



UTE COUNTRY NEWS

FREE

Putting the "unity" back in community™

March 2026

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

Vol. 18, No. 3

Welcome to Ute Country



**"In the spring, I have counted
136 different kinds of weather
inside of 24 hours."**

— Mark Twain

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*Guffey at 130 years -
Final Installment*

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March Saturday Dinners • 4-7pm
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 March 28 - Chicken Marsala

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On Deck



Jeff took our cover photo outside the Walmart parking lot April of 2024. The snow had finished laying its blanket as the sun was rising that cold morning while hoarfrost clung to visible vegetation. The beauty of the day unfolded like a map as the sun came out and began to melt the snow. The majority of snowfall in Colorado occurs in March, April and May. We are hoping for snow in March as we are tinder dry. We liked the quote as we live its truth most every day.

March tends to bring lots of changes as we move from winter into spring and they are not all related to weather! Many businesses, entertainment venues and an increase in outdoor recreation picks up in the month of March. This is a great time to announce a new column: *Behind the Scenes*, which puts a spotlight on those folks that make things happen every day yet are seldom noticed or thanked for doing so. The City of Victor is committed to getting feedback on what residents see as potentially beneficial changes in town by holding "Victor Community Visioning Workshops." *Oyate Herbs* shares a dream come true in "What Dreams are Made of" as she shares the location of her new shop in Florissant. For those ready to slow the pace and truly take in all life has to offer, *Colorado Pharmgirl's* "Lessons in Birding" gives a glimpse of the wealth of experiences to soak in when you give yourself a chance to slow it down. Whether you are picking up the pace or slowing it down, our March issue has much to offer!


Our cats are featured in Critter Corner because we have no others to print! We'd love to print pics of your pets; 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

Oyate Herbs

What Dreams Are Made Of

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



Han (Greetings!) Welcome to Istáwicayazan Wi — Moon of Sore Eyes (Snow Blindness). This is the moon when the eyes hurt from snow blindness. The worst blizzards on the prairie often occurred during this time, when new snow-covered old snow resulted in a top layer of bright new snow that reflected the sun's rays creating a glare. If people did not have appropriate eye covers, they could be temporarily blinded by the sun's reflection off the snow. This was especially hard on the elders.

This phase is also associated with the pursuit of dreams and the creation of dream catchers, which are traditionally made from willow branches and are believed to help catch the dreams of the people. The willow branches are shaped and bound together with sinew strips, and the dream catchers are painted with sacred Lakota colors to represent the dreams they are meant to capture. The Lakota people have a deep connection to nature and the moon, and this phase is a time for reflection, preparation, and the pursuit of dreams.

As Lakota people, we have a rich tradition of dreaming; it is significant in our culture. Dreams are not just random occurrences during sleep; they are considered powerful messages from the spirit world, conveying guidance, warnings, and insights that can influence both personal and communal decisions. We view dreams as a way for the spirit world to communicate with the physical world, offering guidance, messages from ancestors, and insights into life's challenges. The Native American belief system is not uniform with regard to dreams, as each tribe has its own unique interpretations and practices surrounding dream interpretation and the use of dreams for spiritual guidance and healing.

One of the most important aspects of dreams in Native American culture is the interpretation of them. Dream interpretation is a skill that is passed down from generation to generation, and it involves understanding the symbols and messages that are present in the dream. The interpretation of dreams is used to gain insight into one's life, to make important decisions, and to understand the world around them. It is believed that dreams can provide guidance and direction, and that they can help individuals to overcome challenges and obstacles in their lives. The symbolic language of dreams can be challenging to understand, but it is essential to interpret their meanings correctly. Symbols in dreams can appear in various forms, such as animals, plants, water, and others.

One of the most effective techniques for using dream interpretation for personal growth is keeping a dream journal. By recording your dreams as soon as you wake up, you can capture the details and emotions of the dream before they fade away. This allows you to revisit the dream later and analyze it more deeply. Additionally, keeping a dream journal can help you identify recurring themes or symbols in your dreams, which can provide valuable insights into your subconscious mind and help you work through any unresolved issues or emotions.

I personally have been guided throughout my life with many different dreams. Some were very vivid and others were more subtle. Some had many different symbols that I needed to interpret, and I kept a dream journal so that I could reflect on them and understand the messages better. I would also share my journal with the elders if I needed assistance. I have had dreams about things that I felt I needed to pay close attention to, and I have also had dreams come true more times than I can count. My beliefs and understanding are that when you are sleeping, your ancestors are able to communicate with you in the clearest form. You don't have ego to get in your way or fog your ability to understand the messages coming in. I know some of you I'm sure have questioned dreams you have had.

Many of my life goals have come from dreams I have had. I dreamt of going out and harvesting plant medicine from a very early age. I dreamt of the name of my business "Oyate Herbs." I also dreamt about the store I opened up in Lake City, CO. I have dreamt of having a traditional medicines apothecary and healing center for all people to come and have anything available to them for their healing and health purposes. This last dream I mentioned has been in the making for several years now. But as of March 1st, it became reality. I have leased a building in Florissant for me and several of my close friends, family and colleagues will be there to offer the community our services. The traditional medicine apoth-



Dream catchers, which are traditionally made from willow branches and are believed to help catch the dreams of the people.

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 Jeff & Kathy Hansen
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www.Utecountrynews.com
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Sales/Account Reps:
 Feel free to call 719-686-7587 so we can find the sales representative in your area to best serve your needs.
 Flip Boettcher 719-429-3361
 Tracie Bennitt 719-641-9541

Writers:
 Chuck Atkinson, Peggy Badgett, Dr. Bec, Tracie Bennitt, Flip Boettcher, Shannon Conley, Andrea Connolly, Michael Dougherty, Darian Found, Laurie Glauth, Kathy Hansen, JA Rocky Mountain, Kendra Lee Hall, Tammie Lowell, Lori Martin, Brian Mason, Hunter Mathews, Mary Shell, Lauren Smith, Rachel Tyrrell, Anna Urban, Barbara Pickholz-Weiner

Contributors:
 Ark Valley Humane Society, TCRAS

Critter Corner:
 Submit photos to: utecountrynewspaper@gmail.com or PO Box 753, Divide, CO 80814

Publishers Emeritis: Carmon & Beverly Stiles

Cover Photo: Jeff Hansen

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We will be offering Native American artwork and gift items made by two amazing local indigenous people. Some of the items that will be at the store are handmade drums, beaded rattles, feather fans and authentic Indian dolls. We will also be offering classes in basic herbalism, belly dance fitness for all ages and capabilities, ancient sound healing, life guidance, healthy chemical free diet options, meditation, drum circles, chakra clearing and reiki sessions. My dream also involved bringing the Lakota elders, medicine men and women to our location to help with spiritual guidance and healing ceremonies.

This has all come to a reality for me and the Oyate! I am able to offer these beautiful gifts to the community in one location. This has been a long journey but well worth it. Please stop by Oyate Herbs at 38 Costello Ave. Florissant, CO and see all the amazing hard work we have done to help bring this dream to fruition. I am truly blessed to be surrounded by such amazing people that have been brought into my life, by me listening to my ancestors and following my dreams. If you want to know more about your dreams and need help understanding a dream you've had, please reach out via text, phone or email or come see me at our new location. We are always available to assist you in so many ways.

Mitákuyepi Anpétu wašté (Good day relatives)
Many Blessings and may you walk in balance on your path
You may reach Tammie Lowell at 719-661-0410.



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2026 Scholarship Announcement

The Center of Colorado Water Conservancy District ("CCWCD") is offering one-time awards of \$2,500 to three qualified candidates, paid directly to the Applicant's educational institution. The candidates will be selected at random from a pool of qualified candidates established by CCWCD's Board.

Applicants must be a Park County resident or have parents that reside full time in Park County. To apply, you must be pursuing and enrolled in a higher education program or a vocation-technical program focusing on natural resources, agriculture, water resources, and related areas of study during the 2026-2027 academic year.

All applications must be received by CCWCD no later than April 1, 2026.

The Selection Committee will contact selected candidates' school counselors by email or phone by April 15, 2026.

Selected recipients will be **required** to attend a CCWCD Board Meeting on June 10, 2026 to receive their scholarship award.

Please visit our website: www.centerofcoloradowater.com for the full application.

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2026 Gardening and Landscaping Classes

by CSU Extension and CO Master Gardeners

Are you interested in high-altitude gardening? Do you wonder if anything you plant can grow up here? Check out the classes offered by CSU Extension and CO Master Gardeners, these are local experts with local experience! Classes are held at Community Partnership on Mondays 5:30-7:39 p.m., March 23- April 27.

- Greenhouses and Season Extending Techniques April 6
- Small Fruit Production April 13
- Trees: Selection, Planting, Care, Insects and Diseases April 20
- Soils, Fertilizers and Mulch April 27

This is the link for you to register and pay for the classes: <https://teller.extension.colostate.edu/2026-spring-gardening-and-landscaping-classes/>

Topics include:

- What grows in Teller County? March 23
- Integrated Pest Management March 30

Blue Spruce Gallery features Randy Ford in March and April

Local artist and studio member Randy Ford of the Blue Spruce Gallery will be featured for a fantastic show this spring. Randy will show his newest creations during March and April. Randy has been a member of Blue Spruce for years and also shows his work at the Avenue Art and Antiques in Pueblo and Gunnison. His bold, vibrant and colorful paintings of the landscapes of Colorado are show-stoppers, and well worth the visit to the Blue Spruce to enjoy his vision. From the sagebrush plains to the forested mountains, to the red rock canyons, Randy includes all of Colorado in his show.

Saturday March 14, 4-6:30 p.m., come and enjoy a visit with the artist, and light refreshments in the back garden. The gallery will participate in the "Second Saturday" festivities in downtown Florence. Visitors can shop early and enjoy the reception in the early evening. Blue Spruce Gallery 205 W. Main St. 719-748-1339.

A Place for Kids Building Bright Beginnings for Southern Teller County's Children

by Shanon Conley

Join us for an informational session to learn about career and recruitment opportunities in a new licensed childcare center serving infants, toddlers, preschool and elementary-aged children in Cripple Creek. Projected opening is Spring of 2027.

- Workforce training and state licensing requirements
- Professional development and career advancement opportunities

Whether you are entering the workforce, transitioning careers or advancing in early childhood education, this session will outline clear career pathways aligned with Colorado workforce standards.

The session is held on March 30, 2026, 4-5:30 p.m. at The Aspen Mine Center 166 E. Bennet Avenue in Cripple Creek. FMI Shanon Conley 719-689-3584, ext. 120.

Armed Forces Art Exhibit and Sale

This is an exhibit and sale to showcase the artistic talents of active-duty personnel, their spouses and children, Veterans, and retired military personnel in CO. This event is hosted by the Florence Colorado Downtown Merchants Association. The art will be displayed in the storefronts of participating businesses on Main Street. New this year, any artist participating in the Downtown show is invited to place up to three pieces of art in the Bell Tower Cultural Center's May Show "Out of the box" open theme. This is a juried show. Entries for this show must be submitted by May 5th. Entry fee is waived for all artists participating in the Downtown show. This show will be open on May 7th with the reception on May 8th from 5-6:30 p.m. at the Bell Tower Cultural Center at 201 East 2nd street. Awards are presented at 6 p.m. that evening.

The Downtown show will open on May 9th. Artists will be in the participating shops on Main Street 3-5 p.m. to meet the public. The exhibit and sale will run through the end of May. We invite you to submit two-dimensional or

three-dimensional works in any media. Multiple works may be submitted. There is no size limit but let us know so, we can accommodate the size of your work.

The subject matter is open. The Downtown show is not juried, but the subject matter must be appropriate for general public viewing.

Intake of artwork will be at the assigned shops on Main Street between 10:30-noon on May 9th. Other arrangements can be made for early intake of the art. There is no charge to enter the Downtown show. Artwork can be for sale. No commission for sales will be charged. However, a credit card fee of 3% may possibly apply.

The Florence Merchants and the Bell Tower Cultural Center would like to thank and honor military personnel during May, in observance of Armed Forces month and Memorial Day.

The committee requests that interested artists please call 719-621-3301 or email Virginia at mvh876@gmail.com by May 4th to register for both shows or for more information.

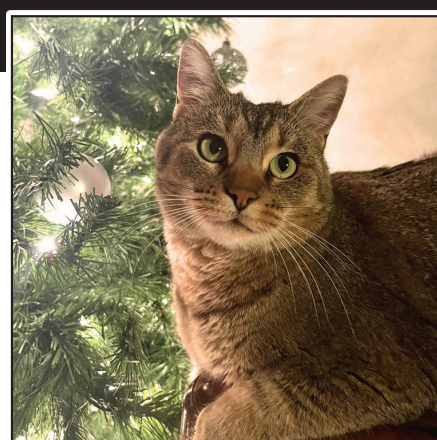
Save these dates May 5 (entry date), 8th (reception) and 9-31 (Downtown show open).

Adopt Me by Ark Valley Humane Society

Maple

Maple has been waiting at Ark-Valley Humane Society for over 100 days, and she's more than ready to find a place to call her own. This sweet 4-year-old Abyssinian mix is bursting with personality! Maple is wonderfully talkative and confidently curious — but she is also a loving cat. After adventuring around, she will be back in your lap for pets. Being the queen that she is, she would prefer to be the only pet in the home. Because she was at the shelter for a while, the caring staff placed her in a loving foster home, where she's thriving and patiently awaiting her adoptive family. Now all she needs is someone to see just how special she is. Will that someone be you? Apply for adoption to meet Maple and give this affectionate, spirited girl the loving home she's been dreaming of. Please contact us at 719-395-2737 to set up a meeting time for Maple.

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



Behind the Scenes Featuring Michael McDonald

by Tracie Bennitt

Welcome to this new column celebrating the people we never see behind the scenes. You know who I'm talking about: The cooks, the linemen, the snow shoveler, the janitor, those folks. The ones behind the scenes who keep us going every day. That's who I'll be celebrating each month. Have a recommendation? Email me tracie.bennitt@gmail.com

It's quiet. A couple of people are perusing the books on the shelves. Students come and go. Watching it all is Library Director Michael McDonald at the Franklin Ferguson Memorial Library in Cripple Creek.

"Many years ago, I was working in product service at Montgomery Wards," Michael recalls. "I decided to go back to school to renew my teaching license." Following time spent at KU and finishing up at St. Joseph, Michael was a teacher. Living in Kansas at the time, a potential offer from Missouri didn't take place because he had graduated from a Kansas school. With two small children to support, he expanded his job search and received three different offers in Colorado. Choosing Cripple Creek because it was halfway between both of their parents, Michael, wife Terri, and the kids moved west.

For the next 38 years, Michael served in the Cripple Creek Victor School District. He taught 8th grade, 6th grade and 5th grade over the next 10 years. In 1998 the superintendent asked him if he was interested in being a librarian. Always a lover of books, Michael spent the next two years getting his degree in Library Science. He was able to take classes on weekends at CU and received his certification to be a teacher librarian. "I have a good public library board and a good, cooperative school board," he said. "The school administration is also extremely supportive."

Libraries have changed a lot according to Michael. In 2020 when Covid hit, he realized that the library was not up to date with the times. "We didn't have a website. You couldn't access databases online," he said.

"All business was done by phone. People would call in to ask about books and then we'd try to find the books for them. Folks would wait outside in their cars, and we'd take the books out to them." Covers were washed with bleach and alcohol upon their return as there was really no protocol as to what to do in the beginning of the virus.

At that point, he started working to get the library online. "The Colorado State Library does this for free," according to Michael. "All books are now online. The State wants as many libraries as possible online and for libraries in the state to be on the Aspen Cat Program." According to Michael, libraries can share their materials, books and resources. A courier service picks up and delivers books twice a week. "If we don't have the hard copy here, chances are good that we can get that book in for a customer," he said.

According to Michael, the library supports the curriculum at the school, bringing in materials that they can use to further enhance their learning. "We treat kids just like anyone else looking for information," he stated. "Now that everything is online, people can still call in to request a hard copy of the publication. We are more of a storehouse for information, with

over 12,000 eBooks available."

"I'm a big supporter of reading. If you can read, you can learn yourself," he stated. "If one person is interested, there will be others. I always try to bring in the publications that I know people will like. It goes along with being here for 38 years."

Now at the end of his 38-year stint in the school system, Michael is ready for retirement. "I'm turning over a new portion in my life," he said a little apprehensively. "I'm a workaholic and Terri has a list of a lot of things around the house to keep me busy right now." "We'd like to go to historical sites around the country with our renovated van and visit sites of the Civil War and Revolutionary War. I'd like to see the Pacific Ocean from Hwy 1 in California," he added. "We've also been to Glacier and Grand Teton and Yellowstone. There are lots of places to still visit."

"Antique stores are a weak spot for us. I see us spending some retirement dollars there," he added. "As Harley riders, we both read the monthly Harley magazine. They recently had a publication on 50 famous places from all 50 states to visit," he said. "That's a great place to visit."

Library members must be residents of



Michael and Terry McDonald

Southern Teller County to get a card. "It's basically the school district boundary," Michael said. Information is available at stellercolibraries.org.



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Applications can be accessed online or at your Teller County DHS office at Tamarac Business Center in Woodland Park or Aspen Mine Center in Cripple Creek.



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The Future of Work is Here and So is JA's Next Chapter
by JA Rocky Mountain

Everywhere we look, technology is changing how we live, learn, and work. Jobs that exist today may not be here tomorrow. So how do we help young people prepare for a world we're still learning to navigate?

At Junior Achievement, we believe the answer lies in experience. For more than 100 years, JA has helped students build essential skills through financial literacy, work readiness, and entrepreneurship. Now, we're taking those strengths further, connecting them through one powerful purpose: accelerating economic mobility through education.

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Together, we can shape what's next. Expanding access, accelerating opportunity, and helping every young person build an opportunity-filled future.

To find out more about volunteering here in Teller County, contact Sherri L. Albertson at salbertson@jarockymountain.org. We'd love to have you on our team!

Florence Note
by Flip Boettcher

The Antique Bazaar located at 108/110 East Main Street in Florence is moving to 117 South Petroleum Street on March 20, according to store owner and longtime Florence Antique Merchant, Larry Nelson. This new location is where the Florence Flipping Peddler used to be almost across the street from Nelson's other shop, Florence Antiques located on the southwest corner of Main and Petroleum.

If you are looking for a deal, check out Nelson's huge liquidation sale at the Antique Bazaar until the move.

Florence is known as the Antique Capitol of America, but offers much, much more. There are many interesting shops, a coffee house, a lovely bakery, restaurants, a brewery, the Pioneer Museum and the historic Rialto Theater, to mention a few.

Upcoming events in Florence include the opening of the 7th Annual Armed Forces Art Show on May 9, Junktique May 14 and 15, and the Car Show May 16.

If you have never been to Florence for a visit, this would be a good time. Enjoy!

The Marketplace Closes at 720 US 24 Plans to Reopen in April!
by Andrea Connolly

The Marketplace, a locally loved shop featuring more than 100 small makers, artists, and entrepreneurs, has officially closed its doors at 720 US 24 due to serious health concerns caused by extreme mold conditions in the building.

Over the past several months, ongoing water intrusion and unremediated mold created an unsafe environment for business owners, vendors, employees, and customers. Multiple individuals experienced health issues consistent with mold exposure, ultimately forcing the difficult decision to close the location in the interest of public safety.

"This was not a decision we made lightly," said ownership. "The Marketplace was built to be a gathering place for our community and a home for local small businesses. But the health and safety of our vendors, customers, and families must come first."

Despite the unexpected closure, The Marketplace is already working toward a fresh start. The business plans to reopen in April at its new location: 1099 US 24, Woodland Park (next to Safeway)

The new space will allow The Marketplace to continue its mission of supporting local makers, hosting classes and events, and creating a welcoming place for the community to shop local and live well.

"We are incredibly grateful for the support we've received from the community during this challenging time," ownership added. "We look forward to opening our doors again in April and welcoming everyone into a healthier, brighter space."

Updates on the reopening, vendor opportunities, and grand opening celebrations will be shared on The Marketplace's social media channels and website in the coming weeks.

Victor Community Visioning Workshop

Share your vision for the City of Victor! What do you want to see in the City of Mines? Victor is planning new goals for its outdoor recreation and economy. Come and share your ideas on how Victor can shape its future. Day 1, Session 1 is March 14, 4-6:30 p.m. and Sessions 2 & 3 are on March 15, 9-5 p.m., all are held at Victor Community Center 203 Portland Ave. Food is provided at all sessions.

Adopt Us by TCRAS
Baby

Hi, my name is Baby. I am a sweet, shy girl who would do best in a home with no small kids or dogs. I have really started to come out of my shell with staff and volunteers in the past week. I like pets, playing with wand toys, cuddling in laps and yummy foods. If you have a confident cat in your home, that could really help to further my progress in socialization. Please consider coming in to meet me, so I can show you just how sweet I can be. Please call my friends at TCRAS to set up an appointment 719-686-7707.

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

Keep Your Butts In Your Car!
Save our forests and homes!

Tales from Big Sky Ranch Bed and Biscuit Foxy and Theo
by Kendra Lee Hall

It's easy to see how Foxy got his name. With his dense russet coat, his tail curled high over his back, and small, intelligent eyes that sparkled with happiness, he looked just like a fox. His coat gleamed in the sun, thick and dense with a luxurious underlayer built for mountain winters. Foxy's fur was a rich cinnamon red with golden tones that shimmered when the light hit just right. His short, sharp snout ended in a perfect black nose that twitched with curiosity. When he walked, it wasn't quite walking — it was prancing, light-footed and graceful, as if every step were an expression of joy.

Theo was his brother, born from the same litter. His coat was a touch lighter, with honey-colored tips that caught the wind when he moved. Their tails curled proudly over their backs like question marks.

Always together Foxy and Theo made quite the pair. Theo matched Foxy stride for stride. They were brothers not just by birth but by spirit.

Foxy and Theo were Shiba Inus, an ancient Japanese breed once used for hunting in the rugged mountains of Japan. The name Shiba Inu roughly translates to "little brushwood dog," for their ability to weave through thick undergrowth. Compact and agile, Shiba Inus are known for their foxlike appearance. They have alert eyes, curled tails, and finely chiseled faces. But what truly sets them apart is their personality: bold, independent, and brimming with intelligence. They are capable of boundless affection for those they love.

True to their heritage, Foxy and Theo move with precision and grace. They don't bark often, but when they do, it's purposeful — sharp and expressive. They communicate more through glances and gestures than sound. A look between them can mean "Let's go," "Want to play?" or simply "I'm glad you're my brother."



The infamous nose tap, gentle and loving.

Always together Foxy and Theo made quite the pair. Theo matched Foxy stride for stride. They were brothers not just by birth but by spirit.

Foxy and Theo were rescued. They were found one cold winter day along a mountain trail. Two hikers first spotted two "little foxes" weaving through the snow, but when they looked closer, they realized they were dogs. The hikers followed their tracks to an old, abandoned miner's cabin and found them huddled together, trembling from the cold. The hikers had no way of knowing how long they'd been out on their own in the harsh winter environment.

They were taken to an animal shelter and, soon after, they were adopted and went to live in their new home in the mountains. At first they were shy, sticking close to each other. But once they learned they were safe, they began to play and really enjoy their new lives and family.

They lived the mountain dream with their family in a cozy cabin tucked beneath tall spruce and aspen. Their parents were back-country adventurers — hikers in summer, backcountry skiers in winter — and the brothers went everywhere with them.

From spring through fall, Foxy and Theo were trail companions. They dart up winding paths through aspen groves, and under large evergreens, their paws silent on the earth, pausing now and then to make sure their parents are still following. Sometimes they stop together on a rise, noses twitching, ears forward, looking out at the wide expanse of mountains as though they understand perfectly how lucky they are to live there.

In winter, when the snow piles high and the trails turn to white ribbons through the forest, the brothers shift gears. Their parents drive to their favorite back country ski destinations, the pups bouncing excitedly in the back seat, chirping in anticipation.

When their parents clip into skis, the boys give a happy spin of excitement. Then Foxy begins to bounce, tail wagging furiously, then Theo joins in — two small pups bursting with energy and exuberance. As the skis start to glide, they take off alongside, running fast through the powder, curling around trees and bounding over drifts.

At night, after the long adventures of the



Foxy and Theo living their best lives in the backcountry.

day, they curl together on the cabin's rug before the fire. Sometimes it's back-to-back, sometimes Theo tucks his nose into the thick fur on Foxy's head. The flicker of the flames makes their coats glow like embers.

When their parents travel, the brothers head to their second home, Big Sky Ranch Bed and Biscuit. They know exactly where they are the moment the car turns on the gravel road heading to the ranch. Ears perked, tails wagging, they let out excited chirps and whines that sound almost like laughter. Once they pull up and the gate to the play area opens, they leap from the car and trot in, eyes bright with excitement.

Despite their elegance, the Bed and Biscuit staff know them best for their playful personalities and the quiet, unbreakable bond that ties them together. They had such a fun style of play, whether indoor or outdoor. It begins with a gentle hip bump, a quick spin, and a paw tapped lightly on the other's nose.

It was a milder form of play indoors, but outdoors they would start the same way: the hip bump, then the spin and a paw tap to the nose or a light bat across the muzzle. But outdoors with more room they added some elements to the play. After the nose tap, they would both spring into the air at once, delicate legs extended, ears tipped forward,

before landing in a synchronized bow. Sometimes they'd chase each other in looping figure eights through the yard.

Other dogs would watch, tails wagging, drawn in by the energy. It wasn't long before Kingsley the Saint Bernard or Bodie the Mini Bernedoodle joined the fun, racing behind the brothers through the play yard. Theo and Foxy always stayed close to each other but still enjoyed the participation of their boarding friends.

When they were tired from playing, they retreated to their favorite shady spot beneath the big pine tree. It's there you'll find them side by side, eyes half-closed, fur brushing fur as the mountain breeze drifts through the branches. Foxy might rest his paw on Theo's shoulder, and Theo will tip his chin onto Foxy's back, their tails curled in perfect mirror shapes. From time to time, one will glance at the other, and that's all it takes — a small look that says everything.

Then every night, when the mountains go still, two little sighs drift through the quiet house, whether at home or at the Bed and Biscuit.

"I'm so glad you're here by my side."
"I am too."

As the stars rose high in the sky and the night grows quiet, you'll find them asleep — paws intertwined, breathing slow and steady, their soft sighs blending together in harmony.

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A Look Inside the Artist Fallon Francis, Portrait Painter

by Mary Shell

How long have you been painting?

I've been painting almost my entire life so a little over 20 years!

What is your favorite medium?

I primarily use acrylic, but I'm not opposed to trying out anything. There's not much I haven't tried though! I will occasionally do mixed media art and throw in various mediums with my acrylic, watercolor, pen and ink, glitter, clay/sculpture.

Were you always interested in painting animals?

I've always loved painting people, but horses came more naturally to me since I watch them all day. I believe their anatomy is engrained in my head. I can just close my eyes and picture what a painting needs. Over the last couple of years my customers have included more and more people and faces as well as some fun side projects I do so I've improved a lot on that point.

I love how you put your interpretation in your work as to what you feel. Do you do that with every portrait?

I let every portrait become what it wants! If it starts to look a certain way or become a specific style I don't correct it, I always let them flow. I call it Jesus in my painting's others may call it something else.

What was your worse experience in a creation?

This one comes back to faces. A couple of years ago I had a customer come in and I must have repainted her face over 20 times

and still ended up painting her a different one completely. I almost gave up customers after that and for a while I did. I overcame that by carrying that painting I considered a mistake with me through multiple moves and when I felt up to it I actually finished it with a different reference photo and it turned out fantastic.

Have you tried other mediums?

I've tried anything I could get my hands on over the years: Sculpting, ceramics, polymer, air dry, porcelain, oil pastels and pastels, watercolor, colored pencil, ink, line drawing, etc.! What I've found is the more you try the easier it becomes to try new things. With art your overall skill grows, and it becomes easier.

What would you like to do in the future?

I would love to have my art in a gallery and possibly have an exhibit as well as some art shows! Painting for some of the best in the horse industry has always been a dream and it's come true a handful of times already.

What else would people like to read about you?



Francis Fallon, portrait painter (above).

Francis Fallon, her work (right).



I train horses full time and teach the new generation the joy of horses. When I'm not in my art room you can catch me barrel racing at a rodeo or barrel race near you!

How would you like people to contact you? I have a Facebook page FallonFrancis-

CowgirlArtist where you can message me, by phone at 719-310-3638 or you can email me at fallonfrancis@gmail.com.

You can reach Mary Shell at creating-fromthesoul@yahoo.com or www.maryshellart.com.

Fern Ready to End her Term as Mayor of Divide

by TCRAS

Fern is wrapping up her two years as Mayor for the small town of Divide, CO. She has had a busy term, supporting many of the dogs who have passed through the shelter's doors and being a huge part of Navy Week. "Fern had some big ears to fill, and she stepped up and was one of the most supportive mayors to the dogs of the shelter!" shared PR & Marketing Coordinator and Administrative Assistant for TCRAS, Kathleen Ruyak.

In 2010, a board member of TCRAS had seen a story about another small town that has raised funds by allowing people to "vote" for an animal for mayor by donating \$1 a vote, and she thought that might work for Divide, too. The first election was a huge success and every 2 years when the neighboring city of Woodland Park elects a new mayor, anyone from anywhere can help decide who the next Mayor of Divide will be. The election creates goodwill, exposure for the non-profits and businesses that sponsor the candidates, and essential funds to support the small but mighty animal shelter at the same time. "People are encouraged to vote as often as they want for their favorite candidates! We've had cats, dogs, a wolf as mayors and this year we have even more exotic animals running," shares Ruyak.

The shelter keeps the race light-hearted and avoids typical political divisions. Each candidate is sponsored by a local business or non-profit, and their "campaign manager" (usually

the pet's owner) helps promote the shelter and its mission of "Fostering Hope and New Beginnings" while the shelter helps promote the sponsors. "It's a win-win for everyone involved," said Ruyak. Voting has begun and will end on April 19, 2026.

Each vote costs \$2 per vote, and anyone, anywhere can vote for any candidate or multiple candidates an unlimited amount of times. The mayor's race "brings awareness to our small rural shelter and it also allows us to raise money for all of the animals that come through our doors," explained Ruyak.

For more information on the campaign, please visit TCRAS's website: <https://www.tcrascolorado.org/>

About TCRAS:

TCRAS (Teller County Regional Animal Shelter) is based in Divide, CO and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, limited access shelter whose mission is "Fostering Hope and New Beginnings." They serve communities throughout the Pikes Peak region and every year, over 900 lost, abandoned, neglected, or homeless dogs and cats get assistance from TCRAS.

They work hard to give each companion pet that enters their doors the time, medical attention and training necessary to find a forever home. They do not receive state or federal funding, but rely on the support of donors, fundraising events, grants, individuals, and

corporate donors. In addition to adopting animals and helping lost pets reunite with their owners, TCRAS has many programs that help the community and their pets. They have a program to help low-income households in Teller County spay and neuter their pets and they are working hard to assist the rural parts of the county with low cost vaccination clinics to ensure the animals of Teller County are happy and healthy. They have a Mighty Medical Program that allows them to help animals that need extra medical care like heartworm treatment, amputations, surgeries or dental work and their Paw in Hand program helps keep animals in their home by assisting with medical needs or behavioral interventions in cases where the owner is considering surrendering an animal to the shelter.

To find out more about the shelter and its programs, to check out the animals available for adoption or to donate to support TCRAS, please visit <https://www.tcrascolorado.org/>

VOTE MAYOR OF DIVIDE 2026

TCRAS
Teller County Regional Animal Shelter

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Cast your vote for a cause! Each vote is just \$2, and every dollar raised goes directly to supporting the animals at TCRAS. There's no limit to your impact—vote as much and as often as you'd like.

Colorado Pharmgirl Lessons from Birding

by Peggy Badgett

Even though I'm retired, my brain is still hard-wired to be productive. I have a tendency to chop through to-do lists or experiences like a chainsaw through butter. With more time than money on my hands, I'm realizing that slowing down to appreciate the small things in life is as significant as the grand adventures I embark upon. Birding with my youngest daughter Hannah has taught me to stop, listen and look. It's a wonderful habit that has enriched my life in many different ways. The heady smell of fresh coffee in the morning is worth lingering over. Brilliant stars in the night sky are worth a few shivers before I dive between cozy flannel sheets. Hugging a massive ponderosa pine and taking in the scent of its rough bark is more important than racing up the mountain.

I am still a novice birder despite Hannah's patient teaching and reteaching. My ears and brain are just not as quick as hers to be able to discern a white-breasted nuthatch from the pygmy variety. Aging eyes struggle with locating the winged creatures she spots, even with her detailed directions (second pine on the left, two-thirds up the trunk, the branch with a downward crook, no — the other left!) She knows I'm fibbing when I agree that the barely visible grayish brown bird in the tangled shrub branches is a female rosy finch. Despite the challenges, I find myself truly enjoying the hunt and creating memories with her.

My daughter and I landed in Novato, CA to visit her cousin and explore last September. Over coffees and a breakfast burrito at a local shop, we plotted a route that included Muir Woods and Point Reyes for the day, hoping to add new species to our life lists. We sat at an outside table swatting yellow jackets away from our cups as we perused maps and e-bird checklists. Across from us was a group of retired men chatting over their beverages, just like the Midwest farmers did every morning back home. We didn't mean to eavesdrop but couldn't avoid it because several of them seemed to have left their hearing aids at home. Their topic was Rocky Mountain Oysters, slightly different from the usual weather and tax complaints. Hannah and I exchanged glances. One of the men stated they were "raccoon balls." I stifled a snicker and whispered to my daughter "I know they are testicles from some hapless creature but definitely not varmint." She grinned. "I'm fairly sure they are beef," she said. The lively debate went on for at least 10 minutes until one of the gentlemen finally asked "Siri." Hannah was right. We had been entertained by simply listening versus pecking at our phones and ignoring our surroundings.

One of my favorite birding excursions of all time was our quest to spot a snowy owl many winters ago. We followed the Audubon grapevine and spent weekends driving east to the Mississippi, south toward the Quad Cities, and north into Wisconsin where several had been reported. No luck. Sightings in Milwaukee lured Hannah and I into one effort during a horrible blizzard. Luckily there was little traffic as I guided the 4-runner through fence posts along back roads, guessing where the road lay under drifting, swirling snow. I'm not sure how we avoided the ditch. As we entered the city, copious amounts of salt had melted most of the snow so I could release my white-knuckled grip on the steering wheel. I guided the vehicle into a lakeshore parking lot. We gathered our binoculars, spotting scope, and bundled up into every layer we had brought along.

The winter sounds and sights of Lake Michigan were unforgettable. Waves undulated around the ice floes. Angry grey water crashed against the cement walls, spraying us with cold mist. Gusts whipped prairie grasses lining the sidewalks. Fisherman huddled around drilled holes on nearby frozen ponds, and I admired their



Peggy and daughter Hannah having many bird watching adventures.



tenacity and dedication to what I considered a crazy hobby. However, I was hardly in a position to judge while shivering and shuffling along an icy path toting birding gear. The only birds we saw were a few hardy grebes. We returned to our vehicle and decided to drive north to Schlitz Audubon preserve as a last ditch effort. At least the forest sheltered us from the wind. We hiked a short trail to the lake's edge and stopped to listen and look. Nothing moved or chirped. Apparently, the birds were smarter than us. We gave up our quest and found an Irish pub featuring heat and great food before heading back to the farm.

Snowy owls eluded us that winter, despite hundreds of miles traveling up and down country roads trying to catch a glimpse of their ghostly silhouettes. My vehicle's brakes had to be redone after being slammed countless times when we spotted something white fluttering in the frozen stubbled cornfields. Always just another plastic grocery bag. I bet those raptors watched us from their cozy tree nests, gleefully calling to each other: "Hey Oliver, look over there. I believe those two human popsicles freezing in the arctic air are 'Common Dumbasses'! LIHHIFER! We can check them off our human list."

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

Editor's note: For those less experienced birders out there, a LIFER is the first experience of seeing that species.



P.O. Box 1747 ~ 548 Front St. ~ Fairplay, CO 80440-1747
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Grant Opportunity Announcement

Request for Proposals for FY 2025 CCWCD Match Funding Projects

Grant Cycle Open: January 15, 2026, to Close: March 31, 2026

Center of Colorado Water Conservancy District (CCWCD) is pleased to announce funding opportunities for projects which benefit our vision of "Park County Water for Park County". Projects must meet the mission of CCWCD to preserve, protect and defend the waters of Park County and be contained within the boundaries of the District. Examples of projects include those that enhance water supply or water quality, improve stream conditions and aquatic habitat, or provide education on water quality and resources.

One-time funding is open to any organization or property owner that meets the criteria and is subject to review and approval of the CCWCD Board of Directors. A minimum 1:1 ratio of matching funds is expected. However, proposals will be considered on a case by case basis. Amounts available are subject to board appropriation.

Deadline to submit proposals is 5:00 pm Mountain Time, **March 31, 2026**. Applicants should submit their applications as early as possible to allow ample time to work with the district ensuring requirements can be met prior to the submittal deadline. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

Proposal requirements and forms can be found on our website: www.centerofcoloradowater.com

Projects that include collaboration among multiple entities are encouraged but not required.

Questions can be submitted to: Lisa Barden Brown, District Manager, PO Box 1747, Fairplay, Colorado 80440-1747. Questions may also be emailed directly to Ms. Barden Brown at lisabbcwcd@outlook.com and will be posted and answered on our website @ www.centerofcoloradowater.com

We are honored to have this avenue to support important work for Park County water.

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In partnership with Early Connections Learning Centers

March 30, 2026
4:00 pm - 5:30 pm

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For Questions, please contact Shanon Conley (719) 689-3584 ext. 120

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CRITTER CORNER



Merrill enjoys the woodstove...



Cat Masterson plays "Puss ON Boots" - Jeff Hanson, Florissant, CO

Have a cute critter? Send us your favorite critter photos and we'll feature them here in the Critter Corner! If you don't send your photos, you'll have to look at our cats every month! Indoor or outdoor cats or wild critters are what we're looking for. We will not accept any photos depicting cruelty or harming animals in any way. Email your critters to utecountrynews@gmail.com. Be sure to include the critter's name as well as your name.

Dutch Wins Again!

by Gilrund the Historian

Dutch, the Angel Dragon was searching for more of the treasure that he and Jet Fire, his new friend, loved as Dutch Angel Dragons. Most of the candy and dice had been either eaten by them or made into wonderful shiny toy cities.

The floor of the cave where the treasure had been found was now covered with the dice city and it shined in the light of the many lamps that the two Angel Dragons had placed in the normally dark cave.

Cassie, Dutch's rider had already taken what she wanted of the treasure that humans want, and her family had moved from the farm to the city to enjoy the good life.

Her father had been surprised when Cassie had actually come home with the legendary hidden treasure. But that didn't keep him from moving his family to a better life.

Dutch and Jet Fire had decided to spend most of their time in the cave making the dice city and enjoying the candy which gave them the energy to keep on building.

Dutch Angel Dragons have no digestive system. Everything that they eat just gives them the energy to do what they have or want to do.

Jet Fire, the light red dragon with yellow claws, looked at Dutch and said, "We seem to have run out of dice and there is still room to build here in the cave. Where can we get more?"

Dutch thought for a moment and replied, "It seems that we must find another treasure. Let's go looking for some humans to ask. They seem to know all of the stories of hidden treasure."

"But where will we find the ones that will not be afraid of us and will talk to us of hidden treasure?" asked Jet Fire.

Again, Dutch stopped to think. "In the places where the humans talk a lot, they drink a lot. Let's go to those places and learn what we need to know. But first we must remember to make ourselves invisible, so not to frighten them."

It was but a short time until the two dragons were inside a tavern. Having used Dragon Magic, they were able to change their size and get inside the building that contained the tavern.

It was late in the evening, and they were standing next to the wall near a table that was filled with four old men that had been drinking and talking for some time.

"My mate's mother is the source of all of our grief," said one older man as he took another drink of the ale in his hand. "You want to know why? Well, I'll tell you. It's money! Yeah, money. Or I should say, the lack of it."

Another man started to speak but was stopped by the old man as he went on.

"Yep! If I was rich, that old woman would be happy. But I'm not! If I had all the gold that is sunk down in those old ships in the harbor, I'd be a wealthy man. But I'm not. Just an old brick layer, that's what I am, and I'll lay bricks 'til I die."

Another man started to talk and

was stopped by the old man as he started again.

"It ain't that far away, you know, but you can't get to it. It's down too deep, so they say. O 'course I ain't tried to go down there in that dirty ol' water. Yeah, and I heard that there's sharks about there too. Can't fool around with them sharks, so I'm told. Lacy! I need another ale; my throat is gettin' dry."

"What gold is it you're talking 'bout Greg? I ain't heard of no gold in the harbor out here," asked Walt, another man at the table.

Greg looked up as Lacy brought him another bottle of ale. He took the new bottle and drank a swig of the ale before answering Walt.

"That's 'cause it ain't in our harbor, you dim-wit. It's over in Baily harbor, where the old king had built his castle."

Walt nodded his head in understanding as he took another drink of his own ale.

"Yeah, now I get it," Walt mumbled.

"'bout time, ya old drunk," Greg returned as he, too took another drink of ale.

Dutch and Jet Fire slipped out of the tavern and then out into the surrounding forest. There they became visible and smiled at each other.

"Now we know where to go to get more gold, but what about the dice?" asked Jet Fire.

"Oh, that's no problem," replied Dutch, "We just get that gold and take it to Cassie. She'll buy it for us. If we get enough, she can buy enough to finish making the dice city fill that whole cave. What do you think of that?"

"Let's go!" laughed Jet Fire as the two dragons took to the air.

They knew where the ancient king had built his castle on the coast and it was but a few hours' flight north of where they were.

It was nearly daylight when the two dragons arrived over the harbor city of Baily. The sun was coming up, and the lights of the city were being put out as the dragons circled over the harbor looking down into the water with the Dragon Vision.

There were several large cargo ships anchored in the harbor at the docks and sailors were working at getting the ships unloaded or loaded.

The water was clear and they could see down into the depths of the harbor.

There they were. Four of them, large four-masted ships that had been sunk long ago by a sudden storm and the heavy load of gold that was in their holds.

The hulls of the ships were still somewhat in place, but the water and time had taken their toll on the wood. The boards were very rotten.

Dutch and Jet Fire looked at the wrecks for a while and then flew off into the forest away from the harbor. "What do you think?" asked Dutch.

"It's pretty deep, but I know that we can get down there and get the gold," replied Jet Fire.

"Me, too. Let's do it tonight when most of the humans are asleep."

The rest of the day was spent searching for food and resting.

Night came and the two dragons

flew over the harbor and were about to take their first dive when they were met by another Angel Dragon.

It was a pale gray color, and the eyes were almost black as were the sharply pointed ears. The wings were tattered and the feathers were of a spotted black and grey color.

The grey dragon flew in front of them with great force and made them stop before they could dive.

"This is my harbor!" announced the evil looking dragon, "All that is in it is mine. The ships, the sailors, everything. Be gone, or I will tear you both to pieces."

Jet Fire looked at the other dragon and knew where it had been and why it looked so bad. It had been to Abyss, a place of negative energy and no happiness, only sorrow and pain that never ends. Only the evil ones go there and mostly they never leave.

But here was one who had obviously been there and somehow gotten out and came back to Terra to torment and abuse.

Dutch looked at the evil dragon and said, "Who are you and why do you claim this harbor?"

"I am Kleptes and I have been watching you two. I know what it is that you want in these waters and why. But you shall not have it, for I claim it for my own! You shall have to fight me to the end before I will give it up."

"Then fight you I will," returned Dutch, "And defeat you I shall. Come Kleptes, to your final defeat!"

Dutch flew at Kleptes with great force and the two came together with claws extended and fangs exposed.

Kleptes grabbed Dutch at the throat as Dutch ripped Kleptes's sides exposing flowings of black blood, a sure sign that he was from Abyss.

The two fell tumbling toward the waters of the Baily Bay. Neither one would let go of the other until Jet Fire attacked and Kleptes was pulled away from Dutch to continue falling into the bay waters.

A great splash was heard by any

humans that may have been awake. A second splash was heard shortly after as Dutch and Jet Fire followed the evil one into the water.

The fight went on in the water down close to where the sunken ships were. The dragons fought and as they did the old ships were torn to pieces.

Rotted wood floated everywhere and mostly sank to the bottom of the bay as the fight went on.

At last Dutch ripped the throat of Kleptes to shreds and the evil one disappeared in a flow of tiny bubbles as he returned to the Abyss. He would not ever return to Terra, for his kind belonged there.

Dutch swam down to what was left of the old ships and gathered up as much of the gold as he could carry. Jet Fire did the same. They both swam to the surface and flew off to the forest to rest and recover.

Dutch's wounds healed quickly as did Jet Fire's while they rested in the woods near the old town of Baily.

As morning came, they both gathered the gold that they had taken from the old ships and flew to the city to speak with Cassie.

Cassie was delighted to see them both and the gold that they had brought.

They spoke to her of their desire to finish the dice city in the cave and would she buy more dice for them?

Cassie was about to be married and wanted them to meet her future husband.

The meeting was arranged and it turned out that Jerry Wilson was a merchant, and he would be glad to buy as many dice as the dragons wanted.

He was given much of the gold and it wasn't long before the two dragons were back in the old treasure cave working on the dice city and eating much of the candy that Jerry had purchased for them along with the dice.

As Dutch and Jet Fire worked on the city of dice, Jet Fire noticed that Dutch had more of the cave floor covered than he did.

"Dutch," called out Jet Fire, "How is it that you have more city made than I do?"

work faster than you do."

"Oh, really. You think that you are faster than me at building dice cities? Well, we shall see!" replied Jet Fire as he quickly moved back to his side of the cave and started to build the dice city more quickly.

It wasn't long before the pieces of dice in the tall stack near the entrance of the cave were being made into tall dice buildings on both sides of the cavern that was in the treasure cave. The floor was still bare in some places, but the spaces were growing smaller by the minute.

Jet Fire was covering his side of the floor with warehouses and schools, business centers and markets. While Dutch was building houses and barns, stables and markets on his side.

Jet Fire soon had hospitals and colleges, country stores and apartments getting closer to the rock wall that was the side of the cavern.

Dutch quickly looked over at how Jet Fire was doing and saw that he had very little time to cover the little space he had on the cavern floor.

He ran to the pile of dice near the entrance of the cave a gathered more dice and hurried back to the cavern and began making a sports arena that would cover most of his empty space.

Jet Fire saw what Dutch was doing and using the few dice that he had left, started making his own sports stadium that would take even more space. He was only a few feet from his wall as was Dutch.

Jet Fire was in the process of finishing another cabin when he ran out of dice. Off he went to grab more as Dutch placed the last piece of dice to complete his final warehouse next to the sports stadium.

"Hurray," cried out Dutch, "I have won, Jet Fire. I am finished. There is no more floor on my side of the cavern."

Jet Fire had just come back with his arms loaded with more dice and looked at what Dutch had done.

"Oh no you don't!" he said as he dropped his load of dice on the floor, "You have to go up too."

"Up?" questioned Dutch.

"Oh yes. There are lots of buildings that go up, you know. The humans have them everywhere. And Look, we can see all of the walls of this cavern. They should be covered too."

"You're on!" grinned Dutch as he picked up a claw full of dice and started to build a skyscraper next to the cavern wall.

The two Angel Dragons were at it again, building the tallest skyscrapers that they could, right next to the cavern walls.

Up and up, they went as high as they could reach to place another piece of dice on to another.

They found that they couldn't fly to place the dice, because the wind that their wings made would blow the dice buildings down. So, it was just as high as they could reach standing on the tips of their claws.

Dutch was laughing as he tried to get his last piece of dice to stay on top, but it kept falling down to the top of a school building.

Jet Fire was just about to place his last piece of dice when he slipped on a few pieces he had on the floor and fell into his last high-rise building.

Down came the whole wall of buildings as he cried out, "Oh, No!" Jet Fire lay covered in dice as he looked at Dutch and said laughingly, "Looks like you win Dutch."

They both laughed and laughed as Jet Fire pushed the hundreds of dice off of himself and then they both stood back and looked at the huge city that they had made out of dice.

"Not bad, Dutch," said Jet Fire, "Not bad at all. You win, my friend. What shall we call it?"

"Let's call it Dutch Blast City," suggested Dutch.

That was what they called their dice city, and they left it in the cavern forever.

To be continued...

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



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Panning for Good Exploring the Cave of the Winds Mountain Park

by Dr. Bec

Imagine being a curious kid, enjoying a slightly windy, carefree day hiking with your church group in Williams Canyon (just north of Manitou Springs across Highway 24). As you make your way up the limestone bluffs, you begin to notice a strange, intermittent, howling sound. You decide to leave the group and take off with your brother to check it out. Unexpectedly, you come across large sink holes near the canyon's cliff edge and realize that wind blowing across the top of the holes was making the strange sound. Feeling incredibly sleuth-like and courageous for solving that mystery, you decide to investigate a nearby tunnel that looks like a possible animal den. Candles lit, you and your brother take a deep breath and begin exploring. Braving about 20 feet into the darkness, out of nowhere, a gust of wind blows the candles out! Panicking, you both scurry out of the tunnel and run as fast as your legs can carry you to Manitou Springs where you emphatically proclaim your discovery of a haunted cave!

This is the generally accepted discovery story of the Cave of the Winds. John and George Pickett were the two young, adventurous boys. Trip Uhalt, the engaging Marketing and PR manager of the Cave of the Winds Mountain Park (who is also a professional comedian), describes what happened when the breathless boys reached Manitou Springs, "No one was listening to them except George Snider who then took a pick axe and shovel, went up the canyon, and sho-nuf, found the cave." George Snider became the first owner of the cave, but the Ute and Jicarilla Apache Native Americans knew about the caves near Manitou and an ancient Apache legend noted that the Great Spirit of the Wind lived there.

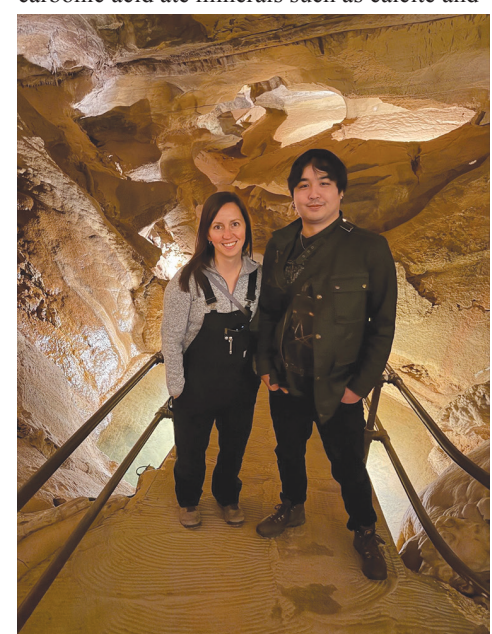
Cave geology and science

Five hundred million years ago, Colorado was a shallow ocean. Dead plants, sea animals and shells collected at the bottom of the ocean and were compressed into layers over time,



Dr. Bec and nephew share a scream on the Terror-dactyl.

creating the sedimentary stone, limestone. When the movement of tectonic plates formed the Rocky Mountains, the limestone became broken in places and water began to seep into the limestone eroding the rock internally and soaking up the carbonation within the rock turning the water into carbonic acid. As the carbonic acid ate minerals such as calcite and



Chelsea Dinon, Cave Scientist from Florida and Joseph Ahn.

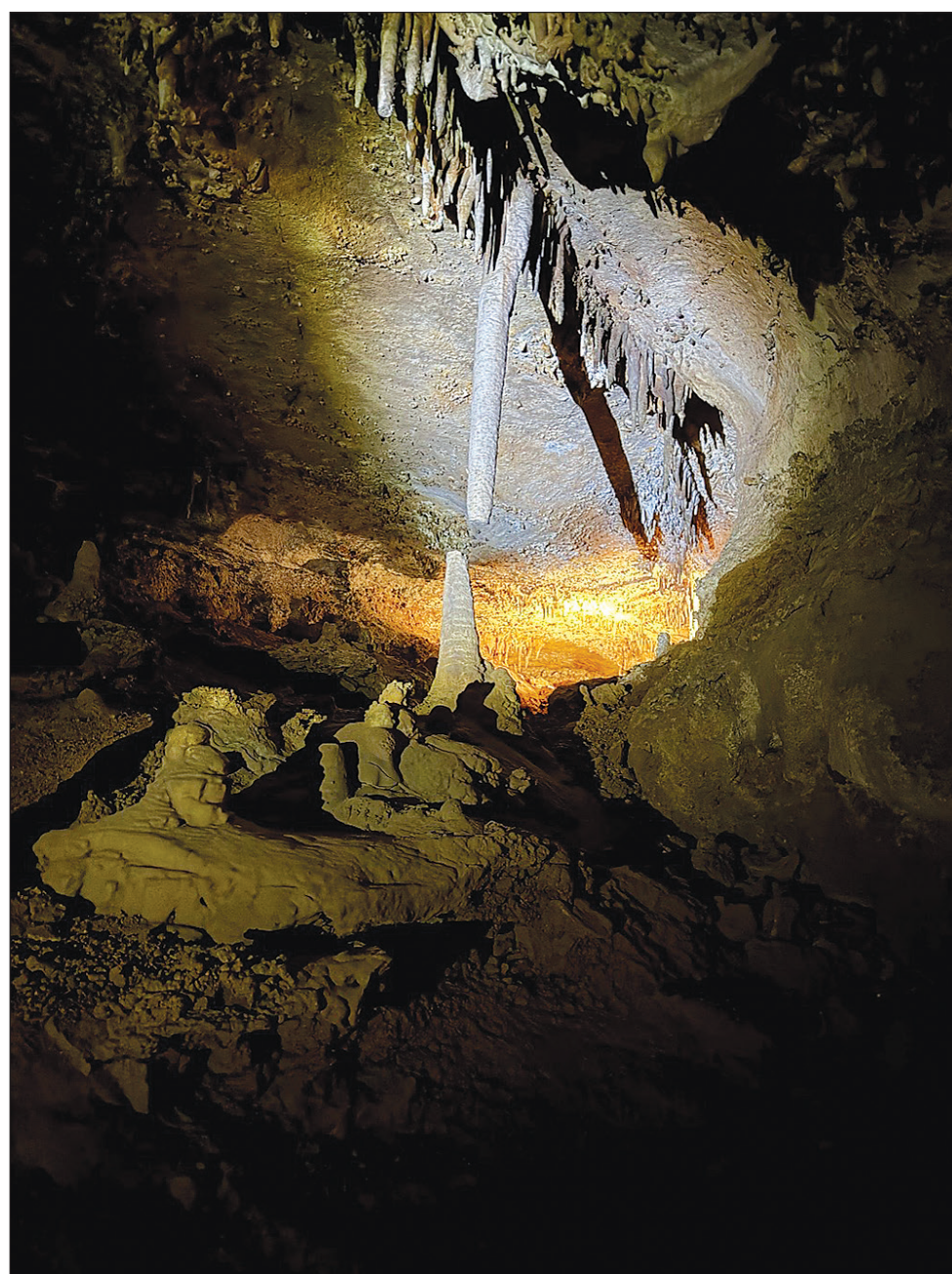
aragonite from the seashells, cracks and holes began to appear in the limestone and as time marched on, various types of cave caverns and formations were formed.

Flowing water masterfully contributed to the design of the Cave of the Winds. It is interesting, beautiful and home to a variety of formations or speleothems. Some of these include stalactites (stuck tite on the ceiling) and stalagmites (you mite trip over them). There are also formations that look like popcorn, big slabs of bacon and life lines that look similar to baby icicles hanging from the ceiling. Another intriguing fact is that the cave maintains a temperature of 54 degrees Fahrenheit year-round.

Paranormal activity

I have visited Cave of the Winds many times. As a teacher, I had the opportunity to take 4th and 5th grade students to the cave where they enjoyed learning about cave geology and Colorado history. This yearly field trip was highly anticipated by the students and each visit over the years proved to be informative, exciting, and at times, downright scary.

One year, when I had a smaller class, the tour guide allowed my students to experience a mix of the current Discovery and Haunted Lantern tours which included crawling through tunnels and taking lanterns deep into the cave. After extinguishing our lights so students could experience the depth of cave darkness (accompanied by terrified gasps) and later, hearing lots of screaming when a couple of bats were seen, we gathered around a dim light deep in the cave to be entertained with light-hearted ghost stories. Nellie, George Snider's wife was rumored to visit the cave at times. It's been said that if she likes you, you might smell rose perfume, but if she doesn't like you, you might receive a little annoyed flick on your neck or ankle. I noticed some students' eyes widening and definitely some sniffing going on. Later, we were told Texas pit, a deep, likely bottomless pit could be



Romeo and Juliet, a thwarted stalactite and stalagmite pair at Cave of the Winds. Cover: Trip Uhalt, Marketing and PR Manager at Cave of the Winds Mountain Park.

could tell it was a person, not a ghost — whew, so I put my hand over their hand, and we both survived that darkness together. It was comforting to know someone else was there and living in fear with me! When the lights came back on, a cave scientist from Florida, Chelsea Dinon, began laughing because she thought she had grabbed her boyfriend's arm, not mine. It was a funny moment for the tour group. Now, I'm pretty independent, but maybe I will make an effort to be less so from now on because that hand on my arm really minimized the fear and anxiety I was experiencing!

Brittany Pratt, a cave guide for eight years shared that along with the tours where people can do legitimate spelunking deep in the cave where there are gorgeous, pure white cave coral formations (Caving 101 and Expedition tours), one of the most interesting things is the cave's "spookiness." She told me one of the strangest things that happened when she was a guide was that for a year or two, both guides and visitors alike would sometimes come out of the cave with cave mud (peanut butter-like) handprints on their backs though no (living) person had touched them. Other recorded paranormal events include people seeing Native American spirits and a pair of legs regularly seen by the Lovers Lane formation.

Attractions

Cave of the Winds Mountain Park now includes adventure opportunities, not only cave tours. When I asked Trip about what attractions were visitor's favorites, he mentioned the Terror-dactyl, Frontier Ziplines and the Via Ferrata.

Trip was originally hired in 2014 to use his video production skills to find a way to video the Terror-dactyl experience for guests. He describes the Terror-dactyl this way, "It drops you 180 feet, at almost 100 miles an hour, pulling 2.5 G's and sends you 400 feet away in less than 4 seconds. Luckily, it flies faster than vomit!"

Italians invented the Via Ferrata during World War I as a way to go through the alps rather than around them. It consists of a series of eye bolts with a cable stretching between them along a rock face. A person is harnessed in and uses straps that clip on and off when going past the eye bolts. Incorporated into this adventure are fun obstacles including a balance beam, a cargo net and two ziplines. This adventure is open May-September.

Over the years I have had numerous educational, adventure-filled, spooky and heart-warming experiences at Cave of the Winds



Wishing Well area, Going Up? The Old-timers were tough!

Mountain Park. It is a local gem!

Websites:

- <https://caveofthewinds.com>
- National Telly Award Winning Overview Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqFT9laWbww>

Joke: upjoke.com

Q: What do you get when you mix a cave with a snippy person?
A: Sar-chasm

Quote:

"This formation is called ping pong rock. If you hit your head on ping, you're destined to meet pong."
— Tracy Bowersox

Challenge:

Face a fear. Extreme heights, just no. But, somehow, I rode the Terror-Dactyl! It must have been the pressure of my nephew needing a partner and wanting to be a cool aunt. I'll never forget it, Trip described it perfectly and I have the video!

Rebecca Frazier, PhD is an educator, author and journalist with a penchant for earth science and the exploration of all things good. You may reach her by email rebeccaafrazier@gmail.com

First Dental Hygiene Clinic at Delta Dental Oral Heal Career Center

by Rachel Tyrrell

Pikes Peak State College (PPSC) is announcing the launch of its Dental Hygiene Clinic, marking the first semester the college is offering comprehensive dental hygiene services to the community. The clinic operates 8-5 p.m. on Mondays and Fridays at the Delta Dental Oral Health Career Center, expanding access to affordable preventive dental care while preparing students for in-demand healthcare careers.

The Dental Hygiene Clinic provides a range of preventive and therapeutic services delivered by PPSC dental hygiene students under the direct supervision of licensed dental professionals. The clinic is open to PPSC students, faculty and staff, their families and

members of the public. Medicaid is accepted.

Services Offered

- Exams and X-rays: \$15 to \$40 depending on the number of X-rays needed
- Sealants: \$10 per tooth, preventative restoration
- Fluoride treatment: \$5, preventative care
- Dental cleanings: \$15 to \$20, preventative care
- Deep cleanings: \$20 to \$60, non-surgical periodontal (gum) disease therapy

Addressing Workforce and Access Gaps

Colorado ranks near the bottom nation-

ally for dental hygienist training programs. The Dental Hygiene Clinic is part of PPSC's broader effort to address critical workforce shortages while improving access to care.

A State-of-the-Art Learning Environment

The clinic is housed in the Delta Dental Oral Health Career Center, which opened in summer 2024 following a historic \$2.5 million grant from the Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation. The facility includes two fully equipped clinics with 20 total chairs, high-fidelity simulation labs, and advanced dental technology such as intraoral imaging, 3D imaging, and CAD/CAM systems. The center creates clear pathways into high-demand oral

health careers while strengthening community access to care.

Location

Delta Dental Oral Health Career Center
11125 Cross Peak View
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Make an Appointment

To schedule an appointment, call 719-502-4049 and leave a message. A PPSC student will return your call. For additional information on the dental hygiene clinic, or the dental assisting clinic that offers fillings and crowns, email dentalclinic@pikespeak.edu.

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

by Readers of Ute Country News

This column is dedicated to acts of kindness, which is why you will not read names of people or businesses; this is about the behavior. The goal is to remind people of what kindness is so that we can create a kinder community. If you experience or witness an act of kindness, please share it by stopping into Shipping Plus and telling us, or by leaving a voicemail 719-686-7587 or by emailing ShippingPlusCO@gmail.com.

- The parking lot had only one space left. The driver pulled up as close as possible to the wall so that there would be as much room as possible for other cars to maneuver. Considering other people and their cars is an act of kindness.
- Asking to pray for someone having surgery is an act of kindness.
- Dining at our favorite restaurant, we decided to leave information on a business card that was laminated. The information was to remind the holder of their Constitutional Rights. We explained if ICE should come in, they would not need to speak a word, simply point to the

card. We also recommended that anyone able should video with their phone because it was the multiple videos that helped MN know exactly how Alex Pretti was murdered by ICE. When the table next to us finished their meal, they came to us to thank us for providing the information, supporting the waitstaff of the restaurant. Sharing information is kindness and so is gratitude.

- Parking kindness looks like this: Pulling in between 2 cars, I noticed one vehicle preparing to exit and a man walking toward the other vehicle. It just made sense to back up and give everyone adequate space. The man waved. Soon after at the gas station, I was getting into my vehicle after fueling. The woman in the car in front of me gestured that she is also on her way out, making my way to exit clear. We CAN show kindness in the parking lot!
- The call was to thank me for the sincere condolences after a significant loss.
- Thank you for getting me chocolate after the evening meal; a kindness to human and snuggled cat alike.

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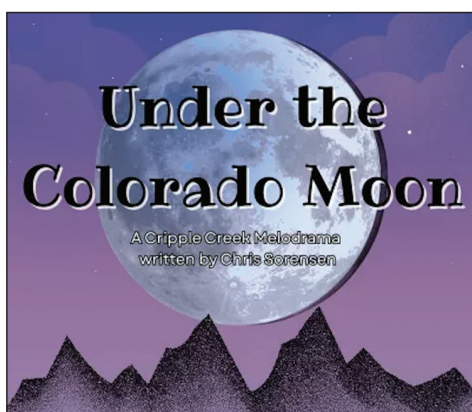
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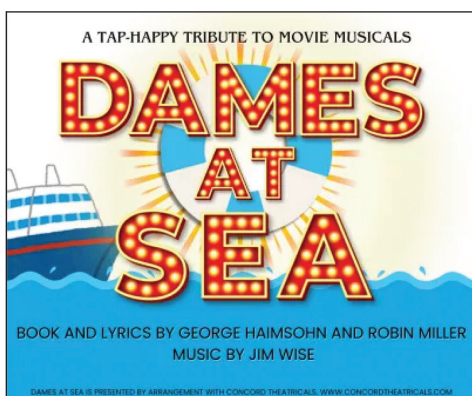
The Butte Theater Announces its 2026 Professional Season

by Lauren Smith

The Butte Theater in Cripple Creek has announced its 2026 Professional Season line up. In partnership with Colorado Springs based production companies Chameleon Arts & Entertainment and Green Glass Productions, two Cripple Creek specific Melodramas and two Musicals will be produced between June and December. Chameleon Arts & Entertainment is led by Betsy McClenahan and at the helm of Green Glass Productions is Nick Charles Madson.



To kick off the season in June, Chameleon Arts & Entertainment presents "Under the Colorado Moon," a Cripple Creek Melodrama written by Chris Sorensen. Last seen on the Butte stage in 2021, "Under the Colorado Moon" tells the story of gentleman Brett Armstrong. In financial distress after a lost wager and falsely accused of forgery, Brett must fake his own death and flee for a new life in the rough and tumble mountain town of Cripple Creek, CO. He assumes a new identity and joins a team of hard rock miners who toil under the thumb of Roy Shatterly, a man as cruel as he is rich. All is well until Armstrong falls for a beautiful and spirited mule skinner who has also caught Shatterly's eye. Now, Armstrong must either deny his love or risk his freedom...and quite possibly his life! "Under the Colorado Moon" runs from June 12th-July 12th.



Opening July 17th and running through August 23rd, Green Glass Productions presents "Dames at Sea," a long running Off-Broadway musical that gave Bernadette Peters her start and parodies classic musicals such as 42nd Street and Anything Goes. The delightfully campy show revels in nostalgia for Hollywood musicals of the '30s. Sweet little Ruby from faraway Hometown, U.S.A. has come to the big city make her mark on Broadway. Who should she chance to meet but another boy from Hometown, U.S.A.: Dick, a sailor, who also has ambitions as a songwriter. Ruby begins in the chorus, and by the end of the day, in true Hollywood fashion, Dick saves her doomed Broadway show with a smash tune and Ruby becomes a star on the deck of a battleship, which just happens to be passing by.

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Following the success of Green Glass's production of "The Vampire of Cripple Creek" comes the World Premiere of a brand-new Halloween Melodrama written by Chris Sorensen entitled "Sweeney, The Demon Barber of Cripple Creek." Taking inspiration from the story of Sweeney Todd, this brand new, spooky melodrama is set in Cripple Creek during the gold rush. Returning to the town that betrayed him after his escapes from Colorado State Penitentiary, Sweeney Todd finds things are no longer the same as when he left. His wife is dead and his daughter Johanna was raised by the very man who imprisoned him, Sheriff Thornton. Once Thornton's plans to marry off Johanna to clear his debts come to light, Sweeney teams up with Mrs. Loveland of Loveland's Tavern where an accidental kill turns into a lethal partnership, hiding dead bodies in vats of chili, while Sweeney pursues his final revenge against Thornton. Darkly funny with twists and songs galore, Sweeney! Proves that in Cripple Creek, justice, like chili, is best served hot. Produced by Green Glass Productions and running October 2nd-November 1st.



To wrap up the season, The Butte and Green Glass Productions will ring in the holidays with holiday favorites from the '60s with "Winter Wonderettes," a sequel to "The Marvelous Wonderettes." Featuring four friends Missy, Suzy, Betty Jean, and Cindy Lou, as they provide the holiday entertainment at Harper Hardware's annual Christmas party. When Santa turns up missing, the girls use their talent and creative ingenuity to save the holiday party! Featuring great versions of holiday classics such as "Santa Claus Is Comin' to Town," "Jingle Bell Rock," "Run, Rudolph, Run," and "Winter Wonderland," the result is, of course, marvelous! This energetic and glittering holiday package is guaranteed to delight audiences of all ages. Running November 20th-December 27th.

Professional Season subscription packages are now on sale, offering patrons the opportunity to save 25% off full-priced, individual tickets and reserve their seats before the public. Tickets for individual seats go on sale to the general public on Friday, March 9th, at 12 p.m.

FMI about the season and to purchase the professional season pass or single tickets, visit buttheater.com.

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Life-Enhancing Journeys

Take Charge of Your Emotions, Improve Your Relationships

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

Have you ever said something in the heat of the moment and wished you could take it back? Many relationship struggles do not come from a lack of love or caring, they happen when emotions take over before we have had a chance to think things through. The truth is, most of us were never taught how to calm ourselves when we experience strong feelings, or how to communicate clearly when we feel hurt, angry, or overwhelmed. As a result, couples, families, and friends often find themselves repeating the same arguments and misunderstandings, not realizing the real problem is emotional overload, not lack of commitment.

I must admit I sometimes struggle with this myself. When under pressure, my mind can sometimes go blank, making it hard to find the right words feel nearly impossible. In those moments, instinct may take charge, causing me to seem unsure or appear foolish, something I never intended. Over time, I have realized the importance of pausing when emotions surge. Taking a breath and giving myself a moment to settle helps me respond more thoughtfully rather than reacting impulsively. The good news is that anyone can develop emotional competence. With practice, it becomes easier to communicate clearly and calmly, even in difficult situations.

"When the emotions battle with the intellect, the emotions always win." Susan Miller, Artist

Here are some strategies: Your peace matters more than their opinions.

Worrying excessively about others' opinions can undermine your confidence. Feeling ignored or disrespected might unsettle you, but it is a normal response. Remind yourself, "It is not about me." Letting go of the need for approval from those who do not support you can lead to more peace and self-acceptance.

When Your Mind Won't Let Go Pause. Breathe. Reset.

1. Ground Yourself
 - Take one slow inhalation, then breathe out more than you inhale.
 - Feel your feet on the floor.
 - Notice where you are in the moment.
2. Quick Reality Check
 - "I don't actually know what they're thinking."
 - "This is a guess, not a fact."
 - "If it matters, I can ask."
3. Let It Go
 - "This isn't worth my peace."
 - "Not everything needs a reaction."
 - "I can move on."
 - "I can't control everything."
4. Return to the Present Moment
 - Ask yourself:
 - What truly needs my attention right now??
 - What small step can I take next?

Find the strength to say "No" with confidence.

You have various ways to respond, depending upon pressure you face. Recognize that saying "no" can help protect you. Agreeing just to keep the peace can harm your self-worth. Be clear about your boundaries. Saying "no" supports your self-worth and can show your strength.

Gentle & Kind

- "I wish I could help, but I'm unable to right now."
- "I'm not available for that at the moment."
- "I can't commit to that, but I hope it goes well."

Clear & Respectful

- "That doesn't work for me right now."
- "I'm going to say no this time."

Warm yet maintaining boundaries

- "I've been overcommitting lately, so I need to say no."
- "I'm focusing on fewer commitments right now."
- "I'm learning to stop stretching myself too thin."

Offering an alternative (if you want)

- "I can't help directly, but I can suggest another option."
- "I can't do that now, but I could help next week."

When someone pushes you



- "I know it's important, but my answer is still no."
- "I need you to respect that I'm unable to do this."
- "I can't take this on."

Respond thoughtfully instead of reacting.

When someone pressures you for an immediate answer, they may be acting out of their own stress. Avoid rushing any response. Taking a brief pause gives you time to breathe and think clearly. Staying calm helps you handle the situation with confidence. Remember, while you cannot control how others act, you can control how you respond.

Phrases to slow the conversation down

- "Let's slow down for a moment so we can sort this out."
- "Let's take this one step at a time."
- "Can we pause for a moment and start fresh?"
- "Give me a moment to think about this."

Build respect by maintaining your composure.

Shouting louder can often undermine respect. Staying calm usually establishes self-control and confidence. During discussions or negotiations, keeping your cool increases your influence. Remain composed and you will likely lead the conversation with dignity.

When someone raises their voice

- "I want to solve this, not argue or debate."
- "I understand. Let's stay calm and productive."
- "I'll keep the conversation going as long as we can stay respectful."

Calmly maintain your authority

- "Here's what I can agree to. Here's what I can't."
- "Let's focus on solutions."
- "My goal is to find something that works for both of us."

When things get emotional

- "I understand this matters to you."
- "Help me get a clear idea of what you're looking for here."
- "What can we do next to move forward?"
- "How do we solve this together?"

To calmly close a conversation

- "Let's revisit this when we're both ready to continue after we've had time to think."
- "I'm glad we were able to talk about this."

Be careful how much you share about yourself.

Sharing personal information can create closeness, but it is important to be selective about what you share and with whom. Over-sharing can reveal vulnerabilities, so maintaining some privacy enhances your resilience and safeguards your personal information. The less you disclose, the more confident you may seem.

Gentle and polite

- "I'd rather keep that private for now."
- "I appreciate your interest, but I'd like to keep that to myself."

Warm but clear

- "I prefer to keep some things private."
- "I'm not ready to go into that, so thank you for understanding."
- "I'm doing okay, but I prefer not to talk about that now."

Clear and well-defined boundaries

- "I'm uncomfortable sharing more about that."
- "That's something I prefer to keep just to myself."

If they keep pushing

- "I've said all I want to say about that."
- "I'm not going to talk about this further."
- "Let's move on."

Gentler redirects

- "Tell me what's new with you."
- "How have things been on your end?"

Identify What Can Drain Your Life Force.

Be aware that certain relationships can drain your vitality. Recently, I chose to distance myself from a "friend" who only talks about herself and never asks about me. Some friends may require constant reassurance, which can become an emotional burden. Sometimes, stepping back is beneficial for both parties. Prioritizing your well-being is key to nurturing healthier relationships.

Gentle, caring boundaries

- "I want to support you, and I also need to take care of myself."
- "I value our friendship, and I need to balance my own needs too."
- "I need some time to recharge right now."

Encouraging them to get more support, especially if they only rely on you

- "I care about you, but it might help to have more support than just me."
- "I'm starting to feel overwhelmed and need to step back a bit."

"This might be something a trained professional could help you with."

When you need to limit heavy conversations

- "I can listen for a few minutes, but I can't go deeply into this right now."
- "I'm not able to discuss serious matters today."
- "I'm feeling overwhelmed myself and could use some help getting through this time."

Setting ongoing boundaries

- "I'm trying not to take on more than I can handle."
- "I can't always be the person you turn to."
- "I want our conversations to feel balanced for both of us."

Redirect your focus inward

Where you focus your attention has a significant impact on how you feel. Constantly comparing yourself to others can lead to self-doubt and feelings of inadequacy. Instead, concentrate on your goals, dreams, and what truly matters to you. When you keep your attention on your path, it is easier to stay motivated and feel more confident about where you are headed.

Limit ruminating about others

Constantly thinking about someone, especially someone who has hurt or betrayed you, can be emotionally exhausting. When your mind keeps replaying painful situations, it drains your energy and affects your well-being. I experienced this with a family member whose behavior caused years of hurt. I kept wondering, "How can I earn their respect without always feeling like a disappointment?" Eventually, I realized the problem was not something I could fix. They simply did not have the ability to offer any compassion or respect that I desired. Holding on to those thoughts was only causing me more pain. Accepting this truth finally helped me feel at peace.

Whenever possible, shift your attention back to your own life. Focusing on what you have control over, your choices, your healing, and your future, can help reduce feelings of anger and resentment. This approach allows you to move forward with greater resilience and a sense of peace.

Accept what you cannot change

Attempting to change someone who is not ready or willing to examine their own behavior can lead to frustration and exhaustion. Remember, you cannot force someone to change, regardless of your desire. Instead, prioritize your own growth and well-being. When necessary, establish boundaries to maintain a sense of balance, calmness, and strength.

Manage your emotions in a healthy way

Acknowledging and accepting your emotions can enhance your ability to manage them. Instead of suppressing or denying your feelings, take time to examine them to gain a clearer understanding. Developing emotional resilience means knowing when and how to express feelings in ways that benefit yourself and others, rather than causing harm.

Final thoughts

Emotional competence is a skill anyone can learn and strengthen over time. When you learn to manage your emotions, you can slow down, think more clearly, and react less impulsively. Challenges still happen, but they become easier to handle when you remember that emotions are temporary and do not have to control your choices.

The more you practice these skills, the stronger and more confident you become. Over time, managing your emotions can become one of your greatest strengths, a true personal superpower.

As Viktor Frankl, Holocaust survivor and psychiatrist, wrote: "Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

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 Journeyscounselingctr@gmail.com.



Fitness ON the Mountain Get ready to kick pain in the butt

by Lori Martin

Fitness On the Mountain was born at the time I was entering my senior years, living a very relaxed life as a retiree. The inspiration for this column, though, continues to be my mom. Witnessing her physical and cognitive decline was both shocking and heartbreaking. Looking back over those years it should not have been a surprise. Many factors contributed to how my family arrived where we are today. I have written about those factors in the past so, I won't revisit that journey here. My main take away was that it was all preventable "if"... and the "if" list is a long one. Regardless, here we are. Where do we go from here?

Comfort

I was determined to help make my mom's marginal decade (the last 10 years of life) more comfortable. First on my list was to find a way to relieve some of her pain. We also needed to stop the reduction of muscle mass and enhance mobility through stretching and strengthening.

Obstacles

1. I lived over 1000 miles away from her, at the time. I had a great plan but, no one in person, to initiate that plan.
2. The cycle of lack of movement led to reduction in muscle mass, which resulted in skeletal deterioration from her feet to her neck. The muscle mass and skeletal system didn't have a chance.

The plan

It was apparent that she needed something passive, something that didn't stress, inflame or otherwise cause a problem for those joints, something non-invasive and definitely, something safe. After all, this is my mom I'm talking about.

The research

I was interested in vibration plate technology but had tried it at a fitness conference and found that it hurt my neck and set off a

mighty migraine. Oh....right... car accidents and whiplash are not a good match for a vibration plate. My mom has multiple skeletal issues including two knee replacements and pretty bad osteoporosis as priority considerations. I wasn't on board with vibrating those old knees, let alone her bone-on-bone hip and degenerative discs.

Vibration plate technology

The concept is amazing and would have helped her 15 years earlier. Strength training, maintaining muscle mass, increase lymphatic flow, core strength training, balance and overall, improve circulation are a few of the benefits. The search continued.

My main take away was that it was all preventable "if"... and the "if" list is a long one. Regardless, here we are. Where do we go from here?

Light therapy

I'd been introduced to light therapy years ago so, I explored the plethora of devices out there. I narrowed my requirements to Made in the USA, science based technology, proper wavelength for healing at the surface and also healing for the deepest tissue. My research was paying off.

Ah, ha!
A Veteran owned Colorado based company, caught my eye with their 60 day guarantee, patented technology, multiple awards and the catcher multiple modalities that can be toggled on or off as needed: Red light, NIR (near infrared) light, "Micro" vibration and magnetic

resonance.

Light therapy and vibration?

DNA Vibe Regenerative Light Therapy BAMM! Everything I was looking for and more.

The test

Still, it had to pass the picky daughter test. I ordered one to try out on myself. I'm not much of a rule breaker so, I committed to 60 days of 10 minutes, 2x per day. Halfway through the second week, I felt it, a very subtle but familiar feeling. I later learned that subtle feeling was my mitochondria firing, generating energy. A deeper explanation of the science and the technology behind this device can be found on my website below.

Pulling the trigger

With my health, wellness and fitness savings account, I purchased my mom her first DNA Vibe Red Light Therapy device. The original stayed with me, as I continued to explore all that it could do.

The obstacle

The key to relief is consistency, which was my mom's main obstacle. How could I expect my sister and family, who already were maxed out with their family, household, work and caregiver duties, to find the time to help my mom use her DNA Vibe?

Life

I continued to explore all that my DNA Vibe was capable of. Somehow along the way acquired another device. Wait, I have two feet... Let's get both devices going at the same time! I placed one under each foot then, both on the tops of my feet. Multiple sprained ankles in my younger years left scar tissue that often seeks relief.

The force

A more powerful force began to emerge in my life. Everywhere I went I encountered people talking about their pain. Pain that was being ignored, justified, prescribed NSAIDs or Rest Ice Compression Elevation but to little avail.

Obsession or passion

I began to share my experience with these people who were friends, neighbors, acquaintances and social clubs. Many purchased their own DNA Vibe to use at home. Soon, I was asked to be a representative of DNA Vibe. Before I knew it, I had my very own website www.dnavibe.com/lorimartinfitness.

I kept several devices on hand. I began loaning them out. After a few weeks, the loanees were asking to buy the device they borrowed. At the time, I was only interested in helping people, not in creating an income. Having a website helped me to help others get relief from their pain. Admittedly, it was also kind of cool.

The foundation

It finally occurred to me that my passion had become a foundation for a business plan that would allow me to:

1. Continue to help provide relief to those in pain.
2. Provide a much needed boost to my now modest new lifestyle and income.
3. Allow me the flexibility to be more available to help with my mom's care.

Celebrating

Having officially achieved Social Security Full Retirement Status, I no longer have the limitations on my income that I had since returning to the workforce 1-1/2 years ago. It's time to take my passion for red light therapy to a new level. The previous years of helping others was important for my growth and my financial fitness.

The timing

I set a goal to earn \$2,000.00 from my new business by April 1st. In January, our family had some emergencies which required me to step up as my mom's secondary caregiver. Those business plans had to be placed on the back burner. It's been over a month, and we are not out of the woods. Yet I continue to work on this business in baby steps, learning to use Chat GPT has been helpful.

Move... Heal...Live MORE

Is no longer delegated to tagline status for Lori Martin Fitness and Fitness on the Moun-

tain. It is now officially the main concept of this new business.

If you find yourself dealing with a chronic or acute injury, weakness or muscle imbalance Move...Heal... Live... MORE can help you find relief.

- While you wait on the process of obtaining diagnoses, Physical Therapy, Imaging
- Possibly even help you avoid surgery

Move...Heal...Live...MORE knows you are looking for:

- Something safe
- Something non-invasive
- Something you can try now

Move... Heal... Live... MORE knows you don't want:

- Another gimmick
- To be told just to rest
- To have to wait weeks or months for appointments

Move...Heal...Live... MORE knows what you want:

- Relief while you're waiting for care
- To feel in control of your healing
- Hope that doesn't include more pills, injections or scary next steps

Kick Pain in the Butt: A 30 Day Move...Heal...Live...MORE Challenge

We offer you the 30 Day "Kick Pain in the Butt" package at 50% discount! With the purchase of every DNA Vibe Red Light Therapy Device you will receive:

- 1 FREE "get to know you" session
- 8 virtual red light sessions
- Education: Learn how to safely and effectively optimize your DNA Vibe Red Light device specific to your situation and lifestyle.
- Personal Coaching: Easy to follow, individually designed plans for your "daily in home" Sessions, plus exercise and stretch recommendations.
- Follow-ups: 4 Monthly virtual follow-up/maintenance sessions.

Move...Heal...Live RECOVERED

Move...Heal...Live MORE understands that every BODY and every situation is different, so we offer you this guarantee: After you complete the "Kick Pain in the Butt" 30 Day Challenge you will experience notable improvement:

- Reduced pain and inflammation
- Increased circulation and mobility
- Improved muscle and joint recovery

If you do not see adequate improvement, we offer:

One FREE month of 8 additional sessions to re-evaluate and fine tune your experience so that we can add you to our list of Move...Heal...Live...Recovered!

Our goal for you is that you no longer require our services. However, we do welcome your reviews and your referrals. We trust you will consider us should a new physical challenge present itself.

Ute Country News readers will receive this Move...Heal...Live...More package for \$420.00 (Reg \$840.00) and it is our belief that your quality of life is worth every penny.

To get started:

1. Go to www.DNAVibe.com/lorimartinfitness to purchase your DNA Vibe Red Light Therapy device
2. Go to www.lorimartinfitness.com to register for the "Kick Pain in the Butt" 30 day Challenge and to schedule your 8 sessions.

Move...Heal...Live MORE

Editor's note: We have purchased several of the DNA Vibe Red Light Therapy Devices. One seemed to lose the vibration, so we contacted the company, sent it back and the replacement arrived very quickly! It seems this company stands behind their product. The folks at Advanced Regenerative Health have confirmed that the wavelength of the DNA Vibe is an "effective" wavelength. Both Jeff and I have used the DNA Vibe for general soreness, to sprains, to over-worked muscles and have found relief! We are glad to have this device available to help us heal, especially as we are aging.

Guffey at 130 years - Final Installment

by Flip Boettcher

photos by Flip Boettcher

In the late 1980s, the Guffey Community Association (GCA) was formed and built the Community Building totally with grant monies and volunteers, including Department of Corrections inmates from Buena Vista who actually built the building. The GCA gave the building to the county. It is still very much in operation with a basketball/racquetball court, pool table, hockey game and weight room. Access requires a \$20 per year access code which also helps maintain and support the building.

Currently, there is a food bank in the foyer of the building for people who are in need of shelf-stable donated food items. Dylan's Pantry should be open through the winter.

The Guffey library started in a small trailer behind the school until the county built the current library building adjacent to the community building. The Guffey library is part of the Park County library system.

The fire department was started in the 1990s with allegedly four drunks and a duce and a half. The fire department has gone on from there to become the Southern Park County Fire Protection District and has a very dedicated fire chief Aric Stahly, who has done wonders with the department. SPCFPD has their main station in Guffey and two satellite buildings, one on the east side on County Road 102, and one on the west side on CR 88.

The main station is staffed every day 9-3 p.m. and has on-call personnel outside those hours on standby. The department also has an ambulance service. The department recently acquired a vehicle with grant monies for the lead on-call EMT to take home to be able to respond to calls from home without having to go into town to get a vehicle, thus saving time, which could also save a life.

This vehicle is also used to take local residents to medical appointments and to pick people up from the hospital if they were flown out in an emergency by helicopter and don't have a way to get back home.

In 2007, the Park County Historical Preservation Advisory Commission and the Colorado Historical Society published a Town of Guffey Intensive Survey with the possibility of the area becoming a national, state or local historic district. They also wanted to preserve some of the town's history. The survey work was performed by Will Cargo, president of Equilibrium Architecture, Inc.

The survey area, 41 acres of the platted Town of Guffey, included 25 buildings, 23 in the platted town and 2 immediately adjacent to the town. The boundaries of the area were Third Street on the north, Water Street on the east, Ninth Street on the south, and Ridge Street on the west.

The 25 buildings listed in the survey sit on 14 properties. The 14 sites are: Guffey Assay Office, 1896; Last Chance Antiques, 1896; Guffey Garage/Livery Stable, 1896; Guffey Dunn Residence, 1925; Guffey Teacherage/Ownbey Residence, 1918; Guffey Town Hall, 1896; Roysse Residence, 1930s; Henry Reed Cabin, 1896; Guffey West Residence, 1900; Johnson Shack, 1896; Stahl Residence, 1896; Keltner House/honeymoon Cabin, 1896; Doll House, 1945; and Killam Residence, 1900.

None of the 14 properties qualified for national or state historic registers but were eligible for Park County Historical Landmark Designation with all 14 contributing to a Park County Historical District.

Very little documentation and few pictures

of the Town of Guffey or Freshwater were found for this survey. "There seems to be more information about Old Mose, the Grizzly that roamed the hills in the area in the late 1800s then there is about the buildings or local events," from the survey.

Cargo found the town residents "suspicious about outsiders and were not very forthcoming with information...Most Guffey residents do not want to have any type of restrictions placed on their properties, for any reason," he said. "That is the reason most people live in Guffey, to escape modern life and step back in time to a place where they can do whatever they want," Cargo. That may or may not be still true today.

Some folks live very remotely and rarely, if ever, come into town and some people come into town for events and to socialize. The school, the fire department and the library are very important to the community, offering many events, and the chance to volunteer.

People thought that by getting historically designated they would have to follow rules about what they could and could not do with their properties. The historic designation was shot down.

Today Guffey is composed of an eclectic group of people. The population in town remains around 30 people, some who come and go. There are about 300-400 people in the surrounding area depending on whether it is winter or summer.

Some folks live very remotely and rarely, if ever, come into town and some people come into town for events and to socialize. The school, the fire department and the library are very important to the community, offering many events, and the chance to volunteer.

Besides the fire department, the post office, the library and the school, there are several businesses in town: The Colorado Mountain Distillers offering food and libations; the Wild Spirit Mountain Lodge offering food, libations, a few bed and breakfast rooms, and a place for an event either public or private; the Guffey Bakery offering food, baked goodies, and homemade chocolates and fudge, and also a recently added market; Old West Liquors is a small liquor store; the Guffey Garage and Last Chance Antiques; and MountainAries Market stocking organic items and produce located just south of town on State Highway 9.

The next big event in Guffey will be Guffey Heritage Day on July 4th celebrating the US 250 year, the Colorado 150 year and the Guffey 130 year birthdays.



The Teacherage is located across Main Street from the school.



The Guffey Garage/Livery Stable - the south side. Located north of the school on Main Street.



The Assay Office. The chow hall was on the north side of this, and the Guffey Hotel was on the south side of this. Located south of the library on Main Street.

Teller County Dems hold 2026 Caucus & Assembly

by Laurie Glauth

Now is the time to be involved! Local government is where change begins.

It's time to attend the 2026 Teller Democrats' county-wide Caucus & Assembly; it is the beginning of the local political process to make change! Choose to be a part of the solution, get involved in shaping your future. Your vote makes a difference!

"We are not going to bend the knee" and "We know bullies don't stop coming back," she said. "We need to unite in Colorado and fight back across the country and speak out, because these actions aren't going to stop here."

— U. S. Congressional Representative
Brittany Pettersen, CD-07 Democrat

The 2026 election cycle begins for Teller County with the Teller County Democrats' Caucus & Assembly on Saturday, March 07, 2026. Democrats will Caucus at the historic Pikes Peak Community Center at 1122 Hwy 24 in Divide, Colorado. This building is located just east of the intersection of Hwy 24 and Hwy 67 South in Divide. It is on the south side of that intersection, next door to the Teller Tire lot. Check-in begins at 9 a.m. County-wide Caucus for all precincts begins at 10 a.m. The Democrats' County Assembly will follow at the same location and will begin immediately after Caucus ends. Voters must attend Caucus in order to participate in Assembly.

All Teller County voters registered as Democrats as of February 13, 2026 are eli-

gible to participate in the Teller Democrats' County-wide Caucus and Assembly. Bring your cell phone to facilitate your ability to vote in the Caucus and Assembly process. Bring your photo ID to aid in checking your voter registration, confirming your voting precinct. Accommodation will be available for those who do not have a cell phone.

At this year's County-wide Democratic Caucus and Assembly, registered Democrats will organize their neighborhood's voting precinct, hear from candidates for county elections as well as Colorado and national elected positions, plus learn about the 2026 Colorado State Democratic Party's upcoming state-wide Assembly in Pueblo on March 28, 2026. Delegates from Teller for Colorado regional and State Democratic Party

Assemblies will be elected from among attendees to this Caucus and Assembly. In order to participate in this process, a Teller voter must be present at their party's Caucus and Assembly. Democrats: This meeting is for you.

Light refreshments will be served. Voters may confirm their voter registration status in advance of this event by checking their voter information at:

<https://www.sos.state.co.us/voter/pages/pub/home.xhtml>. For questions about voter registration status, a Teller resident may contact Teller County Clerk & Recorder's Election Department 719- 689-2951.

For updates, more information please visit the Teller County Democrats' website at <https://tellerdems.org/>.

NO NEED TO DRIVE TO THE SPRINGS!

WE CAN NOW TAKE MOST OF YOUR FEDEX AND US POSTAL PACKAGES IF YOU ONLY HAVE A QR CODE!!

YOU COULD STILL DROP OFF YOUR FEDEX, UPS, AND USPS PACKAGES WITH A LABEL

For All Your Printing & Copy Services...

Restaurant Menus • Tri-fold Brochures & Flyers • Spiral-Bound Booklets & Calendars
POA & HOA Newsletters (with/without mailing)
Stop in for a printing quote!

Shipping Plus

Your Full Service Shipping & Business Center

52 County Road 5 - Divide
(Behind Divide Market)
719-686-7587 • Open M-F 9-5:30
ShippingPlusCO@gmail.com • www.shippingplusco.net



~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.

AVAILABLE ONLINE

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

CAÑON CITY

Sundays Paint with Mary Shell — see page 7.

LIBRARY

- Dr. Seuss Birthday Party 3-4 p.m.
- 20.21 Clothing give-away all day in the teen room.
- 1st Friday Lego Club 3 p.m.
- 2nd Friday Breakfast Box 3 p.m.
- 3rd Friday Creative Crafting 3 p.m.
- 3rd Saturday Cañon City Gardening Club 12-30 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-noon.
- Dulcimer Club for Kids 2nd and 4th Wednesday 3:30-4:30 p.m.
- Mahjong Club Tuesdays 1-4 p.m.
- Metaphysical Group Second 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.
- All at 516 Macon Ave unless otherwise specified. FMI 719-269-9020 www.ccpil.lib.co.us

CASCADE

UTE PASS LIBRARY

- 15. 19 Device Drop-in Help 3-4 p.m. Need help with your laptop, smartphone, tablet, or the Library's new online catalog? Stop by our Device Drop-In Hour and our staff can assist you. No registration is required. Please bring your power cords and devices. We cannot help with installing software, removing viruses, or setting up computers.
- 6. Idea Lab: Cowboy Culture 3:30-4:30 p.m. In honor of Colorado's 150th birthday, learn about cowboy culture and Western heritage in Colorado. You may find yourself mining, panning for gold, or creating your own ranch brand design. Ages 5 - 12. The cookies used in this program contain known allergens.
- 7. Your Clothes Customized 3-4 p.m. Want to add some character to your clothes? Put some pizzazz in your accessories? Bring your own shirts, pants, shoes, hats, headbands, etc., and make them uniquely yours. We'll provide ribbons, fabric, paint, embroidery patches, and fabric scraps for you to create something truly customized. Please bring your own items; the Library will not provide clothes and accessories. Ages 13-18. Registration required at <https://ppid.librarymarket.com/event/your-clothes-customized-524624> or by calling 719-531-6333 x7011
- 13. LEGO Build 3:30-4:30 p.m. Engineering your best LEGO creation and completing LEGO challenges are only some of the possibilities at this open-ended LEGO program using the Library's LEGO resources. Join us for creative fun! All ages welcome.
- 21. Colorado Nature Embroidery 3-4:30 p.m. Embroider the flora and fauna of Colorado in this basics course celebrating the 150th anniversary of the State of Colorado! Create designs inspired by the book *The Field Guide to Embroidery* by Jessica Kemper. All supplies provided. Registration required at <https://ppid.librarymarket.com/event/colorado-nature-embroidery-524369> or by calling 719-531-6333 x7011
- 26. Spring Break: Animals 101 10:30-11:15 a.m. Join Cheyenne Mountain Zoo and their animal ambassadors to learn about animals from around the world! You will get up-close views of these animals as you learn the important roles they play on our planet. Ages 0 - 12.
- Storytime on Fridays 10:30-11:15 a.m. Stories and more for children ages 3-7, and their parents or caregivers.

CRIPPLE CREEK

- 19. 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.

LIBRARY

- Wiggle Wednesdays Storytime every Wednesday at 10 a.m. Come get your wiggles out at this new storytime for ages 0-5!
- 3. Fiber Arts Club at 11 a.m. All are invited to join this club of fiber artists! Some of these arts include crochet, knitting, felting, needle point, sewing, macrame and more.
- 6. Family Craft Day 11-1 p.m. Drop in and make a themed craft as a family!
- 9. Romantics with Altitude Book Club 4-5:30 P.M. Read and talk about romance books with other lovers of love!
- 11. Florissant Bookworms Book Club 10:30-12 p.m.
- 12. Yarnal! Fiber Arts Club 10:30-12 p.m. Beginner or expert, come crochet, knit, sew, and craft with us!
- 13. Food Crafts 11-12 p.m. Drop in after storytime for a fun food themed craft!
- 13. Tarot Club 3 p.m. Teens and up are welcome to join this group and learn all things tarot. March's theme is "Growth."
- 17. Read Amok Book Club 11-12:30 p.m. Bring up to 5 books within the theme to share! March's theme is "Time Machine: What era would you visit and why?"
- 20. Dominion Game Club 11-1:30 p.m. A fun, fast paced, deck building card game set in Medieval Times! Meets the third Friday and the fourth Saturday of the month.
- 20. Family Movie at 1 p.m. Come watch Zootopia 2 with us! Popcorn and lemonade are provided.
- 21. Colorado Hunter Education Course 8-3:30 p.m. Registration is required.

FAIRPLAY

- 28 "No Kings" Peaceful Protest 418 Main St. 3:30-5 p.m. see page 19.

WIZARDS OF THE PEAKS

- 1, 15, 31 Amtgard Park Days 12-1:30 p.m. FREE at South Park Rec Center
- 1 Catan Group 2 p.m.
- 7 One Stick Strategy 7 p.m.
- 8 Chess Group 2 p.m.
- 22 Amtgard Arts & Science Day 12 p.m.
- 29 World Game Group 2 p.m.
- Mondays Cribbage Group weekly 6 p.m.
- Monday Boozy Board Games bi-weekly 6 p.m. FREE at Snitching Lady Distillery.

AMERICAN LEGION

- 5 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.
- 14 BINGO the second Saturday each month 6-8 p.m. at the American Legion Post 171. The Victor Elk's has teamed up with American Legion Post 171 to raise funds and support veterans, youth and community services in Teller County. Teamwork building a better community.

ASPEN MINE CENTER

- 27 Commodities distribution 9-1 p.m.
- 30 A Place for Kids: Building Bright Beginnings for Southern Teller County's Children see page 4.
- Tuesdays BINGO 10:30 a.m. for seniors.
- Tuesdays Moral Reconciliation Therapy 5-7 p.m. at ACCC building.
- What Matters Wednesday 10:45-11:45 a.m. Independence Center presents "Assistive Technology and Home Modifications"
- Wednesdays Luncheon 11:30-1 p.m. upstairs dining room, every Wed, donations greatly appreciated, but not required.
- Mexican Train on Thursday 10:30a.m.
- First and third Thursdays is for Adult Children of Alcoholics 6:30-8 p.m.
- Interested in ESL? Please contact Ann 719-493-0867. All programs at 166 E Bennett Ave. FMI 719-689-3584 x112.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

- 3 Playgroup 10-11:30 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's 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. New students (min. age 16) may join GED classes after completing orientation and \$40 registration fee. FMI Katy@cpteller.org

DIVIDE

- 9. 23 Little Chapel Food Pantry distribution 2-5 p.m. FMI 719-222-7610 or email littlechapelfoodpantry@outlook.com
- 13, 27 Teller Senior Coalition BINGO! 10-11:30 a.m. at Little Chapel Church 69 CR 5. Please call to set up a ride 719-687-0256 and join us for doughnuts, coffee and FUN!

COLORADO WOLF & WILDLIFE CENTER

- Through March 15 First Responder Appreciation Month Tours Tues-Fri only! Standard Tour \$10, Feeding Tour \$15, and 20% off in our gift shop. Beat the Winter Blues and do something fun! Reservations and ID required, must mention "We Salute You" when booking 719-687-9742.
- 15. Luck of the Wolf 12-1:30 p.m. at Colorado Wolf & Wildlife Center. \$40 adults 12+ and \$20 for kids ages 8-11. Wear green to qualify for a special raffle! Seasonal refreshments, meet and greet, storytelling by the fire, enjoy as we pass out shamrock meat treats on the tour! Reserve by calling 719-687-9742.

LIBRARY

- 4 Diabetes Support Group 10-11 a.m. We are coming together to talk about the ups and downs of life with type 2 diabetes. This group is not led by a medical professional, no medical advice will be offered.
- 5 Book Coven Book Club 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.
- 11 Florissant Bookworms Book Club 10:30-12 p.m.
- 12 Yarnal! Fiber Arts Club 10:30-12 p.m. Beginner or expert, come crochet, knit, sew, and craft with us!
- 13 Food Crafts 11-12 p.m. Drop in after storytime for a fun food themed craft!
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WOODLAND PARK

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