



# UTE COUNTRY NEWS

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January 2024

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Vol. 16, No. 1

## Welcome to Ute Country

**"Snowflakes are the most beautiful and unique individual works of art created by God. When joined together they make everything around us peaceful and beautiful. So the same with the human race."**

**— Sotero M Lopez II**

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Check our website for details and upcoming events

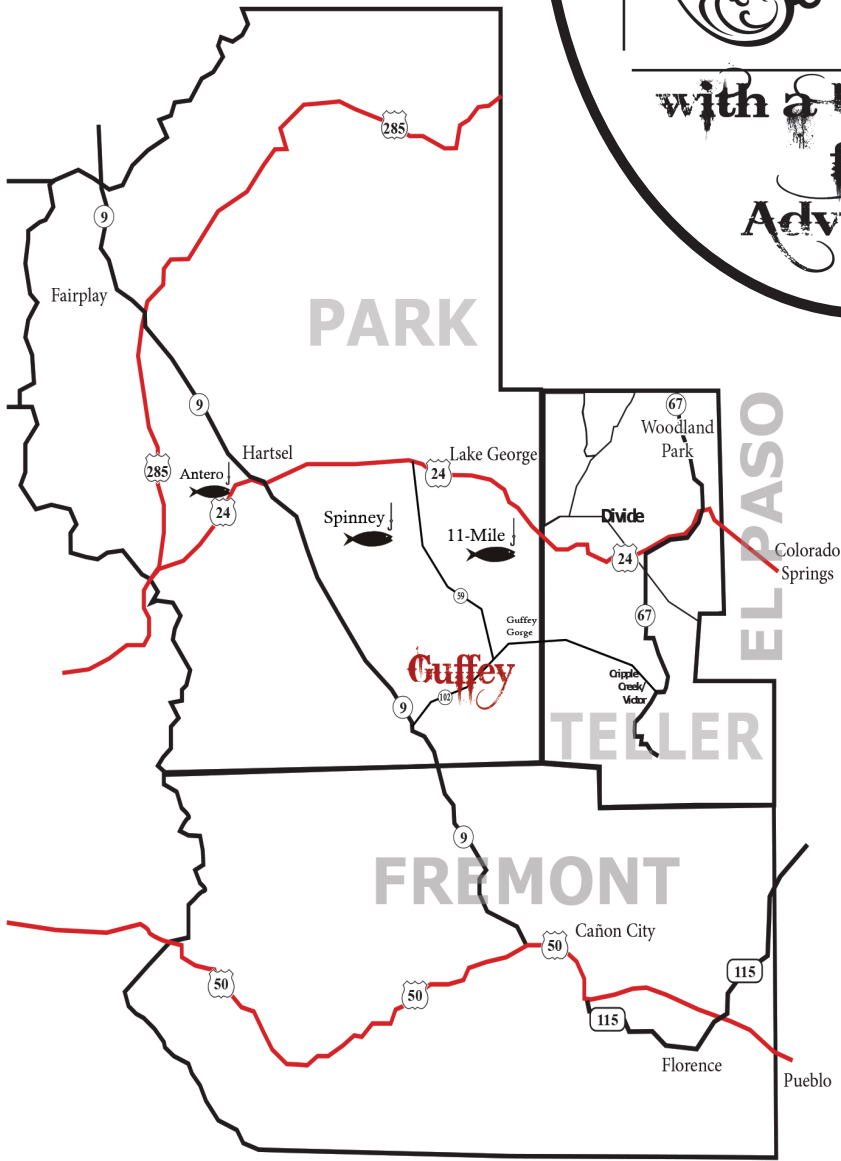
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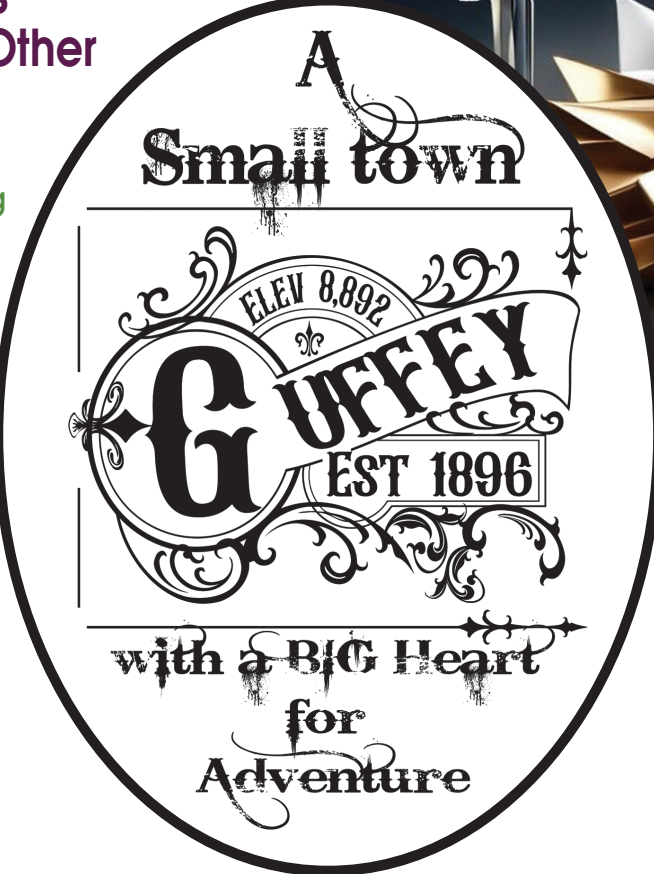
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### On Deck

Our January cover photograph was taken by Jeff in Cascade back in 2016. The beauty of the freshly fallen snow seemed to go hand-in-hand with the idea of a fresh start that each New Year brings. January is often a time of reflection as we consider options for how we might proceed perhaps differently in the future.

Readers who may find themselves feeling let down after the holidays may enjoy *Life Enhancing Journeys* article and the tips for pulling yourself out of a post-holiday slump. *Pharmgirl* shares her personal journey of how she arrived at her 2024 resolution; something every hiker may wish to take note of. Mary Shell reflects on business trends for artists in the age of AI and provides her forecast of how AI will impact artists and the art industry in *A Look Inside the Artist*, a must-read for anyone in the art industry. We look forward to celebrating Smokey Bear's 80th birthday in 2024! For those seeking an attitude of gratitude, check out our on-going series put forth by our readers, *Monkey See, Monkey Do: You can kindle kindness, too!*

Are you dreading the incoming credit card bills from holiday spending? Are you seeking employment as a sales representative? We continue to seek a people-person who knows the definition of "deadline" who is looking to earn some extra money and make meaningful connections in Teller County. If that sounds like you, please stop in at Shipping Plus Mon-Fri 9-5:30 p.m., call us at 719-686-7587 or email [utecountrynewspaper@gmail.com](mailto:utecountrynewspaper@gmail.com).

Did you capture a precious pet moment over the holidays with your camera or phone? We are always seeking submissions for Critter Corner. Give the one who loves you unconditionally a shout-out by sending us their photos. Please email them to [utecountrynewspaper@gmail.com](mailto:utecountrynewspaper@gmail.com), bring them into Shipping Plus Monday through Friday, 9-5:30 p.m., or snail mail to Ute Country News POB 753 Divide, CO 80814.

Thank you,  
— Kathy & Jeff Hansen

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

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First Class subscriptions are available for \$40 for 13 issues, or 6 issues for \$20.

## Hand Hotel

by Flip Boettcher

The Hand Hotel, located at 531 on Fairplay's historic Front Street, has quite a history. In 1924, Jake and Jessie Hand owned the Shawnee Lodge in Bailey, but when that establishment burned down, they bought the Fairplay Hotel in Fairplay, which became the Valiton about 2015.

In the 1920s, a fire ravaged Fairplay, destroying much of the town including the building at 531 Front Street. Jake and Jessie purchased the property and in 1931 started building the Hand Hotel, which opened for business in 1932. The couple ran both hotels for a while, finally selling the Fairplay Hotel.

Jessie Hand, a tiny woman, was an avid outdoors woman, even being sponsored by an outdoor magazine in the early 1900s, which for a woman, was almost unheard of at that time. The Hand Hotel featured outdoor hunting and fishing excursions and trips in the surrounding mountains nearby for their guests.

When grandma Jessie Hand's health declined, hotel ownership was passed on to the Hand children. Eventually though, the hotel was abandoned and became condemned with the sky showing through the roof by the mid-1980s.

In 1987, local Fairplay resident Pat Pocius and two partners purchased the hotel, completely renovating it and Pocius ran the hotel for about 10 years. Pocius sold the hotel to a three-person ownership group, who then sold it to local Fairplay residents Dale and Kathryn Fitting. Dale did a lot of remodeling of the hotel, bringing it back to the 1930s era.

This last April, Catherine Ambrose purchased the Hand Hotel, after spending 20 years in property management and hospitality in Breckenridge and Park County, she said.

Ambrose is very excited about owning the hotel and has plans to get the old neon "HOTEL" sign on the roof lit again, which the Hand family put there in the 1950s. In the summer of 2024, Ambrose wants to restore the exterior of the hotel to its original look.

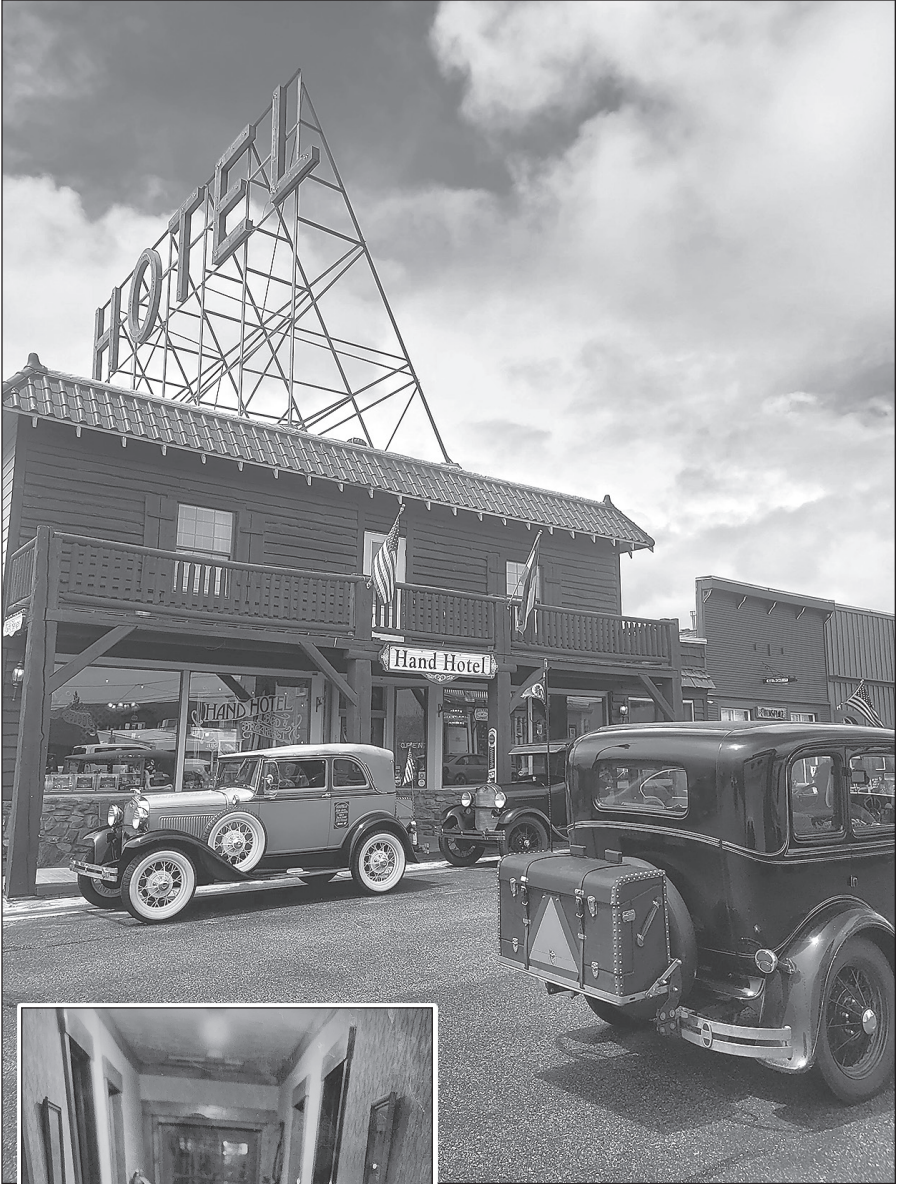
The hotel has always had 11 rooms, but a 12th room has been added with the conversion of the old manager's quarters and full renovation with a private patio overlooking the Platte River below the hotel, according to Ambrose.

Did we mention ghosts? Ghostly sightings and paranormal activity began while Pocius owned the hotel, but such sightings are not uncommon in Fairplay. According to Mike Stone, who has worked at the Hand Hotel for 22 years, said there are ghostly sightings at the Edith Teter School, the Father Dyer chapel in South Park City, and the Fairplay (Valiton) Hotel where pans fly off the wall, to mention a few places.

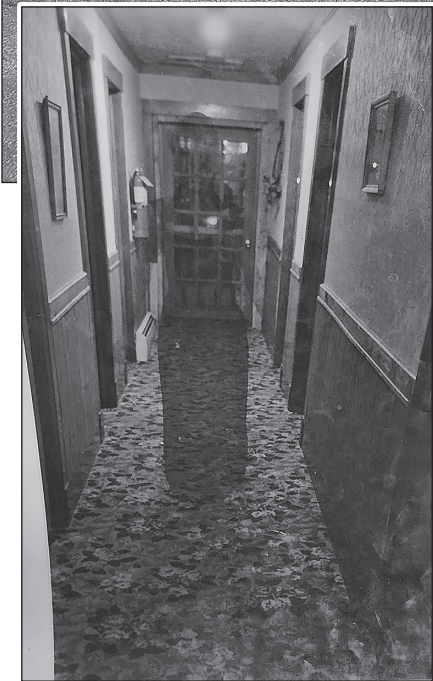
According to Chuck Zukowski though, who has been investigating paranormal activity for over 30 years and after an overnight investigation at the hotel, described the Hand Hotel as "one of Colorado's most active locations."

Fortunately, the ghosts are basically friendly and sightings include full-body apparitions; faces appearing in guestroom mirrors; messed up beds and child size imprints on freshly made beds in locked rooms; as well as party and dancing noises on the second floor ceiling. When guests ask how to get to the third floor party, they are told there is no third floor!

Ben is another common apparition. Pocius had a friend visiting who went upstairs to the second floor to look at the rooms. When she came back downstairs, she remarked that the staff was very helpful and that a nice man named Ben told her to contact him if she needed anything. That day no staff was at the hotel. Ben was the hotel caretaker, but he had died several years before! Ben was a heavy smoker; many guests and staff smelled smoke in the hotel.



The picture above was actually taken this year in May when an old car rally came to Fairplay; it looks like an old pic from the 1930s, in fact one car is a 1932 model and the other is a 1935 car. photo courtesy of Catherine Ambrose.



Miss Amelia in a pink dress (left) walking the halls. The photo was taken in the 1990s by a paranormal investigating group. Catherine Ambrose took this pic of the photo.

and staff have smelled rosewater perfume, which was Grandma Hand's perfume.

Ambrose said her paranormal experiences at the hotel have been warm and caring. She has smelled Grandma Hand's rosewater perfume. With a smile, Ambrose said that there is a "flirting ghost," who has pinched her backside, as well as some of the other female staff.

According to Stone some people have felt a cat rubbing the back of their legs; of course, there is no cat at the hotel. Stone also said that the staff sometimes see a little girl on the bed and she leaves when told to get off.

continued on page 4



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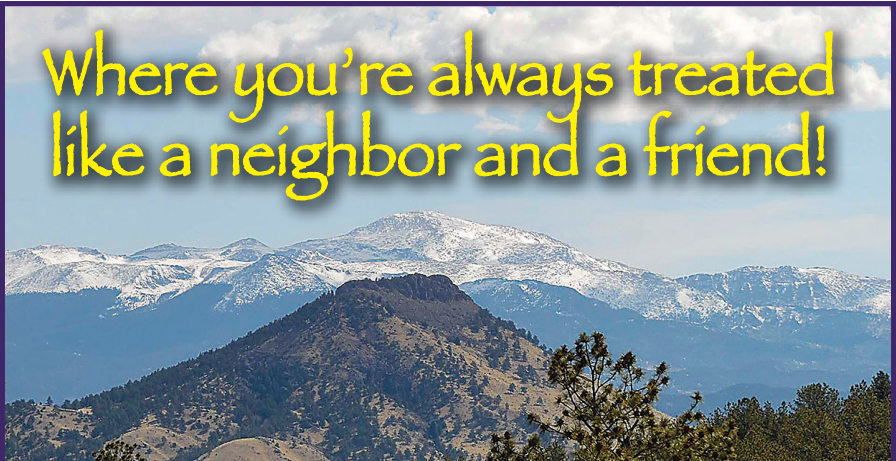
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## Hand Hotel

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One of the staff saw a shadowy figure in one of the rooms and tried to push it away but got cold chills and was sick in bed for a few days.

A family with two children was staying at the hotel, said Stone, and in the middle of the day they heard the 10-year old son running in the hallway and up and down the stairs. Something grabbed him to keep him from falling down the stairs; his family was downstairs at the time.

A ghost dog roams the hotel as well, especially in the basement. Once when Stone was working at the hotel desk, a man and his son came in wanting to visit the basement. Apparently in October 1998, while the father was setting up the basement for a Halloween party, his son came to him "white as a ghost," saying that a dog had bitten him on the hand. The father had brought his son back to the hotel to visit the basement to help alleviate his son's fears.

Over the years, Stone has personally smelled the cigarette smoke and Grandma Hand's rosewater perfume. He has also felt the cat rubbing the back of his legs while in room #7, the schoolmarm's room.

One time years ago while folding laundry, Stone felt someone looking at him and saw a short, bald-headed oriental fellow with a white apron looking at him from the top of the basement stairs. When Stone actually turned around to look at the apparition, it disappeared.

The ghostly apparitions are good and bad for the hotel; some people come and stay because of them, some stay away and some don't even know about them, said Stone.

The Hand Hotel has a very warm, comfortable atmosphere, harking back to an-



Norman, Jr., son and Jessie Hand (above) compare fish they caught.  
photo of pic by Flip Boettcher.  
The cover photograph of Jessie is from 1952.

other era with each room having a different theme. The staff are friendly and Ambrose is very excited to be the new owner.

The hotel serves breakfast and has two lovely gift emporiums, which are open 7 days a week from 9-6 p.m. for your shopping pleasure.

To book a room call the front desk at 719-836-3595 and check out the hotel at [www.HandHotel.com](http://www.HandHotel.com).

During your stay in Fairplay, plan on visiting all the other interesting, unique shops and restaurants on Fairplay's historic Front Street.

## Fishing is Fun Grants

by Joey Livingston

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is excited to announce the 2024 round of funding opportunities for the Fishing is Fun Grant Program. The goal of this program is to provide funding to projects that expand fishing access across the state and provide more angling opportunities. CPW awards around \$650,000 in Fishing is Fun grants annually.

The Fishing is Fun program supports projects such as stream and river habitat improvements, access improvements, perpetual easements for public access, pond and lake habitat improvements, fish retention structures, development of new fishing ponds and amenity improvements such as shade shelters, benches and restrooms.

Recent projects include ADA fishing pier installations, habitat improvements, river restorations and dredging projects.

This program provides matching grant funds annually to local and county

governments, park and recreation departments, water districts, angling organizations and others for projects to improve angling opportunities in Colorado.

"CPW is always looking to empower partners to take steps to increase or improve fishing access," said CPW Grant Manager Travis Long. "In the past 30 years, the Fishing Is Fun program has supported 375 angling improvement projects across the state, from the smallest towns on the Eastern Plains and the West Slope to the largest cities along the Front Range."

A fillable application form and additional program information can be found on our website (<https://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/FishingIsFunProgram.aspx>). The completed application form must be submitted by Feb. 15, 2024.

Contact CPW Grant Manager Travis Long at [travis.long@state.co.us](mailto:travis.long@state.co.us) with additional questions about eligibility, program guidelines and any other related questions.

## Adopt Me

by Ark Valley Humane Society

### Star

Star is a loving, goofy gal who is sure to win you over with her puppy kisses and snuggles. She is a 2-year-old American Pit bull terrier mix with the cutest underbite! Star has lived with another dog in her previous home and even a Guinea Pig who she did well with! We aren't sure how Star will be around cats, and she'd do best in a home with no kids. Since coming to us, she has gotten the opportunity to spend time in two great foster homes. Her second foster home was able to leave her in the crate for longer periods of time — she needs a little more work on crate training but is already off to a great start! If you've been looking for a goofy, loving dog to join your family in the New Year, please consider Star. You can stop by the shelter to meet her — we're at 701 Gregg Drive in Buena Vista and open Monday through Saturday from 12-5 p.m.

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



## Smokey Bear turns 80

by Robert Hudson Westover



To make it to 80 means you have overcome life's greatest challenges — 80 years is a tremendous milestone for anyone. You truly become the elder, the sage, the one who knows a thing or two and should be listened to. Being the spokesperson of the longest running and most successful advertising campaigns in American history, Smokey Bear would agree and so does the USDA Forest Service.

Smokey's actual birthday is August 9. However, starting in January, the Forest Service which has, in cooperation with the Ad Council and the National Association of State Foresters, managed the image of Smokey Bear since the 1940s will launch a yearlong celebration. The kickoff started with Smokey sharing his iconic phrase of *Only You Can Prevent Wildfires* in the Tournament of Roses Parade January 1.



In fact, across the country all sorts of activities are being planned from guest appearances at local events, a Facebook live stream from the California State Fair in July with Darley Newman, host of the PBS show *Travels with Darley*, and a social media campaign where the Forest Service is asking folks to sing Happy Birthday to Smokey with the hashtag #SingForSmokey.

Some of the #SingForSmokey videos will be streamed across numerous social media platforms on August 9 so get your vocal cords ready to belt out one for the bear! The fun continues through the year with the Smokey Bear balloon appearing

in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and the lighting of the U.S. Capital Christmas Tree!

To keep up on national events surrounding Smokey's 80th, follow the Forest Service social media sites as well as the Ad Council's Smokey Bear website [www.smokeybear.com](http://www.smokeybear.com) and social media sites.

Despite the success of Smokey Bear's campaign over the years, wildfire prevention remains one of the most critical issues affecting our country's forests and grasslands. With over 80% of wildfires being started accidentally or by careless or bad behavior, Smokey's message is as relevant and urgent today as it was in 1944.

## CUSP Recap 2023

by Coalition for the Upper South Platte

In 2023, the Coalition for the Upper South Platte celebrated its 25th year of service to the watershed's health and surrounding community. We are so proud of all that has been accomplished and humbled by all there is yet to do!

### Recap of 2023 activities

The most ambitious project that CUSP and our many partners have undertaken for some time has been removing the Lake George spillway/diversion structure at the mouth of Eleven Mile Canyon. It is very exciting to see this large (and expensive) project nearing completion in 2023. The concrete structure has been removed, and obsolete piping has been capped. Massive amounts of sediment have been removed from the river, revealing large boulders and the original river channel, creating extensive aquatic habitat. Cattails have been removed from the boundaries of the river, and the riparian areas have been restored as well. 2024 work includes:

- Completing the fishing bench.
- Completing the parking lot and trail to the fishing area.
- Some vegetation restoration will also be completed, all while avoiding disturbing the return of the nesting Bald Eagles above the work area.
- CUSP partnered with the US Forest Service to complete work at the popular Happy Meadows area north of Lake George. Defined parking areas and fencing were installed to control access to the river and limit damage to the riparian zone. Restrooms were installed to address the other challenge of the increased popularity of this area. CUSP will continue to monitor the site for weeds and successful revegetation.
- Badger Flats is another popular Forest Service area. CUSP installed fire rings again this year to limit the impacts of dispersed camping and informal fire rings.
- CUSP is working with Teller County stakeholders to update the Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This is an important planning document to prioritize future

## Work has begun on Rampart Reservoir project

by Josh Cowden

Pikes Peak Ranger District on the Pike-San Isabel National Forests & Cimarron and Comanche National Grasslands has begun working on the Upper Monument Creek Landscape Restoration Reservoir Project in December. The specific area of the project is about 2300 acres of forest surrounding Rampart Reservoir and the adjacent watershed.

The project aims to increase the resiliency of the forest, by addressing the reduced health of the forest, watersheds and wildlife habitat; and mitigate the high risk of catastrophic wildfires. To do so, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service is working with local contractors to use vegetation treatments such as tree thinning and other fuel reduction methods.

This work will aid in reducing the intensity of fires and create healthier forest conditions across a large area of the Pikes Peak Ranger District.

Collectively, the project will help restore over 2,000 acres of forest by removing overgrown dense forests, infested tress such as the mountain pine beetle and spruce budworm, severe dwarf mistletoe as well as mastication or grinding of hazardous fuels. Work in the area will continue for two years with a final completion goal of 2025.

Visitors access the Rainbow Gulch Trail (#714) should be aware and expect traffic on the route for the duration of mechanical thinning operations. Trucks will not be operating during the weekends or federal

holidays. This project may continue into the summer months and the district plans to follow up with future treatments in the area. The Lovell Gulch Trail (#706), closer to Woodland Park, is an alternate trail opportunity.

"The western U.S. is experiencing a wildland fire crisis of ever-increasing damage to communities, critical infrastructure and important natural resources that provide water, recreation, jobs and other important commodities," said Pikes Peak District Ranger Carl Bauer. "This project aligns with the current Forest Service Wildfire Crisis Strategy initiative to reduce the likelihood of largescale, high-intensity wildfires and improve resiliency of the forest."

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## CPW to use low-flying helicopters for assessment

by Bill Vogrin

Colorado Parks and Wildlife biologists have begun to assess deer and bighorn sheep populations on the southeastern plains of Colorado, east of Interstate 25, by conducting low-altitude helicopter flights.

The CPW staff will conduct similar flights west of I-25, doing surveys and capture work in South Park, the Upper Arkansas Valley, the Pikes Peak Region, the Sangre de Cristo mountains, the Wet Mountain Valley and over Fishers Peak State Park in Trinidad.

"The helicopters will spend a brief amount of time in a specific area to count and categorize individual herds and then move on, searching for more deer, elk or bighorn sheep," said Julie Stiver, senior wildlife biologist for CPW's Southeast Region, based in Colorado Springs.

"Each year, CPW biologists inventory thousands of animals statewide to develop a picture of the productivity and composition of big game in Colorado. The data is critical to our work of forming population models, management strategies and to set future hunting license numbers."

Disturbances by the flights typically only last a few minutes in any one area.

The southeastern plains flight plan calls for helicopters to start flying in the South Republican River drainage from Flagler to the Kansas state line. The helicopter will

then be in Kit Carson and Cheyenne counties followed by tours of Kiowa, Prowers and Baca counties.

From there, the helicopter surveys will fly along the Arkansas River from the Kansas state line to Pueblo and southwest along the Purgatoire River.

On the flights west of I-25, biologists intend to survey and classify deer, elk and bighorn sheep.

Capture work will occur in the Upper Arkansas Valley from Cañon City to Leadville. CPW staff will be trying to catch 60 mule deer fawns to fit them with radio-collars so that biologists can study their survival rates. This work is for a 25-year project that started in 1999 to collect data and monitor survival in the deer herd.

More capture work is planned in South Park and the Upper Arkansas Valley where CPW biologists hope to catch 65 cow elk and 60 calf elk. Each will be fitted with a radio collar so biologists can study their survival rates and movement patterns.

CPW biologists hope to conclude their herd assessment and capture operation flights by late January.

For more information on CPW's wildlife population objectives, visit: [cpw.state.co.us/ThingsToDo/pages/HerdManagementPlans.aspx](http://cpw.state.co.us/ThingsToDo/pages/HerdManagementPlans.aspx)

## Monkey See, Monkey Do

You can Kindle Kindness, too!

by Readers of Ute Country News

Below are acts of kindness experienced or witnessed submitted by our readers this month:

- I needed to pick up a last minute item for Thanksgiving from the local grocery store. I said to the clerk, "Drew the short straw to work on Thanksgiving, huh?" The response surprised me, "No, actually I volunteered to work!" What a gift to co-workers, to volunteer to work on a holiday so that others could be with their friends and family!
- I've been reading this column and noticing how many times holding a door is considered an act of kindness, so I began taking note at my own retail location. Wow! What I noticed is that MOST people will hold a door for someone they see coming or exiting. I also noticed if the person approaching the door happens to be carrying a load, the kind "helper" moves even more quickly to get to the door before the one carrying the load. I must say, just paying attention to this single act of kindness has changed my view — I believe people will help each other when they can!
- It was snowing and I was leaving the grocery store. I rolled the cart to my car and unloaded my groceries. Much to my surprise, a kind gentleman offered to return my cart for me. I was grateful for that act of kindness, especially while it is snowing! Offering to return a shopping cart is especially kind in the snow!
- This has been a month of many sweet treats being offered as gifts. Since I can no longer eat to my heart's content without consequences AND since I know it takes great effort to bake out a cookie or that intentional thought that goes into choosing which sweet treat to purchase, I find I can graciously accept those sweet treats offered. Then, I can offer those same treats to those I know
- who CAN enjoy them without physical consequences. Offering sweet treats is truly an act of kindness as I see those eyes light up when the treat is offered!
- It was very natural for me to offer support to my friend. Her gratitude reminded me that doing so was an act of kindness that was much appreciated. Next time I hesitate to offer support, I will remember how much it meant to her.
- Two widows: There are two widows who are neighbors. Both have arthritis and both have a strong independence streak. They help each other out when they can. One widow had such thick ice on her driveway she could not get her old truck to the road as it kept sliding backward. The other widow noticed how she was struggling with the ice, using a tool not meant for the job. She shared her tools that could help to chop up the ice so that the truck could get relocated, making room for the car with snow tires and four-wheel drive to pass through. It took these ladies two days to chop that ice. Both days they noticed a neighbor with a plow on his truck waving at them. Sadly, the neighbor man with the plow didn't offer to help. These two ladies persevered, laughing as they chopped and shoveled the ice away. Together they made jokes as they made progress and eventually cleared the way for safe travel. Helping your neighbor chop ice is an act of kindness; doing so with laughter made the task easier and more enjoyable — way to go ladies!
- It is an act of kindness to be aware of those in the community that may be alone during the holidays. Offering a small gift of appreciation gives them something to open on a day that everyone is opening presents. Including those that may be alone is an act of kindness. By the way, the gratitude is immense!

It might be winter, but that doesn't mean we're safe from wildfires...

### Keep Your Butts In Your Car!

Save our forests and homes!



## Pharmgirl Resolutions

by Peggy Badgett

I clambered over the third dead log which was much larger than the first two. A broken branch snagged my leggings, leaving a sizable hole. I looked at the damage and muttered a bad word. Both shoulders ached beneath the backpack straps. Exhaustion was setting in. Then, in the back of my oxygen-deprived brain, warning signals started to sound. The woods were quiet, too quiet. I stopped at the bottom of a narrow ravine. Aspen eyes judged me silently, probably calling me an idiot over their underground network. Pine needles and twigs littered the forest floor at my feet instead of a well-worn trail. I did a slow spin. My heart began to gallop. I was lost.

I took several deep breaths, dropped my pack and sat down on a stump. Panicking wouldn't help, but a snack might. Between chews of a dry granola bar I'd dug from a pocket, I sipped some water and resolved to remain calm. Thunder rumbled nearby. I really didn't want this to be my last birthday.

To celebrate turning 63, I'd decided to solo hike to the top of Pikes Peak. I stopped often to take in the incredible views (and catch my breath) on the steady uphill grind. Robber Jays nibbled crumbs from my hands once I reached the switchbacks approaching Devil's playground. The wind picked up speed, whipping through rock formations. I was grateful for the layers I'd packed.

## The last several miles wound beside the summit road and was populated with a few hikers. Just before the bouldering started, I glanced back to see a group of boys and a man my age gaining on me.

The last several miles wound beside the summit road and was populated with a few hikers. Just before the bouldering started, I glanced back to see a group of boys and a man my age gaining on me. Wait. I used to be the one who did the passing on fourteeners. Grumbling to myself, I saved face by stopping to eat fruit snacks on a rock. Quashing a malicious desire to trip them, I noticed the last child was not enjoying himself. I smiled encouragement. He rolled his eyes. Ok, maybe age was slowing me down a bit but at least I didn't have to deal with a bunch of surly teenagers.

Dark clouds gathered as I climbed past the final cairn. Only lingering long enough at the summit to use the bathroom and refill a water bottle, I headed back toward tree line. Somehow, during my woolgathering, my feet had followed a deer track instead of the actual trail. Reasoning that I hadn't veered too far off the path, I decided to follow my intuition. Just as I shouldered my pack, I remembered my new Alltrails app. I opened my phone. It had one bar. After a few key strokes, the satellite showed me as a little blue dot that needed to head in the opposite direction! Maybe technology wasn't so bad. I pushed through brush up a 40 degree incline until I reached the path. My heart slowed as much as it could at 11,000 feet. Then lightning lit up the forest, with thunder on its heels. Rain drops splattered in the dirt. I forced my exhausted body into a slow trot.



Looking over Devil's Playground.



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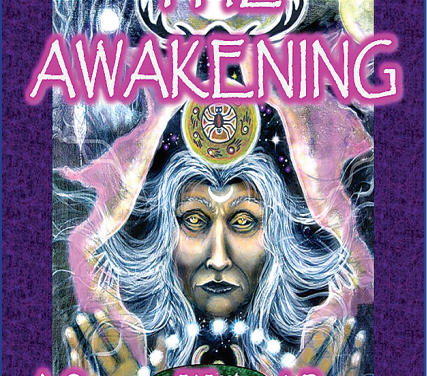
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# The Shadow Mountain Detectives Voices in the Dark

by Gilrund the Historian

The Shadow Mountain Detective Club was about to meet when Sally came in late, and she looked very disturbed. Sally was 12 years old and very pretty. Jerry, the club's leader, was 13. The other members of the club were Willy and Anne, who were twins and eleven years old. The last member was Jake, who was 12. It was Jake who noticed Sally's condition and asked her if she was feeling alright.

Sally looked at the other members of the club and said, "I don't know! The strangest thing happened to me last night. I was babysitting for the Williams family. I had to walk home because mom and dad were out with friends and couldn't drive me back home.

Anyway, I decided to take the shortcut through the cemetery. The moon was up and full, so I could see pretty good. Well, as I hurried down the old, paved road, I thought that I heard the voice of a girl. I was next to an old crypt that belonged to the Madisons.

My dad had told me that the Madison family helped start the town of Shadow Mountain back in the old days. So, I guess it was their burial place. They all had died long before now. I think that there were two sons. One died in the military and the other became a wizard or something. He was sort of an outcast.

Anyway, I stopped to listen to what she might be saying. She was talking to a man and telling him about herself. She seemed to be in her last year of high school, she said that she wanted to look like a fairy. I guess she was not too pretty. I heard her tell the man that the other kids called her the "Gnome."

"That's not very nice!" shouted out Anne, as Sally stopped to take a breath.

"No, it's not," replied Sally, "But, that's what she said. The man that she was talking to asked her what she wanted to look like, and that's when she said that she wanted to look like a fairy princess, but without the wings."

Willy and Jake snickered when they heard that part. Jerry said, "No wings? Why no wings?"

"I don't know," replied Sally, "It's just what she said. Anyway, then the man said that if she would marry him, he would make her look that way. Well, the girl was quiet for a while and then said that she would marry him."

"How was he going to make the girl look like a fairy princess?" asked Jerry, "Was he a plastic surgeon or something? Sounds fishy to me."

"I was just getting to that part, Jerry," answered Sally. "It got quiet for a few minutes, and so I moved a little so that I could see just who these two people were. I moved behind a juniper tree that was just outside of the iron fence that surrounded the crypt.

Then I could see them talking. The man was dressed in the old-style clothes, like in the Dracula movies. But the girl was dressed like we dress now, but she was kinda' homely. I could see why she was called a gnome.

Then the man started waving his hands over her and all around her, like he was a magician or something. A sort of cloud formed around her as he did that with his hands and..."

"Wait a minute!" interrupted Jake, "You said that he waved his hands around her, but did he say anything as he did the hand waving thing? A real magician would have said some magic words too."

"Yeah," added Willy, "They always do that in the movies. You can't understand them, but they do say something."

"Wait a minute," said Jerry, "Didn't you say that one of the Madisons was a wizard? Do wizards have to say stuff when they cast a spell?"

"Yeah, especially one that has been dead for a long time?" added Willy.

"I didn't hear him say anything!" exclaimed Sally as she glared at the boys, "I was close enough to have heard anything that he might have said. He just waived his hands around her as this white cloud seemed to come out of his hands and covered her."

Jake raised his hand to ask another question like he was in school.

"Let her finish!" cried Anne, "I want to hear what happened next."

"Thank you, Anne," said Sally. "As I was saying, The cloud formed as the man waved his hands and then it just went away. I couldn't believe what I saw; there was the girl, and she was just like a human-sized fairy princess. She was beautiful, with pointed ears and her body was perfect in her white sparkly fairy gown. You should have seen it, Anne. It was a sort of off the shoulder with sleeves that went down to her hands and was form fitting until at the waist it flowed out in a full skirt down to her ankles. And her shoes, Anne. You should have seen her shoes. They were like the shoes that Cinderella wore. Glass! Can you believe that? They were glass and they fit perfectly."

"She wore a silver tiara on her long wavy blonde hair that came down to her waist. Her fingers were covered with the most beautiful rings that I had ever seen. And the bracelets, oh Anne, the bracelets were silver covered with all colors of sparkling stones. My mom would have loved to have had even one of the bracelets."

"Enough about what she was wearing!" cried out Jerry, "What happened then?"

"Oh! Well, she wanted to see what she looked like, so this man, again waived his hand toward the ground and a mirror

appeared. In the light of the full moon, the girl could see herself in the magic mirror. Unfortunately, they could also see me looking from behind the tree. So, I ran as fast as I could on home and hid under my bed for an hour."

It was quiet in the clubhouse for a while as the kids thought about what they had just heard from Sally.

Willy leaned over to Jake and whispered, "Sounds like a fairy tale to me."

Jake didn't laugh, but he sure wanted to. Sally saw the two boys trying not to laugh and frowned and said, "If you don't believe me, let's go to the cemetery and I'll show you where this all happened."

Anne punched her brother and said, "Yeah, let's go to the cemetery and see."

She knew that Willy didn't like to go to the cemetery, even in the daylight. It would be a paycheck for laughing at Sally's story.

Jerry said, "Okay, let's vote. Who wants to go to the cemetery and check this out?"

Everybody but Willy raised their hands. "Okay, Lets go," said Jerry, "It's not that far away."

The kids walked and talked as they went to the cemetery. When they got to the gate, Jerry said, "Sally, lead the way."

Sally looked at Anne and she joined her as they started through the cemetery gate toward the interior of the old cemetery. Sally and Anne walked ahead leading them to the big old Madison crypt. They stopped at the old aspen tree where Sally had hidden herself the night before and pointed to where the two young people had been talking.

Jerry found the gate to the grounds of the crypt and went inside looking for any evidence that might show that what Sally had said was true. Anne was looking at the ground for any proof. Sally was looking down, too, as Jake and Willy looked closer at the crypt.

Jake called out, "I found something." "Me too," said Anne as Jerry walked over to see what she had found.

"Look at the ground here," said Anne as she pointed down at the footprints. "See the change? They start with two sets of just plane shoe prints and over here one set changed to prints of high heel shoes. See the difference?"

All the kids came over to look at what Anne had found, and all agreed that there was a difference.

"Look what I found over by the door to the crypt." Said Jake, as he held out his hand. In Jake's hand was a rose petal. In the petal was the impression of the letter "M." "It's the same size as the letter of the name on the sign by the door. This petal is fresh, so this might have been done last night."

"Do you suppose the girl was the one that made the impression on the petal?" asked Willy, "But why?"

Jerry spoke up, "I bet it was part of an initiation to a club or something. I think the girl had to do that to get into a club."

"I wonder if she made it," said Jake, "I mean the rose petal is still here."

"Perhaps it didn't matter to her after she was changed into a fairy princess," suggested Sally, "She was very pretty, and there was the young man that made her that way so she would marry him."

"I'd like to meet the guy and asked him a few questions," said Jake, "You know, to verify what Sally said that she saw."

"Yeah, maybe he would teach you some of his hand tricks and you could make me a pair of glass slippers," grinned Anne, "I'd like a pair of those for sure."

"Well, it seems that we have enough evidence here to go on," said Jerry, "I think we need to be here tonight to see if it happens again. Perhaps it's some kind of haunting. Any volunteers?"

Jake said, "Willy and I will watch tonight."

"WHAT!?!?" cried Willy, "are you crazy? I'm not coming into a cemetery at night. No way!"

Everyone was laughing as Jake said that he would come if someone else came with him to verify whatever he might see. Jerry said that he would.

So, it was set that Jake and Jerry would come to the cemetery at eight o'clock that night and watch for whatever might happen.

The kids all went back to the club house to discuss what they had done that day and then went home.

Eight o'clock came that night and Jerry and Jake were sitting across the road behind a couple of large tombstones watching as the full moon rose in the east to shine down on the Madison crypt.

It was a clear night; the moon was shining like the headlight of a train down on the old cemetery as the two boys watched for whatever might happen at the Madison crypt.

The minutes passed and nothing until they heard a man's voice speaking to them from behind. "What are you two doing here on such a night? Are you waiting for someone? Or trying to get into a club? Perhaps trying to prove how brave you are?"



Jake and Jerry looked around quickly, and saw a tall young man dressed in an old-fashioned way standing and looking down at them. Jerry was the first one able to speak, "Sir, we are watching for the couple that were at the Madison crypt last night. A friend of ours told us that she saw them there and that while she watched she saw the girl changed into a..."

Jerry stopped talking when he saw the fairy princess step out from behind the young man and smile at the two boys.

"A fairy princess?" she asked. "So, you were really here last night?" asked Jerry for Jake seemed unable to talk, he just stared at the couple with his mouth hanging open.

"Yes, we were," smiled the young man, "We had some important plans to make."

"And some changes to make?" asked Jerry.

The young man smiled as he took the hand of the princess and answered, "Yes. A few changes were made as you can see. Isn't my wife beautiful?"

Jerry answered, "Yes, sir. She is beautiful, sir."

Jake just nodded his head, "Yes."

The two boys had been on their knees and now rose to their feet as Jerry said, "I think

that we have found out all that we wanted to know. So, I think that we'll go now."

With that the two friends turned and ran as fast as they could down the road and out of the old cemetery and back to their homes.


The next day as the meeting of the Shadow Mountain Detective Club met there was much to talk about.


Sally was told of the events of the night before. She was so happy that what she had seen was real. Then Willy had to admit that some fairy stories are actually true. They all wondered if the man was the Madison son that had become a wizard.

They all went to the cemetery that night and waited for the magical couple to come again. But they didn't come that night or any night after. But they were seen on certain nights walking the streets of Shadow Mountain hand in hand as they walked toward the old cemetery.

~ To be continued ~


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

  
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### CCDM expands collection

by Jeanne Gripp

The Cripple Creek District Museum is fortunate to have many wonderful items donated to their collection each year. Every donation means so much and often fills in gaps in stories or history.

This past summer, one item made a cross-country journey home to Cripple Creek. It is a saddle made by Cripple Creek harness maker William Ardell. Ardell's shop was located south of the Palace Hotel on 2nd Street. Ardell was in Cripple Creek from 1895 to 1915 at which time he died. Ardell is buried in Mt. Pisgah Cemetery.

Paul and Angela Vaneyk of Ontario Canada donated the saddle. The Vaneyk's flew into Denver from Ontario with the saddle and then drove to Cripple Creek. The saddle had been purchased at an auction by Paul's friend. Paul bought the saddle when his friend passed away.

The saddle is in excellent condition and doesn't appear to have been used. An expert from a saddle museum pointed out the built-in saddle bags and said it was "pretty fancy" for its time. The initials "JB" are stamped on the saddle. We believe the saddle was possibly a present for an important, well-liked person. Possibly Jimmie Burns who was affiliated with the Portland Mine. Burns was well-liked by his miners and stood up for them.

The District Museum is looking for

This Paul Vaneyk and Bill Burcaw of CCDM holding the saddle.

The "JB" is clearly visible!

The maker's mark shows "Ardell."

information, documents, or photographs that would help solve the mystery of who "JB" was. If anyone has information on William Ardell Harness Co. or Jimmie Burns owning the saddle, please contact the Cripple Creek District Museum at 719-689-9540, [director@cripplecreek-museum.com](mailto:director@cripplecreek-museum.com) or visit our website, <https://www.cripplecreekmuseum.com/>

### Adopt Me

by TCRAS

## Sergio

Sergio is a 10-month-old German Shepherd who is Seager to get into a home with someone experienced with German Shepherds. He is an absolute sweetheart and needs more training to learn what it means to be a good boy. Sergio is very active; a home with a nice big yard or an active hiker would do him a lot of good and you would have a hiking buddy. To learn more about Sergio or to meet him contact TCRAS 719-686-7707.

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

### Adopt Me

by SLV Animal Welfare Society

## Red

Meet Red! He is a *leaner* and loves attention and affection. Red is 8 years old and very active. He and two others were abandoned by the owners without food. Red is neutered, chipped and current on all vaccines. He weighs about 60 lbs. If you are seeking a companion that lets you know he is right at your side, consider learning more about Red. Call us at 719-587-9663 (woof).

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

### Life-Enhancing Journeys

Do you have the post-holiday blues?

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

The holidays provide many reasons to celebrate. Holidays are frequently filled with happiness and enthusiasm and are often bursting with anticipation, excitement, and meaningful memories. Yet even people who love the holidays can experience low spirits after the busy season ends.

Although there are many joys this time of the year, some people may experience feelings of sadness, loneliness, anxiety, and depression. The demands needed to make the holidays special require a great deal of effort to plan, create, and accomplish all the tasks. This comes from your desire to continue your holiday traditions as well as to bring joy to others. Yet when the event has passed, there can be a feeling of disappointment or letdown, a sense of emotional withdrawal from the supposed holiday cheer. Is it now time to put everything away and return to real life? We prepare to decompress. In this context, decompression means to relieve or reduce the pressure of something. It is time to calm down and relax.

When January rolls around, feeling tired, worn out, sad, aimless, or even depressed is understandable. These feelings are referred to as the post-holiday blues. Experiencing a reduced desire to be active after the holidays makes sense. So much time and energy were expended in November and December that it is difficult to maintain that intense level of enthusiasm. Perhaps motivating oneself to create New Year's resolutions does not happen when feeling depleted and fatigued.

### So how do we handle the blues?

Understanding the reasons for these feelings, using compassion and self-nurturing skills, combined with self-discipline, may be the most effective choices.

Understanding possible causes of the Holiday Blues: adrenaline letdown, low levels of daylight, dietary changes, and emotional exhaustion

All the holiday activity and preparation can mean pushing yourself beyond normal limits for your energy expenditure. The stress hormone, adrenaline, enables us to keep going despite being hungry, stressed, or tired. However, when functioning beyond our regular capacity for days and/or weeks on end, there is a cost to our bodies, particularly to our brain and nervous system.

Constantly triggering adrenaline can aggravate nerves and blood vessels which may result in elevated blood pressure, headaches, and anxiety. Our bodies are designed to have times of activity and then some downtime. During downtime, our bodies recalibrate the amount of hormones that are needed to resupply our brains, nerves, and blood vessels. Once done, our systems are brought back into a healthier balance.

Earlier sunsets result in fewer hours of sunlight. During these shortest days of the year, we may experience a lack of Vitamin D, a vitamin that we get when we are exposed to the sun outside. Vitamin D plays a vital role in our health such as enhancing immune function and protection against cancer, it promotes bone growth through the absorption of calcium and phosphorus from your gut, prevents muscle cramps and spasms, and reduces inflammation.

Another reason for post-holiday blues relates to dietary changes. The holidays may be filled with the overconsumption of caffeine, alcohol, and foods high in sugar, fat, and salt. After indulging, experiencing unpleasant mental and physical symptoms may occur. Numerous studies have revealed that caffeine, alcohol, and processed foods negatively affect mental health. Even after returning to a normal healthier diet following the holidays, it still takes time for the brain and body to reset. Heightened holiday emotions can take

### Self-Compassion

After understanding some of the reasons for experiencing the post-holiday blues, extend some compassion to your mind and body. You are tired and need time to recover. Remember, after a period of intense activity and emotion, it is common for the mind and body to feel fatigued. Avoid taking on too much during the post-holiday period which can adversely affect you feeling better in the long term.

### Self-nurturing

For most of us, feeling depleted at this time of the year is a temporary experience that does pass by devoting time to self-care. Relax, slow down, and reconnect with yourself to support your brain/body recalibration. Common activities that you may find nurturing are rest, nourishing food, time in nature, time with a supportive friend, gentle movement, meditation, and self-reflection. Nurturing activities are geared toward calming and avoiding adrenaline-inducing episodes.

### Read

Reading for pleasure (and avoiding the news) can help you decompress. When you read or listen to a book it can reduce stress, lower blood pressure and heart rate, and helps your body to calm.

### Ease yourself back into a routine

Resuming a routine that has been effective in the past can help fend off feelings of sadness or apathy that often accompany post-holiday blues. Set the intention of accomplishing small things throughout the day that can motivate you to get back on course. It can be easier if you break down your plan into smaller steps that may feel less overwhelming.

### Hum, sigh and/or sing

Humming, sighing, and singing make us feel more relaxed. It calms the nervous system, lowers blood pressure and heart rate, increases levels of nitric oxide, which promotes healing and widens blood vessels and improves the health of your sinuses. It is unnecessary to be musically gifted to experience the benefits.

### Use mindful breathing exercises

Taking a moment to breathe deeply can help calm the body and the mind down. One way you can practice deep breathing is to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Some benefits of deep breathing are that it lowers your heart rate, lowers your blood pressure, and reduces stress hormones in your body. Find a quiet space and practice deep, intentional breathing. Inhale positivity, exhale tension.

### Find creative outlets

Engage in activities that bring you joy and allow for self-expression. Revealing yourself creatively can be therapeutic whether it is painting, writing, playing a musical instrument, or (re)decorating your home.

### Disconnect

It can be hard to disconnect from technology, but taking a break from screens can help you decompress. When you turn off your phone you can reduce your stress and improve your mental health. In addition, it can help you feel more present in your life, enabling you to relax.

### Take a nap

Did you know that taking a nap can help you decompress after the post-holiday doldrums (or any time)? Napping can improve your memory, lift your mood, and ease stress.

### Express gratitude

One way to shift your attention from sadness or depression is to practice gratitude. Gratitude is simply the practice of being thankful. Research shows that acknowledging all that you are grateful for can help you cope with stress. This also improves emotional well-being.

### Disconnect

Simply hearing the word discipline may be off-putting causing you to feel discouraged. However, inserting some discipline into your life can help you reap great benefits. From my experience with the post-holiday blues, it is easier to recover more quickly when making a commitment to create what I want. For me, that involves setting gentle goals of my own choosing. For example, my overwhelmed self might crave quick and easy processed foods, but (most of the time) I choose to cook and eat nutritious, healthy foods because I know they help me feel better in the long run.

Another example of compassionate discipline occurs when my low-spirited self wants to spend hours scrolling on my phone or watching TV. Instead, I turn to writing or journaling first and then I permit myself time to enjoy scrolling and watching TV.

### Focus on others

Take the focus off yourself and give back. Volunteer some of your time at a local food kitchen or at a homeless shelter. It is something you can do that makes other people feel better and contributes to making you feel better, too. Focusing on other people can make it easier to avoid dwelling on some of the distressing experiences that may have occurred during the holidays.

### Reach out for help

The post-holiday blues can intensify after the party season ends and our socialization decreases. Any kind of social support can be helpful so reach out to friends, whether in person or virtually, for a connection that can help improve your mood. Being kind and compassionate to strangers can also lift your spirits.

### In conclusion...

Feeling exhausted and depleted after the holidays is understandable. Remember to be gentle with yourself. Taking time to care for yourself benefits not only you but those around you. "You can't pour from an empty cup," so, keeping that in mind, be sure to fill your cup consistently, especially after the holidays. Remember that taking care of yourself is self-care, not selfish. Be proud that you are supporting your well-being by making one positive choice at a time.

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](mailto:Journeyscounselingctr@gmail.com).

### Happy New Year

Getting ready to Pawty!

Yete Baylee Daisy

**Spread the Word**  
Pet Food Distributions for January 2024  
**Monday January 8**  
**Monday January 22**  
**2 - 5 p.m.**  
at the Little Chapel of the Hills, Divide, CO  
[www.PetFoodPantryTC.com](http://www.PetFoodPantryTC.com)

**The Pet Food Pantry**  
Volunteers and our Mascots,  
Baylee, Yete & Daisy,  
want to thank you for your donations!





# Fitness ON the Mountain

by Lori Martin

Like many of my fellow insomniacs my creative, problem-solving self tends to come alive on those sleepless nights between 1:30-4:30 a.m. Poor sleeping patterns are just as bad, in many ways, as poor movement patterns. In my case, oftentimes those poor sleeping patterns can be a great way to sort through things that are on my mind. I'll take the win!

The things on my mind this particular night, came from a much needed time with friends including dinner, wine and a sleepover. There was plenty of catching up to do. The whole event was long overdue and seeing these two was good for my heart and soul.

The topic of Pilates came up when my

friend mentioned her daughter had tried some classes recently. Unfortunately, an all-too-common problem occurred for the new Pilates enthusiast.

The frustration of not feeling progress, has the potential to drive any of us to give up. She wasn't feeling like she was working her core which, I translate to mean she was hoping to feel sore abs.

Being that it was Thanksgiving weekend, there were festivities and a small group of people at their home. One of those people was a personal trainer. The daughter mentioned to the personal trainer that she wasn't feeling "sore abs." The only response from the personal trainer was, "You're probably not doing it right." No asking questions, no offering tips. Just a generic answer.

I've learned this personal trainer charges her clients a large amount of money and offers both, in person and virtual sessions. Perhaps her mentality might have been, "I only offer advice to paying clients." Other things I know about this trainer is that she prides herself on being very tough on her clients which, I translate to she makes sure they leave their sessions feeling sore: soreness, to many people equals success!

The business model that I have adopted is the opposite. I literally offer tips and advice for free which, has not created a surplus of funds being deposited into my bank account. Ideally, somewhere in between this other trainer and my own self, sounds reasonable.

For all my readers, followers, and clients like the young woman in my story, have ever approached a trainer that has not been helpful, I'd like to offer you this months' article as a New Year's gift.

## Pilates basics:

First, understand what muscles we're talking about. What muscles make up the core? The basic muscles of the core musculature include:

Anteriorly — your abdominals

- Rectus abdominus
- Internal Obliques
- External Obliques
- Transfer Abdominus

Posteriorly — your back:

- Erector spinae
- Multifidus

## Get acquainted with your core musculature.

- Stabilizing the core — practice this a lot!
- Isometrically = no movement/good posture
  - Co-Contract all the core muscles at the same time. Focusing equally on contracting the muscles of your back and your abdominals in the front.
  - Pay particular attention to the Transverse Abdominus (this is your built in back support device, it wraps around the trunk).
  - Also, the multifidus (spinal stabilizer)

## Flexion

- Bending forward – the spine is rounded.
- Rectus abdominis shortens
- Erector Spinae (the opposing muscle) lengthens.
- Draw the navel to the spine.

## Extension

- The opposite of flexion – the spine is bending backwards
- The Erector Spinae shortens
  - The Rectus Abdominis (the opposing muscle) lengthens.

## Rotation

- The spine rotates to the right or to the left = twisting motions
- Internal Obliques and External Obliques.
  - These muscles are a team
  - The right Internal Obliques
  - Left External Obliques
  - Rotate to the right

- Vice versa to rotate to the left.

## Lateral Rotation

- The spine bends to the side
- More team work
- Obliques
- 1/2 Rectus Abdominis
- 1/2 Erector Spinae

Practice these movements in standing position "unloaded" using no weighted resistance.

Next, add the power of breath

## Inhale:

- Fill the lungs
- Expand through the back
- Relaxed neck and shoulders

## Exhale:

- Initiate contraction and/or
- Contraction + Movement

Other than looking good, what do the core muscles do when they are properly trained?

- Increase in strength
- Improve posture
- Encourage proper movement patterns
- Reduce chance of injury

Be aware of the repercussions of neglecting the entire core structure.

- Poor posture
- Poor movement
- Increased chance of compensational injuries

Be diligent in making sure you are training the entire core and not just the abdominals.

- Prepare to pay an experienced trainer
- Alternatively, take a certification course
- Check out the videos on my website: [lorimartinfitness.com](http://lorimartinfitness.com)

Consider what you are trying to achieve.

- Improved posture
- Reduce back pain
- Enhance movement patterns
- Improve looks
- All of the above

Pilates, if done correctly, can help achieve all of the above.

Most of my clients come to me with the goal of having better looking abs and it will happen but a whole lot of other things need to be achieved first. This is the order in which I train a client regardless of their goal or whether we are doing Pilates, training with machines, using resistance bands, weighed balls, fitness balls, training for a sport or activity, or any combination. I do this because creating good habits early will benefit us in the long run.

1. Posture
2. Proper Breathing
3. Posture + Breathing
4. Movement + Posture + Breathing
5. Resistance + Posture + Breathing
6. Movement + Resistance + Posture + Breathing

## Pilates and the brain

In Pilates, in the gym or in life, train the brain to signal the core first prior to initiating movement. This is especially important where movement involves more awkward positions, and or, includes a weighted load. For example: in a standard biceps curl, strength gains can be achieved faster, more efficiently and with less chance of stress to the low back when we initiate from the brain, then the core stabilizers, then the movement with intention.

If done properly, a side lying leg raise now has purpose. We intentionally lift the leg and lower the leg while anchoring the hip to the floor to eliminate any other movements. The core is responsible for isolating

the movement specific to the exercise.

Picking up even light objects like a puppy, a baby, a pillow or a laundry basket requires the use of various core muscles depending on the movement, as discussed above. We can avoid injury if we learn how to better utilize our core and breath. Practicing until it becomes instinctive to activate the core before attempting the loaded activity. Brain...Baby is crying = Prepare to pick up baby

Core... Breath (inhale) + Core Movement... Bend knees (squat), extend arms (upper body) initiate load and stand (return to standing). Practicing these techniques can keep you safe when you are concentrating on one activity, are multitasking or are exhausted mentally or physically.

## A good Pilates instructor or trainer should:

1. Design your workout to be balanced by offering exercises that target opposing muscle groups and movements.

EX: A supine position exercise (lying on the back) could be balanced by offering a similar movement from a prone position (on the belly) or on all fours.

EX: An exercise that takes a limb (arm or leg) away from the midline of the body (abduction) should be balanced with an exercise that does the opposite (adduction).

2. Create and encourage gradual progressions

Moving to more advanced exercises without having learned the key elements of working the core can be frustrating.

Patience, repetition and focusing on increasing repetition, duration, control and breath are necessary for success.

Sometimes, the problem is with the individual client, especially those that have worked out in the past or were athletes in their younger days. It's common to hold themselves to higher expectations. They can be:

- Easily frustrated
- Hyper-driven to succeed
- Strong desire to "feel" their hard work
- They seek to feel soreness
- All the above are very understandable.

You paid good money.

If you have read through this article and see something you have never learned before, then I have done my job. Sadly, approximately, 90% of my clients have reported that nobody ever explained proper breathing techniques before.

## Extra Tip:

If you are getting your inhales and exhales mixed up...

1. Inhale while you are at rest or preparing for the work.
  2. Exhale while you are working or attempting the movement, especially if that movement includes a weighted load.
  3. Practice breathing outside of your workouts in your everyday activities.
- While standing in line at the grocery store: Co-Contract your core 10X
  - While vacuuming: Exhale as you push forward, inhale as you bring the vacuum toward you.
  - Making the bed: Engage your core while bending forward/pulling up the covers to reduce stress to your lower back and protect your shoulders.

As you enter 2024, remember to give yourself grace as you move toward your goal in small increments. If you need help choosing a goal here is one I like:

Move .... Heal.... Thrive

[www.lorimartinfitness.com](http://www.lorimartinfitness.com)  
[lorimartinfitness@icloud.com](mailto:lorimartinfitness@icloud.com)  
[www.dnavibe.com/lmartinfitness](http://www.dnavibe.com/lmartinfitness)



## A Look Inside the Artist

# What is the future of the Art World?

by Mary Shell

Art has always reflected the human experience, evolving alongside our culture, technology, and societal changes. As we stand on the brink of a new era, the future of art holds great promise and exciting possibilities. The art world is changing. The days of sitting in your studio making a painting and selling it through your local gallery are over. Galleries are no longer depending on in-person shows and expanding to online exhibitions and sales.

We already have metaverse galleries — virtual exhibitions where artists can showcase their work to a global audience without the limitations of physical space. Viewers can explore the virtual gallery space, interact with the artwork, and even attend events and openings. This makes the experience of visiting a metaverse gallery more engaging and memorable than simply viewing artwork online.

Some marketplaces are also opening physical galleries where people can look at digital art in frames on the wall. These types of physical NTFS (the New Technology File System) exhibitions are still experimental, but they illustrate how the metaverse can intersect with real-world experiences.

As we look to the future, artists across genres and fields are thinking of ways in which art and design can keep up with the changing world and using their creativity to pave new pathways to creating and selling their art.

Artists are boosting their creativity in ways never seen before by developing new ways of giving and receiving information to support and improve their ability to create and sell their works.

The art world is becoming increasingly diverse and inclusive. Artists from underrepresented backgrounds are gaining recognition, challenging historical imbalances in the art canon. Museums and galleries are working to diversify their collections and leadership, ensuring that all voices are heard and celebrated.

Art has always been the mainstream medium for explaining the human condition. Art is so important to us humans that we developed the study of neuroaesthetics, shedding light on how the brain perceives and responds to art. Understanding the neural mechanisms behind art appreciation may inform new artistic approaches and enhance the viewer's experience.

It seems technology is focusing on creativity these days. Among the transformative forces in the art world, generative AI has emerged as a tool of extraordinary potential. At the intersection of technology and creativity, generative AI algorithms function as virtual collaborators, assisting artists in creating artworks of unique aesthetic value. Like it or not, AI is here to stay.

As we venture deeper into the digital age, the canvas of creativity is becoming increasingly virtual. Artists, no longer confined to the traditional tools and spaces of their craft, are exploring, and embracing new technologies that redefine their creative boundaries.

In the forefront of this avant-garde movement are Web3 technologies; the project of rewiring how the web works, using blockchain to change how information is stored, shared, and owned. In theory, a blockchain-based web could shatter the monopolies on who controls information, who makes money, and even how networks and corporations work. Advocates argue that Web3 will create new economies, new classes of products, and new services online; that it will return democracy to the web; and that is going to define the next era of the internet. Web3 is inevitable. Sound confusing? Yes, it is... and those artists who wish to increase the market are learning how to use this new technology. It's a new creative outlet. What is the future of AI art? This is a

question very much on the minds of the creative community. From a technical perspective, no one can fail to be impressed by what AI can produce. But by that very token, anyone who creates art for a living must feel threatened partly because they may lose their work to AI, and partly because the way AI art generators learn is by studying the work of existing artists, which most see as a flagrant disregard of their intellectual property rights.

Ownership of artwork has become another buzz in the artworld. With AI on the rise, no image is sacred and secure. There is no compensation for the use of artwork to the artists. Copywriting is almost a thing of the past. But the public has more access to the visual beauty that artists create, in its raw state and digitally altered. Increasing numbers of creatives believe AI art needs to be either stopped or strongly regulated.

I remember reading, "the biggest compliment for an artist is for someone to steal their images." Many of my images have been stolen in the past and I'm sure more will be stolen in the future. It's part of the industry.

AI may be the future of art, but there is nothing like owning a painting where the brushstrokes are visible telling the store of its creation. In the AI process, artists design algorithms or rules that AI follows to generate art pieces, leading to an exciting blend of human creativity and machine efficiency. The resulting artwork, inherently unpredictable due to the nature of algorithms, often possesses a unique dynamism, complexity, and scale that could not be achieved by human hand alone.

So now, artists who wish to survive in the future must wear many more hats... creating, marketing, technology, packaging, and shipping.

As a lifetime artist I have witnessed many changes in trends in art. From the pop art of the 60's to hyper realism. We humans will always create art...but the future of art is beyond traditional comprehension. Artists today are expected to do more than just paint or sculpt, to be successful they must be tech-savvy themselves or partner with one.

But the world is out there waiting for new art, new ideas, new creations, and ways of seeing our world. Studies show more artworks will be sold in the future than ever before...due to technology.

Aside from the future of art and technology, there is the study of new and unusual materials and applications being developed. Interactive art, where you are part of the creating, moving things around in a 3D creation, has already hit the mainstream galleries. Art and innovative thinking are evolving. In the past we enjoyed fireworks, then found them to be toxic, dangerous, and a fire hazard in dry areas, so they employed the idea that a bunch of drones with lights can create art in the sky. Good bye fireworks.

We are a creative species forever searching and developing new ideas to feed our souls and minds. Whatever the future decides is in store for us it will be wonderful, creative, and will leave us in awe.

## So, what's in the future of the Art World?

Through my extensive research on the future of the art world I have found these interesting analogies: This century will certainly bring more changes to the arts and culture industry than we have seen in the last 1,000 years. New trends and players will revolutionize our concepts and ideas. The primary reason will be that the shifts will be swifter and trends shorter.

There's good news for the traditional artist. Art collectors and lovers will revive



The Future of Art by Mary Shell.

the trend of paintings as the most popular medium. The question I have is, will this cause artists to give up plunging into futuristic tendencies, and be forced to return to paintings? Personally, I don't think paintings will ever be out of style, and what artist doesn't explore new ideas that are not their normal mediums? Exploring is a big part of creativity.

They say there is a comeback of pre-20th century art. Late-19th century and early-20th century trends will make a comeback, along with some of the more classical art forms. It is likely that 21st century artists will go retro and find inspiration in what now seems to be so antiquated.

Galleries will see themselves as a retail outlet and very specialized boutiques for creatives. Artists will benefit from these changes and the fact that exclusivity clauses and contracts will be a thing of the past.

The gallery will either have to cater to a large audience or to be recognized as an expert in a particular niche. The hobby-gallerist or the socialite-turned-gallerist dealing with a mishmash of a dozen painters, potters and photographers will soon become part of the history books.

The United States will remain the biggest and the most exciting art market. Physical auctions will disappear. While auctions will remain an important way for selling expensive artworks, the new technologies (listed above) will ensure that the golden days of physical auctions are over.

Art fairs will decline in popularity. I gave up showing at art fairs years ago. Now only because of the time and work setting up and tearing down, there's weather to deal with and you never know how much the event planners are spending on advertising, so your audience can be very small. Then there's the price for a space...not unusual to see the price to be \$600. New technologies, once again, will lead to the decline of attending art fairs.

More people than ever will buy art. People are investing in art that makes them feel good not caring about its resale value. My conclusion is that the future of art looks very good. There will be lots of changes in how and what is created and how you can buy it. Artists will explore the marriage of AI and their own creations and mediums. Galleries will be forced to change their ways of marketing to increase sales.

What we create in the future will be strange, wonderous, wild, expressive, and moving.

I named the painting submitted with this article, "The Future of Art" showing the dismissal of traditional means to a mixture and blending of multiple ideas and mediums.

You can reach Mary Shell at [www.MaryShellArt.com](http://www.MaryShellArt.com) or email creating-fromthesoul@yahoo.com

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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](mailto:utecountrynewspaper@gmail.com).

**AVAILABLE VIRTUALLY**  
• NAMI Colorado: <http://www.namicolorado.org/>  
• Suicide prevention: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/or-dial-988>

**CAÑON CITY**  
3 Free Legal Clinic 2-5 p.m.  
First Wed of each month. Call 719-269-9020 to schedule.  
27 Chautauqua performance 2 p.m. by James Walsh as miner Michael Mooney and the union formation of Leadville silver mines.  
• 1st Friday Lego Club 3 p.m.  
• 2nd Friday Breakout Box 3 p.m.  
• 3rd Friday Creative Crafting 3 p.m.  
• B.O.O.K. (Babies on our knees) story time Mondays 10:30  
• Chess Club Wednesdays 2 p.m.  
• Craft/Junk/Journaling 3rd Tuesday 10-noon  
• Cribbage Club Fridays 10-noon.  
• Dulcimer Club for kids 2nd and 4th Wednesday 3:30-4:30 p.m.  
• Mahjong Club Tuesdays 1-4 p.m.  
• Metaphysical Group Saturdays 10:30 a.m.  
• Natural Grocers health-based training 2nd Wednesday 11 a.m.  
• Rummikub Club meets 3rd Monday of each month 1 p.m.  
• Sewing with Lisa on Tuesdays 10:30-12 for all ages.  
• Story Swap Book Chat 1st and 3rd Tuesdays 3 p.m.  
• Story time and craft Tuesday and Thursdays 10:30 a.m.  
All at 516 Macon Ave. FMI 719-269-9020 [www.ccpf.lib.co.us](http://www.ccpf.lib.co.us)

**FAIRPLAY**  
10 Free Legal Clinic 2-5 p.m. Call 719-836-4297 to schedule.

**FLORENCE**  
8 Deadline for work to be at Blue Spruce Gallery  
10 "Black and White" show at Blue Spruce Gallery opens.  
13 Second Saturday reception at Blue Spruce Gallery 4-6 p.m.

**JOHN C. FREMONT LIBRARY**  
5 Story Time 10:30 a.m. Stories, songs and a craft. Caregivers find support and socialization. FMI 719-784-4649 ext.2 or [www.jcflid.org](http://www.jcflid.org) or Facebook.

**CRIPPLE CREEK**  
4 American Legion Post 171 meets the first Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. at 400 Carr St., Food and refreshments at 5 p.m.  
• GED Classes Mondays & Wednesdays 1-3 p.m. New

students (min. age 16) may join GED classes after completing orientation and \$40 registration fee. FMI Katy@cpteller.org.

**ASPEN MINE CENTER**  
26 Commodities distribution 9-1 p.m.  
• Tuesdays BINGO 10:30 a.m. for seniors.  
• Wednesdays Luncheon 11:30-1 p.m. upstairs dining room, every Wed. FREE! FMI 719-689-3584 x124.

**DIVIDE**  
21 Bonfire Bash 4-6 p.m. at Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center. Join us for a bonfire, tour and homemade chili (meat and vegetarian) with hot drinks and sweets! \$40 for anyone 12+ years, \$20 for those 8-11 years old. Reservations required 719-687-9742.  
8 & 22 Little Chapel Food Pantry distributions 2-5 p.m.

**FAIRPLAY**  
10 Free Legal Clinic 2-5 p.m. Call 719-836-4297 to schedule.

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**FLORISSANT**  
GRANGE  
9, 23 Quilt of Valor Guild 9-12 p.m. All quilters welcome.  
13 Pine Needle Basket Class 9-12 p.m.  
13 Needle Felting Class 10-12 p.m.  
13 Glass Painting Class 10:30-

12 p.m.  
13 Sewing Class 12:30-1:30 p.m. All classes require you to reserve a seat in the class. Text 719-510-2325 to reserve your seat.  
• Thursday Potluck and Music 6-8 p.m. Dancing encouraged!

**LIBRARY**  
10 Florissant Bookworms Book Club 10:30-12 p.m.  
12 Tarot Club 3 p.m. Teens and up are welcome to join this group and learn all things tarot. January's theme is "Beginnings."  
13 Guided Step by Step painting of a snowy cardinal 10 a.m. Please call 719-748-3939 to sign up for a spot!  
16 Read Amok Book Club 11-12:30 p.m. themed "The Future." Bring up to 5 books within the theme to share!  
16 Free Legal Clinic 2-5 p.m. Call 719-748-3939 to schedule.  
18 Homeschool Connections 10-12 p.m. Parent led social and educational enrichment time for homeschoolers. Meets monthly on the third Thursday.  
19 Friends at the Table Cookbook Club, theme is "chili and a side dish" Bring a dish to share! 11:30-1 p.m.  
20 Incredible Colorado history presentation at 10:30 a.m. Come learn about the fascinating history of our colorful state!  
24 Blood Drive 11:30-3:45 p.m. use blood drive code 10054684 FMI [vitalant.org](http://vitalant.org)  
25 Speech Bubble Book Club 1 p.m. Bring a graphic novel to share!  
• Tuesdays Tai Chi 10-11 a.m. Come relax with us!  
• Thursdays Yarnia! 10-12 p.m. Craft and share your knitting and crocheting love with others!  
• The second and fourth Tuesday of each month join us for Hooks and Needles 10-12 p.m., an additional club for crafting!  
• The third Wednesday of each month join us for Crafting

**LIBRARY**  
2 Walking, Talking Threads 12:30-3 p.m. Meets every first Tuesday of the month.  
8 Bee Keepers 10 a.m. They meet every first Monday of the month and discuss everything bee keeping. Come and join the group!  
10 Free Legal Clinic 2-5 p.m. Call 719-689-9280.  
24 Rocky Mountain Rural Health Outreach 11-2 p.m. Weather permitting, RMRH representatives will be offering free health screenings, sound financial medical advice, free clothing and much more.  
29 Guffey Literary Society 1-3 p.m. Book choice for January is *Chief Left Hand* by Margaret Coel. FMI 719-689-9280 or [Guffeylib@parkco.us](mailto:Guffeylib@parkco.us).

**LIBRARY**  
2 Woodland Park Book Club 10:30 a.m.  
2 Shrek Bonanza 12 p.m. Celebrate New Years with green snacks and ogre-tastic movies. Watch one movie each day. Today we will watch *Shrek the Third*.  
3 Shrek Bonanza 12 p.m. Today we will watch *Shrek Forever After*.  
3 Kids Craft Club. Drop in between 3 and 5 for a guided craft! Geared towards ages 5-10. Younger kids will need

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

Together, a club where we finish our abandoned art projects. 10-11:30 a.m.  
• Family Fridays at the Library every Friday! Starts with Storytime at 10 a.m., followed by Reading with Charlie, and then a special family activity at 11 a.m. FMI 719-748-3939

**GUFFEY**  
10 Coffee and doughnuts with the SPCFPD 8-10 a.m. Get to know your volunteers, ask the Fire Chief questions, etc.  
• Donation-based Yoga Sundays 11:30-1 p.m. at Guffey Charter School. (No classes Jan 7, 14). Facebook.com/sunmountainyoga or [yoga@reneweridulph.com](mailto:yoga@reneweridulph.com).

**LIBRARY**  
2 Walking, Talking Threads 12:30-3 p.m. Meets every first Tuesday of the month.  
8 Bee Keepers 10 a.m. They meet every first Monday of the month and discuss everything bee keeping. Come and join the group!  
10 Free Legal Clinic 2-5 p.m. Call 719-689-9280.  
24 Rocky Mountain Rural Health Outreach 11-2 p.m. Weather permitting, RMRH representatives will be offering free health screenings, sound financial medical advice, free clothing and much more.  
29 Guffey Literary Society 1-3 p.m. Book choice for January is *Chief Left Hand* by Margaret Coel. FMI 719-689-9280 or [Guffeylib@parkco.us](mailto:Guffeylib@parkco.us).

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

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**LAKE GEORGE**  
10 Free Legal Clinic 2-5 p.m. Call 719-748-3812.

**WOODLAND PARK**  
8 Blood Drive at Our Lady of the Woods 116 S. West Street 12:30-5:45 p.m. use blood drive code 00480.  
13 Birding 101 with biologist Joe LaFleur presented by the Ute Pass Historical Society \*9-10 a.m. Guided bird walk Manitou Lake, north of Woodland Park. \$10 vehicle access, binoculars suggested. In the event of a blizzard, the walk will be cancelled.  
\*11-12 noon FREE program, Learn to Identify Local Raptors (hawks and owls) Ute Pass Historical Society 231 E. Henrietta Ave. Presented by Joe LaFleur FMI 719-301-8801 or [joe@betterbirdwatching.com](mailto:joe@betterbirdwatching.com).

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP**  
2 Crossroads Co-Parenting Seminar 4:30-8:30 p.m. Teller County court approved parenting and divorce class. Fee \$25. Pre-registration required. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org.  
17 Cooking Classes for Parents of Pre-schoolers 5-7 p.m. Teaching kids and parents important lessons about self-sufficiency in the kitchen. Take home groceries to practice class recipes. Meal and childcare provided. Registration closes Jan 16 for the 6-week Wednesday classes. 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 9-12 p.m.

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Monday through Thursday. Closed Jan 15. Enjoy coffee, Free Wi-Fi, a Kid's Corner and a space to congregate free of charge.  
• GED Classes Mondays & Thursdays 5-7 p.m. New students (min. age 16) may join GED classes after completing orientation and \$40 registration fee. FMI Katy@cpteller.org.  
• Pearson VUE Testing Center Mondays 9:30-5 p.m. Closed Jan 15. Schedule your certification or licensure exam at [www.pearsonvue.com](http://www.pearsonvue.com). Fees vary. FMI Katy@cpteller.org.  
• Playgroup 9:30-11 a.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Fridays. Walk-ins welcome. Parents and caregivers with children ages 5 & under. Older siblings are welcome. FMI Jackie@cpteller.org.  
• Yoga with Leah Mondays 10-11 a.m. No Yoga Jan 15. First come, first served, no late entry. All levels welcome FMI Michelle@cpteller.org.  
• Yoga with Leah Wednesdays 5-6 p.m. First come, first served, no late entry. All levels welcome. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org.

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continued on next page

~OUT AND ABOUT~

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guardian assistance.  
3 Teen Craft Day 3:45-5:30 p.m.  
3 Evening Adult Fiction Book Club 5 p.m.  
5 Coffee Chats 10 a.m. Join us for coffee and conversation.  
11 Reader's Circle Book Club 10:30 a.m.  
16 Free Legal Clinic 2-5 p.m. Call 719-748-3939 to schedule.  
17 Fiber Arts Club 1 p.m. Come make and share your fiber art!  
17 Teen Craft Day 3:45-5:30 p.m.  
23 AARP Smart Drivers Course. Call to reserve a spot. \$20 for AARP members and \$25 for

non-members.  
24 Evening Arts and Crafts for Adults at 5 p.m.  
25 Tarot Club 3 p.m. Teens and up are welcome to join this group and learn all things tarot. January's theme is "Beginnings."  
27 Science Saturday at 11 a.m. We're learning about the science of sound! Geared for children under 10.  
30 Braver Angels (A conversation on Civil Discourse) at 5 p.m.  
• Line Dancing Above the Clouds at 6:30 p.m. every Monday

and Thursday (Not Jan 15th).  
• New Beginner ASL Class every Thursday at 5 p.m. Come learn the basics of American Sign Language!  
• Pokemon Trading Card Game Club every Thursday at 5 p.m.  
• Tuesday Books and Babies 10 a.m. a special storytime for babies and toddlers.  
• Tuesdays is Magic the Gathering from 4-6 p.m.  
• Thursdays Preschool Storytime 10 a.m.  
• Thursdays Tai Chi at 5 p.m.  
• Fridays Tai Chi at 10 a.m.

Call for Entries: Black and White

by Blue Spruce Galleries

The Blue Spruce Gallery is hosting its 23rd Annual winter theme show during January. The artist chosen theme this year is "Black and White." 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. The deadline for work to be at the gallery is January 8th, 2024. The show will open on January 10th with a reception on Second Saturday, January 13th, 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](http://www.bluespruceart.com). FMI 784-1339.

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Mueller State Park

by Anna Miller

First Day Hikes have become a tradition at Colorado Parks and Wildlife parks. But a First Day Forest Bathing Walk or a Wapiti First Day Hike? For them, you need to come to Mueller State Park on Jan. 1 and join one of the park's First Day Hikes. At noon, the park will host its 5th Annual First Day Forest Bathing Walk for adults and kids ages 12 and older. Spend a couple hours experiencing the forest through various mindful exercises led by a certified Forest Therapy Guide and volunteer naturalist. Registration is required for Forest Bathing, so reserve your spot by calling the Visitor Center at 719-687-2366.

Recent snow has allowed Mueller staff to groom some trails for cross country skiing. Corduroy has been laid at Grouse Mountain Trail, Conifer Ridge Campground, and Black Bear Trail. No classic ski tracks have been set yet. Guests are also welcome to try sledding at Mueller even though there are no designated sledding areas in the park. Please note sledding is at your own risk,

so it is best to come prepared with safety gear. For the latest information on current conditions at the park, call the Visitor Center at 719-687-2366. Mueller State Park is open every day for visitors seeking to recreate outdoors in rain, shine or snow. Where there is sufficient snowfall, the park offers opportunities to snowshoe, ski and sled. Hiking is available year-round, too.

Here's a full list of the January 2024 programs:  
5 **Five Senses Hike** 10 a.m. meet at Wapiti Nature TH.  
13 **Animal Antifreeze Experiment** 1-2 p.m. meet at Visitor Center.  
21 **Snowshoe Hike** 10:30 a.m. meet at Elk Meadow TH.  
\*Indicates to meet at the Trailhead (TH) of the same name.

Mueller events are free for any guest with a \$10 day pass or \$80 annual vehicle park pass. FMI, 719-687-2366.

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Happy New Year, Woodland Park!