



# UTE COUNTRY NEWS

FREE

Putting the "unity" back in community™

December 2025

P.O. Box 753, Divide, CO 80814 • 719-686-7587 • utecountrynews.com

Vol. 17, No. 12

## Welcome to Ute Country



**"We make a living by what we get,  
but we make a life by what we give."**  
— Winston Churchill

### PEEK INSIDE...



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Wind Under our Wings



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Exploring the power of gratitude





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Our cover photo was taken last year in Victor, Colorado. The quote by Winston Churchill is perfect for the holiday season aka the season of giving.

Yes, we are in the season of giving! Dr. Bec's "Exploring the Power of Gratitude" is a great read that reminds us of the benefits we reap when we give thanks. "Community Partnership's Outcomes Recognized Nationally" spells out the myriad of ways this organization elevates our communities by supporting people where they need it most — way to go Community Partnership! Two people with a history of giving have been chosen as "Grand Marshall's Exude Community Service" for Woodland Park's Christmas Parade. There are a variety of community celebrations, so be sure to read the Out & About section. Cripple Creek and Victor details are highlighted in "Celebrate Gold Camp Country Christmas for a Season Full of Fun" and "Holiday Decorations Light Up Historic Mining Landscape." Then we have "Green Mountain Falls Celebrates the Holidays with the Annual Yule Days." Music lovers don't want to miss "Sounds of Christmas, Jazz and Jingle Bells Ring in the Holiday Season." Sometimes giving can be as simple as a smile or any other act of kindness. Check out "People See, People Do: You can kindle kindness, too" which is written by our readers and is all about kindness!

We are grateful for our readers, writers, subscribers, sales representatives and the businesses that allow our racks and newspaper boxes; we couldn't do it without you! We wish you ALL a very merry holiday season and a happy New Year!

We know those of you with pets will be taking their holiday photos. Please consider sharing them with our readers in Critter Corner. They can be indoor or outdoor. If you would please send them via email to utecountrynewspaper@gmail.com, drop in to scan the photo at Shipping Plus or snail mail them to us at POB 753 Divide, CO 80814, we are happy to publish them!

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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## Oyate Herbals

# Live a better life with adaptogenic herbs

by Tammie Lowell, PHt, CMH, founder of Oyate Herbals



Han (Greetings!) Welcome to "The Cold and Dark Moons" Due to the frigid cold, the coming of winter signified the beginning of a quieter time. The camp stayed at a single location throughout the winter months. Women spent their time making and mending clothing. Men took part in raiding parties to ensure their camp's strength and safety. The children gathered around the warmth of the fire to listen to the stories of their elders, preserving history for another generation. Winter was also a time for family, games, dancing, ceremony and visiting one another.

As Lakota people, during the winter we also celebrated the winter solstice. For us the Winter Solstice transcends the physical change of seasons; it is a profound reminder of the delicate balance of life and our responsibilities towards it. In Lakota tradition, the Solstice is embraced as a moment to gather, reflect on the past year, and prepare for the future with resiliency and hope. It is a time to renew our bond with nature like Tatanka, the Buffalo, an emblem of life and sustenance, who provided not only material necessities but also spiritual guidance through generations. This sacred time also calls upon us to reaffirm our dedication to environmental stewardship and sustainable living. The Solstice is a reminder of our shared responsibility to protect the land, water, and all living beings, ensuring the gifts of the earth can sustain future generations.

We would traditionally gather around the fire during the Solstice, sharing stories and reinforcing our connection to all living things, the plants, the animals, the water etc. We here at Oyate Herbals invite our supporters, friends and extended Oyate to join us in this period of reflection and commitment. Let us use the Winter Solstice as a moment to rekindle our collective commitment to the environment, and the principles of balance and harmony that guide our everyday lives. Winter solstice is December 21, 2025. Take time to reflect on what our mother earth is teaching us during these coming winter months, and how to take that time and go within and just as nature does. Reflect on the lessons we have learned this past year and how we may bring them into our lives as we start to come out of winter, to bloom and grow more beautiful just as our plant relatives do in the springtime.

As I sit here and start to reflect on this past year, I think of the hardships, stress and obstacles many of us have encountered in the last few months. I know many of us are struggling with finances, and with the holidays it makes it very hard to keep a balance between our physical, mental and emotional health. When a person experiences stress, the body activates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, leading to an increase in cortisol production. This response prepares the body to handle perceived threats by providing a surge of energy and enhancing alertness. For instance, during stressful situations, cortisol helps mobilize energy reserves and increases blood sugar levels to ensure the body has the necessary resources to respond effectively. While cortisol is vital for managing stress, chronic stress can lead to persistently high cortisol levels, which may have detrimental effects on health. Elevated cortisol can contribute to various issues, including anxiety, mood disorders and brain changes. It can affect sleep patterns, leading to insomnia or poor sleep quality. Prolonged high cortisol levels can lead to conditions such as hypertension, type II diabetes, obesity, and weakened immune system.

The best way to manage or decrease cortisol levels is to manage the stressors in your life. Get plenty of rest, eat foods high in antioxidants, exercise of some sort, Ex: walking, yoga, stretching, dancing etc. Use meditation or relaxation techniques. Reduce sugar and carbohydrate intake. Add or increase vitamin B and D supplements, probiotics and adaptogens to your daily routine.

Let's talk about adaptogens and how they can play a major role in helping with cortisol levels. Adaptogens are plants and mushrooms that help your body respond to stress, anxiety, fatigue and overall wellbeing. You can take adaptogens by adding them to food or beverages or take them as tinctures. Adaptogens bring your body back to a steady balance by managing both physical and mental stressors. The goal of taking adaptogens is to return your body to a state of balance (homeostasis). The herbal action in adaptogens increases or decreases chemical reactions within your body. For example, if you're stressed (elevated cortisol), an adaptogen will respond by reducing



ing cortisol levels. If you experience chronic fatigue with low cortisol levels, an adaptogen will increase the level of cortisol in your body. Adaptogenic herbs are a powerful yet gentle way to improve your health. If you haven't heard of them or tried them, you'll enjoy realizing a whole new world of benefits. You can use them in herbal teas, extracts, and in foods. Adaptogenic herbs can change your life for the better! Many of my client's report feeling more in control of their lives with less stressors when they take adaptogenic herbs and mushrooms.

Some of the most popular adaptogenic herbs are Holy basil (Ocimum sanctum), Astragalus (Astragalus membranaceus), Ashwagandha (Withania somnifera), Eleutherococcus senticosus (Siberian ginseng), Rhodiola rosea (Arctic root), and Schisandra chinensis, and Cordyceps mushrooms. Each herb has different functions to support your body. Contact me for a more comprehensive list if necessary.

- **American ginseng** (Panax quinquefolius)  
Helps to boost memory, reaction time, calmness, and the immune system.
- **Ashwagandha** (Withania somnifera)  
Helps to reduce stress and anxiety. It has a positive effect on the endocrine, nervous, immune and cardiovascular systems by regulating your metabolism and helping you relax by calming how your brain responds to stress.
- **Astragalus** (Astragalus membranaceus)  
Works to help combat fatigue and boost immune system.
- **Cordyceps** (Cordyceps militaris)  
Works to help boost endurance.
- **Goji berry** (Lycium barbarum)  
Boosts energy, physical and mental functioning, calmness, and feeling of well-being, and can also help to improve sleep and restfulness.
- **Eleuthero root** (Eleutherococcus senticosus)

Improves focus and reduces mental fatigue.

- **Licorice root** (Glycyrrhiza glabra)  
Helps to reduce feelings of stress.
- **Rhodiola rosea** (R. rosea)  
Helps to reduce physical and mental fatigue.
- **Schisandra berry/Magnolia berry** (Schisandra chinensis)  
Works to boost endurance, mental performance, and working functions.
- **Tulsi/Holy basil** (Ocimum sanctum)  
Decreases physical and mental stress, stress-related anxiety, and depression.
- **Turmeric** (Curcuma longa)  
Works to boost brain function and reduce depression. Also helps with inflammation, whether the inflammation has a physical, mechanical or stress linked cause, by nourishing the system.

Adaptogenic herbs are just one form of herbal remedies you may want to try. It's important to be safe, contact a care provider and get more education if you have questions. Some herbs can interact or have contraindication with certain medications, so it's important to avoid taking them without consultation. Stress is a major cause of so many severe and chronic diseases. Lessen your stress and fortify your health with adaptogenic herbs! At Oyate Herbals, we carry a wide variety of adaptogenic herbs to fit your desired needs. Please feel free to reach out and ask questions. We are always available to help you live a more healthy, happy lifestyle.

Mitákuyepi Anpétu wašté (Good day relatives)  
Many Blessings and May you walk in balance on your path.  
You may reach Oyate Herbals LLC at 719-661-0410 or oyateherbals@aol.com



# UTE COUNTRY NEWS

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# 2025 Gold Camp Country Christmas

## JOIN IN THE HOLIDAY FUN THIS YEAR IN CRIPPLE CREEK!

### Holiday Silent Auction

Starting November 24th through December 5th, organizations and individuals will be bringing in their decorated Christmas trees, wreaths and baskets for the annual Holiday Silent Auction fundraiser.

**Please volunteer to decorate a tree, wreath or basket!**

You can place bids on your favorites through December 13th.

All funds raised go to the Community of Caring. Contact the Aspen Mine Center at 719-689-3584 or visit [www.cocamc.org](http://www.cocamc.org) for entry forms.



Aspen Mine Center at 166 E. Bennett Ave. Cripple Creek  
719-689-3584 X110 or visit [www.cocamc.org](http://www.cocamc.org)

### Winter Wonderland Community Christmas Party

Join us at the annual Winter Wonderland Reception held this year on December 11 3:30 to 6:30 at the Aspen Mine Center in Cripple Creek. Walk through our beautifully decorated winter wonderland to bid on trees, wreaths, and gift baskets. Enjoy great food and sip hot drinks to the sounds of SilverWood Flute & Guitar Duo.

### Soup for the Soul and Cookie Contest

This annual fundraiser pits staff against staff, friends against friends, and everyone against everyone else in this fun annual cooking event. Contestants pay \$5 to enter their best bowl or cookies and tasters pay \$5 to get a sampling of all the goodies. Stop in the Aspen Mine Center Friday, December 12th from 11:30 to 1:30 to indulge your taste buds.

### Christmas Craft Fair

The CC Parks and Rec will be hosting the annual holiday craft fair from 9 to 3 on Saturday, December 13th. Over 30 vendors will 166 E. showcase their unique creations so you can find the perfect gift.

### Gold Camp Country Christmas Day

Enjoy hot chocolate, cider and S'mores at the Aspen Mine Center beginning at 11 am before the start of the annual parade kicking off at Noon down Bennett Avenue. Enjoy a variety of entries. Santa will disembark his sleigh at the Aspen Mine Center. Be sure to stop out to see our famous Cripple Creek Donkeys in their winter pasture! Precautions are in place to protect them from Equine Herpes Virus. Please don't visit if you've been around other equine in the past 30 days. Use hand sanitizer and limit your visit to 30 minutes at the pasture.

### Colorado Springs Chorale Holiday Concert

December 13th at 3:30 residents and visitors alike are invited to the Cripple Creek Baptist Church to enjoy the sounds of the Colorado Spring Chorale, performing their annual holiday concert. The church is located at 137 N 1st Street, just a block north of Bennett Ave. No ticket is needed. A donation to the Aspen Mine Center is requested as this is one of their annual fundraisers for the holidays.





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## Celebrate Gold Camp Country Christmas for a Season Full of Fun

by Tracie Bennett

It's tough every holiday season to decide what to do, what to focus on, who to buy for, how to celebrate. The list goes on and on. The Aspen Mine Center Christmas Committee help each year to take some of the pressure off with a great selection of holiday activities for the whole family.

Kicking off the season, join in the fun decorating for the holiday season at the annual Holiday Silent Auction at the Aspen Mine Center in Cripple Creek. Through December 5th, organizations and individuals will be bringing in their decorated Christmas trees, wreaths and baskets for the annual Holiday Silent Auction fundraiser. Items will be displayed in the Aspen Mine Center and can be bid on through December 13th. All funds raised go to the Community of Caring. Tree themes last year ranged from Elmo to a Mexican Train! Contact the Aspen Mine Center at 719-689-3584 or visit [www.cocamc.org](http://www.cocamc.org) to get your entry form. A \$500 prize will be awarded to the winner! Volunteer to decorate a tree, wreath or basket this year.

The Winter Wonderland Community Christmas Party and Reception will be held this year on December 11 at the Aspen Mine Center. The holiday trees will be decorated and lit. Wreaths and baskets will also help fill the room with Christmas cheer. These items are part of the silent auction that takes place to raise funds for the Aspen Mine Center holiday activities. Vote for your favorites! Enjoy great food and sip hot drinks to the sounds of SilverWood Flute & Guitar Duo composed of Treese Kjeldsen and Sherri Kardong. The room was absolutely gorgeous and full of holiday spirit last year!

The annual Soup for the Soul and Greatest Gold Camp Cookie Contests pit staff against staff, friends against friends, and everyone against everyone else at this fun annual cooking event. Contestants pay \$5 to enter their best bowl or cookies and tasters pay \$5 to get a sampling of all the delectable edibles. Competition is fierce. Stop in the Aspen Mine Center Friday, December 12th from 11:30 to 1:30 p.m. to indulge your taste buds and determine who is the best of the best in Cripple Creek this year. I have to admit. I was BARELY beaten in the competition. My

soup entry (made by my in-house chef John) was narrowly edged out by Ted Borden's soup (made by his in-home chef Shelly). This competition will be continued this year!

The Cripple Creek Parks and Rec will be hosting the annual holiday craft fair from 9 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, December 13th. Over 30 vendors will showcase their unique creations so you can find the perfect gift for those hard to buy folks on your list! Items range from handcrafted treasures to delectable treats. If you cannot find a gift here, you're not looking hard enough! There is an amazing selection to choose from.

Gold Camp Country Christmas Day takes place on December 13th. Enjoy hot chocolate, cider and S'mores at the Aspen Mine Center beginning at 11 a.m. before the start of the annual parade kicking off at noon on down Bennett Avenue. Enjoy a variety of entries! Santa will disembark his sleigh at the Aspen Mine Center following the parade. Kids, young and old alike, visit Santa and tell him your holiday wishes while enjoying a great lunch and viewing the collection of trees, wreaths, and baskets in the silent auction. Winners of the auction, as well as parade entries will be recognized at this time.

The day is not over until you enjoy the sounds of the Colorado Springs Chorale at their annual Holiday Concert. At 3:30 p.m. residents and visitors alike are invited to the Cripple Creek Baptist Church where they will perform their annual holiday concert. The church is located at 137 N 1st Street, just a block north of Bennett Ave. The Colorado Springs Chorale presents a concert of holiday selections to benefit the programs of Aspen Mine Center in Cripple Creek. Adam Torres, artistic director, Lee Meyer, assistant conductor, and Joseph Galema, accompanist, lead the chorale in a medley of holiday song. No ticket is needed. Be sure to arrive a little early as the church generally fills up to standing room only. A free-will donation to the Aspen Mine Center is requested as this is one of their annual fundraisers. Holiday cookies and drinks will be served after the concert.

FMI, please reach out to the Aspen Mine Center at 719-689-3584 or visit their web site [www.cocamc.org](http://www.cocamc.org). There's always plenty to do in the Gold Camp of Cripple Creek!

## Cut your own Christmas Tree with BLM Permit

'Tis the season for tree harvesting! The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is now offering permits to cut Christmas trees for personal use in Colorado.

Trees are available only in specific areas of public lands, so be sure to take a map showing where you can cut trees from a local field office or online (<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/1c78107da56347e89a3af4cb05a23657>) ... and check it twice. The cost for each permit is \$8-\$10, and different types of trees are available. Permits can be purchased either online or at most BLM field offices. If you want to call ahead to check when helpers are in the workshop, you can find contact info on the BLM website: <https://www.blm.gov/office/colorado-state-office>

While you are making a list, the BLM suggests bringing a handsaw, eye protection, rope or twine, extra food, water, and blankets. It's

also a good idea to have tire chains, a shovel, and emergency supplies just in case. Lastly, be sure to use a map or a device with GPS to make sure you are cutting a tree in an area where it's allowed.

Remember to attach a haul tag to your tree when you take it from BLM lands. After the holidays, please dispose of your tree properly; many communities have compost collection sites for Christmas trees.

## Adopt Me by Ark Valley Humane Society

### Freya

In August of this year, Ark-Valley Humane Society received a call from the Chaffee County Sheriff's Office, requesting help with a local neglect situation. This recovery included a 2 year-old German Shepherd mix named Freya. The AVHS team poured their energy into helping Freya and the other animals from the home, providing medical care, safe and loving shelter, and gentle encouragement to heal not just physically, but emotionally. Despite coming from difficult circumstances, Freya has embraced staff, volunteers, and other shelter dogs with her friendly and playful demeanor. She was recently placed in a loving foster home where she is enjoying going on adventures and soaking up all the love. Freya is searching for an adoptive home filled with patience, compassion, kisses, and a warm bed to call her own. Ark-Valley Humane Society hopes that this sweet girl finds a home just as special as she is. If you would like to schedule a meet and greet with Freya, please give us a call at 719-395-2737.

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



## A Look Inside the Artist Irene Shonle, watercolorist

by Mary Shell

I have been finding more watercolor artists these days. I can see how Irene can be taken by the beautiful landscapes we have here in Colorado, and watercolor seems to be the best medium to express its beauty. To begin painting can be challenging when you start at 50 years old... unless you have no or little fear of failing. To see being creative as a joy is a blessing. I look forward to seeing Irene's work progress.

### How old were you when you first started painting?

I was in my early 50s when I decided I wanted to try painting as a creative outlet.

### What's your favorite medium?

I enjoy painting with watercolor. I originally chose it because I liked many of the paintings I saw in watercolor, and because it was easy to clean up and not smelly. I was living in a somewhat remote area in the mountains at the time, and didn't have easy access to any classes, so I decided to learn on my own. I checked out a whole bunch of books from the library and started painting.

### What is your favorite subject?

My favorite subject is landscapes, and I am particularly inspired by moments of beautiful light. The way the sun comes through trees, the orange cast of the mountains at dawn, the long blue shadows in the early morning light. I walk with my dog every morning on the trails and take many of my reference photos on our walks. Sometimes I take so many, my dog has to be patient with me (usually I have to be patient with her sniffing). I will never get tired of the early light and feel blessed that I have amazing trails to walk every day. I also like to paint plants and scenes from the higher mountains when I hike them.

### Can you explain your process?

Although I do paint some plein air, I am much more likely to paint from a photo I have taken — the photo keeps the light from changing on me while I paint. Because I'm on a constant quest to capture the light exactly right, I often have to try painting a painting several times, experimenting with colors and techniques. To be honest, I've never been totally satisfied that I've fully captured the light, but it keeps me trying! I paint at my kitchen table with my computer or phone in front of me as a reference. I am working on trying not to paint exactly what I see, but to rearrange the painting as needed to be a better painting — as Curt Gillespie once said, "you not only have the right to rearrange what you see, you have a responsibility to the painting to do so."

### Who inspires you to create?

After I hit a plateau where I got frustrated at not being able to create the scenes I had in mind, so I gave up for about 5 years. Then we moved to Cañon City, and the art shows at the Fremont Center for the Arts encouraged me



to start painting again. I loved how inclusive they were, and how many community members contributed to the shows. I was absolutely terrified the first time I put a piece in a show — I had never done anything like that before, and it took a lot of courage. I enjoy the challenge of meeting the theme of the show each month — it stretches me to try new subjects.

### Who's your favorite artist?

I have a lot of favorite artists — I think I'm most inspired by Stephen Quiller, Maynard Dixon and Walter Uffer.

### Is there anything new in your future?

I will keep exploring ideas, color, light. Maybe I'll try mounting my paintings without glass, using wax finish instead, to avoid the glare.

### What haven't you tried that you would like to do in art?

I am a bit tempted to try acrylics or oils, because there are some techniques and gestural strokes that you can only do with an opaque medium. I particularly love how rocks look when painted with a palette knife. I may try doing some mixed media pieces as I explore the possibilities. I feel like there is so much to explore and learn, and that I will always be a student when it comes to art.

### What is your favorite painting that you made?

My favorite painting I've done is probably the Arkansas river at sunrise, when the orange morning light was on full display.

### What is it that you want people to see in



### your art?

I want people to feel like my art brings them to a specific place and time — and brings them a bit of happiness. I want people to see the beauty in this world, and to remember to look around and cherish all the astonishing gifts that nature brings us.

### How do you choose your subjects?

Usually there is something that speaks to me — perhaps the light, perhaps a plant, perhaps a mountain range. It's always beauty that calls to me.

### Do you create a story with your paintings?

No, I don't particularly create a story. I think it's more a mood or a moment than a story.

You can find Irene on Facebook, and you can contact Mary Shell at [creatingfromthesoul@yahoo.com](mailto:creatingfromthesoul@yahoo.com)

## Community Partnership's Outcomes Recognized Nationally

by Jodi Mijares

Community Partnership Family Resource Center (CP) is proud to announce that its groundbreaking Return on Investment (ROI) While many social service programs faced potential cuts, the Senate recommended not to reduce this funding, pointing directly to results from Teller County's own Community Partnership Family Resource Center. The Senate report references Teller County's outcomes as evidence to maintain support for the block grant. Full report (page 216): [https://mcusercontent.com/ed250daa64bb471a0a16ac92e2c/files/7efca81-7e59-a738-175a-5e7ca62aff01/fy26\\_lhhs\\_senate\\_report.01.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/ed250daa64bb471a0a16ac92e2c/files/7efca81-7e59-a738-175a-5e7ca62aff01/fy26_lhhs_senate_report.01.pdf)

"To see our local outcomes reflected in national policy conversations is deeply meaningful. It shows that small, community-driven organizations can have a measurable impact on how our nation supports families. Our work in Teller County proves that investing in prevention and connection doesn't just change lives, it transforms systems." — Jodi Mijares, President & CEO, Community Partnership Family Resource Center.

Year-end giving is here! Please support

outcomes when deciding to preserve funding for the Social Services Block Grant, a key national program supporting family services. While many social service programs faced potential cuts, the Senate recommended not to reduce this funding, pointing directly to results from Teller County's own Community Partnership Family Resource Center. The Senate report references Teller County's outcomes as evidence to maintain support for the block grant. Full report (page 216): [https://mcusercontent.com/ed250daa64bb471a0a16ac92e2c/files/7efca81-7e59-a738-175a-5e7ca62aff01/fy26\\_lhhs\\_senate\\_report.01.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/ed250daa64bb471a0a16ac92e2c/files/7efca81-7e59-a738-175a-5e7ca62aff01/fy26_lhhs_senate_report.01.pdf)

"To see our local outcomes reflected in national policy conversations is deeply meaningful. It shows that small, community-driven organizations can have a measurable impact on how our nation supports families. Our work in Teller County proves that investing in prevention and connection doesn't just change lives, it transforms systems." — Jodi Mijares, President & CEO, Community Partnership Family Resource Center.


Year-end giving is here! Please support

CP's efforts by visiting [www.coloradogives.org/CPFRC](http://www.coloradogives.org/CPFRC) to donate. This year, we need your partnership more than ever. Your gift helps ensure that families have access to essential resources and the support they need to thrive. Direct your gift to the services that matter most to you, whether that's early childhood programming, parenting support, or emergency resources for families in crisis. Together, we can strengthen families for a stronger community.

At Community Partnership Family Resource Center (CP), we believe every family, however it's defined, deserves the opportunity to thrive. CP provides a welcoming, supportive space that meets families where they are and helps them reach their full potential. CP is rooted in the belief that strong families build strong communities. Through playgroups, parenting classes, community gardening, and other opportunities, CP offers over 20 free or low-cost programs that foster connection, belonging, and shared growth. Most events include free meals and childcare, making it easier for families to participate and build lasting relationships.

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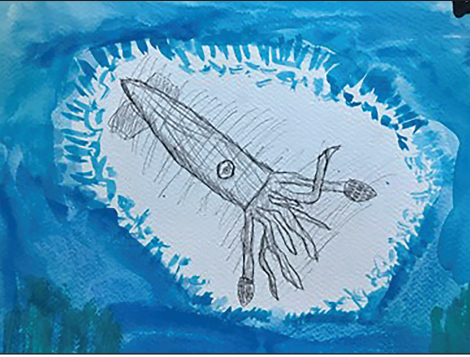
The Amazing Fossil [Pachyteuthis densus]

by Brody Dymond

The *Pachyteuthis densus* was the fossil of a belemnite found in the Upper Sundance formation in Buffalo, Wyoming. Belemnites were a type of squid that lived many years ago. Belemnites evolved to have a different way of protecting themselves from other types of marine animals. They were fast swimmers! Instead of having an external shell, their shell was internal, which helped them speed through the water to escape from predators. The internal shell of a belemnite is the part that was fossilized. There are three parts of the internal shell: the pro-ostracum, the phragmocone, and the rostrum.

A group of belemnites was called a battle-field. The average size of the belemnites when they were alive was 30-50 centimeters long. Belemnites could be found worldwide in shallow waters close to the shore. Belemnites ate small fish, other marine animals, and possibly other belemnites.

The belemnite's tentacles did not have suction cups like squid today. Instead, they had curved hooks. While squids today have eight arms, the belemnites had 10 arms and on each arm were 30-50 curved hooks. They used the hooks on their arms to capture and eat small marine animals. While some squids today are



A concept of what *Pachyteuthis densus* looked like when it was alive. Artwork by B. Dymond.

the same size as belemnites, some squids can get much bigger. For example, colossal squid can get up to 14 meters (46 feet) long!

The belemnites went extinct at the end of the Cretaceous Period roughly 65.5 million years ago. They died around the same time as the dinosaurs.

**About Brody Dymond**

Brody is 12 years old and is in 6th grade. He has been involved with Pebble Pups for over three years. He has a keen interest in rocks, fossils, and also enjoys being outdoors, biking on trails, robotics, engineering, art, gaming, and Legos. He is currently a Scout from Troop 131 in Suttons Bay, Michigan. Brody is a member of the Grand Traverse Area Rock and Mineral Club and helps the Pebble Pups' leader Steven Veatch.




Image of the *Pachyteuthis densus* study specimen. Photo date 2024 by B. Dymond.

**Donkey Visits this December**

by Tracie Bennitt

Some of my favorite mammals reside in Cripple Creek. Always happy to see if you have a treat in hand, the Cripple Creek Donkeys are a major attraction in the Gold Camp region. In light of a current virus outbreak, certain guidelines have been put in place to protect them this holiday season.

Two Mile High Club (TMHC) wants to inform the public regarding donkey visits at this time. There is currently an outbreak of Equine Herpes Virus (EHV) affecting Colorado and surrounding states. TMHC has a top priority of caring for and protecting the Cripple Creek Donkey herd. "The donkeys will not be making an appearance in the Gold Camp Parade this year," stated TMHC president Brandon Westoff. "It's important that we limit opportunities for them to come in contact with people who may have interacted with infected horses." The donkey herd will be kept in their winter pasture where people can visit and interact with them.

Some of the rules now in place include not visiting the donkeys if you've been around other horses in the last 30 days. The outbreak appears to have initiated in Waco, Texas and

has spread from there according to the state Department of Agriculture site. The virus is spread from horse to horse through contact with nasal discharge or spread as aerosol droplets. Infected horses may not show clinical signs of the virus but may still act as carriers.

"This outbreak serves as a reminder of the potential disease risks associated with large commingling equine events. It highlights the need for all horse owners to practice strong biosecurity and report any concerning signs to their veterinarian quickly," said Colorado State Veterinarian Dr. Maggie Baldwin.

Visitors who have not been in contact with other equine in the past 30 days are welcome to visit at the winter pasture. TMHC is asking that folks only stay about 30 minutes so that there is an opportunity for all to visit. Hand sanitizer will be provided at the feeding platform or use your own. Following these guidelines is essential in ensuring the safety of the herd.

Visit [www.cripplecreekdonkeys.com](http://www.cripplecreekdonkeys.com) to keep up to date on what the donkeys are up to.

**Green Mountain Falls Celebrates the Holiday Season with Annual Yule Days**

by Margaret Morris

Come and join us in Green Mountain Falls for a weekend filled with community, fellowship, and a joyful celebration of the season!

This year, enjoy a holiday craft fair at the Sallie Bush Building on Saturday/Sunday, Dec. 6 & 7. Carolers, craft activities for the whole family, visits with Santa, Yule Log Hunt and the annual tree lighting at Gazebo Park will take place Sunday, Dec 7.

Yule Days is collaboratively presented by Green Box Arts, Building Ute Pass Community, Town of Green Mountain Falls, Cantina Verde, Outlook Lodge, Church in the Wild-wood, Colorado Horse Hay, and Elite Equine.

**Yule Days highlights include:**

- Craft Fair and Bake Sale at Sallie Bush


**Building**

- Saturday: 9-4 p.m.
- Sunday: 10-3 p.m.

■ **Yule Events Sunday: 1-6 p.m.**

- 1-3 p.m. Ornament Painting and Santa at Green Box Campus
- 2-4 p.m. Photos w/Horses and Santa, Crafts at Horse Wellness Meadow
- 3 p.m. Yule Log Hunt and Bigfoot Race at Horse Wellness Meadow
- 3-5 p.m. Cookie Decorating and Santa at Church in the Wildwood
- 5:15 p.m. Tree Lighting at Gazebo Park
- Nite Caps and S'mores after Tree Lighting at Green Box Campus

Admission is free and open to the public.



**Fitness ON the Mountain**

Travel fitness tips

by Lori Martin

This is a great time to share some of my favorite travel fitness tips. The following tips are geared for any fitness level and can help those with mobility issues, as well.

Whether you are traveling, have an acute injury, are recovering from surgery or have one or more chronic conditions, there are things we can do to reduce loss of muscle mass. I dislike sitting still for long periods of time. On long trips I have found tricky ways to:

- Increase my energy level
- Decrease stress
- Maintain muscle mass
- Decrease soreness and/or stiffness
- Satisfied my antsy pants tendency

While it is easier to execute most of these exercises as a passenger while traveling, a few can apply to the driver, as well. The most important factor as driver is safety.

**Side note:** The movement obsessed person that I am feels compelled to mention the physical benefits of my favorite past-time, singing while traveling. The two biggest benefits I have experienced:

1. Building strength and power for the lungs, in turn, increases circulation and enhances overall good health of our bodies at the cellular level.
2. Engaging the core muscles during each exhale (Co-Contracting the abdominals and the muscles of the back, equally) is great training for posture and movement, particularly when exercising. Always inhale with the resting phase and exhale, co-contracting the entire core with the exertion phase whether singing, swinging a golf club, going into that yoga pose or working out in the gym.

**MOVEMENT**

- Moving the body or exercising in any vehicle of transport may be frowned upon by other passengers or the driver.

**ISOMETRIC EXERCISE**

Isometric exercise is exercise without movement or subtly contracting and releasing one or more muscle groups at a time. Isometric exercises are an important component of developing strength, are helpful in everyday life and often neglected. For safety's sake and in consideration of our fellow travelers you'll find that with use of the car seat, a Pilates ball, a pillow or a tote bag, we can re-create most exercises done in a gym or fitness class. Your focus will be resistance, core strength and breathing.

**As we age, isometric exercises:**

- Enhance the quality of all movements.
- Prepare our body in a more functional way for life.
- Are less stress on the joints than traditional flexion/extension exercises.

**BREATHE**

- Proper oxygen consumption = energy. Oxygen is a necessary component of all forms of exertion.

**HYDRATION**

- Drink more water than you're used to drinking

**POSTURE**

- Slide the tailbone all the way back on the seat.
- Weight equally distributed on both "SIT" bones aka Ischial Tuberosities.
- Align the ear, the shoulders and the hips.
- Tailbone, shoulder blades and head touch the back of the seat.
- Head rests often push our head forward, out of neutral alignment. Placing a small pillow or ball between our shoulder blades and our seat to correct forward head. Using a ball to fill that void and correct neutral posture should be in moderation. The ball is an unstable object and will respond to any and all movements/vibrations. Each vibration triggers the muscles to respond with micro contractions. Great for improving core strength, but may result in overworking muscles of your back or may irritate a neck injury, etc.
- The sternum or breastbone should face


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- Start with 3 repetitions each and gradually increase.
- Continue breathing as described above and engage the entire core.
- Train your breathing with everyday activity to include your core (abs and back) until it becomes habit. Inhale before resistance and exhale during resistance.

to the ball from your lower leg. HOLD. Breathe.

**ABDUCTORS — OUTSIDE OF LEG**

- Knee bent.
- Ball between the outside of the thigh and the door and/or center console.
- On exhale, lift sternum, apply resistance to the ball. HOLD. Breathe.

**ADDUCTOR — INSIDE LEG**

- Feet flat on floor/ knees bent.
- Ball between the knees.
- On exhale, lift sternum, apply resistance to the ball equally with both legs. HOLD. Breathe.

**CALVES — GASTROCNEMIUS AND SOLEUS**

- Feet flat on floor/knees bent.
- Toes facing forward.
- Place ball in between knees or calves.
- On exhale, lift sternum, simultaneously:
  - raise heels off the ground while pressing balls of feet into the floor.
  - apply resistance to the ball (no HOLD)
  - 20 - 30 reps
  - "up for 2, down for 2"

**CORE — ABDOMINALS AND BACK**

- Co-Contract core muscles.
- Place ball between your back and the back of the seat around the shoulder blades.
- Without pushing through your legs on exhale, lift sternum, apply resistance. HOLD. Breathe.
  - The spine stays in neutral throughout.
  - The spine should not round forward or arch backward.

**TECHNOLOGY**

The App "Peak Fit Pro" looks a little intimidating, even for me but, if you want some guidance for isometric exercises in general, it appears to have a wide variety.

The App "Isometrics Head Exercise" is not really about strengthening the head but, will most likely, help strengthen imbalances in the muscles of the neck by applying resistance to various points on the head.

ChatGPT - Believe it or not, is training novice trainers how to train you. I'm still learning how to create documents and have not embraced it to help me improve my life.

**CHEST**

- Both elbows in right angle in front of the chest.
- Elbow bent at a right angle.
- Forearms and hands pointed up.
- Back of forearms from wrist to elbow in contact with the seat back.
- On exhale, lift sternum, apply resistance. HOLD. Breathe.

**BACK**

- Place your ball between the back of your upper right arm and the back of the seat.
- Arm bent at right angle with elbows slightly in front of your hips.
- On exhale, lift sternum, press back of the upper arm into the ball. HOLD. Breathe.
- Repeat on left arm.

**QUADRICEPS — FRONT**

- Place small ball under the back of the leg.
- Extend the leg out with knee slightly bent.
- On exhale, lift sternum, apply resistance downward into the ball. HOLD. Breathe. (The heel should lift off the floor a few inches).

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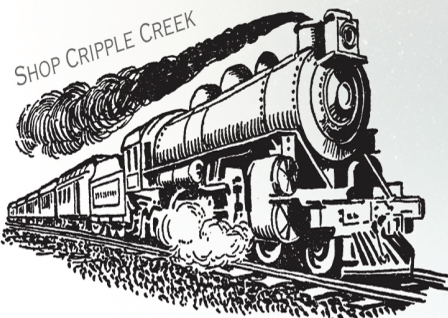
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## Grand Marshals Exude Community Service

by Tracie Bennitt

Woodland Park Grand Marshals are full of service that they have provided to the community for a number of years. Having worked personally with both of them for many years, I can personally attest to their characters and willingness to make our community a better place to live.

This year's Grand Marshals are local business owner Gail Wingerd and Woodland Park City Employee Cindy Keating. Both have contributed to the area for well over 30 years.

Gail Wingerd has been an integral participant in Teller County businesses since moving to the area in 1998 from Kansas. Starting her business, Creative Concepts, Gail specialized in creating and providing marketing solutions for local businesses. As a result, she has assisted numerous start-up businesses by helping them to grow their companies.

Volunteerism is a big part of Gail's personality. One of the founding members of Teller Business Builders, Gail has interacted and assisted many local business owners in the building of their enterprises. "It's been over 20 years and is still going strong," she said. Gail participated on the board of Lighter Side of Christmas from 2006 to 2022. She was instrumental in organizing the check-in area for the parade entrants, making sure there was a clear, cohesive flow to the line-up for each year's parade. From 2007 to 2022 Gail worked each year with Symphony Above the Clouds, an annual event attended by people from not only local, but surrounding areas, to enjoy the celebration of July 4th and the birthday of the country. Held on July 5th each year, hundreds of people engaged with the musicians building up to the War of 1812 Overture and live fireworks and cannon firings.

From 2014 to 2022, Gail served as the Board scribe and was part of the Promotions Committee for the original Woodland Park Main Street Program. From 2018 to 2022, she was the WP Main Street Program Manager.

This position allowed her to interact personally with businesses located in the Main Street perimeter, staying up to date on the wants and needs of the community and becoming a spokesperson for them in the process.

"My real passion has always been to help other people meet their goals," she said. "I want to help them have their passions become reality through my service to them." Gail continues in her efforts to provide excellent customer service working with not only businesses, but also civic organizations and non-profits in the area. Gail Wingerd is definitely an asset to our community.

Cindy Keating and her husband, Kipp, moved here in 1991. She has worked for the City of Woodland Park for 32 years, the last 26 or so in the Parks and Rec Department. "My favorite part of this job is coming up with programs and events that the community will enjoy," she stated. "I love providing these things for the community."

Originally from Minnesota, the Midwest work ethic has followed her here. Cindy works on new programs each year. The most recent adventure was a collaboration with Community Partnership creating a garden center at City Hall. "I was able to get the space, the water as well as help with promotions of the garden," she said. Staff shortages kept her from personally gardening, but she plans on learning how to grow herbs and vegetables next year. "I did get to try some salsa made from the garden and have to admit, it was pretty good," she said.

Cindy and Kipp love to be outside. Their favorite activities are biking, hiking, ATVs and camping. "If it's outside, we love to do it," she added. She keeps Kipp, who's retired, busy with an ongoing Honey Do list.

Woodland Park should be proud of these two women and the contributions they have made to our community.

## Free Gun Safe Giveaway Event

by BoulderCounty.gov

The free gun safe giveaway event, held on October 18th in Boulder, Colorado, was a resounding success. The event, a collaborative effort between the Boulder Rotary Club, the YMCA of Northern Colorado, the District Attorney's Office, and Boulder Community Health (BCH), saw an overwhelming response from the community. The event was hosted at the BCH Foothills Campus.

These giveaway events promote gun safety and responsible firearm storage within the community. The initiative has been met with strong enthusiasm from the public, attracting hundreds of residents who are eager to obtain secure storage solutions for their firearms. Every gun safe that is given away reduces the likelihood of a needless tragedy, whether it be suicide or a stolen gun used in a violent crime.

Approximately \$20,000 had been raised by the Boulder Rotary Club and from generous community members to support the event. This funding allowed for the distribution of 260 home safes, 250 car safes, and approximately 150 cable locks. Together, we distributed 510 gun safes in 20 minutes. Attendees also received educational materials on firearm safety and were provided with the opportunity to receive free Narcan.

Over 40 volunteers contributed to the success of the event, including 24 Rotarians, 11 students from Fairview High School, District Attorney Michael Dougherty and DA staff, CU students with Students Demand Ac-

tion, and staff from the YMCA of Northern Colorado, Boulder Community Health, and Boulder County.

This effort is part of a broader campaign to reduce gun-related incidents and ensure that firearms are kept out of the hands of unauthorized users, especially kids. Since 2022, our gun safe giveaway events have distributed nearly 1500 home safes, 1200 car safes, and over 1500 cable locks.

District Attorney Michael Dougherty said: "This was one of the best days ever. Our office vigorously prosecutes gun cases, fights for sensible reforms, and helps gun owners to secure their weapons. With the help of our incredible community partners, these gun safe giveaways allow us to respect one's constitutional right to possess a firearm while enhancing the community's ability to be safe from gun violence and mass shootings."

Another gun safe giveaway event was planned for Veteran's Day at Roosevelt Community Park in Longmont from noon-2 p.m. Our community partners hope to continue these extraordinarily successful events and will be seeking additional financial support for the purchase of more safes.

FMI about gun safety resources, please visit the District Attorney's Office Gun Safety website at <https://bouldercounty.gov/district-attorney/gun-safety/>

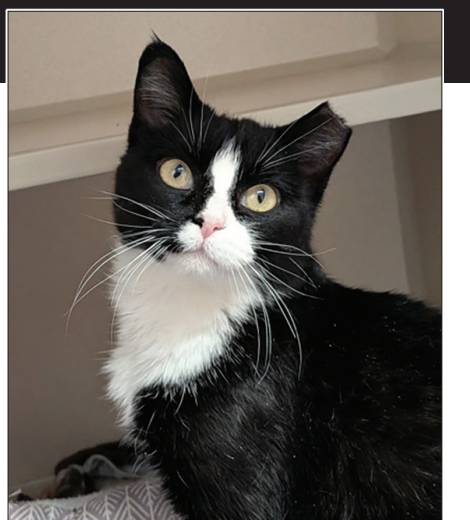
## Adopt Us

by TCRAS

### Saffron

Hello, my name is Saffron, and I am on the hunt for a place to call home. I came into the shelter because I was found outside with my kittens. Since coming into TCRAS, I have really come out of my shell. If I could pick the perfect home it would have a lot of toys to play with, a person who will give me time to become comfortable in my new home and a sunny window to watch the birds. If you would like to see how cute I am in person, please call TCRAS at 719-686-7707 and let them know you want to meet me.

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



## Colorado Pharmgirl Wind Under our Wings

by Peggy Badgett

Traveling solo can be intimidating. So, when a friend called one day and said he was going to back out of his vacation with his son, daughter-in-law, and two grandchildren, I convinced him to go despite his fears. Then, I ended up as his plus one. In exchange for my passage, I would help babysit his granddaughters. Three months later, I found myself boarding an enormous boat in Galveston, Texas with him and his family.

The first leg of our Caribbean adventure was driving from Colorado to the port. On the way, we hiked Palo Duro Canyon. The area was beautiful and Texas-style enormous. When we arrived in Galveston, I met the family. They immediately welcomed me like a long lost aunt. While my friend reconnected with his crew after a wonderful dinner, I walked the surf until moonlight shimmered over the water. Our hotel was directly across the street from the beach, and everyone was in their rooms when I returned.

I snuck back to the shore before sunrise the next day and checked the lone star state off my skinny-dipping list. It was too dark for anyone to film it on their phones. At least I hoped so. After showering the salt water off my skin, I met up with our excited group at breakfast. Then we caravanned to the cruise port parking area and boarded our ship. Crew members unloaded countless food pallets onto the boat, along with all the luggage for 6,000 passengers.

The cabin my friend had reserved was quite spacious and featured an ocean view balcony. Our first challenge was sleeping arrangements; there was only one bed. After some thought, we decided to drag the futon mattress from the couch onto the balcony. With extra blankets and pillows, it created a cozy nest where the stars and water lulled me to sleep every night. Sharing the communal space went smoothly because both of us had packed lightly.

There were three ports of call we visited, but none were considered safe enough to venture out alone. Wandering the shops wasn't my thing; after the first one every T-shirt, trinket and jewelry shop looked the same. Vendors were extremely aggressive and best handled with no eye contact and murmured "no thank-yous." I was feeling disconnected from the natural world until we docked at Rauton, Honduras before sunrise. Three great egrets preened on one of the pool canopies as I walked to the top deck for my morning yoga practice. During sun salutations, I was delighted to spot a small raptor-like bird swooping around the ship. A nighthawk? ! finished my poses, sat on a deck chair, and watched him until he disappeared into the daylight.

Spending hours with his family on the water slides, in the pools, and at the carousel made the days fly by. The enthusiasm of the little kids was infectious. I rediscovered that two-year-olds and five-year-olds required quite a bit of energy. But the girls were adorable. I resuscitated rusty old "Mom" tools like "I spy" and "Ten questions" to occupy them at mealtime. A sketch pad and waterproof markers came in clutch. My friend and I babysat while his son and daughter-in-law went on a snorkel excursion, which turned out to be a great day for all. Holding little hands. Wiping faces. Carrying kids on my hip. Constant scanning the kiddie pool to keep them in sight, and of course fetching ice cream (we made sure to elevate their blood sugars before delivering the girls back to their parents.) When I needed time alone, my friend understood. I was free to jog the running track, chill in the adult solarium, and write in quiet coffee shop corners.

The food was very good, and quite plentiful. My favorites were the baklava, flounder, and tiramisu. The fresh fruit and rolls were also amazing. Chefs and waiters worked tirelessly to take care of everyone and help entertain the little ones. There were options to graze almost every hour of the day. If not for taking the stairs constantly, I would have easily put on five pounds. On Halloween day, the creativity of the adult and children's costumes wowed everyone.

The adventure was a different experience for me; most of my vacations over the last 20 years have centered around visiting my kids or traveling with them to new destinations. Every trip has created precious memories, and I treasure those times together. My children have opened my eyes to the world around me: Hannah with her birding skills, Alex via snowboarding and rock climbing, and Amie who dedicates countless hours volunteering with worthwhile organizations. My friend gifted me a glimpse into life with grandchildren.

The final morning of the cruise, I settled onto a chaise lounge at the very front of the ship. A monarch butterfly fluttered madly above me, trapped between the clear plexiglass ceiling and support beams. I watched it for a few minutes; flying, resting, flying, resting. Several other passengers commented about it. There was an opening a few panels away, and I silently willed the butterfly to find it. But it just kept smashing into the same spot.

There were no crew members in sight. So, I went on a hunt for something to help the distressed creature. I spotted a cleaning cart in a corner with a long wooden-handled squeegee, carried it back to my chair, and held it up next to the butterfly. She ignored it and bashed into the window. I moved the handle closer. No luck. Everyone in the area was watching now. I held the long stick still, hoping. Finally, the butterfly gripped it. Holding my breath, I slowly moved the handle until the Monarch flew through the opening and out into the sky. Everyone in the hot tub cheered.

The cruise had been fun, eye-opening to life with grandchildren. But having some with my bloodline isn't a requirement for my happiness. Bringing babies into this changing, com-

plex world is a far different experience from when I chose parenthood. If my kids decide not to procreate, I support them wholeheartedly. I still get to be "wild Aunt Peg" to all my friends' little ones. Every creature has a purpose in life, and every positive action we take means something to someone. Even if it is as seemingly insignificant as helping a butterfly find wind under her wings.

Peggy Badgett is an artist and writer. She has several years' worth of adventures you can read for free on her website [pharmgirl.org](http://pharmgirl.org), and can be reached at [coloradopharmgirl@gmail.com](mailto:coloradopharmgirl@gmail.com). Her book, Rooster in the Drive-Through is available for sale at Shipping Plus in Divide.



Peggy and crew on the ship (above).

Cover: Peggy plays on the Galveston surf.

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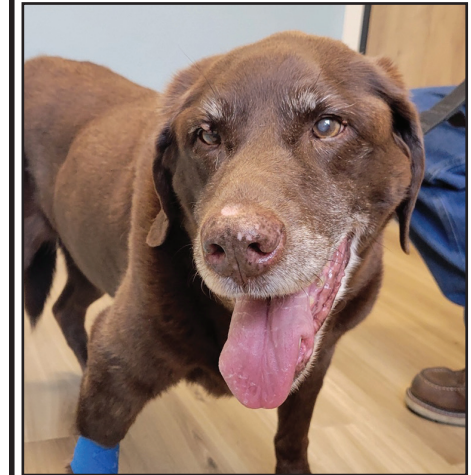


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# The Kiss of the Christmas Dragon

by Gilrund the Historian

Freddy the fox was wandering through the meadow in the white snow that blended with his new white fur looking for something to eat when he saw Marvin the moose. "Hi, Marvin," he called as Marvin looked around the meadow for Freddy who was hard to see in the snow. "Oh, there you are, Freddy," replied the moose, "How's the hunting going?" "Not so good right now," replied the white fox, "Everything is sleeping. But I'll find something, I always do."

"I understand," said Marvin, "The grass is hidden under the snow, so I eat the small parts of the trees and bushes. That's enough for me." Marvin started to walk away until Freddy called out, "Are you going to be here when Mistletoe comes this year?" Marvin stopped and thought for a moment. "Why, yes, of course. I had nearly forgotten. Thank you for reminding me. I'll see you then." Marvin walked away toward the frozen stream that still flowed under the ice through the meadow to eat some of the Aspen bark and twigs that stood there.

Harry the hare had been hiding in the bushes near the stream and heard the conversation. He turned to his mate Mary and said, "Did you hear that? Mistletoe will be coming soon. We need to tell the others." Mary's ears suddenly stood tall as she understood what Harry was saying. "Yes, we must tell everyone to be ready for the Christmas celebration."

Harry was eating some Aspen bark he had found as he thought of how long it would be until Mistletoe returned. Then his ears shot up straight as he swallowed the food in his mouth and said, "It's only a few days away. Come on Mary, we have to hurry." The two hares ran off away from the meadow and into the thick woods that grew around the meadow. As they ran, they called out to the other hares that were searching for winter food, reminding them of the coming celebration.

Then those two also ran to remind others of the celebration. Soon there was talk all through the forest and off into the hills. The jay birds and robins were flying to tell the sleepy owls and the wandering turkeys that the Christmas celebration was coming in just a few days. They all knew what had to be done before Mistletoe arrived.

The jay birds and robins soon were flying about looking for human campsites to rob them of the candles that were always there. Sometimes they would take the shiny plastic silverware that was left unattended.

Wendy was just coming out of the tent as Jerry the jay bird grabbed a small candle from the little table that her husband Frank had set up to be used as they spent time camping.

"Go away, you silly bird!" called out Wendy as Jerry flew away with the candle in his beak. "What's going on here?" wondered Wendy as she watched the two birds fly away with the candles in their beaks. "We've never had birds steal our candles before."

"Frank!" she called out as her husband came out of his tent. Billy and Sandy came out of their tent too wondering why mother was yelling.

"What's going on Wendy?" asked Frank as he looked around the campsite. "The birds are stealing our candles," answered Wendy as she pointed to the small table next to the fire pit.

Just then Walter the woodpecker swooped down and grabbed another candle that lay out in the open candle box and took another candle in his claw, then flew off toward the forest.

"Hey!" exclaimed Frank as he waved his hands at the woodpecker that was now

long gone.

Old Josh was sitting next to his fire ring keeping warm as something white slowly slipped up behind him as the sun rose higher in the eastern sky.

Josh used a small tree stump as his table, and his chair was another stump that was near his fire ring. Josh was an old man with lots of experience camping. He loved the wildlife that would approach his camp hoping to get

snow and wondered what the weasel wanted with his plastic silverware.

It was not a big deal, Josh had lots more in the bag in the tent. At least he thought he did. What Josh didn't realize was that while he was out hiking during the day, Shirley the squirrel was in his tent gathering even more shiny things, for the Christmas celebration was coming soon.

Daisy the doe and Stanely the stag were

dryads like to pick the big, majestic trees to live in. Sort of like the humans like to live in big houses. Anyway, this tree hasn't much of a chance of having a dryad making it its home, so it's giving up."

"Do you know where this tree is?" asked Stanley.

"Mindy said it's on the west side of the meadow back away from the stream. Shall we go and look at it?"

Mindy smiled, turned to the little tree and in the dryad speech told him the good news. Stanley went on, "What is your name pine tree?"

Mindy told Stanley that his name was Peter the Pitiful Pine Tree.

"No longer will that be your name," declared Stanley, "From now on your name will be Peter the Proud Pine Tree, and rightfully so. For you have been chosen as the Christ-

the female cones to make pine seeds that will grow into more pine trees.

Peter was a happy tree!

The next day was a busy day for the animals of the forest. The birds, weasels, and squirrels were all over Peter the Proud hanging the shiny things they had gotten from the human camps. There were silvery knives and forks and spoons, polished aluminum plates and bowls, clear plastic glasses, anything that could shine in the light of the sun and wouldn't be missed too much by the human campers.

On each branch stood at least two candles and on the top of the tree was a special glass star that was kept from year to year by Mindy the dryad to be placed on the top of the chosen Christmas tree.

Then came Christmas Eve day. The skies were dark with snow clouds and the snow fell so thick that the animals couldn't see to hunt for food, so they all stayed at home until the time of the celebration.

As the sun went down the snow stopped falling. The whole forest and meadow were covered in beautiful white snow.

Suddenly a large dark shadow moved across the snow and became bigger and darker as Mistletoe, the dragon, flew over the forest to find the Christmas tree that had been picked by the forest animals for the celebration.

In his great talons he carried many small sacks containing the things that the animals loved to eat: seeds, and tree bark, greens from the many plants that grew near rivers, lakes and ponds. There were even carrots for the hares and apples for the deer.

He soon saw the little pine tree that had been chosen. Peter the Proud was covered with the new white snow and from his branches there hung so many shining things, yet on the top of his branches there stood the candles waiting for the Dragon's Kiss.

Mistletoe was, of course, a green dragon, with red spots, to match his name. Not all dragons are green, but he was, and his parents gave him the name of a wonderful green plant, Mistletoe.

As the dragon landed in the snow and walked up to the chosen tree, he dropped the many sacks and left a trail of gifts for the forest animals that all stood at the edge of the forest watching what was about to happen.

A young hare started to run out and grab one of the sacks but was stopped by his mother who whispered to him to wait for the kiss. It was his first time watching the Dragon Kiss, and he didn't understand why he had to wait or what the Dragon Kiss was.

"Just watch!" his mother said as she held his little ears in her paws.

Mistletoe walked up to the tree, then raised his great head and filled the air above the tree with a roaring flame. Then he stepped back and, starting at the top, walked around the tree and with a small gentle flame lit all of the candles that stood tall on the branches until all of the candles were lit. As he stood back, the forest filled with the music of the many singing birds that sat in the surrounding trees.

All of the forest animals, including Mistletoe, bowed their heads in respect for what the tree represented as the birds sang the last song.

Then the many gift sacks were grabbed by the forest animals as Mistletoe revealed his huge dragon smile and took to the air.

He circled the place where all the forest creatures stood eating their Christmas gifts. Then to say "Good-bye" he filled the air with his great dragon flame as he flew away to return again the next year to give the Kiss of the Christmas Dragon.

Merry Christmas

~ The End ~

*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.*



something left out for them.

Josh's camp was where the animals would get the shiny plastic knives and forks that they needed. They would get food on occasion too, for Josh loved the wild creatures and would leave scraps out for them.

The white thing moving slowly through the snow was close to the table now and carefully lifted its head to look at what might be on the table.

There was just what Willy the weasel was looking for. Dressed in his winter coat of white fur he was very hard to see, and he had crawled right next to the table now. He watched as Josh sat and drank his hot coffee and turned to watch as a jay bird sat in a nearby pine tree calling for the other birds to come.

Willy watched as Josh stood and walked over to the tree that the jay bird was in. Then Willy quickly climbed the table stump and grabbed the silver plastic knife and fork that were lying next to the paper plate that had held the fried egg the Josh had just eaten.

Willy jumped down from the table stump with the knife and fork in his mouth and ran through the deep snow back into the forest.

Josh didn't hear Willy jump. When he returned to his seat, he noticed that his knife and fork were missing. Josh looked around and found the tracks that Willy had left in the

walking through the forest looking at the many beautiful pine trees that grew there.

"Well, which do you think will be the best one for the celebration?" asked Shirley as they walked along.

"I really can't decide," answered Stanley, "We have used all different sizes over the years. I'd really like to do something different this year. We have had magnificently tall trees and some that were so full that they looked like a snowball like the humans like to play with."

"I was talking to Mindy the tree dryad yesterday," answered Daisy, "I told her that it was nearly time for the Christmas celebration, that we had to pick a tree for it. She told me that she had been talking to some of the other dryads and they have heard of a tree near the meadow that is very young and because it is very much by itself, it feels that no one cares for it."

"I told her that there are lots of trees that grow by themselves. Why should we concern ourselves with this one? Well, she said that this tree just doesn't want to grow anymore. It's been there for over 10 years and is only five feet tall. But the worst thing is that it doesn't have a dryad living in it."

"I didn't know that the trees loved having dryads living in them. Mindy told me that the

"Let's go," Stanley replied, and off they went.

It was just a few minutes, and the two deer walked up to a small pine tree that had little or no snow on its branches. Those branches that did have a bit of snow on them hung down to the ground. Not because of the weight of the snow, but because the tree was what humans would call depressed.

Stanley looked at the tree and spoke to it and got no response.

"Mindy will have to talk to the tree for you, my dear," said Daisy, "Dryads are good at that."

Just at that point Mindy walked up behind the two deer and pointed to the tree.

"This is the one I told you about Daisy," she said, "See how he is so unhappy?"

"What can we do to help him?" asked Stanley.

Mindy was quiet for a few moments as she spoke to the tree with the Dryad Tree Language.

Mindy turned to the two deer and explained that the little tree felt that he had no purpose in the forest.

Stanley stood and looked at the tree and then said to Mindy, "Tell him that he is very important. For I have chosen him as the Christmas Tree for the celebration this year."

mas Tree of this Year. You shall stand tall and carry all of the decorations that have been gathered by all of the animals that celebrate Christmas each year.

"Should the Creator be willing, you shall be covered in pure white snow in two days. You shall be decorated with many shining things and have many candles on your branches as you await the kiss of the Christmas Dragon.

Mindy turned with a smile on her face and told the little pine tree what she had just heard.

It was just a moment, and the sagging branches were quickly up where they should be, and the fading color of the pine needles was vibrant green as they should be.

Then to top it all off, a young girl dryad, who had been watching from the edge of the forest, approached Peter the Proud and said, "Hello, Peter, I am only a young dryad girl. I have much to learn of the dryad ways, but I would like to make you, my home."

What does a pine tree look like when he is the proudest pine tree in the world? This is how Peter suddenly looked. He was as green as a pine tree could be. His limbs were covered with the small male pinecones that filled the air with the golden color of the pollen grains. Grains that are carried by the wind to

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## Life-Enhancing Journeys Getting ready for the holidays

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

As the holidays approach, many people picture driving to a house decorated with colorful lights. They imagine reuniting with family for joyful and festive celebrations. People look forward to a warm welcome, complete with a big hug, from loved ones they see only once a year. They think about watching young children open their presents and enjoy holiday traditions. All these moments make the holiday season feel warm and joyful.

During the holiday season, we often hear that the most important thing is being with family. This idea paints a warm and happy picture, and many people look forward to spending time with their loved ones. However, not everyone finds it easy to be around family members. For some, holidays can be stressful instead of cheerful. This might be because there are memories of disagreements or conflicts that happened at family gatherings. These memories can make the holidays feel uncomfortable or tense, especially if those conflicts are still fresh in everyone's mind.

Spending holidays with family can sometimes feel emotionally intense and overwhelming, but it can also be a wonderful opportunity for closeness and joy. The holidays may bring feelings of exhaustion, family conflicts, differing opinions from relatives, and an overall sense of overload. Remember, you're not alone in feeling this way, and there are ways to make the season more enjoyable. This article includes tips to help you navigate the season with resilience, especially if cheer and goodwill seem hard to find.

Finding something to fill the gap for the holidays without a family connection can become stressful. Some people believe that one of the great things about holidays is the feeling of love for strangers and neighbors; however, that may not be true for everyone. They might feel completely isolated, alienated, or lonely for various reasons. They may be estranged from their family or be far away. Perhaps they are turned off by the idea of Christmas, Kwanza, or Hanukkah, thinking they have lost its true meaning, making it harder to watch others celebrate. Instead of resenting others' festive mood, consider finding your own way to find meaning in the holidays. Could this be a time for you to take shelter alone and do things that help you feel comfortable and relaxed? Much of the pressure and sense of alienation may come from the expectation that we should feel a certain way. Consider planning time with a friend who understands your feelings and creating a tradition around it. This way, you can feel more in control because you're choosing how to spend your time.

Some people feel anxious and worried because they often face rejection from their families. If this is the case, try to find someone you feel comfortable with, an ally who can be there for you. Remember, it's okay to adjust your approach to things. You may want to prepare a few safe topics or questions beforehand, just in case the conversation becomes too difficult. Taking care of your emotional well-being is important. You absolutely deserve that support.

Avoid sitting next to a family member who irritates you. Instead, sit beside someone you feel comfortable with or who makes you laugh. Do your best to avoid people who

make you feel bad. Surround yourself with those who bring you joy and support you. If you have to be around someone rude, take a moment to breathe and avoid triggering your survival instincts. Then, use something unexpected to defuse the situation, like "I notice that you are as charming as I remember..." or "I just want to give you a great big hug right now..." If they ask an inappropriate, rude, or overly personal question, remember that just because someone asks does not mean you are required to answer. You can also turn the question back on them by asking, "What is your point...?" or "Why are you asking that...?" Never let them provoke you into being as nasty as they are. You can use words that diffuse tension, like "Maybe so, maybe not." This phrase sounds neutral and relaxed. It can help ease the pressure in the moment by leaving the decision open. Saying, "Maybe so, maybe not," gently acknowledges the question without committing.

Create an escape plan, whether it involves taking a break by retreating to the bathroom or private space temporarily, going for a walk, calling a supportive friend, or just leaving altogether if things become too uncomfortable. If possible, consider reserving a hotel room instead of staying at your family's house. Allow yourself to stay at home during the holidays and simply join a quick Zoom call to avoid any drama or trauma.

While many people genuinely enjoy family gatherings, it is possible that some attendees may not share the same enthusiasm for the holidays. They might come along out of obligation or other reasons, even if they do not particularly look forward to it. A helpful approach is to invite them to share their thoughts or concerns. You could start by asking what they believe in and how those beliefs might add to the holiday celebration. Taking the time to listen to one another, even when opinions and traditions differ, can create a sense of respect and understanding that makes everyone feel more at ease.

Feeling a bit exhausted and overwhelmed is completely normal during and after the holidays, and it is something many of us experience. Remember, you don't have to do everything on your own. It is okay to ask for support from family and guests. This might be a great time to think about simplifying things a bit; it could make hosting more enjoyable for everyone and help reduce stress. Keep in mind, perfection isn't necessary, especially when you have others with whom to share the occasion.

To navigate difficult times, focus on building strong relationships, cultivate gratitude and mindfulness, and take consistent, small actions to create momentum. Remember that challenges are temporary and can lead to personal growth.

### Tips for enhancing resilience, especially during the holidays.

#### FOCUS ON PERSONAL WELL-BEING

- **Begin your day with intention:** Establish morning routines, such as meditation, gratitude, and affirmations, to start your day on a positive note.
- **Practice self-compassion:** Be gentle with yourself during challenging moments.

Sometimes it is perfectly okay to feel overwhelmed. Always remember that you are enough just as you are.

#### TAKE ACTION

- **Divide tasks into smaller, manageable steps:** When faced with challenges, approach them one step at a time. This helps boost confidence and create a sense of control.
- **Celebrate small wins:** Celebrate and reward yourself for completing even small tasks to build momentum.

#### BUILD SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

- **Lean on your community:** Surround yourself with caring friends and family who can offer encouragement and support during tough times.
- **Engage in social activities:** Participate in groups or volunteer to build connections and promote a sense of belonging.

#### MAINTAIN A ROUTINE

- **Establish Daily Routines:** Maintaining a consistent daily schedule can offer stability and reduce stress.
- **Set aside time for relaxation:** Take regular breaks and enjoy leisure activities to recharge and maintain a healthy balance.

#### EMBRACE CHANGE

- **Reframe setbacks:** View challenges as opportunities for personal growth. Consider what lessons each situation can teach you.
- **Accept impermanence and uncertainty:** While we cannot predict what the future holds, it is comforting to remember that tough times are usually temporary. Staying resilient means finding ways to adapt and to continue moving forward despite challenges.

By applying these strategies, you can strengthen your resilience and better handle life's challenges.

### Strategies for finding comfort during holidays without family or friends.

Feeling lonely during the holidays can be tough, but there are ways to find comfort and happiness during this season, even if you do not have family or friends nearby. Here are some ideas to help you get through this time.

#### CREATE NEW TRADITIONS

- **Personal rituals:** Find new ways to celebrate that reflect your interests. This could include cooking a special dish, decorating your space with a festive touch, or dedicating time to a favorite hobby. It is all about making your celebrations feel personal and joyful.
- **Volunteer:** Think about spending part of your holiday volunteering at a local charity or community center. Helping others can give you a sense of purpose and connection to your community.

#### ENGAGE WITH YOUR SURROUNDINGS

- **Explore your community:** Seek out local events, such as holiday markets, concerts, or festivals. Participating in community activities can help reduce feelings of isolation.

- **Connect with neighbors:** If you feel at ease, try reaching out to your neighbors. Small gestures, such as greetings or sharing a meal, can help build connections.

#### EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY

- **Virtual connections:** Use video calls to remain in touch with friends or family who are far away. Even short conversations can help you feel more connected.
- **Join online communities:** Connect with others and feel a sense of community by joining online forums or social media groups related to your hobbies or interests.

#### FOCUS ON SELF-CARE

- **Mindfulness and reflection:** Practice mindfulness, meditate, or write in a journal. Reflecting on your feelings can help you understand your emotions and find peace.
- **Engage in activities you enjoy:** Set aside time for activities that bring you happiness, such as reading, watching movies, or trying out new hobbies.

#### REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT

- **Local support groups:** Think about joining a community support group. Connecting with others who understand your experiences can offer comfort.
- **Professional help:** If loneliness feels overwhelming, reaching out to a mental health professional can help.

#### STAY PRESENT

- **Focus on the moment:** Embrace the present instead of dwelling on what you might be missing. Celebrate the small victories and joys of the season.
- **Gratitude practice:** Take a moment to appreciate the good things in your life, no matter how small they may seem. Doing this can help you feel more connected and less lonely.

The holiday season brings different feelings for everyone. Some people feel happy, connected, and enjoy special traditions and memories. Others might feel lonely, stressed, or sad.

Both perspectives are valid and understanding this helps create a compassionate environment during the holidays. Celebrating or feeling indifferent does not lessen others' experiences. By accepting a range of emotions, we allow everyone to navigate the season in their own way. Support can be as simple as recognizing that togetherness appears in many forms, such as gatherings, volunteering, or taking a moment for quiet reflection.

Ultimately, the holidays can become a warm and meaningful time when people appreciate both joyful and somber moments. It is a season for everyone to embrace their emotions and support one another through it all.

Barbara Pickholz-Weiner, RN, BSN, CACII, 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 Journeycounselingctr@gmail.com.

## Ute Pass Library Under New Ownership

by Tracie Bennett



Front of the building under new ownership of Ute Pass Library

A day of new beginnings for the Ute Pass Library in Cascade took place on November 20, 2025. The Pikes Peak Library District (PPLD) Board of Trustees voted at its August 20 Board meeting to purchase the property. The library, a part of the PPLD since the early 1970s, is a piece of history in the community. Part of the building is the original schoolhouse in Cascade. Antique doors, windows, cabinets and slate chalkboards grace the children's and staff area in the building. This piece of history is getting a life extension with the new ownership.

Staff from PPLD, along with local residents, celebrated the new ownership with cake and cookies. "We love this library," stated Cascade residents Kate and Dave. "It's a cornerstone of our community. The library is a community gathering place and we can easily walk here from home." Dr. T, another long-time Cascade resident, was excited to point out the temporary collection case where locals can exhibit their personal collections. Currently LEGOS are on exhibit. (I had to offer a dinosaur/fossil exhibit in the future to the director.)

PPLD celebrated taking ownership of Ute Pass Library. Heather Laslie, COO for PPLD, sees this as a huge landmark opportunity for the area. "We will be able to expand the hours for activities in the library for the community allowing for more access during off hours," she said. "Our goal is to make this the library that the community needs. We are committed to providing sustainable access to library services and resources in the community."

Julie Smyth, PPLD Board President, is excited regarding the expanded services and access to books and literacy at the facility. Smyth joined the PPLD board in 2023 with a background in journalism, book publishing and nonprofits. Her skill set appears in perfect alignment with the plans for Ute Pass Library's growth. "We plan to maintain performance and expand services here at this location," she said.

Backed with a master's degree, Ute Pass Library Director Taryn Malila has worked in the public library system for over 12 years. "My heart lies in management, so this is the perfect opportunity for me to put my abilities to use at the Ute Pass and Manitou Libraries." All



Original school windows between the children's room and staff room.

## Sounds of Christmas Jazz and Jingle Bells Ring in the Holiday Season

by Tracie Bennett

Our local musicians from Woodland Park Wind Symphony and Swing Factory Big Band will kick off the holiday season December 7 and December 14. These talented folks have been creating music for our community for over 25 years. Craig Harms is the Musical Director/Conductor of the Symphony. Ron Stinson is at the helm of the Swing Factory Big Band.

"Sounds of Christmas" will take place on Sunday, December 7 at the Church of the Nazarene in Woodland Park. A reception with holiday treats and refreshments will start at 6 p.m. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. with a French Horn ensemble performing as attendees take their seats. Reservations are not needed. Come early as seating is limited. The concert is free, but donations are welcome to help with Symphony expenses.

Swing Factory Big Band will kick off "Jazz and Jingle Bells" on Sunday, December 14 at the Ute Pass Cultural Center in Woodland Park. A Reception with holiday treats and cash bar opens at 6:30 p.m. The 19 piece big band will bring a jazzy feel to the holiday music with lots of energy, sounds and rhythms at 7 p.m. Wearing their brand, new tuxedos, the Swing Factory is sure to get your toes tapping. I, myself am always open to dancing in the aisles to the sound of music displayed by these talented musicians.

The concert is free, but donations are always welcome to help offset the costs that the band incurs.

Visit [www.woodlandparkwindsymphony.com](http://www.woodlandparkwindsymphony.com) for additional information.

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# Guffey at 130 years - part I

by Flip Boettcher

It's hard to believe, but Guffey is 130 years old. So the story goes, when the mining claims in nearby Cripple Creek had mostly been taken up, people headed farther west. Since the geology in and around Guffey was similar to that of Cripple Creek, people settled here, but homesteaders were already in the area.

With gold being found at Tarryall and Fairplay in 1859 and the 1862 Homestead Act, people were already streaming into the area. The Homestead Act was intended to lure people to the vast west for 160 acres of almost-free land to help populate the area.

In 1860, the Currant Creek Wagon Road was established from Cañon City up Currant Creek, which runs just west of Guffey, to the gold fields. This brought homesteaders and ranchers to the Guffey area in the 1870s. Of course, homesteads on the creek were the first to go.

With the influx of homesteaders, ranchers and miners, a post office was established in the Freshwater Mining District, of which Guffey is the center, on April 12, 1895. According to postal documents, the name Freshwater could not be used because a post office in California already had that name. Idaville was chosen after Ida E. McKelvy Wagner, a prominent woman who had several mining claims on Gold Hill, north of Guffey. The first postmaster was William E. McNabb, April 12, 1895 - April 3, 1896. McNabb also owned the two-story Guffey Hotel on Main Street.

Northwest of Guffey, on the southern slopes of Thirty-nine-Mile Mountain, the short-lived Townsite of Alhambra was a bustling mining camp owned by the Andesite Gold Mining and Town Company. In a March 26, 1895, *Salida Mail* newspaper article, W.M. Jenkins reported that the sales of businesses and lots were progressing with 56 resident and business lots sold in two days ranging in price from \$15 to \$25 each. There are three stage lines, one from Canon City and two from Cripple Creek; three livery stables; two butcher shops; two assay offices; one large hotel and lodging house; two saloons; one feed store; and one lumber yard. The town had about 200 people, mostly living in tents and awaiting warmer weather.

Nothing of great worth was found at Alhambra and the first mining claim in the area dated September 1896, the Pill Placer, was sold for back taxes in 1907.

This area became the 5,000 acre Cisar Ranch in the early 1940s to the early 1950s, owned by Walt and Amy Cisar. It then became the Many Hills Ranch owned by Dr. Morgan Berthrong and then became the Many Hills subdivision.

In the meantime, the Guffey Townsite plat map, based on the survey by William C. Teller

was notarized and accepted by the county on January 2, 1896. On May 23, 1896, the post office name was changed to Guffey.

The name Guffey most likely came from James McClurg Guffey, a Pennsylvania oilman who had mining and real estate holdings in various sections of the Freshwater Mining District. According to the August 7, 1896, issue of the *Denver Times*, the Townsite of Guffey was named for him. The community honored him because he donated money for street improvements in town.

Another story about the town's name is that J.M. Guffey's uncle Joseph F. Guffey, who was a US Senator from PA from 1934-1946, paid the Townsite of Guffey \$500 to claim that the townsite was named for him.

Whatever the true story about the town name, it still remains Guffey.

November 23, 1896, Gustave (Gus) Cohen received a US Land Patent, receipt #1599, as "trustee for the use and benefit of occupants and inhabitants of the Townsite of Freshwater according to their respective interests," for 110 acres at \$1.25 per acre for a total purchase price of \$137.50.

Gus Cohen was the second postmaster, April 3, 1896, and was postmaster when the name changed on May 23, 1896, to Guffey. He was postmaster until June 1899.

The first recorded sale of buildings was in August 1896 by Gus Cohen to his father Sam Cohen, who had a general store in Fairplay. The first recorded sale of lots was January 6, 1897, for lots 9 and 10 in block 42 to H.L. Fuller.

Gus Cohen homesteaded in what is now the Old Kathleen Ranch subdivision east of Guffey. A portion of the land is still in the family.

Guffey quickly became the economic center of the Freshwater, Black Mountain, Alhambra and Red Ruth Mining districts, as well as for the surrounding ranchers. By 1896 it is said that the population in the Freshwater Mining District was 1200.

As can be seen from the plat map, there were great plans for Guffey. The town of



Bender ranch group photo 1895 - courtesy of Doug Stiverson. The Benders were early homesteaders on Currant Creek up near the pass. You can see the ranch house in the background. John Bender built the ranch house on the right. The small cabin was his wife's mother's cabin, Hannah Hammond, who had the first family homestead. Hannah is in the middle. Third from the right is Annie Bender, next is her husband John and son Martin holding the horse.



Waiting for the mail coach. Looking south on Main Street.

Clarksville, located north of Guffey on the top of Gold Hill, was platted April 18, 1896. Nothing ever became of Clarksville though. Also, south of Guffey on Sikka Scott's homestead, the town of Scottsville was planned, but never platted.

In its gold rush days, 1895-1902, the population in Guffey was 500. The first school was established in 1895, and the community had over 40 businesses by the end of 1895. The businesses included three groceries; four saloons; three hotels; three livery barns; four restaurants;

two bakeries; three hardware stores; two clothing houses; two barber shops, one owned by a lady barber, Miss Viola Tipton, who lived with her mother plying her tonsorial arts; two assay offices; two meat markets; one fruit store; one furniture store; three feed stores; two laundries; three brokers' offices; one lawyer; two physicians; one sign painter; three civil engineers; and six carpenters.

There were also five stage and transfer lines in town. Although no copies are known to exist, there were three newspapers published in Guffey. Each was a weekly. They were the *Guffy* (sic) *Prospector*, published from 1897-1903; *Guffy* (sic) *Independent*, 1900-1901; and the *Freshwater Pilot*, 1901-1902, according to the *Guffey - One Hundred Years of Memories* book.

The first confirmed burials in the Guffey Cemetery, located east of town, were in 1897. First was 15-month-old Baby Buford Swope and then 30-year-old Thomas H. Burge who died within days of each other in August of that year. Their graves are marked with a single obelisk with their names, birth dates, death dates and age at the time of their death inscribed. Although on the same headstone, there does not seem to be any family connection. Baby Buford's headstone also has inscribed on it, "Like the dove to the ark. Thou hast flown to thy rest, from the world sea of strife, to the home of the blest."

To be continued...

## National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum

New Exhibit – Minerals A-Z

The National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum is opening a new exhibit entitled Minerals A-Z on December 05, 2025. This exhibit is the reopening of the largest gallery in the Museum with over 1,600 square feet of exhibit space. The gallery has been closed to the public for the last 12 months during curation and installation. The exhibit has more than 700 specimens, including one-of-a-kind items from the Museum storage vault that will be on public display for the first time, in 18 closed display cases and 16 large specimens on open display pedestals. The exhibit emphasizes educational information related to rocks and minerals including such character-defining features as mineral formation, composition, and crystal structure. The exhibit opening and reception will be on December 5, 2025, from 2-4 p.m. with free admission for all. Light refreshments will be served. Reception attendees are encouraged to dress as a creative representation of their favorite rock or mineral.

The National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum celebrates the spirit of discovery, innovation, and perseverance in the world of mining. Minerals A-Z will inspire visitors by providing an opportunity to explore the spectacular breadth of minerals from around the world. David Rasch, Museum Curator, said, "I am truly excited to share this new exhibit with visitors as it significantly increases the educational value of our minerals exhibit." This exhibit will be a cornerstone for educational information on minerals in the Museum for years to come. FMI 719-486-1229.

## Immigration and Our Commitment to Justice

by Michael Dougherty

Immigrants are part of our country's history, present, and future. For generations, the United States has offered hope to people from around the world. My grandparents emigrated from Ireland, leaving their families behind, for the freedoms and opportunities in this great country. That path and their hard work led to me becoming an attorney and elected official.

But the idea of America as a beacon of promise is being shattered. On his first day in office, and just after taking the oath to uphold the U.S. Constitution, Donald Trump issued an order revoking birthright citizenship. Birthright citizenship is a constitutional right under the 14th Amendment, as reaffirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1800s. Thousands of people have built their lives based on that constitutional protection.

Now, the U.S. military has been ordered to police American cities. ICE agents, wearing masks and without identification, have swept into neighborhoods to arrest kids and families. ICE has become the largest funded federal law enforcement agency. At a time of federal shutdowns and severe budget cuts, ICE is receiving \$45 billion dollars, in part, to detain people in private prisons — for-profit facilities that should be banned.

Let me be clear — our country must have secure borders, a sensible immigration policy, and convicted criminals should be subject to deportation. The Biden administration failed to deliver on immigration. But the pendulum has swung way too far in the other direction.

Mask-wearing agents pulling hardworking community members and their kids off the streets is the stuff of a dystopian movie — not an immigration policy for the future of our nation. We uphold the rule of law by using consistent, transparent processes — not

### It is a terrifying time for all immigrants in this country, regardless of their legal status. Even victims and witnesses who are here legally are being arrested by ICE.

subversion and secrecy. As the ICE arrests of parents and two children in Durango recently demonstrated — with masked agents forcibly separating the children from their parents and holding them in different facilities — ICE's methods undermine the community's confidence and trust in law enforcement.

This approach to immigration is making our streets and neighborhoods less safe.

As district attorney, my responsibility is to pursue justice with fairness, integrity, and a steadfast commitment to public safety. That means protecting victims, holding those who commit crimes accountable, and ensuring everyone — regardless of who they are or where they were born — can participate in the justice system and see criminal cases through to completion.

When a woman is assaulted by her abuser, she should be able to go to the hospital, report it to the police, and have justice done. When someone is sexually assaulted, they should be able to receive treatment, talk to detectives, and testify at trial so the offender can be held

fully accountable. When these victims are scared to come forward because they or their kids may be deported, offenders escape justice and remain at large in our communities. As a result, everyone's public safety is jeopardized.

It is a terrifying time for all immigrants in this country, regardless of their legal status. Even victims and witnesses who are here legally are being arrested by ICE.

Similarly, deporting defendants while a criminal prosecution is still pending denies justice for victims and the community as a whole. When an offender is deported before they go to trial or enter a guilty plea, there is no conviction entered, no sentence imposed, and they remain free in another country.

Bottom line: Public safety is eroded when justice is denied and communities live in fear.

That's why I strongly supported Senate Bill 276, which was enacted in May to ensure that state and local resources and information are not used for federal immigration enforcement. Colorado law also prevents immigration enforcement activity at courthouses to allow the full administration of our state laws. Schools, hospitals, and daycare centers also are protected spaces.

I am proud to live and work in a state that is seeking the right balance on immigration. In Colorado, we should not let politics or prejudice get in the way of our shared responsibility to uphold the law.

Michael Dougherty has been a prosecutor for nearly 30 years. He is the District Attorney for the 20th Judicial District and a candidate for attorney general of Colorado.

This article was first published in The Daily Sentinel of Grand Junction, CO.



## Panning for Good

Exploring the power of gratitude

by Dr. Bec

The holidays can remind us of what is good in the world and fill our hearts with joy and peace. Or they can be full of stressful times that leave us feeling grinchy and grumpy. Is there a way to happily navigate the holiday season or even every day by finding a way to reside in both a head and heart space where life is beautiful in perpetuity? Is it possible to reframe our difficulties to our advantage, live happier days and make positive changes to our biology? How? Enter, gratitude. It's simple, doesn't cost a thing or take a lot of time, and the myriad benefits are astonishing!

Most of us know that being grateful is good for us. However, did you know that establishing an intentional gratitude practice could be life changing providing both immediate and long-term advantages? In this article, the benefits of gratitude are incorporated into three sections, mind, body and spirit. Tips are then shared along with a possible quantum connection.

### Mind

**GRATITUDE:**

- Has been proven to reduce many toxic emotions including envy, frustration and regret.
- Increases sleep quality by decreasing the time it takes to fall asleep and lengthening sleep duration.
- Increases resilience when faced with traumatic and stressful events. A 2006 study in Behavior Research and Therapy found that Vietnam veterans with more gratitude experienced lower rates of PTSD.
- Speeds trauma recovery.
- Reduces depression and increases happiness.
- When gratitude is combined with grit, or the ability to persevere, balance is created. By incorporating grateful moments of reflection and satisfaction into our days as we push forward through obstacles to achieve goals, burnout can be avoided. Gratitude provides necessary energy and encourages a positive frame of mind which minimizes the effects of discouragement and makes us less likely to abandon challenging goals we deeply want to achieve.
- Increases self-esteem by reducing the impact of social comparisons such as those generated by social media.
- People who are grateful are more able to appreciate their own strengths and abilities as well as others' accomplishments.

### Body

**BRAIN:**

- Located above the brainstem, the hypothalamus regulates critical bodily functions such as breathing, sleep, appetite and temperature. Dopamine, a chemical that is instrumental in helping us feel motivated, alert and happy, floods our brains when we feel gratitude. We are rewarded with this natural high when grateful. This provides motivation to continue being grateful and



Grateful for our son Jon Frazier who is willing to take trash to the dump!

to use our energy to put good into the world through our words and actions. "The more likely you are to express gratitude; the likelihood increases that you will have even more to express gratitude for." Jim Kwik

- According to UCLA's mindfulness awareness research center, when gratitude is practiced often, the molecular structure of the brain is changed, keeping the grey matter functioning and increasing health and happiness.

### HEART:

- "When you're grateful, your heart starts to beat in a more rhythmic way that causes the arteries in your heart literally to swell, to open up...and your heart feels full. When energy makes it to the heart then somehow sends the energy to the brain causing a beautiful pattern of Alpha Brain Wave states which is the state of imagination." Joe Dispenza

In general, grateful people:

- Experience less aches and pains.
- Feel healthier than other people
- Are more likely to care of their health, exercise more and attend regular check-ups.

### Spirit

A few thoughts about gratitude from spiritual leaders:

- "Gratitude opens our minds to a universe permeated with the richness of a living God. Through it, we become spiritually aware of the wonder of the smallest things, which gladden our hearts with their messages of God's love." Bonnie D. Parkin
- "If you are grateful, gratitude will increase in you and you will be given more." Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
- "Gratitude is a flower that blooms in noble souls." Pope Francis
- "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts...be ye thankful." Colossians 3:15, The Holy Bible KJV.

### FAVORITE GRATITUDE TIPS:

While preparing to write this article, I decided to read a book called *The Gratitude Jar*, by Josie Robinson (highly recommended). It's a book about a young professional, a mother, who was fighting money problems, alcoholism and self-destructive thinking. The book chronicles how her life positively changed both internally and externally as she learned to embrace and embody the empowering energy of gratitude through the simple act of writing down what she was grateful for each day for 30 days. Each night before bed, she would share her note with her young son (who had also written down his thoughts). Then, they would have a conversation about the notes and place them in the designated Gratitude Jar.

It was such a simple act, but it created profound positive changes in her life including gaining the strength to stop drinking, newfound energy and positivity that created an opportunity for a better job and she also became exponentially happier as she developed an increased ability to see the good in her life. She was also able to create a better relationship with her son, which was something she really wanted.

One of the tips Josie shared about how to experience more gratitude was to learn to reduce judgment and silence the inner critic. What she meant by this, in part, was to not assign negative stories to events. Events are events and if we tell a bad story about them, we get to live in that bad story, which isn't even true, it was just made up in our heads.

An example from my life would be the current saga of the kitchen floor. Here's an abbreviated blow by blow account: Kitchen flooring installation to address a bump in the floor, flooring installed, flooring peels up, partial re-install with flooring type discontinued midway through installation-not enough flooring to finish, discovery of huge crack in cement slab under flooring, three bags of concrete needed to fill crack further stalling flooring install, then more cracks in new cement leading to my newly fitted straight jacket-ha! Yet, at the suggestion of the flooring company, we called a foundation company and now our cement slab will be stabilized, the root of the problem was found and will now be permanently resolved along with other cement problems identified that needed to be addressed that we might have missed!

During this long process, I found myself getting angry at the flooring company, being



Grateful for our view of nature's mountain mix! (above & right).

Grateful for many holiday turkeys over the years and the chance to share them with Gary Frazier (bottom).

Cover: Grateful for the happy energy and devoted love our pets give us. Well, maybe semi-devoted for Ice our cat.

sick and tired of paying so much money and not having a stove or access to many things in my kitchen for months. However, the process led to very important findings and my negative emotions surrounding all that had happened didn't change anything, they just made me feel upset. I think nurturing this character trait to reduce our judgment and silence our inner critic can save us from wasting our emotional currency on expensive tickets to board roller coasters of negative emotions that block our gratitude sensors and inhibit happiness.

### A FEW MORE GRATITUDE IDEAS:

- Start a Gratitude Jar or something similar such as a journal like writing down 3 things you're grateful for first thing in the morning and before bed each night. (Blood pressure can be reduced up to 10% when consistently writing in a gratitude journal.)
- Tell someone you appreciate them, call them, write them a love note.
- Pick a daily trigger such as brushing your teeth, and when you do this each day, verbalize something you like or appreciate about yourself or recall something you did that you're proud of.

### QUANTUM EFFECTS OF GRATITUDE

Recently, there has been a lot of research, discussion and questions about the quantum realm and how actions we are taking now can possibly influence our past because the particles are connected and we are currently influencing that connection. This is fascinating, nothing is proven at this point, but I know that when I look at my past while in a state of gratitude — the mistakes I've made, the people who treated me badly, situations I felt were horrible and unfair, they seem to be tempered. I somehow see them in a gentler light, a light that mellows the harshness of the experiences and helps me see how I can learn from even difficult people and situations. Maybe it's time and perspective, but it seems when I add gratitude to the mix, something tangible changes in my emotional recall and physical responses to memories of events and people.

### Jokes:

**Q:** How do bananas express their gratitude?  
**A:** They say, "thanks a bunch." (That's why they're so appealing!)



### Quotes:

"Gratitude turns what we have into enough."  
— Melody Beattie

"It's not happy people that are thankful, it's thankful people that are happy."  
— Jim Kwik

### Challenge:

When I learned that being grateful literally causes arteries to swell and our hearts to open up, I was incredibly surprised. So, I tried to see if I could feel that or some other effects during a kind of mundane, stressful time trying to consolidate storage spaces. I started thinking of my husband, my dog, my faith, good chocolate, you know, whatever... and that tight, stressful feeling in my stomach completely dissipated. Would you like to give it a try if you run across a stressful time this month? All you need to do is to reflect on what you are grateful for, allow yourself to genuinely feel the gratitude as you verbalize your thanks.

### Resources:

- *Your Brain on Gratitude* video by Jim Kwik: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LG0COiQBjXA&t=76s>
- *The Gratitude Jar* book by Josie Robinson
- *Mind Blowing Benefits of Gratitude* video by Joe Dispenza: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/FbTWxDoqcMs>



## ~OUT AND ABOUT~

Check out these activities going on right here in this area. If you know of an activity we should include, please call us at 719-686-7587 or email us at [utecountrynewspaper@gmail.com](mailto:utecountrynewspaper@gmail.com).

### AVAILABLE ONLINE

- NAMI Colorado: <http://www.nami-colorado.org>
- Suicide prevention: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org> or dial 988

### CASCADE

- UTE PASS LIBRARY
- 5, 12 Storytime 10:30-11:15 a.m. ages 0-8 years.
- 6 Social Media Painting Relay for teens 2:30-4 p.m.
- 8 Idea Lab: Fairy Tale Science 4-5 p.m. ages 5-12 years.
- 12 LEGO Build 3:34-4:30 p.m.

### CAÑON CITY

- Sundays Paint with Mary Shell - see page 11.

### LIBRARY

- 4 Tree Lighting in the plaza 6-7 p.m.
- 13 Santa and Mrs. Clause 10-2 p.m. Grab your camera and snap a pic with the jolly old couple!
- 18 Free Legal Clinic by appointment 2:40-4 p.m. 719-269-9020.
- 1st Friday Lego Club 3 p.m.
- 2nd Friday Breakout Box 3 p.m.
- 3rd Friday Creative Crafting 3 p.m.
- Saturdays D&D for teens 12-2 p.m., adults and younger kids 2-4 p.m. Registration is required.
- B.O.O.K. (Babies on our knees) story time Mondays 10:30
- Chess Club Wednesdays 2 p.m.
- Cribbage Club Fridays 10:00.
- Dulcimer Club for kids 2nd and 4th Wednesday 3:30-4:30 p.m.
- Mahjong Club Tuesdays 1-4 p.m.
- Metaphysical Group Saturdays 10:30 a.m.
- Rummikub Club meets 3rd Monday of each month 1 p.m.
- Story Swap Book Chat 1st and 3rd Tuesdays 3 p.m.
- Story time and craft Tuesday and Thursdays 10:30 a.m.

### CRIPPLE CREEK

- 4 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.
- 9 BINGO the second Tuesday each month 6-8 p.m. at the American Legion Post 171. The Victor Elk's has teamed up with funds and support veterans, youth and community services in Teller County. Teamwork building a better community.
- 18 Third Thursday of the month is the Two Mile High Club monthly meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the lower level of the Double Eagle Casino complex 442 East Bennett Ave.

### ASPEN MINE CENTER

- See page 2 for details on holiday events.
- 1 Begin decorating Aspen Mine Center. Volunteers welcome!
- 11 Winter Wonderland & Community Party 4-6:30 p.m.
- 12 Soup for the Soul and Cookie Contest 11:30-1 p.m.
- 13 Christmas Parade noon, see Santa after parade.
- 17 Christmas Dinner 11:30-2 p.m.
- 19 Commodities distribution 9-1 p.m.
- Tuesdays BINGO 10:30 a.m. for seniors.
- Tuesdays Moral Reconation Therapy 5-7 p.m. at ACCC building.
- Wednesdays Luncheon 11:30-1 p.m. upstairs dining room, every Wed, donations greatly appreciated, but not required.
- Mexican Train on Thursday 10:30 a.m.
- First and third Thursdays is for Adult Children of Alcoholics 6:30-8 p.m. All programs at 166 E Bennett Ave. FMI 719-689-3584 x112.

### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

- 5 Playgroup 9-10 a.m. Cripple Creek Parks & Recreation, Learn, grow, play, and have fun! Join us to meet other children and caregivers, participate in fun and educational activities together, and nurture your child's development. Playgroup is for families with children 5 years and under and their caregivers, older siblings are welcome. Walk-ins welcome. FMI Aimee@cpteller.org
- GED Classes Mondays & Wednesdays 1-3 p.m. (Closed Dec 22 & 29) New students (min. age 16) may join GED classes after completing orientation and \$40 registration fee. FMI Katy@cpteller.org

### DIVIDE

#### LIBRARY

Check out our new location at 11/122 Hwy 24

- 13 Christmas in the Pines 12-3 p.m. Pictures with Santa, cookie and ornament decorating, Christmas movies and music, hot drinks and baked goods and at 2 p.m. we read *The Night Before Christmas!*
- Wiggle Wednesdays Storytime every Wednesday at 10 a.m. Come get your wiggles out at this new storytime for ages 0-5!
- Story Explorers every Wednesday 3:30 p.m. Read through chapter books and other stories at this special storytime for elementary aged kids. After reading, journey through a creative activity inspired by the story.
- Inventors Club on the third Thursday of each month 3:30 p.m. Get inventive with old and recycled items! The club is geared for kids ages 8-12. Participants will be taught to safely use hand tools, cutting tools and various types of adhesives. FMI 719-686-5301.

### LITTLE CHAPEL

- 8, 22 Little Chapel Food Pantry Distribution 2-5 p.m. FMI 719-322-7610 or [littlechapelfoodpantry@outlook.com](mailto:littlechapelfoodpantry@outlook.com)
- 5, 19 Teller Senior Coalition BINGO! 10-11:30 a.m. at Little Chapel Church 69 CR 5. RSVP 719-687-3330 ext. 6. Please call to set up a ride 719-687-0256 and join us for doughnuts, coffee and FUN!

### FAIRPLAY

- 11 Free Legal Clinic 2-4 p.m. by appointment from the library 719-836-4297.
- 11 Highside X Middleway Sanctuary Collaboration Release & Fundraiser 2-8 p.m. at Highside Brewing. Help the Middle Way Sanctuary fundraiser toward a forever home for horses in need! Horse meet & greet and photos 2-4 p.m. A portion of beer sales of "Ranger's Original" go directly toward the Middle Way Sanctuary in their mission to purchase their land and continue providing a safe and healing home for animals. There will also be a silent auction on western and vintage items, information booth, holiday card photo booth, and fun for all ages!

### WIZARDS OF THE PEAKS

- 5 Zombicide w/Miniature Painting for teens 1-3 p.m. rotating bi-weekly at South Park Rec Center
- 7, 21 Amtgard Park Days noon free.
- 12 Junior Adventurers League teen D&D 1-3 p.m. rotating bi-weekly at South Park Rec Center
- 13, 27 all ages Pokemon 3-5 p.m.
- 6, 20 Youth Dungeons & Dragon 4-6 p.m.
- Sundays Game Groups 2 p.m. Catan Group, Chess Group, Word Game Group
- Sundays Amtgard Park Days bi-weekly at noon, free
- Mondays Cribbage Group weekly 6 p.m.
- Mondays Boozy Board Games bi-weekly 6 p.m.

- weekly 6 p.m. at Snitching Lady Tuesdays TTRPG 7 p.m., & 8 p.m. different TTRPG each week.
- Wednesdays Trivia Night bi-weekly 6 p.m. free at Snitching Lady
- Thursdays Learn to Play 6 p.m. Dec featured game "Bad Christmas"
- Saturdays adult RPGs 7 p.m., 8 p.m.

### FLORENCE

- 6 Family Fun Walk/Run, costume contest 11-3 p.m. snowball fight after at Kiallo.
- 13 Christmas Crafts, letters to Santa and Fundu Fondue 11-3 p.m. for Second Saturday, participating shops.
- 14 Fremont Frost Holiday Market at Pathfinder Park 10-5 p.m.
- 20 Model Train Open House at Pioneer Museum 10-3 p.m. We will have 4 running trains and many displays about trains. Colorado Lifesaver has sent activity books and stickers on railroad and train safety for kids and there will be train coloring sheets for the young and young at heart. Come and enjoy a hot cup of cider, cocoa or coffee and homemade pizzels while you talk train with our engineers. Get your F&CC on! You don't know what F&CC is? Come to the museum to find out www.florencepioneermuseum.org FMI 303-880-8146 or [www.finditn-florence.com](http://www.finditn-florence.com)

### JOHN C. FREMONT LIBRARY

- 10 The Friends of the Library Christmas Auction ends at noon. Make sure that if you bid on something you get your last bid in before noon!
- 11 Adult Coloring at 2 p.m.
- 12 The Cañon City Workforce will be at the library from 11-1 p.m.
- 16 Index Card Doodle Craft at 2 p.m.
- 22 Adult movie at 2 p.m.

### SWEET RADIANCE BOUTIQUE

- 6 Cookies and Cocoa
- 13 Holiday Gift Market 9-4 p.m.
- 13 Fundue Fondue 10-3 p.m.

### FLORISSANT

- GRANGE
- 6, 7 Christmas Bazaar 9-3 p.m. Sat. 12-3 p.m. Sun. 15 artists, crafters, and vendors inside and many more in the gift shop to help you get your shopping wrapped up for the season.
- 20 Christmas Party with Santa. Bring the kiddos and get pictures with Santa. Santa has goodie bags for all the children, and cookies. Join this year's 9-noon. We make quilts for Veterans.
- Thursdays Potluck and Music 6-8 p.m. Bring a dish and small donation. Sing and dance with us! FMI 719-510-2325.

### LIBRARY

- 4 Book Coven Book Club from 5:30-7 p.m. Come sit a spell! Explore stories that feature witchcraft, mystical worlds, and magical adventures, from fantasy to contemporary works, creating a space for those who love all things magical and mysterious.
- 5 Family Craft Day 11-1 p.m. Come make a craft together after storytime!
- 6 Adult Art Step-By-Step Painting 10 a.m. Call to reserve a spot in this fun holiday painting workshop for adults!
- 8 Romantics with Altitude Book Club 4-5:30 p.m. Read and talk about romance books with other lovers of love!
- 10 Florissant Bookworms Book Club 10:30-12 p.m.
- 12 Food Crafts 1-3 p.m. Drop in after storytime for a fun food themed craft!
- 12 Tarot Club 3 p.m. Teens and up are welcome to join this group and learn all things tarot. December's theme is "Wildness."
- 16 Read Amok Book Club 11-12:30 p.m. themed "December's theme is

- Party!" Bring up to 5 books within the theme to share!

### 23 Pre-Teen's Cards and Crafts Day

- 10 a.m. Join us and make cards and holiday crafts while enjoying snacks!

### 23 Library Book Club 3 p.m.

- Join this book club where we read books that have libraries as a part of the title or a central role in the setting or story!

### Check our Website for the titles we're reading each month.

- Thursdays Homeschool Family Playgroup 10-11 a.m. Come make connections with other homeschool families!

- 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 10-12 p.m., an additional club for crafting!

- Storytime every Friday 10 a.m. FMI 719-468-3939

### GREEN MOUNTAIN FALLS

- 6, 7 Annual Yule Days - see page 6.

- 14 Advent & Christmas Hymns 7 p.m. Church in the Wildwood featuring Vocal, Handbell, and Philharmonic Musicians.

### LAKE GEORGE

- LIBRARY

- 11 Free Legal Clinic 2-4 p.m. by appointment. 719-689-9280.

### LAKE GEORGE

- LIBRARY

- 11 Free Legal Clinic 2-4 p.m. by appointment. 719-748-3812.

- 12 Book club 10 a.m. We discuss a book we selected a month or two before.

- Regular meetings on 4th Friday each month 9:30 a.m.

### GUFFEY

- LIBRARY

- 11 Free Legal Clinic 2-4 p.m. by appointment. 719-689-9280.

### LAKE GEORGE

- LIBRARY

- 11 Free Legal Clinic 2-4 p.m. by appointment. 719-748-3812.

- 12 Book club 10 a.m. We discuss a book we selected a month or two before.

- Regular meetings on 4th Friday each month 9:30 a.m.

### VICTOR

- Through Jan 1 Cold Guard Holiday Head Frame Lighting see page 12.

- 12 Victor Parade of Lights, Jingle Bell Ball, and Head Frame Lighting

### WOODLAND PARK

- 6 Lights Above the Clouds Parade 6-8:30 p.m. Parade, fireworks, crazy hat contest, after-party at the Ute Pass Cultural Center. Join this year's Grand Marshals, Gail Wingerd and Cindy Keating for the Charlie Brown Christmas Parade.

- Playgroup Tuesdays & Wednesdays 9:30-11 a.m. (No Playgroup Dec 23 & 24) Learn, grow, play, and have fun! Join us to meet other children and caregivers, participate in fun and educational activities together, and nurture your child's development. Playgroup is for families with children 5 years and under and their caregivers, older siblings are welcome. Walk-ins welcome. FMI Aimee@cpteller.org

- Telehealth Location Monday through Thursday 9-4 p.m. Comfortable private rooms and equipment available for any virtual appointment including health care, therapy visits, interviews, parent-teacher conferences, and more.

- Yoga with Leah Mondays 10-11 a.m. (No Yoga Dec 8, 22, & 29) 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 10 & 24) 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 Family Resource Center 701 Gold Hill Place unless otherwise noted. FMI 719-686-0705.

- 20 Cookies & Milk with Santa 11-1

### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

- 3 Holiday Gift Program Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community donors, local businesses, and service agencies, we are offering: new coats, new toys, meals, and thoughtful gifts, at no cost to you. Call CP to schedule a private, personalized appointment in our Holiday Shop and choose the perfect gifts for your loved ones. FMI Yvette@cpteller.org or call 719-686-0705.

- 12 Crossroads Co-Parenting Seminar 9:30-12:30 p.m. Teller County court approved parenting and divorce class seminar. \$35 fee. Pre-registration required. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org.

- 20 Cookies & Milk with Santa 11-1

- p.m. Join us for a festive Meet & Greet with Mr. and Mrs. Claus, stocking giveaways, cookie decorating, rock painting, sing-alongs and story time, letters to Santa, photo opportunities, holiday crafts, and fun for the whole family. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org

### 31 6th Annual New Year's Eve Online Silent Auction Bidding opens at 4 p.m.

- on Wednesday, December 31, 2025, and closes at noon on Thursday, January 1, 2026. Funds raised support GED scholarships, provide meals and childcare for parenting classes, and put warm food on family tables. Every contribution truly helps families in Teller County feel valued, connected, and empowered to thrive. FMI [www.event.gives/cp2026](http://www.event.gives/cp2026)

- Addiction Recovery Mondays 9-4 p.m. (Closed Dec 22) Serenity Recovery Connection provides peer and telephone recovery support and coaching. Walk-ins welcome. FMI 719-465-2295

- Addiction Support Wednesdays 9-4 p.m. (Closed Dec 24) Face It TOGETHER provides in-person and virtual addiction support. Confidential, compassionate peer coaching for those impacted by alcohol or other drugs, including loved ones. Sobriety not required. 18 yr and older. Walk-ins welcome. FMI [www.wefaceittogether.org](http://www.wefaceittogether.org)

- Career Center Tuesdays & Thursdays 10-3 p.m. (Closed Nov 27 Dec 23 & 25) Pikes Peak Workforce Center helps with job searching, resume assistance, and unemployment applications. Walk-ins welcome or schedule appointments with George@cpteller.org

- Family Café Monday through Thursday 9-4 p.m. (Closed Dec 22-25) Enjoy coffee, Free Wi-Fi, Kid's Corner, and a space for parents and caregivers in our community to connect.

- Foundation Training Innovative Exercise Program Wednesdays 7-7:45 a.m. (No Class Dec 24) 45 minutes of activation, breathing and stretching. Feel stronger and more connected with your body after just one class. Bring your mat. FMI [beth.foundationtraining@gmail.com](mailto:beth.foundationtraining@gmail.com)

- GED Classes Mondays & Wednesdays 10-12 p.m. (No Class Dec 22-31) 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 9:30-5:30 p.m. (Closed Dec 22 & 29) Schedule your certification or licensure exam at [www.pearsonvue.com](http://www.pearsonvue.com). Fees vary. FMI Katy@cpteller.org

- Playgroup Tuesdays & Wednesdays 9:30-11 a.m. (No Playgroup Dec 23 & 24) Learn, grow, play, and have fun! Join us to meet other children and caregivers, participate in fun and educational activities together, and nurture your child's development. Playgroup is for families with children 5 years and under and their caregivers, older siblings are welcome. Walk-ins welcome. FMI Aimee@cpteller.org

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- All programs at Community Partnership Family Resource Center 701 Gold Hill Place unless otherwise noted. FMI 719-686-0705.

- 20 Cookies & Milk with Santa 11-1

## Proud Supporters of the LGCS's 47th Annual Halloween Carnival!

Lake George Charger School would like to send out a big shout out to all the individuals and businesses that donated to the 47th Annual Halloween Carnival. It was a huge success, and we could not do it without all the support from our community. Please join us in celebrating our amazing community by thanking them when you see or visit their place of business.

- AC Concrete
- Ace Hardware
- AJ's Pizza
- Allie Welsh
- April Achord and Family
- April & Allen Patton
- Aspen Interiors, LLC.
- Bad Rock Auto
- Beanbeings
- Brenda Schell
- Bright CO Home Group
- Cal's Trucking & Excavating
- Cave of the Winds
- Century Casino
- Chelsea Brandy and Family
- City Market
- Continental Divide Billing
- CORE Electric Cooperative
- Crippen's Processing
- Dawn Henderson and Family
- Diana Potter
- Divide Feed
- Divide Market
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- JAZ BBQ

- Jill Jones Custom Hat Co.
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- Krokoked Bones
- Margaret's Munchies
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- Modern Hearth Craft
- Molly Granger
- NAPA Auto Parts
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- Philly Joe's Cheesesteaks
- Pikes Peak Courier
- RAM Water Transportation
- Regena LaCroce
- Rocky Mountain Dinosaur Resource Center
- McGinty's Wood Oven Pub
- Ruffs' Place
- Shipping Plus
- Smith & Western Lifestyle Co.
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- The Picket Fence
- Red Rock Pizza
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- Woodland Hardware, DO IT BEST
- Ute Country News
- Yates Herbal, LLC

## Consolidation Announcement for Junior Achievement

by JA Rocky Mountain

We are pleased to announce the consolidation of Junior Achievement-Rocky Mountain (JA-Rocky Mountain), which covers Metro Denver and communities in the northern half of Colorado and southern Wyoming; and Junior Achievement of Southern Colorado (JA of Southern Colorado), which covers Colorado Springs and communities in the southern half of Colorado, effective on November 4. The combined organization will create a statewide operation under the name JA-Rocky Mountain. This strategic move comes at a time when there is unprecedented momentum and interest in career connected learning that accelerates economic opportunity and mobility for students.

JA-Rocky Mountain and JA of Southern Colorado have 146 years' combined experience helping Colorado students develop skill sets and mindsets that lead to meaningful and opportunity-filled lives. As the organizations evolved to meet the growing and changing needs of students, teachers, and schools, JA-Rocky Mountain and JA of Southern Colorado recognized that consolidating is essential to furthering the JA mission.

"The consolidation positions JA-Rocky Mountain as a statewide solution provider which has significant benefits for educators, volunteers, donors, and staff," said Robin Wise, president and CEO of JA-Rocky Mountain. "Most importantly, we are now able to serve more students with high impact, layered, and sequential JA experiences. We are particularly excited to implement best practices to reach rural students across the region," she said.

JA-Rocky Mountain's financial literacy, work and career readiness, and entrepreneurship pro-

grams bring learning to life, reinforce new concepts with hands-on experiences, and support the development of core competencies needed for an ever-changing economy. They align with national and state educational standards and are delivered to students with the help of education partners and volunteers from the local community.

"The consolidation of these two JA area offices allows for a more efficient and complete approach to extending JA's impact," said Tim Greinert, president of Junior Achievement USA. "Together, they will leverage their combined expertise and resources to deliver high-quality experiential programs to teachers and students."

JA-Rocky Mountain will work quickly to integrate the organizations and there will be no disruption to program delivery. JA programs will continue to be offered at no cost to students and schools. The organization will communicate additional information as it becomes available by email and through their website (<https://www.JARockyMountain.org/>).

### About Junior Achievement-Rocky Mountain (JA-Rocky Mountain)

JA-Rocky Mountain gives young people the knowledge and skills they need to own their economic success, plan for their future, and make smart academic and financial choices. JA-Rocky Mountain's student learning experiences are delivered by corporate and community volunteers and provide relevant, hands-on experiences that give young people knowledge and skills in financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship. Visit [www.JARockyMountain.org](http://www.JARockyMountain.org) to learn more.



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**Teller County Cares Food Initiative** — Together, we can make a real difference in the lives of our neighbors. Hunger affects families right here in our community, and your support helps ensure that every Teller County resident has access to nutritious food. You can help by making a monetary donation to the Community Partnership Family Resource Center, which serves as the central receiving location for all funds. Every dollar stays local—supporting food programs, pantries, and families in need.

If you are one of the households in Teller County impacted by the freeze on SNAP funds, please reach out to one of our local food banks for assistance. Friendly volunteers are ready to help you with groceries and resources to get through this difficult time. Together, we can show that Teller County truly cares.



One Neighbor Helping Another