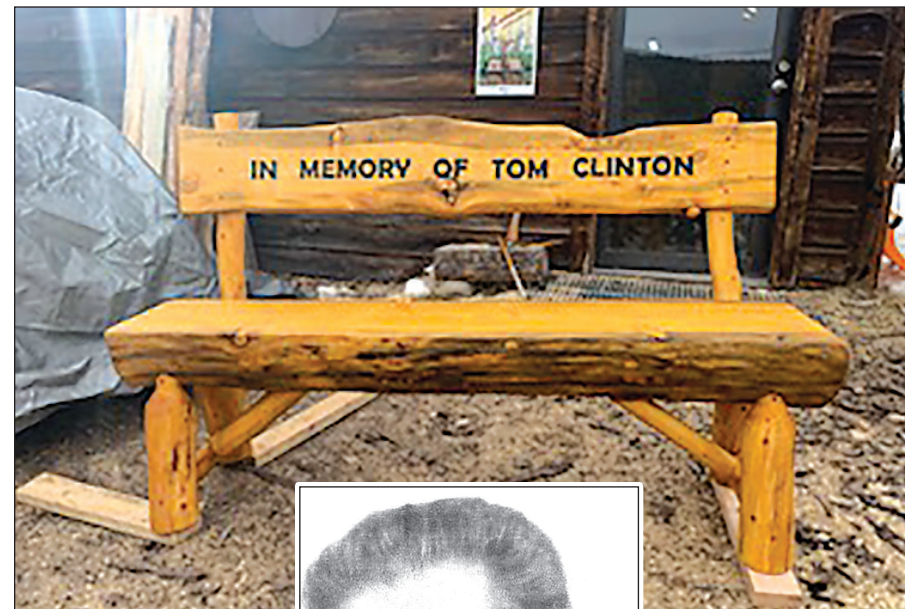
cess all the items and features new items daily, great prices, and discounts throughout the store, Autumn added.

Autumn's Attic is open seven days a week: Sunday 11-4 p.m.; Monday-Thursday 10-5p.m.; Friday and Saturday 10-6 p.m. The store also stays open later on the first Friday of the month and will have extended hours for holiday shopping. Phone 719-429-7900 or visit their Facebook page which has daily pictures and information at autumnsatticanoncny.com.

So, plan on a visit to Autumn's Attic this holiday season and visit some of the other unusual shops, businesses and eating establishments on historic Main Street, including Reclaimed Woodworks, Mel's Mill Apothecary, The Dungeon Body Arts Tattoo and Piercings Studio, Royal City Originals Barber Shop, Phil's Barber Shop, Mose Bar and Grill, Nirvana Indian food restaurant, Fremont Provisions restaurant and Pizza Madness, to name a few. You won't be disappointed.

Tom Clinton's memorial bench

by Carol Smusz



Tom Clinton from the town of Jefferson passed away last May. Tom was a pillar of our community. The good people of Jefferson donated money for a bench to be built in his honor. Alex Organsky from Alma designed and built the bench. It was delivered to the Jefferson Market on Wednesday, November 22, 2023. It is a reminder of how important Tom was to our community and what a dear friend he was to all of us.

Tom and Jerry ran the market in Jefferson for many years. Jerry was also

postmaster at that time. They were entrepreneurs before the word was popular. Tom and Jerry have lived here in Jefferson for probably 40 years. Tom was a good friend and neighbor, always willing to help folks out. He would plow driveways and help in any way that he could.

We thank Tom for shining his light on his friends and neighbors of Jefferson. We hope this bench will keep that light shining.

Changing up the boring routine this year

by Tracie Bennitt

Lots of volunteers have combined their energies to produce one of the largest holiday events in Woodland Park. The City of Woodland Park Lighter Side of Christmas Parade brings friends and family to Midland Avenue in Downtown Woodland Park to enjoy the "lighter" side of the holidays. The 35th Annual parade will take place this year on Saturday, December 2 and kicks off at 6 p.m. with the theme "Woodland Park's Nightmare Before Christmas" as we celebrate this holiday favorite. Jack Skellington, Halloween town's beloved pumpkin king, decides to change up his boring routine frightening people in the "real world" and plotting to take over Christmas after he discovers Christmas Town.

This year's beneficiaries for funds raised include the Rotary Club of Pikes Peak in Woodland Park, which has served the community for the past 30 years; a service club that works on projects that will benefit the local community and other communities worldwide. Some of the current club projects include sponsor for the Children's Literacy Site in Woodland Park and help with tutoring, delivering dictionaries to area third grade students, helping with the annual bell ringing project to benefit Teller County Salvation Army, providing annual scholarships for high school seniors in Teller County and donating to and participating in the Rotary Champions event.

The Divide Mountain Explorers are the second beneficiary this year. They are a non-profit, unaffiliated, grassroots, local youth adventure and community service program. Much like their former team label, they "Pride Ourselves in Creating Adventurous Experiences, Encouraging Youth Leadership Opportunities, and Providing Community Service to Teller

County and the Surrounding Area!" Over 26 local kids currently participate in the program.

The Lighter Side of Christmas Holiday Treasure Hunt kicks off following the first clue that came out on November 17th. A new clue is revealed to LSOC Platinum Sponsors (listed on the webpage and a week delayed on the Facebook page) every Friday for those treasure hunters searching for the hidden pumpkin. Stop in and visit these businesses each week for clues. Whoever finds the little pumpkin will receive a holiday basket valued at over \$1000 with gifts provided by local businesses.

Other LSOC events include the annual LSOC Gingerbread House Contest. The Rampart Range Library District is hosting the competition again this year at the Woodland Park location. Houses can be dropped off between November 30th and December 2nd. People's Choice voting takes place through December 10th. Houses will be on display through December 16th. Information is at www.lightersideofchristmas.com

Mike's Crazy Hat Contest, sponsored by Williams Log Cabin Furniture, is held the night of the parade. Here's a chance for all the creative hat lovers out there to make their fashion statement this year. The Lighter Side of Christmas Parade Committee is inviting local fashion connoisseurs to decorate their most creative hat art ever at the 24th Annual Lighter Side of Christmas Crazy Hat Contest. Local resident Mike Williams was the mastermind behind this addition to the annual parade activities for many years. Williams always decorated and wore the most elaborate and craziest of hats for the Christmas parade each year. Following his passing in 2009, Mike's Crazy Hat



Mike Williams and local resident Deb Idleman judge hats at the 2008 LSOC parade.

Contest was made an official part of the parade activities each year.

Contestants are asked to come to the Ute Pass Cultural Center following the LSOC Parade on Saturday, December 2nd and show off their fashion art. This year's parade theme, "Woodland Park's Nightmare Before Christmas," offers artists a chance to share their interpretation of the film with local friends and neighbors. All ages are welcome to participate.

Sponsored by Williams Log Cabin Furniture, prizes are awarded to participants that are voted on by the audience following the parade. In honor of Mike Williams, the Crazy Hat Contest allows

for parade goers to get creative with their holiday decorations, on their hat!! The parade awards and Crazy Hat Contest take place at the Ute Pass Cultural Center following the parade at 7 p.m.

The City of Woodland Winter Day in the Park with annual Tree Lighting event in Memorial Park starts on Friday, December 1st at 3:30-5:30 p.m. followed by the annual Holiday Tree Lighting from 5:30-6 p.m. FMI visit www.city-woodlandpark.org

Information on these and other holiday events are available at www.lightersideofchristmas.com and updates at www.facebook.com/LighterSideofChristmasParade

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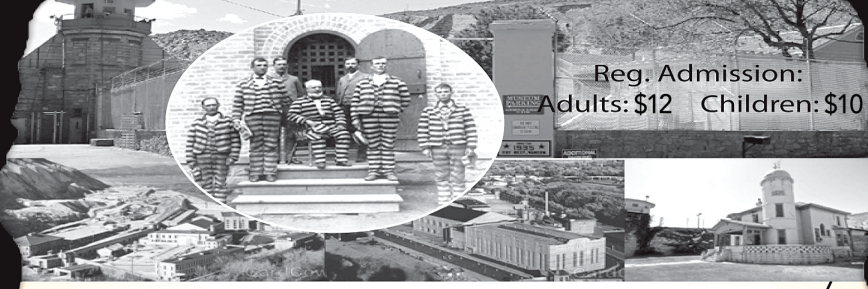
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Monkey See, Monkey Do You can Kindle Kindness, too!

by Readers of Ute Country News

- A group of women meet monthly to play a game. They take turns hosting the event, which includes snacks and other special preparations. One of the women would like to host the event, however, she has a dog that does not take kindly to people. Another woman offers her home to host the event, which means the woman with the dog can still fulfill the snacks and other special preparations for the event. Offering a venue to host the event allows the woman with the dog to fulfill her responsibilities of snacks and other special preparations and is an act of kindness because it affords her inclusion. This is also an act of kindness for the dog!
- I was taking MANY boxes to the post office in Divide. A kind man with long brown hair opened the door for me as I entered carrying a very large box. I needed to make more than one trip. In an effort to make fewer trips I had the boxes piled high. There was one box that was teetering a bit, but I was able to hold my arm out to prevent it from falling. As I approached the door of the post office, that same kind man with long brown hair scurried from his vehicle to get the door opened before I got there! I was so relieved and grateful. Thank you, kind man with long brown hair — your acts of kindness of holding the doors for me made my day!
- It was about four years ago a friend had a stroke. I was familiar with the recovery process given I have experience working in a nursing home and know how the recovery process can vary from one person to another. I provided encouragement every time I saw our friend. Just yesterday I saw our friend. Do you know that EVERY time I see this friend, he thanks me for the encouragement I had given years ago! His expression of gratitude is an unnecessary act of kindness, yet I am aware that each time I receive his gratitude it brightens my day. Expressing gratitude is an act of kindness!
- A woman holds the door for a man carrying a large box. He expressed his gratitude. Holding the door and expressing gratitude are acts of kindness.
- We are typically good at managing our tasks ourselves. However, given a recent surgery that resulted in a restriction of lifting only 10 pounds, it was clear we would need some help with our deliveries. It is hard to reach out and ask for help. I am so very grateful for the kind folks who readily agreed to help us with the delivery process so my partner can heal. Helping people after surgery is an AMAZING act of kindness — thank you!
- A man holds the door for a woman exiting the building. Holding a door is an act of kindness.
- Friends were having a discussion that became a bit heated. One friend noticed

another friend was squirming and feeling uncomfortable. Changing the topic to something more amicable was an act of kindness that ALL the friends appreciated!

- I helped a customer who is always very grateful for our service. This customer expresses appreciation all throughout the process, which is not necessary, however, it keeps the task so much more enjoyable to hear the gratitude! Expressing gratitude is an act of kindness.
- While dining at a local restaurant, we witnessed a true act of kindness: A family that had a young girl about the same age as the young girl that is related to the owners of the restaurant encouraged their young girl to say "hello" to the other girl — both seemed to be shy, which is typical of that age. One of the adults said, "Let me show you how to introduce yourself," and proceeded to introduce himself to the owner's young girl. This way, their young child can watch and listen to the process so she knows how to go about introducing herself when she is ready to do so. The smiles on the girls' faces were heartwarming to see. Teaching children etiquette is a gift of kindness that may stay with these children the rest of their lives!
- Being thankful for how well my husband's surgery went, we prepared a little "thank you" for his surgical team. When I brought the package to the check-in counter, I explained the date of his surgery and that we wanted to thank the surgical team as we are guessing that may not happen very often. I thought the gentleman behind the desk was going to cry. Gifts of gratitude can be powerful acts of kindness.
- A woman has several boxes to bring into a store. The store owner helps with one box and turns around to see a delivery man from a neighboring business standing there with the woman's other box, smiling as he is saying, "This is from that lady." He was clearly happy to help! She and I were both happy to receive the assistance. Helping to bring in a box is an act of kindness, extra special with the smile!
- A friend is going to a township a bit west of where we are. He stops in to see if we need any help in that direction, since he is going that way. Stopping to see if you can help is an act of kindness, whether or not we had something for that direction!

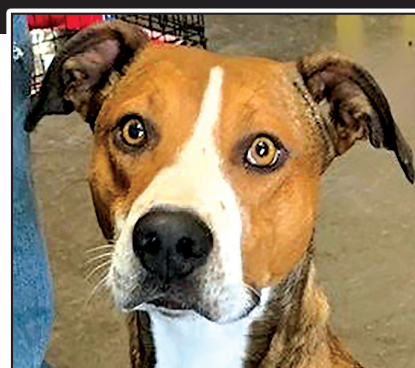
Please feel free to share acts of kindness you have participated in or witnessed. You may email them to utecountrynewspaper@gmail.com, you may come into Shipping Plus and tell Kathy your story or you may write them down and mail them to Ute Country News POB 753 Divide, CO 80814.

Adopt Me Little Roscoe

by SLV Animal Welfare Society

This is Little Roscoe! He's a 35 pound, 1 1/2-year-old sweetheart. He loves children and toddlers, is subordinate to dominant dogs, very intelligent and as you can see, he will look you straight in the eyes! Roscoe is neutered and current on all vaccines. He also has a chip. He is with us because his people's house burned down and he needed shelter. We will be at 7680 N. Academy Blvd. PetSmart Saturdays until warm weather in the springtime. To learn more about Roscoe, call us 719-587-woof (9663).

This space donated by the Ute Country News to promote shelter animal adoption.



Colorado Healthcare news Innovative services poised to improve Colorado's mental health crisis

by Joseph McDonough

Colorado is facing a mounting mental health crisis made worse by the unprecedented staffing and economic pressures in the wake of the pandemic. The state currently ranks 45th nationally when it comes to access to behavioral healthcare. The state must start implementing different antidotes to the problem, including long-term behavioral home care for patients.

In Colorado Springs, more than 18% of adults reported having experienced a behavioral health disorder in the last year and 43% of patients who needed those mental health services reported not being able to receive the care they needed. If people cannot access treatment, they cycle in and out of emergency rooms or mental health facilities, which results in fractured care, frustrated healthcare workers, and high healthcare costs.

Specialized behavioral healthcare needed

As a clinician for almost 30 years and the CEO of a behavioral home healthcare company for over two decades, I can tell you first-hand that without a system in place to support long-term behavioral health patients out of the hospital, people will not get better, and this crisis will continue. In far too many cases they are taking up hospital beds they don't necessarily need, or worse, they aren't receiving care at all.

When we started our operation in Massachusetts, the same problem existed (albeit on a smaller scale). Our model provides in-home behavioral care to complex patients and currently conducts around 20,000 patient visits per week across the state. An example of a patient we serve is a 55-year-old male identifying and suffering from severe mental illness, such as schizophrenia. They also typically suffer from up to 20 comorbidities or complications. They are additionally among the highest-cost patients in the healthcare system who take up to 10-15 medications and often live in communities with less access to care.

Without home-based or community behavioral health services, these patients would utilize the hospital or emergency rooms as the primary care physicians — sometimes up to 15 times a year at an enormous cost. For example, a single hospitalization costs, on average, about \$38,000, whereas an entire year of our in-home services costs \$25,000. In most cases, hospitalization could be 98% preventable with the right home care infrastructure in place, e.g., using technology to assess patients in their homes, sharing cohesive electronic medical records to help treat them, and assigning a clinician to help administer their medication and take their vitals.

Expanding to address Colorado's mental health crisis

We recently expanded our services to Colorado Springs because we believe this innovative home healthcare model is filling a critical gap for this patient population, which in turn will have an immediate impact in treating underserved patients in Colorado. For example, in Colorado Springs, there is a higher prevalence of severe mental illness — 10% — compared to Colorado's statewide average of 6%.

It is also critical to have the right policies in place, and Colorado lawmakers have demonstrated a commitment to behavioral health reform plans by earmarking \$547 million to ensure more access to the continuum of care that the highest cost drivers require. This strategy will ensure interconnectivity on quality, payment,

accountability, and provider standards that have population health at the center of the thought process. We are hopeful that health equity will remain at the core of Colorado's vision and that state leaders will work together to implement innovative solutions for vulnerable patients who are disproportionately impacted by social, economic and environmental issues that have downstream clinical impacts.

We have seen firsthand how home healthcare can remove the social barriers to continuing care and reduce the chances that untreated mental illness leads to other traumas like addiction, homelessness and even incarceration. Also, since multiple studies have shown home healthcare reduces readmissions to hospitals, behavior-

al home healthcare can help save the state of Colorado up to \$200,000 a year per patient, improve patient outcomes, and take pressure off the healthcare system.

Home healthcare services can keep patients in their homes and in a more stable, compassionate environment. We look forward to working within the healthcare system to effectively reach and serve this patient population in Colorado that too often unfortunately goes without the care they need and deserve.



Joseph McDonough is the CEO of Innovive Health, which recently expanded into Colorado with clinical operations out of Colorado Springs.

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Pharmgirl Snow birding by Peggy Badgett

A large congregation of glossy black vultures lounged in the shallow ditches lining the Lake Apopka trail as I slowly pedaled along. Their eyes shone eerily in the early morning light and I shivered. Did they know something I didn't? Were they waiting for my heart to falter and pitch me onto the grasses? A vivid scene from Alfred Hitchcock's classic, *The Birds*, winged into my brain. Picking up my pace, I put several miles between them and my overactive imagination until they became tiny specks when I glanced behind me. At least they didn't follow.

The scavengers couldn't overshadow the joy I felt from the breeze on my arms and sun on my face. Being back on two wheels was wonderful therapy for my winter-jaded spirit. The trail wound through thick swamps, and open wet lands, beginning in Magnolia Park and ending at Green Mountain. Wait. Really? A mountain in Florida? Did that tiny hill on the horizon qualify as a peak? I grinned, applied the squeaky brakes and hopped off to focus my binoculars on an osprey eating a fish on a tree limb 20 feet above me.

A few miles down the trail, two tawny cat-like shapes crossed the path. The smaller one paused until I was almost even with it, and then slipped into the dense brush like a ghost. I'd never seen one in Colorado; Florida had gifted me with my first sighting of bobcats for an early Christmas present!

There was so much more to central Florida than waiting in lines at expensive theme parks. I'd done an outdoor yoga class in Mead Botanic Gardens and biked to local coffee shops. Strolling on the quiet trails of the Disney Wilderness Preserve and Lake Louisa State Park revealed them both as uncrowded hidden gems in a sea of commercialism gone wild. But my favorite destination by far was the Orlando Wetlands.



Anhinga sunning itself

The Orlando Wetlands, besides being a birder's dream, was home to an abundance of wildlife. After rounding one corner along a canal, a huge scaly green beast right in front of me spun and splashed into the murky water. My front wheel had almost run over the alligator's tail! Then, a mile or two down the gravel, I spotted what appeared to be a raccoon loping along the gravel trail. But as I approached, the critter heard me and turned its head in mid-stride. The otter and I stared at each other in surprise; then he fluidly dove into tall reeds.

In spite of my novice abilities, I already had an impressive list of avian sightings for the day and that was without counting any of the warblers flitting around the bushes who were too quick for me to identify. A pair of bald eagles chattered from a nest high up in an ancient tree, while at least 50 coots dove beneath the water on the bay side. Common gallinules roosted, raced and squawked on low branches in the swamp. Anhingas spread their wings along the shoreline, soaking up the warm sun.

After 15 pleasant miles, I pedaled up the small switchbacks to the top of Green Mountain. It was a cute little incline, but not much of a peak when you're used to climbing fourteeners. At the top, I was rewarded with a stunning view of water, clouds, and treetops. Crunching pistachios and sipping water, I sat for a while and enjoyed the humid air caressing my skin. Then I glided back down the path and pointed my bike toward the trailhead. The sun was growing hot. I picked up speed to avoid the hungry mosquitos hiding in a grove of grand old oak trees until I was back in open land. A few miles down the trail, two tawny cat-like shapes crossed the path. The smaller one paused until I was almost even with it, and then slipped into the dense brush like a ghost. I'd never seen one in Colorado; Florida had gifted me with my first sighting of bobcats for an early Christmas present! I had always scoffed at people who traveled south to escape the snow and ice. Now I understood. There were definite benefits to this "snow birding" thing. But I'm not ready to give up my snowboard yet.

Tweeds Holiday Home Tour Celebrates its 25th Anniversary Ute Pass Holiday Express – An Historical Tour of the Greater Ute Pass

by Karolyn Smith

The 25th Annual Tweeds Holiday Home Tour, graciously sponsored by Tweeds Fine Furnishings, will take place on Saturday, December 2nd and Sunday, December 3rd from 10-5 p.m. each day. This first weekend in December is filled with wonderful celebrations to kick off the holiday season, with Tweeds Holiday Home Tour being a centerpiece in Teller County.

The 2023 Tour features a unique array of beautifully decorated homes and venues located in the Greater Ute Pass area. The mission of the Tour is to raise funds for four local nonprofit organizations, where it has donated over \$246,000 since its inception. This year's beneficiaries are Woodland Park High School Performing Arts Parents Association (PAPA), Rampart Library District Foundation, Teller Senior Coalition, and the Ute Pass Symphony Guild.

As part of the 25th Anniversary Celebration, the 2023 Tour includes some new and exciting venues and holiday offerings. As part of a ticket purchase, lunch will be provided at The Lodge at Rainbow Valley Ranch in Divide. There will also be a unique holiday display highlighting the tour's 25th Anniversary at the kiosk outside of Williams Log Cabin Furniture in Woodland Park.

This momentous occasion would not be possible without all the gracious homeowners who are willing to open their homes every year, as well as the cadre of volunteers who decorate and host at each location. The Home Tour Steering Committee also would like to acknowledge the generous financial donations from our many supporters throughout the community, including local businesses who

provide in-kind donations. A complete list of sponsors and contributors is available on the website.

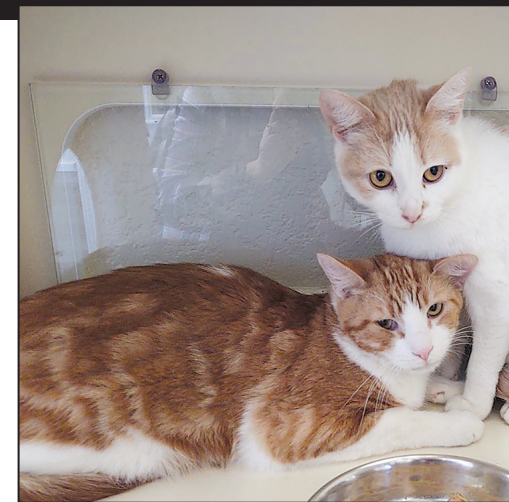
As in recent years, there will be a Tour Artisan Shoppe at the Hospitality Suites located in the Woodland Professional Building, 400 West Midland at Hwy 24. Visit <https://www.wphht.org> and click on the "Tour Artisan Shoppe" link for more details. New this year will be a Holiday Wreath online auction open to everyone. The Holiday Wreaths created by our past and current decorators can be viewed online at the website or in person at the Hospitality Suite the weekend of the tour. Bids will be accepted online beginning at 5 p.m. November 17, 2023, and will close December 3, 2023 at 6 p.m. Quilters Above the Clouds is partnering again with the Holiday Home Tour this year to raise funds for our local nonprofits. Their raffle items will be displayed at each location, where you can buy raffle tickets.

The Holiday Home Tour also provides holiday music at each location to enjoy. There will also be Letters for Santa for children to write at the Woodland Park Senior Center, along with a visit from Mr. and Mrs. Claus Sunday, December 3rd from 11-3 p.m.

Tickets are available at Tweeds Fine Furnishings or online at <https://www.wphht.org>. Ticket prices are \$20 for adults, \$35 for two adults, \$40 for a Family Pass, and \$5 for students (K-12). Tickets purchased online can be picked up at the Home Tour Hospitality Suites, Tweeds Fine Furnishings or The Lodge at Rainbow Valley Ranch. Further details about the Tour may be found on the website or by calling 719-661-7377.

Adopt Me by Ark Valley Humane Society

Sweet Pea & Rowdy a bonded pair



Sweet Pea and Rowdy were brought in from neighboring county, Saguache, in early September when their owner could no longer care for them. We quickly found out they were quite bonded and would need a forever home together. Rowdy (more orange) is a 10-month-old domestic shorthair mix. He is the shyer one of the pair and is very bonded with Sweet Pea. When she's around he is braver and will approach more people. We've been calling her Rowdy's emotional support cat. Sweet Pea (more white) is a 2-year-old female domestic shorthair mix. She is outgoing and confident. They complement each other nicely and enjoy snuggling together during the day. We aren't sure how this pair will do with other dogs or cats, but they are sure to brighten any home. If you have room in your home and heart for two cats in need, please consider this duo. You can find out more and apply to adopt the pair at ark-valley.org/adopt/cats/.

This space donated by the Ute Country News to promote shelter animal adoption.

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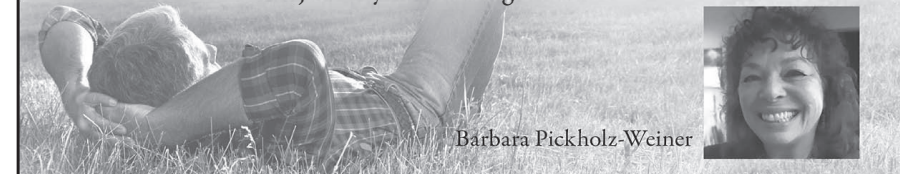
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Barbara Pickholz-Weiner



A portrait of Gifford Pinchot on a national forest. Pinchot was the first Chief of the US Forest Service which was founded in 1905. Photo credit: US Forest Service

Conservation versus preservation

by Robert Hudson Westover of U.S. Forest Service

Have you ever wondered why your favorite national park is surrounded by a national forest? Well, it didn't happen by accident or guesswork. The fact is it was all started over 100 years ago by two men I like to refer to as the founding fathers of America's public lands.

Back at the turn of the 20th Century Gifford Pinchot and John Muir had radically contrasting views of how to manage America's wild lands and they worked tirelessly lobbying Congress and convincing Presidents to agree with them to start protecting open space. Muir promoted preservation and Pinchot advocated for conservation.

Pinchot's vision of managed conservation basically meant that lands owned by the federal government could not only be used for recreation by the general public but could also be used, responsibly, by industry for logging, mining and many other purposes including extensive scientific research on tens of thousands of acres of land.

Pinchot, who would eventually start and serve as the first chief of the US Forest Service that now manages or conserves 193 million acres of forested and grass lands, prevailed overall. He had help, though. President Theodore Roosevelt agreed that conservation was the best practice for the majority of federally owned lands.

The adoption of the conservation model resulted in national forests being multi-billion dollar economic engines for hundreds of small towns and communities across America. If you like winter sports, there's a good chance that your favorite ski run is in a national forest. The same goes for swimming, hiking and camping. There's a good chance that the house you live in, and some of the furniture you sit on, was built by wood harvested from a national forest.

Another of Pinchot's concepts from his wild lands conservation philosophies resulted in creation of the Forest Products Lab, the world's preeminent wood research laboratory and a behemoth of technology and invention located in Madison, Wisconsin. Pinchot's vision of managing forests for profit fit into his life mantra: The Greatest Good for the great-



John Muir was a founding father of the American outdoors preservation movement which resulted in the establishment of the US Park Service in 1916. Photo credit: US Park Service

est number...

But Pinchot's success was not at the expense of John Muir's preservation legacy aimed at permitting little to no industrial profit from the federal lands that have become our National Parks. In fact, Muir's vision resulted in protecting forever some of the nation's most iconic open spaces totaling over 100 million acres managed by an agency that was to be called the National Park Service.

Despite arguments by some, Muir's preservation and Pinchot's conservation philosophies are not at odds. In fact they play together, a huge role in protecting our natural open spaces — for generations to come.

This "working together" philosophy of land management can perhaps best be seen by looking at a map of a large national park say Yellowstone or Yosemite or Shenandoah. You'll notice that these parks (and many others) are connected to, or completely surrounded by, national forests or grasslands managed by the Forest Service.

For more than 100 years the success of the dual strategy of conservation and preservation has grown more and more obvious to the millions who benefit from jobs created and those who enjoy the wild places. Throughout the world other nations seek to emulate our federal land management system.

Thanks to Pinchot and Muir our federal dual system of conservation and preservation land management works in practical ways to keep our public lands open and productive.

It's official!

by Flip Boettcher

Guffey resident Gene Stanley retired as the director of Emergency Management for Park County on October 31, 2023, after serving in that capacity for about 10 years, he said in an interview.

Stanley came to Colorado in the spring of 1995 from east Nebraska/west Iowa with his wife Kim. The couple enjoyed hiking, climbing and the out-of-doors and Colorado seemed to be a likely choice of places to move to, although they looked in several other western states.

Since they wanted to build an earthship, a southern facing exposure was essential. They found their property west of Guffey in the Pike Trails subdivision and Stanley started working on the design of their earthship.

In the process of trying to get permits to build his earthship, the county didn't really know anything about earthships, Mary Gentry, then head of the county environmental health department, asked Stanley if he would come work for the county. Stanley started as a building designer and septic inspector and then he became a building inspector.

At that time, 1995, the Advisory Board to the Environment (ABE) was formed and Stanley joined the group.

Soon after that, Stanley noted that the then fire department, jokingly called "three drunks and a deuce and a half," was having trouble with its equipment and he decided to go to a fire meeting; he left that meeting as the deputy chief. Local resident John Maris was organizing the fire department and told Stanley that the department really needed a chief. At the next fire meeting, Stanley left as the new chief, pursuing what he called OTJT (on the job training), although he had been a fire department volunteer in Nebraska.

Stanley then went to fire training and with some medical experience back home,

he became an EMT, eventually becoming a medical unit leader with the forest service.

Stanley left his county jobs and spent the next 18 years building up the Southern Park County Fire Protection District fire department with a lot of help from local resident Jerry Shengle. Stanley purchased and upgraded the equipment; built satellite station #2 out east of Guffey on County Road 102; built satellite station #3 out west of Guffey on CR 88.

When the 4-Mile fire department in Teller County started its own ambulance service, Stanley got them to serve the SPCFPD as well. When the 4-Mile ambulance service was unable to adequately serve the SPCFPD, Stanley started a department ambulance service in Guffey. Stanley got three people to certify for advanced life support for the ambulances.

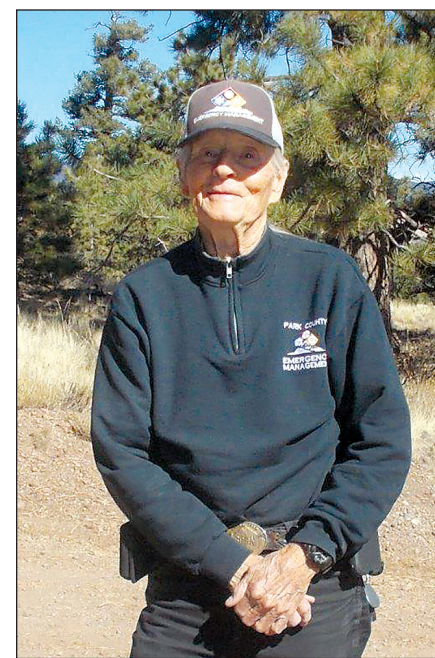
With his interest in wildland fires, Stanley was able to get 15 interested people out of the 30 the department had to train and go out to wildland fires within and outside of the state. This was good for the fire fighters and the department, bringing in extra money for both.

Stanley first retired from the SPCFPD in 2000 and jokingly says he retired about five times from the department. Each time a new fire chief came on and was either fired or quit, Stanley was called back as chief, while at the same time pursuing his 16 year career as a single resource with the forest service.

As a single resource for the forest service, Stanley would go out to wild land fires from late March to December and has been to just about every state. He has qualifications for the incident management team and a liaison officer, general command officer, logistics section chief, food unit leader and medical unit leader.

In 2003, while still not working for

Gene Stanley
at his home in
Guffey.



the county again, he was with the county E911 authority board on which he has served for 20 years and is still the president. At this time the emergency services council was building and Stanley was treasurer for awhile; he stepped down from this in 2022.

During this time, he worked for former sheriff Fred Wegener as a fire investigator and was on the SWAT team and was part of the SWAT team during the hostage shooting at the Platte Canyon High School.

In 2013, Stanley was on the committee to select a director for the Emergency Management department, but after the first person selected didn't pan out, Stanley decided it might be time to quit his job with the forest service and he applied for and got the position.

On July 15, 2013, Stanley was hired as the Park County Director of Emergency Management. A position he has had for ten years and from which he is retiring October 31.

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Daisy Mae is a Hartsel kitty and loves her cabin in the mountains - Pamela Nevins, Hartsel, CO

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The Shadow Mountain Detectives Christmas Mystery

by Gilrund the Historian

Christmas was just around the corner and the members of the Shadow Mountain Detective Club were meeting for the last time before the holiday.

Jerry, their leader, was calling the meeting to order in the treehouse in his family's yard, where they always met. It was Friday afternoon after school and Christmas Vacation had just started. The kids had two whole weeks of no school. "Does anyone have something that we need to investigate?" asked Jerry as he called the meeting to order.

All the members were there; Willy and Anne, the eleven-year-old twins, Jake was there, as was Sally. They were both twelve. Jerry was the oldest at thirteen years.

"Yeah," called out Jake as he raised his hand, "I want to know why I don't get more presents each year?"

"Cause you aren't on Santa's good list anymore," called out Anne as everyone started laughing, including Jake.

When they had calmed down a bit, Sally raised her hand and said, "I heard today, that Billy Wilson's mom lost her purse at the Dollar Store. Billy told me that she left it in the shopping cart. But when she went back to get it, it was gone. He said that it had her rent money in it and now she won't be able to pay her rent."

"Is she sure that she left it in the cart? She might have dropped it in the parking lot or left it inside the store. My mom's done that," questioned Willy.

"I don't know. That's all Billy told me. It happened just yesterday afternoon," answered Sally.

"Let's go look and see what we can find," added Jake, "It could be anywhere in the parking lot or in the store."

It was only 20 minutes, and the kids were all at the Dollar Store. Willy and Jake were searching the parking lot, while Sally, Anne and Jerry were inside the store.

Sally asked the manager if anyone had turned in a purse and he said that no one had. The kids started searching the whole store looking for the purse.

Anne started with the shopping carts and found candy wrappers, broken tie wraps and plastic bags, but no purse.

Jake and Willy searched from one end of the parking lot to the other. They looked in the surrounding bushes and trees, in the tall grass, in front and behind the building yet found only old broken cardboard boxes and some plastic bags with the store's name on them.

The kids met in front of the store. Jake had an idea that he wanted to try. "Let's go to Billy's house," he said, "His mom may have done what my mom has done several times. Left the purse under the front seat."

The kids all agreed that was a good idea, for Billie's mom drove a big SUV and all kinds of things could get lost in one of those.

The kids all quickly walked to Billie's house which was only a few blocks away. Jerry knocked on the front door and Billy answered.

"Hi, guys, what are you doing here?" he asked.

"Hi Billy," replied Sally, "I told them that your mom lost her purse, and we are trying to help you find it. Any luck yet?"

"No, and we've looked everywhere," answered Billy.

"How about under the front seat of the SUV, the driver's side?" asked Jake.

Billy looked at Jake and ran for the car that was parked in the driveway. He pulled open the front door and looked under the driver's seat.

"There it is!" he shouted as he pulled the purse out to show them. "Mom, Mom! We found it!" Billy shouted as he ran into the house.

It was only moments until Billie's mother was hurrying out of the front door with her purse in her hand and tears in her eyes. She hugged all the kids and thanked them over and over for what they had done for her and her family. "I'll have fresh cookies for all of you tomorrow afternoon if you'll come back. Thank you again," she said.

Billy asked how they knew that it was under the seat of the car. The answer was the same from all of them, "My mom does it all the time."

The kids all laughed and laughed because it was true.

It was Christmas Day and Jerry had finished opening his presents. He was about to take a nap after the wonderful Christmas dinner that his mom had prepared for the family, when he found a small crumpled up piece of paper on his bed. He thought it must have been put there by someone throwing it through his open window. He opened it up and smoothed the paper out so that he could read what was written on it. All it said was, "Go to the treehouse."

Jerry took the note with him as he left the house and went to the treehouse where the detective club met. He climbed the stairs and when he went inside, he saw placed on his cardboard desk a large brown envelope, with "Merry Christmas" written on it. Jerry looked at the writing and didn't recognize the writing at all. He opened the envelope and poured out five smaller envelopes that had one of the members' names printed on each one. Jerry opened the envelope with his name on it and found, to his delight, a \$20 bill and that

was all, no other note, nothing.

"If these all have money like mine, I've got to call an emergency meeting right away!" he said out loud as he ran for the door and the stairs down to his house.

Jerry grabbed the phone and called all the members to come to the clubhouse right away. It wasn't long before all the members were there in the clubhouse asking Jerry why he had called on such short notice on Christmas Day.

He picked up the large envelope and pulled out each of the smaller envelopes and handed them to the ones with their name on it. He explained to them how he got them as they opened their envelopes. Each one had a \$20 bill inside.

Jerry smiled as he saw the expressions on his friends' faces when they saw the money. Then he said, "No! I don't know who did this. I think it is our next investigation. I think it is from someone that we have helped in the past. It should be a real challenge to figure out who it might have been."

Jake asked to see the large envelope and studied the writing on the front. "This looks familiar to me," he said as he showed it to the others, "do you see the way the capital 'M' is made and the 'C'?"

They all thought that it looked familiar but couldn't remember where they had seen it before. Jake just waited as the writing was studied by the others.

"Do you remember the case of Mr. Dobson? The man that owns the malt shop and had his bank deposit bag stolen?" started Jake, "Remember how he asked us to find it for him. He thought that he had misplaced it somewhere. But we started looking around his shop and Willy found some muddy footprints at the back door."

"Yeah," injected Willy, "It had been raining the day before. The ground behind the shop was muddy and the prints went right to where Mr. Dobson always placed the money bag, before he would take it to the bank. It was in a small cupboard in the back kitchen."

"I remember that!" interrupted Sally, "Mr. Dobson was the only one who knew where he put that bag. At least, he thought he was. But one of his former workers had seen him put it there before and came in while no one was in the kitchen and stolen it."

"That's right!" grinned Anne, "Willy saw the footprints on the floor and called all of us to follow them. I remember that they were different than most, because

one foot, I think it was the left one, stuck out a little to the side. We followed the muddy prints for a long way until we came to the back of an old house where the prints went inside."

"I remember now," said Jerry, "It was an old, abandoned place that hadn't been lived in for a really long time. Crazy Willy wanted to go in and follow the prints. I didn't think that was a good idea, 'cause the thief could be dangerous if he caught one of us. But we went in anyway. Boy, was I scared!"

"The place was old and empty except for a few pieces of broken furniture. It was kinda dark, and the floor creaked as we walked, but we followed the muddy footprints farther inside until we got to the living room and there he was! David Wilson, the guy that Mr. Dobson had to fire because he had been stealing money out of the cash register."

Anne added, "I remember that it was really dark, not just kind of dark! I just knew that something was going to come out of one of those old rooms and get me. Then there he stood, bigger than any of us in that big dark room like he was waiting for us or something. I'll never do that again!"

"He knew we were coming because of that creaking floor," said Willy, "Otherwise we could have surprised him."

"I think we surprised him anyway," said Sally, "I'm with Anne, I'll not do that again. I'll let you crazy guys follow the bad guy into a creepy old house the next time."

Jake started laughing as he added, "I remember that Willy grabbed the money bag right out of David's hand and ran for the door with David right behind him. I tripped the guy with my foot, and he went head-first into the door when Willy slammed it shut."

"Then it got really scary," added Sally, "cause David was really mad. When he got up, he was yelling at us that it was his money bag, and he was going to whip us all if we didn't give it back to him."

"Yeah, and you were right on Willy's heels too," laughed Jake.

"Well, you weren't too far behind, as I remember," replied Sally.

"You got that right!" grinned Jake, "that David was big!"

The kids were all laughing now as they remembered how they all ran from David down the muddy alley, slipping and falling in the mud, until the policeman that Mr. Dobson had called, saw

them and grabbed David.

"Willy gave that policeman the money bag and told him where he had gotten it. David went to jail and Mr. Dobson was very thankful," said Jake.

"Yeah, and he gave us each a free shake every Saturday for a whole month," replied Willy, "I sure liked that."

"I remember, my mom wasn't really happy with the way we looked when we got home that day," laughed Anne, "We were covered with mud. Then when Willy and I told her how we got all that mud on us, she really got scared and told us never to do that again. I mean, like we had planned it or something."

Jake looked at the writing on the big envelope again and said, "Yep, it's Mr. Dobson's writing alright. No one else makes those letters like that. I think it's because of his crooked fingers on that hand. Should we go and thank him? I mean, he was kinda' secretive about it."

"No, I don't think so," replied Jerry, "he'll get most of it back anyway, at least from me he will. I love that malt shop of his."

All the kids agreed and laughed. Two days later the kids all met at the malt shop. They wanted to find out if Mr. Dobson really was the person who gave them the money.

Jerry had come up with the idea of having Mr. Dobson write something for them so they could compare the writing. Jerry had written a short paper as though it was for school. He had misspelled several words on purpose. He handed the paper to Mr. Dobson and asked him if he would correct it for him.

Mr. Dobson looked at the paper and grinned, "you have quite a few mistakes

here Jerry."

"Well, would you show me how it should be done?" asked Jerry.

Mr. Dobson took a blank piece of paper and wrote the paper over again and gave it to Jerry. "This is how it should be written. See the changes that I made?" he said.

"Okay, I've got it now. Thanks, sir."

The kids later left the malt shop and compared the writing.

"It was Mr. Dobson alright," said Jerry.

All the kids agreed because the odd letters were all there. Mr. Dobson got most of the gift money back as the kids drank the many malts and sodas over the next few weeks.

~ To be continued ~

Chuck Atkinson of Como, CO enjoys writing fiction stories and treasure hunts for the children at his church. We are pleased to have him contribute to the only fiction in our Ute Country News.



Discover the Magic of Victor's Holiday Season!

The town is turning into a holiday winter wonderland, and you're invited to join the fun.

Weekends
November 24
December 24

Cozy Small Town Shopping and Dining
Holiday Music, Magical Decorations, Baked Goodies, Hot Drinks, Spirits, Lunch, Dinner, Local Artists, Crafters, Unique Gifts, Books, Souvenirs, Collectables, and Antiques.

Weekends
November 24
January 1

Gold Camp Christmas
Take a self-guided Scenic Headframe Lighting Tour
Find map at victorcolorado.com/goldcampchristmas

Friday
December 8

Victor Parade of Lights 6:00 pm
The Cutest Parade of Christmas Cheer! Christmas Tree Lighting Party in the Plaza with Holiday Music, hot drinks, cookies, and wagon rides!

Victor Elks Lodge Jingle Bell Ball
Santa, hot cocoa, cookies, pot-luck dinner, guitarist Levi Richardson, and open Club Room. Fun for all!

Saturday
December 16

Potluck Christmas Party
at the Victor Hotel
Don't miss out on the enchantment! Experience the magic of the holidays in Victor, Colorado.

For more details and a full schedule of events, visit facebook.com/VictorMainStreetProgram or call 719-494-9789. Join the festivities and make this holiday season unforgettable!

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NoFloCo
by Don and Toni Moore

Teller County officials are on the cusp of making decisions that will propel Teller County into being the healthiest, most wildfire resistant forested mountain area in the state or begin the long slow descent into barren mountain desert. Wildfire, disease, and pests are decimating forests in and around Teller County. Look south along Highway 24 East toward Cascade and Green Mountain Falls, or notice the tops of any stands of spruce and fir. You can see death creeping in. A wildfire in these areas will be extreme.

Leading scientists say our “Dry Forests” are not recovering. Our hope is in forest management, as current extreme heat fires and die outs are not recoverable. Biomass reduction via controlled burns in the forest leads to lower temperature wildfires where trees recover quickly despite climate change.

“We know from prior research that forest thinning and controlled burns in overgrown dry forests effectively reduces fire severity and subsequent tree death” says study co-author Marcos Robles, lead scientist for The Nature Conservancy in Arizona. “Land managers can’t do much about drought and climate change in the short term, but they can reduce the area in which forests are vulnerable to severe wildfires by accelerating ecological based forest management” — <https://www.nature.org/en-us/newsroom/new-research-wildfire-forest-recovery/>

The science on saving homes and forests has changed over the past decade. NoFloCo Fire Mitigation Posse, a grassroots effort started in Florissant, CO has leaned into the most recent science. The “Posse” has exploded to over 500 members as wildfire concerns have grown across our state. Still, some in Teller County don’t think much of the group. “There is no way for you to burn safely,” Sheriff Jason Mikesell said as he turned away from the County Commissioners to face Don and Toni Moore at a recent Board of Commissioners meeting. After a 20-minute lecture from Mikesell aimed at the founders of NoFloCo, Mikesell left the room and refused any conversation about new studies or proof that shows home hardening and biomass management is the way forward.

The Moore’s expressed frustration over being compared by Mikesell to Forest Service workers who have allowed controlled burns to get away. Donald Moore said, “NoFloCo volunteers will not lose control of fire because we spend so much effort on safety training, preparing, and overstaffing. We do not follow the Colorado Forestry example and therefore do not like to be compared to them. They have one watcher for 10 or more 8’ x 8’ x 8’ piles. I can see why their controlled burns sometimes get away. NoFloCo has 30+ watchers for just a fraction of that

amount of burning biomass. We always have many more fire monitors than could possibly be needed at our fires, fire breaks on both sides of the burns, and water or snow handy to extinguish the fires, along with other safety tools.”

NoFloCo may not be loved by Teller County decision makers, but they are getting lots of love outside of Teller County. They are recent scholarship winners and were featured presenters at the International Association of Wildland Fire’s 6th Annual National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy Workshop in Sante Fe, NM November 6-10, 2023 (<https://www.iawfonline.org>).

“I can’t say enough good things about NoFloCo Fire Mitigation Posse. The work they did at my home in Arabian Acres was absolutely amazing and beyond expectations.”
— Brad Hillman, property owner, Divide, CO.

When asked what their goals for the workshop were, Toni Moore responded, “We hope to learn more and share our experiences in gaining social acceptance for increasing the use of prescribed and managed fire. We try to educate locally about Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge. We want to help our county leadership and citizens accept some short-term risk for long-term benefit. We are seeking better ways to transfer science, data, technology, and knowledge to decision-makers here in Teller County.”

Closer to home, Colorado Department of Natural Resources has guided the group as they work to become better trained and educated. A Colorado Strategic Wildfire Action Program (COSWAP) grant trained 46 members in Basic Wildland Firefighting and 13 in Wildland Saws. On their own, 17 members have attended Certified Burner Training, and other classes related to understanding the latest science on structure protection against wildland fire. Eight recently finished the National Fire Prevention Association’s ASIP Wildfire Structure Ignition Factors Class.

Brad Hillman of Colorado Springs had the group assist him with fire mitigation October 21st at his second home in Divide, CO. “I can’t say enough good things about NoFloCo Fire Mitigation Posse. The work they did at my home in

Arabian Acres was absolutely amazing and beyond expectations. Safety was a priority. Men and women worked hard. There was freedom to rest and they were so friendly. This was a positive experience at a level 10!”

“It is unfortunate that wildfire is the greatest natural disaster risk we face, but our leaders have not kept up with the emerging science. We need to be forward thinking and strategic NOW to make the next 50 years the best they can be. What we do today will result in great successes or dismal failure for our county, fire mitigation-wise. We have the momentum and education to do the right thing, we just need our leaders to get onboard,” Toni Moore said.

Teller County recently updated their controlled burn permitting process, many believe in response to the NoFloCo mitigation group. The new regulation is more confusing and less clear than the previous version, leading many to feel the update was not well thought out.

The NoFloCo Mission Statement:
To assist private property owners within the Wildland Urban Interface footprint with fire mitigation, fire awareness, forest health; to make the community safer from fire danger, improve property appearance, and have fun.

NoFloCo Fire Mitigation Posse’ by the numbers (as of 10/18/2023):

- Total NoFloCo Members — 423
- Total Purple Helmets — 73 (received after completing 5 workdays)
- Total Property Assessments — 206
- Fire Mitigation Projects Completed — 102
- Acres Mitigated — 155
- Cords of Firewood Donated — 210
- Subdivisions Impacted — 12 (Aspen Moors, Arabian Acres, Colorado Mountain Estates, Druid Hills, Florissant Heights, Indian Creek, La Montana Mesa, Trout Creek, Woodland Park, Wagon Tongue, Spring Valley, Valley High)
- Volunteer Hours — 4000+
- Certified and Trained Wildland Firefighter II — 46
- Wildland Saws Trained Type A or B — 16
- Posse Members who are also Local Firefighters — 16
- Emergency or Ambulance Visits — 0

Editor’s note: We thank the NoFloCo Posse for all the training, helping hands and for bringing people together during this time of division. We were pleased to hear there were MANY at the workshop who commended them on all they have accomplished! They were happy to share their methods with interested parties. Thank you!

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Popsicles, puddles and butterflies
by Susan McConnell

*If competition was planted in the human brain as a means for survival
When left unchecked we become too rival.*

*We begin to kill each other in thoughtless words or even violence
forgetting each had a mother cheering us on in kindness,*

*That every human child is born cute and hopeful, faces each day leaving grudges behind
A practice long been forgotten in grown-up minds.*

The laughter, the silliness and simple joys of popsicles, puddles and butterflies

*Replaced with honed arguments, proofs of being right, best and first
Making Angels cry as dreams are burst*

*Before you get up from your bed to live on Earth this day
Be that child you were in a month like May*

*That you heard a Robin sing, a cricket chirp
or held a tiny lightning bug and didn’t care about dirt*

And let your Light, however small, shine, so others see yours in the dark

And begin to Compete in shining their own Light, in doing their part.

Victor Holiday Events Calendar

Joy and merriment unveiled for a festive season
by Jon Zalewski

The charming town of Victor, nestled in the heart of Colorado, is gearing up for a season of joy and merriment with the release of the Victor Holiday Events Calendar. From November 24th through January 1st, the town will be adorned with festive decorations and bustling with a myriad of events for residents and visitors alike.

Weekends through December 24:
Shop Victor, Cozy Small Town Shopping and Dining
Embrace the festive spirit with holiday music, magical decorations, delicious treats, hot drinks, spirits, lunch, dinner, books, souvenirs, antiques, collectables, and unique gifts from local artists and crafters.

Weekends through January 1:
Gold Camp Christmas — A Twinkling Tour of Lights
Take a scenic drive around the mining district and discover that even headframes can get into the holiday spirit with twinkling lights. The giant headframes that are the remains of 1890s gold mining days will again light up the night sky around Victor and Cripple Creek again this holiday season. These unique mining structures are one-of-a-kind remnants of the gold rush era.

Holiday ornaments, some as large as 20 feet tall, will be lit against the starry night skies of Victor and Cripple Creek. Everything from a Christmas wreath to a snowman and a toy soldier will be on display this year. A self-guided driving tour map will be available online at STCFG.com or

VictorColorado.com/goldcampchristmas

Friday, December 8:
Victor Parade of Lights and Christmas Tree Lighting Party
Victor Parade of Lights 6 p.m. Revel in the beauty of the season with the dazzling parade through the streets of Victor. Watch the town sparkle brighter than your aunt’s favorite holiday sweater.

Christmas Tree Lighting Party in the Plaza 6:30 p.m. Join the festive gathering with holiday music, hot drinks, cookies, and wagon rides in the Plaza. Where the trees are lit, and the cocoa flows freely.

Victor Elks Lodge Jingle Bell Ball 7 p.m. Keep the celebration going with the Jingle Bell Ball featuring Santa, hot cocoa, cookies, pot-luck dinner, guitarist Levi Richardson, and an open lounge. Dance the night away with Levi.


Saturday, December 16:
Potluck Christmas Party at the Victor Hotel
Potluck Christmas Party at the Victor Hotel: Share the joy of the season with friends and neighbors at the Victor Hotel’s Potluck Christmas Party. Because calories don’t count in December.

Experience the magic of the holidays in Victor, Colorado, where the spirit of the season comes alive. For more information and a detailed schedule of events, visit City-Of-Victor.com or Facebook.com/VictorMain-StreetProgram or contact Jon at VictorMain-Street@gmail.com or 719-494-9789.

Adopt Me by TCRAS

Brigid

Brigid is about 2 years old, a Shepherd mix. She is a tall, long-legged red head with lots of personality. Brigid is a talker! She came to us in June as a stray so we do not know much about her past, but we know she is a sweet soul. She loves to be around people and loves hiking and walking. She has been in a foster home for about a month and is doing amazingly as she is learning to be in a home. Brigid is growing in confidence and really coming into her own. She is working on being around other dogs and with a proper introduction, she might be able to live with another dog. Brigid would love to find a home with a big yard. She does well with long walks each day. To arrange to meet Brigid call TCRAS 719-686-7707.



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Preserving Camp Hale

by U.S. Senator Michael Bennet

What happened: For years, I worked with Coloradans to preserve the legacy of the Ute people — who lived along the Continental Divide for generations — and soldiers from the 10th Mountain Division who trained at Camp Hale. That’s why last year, when President Biden designated Camp Hale and the Tenuile Range as the first National Monument of his administration, I was thrilled.

What’s next: Now that we have this designation, we must work together to develop a management plan that honors the veterans and Tribes who have an enduring connection to this land — not only for Colorado but for America.

What I’m doing: On Saturday, (October 23, 2023) I joined the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Representative Joe Neguse, and leaders from the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Indian Tribes to unveil new signs for the monument and begin work on the management plan. I’ll keep working to secure funding for the Camp Hale-Continental Divide National Monument and provide the resources it deserves.



Joining USFS and Tribal leaders alongside Rep. Neguse to unveil the new sign.

Pike-San Isabel National Forests prescribed pile burning

by Lana Longwell

The Pike-San Isabel National Forests & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands is preparing for prescribed pile burning on National Forest System lands beginning December 2023 and continuing into the spring of 2024. Piles of woody debris (slash) are burned to help reduce hazardous fuels. As conditions allow, prescribed burning of slash piles on the administrative unit will take place at the following locations (pertinent to our Ute Country News coverage area):

South Platte Ranger District

- Dell — 3.5 miles southeast of Buffalo Creek (Jefferson County)
- Harris Park — north of CR 43 and 47; adjacent to Harris Park, Elk Creek Highlands and Forest Ridge communities (Park County)
- Hatch — east of CR 67 along the South Platt River corridor (Douglas County)
- Miller Gulch — at the junction of CR 70 and FS Road 553 near the Miller Gulch Trailhead (Jefferson County)

Pikes Peak Ranger District

- Rampart Range — approximately 2 miles east of Woodland Park. East side of Rampart Range Road from Mt. Herman Road south to Rampart Reservoir (Teller and El Paso counties)
- Monument Fire Center — west of Monument (El Paso County)
- North Divide — north of Hwy 67, north-east of the town of Divide and approximately 2 miles west of Woodland Park



- (Teller County).
- Forest Road 331 — 2 miles southwest of Crystal Reservoir (El Paso County).

South Park Ranger District

- Lake George East — surrounding the Lake George Work Center (Park County).

The prescribed fire project’s goals are to reduce the accumulation of hazardous fuels, restore and maintain healthy and diverse forest ecosystems, and maintain and enhance wildlife habitat. Prescribed fire is an important tool in reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire across the landscape and can help prevent extreme fires by reducing fuel buildup. Piles consist of small trees, as well as treetops and limbs, cut and piled during hazardous fuel management or other vegetation management projects.

Slash piles can vary in size from 6 cubic foot piles stacked by hand to a minimum of 12 cubic foot piles created by machines.

Ignitions will occur only when weather and fuel conditions meet established parameters and when smoke impacts can be managed within state requirements. Ignition and burning operations may continue for several days or weeks depending on the number of piles being burned. Fire personnel will monitor the burns until the fires are completely out.

Prescribed fires minimize impacts to air quality when compared to wildfires. Prescribed fire smoke may affect people’s health. FMI <https://cdphe.colorado.gov/wood-smoke-and-your-health>. Once the prescribed fire begins, smoke may be present for several days or week sin the general project areas.

Outdoor Equity Grant Program is accepting board member applications

by Bridget O’Rourke

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is accepting board member applications for the Outdoor Equity Grant Program. Board members are responsible for the governance of the Outdoor Equity Grant Program created by bill HB21-1318. The deadline for the application is Dec. 11, 2023.

- CPW is seeking to fill the following four board member seats:
- One member personally impacted by and with experience in racial justice issues
 - One member with experience working on conservation issues
 - Two youth members (age 25 and younger) who come from communities impacted by the grant program

The Board Member Application and additional application materials are available on the CPW website.

The purpose of the Outdoor Equity

Grant Program is to increase access and opportunity for underserved youth and their families to access meaningful experiences in Colorado’s state parks and outdoor spaces. The board is responsible for overseeing the grant program and awarding grants to applicants that will utilize the grant to engage eligible youth and their families by reducing barriers to Colorado’s outdoors, creating pathways for formal or informal conservation of Colorado outdoors, or offering environmental and Colorado outdoor-based educational opportunities.

Since 2022, the Outdoor Equity Grant Program has distributed nearly \$3.1 million to organizations that provide outdoor recreation, education, and conservation programs to youth and families across the state. The Outdoor Equity Grant Board is set to distribute an additional \$2 million

in December. In 2024, the program will distribute approximately \$2.75 million annually in Outdoor Equity Grants.

Individuals on the board may be associated with an organization that intends to apply for a future grant. Board members will be selected in collaboration with communities served by the grant program and begin their terms in January 2024. Program grants will be distributed based on how an organization will impactfully create pathways for Colorado’s outdoors and offer environmental and outdoor-based educational opportunities for underserved communities.

The Outdoor Equity Grant Program Board has nine voting seats. Board members will serve for four years and may serve up to two terms. Youth board members serve one or two-year terms and may serve up to two terms.



The gift from the heart

by Stephanie G. Hutchings

Think back on the Christmas seasons of perhaps long-ago. In those times, there was usually someone who presented a hand-made gift. Now many of us, in our childish need for goodies on Christmas morning, may have been disappointed in such gifts. Yet, how much meaning was in those gifts? How many of those do you still have? The gift made with someone’s hands comes from the heart. They come from a place of love and knowing something special about you or an attempt to give you something with meaning.

Santa and his elves provided us with our first gifts crafted by hand. We believed in the warmth that gifts from Santa provided. This feeling can envelop us all once again. This is a very simple project to grab hold of in this retrospective season. There is something special about each individual that we encounter. There is something that you can give from your heart and hands to send the message that you care and that you know them on a much less superficial level than the standard gift card allows.

Now, not all of us are what would be considered “crafty” but it does not take skill or necessarily money to create a heart-felt gift. In my experience, a rock has meant a great deal to a friend who just needed something to literally hold on to. Of course, the rock was washed and placed on a soft piece of fabric, then wrapped in a message of hope and peace. This gift was received with an amount of gratitude that can motivate us all to do these simple things at any time of year. It is not the actual gift that matters, it is the message within the gift itself. Many times, simple gifts have a better way of giving a message of love, caring, friendship, hope, peace, warmth, and/or joy than a gift that millions of people are in possession of.

“Shopping” for the gift-from-the-heart is no longer a Black Friday sale or a cyber sale. Now, we can either chat with our recipients or take a moment in the day to think of these people and note what we know about them. What brings a smile? What brings peace? What has helped us in times when we needed encouragement or a reminder of something special? The list can go on for an eternity. The main idea is that what we see in others is special and unique; this knowledge allows us to be more personal in our gifts.

Some of us are still scratching our heads asking for a starting point or ideas. Here are some ideas to help get the soul thinking:

- **Rocks** — Ok, I know this is odd, but stay with me. Rocks are part of the Earth, obviously. Yet, consider the phrase “ground yourself.” A rock, simple as it is, can be very soothing. Perhaps, the rock(s) came from a spe-

cial place or time and can be a forever reminder. Simplicity with meaning.

- **Handwritten anything** — Not all of us are Pulitzer writers, I am certainly not, but our thoughts can be put into words. Have you ever had a moment or moments in which you had a warm, loving, caring, or encouraging thought for someone? We all have, usually daily if we are paying attention. Write those thoughts down. A bit of paper and a writing utensil is all you need. If writing is not accessible, record it or type it. This is a benefit for the giftee and the giver in that we become more aware of those around us and begin to build an appreciation for our family, friends, and community.

- **Crafts** — There are more mini-crafts available from big stores to basic materials from a Dollar store. Here is a chance to have some fun and just create. Perfection goes out of the door and we get to put the joy of creating into the heart of the ones we create for. This is an excellent place to start with young children. Here is where we can teach children something about gifts that has been lost. It is the heart and thought that goes into the gift, not the price or extravagance.

I have been making hand-made gifts since I was 4 years old. As time has gone by, I have had the pleasure of seeing gifts from so long ago that are still a part of each person’s life; yes, even the rock. Actually, many people throughout my years have received rocks and none of them were nearly as disappointed as Charlie Brown on Halloween. Each simple gift stayed with them. The glory of the “newest thing” never beat the glory of a gift from the heart. Electronics break, toys wear out, clothes grow thread-bare, yet the gift-from-the-heart manages to stay safe and withstand the test of time.

Christmas is coming, the time of giving, sharing, and being grateful for our time with our family, friends, and community. It is never too late to give the gift of your compassion, friendship, and joy. There is little or no shopping involved. There is little time involved, unless we become embraced by the energy that this action provides. One moment in the day can result in a lifetime of moments for others. Even in times in which we have lost or misplaced a special gift, we always remember them and feel them in our hearts as though they are still with us.

As the time passes, ever so quickly, before the unwrapping and celebration begins, try to take a few moments and create a gift or two or many and make the difference this holiday season. My gift to all is a hope for a wonderful holiday season and a new outlook for the upcoming new year.



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Life-Enhancing Journeys

Is loneliness hurting us?

by Barbara Pickholz-Weiner, RN, BSN, CACIII, MAC, EMDRII

Have you ever felt lonely? Loneliness is not simply being alone. Spending time alone is a choice. Some people prefer to hike by themselves. Others go to the movies solo. At times, being alone assists us in coming up with creative ideas. Time spent alone can feel good and is actually healthy for us. Just because someone is by themselves does not mean that they are lonely. This is especially true for introverts, who recharge themselves by spending time away from others — this is called solitude — to gather thoughts and chill for a bit.

People can live relatively solitary lives without feeling lonely, yet on the other hand, they can live a seemingly active social life and still feel lonely. Loneliness is caused by a difference between the relationships we have and those we want. Loneliness hurts.

Loneliness is defined as “A distressing feeling that accompanies the perception when there is a gap between the social connection we want to have with others... and the connection we feel we actually do have,” according to Jeremy Nobel, MD, MPH, a physician and the founder of Project UnLonely. Dr. Nobel maintains that loneliness, on a societal level, is “always a negative feeling because there is something missing that we need.” He refers to this as a “crisis of disconnection” therefore, many factors and life events can make us feel lonely. The good news is that we can alleviate our feelings of loneliness so that our isolation will not adversely affect our well-being.

We humans are social creatures by nature, relying on safe, secure social surroundings to survive and thrive. Loneliness can be viewed as an experience like hunger or thirst, which signals that human connections are missing from our lives. Feeling socially isolated or lonely increases a sense of fear, intensifying feelings of vulnerability, both of which can negatively impact our health, particularly the immune system. A new study finds that social isolation has been correlated with an increased risk of dementia. Additional studies estimated that, over the long term, loneliness is as risky to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

People react in different ways to loneliness, some by withdrawing and getting quiet, while others become irritable and angry, which is why it may take some time to realize what is actually going on. Sometimes, we may need somebody we trust to tell us, ‘Hey, you seem to be withdrawing more’ or ‘Are you feeling more irritated or angrier lately?’ to help us understand that we might be dealing with loneliness.

Loneliness has become an epidemic, not only since Covid but also at this time of the year, because the holidays can increase stress. When we think of the word “lonely,” we might picture someone sitting alone in their bedroom or standing in the corner of the room at a social event. This may or may not be accurate. Loneliness is experienced differently by each person. Even though it may seem contradictory, it is possible to feel lonely even when actively conversing with others. It is difficult to express how lonely we may feel because loneliness is a personal, subjective feeling that cannot be measured objectively. The reason has been explained by John Cacioppo, a neuroscientist, who said, “Loneliness is like an iceberg — we are conscious of the surface, but it goes much deeper than we can see.” He maintains that simply understanding the cause of loneliness will not eliminate our need to resolve it, so he recommends creating “a culture of connection” as a remedy.

When you experience loneliness, you tend to focus more and more on yourself while your brain engages in self-preservation. In most cases, you are unaware this is happening, you feel vulnerable so you may lose your ability to be empathetic or compassionate, and your social skills are apt to decrease. Eric Liu, the CEO of Citizen University, said that the longer people feel disconnected, the easier it is for them to believe that no one really cares about them. Believing that you are alone and disconnected increases stress, anxiety and inflammation, which is a primary cause of disease. This is why it is so essential to create what Eric Liu calls “a culture of connection,” a way to add personal relationships to your social circle.

We can all relate to having been lonely at varying times in our lives. I recall a time when I felt a deep sense of loneliness, during the time when my husband and I were not getting along. We were so disconnected then that I thought we would end up divorced. I avoided him and even isolated myself from my friends. I put most of my energy into work and ignored the rest of the world. I remember walking into my supervisor’s office one morning and when he said hello to me, I burst into tears without understanding why I was crying. He expressed his concern and then referred me to a therapist who helped me emerge from that lonely, isolated place. I continue to use the skills I learned many years ago and have never experienced that depth of loneliness again. I think many of us have had similar experiences. I was fortunate that I had a supervisor who cared enough and whom I trusted.

Since the 1980s, the percentage of people reporting loneliness has gone from 20% to 40%. That is two out of every five people. Wow! Over the past three decades, the nature of relationships has fundamentally changed, and we are unsure as to how to adjust. We live in a society that is increasingly becoming always-on, which is zapping our energy for our relationships and keeping us from considering others. People seem to have become more guarded, hostile and self-centered, offering less kindness and compassion, leading to a greater sense of disconnection.

What can be done about this?

- **Perform acts of kindness** — Healing loneliness requires mutual connections in both directions — a give and take. Doing something nice for others can help you feel better. Whether you get involved in an official community fundraiser or do a kind deed for a neighbor, you could perform many acts of kindness. If you struggle to find something you can do, you might contact local charities, hospitals, nursing homes, or animal shelters to see how you could volunteer or help.

- **Validate and examine your feelings** — Feeling lonely really is okay even though it may be uncomfortable. Consider talking to others who may share your feelings (either via the internet or in real life) which can help you to feel less lonely.

When you examine your feelings, ask yourself if you would benefit from putting more time into your social life to build stronger relationships. Is something inside of you causing you to keep people at a distance?

- **Rethink your expectations** — This is one way to deal with feelings of loneliness. For example, realizing that you can take a good friend (instead of “the perfect date”) to a holiday party or that

the love of a difficult family member still counts as love, can help you to feel less lonely.

Looking at social media could stress you out by making you believe that your life pales in comparison to others. It is essential to realize that few people’s lifestyles actually measure up to the invented lives others claim to have. Try to shift your focus to the positive things you do have in your life instead of comparing yourself to others and the life they portray online.

- **Get connected** — Establish eye contact and say hello and smile, even to strangers, exchange friendly words with people at the office, write holiday cards, or pick up the phone and call an old friend with whom you have lost contact. This may be a time to communicate with people by sending a caring text message or writing a thoughtful email. Reaching out to people and strengthening bonds can help you feel more connected and less lonely.

- **Cultivate gratitude** — One easy antidote to feelings of disconnection is cultivating gratitude for what you do have. If you are feeling a lack of love in your life, make a concerted effort to focus on the love that you do have — from friends, family, neighbors, and even pets. You can also focus on things you truly value in your life, such as your work, hobbies, or even your dreams.

Maintaining a gratitude journal can be an excellent method of cultivating an attitude of gratitude. It will be a written record of everything you value that you can read during the times when you are feeling down.

- **Give to others** — One significant way to feel less lonely during the holidays is to donate your time to a cause you believe in. Helping others who are less fortunate can fill you with positive feelings.

- **Read a book** — Studies have shown that just 30 minutes of reading can help reduce psychological distress. Whether you are reading or listening to an audiobook, losing yourself in a story can help ease feelings of loneliness. Ask yourself what makes you feel most supported and seek that out in a book.

“There is no friend as loyal as a book.”
— Ernest Hemingway

As humans, we crave connection, which is a powerful motivator to feel close to others. We are biologically wired to be around others; in a family, an ethnic group, a team or a community.

Loneliness can have serious consequences for your health, so it is important to recognize the symptoms. Remember that being alone differs from feeling lonely. Overcoming loneliness takes time, but taking steps like reframing negative thoughts, acknowledging your feelings, and reaching out to others is a good way to feel less alone and more connected.

Barbara Pickholz-Weiner, RN, BSN, CACIII, MAC, EMDRII is the program director of Journeys Counseling Center, Inc. At Journeys, we teach you tools, skills and help you discover resources to live the most effective life possible. We guide, support and coach you along the path you desire, to become the best version of yourself. To contact Barbara, call 719-510-1268 (cell) or email Journeyscounselingctr@gmail.com.

Traveling trees:

Assisted migration for climate resilience

by Savannah Halleaux



This cartoon represents assisted tree migration, which is a practice under assessment by the Forest Service and its partners as a means of improving forest resilience to climate change. (Forest Service illustration by Savannah Halleaux).

Traveling trees seem like whimsy from the science fiction or fantasy genres — like J.R.R. Tolkien’s Ents or Groot from Marvel’s *Guardians of the Galaxy*. But tree species really do migrate in their own way, although it may take decades or centuries.

“Natural migration is very slow for most tree species,” said Leslie Brandt, a USDA Forest Service climate adaptation specialist. “They just don’t have a very far seed dispersal distance, and they just cannot keep up with the rapid pace of climate change.”

The continuing and projected changes in climate exceed the natural migration and adaptation abilities of many tree species. This can translate into whole-forest and whole-landscape impacts from climate-induced die-offs.

If North American native trees do not fill the space, it causes even greater problems, as invasive tree species can rapidly take over. Or the ecosystem could rapidly change, like from hardwood to pine forest or from pine forest to prairie. These dramatic changes can cause harmful impacts on wildlife and humans who rely on these landscapes for resources to survive and thrive.

That’s where assisted migration comes in. Assisted migration is the human-assisted movement of populations or species in response to climate change and could be a proactive, pragmatic tool for building climate resilience in our landscapes.

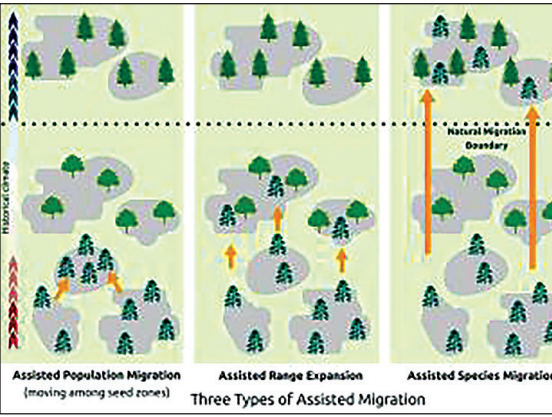
Assisted migration 101

“Historically, people have been moving species around the globe for centuries, if not millennia. This is not new to forestry,” said Brandt. “What is new is the intentional use of climate data to help inform those decisions.”

There are three types of assisted migration: assisted population expansion, assisted range expansion, and assisted species migration.

Assisted population migration involves tree movement to new locations within their established historical range, typically as a seed or seedling. For assisted population migration, researchers collect seeds from a slightly lower elevation or latitude from trees of the same species likely to have slightly different genetic material that makes them adapted to warmer conditions.

Assisted range expansion is tree movement from their current range to suitable areas just beyond their current



This graphic demonstrates each type of assisted migration using the darker green conifers as the example; the three types of assisted migration are applicable to all plants. Different populations are represented by individual gray areas. Orange arrows represent human-assisted movement of plant material from the dark green conifers to new locations. The historical climate bar on the left notes the movement of plant materials from warmer, drier climates (red) to historically cooler (blue), wetter climates. Graphic first published in the USDA Forest Service Seedlot Selection Tool Guidebook.



Forest Service climate adaptation specialist Leslie Brandt (above) stands in front of an adaptive silviculture site planted with cottonwood seedlings from trees adapted to warmer climate conditions. Her team is assessing if these trees are more resilient to the changing climate conditions there. photo courtesy of Leslie Brandt

range.

Forest Service scientists are also researching assisted tree movement beyond range expansion to higher elevations and latitudes they are unlikely to reach without human intervention anytime soon. This movement of trees beyond their historic species range and typical range expansion is called assisted species migration.

“Assisted species migration can be a little more controversial, but many scientists argue is necessary given the rate of changes that we’re seeing on the landscape, especially due to exotic insects and diseases. For rare or threatened species, assisted migration may be the only way to save a species,” said Brandt.

Assisted migration in action

When tree species decline in an area, it is sometimes prudent to incorporate additional species to fill that space. In these cases, foresters look for North American species that would still fit into that ecosystem, but that might not have been native to that particular location in the past.

For example, a forested area in Saint Paul, Minnesota, suffered extensive canopy loss due to the emerald ash borer. The emerald ash borer is a non-native invasive insect species that is wiping out North American ash trees.

“When these ash trees die, we’re not seeing natural regeneration of other tree species,” said Brandt. “Invasive grasses and herbaceous species out-compete the native trees.”

To reestablish the tree canopy, Brandt’s team planted 19 different tree species. Some of these species, like silver maple, are native to the general area. Other species planted there — like sycamore and tulip poplar — are from warmer environments in southern Minnesota, Missouri and Illinois. These are examples of all three types of assisted migration.

“We’re hoping to establish a tree canopy that can both be resilient against emerald ash borer because we’re not planting ash, but also including other species that are native to the Mississippi River basin,” said Brandt.

The goal is to build up the forest ecosystem so it can sustain itself through projected climate change over time.



Forest Service volunteers implement assisted tree migration as they plant young trees at an adaptive silviculture site located in Saint Paul, Minnesota. This project seeks to reestablish canopy cover after the site’s ash trees died off from emerald ash borer infestation and invasive plant species threatened to take over. USDA Forest Service photo by Leslie Brandt.

change to ensure the development of healthy, resilient future forests. Assisted migration is one reforestation tool to help ensure the right seedling is planted in the right place, at the right time, with the right species and at appropriate scales.

The agency’s Office of Sustainability and Climate has recently convened the Forestry Assisted Migration Technical Assistance Team to develop tools and resources needed to help managers decide if, when, where and how to implement assisted migration of tree species on Forest Service-managed lands.

With support from the Forest Service and its Office of Sustainability and Climate, the Superior National Forest in northern Minnesota is developing an assisted migration plan for its landscapes in collaboration with over 100 representatives from tribes, state and local governments, and partner organizations. Once complete, this plan will serve as a pilot for the national Forestry Assisted Migration Technical Assistance Team to test methods and processes to locally develop assisted migration plans on other forests across the country.

The Forest Service also participates in the Adaptive Silviculture for Climate Change Network, a collaboration of scientists, land managers, and key partners studying how to integrate climate change planning and adaptation into forest planning and management.

The goal is to understand where and how assisted migration can help maintain healthy, thriving landscapes across the country.

“We’re finding that some tree populations can’t keep up with shifting climate patterns on their own,” said Brandt. “With assisted migration, we’re just kind of helping the trees along.”



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Never underestimate the power of Girl Scouts

by Annie Valades

Each year before "cookie season," Girl Scout Troop #44307, in Peyton, Colorado, located some 30 miles east of Colorado Springs, creates a list of things they'd like to do as a troop and which "community service project" they want to do for their "hometown hero." This year, one of the Scout Leaders, Shannon Kimball, challenged the girls, ages 9-12, to think more broadly about the community project, and they researched various happenings around Colorado. Donkey Derby Days in Cripple Creek was one such event. Donkey Derby Days is an annual celebration of the history of mining and the donkeys' significance. A herd of wild donkeys is cared for by the Two Mile High Club, a nonprofit entity that relies on grants, donations, and fundraising at events such as Donkey Derby Days, its largest fundraiser. Initially, the troops chose to work on a town water park. Then, news emerged that the 92nd annual Donkey Derby Days may not occur due to a lack of funding. During the next Girl Scout meeting, the leaders discussed this with the Girl Scouts. On their own, the girls, all in 4th-6th grade, voted to donate \$500 of their cookie money toward the donkeys of Cripple Creek for their maintenance and celebration.

The reasons are many and best stated in quotes gathered from the girls:

"The donkeys are important because they make people happy, and we want to make the world a better place, which means keeping the donkeys around for a long time."

"The donkeys are wonderful creatures, and I don't want them to die. They are very kind creatures who need our help."

"I like the donkeys because they have soft fur and long ears, they are cute, and they remind me of Donkey from Shrek."

"Donkeys are nice animals. It's important for them to have a home and to stay warm and safe in the winter."

"Donkeys are cute, sweet, and funny to be around."

"It is important to help the donkeys so they survive."

Now the girls are hoping to earn a Bronze Award in Scouting alongside the donkeys of Cripple Creek. On Sunday, November 5th, the girls and their scout leaders paid a visit to the winter pasture



Jordyn Hedding



Jordyn Hedding and Caitlin Poulin

of the donkeys, where their hosts, the Two Mile High Club, caretakers of the donkeys, spent the afternoon teaching them about these curious animals. The Scouts got up close and personal with these fuzzy mascots of Cripple Creek, whose history begins with the original donkey herd back to the beginning of Gold Mining in the region in the early 1900s when the donkeys were used to bring the iron ore up to the



Ella Kimball, Abby Tracy, Lexi Parsons, Analisia Ramirez, Jordyn Hedding and Caitlin Poulin

surface.

Legend has it that President Teddy Roosevelt convinced the gold mine owners to release the donkeys to the city of Cripple Creek in 1931. At that time, the Two Mile High Club was formed to provide continuous care to these lovable beasts of burden. Today's herd numbers 15, and they receive daily food, shelter, and medication as needed, by the devoted volunteers of the Two Mile High Club.

"These little girls saw a need, and they filled it," said Brandon Westhoff, President of the Two Mile High Club. They worked hard and gave their efforts to benefit animals that live more than 70 miles away, high up in the mountains, and touch all of our hearts. They are an example of what it means to give."

The Troop of 12, formed five years ago, follows the creed "On my honor, I will try

To serve God and my country, To help people at all times, And to live by the Girl Scout Law. I will do my best to be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and do, and to respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout."

"The world could use more Girl Scout honor right now," said Wendy Wood, Vice President of the Two Mile High Club, "and we and the donkeys are grateful to be recipients of their kindness and beneficiaries of their hard work."

If you would like to make a donation to help the donkeys of Cripple Creek, please contact Donkey Derby Days 719-270-1999 or information@VisitCrippleCreek.com.

A New Year's Resolution that works

by Kathy Hansen

Surely you are familiar with the tradition of making a New Year's Resolution. I've done it for years and for most of those years when I continued it through January or February, it was quite a feat, seldom making it through March. However, it will be three years this January for a New Year's Resolution that continues to come into effect: stop planning; instead create options, opportunities and alternatives.

You've heard the expression, "When you make a plan, God laughs." We found the laughter actually ended when we stopped making plans. It really isn't as hard as you think. It is all about changing your language, which has the amazing effect of opening your mind to choices you have yet to consider.

Think about it: we can become attached to the *plans* we make, so much so that when there is a monkey wrench thrown into the mix, we feel stalled, halted and immobilized. However, when you create an option, when that monkey wrench comes it is somehow so much simpler to think of another choice, an alternative or opportunity that just might work out better than your *"plan."*

Here is an example. I have the next four days off at home. I could *plan* to exercise 30 minutes each day on my elliptical, yet if I get a call from a friend or family member at the time I was to exercise that *plan* is foiled. However, when I create options and opportunities to exercise, there is great flexibility in my thought process. My first

option might be to use my elliptical each morning for 30 minutes. If I get a call at a time I expected to be on the elliptical, I can change my first option to being on the elliptical at a later time or perhaps I might choose three sessions of 10 minutes each. Also, I might look at the weather forecast and see snow is coming. Shoveling snow is aerobic exercise. If it takes at least 30 minutes to shovel, I have completed my exercise for the day and I have a snow-free deck and the first foot of the roof raked. Perhaps I will decide that cleaning the house on the first day will ease my mind. Vacuuming, sweeping and scrubbing floors are all aerobic exercises. Maybe another goal is to spend time outdoors. I might choose to hike up our hill before the big

meal on the holiday. The hike up the hill and back down typically takes at least 30 minutes. Now, look at all the options created, the opportunities presented when I eliminate *plan* and replace it with options, opportunities and alternatives!

Give this option consideration. It might help if you have a partner, spouse or friend willing to listen for the word *plan* and replace it when they hear it, reminding you of the alternatives. Jeff and I check each other on this and can attest to the difference it makes in discovering alternatives more quickly, as well as the lack of disappointment when a *plan* has been foiled. The unexpected gift in all of this is a significant reduction in stress. Try it, you might like it!

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- 2 Illuminating Hearts sponsored by Voices of Grief invites you to join us 2-4 p.m. at Aspen Trail Retirement Resort 5455 New Car Drive. There is no cost to attend, but RSVP is required — email info@voicesofgriefcenter.org or 719-286-0612. Our annual Luminaria Event will include the gift of music, practical resources for navigating holiday grief and time for reflection.

CRIPPLE CREEK

- 7 American Legion Post 171 meets the first Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. at 400 Carr St., Food and refreshments at 5 p.m.
• 7-9 Silent Auction Aspen Mine Center East
7 Winter Wonderland Reception 3:30-6:30 p.m. Aspen Mine Center East
8 Soup for the Soul 11:30-1 p.m. Aspen Mine Center East
8 Headframe Tour 5:30 p.m. Aspen Mine Center East Shuttle
9 Christmas Craft Fair 9-3 p.m. June Hack Community Center Parks & Rec
9 Hot Chocolate/Cider/s'mores 11-1:30 outside Aspen Mine Center East, luncheon inside.
9 Gold Camp Christmas Parade



- noon Bennet Avenue
9 Visit with Santa 12:30 p.m. Aspen Mine Center East
9 Children's Activities 12:30-2 p.m. Aspen Mine Center
9 Chorale 3-5 p.m. Baptist Church
14 Toys for Tots 4:30-6:30 p.m. CCV High School
15 Commodities distribution 9-1 p.m. Aspen Mine Center
• Tuesdays BINGO 10:30 a.m. for seniors Aspen Mine Center
• Wednesdays Luncheon 11:30-1 p.m. upstairs dining room, every Wed, FREE! Aspen Mine Center
• GED Classes Mondays & Wednesdays 1-3 p.m. New students (min. age 16) may join GED classes after completing orientation and \$40 registration fee. FMI Katy@cpteller.org.

DIVIDE

- 1, 15 Teller Senior Coalition BINGO 10-11:30 a.m. at Little Chapel Church 69 CR 5. RSVP 719-687-3330 ext. 6. Call to set up a ride 719-687-0256.
4, 18 Little Chapel Food Pantry Distribution 2-5 p.m.
17 Winter Wonderland with the Wolves 9-11 a.m. at Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center. Join us for a special holiday celebration. Festivities include breakfast burritos with the wolves. Reservations required as space is limited. Tickets are \$40 for ages 12 and over, \$20 for ages 6-11 years. No one under age 6 is permitted. FMI 719-687-9742.

MUELLER STATE PARK

- 2 Hike: School Pond*/Stoner Mill loop 9 a.m.
10 Hike: Outlook Ridge*/Lost Pond loop 9:30 a.m.
16 Hike: Rock Pond loop 9 a.m. meet at Visitor Center.
17 Snowshoe Hike One 10:30 a.m. meet at picnic tables at Outlook Ridge TH.
22 Nature Ornaments 10-12 p.m. Create ornaments using elements of nature at Visitor Center Auditorium.
25 Christmas Day Bird Hike 8:30 a.m. meet at Elk Meadows TH.
27 Touch Table: Antlers and Horns 12-2 p.m. Visitor Center.
Jan 1 First Day Hike: Elk Meadow* 9 a.m.
Jan 1 First Day Hike: Forest Bathing 12-2:30 p.m. meet at Outlook Ridge TH.
*Indicates to meet at the Trail-head (TH) of the same name. FMI 719-686-2366 ext. 0.

FLORENCE

- 4-20 The Friends of the John C Fremont Library are having their Christmas Silent Auction. Bidding begins on the 4 and ends at noon on Dec 20. The items up for bid and the bidding books are at the library 130 Church Ave. FMI 719-748-4649.
9 Second Saturday Pickle Contest in participating shops with a grand prize for the most pickles found. There will be a sheet with stores that have pickles to find in their shops. If you find a pickle, you write the number on the pickle on your sheet. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be there 11-2 p.m. Luminaries that are lit outside shops that are open in the evening indicate the shop is open.
16 All aboard for the Model Train Open House at Florence Pioneer Museum and Research Center 100 E. Front St 10-6 p.m. Running trains will be showcased 3-6 p.m. Coffee, hot cider and cookies will be served. Admission by donation. FMI www.florencepioneermuseum.org.

FLORISSANT

- GRANGE**
• Thursday Potluck and Music 6-8 p.m. Dancing encouraged!

LIBRARY

- 2 GG's Gemstones Jewelry Class — Making Earrings — 10-12 p.m. *Must call to reserve a spot. There will be a fee to cover the materials you choose.
8 Tarot Club 3 p.m. Teens and up are welcome to join this group and learn all things tarot. December's theme is Winter Energies.
13 Florissant Bookworms Book Club 10:30-12 p.m.
14 Free Legal Clinic 2-5 p.m. Call 719-748-3939 to sign-up.
15 Friends at the Table Cookbook Club 11:30-1 p.m., theme is "favorite holiday dish" Bring a dish to share!
19 Read Amok Book Club 11-12:30 p.m., themed "Party" Bring a book to share!
21 Homeschool Connections 10-12 p.m. Parent led social and educational enrichment time for homeschoolers. Meets monthly on the third Thursday.
28 Speech Bubble Book Club 1 p.m. Bring a graphic novel to share!
• Tuesdays Tai Chi 10-11 a.m. Come relax with us!

- Thursdays Yarnia! 10-12 p.m. Craft and share your knitting and crocheting love with others!
• The second and fourth Tuesday of each month join us for Hooks and Needles, an additional club for crafting! 10-12 p.m.
• The third Wednesday of each month join us for Crafting Together, a club where we finish our abandoned art projects. 10-11:30 a.m.
• Family Fridays at the Library every Friday! Starts with Storytime at 10 a.m., followed by Reading with Charlie, and then a special family activity at 11 a.m.! FMI 719-748-3939

GREEN MOUNTAIN FALLS

- 2 Yule Day Craft Fair at Joyland Church noon-5 p.m. FMI greenboxarts.org/events.
17 Advent and Christmas Music with members of the Colorado Springs Philharmonic 7 p.m. Church in the Wildwood. FMI [wildwooducc.org](http://www.wildwooducc.org).

GUFFEY

- 7 Tree lighting/Ugly sweater contest 5 p.m. at Guffey School and the Bakery.

HARTSEL

- Country Church of Hartsel meets at the Hartsel Community Center 80 Valley View Drive 10 a.m. Sundays. Everyone is welcome! FMI call Jimmy Anderson 719-358-1100.

MANITOU SPRINGS

- 1 Handmade Holiday at the Manitou Art Center 5-8 p.m.
2 A Community Christmas Event at the Community Congregational Church of Manitou Springs 9 a.m.
8 The Out Loud COS Chorus at the Community Congregational Church of Manitou Springs 7:30 p.m.
9 Breakfast with Santa at City Hall 8-10 a.m.
10 Holl-Sleigh with J. Chang at the Community Congregational Church of Manitou Springs 2 p.m.
24 Santa at Town Clock bring your wish list 6 p.m.
25 Salvation Army Community Holiday Dinner at City Hall 10-2 p.m.
31 AdAmAn 101st Fireworks summit of Pikes Peak 12

- a.m.
FMI ManitouSprings.org

VICTOR

- 8 Parade of Lights 6 p.m. Main Street
8 Victor Christmas 6:45 p.m., Elks Lodge, Jingle Bell Ball 7 p.m.

WOODLAND PARK

- 2 TCRAS adoption fair at Tractor Supply 10-3 p.m.
2 Enjoy hot beverages during the parade at Mountain Vapor Lounge.
3 Christmas Jazz f/Swing Factory and In-House Big Band at Ute Pass Cultural Center. Cash bar reception at 6 p.m., music at 7 p.m. Free admission — donations are welcome. FMI: <http://www.woodlandparkwindsymphony.com>
10 The Sounds of Christmas w/The Woodland Park Wind Symphony at the Ute Pass Cultural Center. Two performances 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. General admission reservations are suggested as seating is limited. Doors open 1 hour prior for general admission reservation seat selection and cash bar. Free admission — donations welcome. FMI <http://www.woodlandparkwindsymphony.com>
16 TCRAS adoption fair at Tractor Supply 10-3 p.m.
16 Pampering Spa Sessions 12-2 p.m. at Mountain Vapor Lounge. See page 15.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

- 6 Unified Title's Annual Fund-raiser & Toy Drive Benefiting Community Partnership 5-7 p.m. at Ute Pass Cultural Center. Come and enjoy dinner, drinks, and silent auction. Bring a new toy or gift card. RSVP to ryoung@unifiedtitle.com
8 Crossroads Co-Parenting Seminar 9:30-1:30 p.m. Teller County court approved parenting and divorce class. \$35 fee. Pre-registration required. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org.
16 Milk & Cookies with Santa 11-1 p.m. Join us for cookie decorating, candy cane fishing, letters to Santa, make a holiday card, storytime with Santa, and photo opportunities with Mr. & Mrs. Claus. Stockings will be handed out while supplies last. FMI Jackie@cpteller.org.
31 4th Annual New Year's Eve On-line Silent Auction. www.event.gives/cp2024

Bidding opens at 4 p.m. on December 31, 2023 and ends 4 p.m. Monday, January 1, 2024. Funds raised will help families learn to cook healthy meals, sponsors GED scholarships, put warm food on a family's table, or cover the cost of dinner and childcare during parenting classes, and much more. FMI Jamie@cpteller.org.
• Career Center 12-4 p.m. Tuesdays & Thursdays. Closed Dec 26 & 28. Pikes Peak Workforce Center can help with job searching, resume assistance and unemployment applications. Walk-ins welcome. FMI Erin@cpteller.org.
• Family Café 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Monday through Friday. Closed Dec 25-29. Enjoy coffee, Free Wi-Fi, a Kid's Corner and a space to congregate free of charge for parents and caregivers in our community to connect.
• GED Classes Mondays & Thursdays 5-7 p.m. New students (min. age 16) may join GED classes after completing orientation and \$40 registration fee. FMI Katy@cpteller.org.
• Pearson VUE Testing Center Mondays 9:30-5 p.m. Closed Dec 25. Schedule your certification or licensure exam at www.pearsonvue.com. Fees vary. FMI Katy@cpteller.org.
• Playgroup 9:30-11 a.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Fridays. No Playgroup Dec 26, 27, & 29. Walk-ins welcome. Parents and caregivers with children ages 5 & under. Older siblings are welcome. FMI Jackie@cpteller.org.
• Yoga with Leah Mondays 10-11 a.m. No Yoga Dec 25. First come, first served, no late entry. Bring your own mat and props. All levels welcome. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org.
• Yoga with Leah Wednesdays 5-6 p.m. No Yoga Dec 27. First come, first served, no late entry. Bring your own mat and props. All levels welcome. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org. All programs at Community Partnership 701 Gold Hill Place unless otherwise noted. FMI 719-686-0705.

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- Holiday Ariel at 10 a.m. Sing songs, read stories, and have your photo taken with Princess Ariel!
22 Dungeons and Dragons for Teens. Come play in a winery D&D game! 11-2 p.m. in the board room. Pre-built level 5 characters and supplies will be provided if you don't have them. Must email megane@rampartlibrarydistrict.org or sign up in the teen room.
28 Tarot Club 3 p.m. Teens and up are welcome to join this group and learn all things tarot. December's theme is Winter Energies.
28 Shrek Bonanza 12 p.m. Get ready for a four day Shrek Marathon! Celebrate New Years with green snacks and ogre-tastic movies. Watch one movie each day. Today we will watch Shrek.
29 Shrek Bonanza 12 p.m. Get ready for a four day Shrek Marathon! Celebrate New Years with green snacks and ogre-tastic movies. Watch

one movie each day. Today we will watch Shrek 2.

- Line Dancing Above the Clouds at 6:30 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Please note we will not meet on the 25th.
- ASL Class every Wednesday at 5 p.m. Come learn the basics of American Sign Language!
- Tuesday Books and Babies 10 a.m. a special storytime for babies and toddlers.
- Tuesdays is Magic the Gathering from 4-6 p.m.
- Thursdays Preschool Story-time 10 a.m.
- Thursdays Tai Chi at 5 p.m.
- Fridays Tai Chi at 10 a.m.

RESERVE OUR GALLERY

2-22 Winter Art Show! Fourteen artists from Colorado are featured. The Curator's Award was given to Jerry Edwards for his watercolor of Fairplay titled, *A Good Morning*.
9 Gala and Art Reception 6-8 p.m. The featured artist this month is Michael Gault. This event also recognizes the artists who are part of the Winter Show at the gallery. Stop by for refreshments including adult beverages. Free! RSVP to reservourgallery@gmail.com.
12 SOAR Nonprofit Cooperative Holiday Breakfast 9:30-10:45 a.m. Bring a breakfast potluck and join

the fun! Bring a pair of crazy socks if you want to join the gift exchange. SOAR is a group of 22 nonprofits in the community who meet to train, collaborate and share resources.
• Through Dec 24 Holiday Gift Tables noon-4 p.m. Artists in the community are featured on gift tables. Unique items are all reasonably priced. Wreaths, purses made from ties, wooden reindeer and snowmen, ornaments, pinecone Christmas trees and more!
Reserve our Gallery is located at 400 West Midland Avenue.

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