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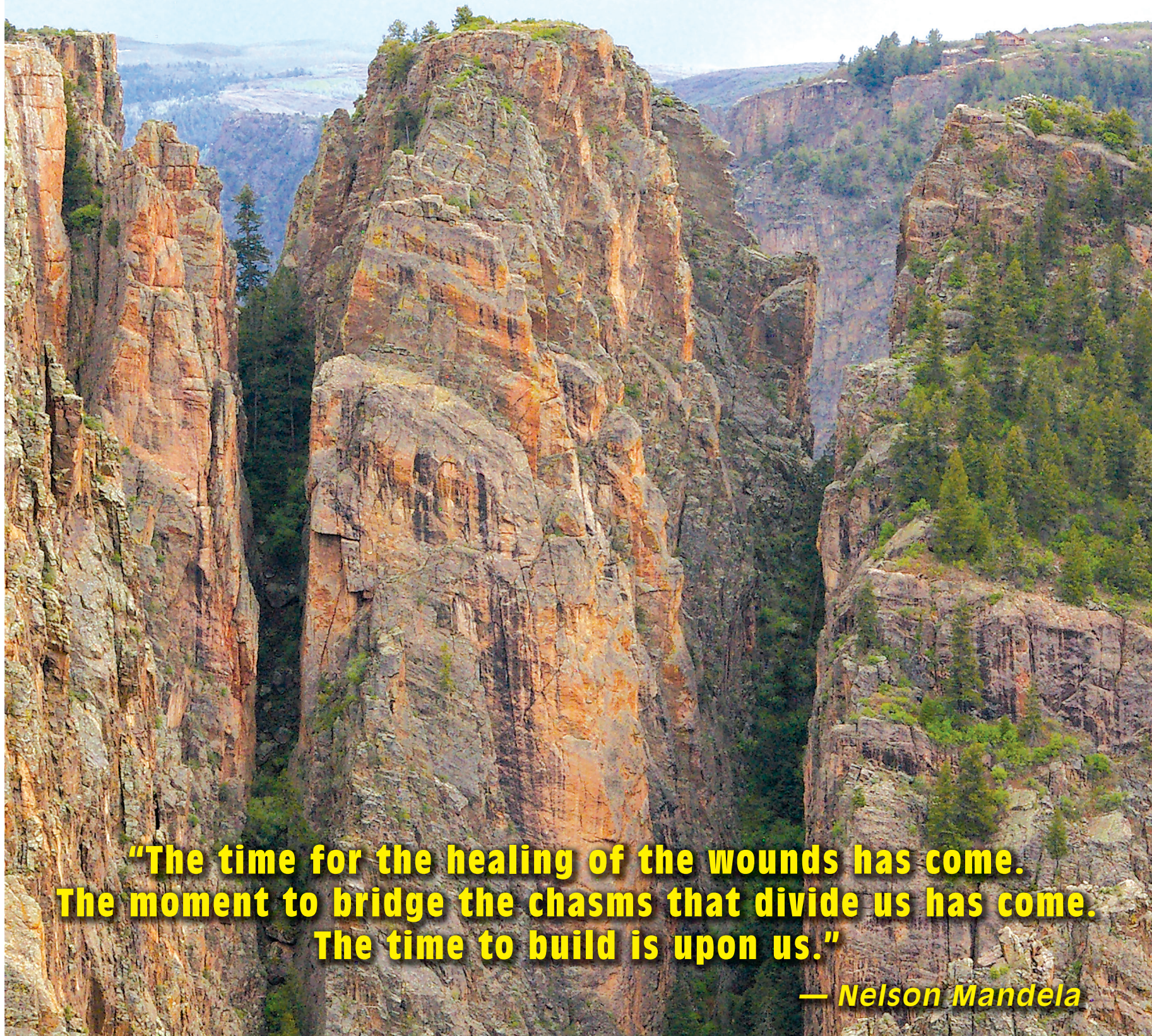
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March 2023

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Vol. 15, No. 3

Welcome to Ute Country



**"The time for the healing of the wounds has come.
The moment to bridge the chasms that divide us has come.
The time to build is upon us."**

— Nelson Mandela

PEEK INSIDE...



page
6

Tails of fire



page
9

Bruce Wagner, Watercolorist



page
12

Passive vs active walking

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On Deck

Our cover photo is of the breathtaking Black Canyon of the Gunnison taken by Jeff in May of 2014. The Black Canyon of the Gunnison was established as a national monument on March 2, 1933. This destination is worth planning for as the views are as incredible as they are inspiring. We felt Nelson Mandela's quote fit the photo and our March content quite nicely.

Our March pages are filled with articles and columns that fit the themes of healing, bridging chasms and building. You can learn how to heal in nature through the *Thymekeeper's* article and "A Path to Discovery." *Life Enhancing Journeys* teaches us skills helpful to bridge chasms in relationships. CUSP offers several websites for the reader to "Protect Your Water." Those who wish to bridge the gap of their understanding of foxes will enjoy *Beasts of the Peaks*. Florissant readers may wish to engage with their Volunteer Fire Department and help bridge some gaps, especially as we are entering fire season. *Fitness ON the Mountain* helps you build your walking routine by elevating your awareness, through "Passive vs Active Walking — are you just counting steps?" *Growing Ideas* helps the high-altitude gardener build their focus through "Purpose, planning, preparation and patience." Local artisans may want to build their portfolios with several calls for entries for a variety of art shows.

Do you enjoy meeting people and helping to solve problems? *Ute Country News* is currently seeking sales staff. If you are interested, please stop in Shipping Plus in Divide M-F 9-5:30 p.m., call us 719-686-7587 or email your intent and resume to utecountrynewspaper@gmail.com.

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Thank you,
— Kathy & Jeff Hansen

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

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The Thymekeeper
Wild world of wisdom
by Mari Marques-Worden

Lately it seems there is a plethora of discussion around books and which books should be included in our children's curriculum. I love books. In fact, I buy them faster than I can read them. Most of the herbalists I know feel the same way but one thing we all know is that the great outdoors holds a treasure trove of information that could never be contained in the pages of a book. For example, if I felt I could gain everything there is to know about an herb from a book or a blog on the internet, I would have only half the knowledge I have now after spending so many hours in the field.

Most people are busy with their daily routines of working to survive and in this state of being it is easy to lose sight of the beauty and teachings available to us. The same is true of our children. School is a major part of their experience and if we focus solely on their performance when it comes to reading or test scores, are we depriving them of outdoor exploration and the educational adventures that await them? In my experience the wild of the world holds more wonder than we could ever imagine, and many life lessons are there for the taking. I often ponder on the thought that our children, and I would include most people, are suffering from what's known as *Nature Deficit Disorder*.

When children are removed from Nature, the consequences they suffer are dire, among them are more stress and anxiety, higher rates of obesity, ADHD, and more. In Richard Louv's book *The Last Child in the Woods*, he reflects that not only is Nature good for children's health, it improves their ability to learn and even small amounts of exposure can have profound effects.

Many studies have shown the great outdoors helps to restore focus, relieves anxiety and stress, and improves self-discipline. Even something as simple as a walk in the park can restore a sense of well-being.

When I lived in Manitou Springs one of my favorite places was Soda Springs Park. I took the children and the willing adults every chance I could. Whenever I encountered an adult with depression, I heartily agreed to a consultation on the condition that we had to consult at the park. Once they found themselves swinging on the swings or wading in the creek, it wasn't hard to convince them that perhaps they had forgotten how to have fun with simple pleasures that are readily available to everyone.

The children and I built boats with litter, leaves and twigs and launched our float your boat Barbie doll crashing into the rocks. A good lesson on what works



In my experience the wild of the world holds more wonder than we could ever imagine, and many life lessons are there for the taking.

and what doesn't when building a flotation device from found objects and the importance of a steering mechanism, at the same time enhancing critical thinking skills. These experiences were as beneficial for my mental health as theirs when I was working seven days a week at the mercy of tourists.

Previously I've written about the fact that our current public educational system is either unwilling or unable to recognize children as unique individuals. Public school is an abnormal environment for children. It isn't natural for them to sit for hours on end at the same time ignoring their own individual way of thinking. There is no room for them to express their own natural curiosity. Children are wired much differently than adults and movement is critical to burn off excess energy. Could this be the reason we now have so many overweight children with an ADHD diagnosis? As we stop to consider this, let's not dismiss the fact that Nature freely offers solutions to these issues that have only recently come into being.

As an herbalist I turn to books for historical facts and traditional uses of the herbs, but to really know a plant I find one-on-one contact is necessary. Using mullein, a respiratory herb as an example, a book may describe the natural habitat of the plant but one aspect not reflected in any book is how it manages to find its way to the yards of people who need it most. I am no stranger to this phenomena. It seems every time I mention it to those who struggle to breathe, they often respond with "yes, it came to my yard too."

Last week as I was helping cut firewood on a property, the owner asked me what the five plants growing by her driveway were. As she pondered their existence from her deck, I noticed it was mullein waving in the wind directly in her view. She reflected that they had shown up about a year earlier and this was about the time she had started using oxygen to breathe. She commented earlier that day that she was struggling to keep her oxygen levels up and of course I viewed this as a perfect learning opportunity to share with her how easy it is

to dry the leaf and make tea to help her breathe easier. Closer observation would have shown her mullein's affinity for the respiratory system as the bottom of the leaf closely resembles lung tissue.

In another instance I was invited to a home in the High Chateau area of Florissant that was heavily burned by last year's fire. As mullein is the first plant to come back after fire, it was everywhere including the hardest ground between the cracks of the stepping stones. The tenant asked "what is that plant? It is amazing and it is all over the place." Yet another teaching opportunity for me and the realization that mullein, the remedy for a hard cough, brings softness to the hard places of the world, heals the soil, and helps with breathing when smoke inhalation is an issue.

Most creatures in Nature learn from their elders and those around them. Indigenous people didn't have books and considered the plants their teachers. One of my teachers had an encounter with an indigenous man in the Amazon who could not grasp the concept of gaining information from a book and finally concluded that the tree that the pages of the book originated from was imparting its wisdom to her.

Although spending time in Nature may serve to enhance the classroom experience, the opposite may not hold true. To paraphrase the honorable and recently deceased herbalist and author Stephen Harrod Buhner, "Leave your university education in the parking lot before you enter into the wildness of the World or it will just get in the way."

Nature is our greatest teacher as it has a way of igniting the senses. Herbalist Sajah Popham tells us, "It can transform you from looking to seeing, from hearing to listening, from touching to feeling" and to me that is an experience that cannot be gleaned from the study of books or the internet and is essential for the discovery of the magic and beauty of the world we live in.

Mari Marques is a state certified herbalist and owner of *The Thymekeeper*. She can be reached at mugsyspad@aol.com or 719-439-7303

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Growing Ideas Purpose, planning, preparation and patience

by Karen Anderson “The Plant Lady”

“For there is always light, if we are only brave enough to see it, if we are only brave enough to be it.”

— Amanda Gorman

March greeting gardeners and friends of our communities. It’s good to be back with you in 2023 and although we are definitely not rushing into any major gardening projects just yet, I wanted to touch base with you and share some thoughts about what we can do in anticipation of the warmer outdoor weather.

If you are blessed with a greenhouse providing supplemental heat, you can successfully start and grow some cold crops such as spinach, all kinds of greens and radishes this month. Some folks may have perennial plantings in their hot houses that may be emerging from their winter slumber. But for the average mountain gardener, we will patiently wait for a couple of months to actively get involved with our gardening endeavors.

So, in the meantime, we can reflect on our past gardening experiences, what worked out well for us and what didn’t. We can ponder on what our purpose is in the world of gardening. Purpose can include intentions, goals, ambitions, aspirations and motivations. You may wish to grow your own organic vegetables or focus on cultivating the flower garden of your dreams or both! Also be thinking about how much dedication it will take to achieve these goals without jeopardizing the love and pleasure of tending to your gardens.

March is a good time to plan your gardening strategies. Our remaining snow days can be perfect opportunities to inventory and organize our existing seed collection, order new seeds and peruse some high-altitude gardening magazines for some fresh and inspirational ideas. Personally, I will be planting tomato pepper and herbs seeds toward the end of the month, preferably a couple of days after the new moon with the plan of transplanting them into the greenhouse in May.

We won’t be diggin’ in the dirt anytime soon, but we may very well be granted a reprieve this month from the winter cold with what I call a ‘faux spring’ when it warms up enough to lure us into a false sense of security pertaining to planting anything outside. Please don’t do that! However, weather permitting, we can prepare by building raised garden beds, checking on resources for soil, amendments and mulches. Many stores are starting to stock gardening supplies and it would be a good time to acquire some products for the garden pantry to have on hand for the future.



If you have a greenhouse with supplemental heat you can start planting some cold crops, otherwise start seeds indoors and transplant them when the weather turns warmer.

Finally, please practice patience. Try not to get too ‘antsy’ or fancy right now. There will be a lot of temptation out there when the stores start displaying plants of many types and colors and for mountain gardeners, it is way too early to indulge in these enticements. Timing is one of the most important factors to consider for successful outcomes and avoiding heartbreaks due to freezing temperatures into late May and early June.

If you feel that you may need some guidance, coaching or a personal landscape consultation, you can reach me at 719-748-3521 or e-mail plantlady-speaks@gmail.com to obtain more information on how I can be of assistance to you.

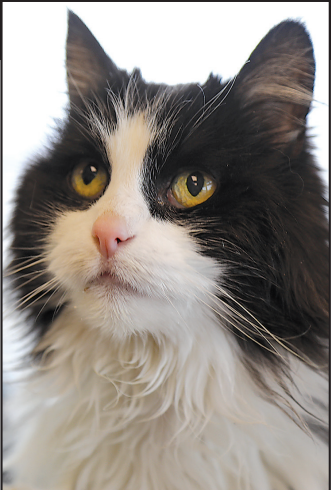
Happy Houseplants are always up for adoption at The Outpost in Florissant, Shipping Plus in Divide and at Mountain Naturals in Woodland Park. My 2023 Heritage Collection of organic, high altitude seeds will also be provided at these stores very soon. I am looking forward to meeting new gardening spirits and connecting with time honored friends and clients again this year. As always, wishing you all peace and love.

Adopt Me by Ark Valley Humane Society

Lulu

Lulu is an 8-year-old female, domestic longhair mix. She was found in Salida and brought to the shelter by a kind samaritan. Lulu was very stressed out in the kennel and took a while to warm up to staff. Over several weeks she started to trust us more and will now lean in for pets and love when she sees us in the morning, especially if we have her favorite thing: wet food. We’re confident any loving individual could gain Lulu’s trust with wet food. Since Lulu was a found stray, we don’t know much about her history or how she is with other animals. Her teeth were not in great shape when she arrived, so she got a dental cleaning and had a few teeth removed. She is very much on the mend and would love to find a home where she can sunbathe in a window of her own every day. If you’ve been looking for a new cat to add to your family, we hope you will consider giving Lulu a second chance at love.

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



Fiasco at Florissant Fire Department

February 19, 2023 Florissant Fire Department Report

submitted by Toni Moore and Allen Schultz

History and Status of the Colorado State Reimbursement to Florissant Fire Protection District volunteer firefighters.

The issue revolved around the payment from the State for the services provided by the Florissant Fire Protection District and its volunteers during the High Park Fire, May 2022. Names of private citizens are redacted.

Due to the lapse of time from the qualifying event and refusal of the Florissant Fire Department Board to adequately direct Chief Holt to do his job, inquiries were made by [redacted names] to [redacted names] for advice and assistance. Several citizens reviewed emails, meeting minutes and made phone calls which resulted in the progress set forth in this report.

[Redacted citizens] contacted the Colorado Department of Public Safety, Fire Billing Department, for information. The agent who assisted [redacted names] was Tresa Weinhold, Fire Billing Specialist. Conversations with her revealed contradictions between the status provided by the State and Erik Holt.

A summation of events follows, taken from multiple sources, including emails, board minutes, board recordings and personal phone calls is presented, in chronological order.

History

May 22, 2022: Florissant Fire volunteers and apparatus were requested on the High Park fire.

June 6, 2022: Chief Holt submitted the invoice for services provided by the Florissant Fire Department and its volunteers to the Colorado State Fire Billing Department.

July 5, 2022: Ms. Weinhold, from the Colorado State Fire Billing Department, sent an email to Chief Holt requesting that supporting documents be uploaded to the system so that the invoice can be processed for payment.

July 28, 2022: Chief Holt responded to Ms. Weinhold expressing his apologies for the delay in his response and indicated that the supporting documents would be uploaded to the system later in the day. Holt further stated the following, “I didn’t upload them because our demob paperwork was all incorrect from our daily rate for apparatus in our CRRF to our personnel positions. The numbers to come out pretty close but are all incorrect so I input the correct information on our fire billing.”

September 28, 2022: Former Florissant Fire Protection District volunteer firefighter [redacted name] sent an email to the Florissant Fire Protection District Board members indicating that he is anticipating payment for his services provided to the High Park Fire and requested a status

update as to when he can expect payment.

December 2, 2022: Former Florissant Fire Protection District volunteer firefighter [redacted name] sent a follow-up email to the Florissant Fire Protection District Board members requesting an update on his September 28, 2022, email request and the status of his payment.

December 7, 2022: Former Florissant Fire Protection District volunteer firefighter [redacted name] sent another follow up email to the Florissant Fire Protection District Board members requesting the status of his payment for the High Park Fire that was seven months in the past.

December 7, 2022: Florissant Fire Protection District Board President Starla Thompson prepared and sent two emails to the former Florissant Fire Protection District volunteer firefighter [redacted] in response to his request.

The first email from Board President Thompson expressed her appreciation for his concern and that she (Board President Starla Thompson) would be comfortable with checks being written from the Florissant Fire Protection District to the volunteers, even if the Florissant Fire Protection District were not compensated from the State for their efforts. Essentially, this meant taxpayer money would be spent compensating volunteer firefighters because Erik Holt couldn’t file a claim correctly. Also, the Fire Department would not be compensated for use of their equipment.

The second email from President Thompson states that the individual checks to the firefighters have been cut, but not signed. President Thompson further stated that there is a Florissant Fire Protection District Board meeting that evening (December 7, 2022) and that the checks would be brought for signature.

During the meeting, contradicting Starla Thompson, Board Secretary Amanda Sutton provided a reason why the checks had not been cut. “Have been” is different than “have not because.” Not only are they not truthful, they can’t even keep their stories straight.

On January 21, 2023: [Redacted name] sent another follow-up email to the Florissant Fire Protection District Board members asking the status of the “cut” and “signed” checks that Board President Starla Thompson indicated would be acted upon at the December 7, 2022 Board meeting.

Florissant Fire Protection District Board President Starla Thompson sent an email response to [redacted] on January 21, 2023 indicating that they, the Florissant Fire Protection District Board, are having difficulty in validating the amount of time each firefighter was on the High Park Fire. In addition, President Thompson stated that the Florissant Fire Protection District has not yet been compensated from the

State for the services provided by the Florissant Fire Protection District during the High Park Fire. Apparently, Holt isn’t the “data driven” decision maker he has claimed to be.

January 22, 2023: [Redacted] sent yet another follow-up email to the Florissant Fire Protection District Board members, continuing to express some concern and frustration regarding the non-payment for services provided to the High Park Fire.

January 25, 2023: At this Florissant Fire Board meeting during the public comment period, a question regarding the status of the reimbursement to the Florissant Fire Protection District and its volunteers specific to the High Park Fire was once again asked and read into the minutes. The members of the Florissant Fire Protection District Board provided no answer.

Chief Holt indicated that the reason this payment has not been received is because “there was an error at the State level, not ours.” Chief Holt went on to double down on his statement by stating, “Nobody has been reimbursed yet.”

Remember, The Fire Billing Department for the Colorado Department of Public Safety sent an email to Chief Holt requesting the supporting documents on July 5, 2022 and Chief Holt responded that the documents would be uploaded to the system during the afternoon of July 28, 2022; they were not uploaded.

It was subsequently learned from the Fire Billing Department for the Colorado Department of Public Safety had received 144 invoices for the High Park Fire and all but one of those invoices had been paid. This contradicts Erik Holt’s claim that nobody had been paid when in actuality every other department, who filed paperwork properly, had been paid. This was obviously not a “state level problem.”

On that same day, an efficient and very pointed response from Florissant Fire Protection District Board President Starla Thompson to [redacted] stated the following, “This is an issue that you need to take up with the fire chief. The board is not in the middle of what is going on. This is an operational issue. I have attempted to resolve the situation and keeping advised that this is incorrect so at this point in time I’ll turn that over for you to handle with the chief.”

Since when does the board relinquish their responsibility for their employee, to a private citizen? Why could private citizens accomplish with a few phone calls what Board President Starla Thompson and Chief Erik Holt could not?

It appears as though the Florissant Fire Protection District Board leadership has heard all she needs to hear on this issue, there is no further need for the Florissant Fire Protection District Board involve-

ment, no additional discussions are warranted, the research has been completed and no further attention will be given to the matter.

January 27th, 2023: [Redacted] sent another email to the Florissant Fire Protection District expressing continued concern, frustration, and distrust of both the Board and Chief Holt, citing the above statements made by Chief Holt as being untruths and stating that the Board should function in a supervisory, not subservient role to the Chief Holt, as well as gain an understanding of their fiduciary responsibility to the taxpayer citizens of the Florissant Fire Protection District.

January 31, 2023: Ms. Angell, Bookkeeper at the Florissant Fire Department, contacted the Fire Billing Department at the Colorado Department of Public Safety. Her phone call resulted in the Fire Billing Department for the Colorado Department of Public Safety scheduling a training session two weeks later. Not sure why Erik Holt couldn’t have taken this step, but we are grateful that she did.

February 14, 2023: The Fire Billing Department for the Colorado Department of Public Safety held a training session with Patti Angel, Florissant Fire Protection District Administrative Assistant. This training session was conducted to instruct and assist Ms. Angell in the completion of the required paperwork that Chief Holt had improperly filed months prior on June 6th, 2022.

February 14, 2023: The paperwork was successfully filed with the Fire Billing Department and [redacted name] was informed that processing would be expedited. No firm date was mentioned.

Conclusion

If not for the phone calls and emails by [redacted] citizens continuing to focus attention on this matter, this \$9,000 invoice would continue to have been ignored by the board and Chief Holt.

This stalling, passing the buck, and mis-informing the public could have gone on until after the deadline for filing passed. This means the money due to the Florissant Fire Protection District and its volunteers may never have been collected and distributed to deserving volunteers.

Editor’s note: We felt this article was important to print as there has been at least one fire in Teller County already this year. It is important for readers to be aware of fire mitigation processes and what is happening with your local VOL-UNTEER departments/organizations.

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Beasts of the Peaks Tails of fire

by Jessica Stevens

I had already been a wet winter and this day would be no exception. After a week of bright mountain sunshine, thick white clouds whispered through the rocky passes and obscured the peaks in their downy tresses. Flake by flake, thick white coins of soft snow descended upon the upper boughs of the forest on the slope of the mountain. Inside the cabin, we were warm and safe. A pot of something comforting cooked on the stovetop and my family's soft voices filled the house. Snuggling close, oblivious to the storm beyond the window pane, my newborn slept on.

My husband and I gazed out the picture windows at the falling snow, knowing we would soon need to take to the highway. The road back to Oklahoma was long enough without bad weather. Suddenly, a flash of sunset fire dashed over the nearby hillside. It burned beautifully against the snowy landscape: a fox. Its sleek figure gracefully picked its way along the rocky terrain, no doubt searching the snow for hidden mousey morsels to feed its well-hidden kits. As quickly as it came, it slunk away into the falling shadows.

Foxes are a common sight worldwide, being one of the most well-distributed carnivores on earth. They live in hot deserts and freezing tundra, empty wastelands and dense forests. There are tiny fennec foxes with elephantine ears, bushy-headed bat-eared foxes in Africa, the arctic friends of polar bears, and the stunningly colored foxes we're most familiar with. Colorado is home to four different species of fox: the red, swift, kit and gray foxes.

In the Rockies, red foxes are found almost anywhere, but they seem to prefer riparian areas near open meadows. Foxes are naturally skilled hunters, and as such they eat a large range of small animals like birds, rodents, hares, insects, and fish, to name a few. They have keen eyes, with pupils different from that of other canids: vertical slits, believed to aid in their night-time habits. In addition to excellent sight, red foxes also can hear mice under a few feet of snow or half a football field away. Technically omnivorous, foxes will also eat berries and other plant matter. Though they are crafty beings, they sometimes fall prey to larger carnivores like mountain lions, coyotes, eagles, and owls.

A familiar face in storybooks, movies, nurseries, and home decor, these alluring creatures are named for their tails. In nearly every language where they are discussed, they are called "bushy tail." Indeed, they do have very fluffy tails, and red foxes are named so because most members of Vulpes vulpes are titian in color, though silver, gray, and black are also common. Red foxes always have a white tip on their tail and black feet. Their eyes are orange like the Garden of the Gods, with that telltale vertical slit.



Being the largest of true foxes, these vulpine creatures are about as big as a border collie or blue heeler. Though it may sound silly to call them anything other than foxes, they do have other colloquial names. Males are called todos, dogs, or reynards. Technically, only the females are named "vixen," though sometimes people refer to any fox as a vixen, as that word has become synonymous with "trickster" or "sly." Baby foxes are called pups or kits equally.

It is believed that foxes are monogamous. A pair will separate for a couple of months, then come together in the winter and prepare to have a litter of pups. Sometimes foxes dig their own dens, but they use the abandoned ones of other creatures, too. According to Colorado Parks and Wildlife, kits are in utero for 53 days and are born sometime between March and April, with an average litter of five pups. Sometime in May, the pups are old enough to come out of their cozy den and explore the world. They hang out nearby, while mom and dad watch for danger. If called inside, they scamper to safety. After a month or two, their parents take them on hunting trips where they learn to fend for themselves. By the end of summer, kits are on their own. When they are as young as ten months old, they find a mate and begin the cycle all over again.

Interestingly, I've found that the family to which foxes belong is occasionally a point of confusion. They are canines, and as such are related to wolves, coyotes, and domestic dogs. However, sometimes foxes appear catlike because of their sleek nature, smooth gait, and slitted eyes. Foxes have been known throughout human history as cunning. They've made their way into many mythologies, being used as the vehicle to teach us truth and wisdom. For example, they appear in Aesop's tale of the fox and the grapes, many Native American stories, and in Brian Jaques' *Redwall* novels, in which foxes are most often healers. They are so beautiful that their likeness has become a popular nursery decoration.

While foxes are indeed beautiful and mysterious, their presence as a pet has become controversial in the last few decades. A Russian study conducted in the latter half of the 20th century ventured to study domestication in animals. They took a population of wild foxes and began to slowly treat them like the pets we keep in our homes. Over generations, they bred the most congenial foxes with each other and some interesting discoveries were made: the foxes began to lose some natural aggression, develop white patches on their coats, their ears folded over, their tails began to curl, and some even began to wag their tails when their handlers came into sight.

Though this is good research, foxes have

since become popular exotic pets. Like most exotic pets, they come with risk. Even if some have lost much of their natural aggression, they are still far behind their doggo counterparts. Their instincts and bad habits can be pretty hard to deal with. They chew almost everything, are very vocal and obnoxious, require a special and raw diet, and need the care of a special veterinarian. Foxes are also naturally nocturnal, so they are most active at night which does not mesh with our diurnal habits.

In addition, though they might be pleasant neighbors, foxes in the wild can also pose a problem. They are still wild animals and should be treated as such. They can carry diseases like rabies, might be aggressive if provoked, and can become a road hazard. Foxes hunt small creatures and will kill small dogs, cats, and small livestock like chickens and rabbits. If foxes are problematic enough on a property, small game licenses may be purchased through the Colorado Division of Wildlife in order to mitigate the problem.

As always, it is important to never feed wildlife because human food can often make a wild creature, like a fox, very ill. Feeding foxes also removes their natural fear of humans, which can get everyone into trouble. Aside from the moral obligation to care for our mountain cohabitants, it is illegal to feed wildlife in Colorado. It is wonderful to watch them, though.

As a teenager, there is something special about caring for someone else's home. I did quite a lot of pet sitting during this time of my life, and it was good practice for running my own home. It gives a feeling of responsibility and independence, as well as affording one time to think and simply be. Once, during such a time, I had woken early on a crisp March morning and was drinking a cup of hot tea while admiring the clouds on Sleeping Indian. The steam from the river always makes the mountain look like it's floating. Suddenly, among the frosted grama, something red and black weaved to and fro. Another fox, returning from her night's hunt, picked her way through the tall grasses and around my horse's corral. Bandido pricked his ears at the swift passerby, then resumed munching his breakfast. As quietly and quickly as she came, she was gone.

One of the nicknames I have for my firstborn is "little fox." This is in part because I craved the color orange while pregnant, and part because I just think foxes are so handsome, cute, fun, and smart. It is my hope and my goal that my little ones will grow in the quietness that nature can give us, admiring its beauty and caring for it just as God intended for us to do. It's up to all of us to rise to that calling and care for these — and all — of God's creatures, great and small.

PPIHC Seeking Poster Art Submissions

by Lisa Haight

A *Call for Entries* has been announced by the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb for artists within the Pikes Peak Region in celebration of the 101st running of this historic and iconic motorsports event.

This year's theme, *Our 2nd Century — The Climb Continue*, looks back on a century of racing while looking forward to the next 100 years of motorsport on Pikes Peak — America's Mountain. Every year the PPIHC brings local, national, and international media exposure to the Pikes Peak Region showcasing much of what makes this a great place to live and vacation.

"For decades iconic artwork has helped capture both the thrill and the beauty of motorsports around the world, from Monaco's Grand Prix to the landmark pagoda at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, art tells a compelling story," explained PPIHC Executive Director, Melissa Eickhoff. "We look forward to witnessing how artists in our community interpret this famous race."

Eligibility Requirements:

- Open to all ages
- Professional, amateur, and student submissions welcome

missions welcome

- Live in or have very strong ties to the Pikes Peak Region

Selection Process:

- One winning artist will be chosen by a committee. Interviews may be requested.
- Four Honorable Mention artists will be also chosen by the committee.
- The People's Choice Award will be a popular vote conducted online via social media, and at Fan Fest.
- Winners will be announced and featured on PPIHC social media and PR.

Cash Awards:

- Winning artist - \$1,000
- People's Choice Winner - \$250

Deadlines:

- March 31, 2023 — Submissions Deadline
- April 14, 2023 — Winners Chosen
- June 2023 — Artwork on display and in distribution (specific dates and locations TBA)
- June 25, 2023 — 101st Running of the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb

Peak Art Adventure

by Gayle Gross

This is a juried art show which will be held May 3-30. Applications are accepted until March 6, extended to March 10. All mediums welcome. Ribbons and monetary awards. Check Festivalnet.com for details or email gayle@reserveourgallery.com for an application. FMI 719-401-2301.

Spirits in the Shaft

by National Mining Hall of Fame & Museum

Are you ready for a wild and good time? The National Mining Hall of Fame & Museum (NMHFM) will be hosting our annual fundraising event *Spirits in the Shaft*: a wine, beer, and whiskey tasting event on Friday, March 3, 2023. We will be exploring the Wild, Wild West, primarily focusing on the railroads and how life was lived in this age. Tastings of wine, beer, whiskey, along with light hors d'oeuvres will be available for sampling as guests move about all five floors of the museum. Interested in joining for this rocking good time call the museum at 719-486-1229 or visit mininghalloffame.org for tickets and more information.

Adopt Me by AARF Cheesecake

Cheesecake is a lovable and friendly 5-year-old black and white Husky mix. This spayed female loves to be with her people. She is fully house broken and good with other dogs but will chase cats. Cheesecake will talk to you to get your attention in typical Husky fashion. She does have special needs; she takes medication and needs attention when drinking due to a possible autoimmune disease. If you are interested in meeting Cheesecake please contact aarfcOLORADO@gmail.com.

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Life-Enhancing Journeys

Creating happy and fulfilling relationships

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

Last month’s article titled “The Evolution of Relationships,” ended with the following statement, “This would be a truly remarkable world if everybody learned and lived the experience of whole-hearted love.” This was the starting point for my motivation to write this month’s column on creating healthy and happy relationships. My intention in this article is to offer information in a straightforward and practical way, enhancing the positive aspects of relationships rather than identifying unhealthy traits.

Much of what many people have learned about relationships was modeled at home by our caretakers. Transforming ourselves into an improved version can start by challenging those early behaviors and beliefs. It takes courage to look at yourself then adjust whatever behaviors and thoughts are creating unhappiness. It may seem difficult to alter ingrained patterns, yet anybody can transform old paradigms by creating new habits. It is unrealistic to believe all conflicts can be avoided. However, when handling disagreements thoughtfully and with kindness, the results tend to be favorable for everyone. Remember to be patient with yourself and your partner, proceed slowly with small changes, and keep practicing until the changes become routine.

After the Romance Period ends, Stage 1, you can then appreciate all aspects of your partner, a person with cracks, flaws, their own humanity, their own challenges. Can you love your partner despite those imperfections? How do you show love? How do you receive love?

We all have needs and were created to bond together to insure survival. If you see yourself as a person who is unable to recognize and communicate your needs, even though it may be difficult, practice identifying your needs (and support your partner) so you can give to one another. This is part of what love and connection are all about.

Love is more than a feeling; it is a behavior, an action. It is something you do, not something that just happens to you. Giving and receiving a daily dose helps maintain a healthy, thriving relationship.

One indicator of marital stability identified by John and Julie Gottman is what they call “Turning Toward vs Turning Away.” For example, one of the partners may be looking out a window and sees a beautiful sunset they would like to share, so they say, “Wow, look at that sunset, it’s incredible.” In this situation, the partner responds with, “Wow, that’s fantastic – thanks for showing me.” That is what is meant by “turning towards.” The partner paid attention to their mate, noticing what

We all have needs and were created to bond together to insure survival.

brought on the excitement.

“Turning Away” is ignoring the partner and saying nothing while continuing to do whatever they were doing, like looking at their phone. This lack of acknowledgment can be very painful because turning against is a hostile response. The message your partner is getting is that they are insignificant and worthless to you. It is as if they are saying, “I don’t care what you have to say...leave me alone.” Ouch! That hurts! When you think about it, any response would have only taken a few seconds even if they were to say, “Hang on...I’m in the middle of something.”

Couples who have loving relationships turn towards each other 86% of the time. Couples who are unsuccessful responded to their partner’s attempt for connection only 33% of the time. It is the little things that have a big impact on the quality of a couple’s bond.

When I recall dealing with this situation in my relationship, I now find some humor in it. My husband is someone who likes to think about things before he responds. When I would ask him a question, initially there would be silence. “Mark, did you hear what I asked you?” He would usually say, “Yes I did...I’m thinking about it.” This became aggravating, believing that he was ignoring me. We resolved this issue easily once we both recognized what was happening. Now, if either of us asks a question, we respond immediately with, “I’m thinking about it...I’ll get back to you...” or “I heard you...give me a minute.”

Turning toward someone more regularly, which only requires some awareness, will reward you with this wonderful gift of a sense of humor about yourselves, especially if you are at odds with each other. When you can laugh together, it reduces physiological arousal and makes people more logical and rational rather than raising their voices. The appreciation you receive when you turn towards your partner keeps you wanting to do it more often. Applying the habit of turning toward your partner helps build stronger connections.

Stop the criticism.

As children, most of us have been raised with criticism. Fault-finding can be used to control a child’s behavior. Unfortunately, many of us are accustomed to

disapproval. We absorbed what we heard throughout our childhood, most of which were harsh put-downs. Consequently, as an adult, judgmental phrases become a part of our defensive communication. We say things we heard ourselves such as, “You’re not good enough...What’s wrong with you...Are you stupid?” Most people I encounter, who are habitually self-critical, seem surprised when I point out this trait. To replace these hurtful phrases, practice looking for the positive by giving yourself a compliment each time you notice you are thinking or verbally criticizing yourself or your partner.

Appreciate the positive.

Start catching people doing things you like rather than focusing only on what they are doing wrong. It is embarrassing having your mistakes pointed out. It can be difficult to change these patterns since many of them were formed in childhood, yet, becoming more aware of them can help you replace these unwanted behaviors with healthier, more positive habits.

When my son was seven years old, he was unaware that he chewed his food with his mouth open, smacking his lips. My mother, who was quite critical, would berate him and tell him how disgusting it was to eat with him when he ate his food in that manner. So, guess what he did?! He opened his mouth even wider (after all, he was only seven). During that meal, I noticed my son had moments where he closed his mouth and chewed quietly so I took that opportunity to tell him how pleasant it was to be sitting across from him when he chewed with his lips together. From that point on he chewed with his mouth closed and silently.

Ask thought-provoking questions.

Encourage your partner to open up about themselves by asking curious questions. It allows them to feel appreciated and acknowledged because you are interested in listening to them. So, instead of asking mundane questions such as “How was your day?” “What do you want for dinner?” be more specific and listen. Ask questions with curiosity, such as, “Would you like to be famous? In what way?” “What would be a perfect day for you?” “What are some of your life dreams right now?” “What are the three most important things on your personal bucket list?” “What is one of the most adventurous things you have ever done? What was it like?” “If your friends were asked to describe you, what do you think they would say?” (I have many handouts available

with numerous questions such as these).

If you were to ask your partner what they dream about over the next five years, and it seems like a nightmare to you, keep listening so you can understand where their fantasy is coming from. You can avoid most conflicts by remembering that they are responding to your question about *their* vision.

Minimize distractions (put phones away) and focus on being fully present. Just listen without interrupting. Your turn will come about. Focus on creating a stronger bond through active listening with patience rather than thinking about what you are going to say next. Then respond with interest, understanding, and respect.

Use “I” statements.

“I” statements are centered on feelings instead of on behavior. If you are both fixated on arguing facts without talking about feelings, arguments can quickly turn into debates over who is “right” or who gets the last word. For example, instead of saying “You are never on time,” which sounds angry and accusatory, you might say “I get worried when you come home later than expected,” which expresses concern. Using these types of statements can help conversations seem less blaming and focuses more on the emotions behind some concerns.

Treat each other with kindness.

Every human deals with struggles. Showing kindness is a beneficial way to strengthen a caring bond. This means using kind words such as, “Please” and “thank you,” “Are you okay with my plan?” “I appreciate you handling this.” “I’m sorry you feel hurt...that was unintentional...What can I do to help?” Assume your partner is amenable which will help prevent resentments.

The purpose of this is to feel loved and connected by conveying affection, kindness, interest and respect. Every day can be fulfilling and feel like “heaven on earth” when your actions reinforce a truly loving bond with one another.

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



A Look Inside the Artist

Bruce Wagner, Watercolorist

by Mary Shell

I’ve interviewed many artists whose introduction to creating art happened after a completely unrelated career, such as a bookkeeper or engineer. Bruce’s career was photography, a closely related medium in the art world. I wondered how he compared photography to watercolor painting and was surprised with his answer. To venture from one form of art to another takes courage, patience and can be quite nerve wracking...unless you maintain a calm adventurous attitude. When I met Bruce, I saw a calm happy carefree smile on his face. That told me he wasn’t afraid to tackle watercolors...which many say is the hardest medium to work with and very unforgiving. Kudos to you Bruce...keep painting and keep that smile.

I see you were a professional photographer. How do you compare photography to painting?

When I was a professional photographer we were still using film and working in the darkroom. Photography was predominately a mechanical process. Photography today is digital, no more film; the only thing that has changed is today it is more reliant on electronics than a mechanical process. You control the angle of view and you compose in the viewfinder. Painting with watercolor is still pretty much the same today as it was 40 years ago. Painting with watercolor is using your mind, imagination, knowledge of your materials and hand eye coordination to create a work of art that no computer can rival for expression, feeling and originality.

How long have you been creating art in watercolors?

I started seriously painting with watercolor in 1987. My first attempts were very discouraging. I was lucky enough to have found an artist who was willing to help me learn the fundamentals of watercolor painting. The next year I entered the county fair with three of my paintings. I won a first-place ribbon on my first excursion into watercolor competition. I knew then this was my medium and it has been a very rewarding experience since.

Is watercolor your favorite medium?

In a word, yes. I love the way the colors will mingle on wet paper creating tones and textures that are unpredictable and unique. It also has its predictable nature along with some happy accidents. This is the magic of watercolor that intrigues me.

What other mediums do you use?

I have experimented with pastels, charcoal, graphite, colored pencils and acrylics. They all have their own unique properties, but I find myself coming back to my first love and that is watercolor.



water with reflections from the surrounding rocks and trees was a difficult piece for me. Many of my paintings will have some degree of difficulty; whether it is the look of rough or tranquil water; the rendering of figures or even the color of the rocks. I start with a preconceived idea of what I want the finished piece to look like and often I sometimes have to adapt and go where the painting wants to take me. There are times while painting I will start a piece and when I next check the time hours have elapsed.

Explain your process.

I often become enamored with a theme or a subject. For example, I wanted to paint wooden bridges in a rural type setting. First, I would drive to areas where I thought I could find them. Second, I would photograph them for reference and also sketch them, sometimes I even had my watercolors with me and I would do a quick study on location. Third, I would paint a series of thumbnails in the studio until I have one that had a pleasing composition. (Thumbnail sketches are small sketches used to plan out your painting before you begin. They’re typically only 2-3 inches in size, so they can be quickly drawn and easily changed if needed.) I would then paint a series of three to five paintings exploring the subject in many different views until I am satisfied with the painting. I use this process with old trucks, barns, waterfalls, bears, deer and even golf courses with golfers. Whatever inspires me at the

moment that is what I will paint!

Who inspires you?

I have attended workshops led by many well-known artists. I give credit to Tony Couch and Tom Lynch for their inspiration and guidance in developing me into the artist I am today.

What’s in the future for you?

I built a studio and art gallery on my property during the COVID pandemic. It is my go-to place every day (I jokingly refer to it as a place I go to, to maintain my wife’s sanity). My day starts at 8:30 or 9:00 in the morning and I usually paint something during the morning hours until lunch. The days I don’t feel like painting I usually draw figures, animals, cars, whatever comes to mind. I have an extensive library of material that I read and review often, trying to learn more about the art of watercolor and what other artists are doing and keeping up with the advances in art materials. I usually call it a day around 5:30 p.m. I do still go fishing and I play golf two or three times a week when weather permits. My life has been blessed and I am thankful for the people in my life.

Bruce can be reached at H2Ocolor-ist69@gmail.com or watercolorsbymaryshell.com.

You may contact Mary through her Facebook page, Mary Shell.

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The Treasure of a Lifetime

by *Gilrund the Historian*

Randy and Jack were sitting at home talking about what would be for lunch when Willy, the boy next door, came in all excited. He had a big grin on his face, and he couldn't stand still as he greeted his two friends. Randy laughed as he said, "Wow, Willy, what's got you so cranked up?" Willy forced himself to stop moving around and looked at his two friends and blurted out, "I've got a map to a real treasure cave!"

"Sure, you do, Willy," responded Jack, "And I have a bridge that I'll sell you." "No, really, I just got it from Max down the street. You know the big guy that thinks he knows everything," returned Willy, "I bought it from him after he showed me some of the jewels that he said he got from the cave."

"Oh, no," groaned Randy, "What did he want for the map? I hope it wasn't much. He tried to sell me a bike for ten dollars, and it wasn't worth ten cents."

"Were the jewels real?" asked Jack, "Did he let you touch any of them?" Willy looked down at the floor and then said, "No, I didn't touch the jewels, but I wouldn't have known if they were real or not. He said he wanted five dollars, but I told him I didn't have that much. So, he settled for the three dollars that I had on me. But look at the map. It looks real to me."

Willy pulled a folded piece of old looking paper out of his back pocket and unfolded it as he showed it to his two friends saying, "Look at it! Doesn't it look real to you?"

Jack took the paper and looked at it as Randy looked over his shoulder.

"I hate to admit it," said Randy, "But it looks real to me. Probably more real than the jewels that Max showed you. But look at how the edges are all torn and worn. Isn't that how old paper looks?"

"Yeah, and the paper is old and worn like it's been around for a long time," added Jack.

"So, what do you think?" asked Willy, "Is it real?"

"Sure looks like it to me," said Jack. "Me too." Said Randy.

"Okay! So, when do we go treasure hunting?" grinned Willy.

"Well, It is summer vacation and I've got nothing to do for the rest of the week," replied Jack as he handed back the map.

"Me either," said Randy.

Willy was dancing again as he said, "Well, what about tomorrow? I've got nothing going but a chance to get really rich. It's over on old Goffer Mountain. That's not too far away. We could be there by eleven on our bikes if we start by eight o'clock."

Jack and Randy laughed as Randy said, "Okay, Willy. We'll meet you at your house at eight, but we want a share of the treasure, if we find it."

"Yeah, not a really big share," laughed Jack, "How about a quarter each?"

"HA, I can give you quarter right now," grinned Willy, "Then the rest would all be mine."

The three boys laughed as they continued to talk of how much treasure they might find and what they would spend it on.

The next morning found the three boys biking as fast as they could toward Goffer Mountain and laughing as they went. Soon they were at the trailhead where

the treasure map told them where they were to start. Jack had a backpack filled with two flashlights and a folding shovel, two pairs of thick gloves and seven Ziplock plastic bags that held new batteries for the lights.

Randy had another backpack, but his was filled with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, cold packs wrapped around four sodas and a bag of chocolate chip cookies that their mother had made just last night.

Willy had his own backpack filled with similar things, but he had several water bottles in his.

Willy looked at the map and pointed up the trail, "It's about 300 yards up the trail and then we go off to the left for about another hundred yards to the cave. It's hidden behind two trees that form a "V"."

The boys left their bikes chained to the bike rack at the trailhead and started up the trail. The trail was steep, and 300 yards was beginning to be a very long way in the summer heat. But they kept going. The thought of finding real treasure was a good incentive for them.

It took a while for them to find the little used side trail leading off to the right. It was hidden by bushes and trees, but they found it and stopped for a rest.

There was no one else on the trail so there was no rush, and they wouldn't have to explain to anyone why they had stopped at that particular place.

The boys drank some of their drinks and then looked to the right and started down the trail. It was covered with grass and small bushes with trees on both sides that gave them a little shade.

"Are you sure that this is the right trail?" asked Jack, "It doesn't look like anyone has been on it in a long time."

"It's what is shown on the map, Jack," replied Willy, "There aren't any other trails shown on the map anyway."

"Okay, let's get going," suggested Randy, "It can't be that much farther. Just look for the weird trees."

On they walked for what was more than the hundred yards where the map said was the distance to the cave. Willy saw the two trees that formed a "V" and pointed as he started to run toward them shouting, "There they are, there they are!"

Jack and Randy weren't far behind him as they came up to the trees. Willy was looking around at the side of the mountain for the entrance to the cave that was supposed to be there as Randy and Jack came to the trees.

"I can't find it!" shouted Willy as he waved the old map in the air. "It should be right here, behind these trees."

Jack and Randy stood back a little and looked carefully at the side of the mountain.

"Let us see the map again, Willy," asked Jack as Willy walked back to the two brothers.

Jack took the map and looked carefully at it and the mountain side as Randy looked on. "I think we're a bit too far down from the side where the map says the cave is," said Randy, "Let's go up the side some more."

The three boys started to climb further up the side of the mountain from where the two trees were. There were plenty of bushes in the way and it was hard to see for the sun was in the wrong position and not shining on the side of the mountain

where the boys were climbing.

"Here it is!" exclaimed Randy as he waived to the others from about 10 yards away and further up the side of the mountain.

"Yahoo!" cried out Willy, "You've found it!"

Jack and Willy rushed over to where Randy was holding back the branches of a bush to show the opening on the side of the mountain. It was not too large, only three feet high and four feet wide. The bushes had covered the opening very well, so it was hard to see from a distance of any length.

Willy took off his backpack and opened it to grab a flashlight and then started to go into the cave.

called out Jack as Randy grabbed Willy's arm and pulled him back.

"You can't just rush in there," said Randy, "You don't know what might be in there besides the treasure."

"Yeah, let's look around the opening a bit before we go in and look for tracks and stuff," said Jack.

Willy didn't want to wait, but the more he thought of what his friends said, the more he thought it was a good idea.

The boys spent nearly half an hour looking at the ground near the cave opening for tracks of any sort and found several that looked like the tracks of a big cat or mountain lion. The more they studied them they saw that they were very old. They were the only tracks that they could find.

"I think that it will be okay to go in now, Willy," said Jack, "But let's be re-

ally careful and keep looking for anything that might be a danger."

Willy was the first to crawl in the opening with his flashlight pointed ahead. Jack and Randy followed, and their flashlights were on too.

The boys crawled for over 20 feet and then the cave opened up enough that they could stand up and walk. They continued into the cave still being careful and shining flashlights everywhere looking for anything that might be a danger to them. They found two side tunnels as they went, but those were too short, and they could see the ends of them easily in the light of their flashlights.

The tunnel took a left turn and they quickly walked into a large rock-walled room that had a big old wooden trunk sitting on the floor toward the back. Willy ran to it and started to open the lid, but Randy stopped him.

"From the side Willy, from the side," Randy said, "It might be a trap."

Willy nodded and stood at the side of the old trunk while Randy and Jack stood at the other side as Willy slowly opened the lid. The lid was halfway open when there was a Whooshing sound, and something flew out of the trunk and fell to the ground a short distance down the tunnel. Willy dropped the lid as he jumped back away from the old trunk. Jack and Randy did the same.

"What was that?" shouted Willy.

Jack was walking down the tunnel with his flashlight shining down at the floor while Randy held the trunk lid down like it was going to jump up and get him.

"Wow, look what I found!" called Jack as he shined his light on the ground.

Willy walked down to see what it might be that Jack had found. Randy waited as he held the lid down.

"What is it?" Randy called.

"It looks like a dagger and a big one too!" replied Willy as he looked down at the weapon that lay in the dirt, "It was a trap, Randy!"

Jack reached down and picked up the dagger as Willy watched. Then the two friends walked back down the tunnel to where Randy was waiting.

"I think you can open the lid now Randy," said Jack as he and Willy stood to the side of the trunk.

Randy slowly opened the trunk lid as he too, stood to the side, and nothing more happened when it was opened all the way. Willy shone his light inside the trunk and the boys saw what looked like a big rubber band lying on the top of a pile of gold coins. As the boys looked in the trunk, they could see that the dagger had been put in the trunk with the big rubber band stretched in such a way that when the lid was opened the dagger would fly out and stab the person that had lifted the lid.

"That would have killed me, if you hadn't warned me to step to one side, Randy. Thank you, thank you. I think I need to sit down," sighed Willy.

Jack pulled a soda out of his backpack and opened it to give to Willy as he sat on the edge of the open trunk. Willy slowly drank the cold soda as the tears rolled down his face.

"That was a close one, Willy," said

Jack, "Really close. Tears are okay, yes, they are."

"Where did Max get the map, Willy?" asked Randy.

Willy sniffed as he wiped away the tears and answered, "He said that he found it in an old book in the library downtown and thought he could sell it to someone who would want to look for a treasure and get rich. Well, that was me and I almost got killed. It's good to listen to friends who give good advice. Thanks again Randy, you saved my life. I'll never forget it, ever!"

"Hey, let's see what we have here in the trunk," grinned Randy as he shined his flashlight in the trunk. "It looks like you're a rich man, Willy, if this is real gold,"

said Jack as he picked up a gold coin and tried to bite it.

"Ouch!" cried Jack, "I think it's real gold or a good imitation. Look, it has a dent in it where I bit it. It must be real."

"We're all rich!" called out Willy as he jumped off the old trunk and shone his flashlight down the trunk.

The three friends danced around the treasure trunk and laughed and laughed.

They each took a few of the coins and put them into their backpacks. Willy took the dagger that nearly killed him and put that in his backpack. He wanted it to show to his parents when he told them of the treasure when they got home again.

But what about Max?

Max suddenly became a scholar when he heard of Willies good fortune and spent a great deal of time in the old book section of the library, reading about pirates and hidden treasure. His grades went up in school too, because his whole attitude had changed toward reading and education.

Willy and his family were grateful to Randy and Jack and the two families became very good friends, even more than they were before. They found that it is good to listen to good advice, it shows wisdom.

~ The End ~

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



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Fitness ON the Mountain

Passive vs active walking – are you just counting steps?

by Lori Martin

Often times, my best fitness tips evolve from my personal desire to achieve these three long term goals in my own workouts:

1. Optimize quality of life
2. Improve fitness performance
3. Injury prevention

This article explains how we can proactively use the goals above to optimize our lives through movement. Awareness and planning are tools we can use to achieve our fitness goals safely.

Awareness helps keep us focused on the little nuances that have the potential to either help improve or to set us back. A plan can push us to the next level when we are ready and can help us avoid injury. In this article I will focus on the factor of awareness.

We all should strive to improve some aspect of our fitness level, as opposed to remaining stagnant. This is true for all ages but, particularly for those of us who want to remain independent as we approach our marginal decade. There are endless ways to challenge ourselves:

1. Increasing, intensity, duration, frequency, resistance
2. Attending a new fitness class
3. Learning a new sport

Taking a hard look at my own movement patterns is a bit of an obsession influenced by four factors:

1. My passion for the art of movement (Kinesiology)
2. My disdain for pain
3. My desire for efficiency of movement
4. My experiences working with individuals whose injuries could have been prevented

The following is a true-life narrative describing how my obsession gives me more tools to help myself and ultimately, my clients and readers of my articles. It was a rare and beautiful day here in Divide. Many weeks of cold temperatures left us with icy roads to contend with. I had missed quite a few of our outdoor sessions. Typically, I alternate “fitness” walking days with “dog explore” days which, are meant more as mental stimulation for my dog but, also, get me out in the fresh air.

It occurred to me that I was struggling more than usual on this gorgeous day during our fitness walk. Not a huge surprise, as most of my cardiovascular work had been disguised as playing with my dog who had been experiencing cabin fever. A fun workout but, not as exerting as our usual fitness walk.

To keep my mind off the struggle of keeping up the usual pace I pondered the difference between my fitness walks and my explore walks. The explore walks are more passive. My personal focus physically, is remaining upright while my pup decides he needs to stick his nose in a hole or check out deer tracks in the snow, with little notification. I need to be tuned into my dog, my posture, and my engaged and co-contracted core. The fitness walks are fast paced and my husband holds the leash allowing my mind to drift into fitness mode.

During the first phase of this recent fitness walk I noticed my body kept wanting to revert to passive walking. Awareness! It appeared I hadn’t been paying attention to the most important aspect of my stride, the heel strike. Laziness was trying to take over.

Within minutes the following events took place:

1. Correct stride
2. Reduce impact
3. Increase power
4. Correct alignment
5. Increase oxygen

6. Increase energy production
7. Improved focus
8. More calories burned
9. Increased efficiency
10. Enhanced experience
11. Increased productivity

Here is a breakdown of what this all means.

Correct stride
Balanced and efficient

- Forward foot: Intentional placement of weight on the heel (heel strike)
- Rear foot: Simultaneously, roll to the ball of the rear foot
- Equal weight distribution in the middle of the stride — right to left leg
- Proper alignment: toe, heal, ankle, knee, hip aligned (preferably, toe facing forward)

We all should strive to improve some aspect of our fitness level, as opposed to remaining stagnant.

Reduce impact
Smooth the heel ball roll

- Forward leg: knee slightly bent on the impact of the heel strike
- Rear leg: pushing off the ball of the foot

Increase power
Activate more muscle fibers:

- Quadriceps, hamstrings, glutes
- Slight forward lean
- Press into forward heel
- Simultaneously, push off rear ball of foot

Correct alignment
Correct deviations

- Posture check
- Co-contract core (supporting the muscles of the back, the abdominals and the pelvic floor to assist in maintaining correct alignment and posture)

Increase oxygen
365 Degree breathing:

- Inhale through the nose expanding the rib cage both laterally and front to back
- Imagine the incoming oxygen traveling to the space between the shoulder blades
- Exhale through the mouth while simultaneously, increasing the co-contraction of your entire core as described above
- Maintain the expansion across the upper back on the exhale

Residual effects

- Increased energy production
- Improved focus
- More calories burned
- Increased efficiency
- Reduced stress
- Enhanced experience
- Increased productivity

A few minutes later, my body and my mind began seeking additional ways to make this walk even more productive. My practical brain said, “If only we had some weights we could do some upper body strength training.” My creative brain replied, “We don’t need weights!” And so, it began!

The following exercises only required:

1. Isometric resistance (AKA a jacket with deep pockets)
2. Excellent posture
3. 365 Degree breathing



Typically, I alternate “fitness” walking days with “dog explore” days which, are meant more as mental stimulation for my dog but, also, get me out in the fresh air.

Throughout the rest of my walk I was able to work:

- Chest — press fist forward + push elbows and forearms toward each other
- Back — press down and forward arms extended + squeeze shoulder blades together (resist allowing the arms to come back)
- Shoulders — press fist outward + lifting elbows in line with fist
- Bicep — Hands in pockets, fist thumbs up, create resistance by pressing upward
- Tricep — Press down

All in addition to the entire lower body muscles and muscles of the core involved in the cardiovascular portion of the Fitness Walk.

It’s definitely a lot to think about. With practice, you may be able to hear your creative brain. For myself, the reminders play over in my brain as I check in with my movement patterns.

Are there any subtle signs to be aware of such as:

- Joint pain?
- Forward head?
- Does my lower back ache?
- What signs do I see in my shadow or in my footprint in the mud?
- Is the right foot pointed to the right while my left foot is forward?

My suggestion?

Practice the following 2-3 x per day for 1- 5 days before progressing to the next step

Step 1: 365 Degree breaths while sitting

Step 2: 365 Degree breaths while standing

Step 3-9: 365 Degree breaths + co-contraction your entire core on the exhale portion in seated position first. One at a time add the remaining positions:

- standing
 - on all fours
 - laying flat
 - laying flat with knees bent
 - laying flat with feet elevated on the sofa or a fitness ball
 - laying flat with feet elevated and pressing the calves or heels into the sofa, etc. on the exhale
- Step 10:** 365 Degree breaths while walking 5 steps (increase in 5 step increments)

ments)

Note: These breaths should not make you feel dizzy or light headed. If you do experience dizziness or feel light headed take a break and restart. If the dizziness/ lightheadedness continues, stop your practice. Often times, this is due to being over exuberant with your breathing but, could also be cause to notify your physician.

If you made it this far, you are probably noticing 365 Degree breathing + Core co-contraction is becoming more natural. If so, you may be ready to advance.

Go back to Step 1: Add isometric resistance by pressing against an immovable object like a wall, counter, floor or even by pressing your hands together. Do this as you exhale and co-contract the core.

Example:

- Inhale
- Exhale while simultaneously, co-contraction the core and
- Pressing your hands together.

A small ball or pillow between your knees creates an isometric contraction for your inner thighs and if you are engaging your core while you squeeze the object you should feel your abs, back and pelvic floor working equally and more intensely than the previous round.

When you are breathing properly + using your core + in good posture you will experience:

1. Increase in strength
2. Increase in repetitions, duration and workload
3. Improved posture
4. Overall improved performance

For more information or questions on this topic or any related fitness topic please contact me: Lori Martin: lorimartinfitness@icloud.com

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Move, Heal, Live... LOCAL

A Path to Discovery

by Steven Wade Veatch
photo by S. W. Veatch

Once lived below Rattlesnake Bluff in Colorado Springs, Colorado, a place that forever changed my life. Today, the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs sprawls out over this landscape. Nothing looks the same. Human nature has traded places with mother nature, replacing the peaceful silence of an open field with the noise of busy development. When I was in elementary school, this place seemed like it was on the edge of a frontier, and the path to the top of the bluff led to discovery.

Back then, when I was 10, I ran all over the place. I bicycled my way to the adventure of open fields, construction sites, and ponds full of frogs. I bounced back and forth between exploring, building forts, catching horned toads, chasing turtles, and flying kites. Wanderings like these allowed me to follow the infinite possibilities of boyhood. Now that I was 10, I was old enough to climb to the top of Rattlesnake Bluff. This sandstone outcrop produced a perfect place to collect rocks and minerals. I had learned something about these from my teacher in third grade.

The day I first climbed Rattlesnake Bluff lives in bits and pieces of my memory. It began as a sun-drenched, windless day. I started bushwhacking up the slopes, slowly walking through gulches, gullies, and arroyos that carved the face of the bluff. Moving among outcrops of ancient sandstone, I hiked along a path through several broken boulders where crows, picking at a dead rabbit on the ground, scolded me. Time, weathering, and gravity left blood-red jaspers, cream-colored chert, milky quartz, and purple sandstone spread out on the ground near my path. I bent down and scooped up some of those specimens and studied them carefully. Next, I found

a smooth sandstone slab with a pattern of small bowl-shaped depressions ground into its surface. Years later, I learned Indians used this artifact like an artist’s palette to mix ceremonial paints.

As I continued up the path to the top of the bluff, the wind picked up. I heard faint rustlings in the bushes and tall grass — a blue-belly lizard crawled onto a rock, cocked his head to glance at me, and then blinked in the bright sun. Then a coyote darted into the open field below and melted into the brush.

Imposing sandstone outcrops bordered the footpath and ranged in color from tan to brown, with large, almost white sections. From the relentless pull of gravity, a dozen boulders had cleaved off the upper brown sections of the bluffs and rolled down the slope. Over decades, a bright green swath of lichen had spread over those boulders. I didn’t have a sense of deep time as a boy, but now I see the bluff, rich with geologic history.

Nature worked overtime on areas along the trail to the top. I stopped occasionally to take in the lay of the land. A tide of sunflowers turned their yellow faces toward the sun in a late summer communion with their environment of air, sand, soil, and rain. Birds picked at their seeds. I looked around and inhaled the fresh air. Ponderosa pines clung in clefts in the sandstone on the face of the bluff. A group of jumbled boulders in a ravine concealed an animal den. Purple Asters dotted the late summer grass; busy ants maintained their hills while grasshoppers broke the silence with their clattering wings. Meanwhile, I continued hiking, crunching twigs and gravel underfoot. As I made my slow climb up, I startled a silent snake, sunning on a pitted rock.

After looking to avoid the sharp spines



Rattlesnake Bluff, Colorado Springs. Photo date 2013

the primordial past: continental plates drifting and colliding, oceans rising and falling, inland seas advancing and receding, mountains growing skyward and then eroding away, and sediment being converted into layers of rock. Conglomerate whispers stories of swift streams mixing

of barrel cacti, I sat down under a ponderosa pine and ate lunch. Jelly dribbled on my jeans from my peanut-butter sandwich. After eating lunch, I looked at the rocks I had picked up earlier and wondered about their origin. Although I was at the edge of my knowledge, I sensed geologic forces at work. The bluff’s prehistoric past played out over a frenzy of cataclysmic events: surging seas, volcanoes, floods, earthquakes, mudslides, and endless change. This place also changed me, connecting me deeply to nature, to rocks, to minerals.

Later, I learned that geologists call the two sandstone units of the bluff the Dawson and Laramie formations, and they date back to the Cretaceous Period — the last part of the Age of Dinosaurs. The Dawson and Laramie formations formed from rushing streams flowing off the Ancestral Rockies. These active streams stripped off sediments from those ancient mountains, then deposited those sediments in radiating fans. The Western Interior Seaway was nearby, with bordering stream channels, coal swamps, and lagoons.

The day grew longer as I picked up interesting specimens and put them in my ragged cloth sack. These rocks all have meaning; they record the events of

sand and gravel. Fragments of volcanic rocks reveal a past unsettled by violent eruptions of ash and lava. I selected rocks that day for their heft, their color, their unusual shapes—not knowing they held the secret of a good geological story, a story I learned to decipher many years later as an adult.

When I reached the bluff’s top, I sensed an affinity for this place. I held pieces of it in my hand. I felt the bluff pulling me into the natural world, where I made a deep connection. What did it all mean? My hike to the top that day marked the start of my life-long study of the Earth and its past. It put me on the pathway toward becoming an Earth scientist and teacher.

From my perch on the bluff, I saw dark rolling clouds bring a weight to the afternoon. I turned and walked back down the slope — carrying pieces of the day in my cloth bag — and headed toward home.

That night, I climbed a neighbor’s willow tree and sat on a branch. I looked up toward the moon and stars. From my perch I saw a meteor burn itself out in the cold nothingness of the night sky. I thought about my hike earlier — it was a good day for discovery.



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Colorado Mountain Distillery

by Flip Boettcher

The Colorado Mountain Distillery is the newest, among just a handful of businesses in Guffey. The distillery is located at the old Rolling Thunder Cloud Cafe building on Canon Street, and owners Kate and Mike Smith have done extensive remodeling inside and out. It doesn't look at all like the old cafe.

The building used to be a duplex, with the business on one side and living space on the other. The Smiths have opened both sides and have created one large space. There will be a limited seating area with a pool table and large screen television; a full bar featuring their distilled spirits; and a full commercial kitchen.

The interior is very beautiful and in keeping with the spirit and character of

historic Guffey. The couple have used old-recycled metal on the ceiling and old barn lumber for the trim.

The couple plan on serving pizza and using the commercial kitchen to make items like mild-goat cheese, using local goat milk. They would also like to eventually have booths in front of the distillery for a farmer's market using fresh, local produce.

The Smiths are from the western slope and are an old-time Colorado family. Mike is the Director of Development Services for Park County and commutes to Fairplay. Kate works out of her home, which is located up behind the distillery.

So...look for the Grand Opening of the distillery, which will hopefully be sometime in mid-March.

Adopt Me by SLV
Girl Charlie

Girl Charlie would love to cuddle with you on the couch. She and her sister Chili, similar in appearance, are mellow, affectionate Border Collies. They love belly rubs and attention. Running and playing with other dogs makes the day fun as can be for them. As Border Collies, they need lots of mental and physical stimulation. Girl Charlie is 3 years old, spayed, all vaccines are current and she is microchipped. Their owner passed away, so they are seeking a new home. Perhaps one with cattle as they have been around cattle. We hold adoption fairs 11-3:30 p.m. First Saturday of each month at 5020 N. Nevada Petco; all other Saturdays 7680 N. Academy PetSmart.

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



Call for entries "Textures!"

by Blue Spruce

The Blue Spruce Gallery is hosting a new winter theme show during March. The artist chosen theme is "Textures." This fun and exciting event always encourages artists to be creative with the theme. All artists are encouraged to enter the show—we are looking for a wide variety of work, including both two-dimensional and three-dimensional. Deadline for work to be

at the gallery is March 6, 2023. The show will open on March 8, with a reception on Second Saturday, March 11 from 4-6 p.m. Cash prizes will be awarded, as well as ribbons in several categories.

Entry forms can be picked up at the Blue Spruce Gallery, 205 West Main Street in Florence or downloaded from our website at www.bluespruceart.com. FMI 719-784-1339.

Call for Artists

38th Annual Mountain Arts Festival

by Gayle Gross

After over 30 years, the Mountain Arts Festival is moving to a new location in Woodland Park. The new location is just a couple of blocks from the old one in Memorial Park, Woodland Park. This new location will have more space for additional artists and food vendors. The date has also been changed to the second weekend in August (Aug. 12 and 13) when fewer competing activities are occurring.

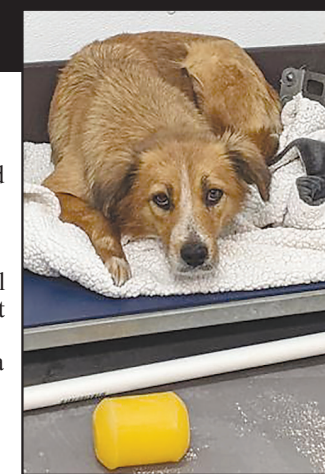
The Mountain Artists looks to 2023 to be bigger and better than ever so will be accepting entries for the 38th Annual Mountain Arts Festival until June 1. Applications for the juried art show are available at www.themountainartists.org. Call 719-401-2301 for more information.

Adopt Me by TCRAS

Vixen

This sweet girl is Vixen. She is an Australian Shepherd mix at 2 years, 8 months old. Vixen is nervous and unsure about the world and people but we're working to show her the positives of being a companion dog. She's going to need an understanding home, quiet and no small children. She's starting to come out of her shell a little bit especially with her friend Comet, but we'd love her to get into the perfect home where she can get a routine in a quieter, less stressful environment. Call TCRAS at 719-686-7707 if this beauty captures your heart!

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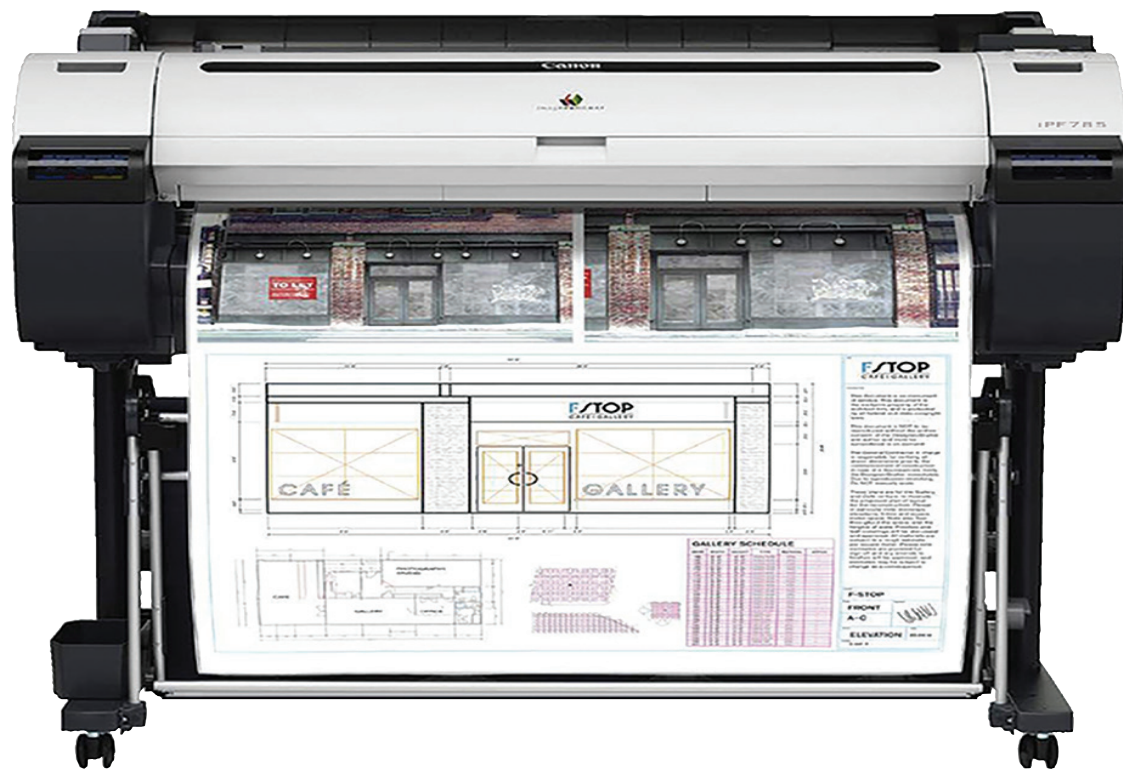
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Donkey Derby Days 2023 Facing Financial Challenges

The annual Donkey Derby Days celebration in Cripple Creek, Colorado, began in 1931 to honor donkeys left behind by miners after more modern equipment replaced them. The original orphaned donkeys were adopted by the city and protected by City Ordinance. Fifteen donkeys make up the herd today and are cared for by the nonprofit all-volunteer “Two Mile High Club,” established in 1932, to guarantee continued care for these beloved creatures. Each year the Club and the City of Cripple Creek celebrate its rich history with these famous “town mascots” leading the way. An ongoing shortfall in income from gambling machines since the beginning of the pandemic forced the City of Cripple Creek to pull funding from this event and others in town. The Committee hopes that generous donors and sponsors will make up the \$30,000 shortfall historically designated for this town festival or Donkey Derby Days may not occur.

Our donkeys need care every day. It costs approximately \$2,000 per donkey annually for food, shelter with electricity, medication, veterinary, and farrier care. The Two Mile High Club partly sponsors the town celebration. Still, ultimately, it exists to care for the donkeys as they have faithfully for 91 years. Curt Sorenson, President of the Two Mile High Club, said, “We rely heavily on volunteers for all fundraising and day-to-day care of our donkeys. These donkeys need to be fed and cared for every day all year. With the city’s additional \$10k in historic preservation funding this year and last, we have some relief. We rely on a core of a dozen club members and officers supplemented by volunteers who assist with fundraising events and other requirements like trimming donkey hooves to get the job done. We have a huge responsibility, managed by a few folks not only for the benefit of the donkeys but for the entire community.” Ultimately, the Two Mile High Club exists to provide care for the donkeys. When money is short, celebratory causes are not a priority.

The donkeys are ambassadors for the City of Cripple Creek and an economic asset. The first question that summer visitors tend to ask in Cripple Creek is, “Where are the donkeys today?” because the donkeys roam the streets freely from mid-May to mid-October. They enjoy the attention and the healthy treats that visitors provide. Donkey Derby Days is a time for this entire region to celebrate the rich mining history of Cripple Creek and the historical representation of times past with the Cripple Creek donkey herd. This annual festival usually draws more than 10,000 people a day, a boon for the City of Cripple Creek and all the surrounding cities of Woodland Park, Victor, Florissant, and Divide. It’s common for some out-of-state visitors to plan their vacation around this fun festival.

So, the economic impact is far-reaching. As many in the nonprofit sector can attest, volunteer help can be hard to come by, and many groups are dwindling. Before the holidays, the Two Mile High Club realized they couldn’t put on the Donkey Derby Days because they no longer had enough volunteers. “Then, at our meeting before Christmas, a large group of volunteers appeared out of nowhere and collectively raised hands to continue the celebration. It was a *Christmas Miracle* that restored my faith in humanity,” Sorenson said with a gleam in his eye. When the Donkey Derby Days Planning Committee meets, there are so many ideas put forth and so much enthusiasm that nothing can stop this group from succeeding, except perhaps a lack of funding.

The Two Mile High Club has pledged about a third of the budget needed for the three-day festival in Cripple Creek in August. The Committee is tentatively planning a kickoff event on Friday evening, August 11, followed by an entire weekend of celebration. The Committee hopes to feature concerts, historical re-enactments, vendors, attractions, food trucks, and potential for mining and other competitions throughout the weekend. The annual parade up Bennett Avenue may feature a mounted color guard and flyover, parade floats, bands, a wild west shootout, and much more, all preceding the famous donkey races, an annual crowd favorite. Based on attendance history from prior years, the Committee estimates that 35,000 people will attend the weekend event.

“The Newmont Mine and most of the casinos have been very supportive of our efforts,” said Wendy Wood, Vice President of the Two Mile High Club. “Many of them ‘sponsor’ donkeys year-round. We hope others who enjoy our efforts and have fun at Donkey Derby Days will help us ensure a celebration this year by contributing financial support.”

If you are interested in learning more about the Cripple Creek Donkeys, go to our website: <https://www.cripplecreek-donkeys.com>.

To make a tax-deductible donation, in any amount specifically to the Donkey Derby Days fund, visit: <https://www.cripplecreekdonkeys.com/product/cripplecreekdonkeys.com/106?cs=true&cst=custom>

Send all sponsorship inquiries to Annie Valades, Donkey Derby Day Committee chairperson, at ccdd2023@gmail.com

Now the question remains. Will Donkey Derby Days take place in 2023? Only time and donations will tell, but the Committee is optimistic that funding will materialize as it plans this historic and exciting event.

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Protect your Water Quality

by Coalition for the Upper South Platte

Colorado has been experiencing historic drought conditions. Although the snowpack for the beginning of 2023 looks encouraging, that does not tell the entire story of the lingering impacts of the dry conditions and increased demand statewide. Not only water quantity, but also water quality is impacted and deserves our attention.

We all know that clean water and a healthy watershed is important for our ecosystem and community. Right? But what does that mean in action? What can I do to make a difference?

With credit to Water Education Colorado, here are actions that we all can take right now.

- Find out where your water comes from. What is the source? The EPA has a mapping tool to provide identify water source, identify potential contaminants, and prioritize source water protections. <https://www.epa.gov/sourcewaterprotection/drinking-water-mapping-application-protect-source-waters-dwmaps>
- Conserve water! Turn off the faucet when you brush your teeth, take a shower rather than a bath, run the dishwasher when full, find and fix leaks! Check this EPA tool: <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/fix-leak-week>
- Protect water quality! Use the commercial car wash and not your driveway, only let rain and snowmelt go into the storm drains, fix that oil leak from your car and ATV, use sand and not salt for ice melt, clean up after your pets (and yourself!) and put it into an appropriate trash receptacle.
- Maintain your septic system. Know where your system is located and inspect the system annually for proper function. Clearly puddles of water or drains backing up into the house indicate



issues. Once again, the EPA has great information: <https://www.epa.gov/septic/frequent-questions-septic-systems>.

Because we live and recreate in the beautiful Rocky Mountains, we all must take responsibility for water quality.

In 2023 CUSP celebrates our 25th year!

As we look forward to sustaining the health of the Upper South Platte Watershed, we also look back to some of our projects over the last 25 years.

By the time it was contained in July 2012, the Waldo Canyon Fire burned 18,247 acres and destroyed 346 homes. The burned area impacted water supply reservoirs, supply lines, roads, highways, and other infrastructure. The impacts of the fire have been lasting for the communities directly and indirectly impacted. The 2016 review of the Waldo Fire

Canyon recovery efforts and lessons learned, <https://cusp.ws/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Waldo-Final-small.pdf>, summarizes assessment of treatments in 17 project reaches within 12 sub-basins in the burn area. The report includes site by site assessment of treatment success and/or failure and suggests improvements.

Recovery for the Waldo Fire drew on the experience of the Hayman Fire recovery, from 10 years earlier. The report concludes: “The overall success of recovery efforts was real, but we learned that techniques developed ten years after Hayman did not always work as planned. Some structure designs were changed over time to better withstand the dynamic nature of a new fire scar.”

The lessons learned from the Waldo Canyon Fire recovery have been implemented throughout Colorado and the west by CUSP’s many partners and other agencies responding to catastrophic wildfire.

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~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 VIRTUALLY**

 - NAMI Colorado: <http://www.namicolorado.org/>
 - Suicide prevention: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/> or 1-800-273-8255
- CAÑON CITY LIBRARY**

1 FREE Legal Self-Help Clinic 2-5 p.m. call 719-269-9020 to schedule appointment.

8 Roxanne Schuster from Natural Grocers presents on brain health at 11 a.m. She brings samples and coupons.

11 Living History Program "John Henry "Doc" Holiday, His Dreams... and Demons" performed by David T. Wright. This program will be held at the Steeple Event Center 701 Macon Ave at 2 p.m.

 - Adult literacy program. We have tutors available to help for FREE!
 - B.O.O.K. Babies on our Knees Monday 10:30 a.m.
 - Break out box 2nd Friday each month 3-4 p.m.
 - Chess Club Wednesday 2 p.m.
 - Creative Crafting (different craft each month) 3rd Friday each month 3-4 p.m.
 - Cribbage Club Fridays 10 a.m. All ages welcome!
 - Fremont Brain Injury Support 1st Tuesday 12:30 p.m.
 - Lego Club 1st Friday each month 3-4 p.m.
 - Metaphysical Group every Saturday 10:30 a.m.
 - New Neighbors Genealogy 1st Friday 1 p.m.
 - Story Swap Book Club 1st and 3rd Tuesday 3-4 p.m.
 - Story time and craft Tuesday and Thursday 10:30 a.m. All at 516 Macon Ave. unless otherwise noted above. FMI 719-269-9020.
- COLORADO SPRINGS**

3 Jo Koy at Broadmoor World Arena
- CRIPPLE CREEK**

2 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.
- ASPEN MINE CENTER**

25 Commodities distribution 9-1 p.m.

 - Tuesdays BINGO 10:30 a.m. for seniors. (Not meeting March 6 or 13).
- March 6 or 13).

 - Wednesdays Luncheon 11:30-1 p.m. upstairs dining room, every Wed. FREE!
 - Thursdays Mexican Train 10 a.m. for seniors. (Not meeting March 6 or 13). FMI 719-689-3584 x124.
- COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

11 FREE Income Tax Preparation 9-1 p.m. at Aspen Mine Center. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance provides FREE, CONFIDENTIAL and SECURE preparation and e-filing of Federal and State income taxes, for taxpayers who qualify. This service is available for basic returns with income up to about \$60,000. Refreshments provided. BY APPOINTMENT ONLY TellerCountyVITA@gmail.com or 719-203-1265.

 - GED Class 1-3 p.m. New students (min. age 16) may join GED classes after completing orientation and \$40 registration fee. FMI Katy@cpteller.org.
- CRYSTOLA**

10, 23 Sunburn in the Shade at Crystola Bar 7-10 p.m.
- DIVIDE**

3, 17, 31 BINGO at the Pikes Peak Community Center 10 a.m. sponsored by Teller Senior Coalition.

19 Wolf Day 4-6 p.m. at Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center 4729 Twin Rocks Road. Meet and greet with Raven and a raffle of Raven artwork. Tickets \$40 ages 12+, \$20 ages 8-11. Reservations required 719-687-9742. FMI wolfeeducation.org.
- LITTLE CHAPEL FOOD PANTRY**

13, 27 This is a drive-up distribution, and to make sure to avoid traffic issues our distribution times are:

Last name beginning with:

A-H	3:30-4:30 p.m.
I-Q	4:30-5:30 p.m.
R-Z	5:30-6:30 p.m.
- FAIRPLAY**

25 Comedy Night 7 p.m. at Rocky Mountain Cigar Company. Tickets \$25 available on Everbrite or call 218-556-3809.
- FLORENCE**

3, 4 Check Please, a comedy written by Jonathan Rand 7 p.m. at the Rialto Theater.
- 6 Deadline for artwork to be submitted to Blue Spruce Gallery. See page 15.

11 Second Saturday Celebration, art walk 1-4 p.m. activities, shopping, food, and fun all day downtown.

11 FloCo Gallery Desert Dreams Opening Art Reception featuring Elizabeth Gamache and Marley Seifert 5-7:30 p.m. The Assault Shakers plays 6-7 p.m. Free admission. 120 E Main St.

11 Rialto Rose Acoustic Society presents ACME Bluegrass 7 p.m. at the Rialto Theater 209 W Main St.

17 Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner 5:30 p.m. at the Elks, music by Bob Weir, drink specials.

18 Wilson & McKee live music 7 p.m. at the Bell Tower Cultural Event Center 201 East Second St. Tickets \$8 members/\$10 non-members.

 - Every Wednesday is Open Mic Night at the Bell Tower Cultural Event Center 201 East Second St. Performers sign in at 6 p.m., music starts at 6:30 p.m. FMI 719-784-2038.
 - The Florence Pioneer Museum and Research Center's new "United Oil Company" timeline display is up in black and white pictures re-created by Sam Carlsson, local photographer.
 - We continue to sell Dennis Lancaster's book, *Florence 1870-1970* for \$24 at the museum. The book can be found on our website www.florencepioneermuseum.org in the General Store link. The museum is open through these winter months. Check website for hours.
- FLORISSANT LIBRARY**

9 FREE Legal Clinic 2-5 p.m. Call 719-748-3939 to schedule appointment.
- GRANGE**

4 Quilt of Valor Guild is having a fundraising event 10-2 p.m. Come help us raise money to continue making beautiful quilts for the veterans of Teller County and beyond. Each quilt costs approximately \$300-\$600 to make. We would love your donations for this great cause. We will have baked goods, table runners, bowl cozies, throws, knitted items and much more. Come see us and help us continue to make these beautiful quilts for Teller County Veterans.
- 11 Craft Classes: Pine Needle Baskets 9-12 p.m., Needle Felting 10 a.m., Gourds 11 a.m., Oil Painting beginner class 1-3 p.m. Reservations are necessary for each class so we can bring the proper supplies.

14, 28 Quilt of Valor Guild meets 9-12 p.m. If you are a quilter who would like to join us, come on over and see what we do.

18 Learn to sew class. This is the 3rd class in this series. FMI or RSVP 719-510-2325.

 - Every Thursday Potluck and Music 6-8 p.m. All are welcome. Bring a dish and a small donation, and join the fun.
- a float, classic car, walking or riding groups participate. The Pub/Food Crawl begins after the parade. Crawl cards are \$5 and they are filled with discounts and deals from favorite area eateries. We are still accepting vendors for this as well. The Crawl Card deals are good starting the 11th at 1 p.m. through March 18. Cards will be for sale March 11 at the table in front of the Cultural Center before and after the parade. FMI www.mountainaire.org or mountaineire@yahoo.com.

14 Nonprofit Cooperative of Teller County Meeting/ Training 9:30-10:45 a.m. at Reserve Our Gallery. A gathering of nonprofit leaders. FMI 719-233-9902.

18 Woodland Park Senior Center's 10th Annual Chili Cook-off 11-1 p.m. at 321 N Pine Street. There are 12 chili recipes to taste and enter your vote for the People's Choice winner! Open to all, \$5 for all you can eat chili, cornbread, drinks and dessert. Everyone welcome!

25 Art & Wine Paint Night 5:30-9 p.m. at Reserve Our Gallery. All supplies provided including dinner \$70. RSVP 719-401-2301 or reserveourgallery@gmail.com.
- COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**

7 Crossroads Co-Parenting Seminar 4:30-8:30 p.m. Teller County court-approved parenting & divorce class. \$35 pre-registration fee required. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org.

14 Circle of Parents Kinship Connection 5:30-7:30 p.m. A place for those raising their grandchildren or kin, to share, laugh, joke and find out how other caregivers are navigating this new world. Meal and childcare provided. Second Tuesday of each month. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org.

14 Circle of Fathers 5:30-7:30 p.m. Dads are often left out of the conversation. Join a father-led group where your opinions, ideas, and point of view are heard. Meal and childcare provided. Second Tuesday of each month. FMI Steve@cpteller.org.

27 Feb-22 May Nurturing Families 5:15-7:45 p.m. Mondays (no class March 27). A nurturing and active approach to parenting in a supportive peer environment. Support for every step of your child's physical, emotional, and cognitive development. Meal and childcare provided. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org.

 - Career Center 12-4 p.m. Tuesdays & Thursdays. Pikes Peak Workforce Center can help with job searching, resume assistance and unemployment applications. Walk-ins welcome. FMI Erin@cpteller.org.
 - Family Café 9 a.m.-12 p.m. Mon through Fri. Free Wifi, a Kid's Corner and a space to congregate free of charge for parents and caregivers in our community. A place for families to connect and build social networks.
 - FREE Yoga with Leah Mondays 10-11 a.m. First come, first served, doors lock at 10 a.m. Bring your own mat and props. All levels welcome. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org.
 - GED Class 5-7 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays. New students (minimum age 16) may join GED classes after completing orientation and \$40 registration fee. FMI Katy@cpteller.org.
 - Pearson VUE Testing Center Mondays 10-7 p.m. Schedule your certification or licensure exam at www.pearsonvue.com. Fees vary. FMI Katy@cpteller.org.
 - Playgroup 9:30-11 a.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Fridays. Parents and caregivers with children ages 5 & under. Older siblings are welcome. FMI Jackie@cpteller.org.
 - Save the date – April 1 – Free Income Tax Preparation 9-1 p.m. Volunteer Income Tax Assistance provides FREE, CONFIDENTIAL and SECURE preparation and e-filing of Federal and State income taxes, for taxpayers who qualify. This service is available for basic returns with income up to about \$60,000. Refreshments provided. BY APPOINTMENT ONLY TellerCountyVITA@gmail.com or 719-203-1265.
 - All programs at Community Partnership 701 Gold Hill Place unless otherwise noted. FMI 719-686-0705.
- LIBRARY**

9 Free Legal Clinic 2-5 p.m. Call 719-748-3939 to schedule appointment.

Mueller State Park

Snow or shine, Mueller State Park is a great place to get away from it all! Winter hikes and snowshoeing are on the schedule for March at Mueller.

Guided hikes scheduled for March range from 1 to 3 miles and from moderate to more challenging in duration. Snowshoeing, sledding and skiing are available anytime. Three ski trails are groomed as often as new snow falls. Following is a list of hikes coming up:

- 4 Hike Peak View Trail 9 a.m. meet at Elk Meadow TH
- 5 Hike Osborn Cabin 9 a.m. meet at Black Bear TH
- 11 Hug-a-Tree 2 p.m. meet at Visitor Center
- 12 Hike Elk Meadow* 1 p.m.
- 18 Hike Wapiti* 9 a.m.
- 26 Hike School Pond 1 p.m. meet at Preacher's Hollow TH
- 26 Sledding. Peak View and Preacher's Hollow are the two best hills for sledding.

- 26 Cross Country Skiing. Three groomed trails are Conifer Ridge, Grouse Mountain Campground loops and Black Bear Trail.
- 26 Snowshoeing. While main trails often get packed down, deep snow usually can be found off the trails and further from the road.

*Indicates to meet at the Trailhead (TH) of the same name.

Winter Weather is in full swing and can be quite variable! Snow can make the trails snowy, icy, or dry. Remember to dress in layers, bring water and a snack. Snowshoes or spikes are often recommended for hiking. Please access your local weather resources or call the Visitor Center between 9-4 p.m. for current conditions, 719-687-2366. Mueller events are free. However, a \$10-day pass or \$80-annual vehicle pass or Keep Colorado Wild pass are required to enter the park.



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