



UTE COUNTRY NEWS

FREE

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May 2026

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

Vol. 18, No. 5

Welcome to Ute Country

"May is the most beautiful month of the year, a month alive with warm color. The flowers and trees are in full bloom, and even the sun joins this rhapsody by emitting warmer rays."

— Lillian Berliner

PEEK INSIDE...



25th Anniversary Celebration at Blue Spruce



1st Anniversary Old West Liquors



Behind the Scenes Dynamic Duo

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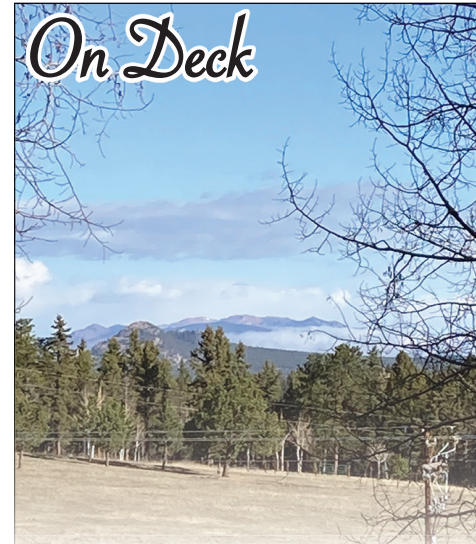
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On Deck

It was 13 years ago that this blooming Cosmos stole Jeff's attention just as sun was drawing out the vibrant color of the flower on our deck. Cosmos work very well at our altitude. We strongly recommend checking out Dinosaur Pot Broker's Cosmos available for sale at Mountain Naturals in Woodland Park. We had the purple and gold Cosmos last year and were very impressed with how tall, vibrant and hardy these plants were. They are definitely on this year's list of flowers for the deck. Those of us who have been here a while know to be prepared to protect those potted plants in the event of late May or early June snow. We felt the quote was a perfect fit for our cover photo; it is written by a Holocaust survivor.

Speaking of surviving, check out *Make Sure You're Ready For Fire Season* by Tracie Bennitt as she shares her reflection on the evacuation and return after the Hayman Fire back in 2002. May is a fantastic month to get out and celebrate! If you're in need of a role model to remind you how it's done, *Big Sky Ranch Bed and Biscuits*'s "Kingsley — King of the Zoomies" is sure to inspire and produce a smile. With more physical activity your needs for water might increase. You can learn more about your personal hydration intake by reading our newest column *Notes on Nutrition* by Catrina Lynn, who begins with "Water is Life." There are several anniversaries to celebrate and read about: 1 year at Old West Liquor; 25 years for Blue Spruce and 95 years for Cripple Creek donkeys.

Critter Corner is always ready to receive pics of your pets. We'd love to print pics; please send them via email to utecountrynewspaper@gmail.com, drop in to scan the photo at Shipping Plus or snail mail them to us at POB 753 Divide, CO 80814, we are happy to publish them!

Our office will move from our current location to 121 County Road 5 as of June 1, 2026. We hope to see you there in JUNE!

Thank you, —Kathy & Jeff Hansen



Oyate Herbals
Go Gray in May – Brain Cancer Awareness
 by Tammie Lowell, PHt, CMH, founder of Oyate Herbals

>Welcome to Wihákata Cépapi Wi the Moon of Making Fat or Moon of Fatness is one of the 13 lunar months in the traditional Lakota calendar, marking the time when the sun is highest in the sky and the world's growing power is at its peak. So, start working on those veggies, herbs and plants for your green house or gardens.

May is also Brain Cancer awareness month, also known as Brain Tumor Awareness Month (BTAM). It is dedicated to raising awareness about brain and spine tumors, educating the public, supporting patients and caregivers, and promoting research into treatments and cures for these rare but serious cancers. In the United States, approximately 25,000 people are diagnosed with cancerous central nervous system (CNS) tumors each year, with over 130 different tumor types identified. Despite their rarity, these tumors have a profound impact on patients and families, making awareness and advocacy critical. Many events are held worldwide, and the events include community walks, fundraising campaigns, educational programs, and social media initiatives. Participants are encouraged to wear gray, the color representing brain tumor awareness, and to share information about brain tumors to educate the public.

This subject is very dear to my heart. Some of you know me very well, and others are just getting to know me. Most of you know that I am a Master Herbalist and have a degree in Phytotherapy. I am Lakota on my father's side from Pineridge reservation and follow my Lakota traditions fully. But only a few of you know the importance this month is to me and why. So, I decided to share my story with you so you may understand me better and understand why I am so passionate about brain cancer.

Almost five years ago, my husband Jon Davidson, the love of my life, the glue that held me and my family together, lost his battle to Glioblastoma brain cancer aka (GBM). Jon was diagnosed on January 6th of 2020 right after we were legally married in October of 2019. This was such devastating news for us! We had finally found genuine love, peace and balance in our lives after so many years of searching for the right person. Jon was such a huge supporter and backbone of Oyate Herbals. He also believed that traditional medicines would help heal him and he put his utmost faith in my abilities and research. (no pressure at all, right!)

Glioblastoma is the most common and the most aggressive primary brain tumor in adults, accounting for 48% of all primary malignant brain tumors. It is characterized by rapid growth and a tendency to invade surrounding brain tissue. GBM can affect people of all ages and genders, though it is more common in adults. Pediatric GBM is rare, representing only 2-3% of childhood brain tumors. The exact causes of GBM remain unknown, but risk factors may include exposure to certain chemicals, genetic syndromes (like Li-Fraumeni or Turcot syndrome), and prior radiation therapy to the head. Currently, there is no cure for glioblastoma. Standard treatment includes a combination of surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy, but these approaches are generally not effective for long-term survival. The median survival for patients is approximately 15 months, and without treatment, survival drops to three to six months. There is only four FDA approved drugs and one device called a Optune are available for GBM treatment.

The doctors gave Jon three to six months to live due to the type of cancer and how bad it was when it was found. He chose to do the surgery at that time to help prolong treatment and for me to find other options. They were able to remove 98% of the tumor that was about 36 centimeters, about the size of a golf ball. Jon also did radiation treatments, but the tumor grew back within just a few months. It came back bigger and more aggressive than before. At this point, I was desperately seeking answers to an almost impossible task.

Not long after the tumor grew back, I was lucky enough to find a study out of Bosnia that had given GBM patents up to 48 months. It was a complete 25-herb phytotherapy study with MRI scans and a complete recipe breakdown in tea form. Jon's oncologist was offering immunotherapy and chemotherapy at this time. I sent the study to his oncologist. We then discussed that if I could reproduce it, we could replace the chemotherapy with the phytotherapy blends and in theory, we should



Glioblastoma is the most common and the most aggressive primary brain tumor in adults, accounting for 48% of all primary malignant brain tumors. It is characterized by rapid growth and a tendency to invade surrounding brain tissue.

get good results. I was able to reproduce it in tincture form, and we started applying this treatment and monitoring Jon's progress. Not only did we get good results, but we also had a 50% reduction in the tumor which astonished the radiologist and oncologist on his team and is completely unheard of for any GBM patient with a recurrent tumor of that size. We really thought we had this beat. But this type of cancer is smart, relentless and unforgiving. It moved to the opposite side of his brain, started creating its own blood supply, became resistant to everything we were doing and took him over in less than 30 days. Jon made it a total of 18 months vs three.

During this entire journey, Jon always talked about bringing awareness to brain

cancer. On May 23, 2021, we did a "last ride for Jon" it got him back on a motorcycle one last time, and we raised almost \$600 and that was sent to the GBM foundation along with my notes and the phytotherapy study in hopes it might help someone in the future. We loved riding our motorcycles together. We rode together for over 20 years prior to becoming a couple. He was my best friend and road companion in so many ways.

So, in honor of Jon and all the ones who are battling or have lost the battle to brain cancer, please take a moment to honor them, their loved ones and caretakers. Do some research on how brutal and life altering brain tumors and brain cancer is to the patient and their family. You can also honor them by wearing the color gray in this month. "Go Gray in May!" Thank you all for taking the time to read this. It was one of the hardest things I've written in a long time.

Please stop by the new store at 38 Costillo Ave in Florissant CO 80816, if you would like to chat with me about phytotherapy and traditional medicines and how they may help you with many issues you and your family might be having. We also offer ancient sound healings every Thursday from 5:30-7 p.m. and other energy healing modalities. Call or stop by if you're interested. Store hours are 11-6 p.m. daily, except for Thursdays for sound healing.

Mitákuyepi Anpétu wasté (Good day relatives)
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Tammie Lowell PHt, CMH can be reached at 719-661-0410.

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25th Anniversary Celebration at Blue Spruce

by Lynn Lemmon-Oliver

Having a painting in the Smithsonian Art Museum along with other notable national collections, Coleen Bobinac considers her drawing and painting passion of 60 plus years, to be her forever companion and friend. "At a very young age, my 'first exhibition', a colored pencil drawing, took place in 1956 at today's Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center. This was due to my renowned art instructor, Archie Musick, who intermittently taught art at the Broadmoor Art School, along with studying with co-artist and friend Thomas Hart Benton." After European art history studies, and a teaching degree in art, Coleen taught art for 13 years in the Colorado Springs area. After several solo "sold out" art exhibitions in Arizona and New Mexico, she left teaching to pursue painting full time.

Her favorite subject matter is the landscape, ancient ruins, and the Southwestern Indian pueblos. Authenticity and a consistent style, such as one's thumbprint, is unique and identifiable in Bobinac's paintings. She feels that it is extremely important to have personally experienced her subject matter, and not to have merely "copied" other artist's work. She looks forward to every day spent in the studio and strives to encourage people to learn "to see", as the majority of people unfortunately look, but very few truly see!

The Blue Spruce Gallery opened in 2001 and is celebrating over 25 years of happily showcasing the creations of local artists. Operated cooperatively, the artists take turns working in the store and interacting with visitors. This year marks a milestone in the existence of the gallery, and as Florence continues to grow, so does the Blue Spruce!

Bobinac's show will hang from May 6 to June 9, and she encourages everyone to attend the opening reception at The Blue Spruce Gallery in historic downtown Florence. There will be light refreshments on Saturday evening, May 9, 4:30-6:30 p.m. at the gallery, located at 205 W. Main Street in Florence, Colorado.

FMI visit bluespruceart.com or call 719-784-1339.



Blue Spruce's 25th Anniversary

by Flip Boettcher

Twenty-five years and still going strong and growing, the Blue Spruce Gallery — Art and Antiques is celebrating their 25th anniversary of showcasing the creations of local artists this year. Although there won't be a specific anniversary party, according to store co-owner Lynn Lemmon-Oliver, there will be a painting exhibition featuring the artwork of artist Coleen Bobinac May 6-June 9 with an artist's reception May 9, 4:30-6:30 p.m. See the press release above.

The Blue Spruce Gallery is located at 205 West Main Street in Florence and is open seven days a week. 719-784-1339. www.bluespruceart.com.

Lynn taught at Florence High School; she and the art teacher there, Kathy Dorn-Walker, brainstormed about ideas. Kathy encouraged Lynn to open a local art gallery, she said.

In early 2001, Lynn and her husband Michael Oliver purchased the Blue Spruce building, and after some upgrades and remodeling, opened the gallery September 1, 2001. Kathy joined the gallery a few months after they opened. She is the in-house studio artist and rents the upstairs art studio, said Lynn.

The building, built in 1890 or 1891, was a private residence until the couple bought it; although the previous owner, Tammy Stone, did start Florence's first coffee shop, The Pour House, in 1996 in the front room and lived in the rest of the building. It was the first building built on the block.

The following year, 1891 or 1892, the hotel on the west side was built and in the 1920s the Rialto Theater was built.

When the Blue Spruce first opened, they had an artist living upstairs and three of the rooms were rented out as individual artist studios, with the gallery just in the front two rooms, said Lynn.

By early 2002 though, the gallery expanded into the whole building with more artists and antiques. Also that year, one of the members who had suffered a personal loss, wanted to do a "project" in the back yard, which was just dirt at that time. After six months, with some other artists' help, the back garden was created and is a great space for receptions and meetings, according to Lynn. A few years later, they worked on the front yard with everyone helping.

Today, there are 27 artists and all but two are local, who cooperatively operate the gallery, taking turns to run the store and interact with the visitors.

The name of the gallery comes from the three lovely blue spruce trees growing in the front yard. As the blue spruce trees and Florence continue to grow, so grows the Blue Spruce Gallery.

Come on in and visit the gallery, attend an artist's reception and enjoy all the wonderful artwork, crafts and select antiques on display in a Victorian setting. Check this paper for the upcoming artist's exhibitions and artist's receptions.

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Colorado Pharmgirl Failures and mistakes

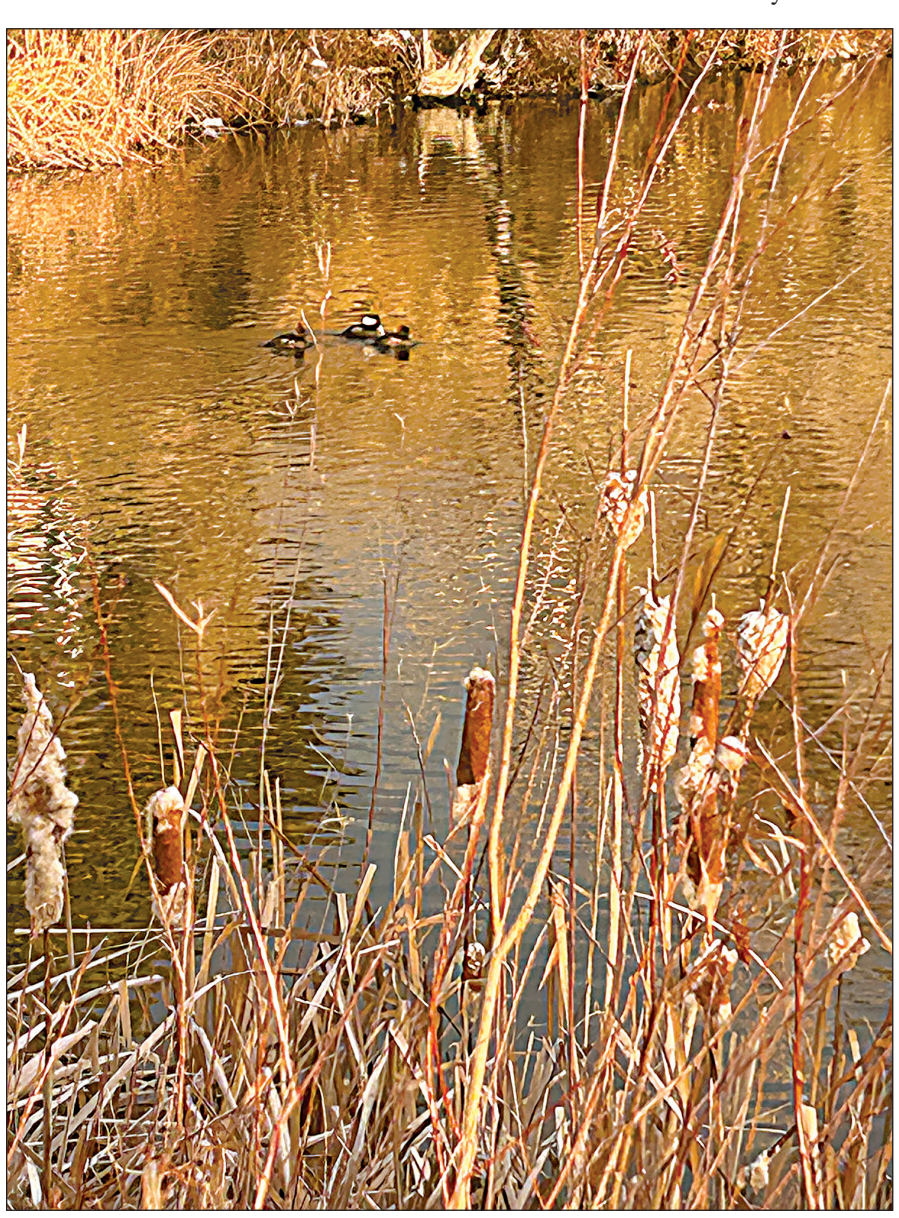
by Peggy Badgett

Failure is something all creatures experience. Humans are lucky; most of our mistakes don't end our lives early. Hopefully, bad decisions teach us valuable lessons. Don't let go of the monkey bars too soon when you're hanging upside down. Neglecting to buy extra milk for three always hungry teenagers equals an extra trip. Forgetting to latch the gate in the horse pen means spending the afternoon trying to catch your horse.

Childhood taught many of us to hide mistakes, hoping they wouldn't be discovered. Report cards got lost (did we really think that would work?) Shattered lamp shards swept into the trash hid the evidence but didn't replace the light. Plus, there were always the other family members to blame if we had siblings, or the invisible ones named "Not Me" or "I Don't Know." Truth versus lies: Was it worse to fess up, or allow guilt to nibble away at our peace of mind? Therapists and bartenders spend lots of time listening to agonized psyches dealing with these issues.

Mistakes can be a simple mis-judgement, like thinking my size 10 feet will clear all obstacles while I'm trail running. I forget that Mother Nature likes to hide her rocks and roots under thick pine needles. My recent tumble ended in a full body slide any baseball coach would have been proud of. What was my first instinct? Not to check for broken limbs, but to see if anyone had witnessed my fall. A fish crowd in a Loblolly pine was the only creature in view. He cawed repeatedly, probably laughing in birdspeak. I stood up, stuck my tongue out at him, brushed off my clothes, and trotted down the trail, stopping briefly at the creek to wash dirt from my bloodied knee and soothe my sprained finger.

Other failures can have a critical impact on someone's life: A decision to drive under the influence; experiment with illegal drugs; ignore a friend asking for support. As a pharmacist, the potential for making a mistake hovered constantly in the back of my mind. Our work was fast-paced and filled with possible mishaps. Early in my career, typewriters and physician scribbles led to many mistakes; thankfully most were simple typos. The electronic age re-



Sometimes our mistakes are only small ripples in a pond.

duced medication order mis-interpretations considerably, but computers are only as good as the users. The exponential increase in medications over 30 years was overwhelming. Despite all the care I took, I'd still bolt upright in bed after a 10-hour shift of checking hundreds of prescriptions. Did I tell Mr. Jacobs to avoid grapefruit with his new cholesterol medication? Had the tablets in the vial for far-sighted Mrs. Smith been round like they should be, or oblong?

One of my first mentors wisely told me if that little voice whispers "something's wrong," I should stop. Ignore the multiple phone lines ringing and long line of patients glaring from the counseling window. Take a deep breath, review. That subconsciousness was usually right about wrongs. Health care occupations aren't alone in impacting lives. One time, after an oil change and tire rotation at a trusted dealership, my car developed a weird rattle and started shimmying badly. I discovered that the mechanic had gotten interrupted in his work and forgot to tighten all the lug nuts except one on the front wheel. Losing a wheel on a mountain pass could have been deadly.

Even something as innocuous as taxes can impact quality of life. A group of retired accountants provide a free filing service for senior citizens in a nearby mountain town.

Later. After walking my two canine charges in fresh snow, I decided to take a break from editing my book and review those papers. To my horror, my income had been grossly under-reported. I had nightmares that night, where men in sunglasses and dark suits showed up at my doorstep with hand cuffs.

There was no response to my flurry of panicked texts and emails. A hazard of relying on a volunteer service that met once weekly; messages weren't monitored daily. My anxiety grew exponentially with every hour that ticked past. Finally, after five days, the supervisor sent me an email saying they could amend the return and fit me in two weeks out — 14 days?! Would the men in black get me? I wasn't happy but grudgingly accepted.

By the time I sat down with the accountant that morning, I'd calmed down. I understood the dread of being on the receiving end of a patient's anger and frustration when a mistake was made. I brought her a copy of my book as a peace offering. She apologized profusely and went through the return line by line, making corrections. That was really all I wanted, to have it fixed. Failures happen. Remedying them with humility, grace and a sense of humor is a path we can all choose.

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

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

by Readers of Ute Country News

This is a column dedicated to acts of kindness. You will not read names of people or businesses here because the focus is on kind behavior. Have you experienced or witnessed an act of kindness? Please share it with our readers by emailing us at utecountrynewspaper@gmail.com, stopping into Shipping Plus to tell us about it, or snail mail to Ute Country News POB 753, Divide, CO 80814. Let's empower each other to co-create a kinder community!

• They offered to help us out when we were in a time crunch. The help is certainly an act of kindness. It was their history of being reliable and dependable that was the TRUE act of kindness because we knew we could depend on them.

• There was a long line of traffic I was trying to merge into. Suddenly, the traffic became even slower as a bus ahead was merging. I figured it would take quite a while longer. Then I saw the car stop and wave me into traffic! So grateful for this kindness!

• I was so grateful that he took that heavy box to the garage and brought in the plant stand I needed. He knew I'd want to wipe it down

before bringing it in the house and offered to haul it in. Helping is kindness and so is being aware of usual cleaning habits.

• When she asked, I had to say no. Based on past experience I expected an argument. Much to my surprise, she simply accepted the answer. Honoring boundaries is an act of kindness because it says BOTH people matter.

• What a surprise! She received the note about our trip and move. Recognizing how busy we would be, she sent an invitation to dinner during the very busy time. Considering an action that has the power to alleviate stress and providing food are both acts of kindness, for which we gratefully accept! It feels really special for someone to consider all of this. What great friends!

• Awe! The flowers were an unexpected but welcome surprise and a gift of kindness.

• The gift of an iPad made communicating easier. She can type what she has to say, and others can speak into it as it will translate into written form for her to read. Having a tool to ease communication is an act of kindness because it maintains connections.

Colorado Publisher Celebrates Best-Selling Release Rising Relentlessly: A Cannabis Collective of Eleven Breakthrough Stories

A Colorado-based publishing company is gaining national attention for amplifying real, raw, and powerful human stories.

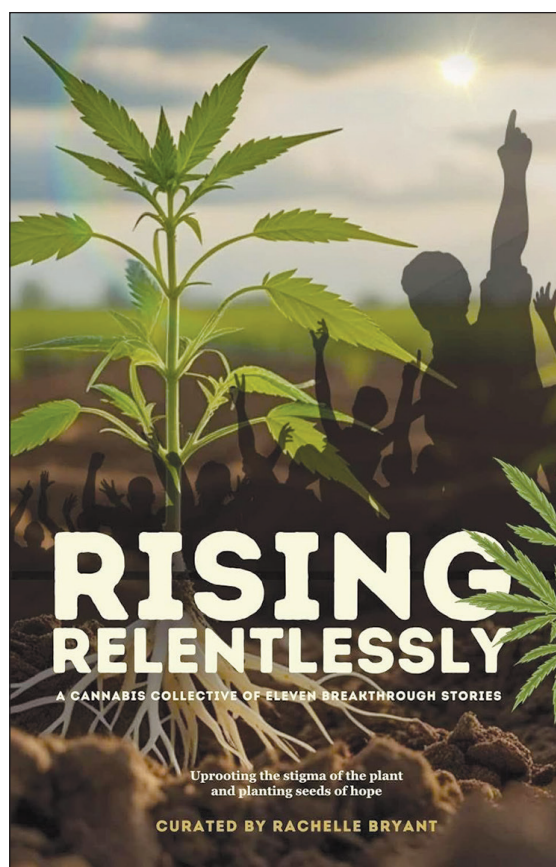
Rising Relentlessly: A Cannabis Collective of Eleven Breakthrough Stories, the latest release from Wildly Free Publishing, has officially reached Amazon Best-Seller status, bringing together 11 authors who courageously share their journeys through adversity, healing, and personal transformation.

This milestone follows the success of the publisher's previous Amazon Best-Selling books, *Expiration Date Unknown: From Diagnosis to Transplant: Navigating Life with PKD and Rooted to Rise: Real Stories From Seven Women Who Were Brought Together By Cannabis*, further solidifying Wildly Free Publishing's mission to create space for authentic, impactful storytelling.

Led by co-founder Rachelle Bryant, the company focuses on helping everyday individuals turn their life experiences into meaningful narratives that resonate far beyond the page.

"These stories are incredibly honest and deeply human," Bryant says. "Reaching best-selling status is exciting, but what matters most is the impact these stories are having, helping people feel seen, understood, and less alone."

Each chapter in *Rising Relentlessly* explores themes such as resilience, healing, identity, and personal growth, offering readers a powerful reminder of the strength found in vulnerability. More than just a book, *Rising Relentlessly* represents a growing movement



centered on connection, courage, and the power of storytelling.

The book is currently available for sale on Amazon.com and WildlyFreePublishing.com

For more information, please contact: Wildly Free Publishing, james@wildlyfreelc.com

Adopt Me by Ark Valley Humane Society Littleman

Littleman's story didn't start out easy, but if you give him a chance, you'll find he has a lot of love to give. At just one year-old and 27 pounds, Littleman came to Ark-Valley Humane Society through our Transfer Program. He originally came from Surface Creek Animal Shelter, after he was pulled from a hoarding case. New people and places can still feel a little overwhelming for him, but with patience and kindness, he's beginning to show his true self — a gentle, affectionate little cuddle bug. To help build his confidence, Littleman was recently placed in a loving foster home. It may take him a little time to warm up, but once he does, his sweet personality shines. He's met other dogs and tends to be more of an independent guy, happy to coexist and do his own thing. Littleman is ready for the next chapter of his journey, an adoptive home. He may need a little extra time to adjust, but for the person willing to give him that chance, the reward will be a loyal, loving companion. Take a chance on Littleman — and watch a once-timid pup blossom into your little best friend! To make arrangements to meet Littleman call 719-395-2737.



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



A Look Inside the Artist Featuring Jax Gibson, pencil artist

by Mary Shell

I usually spend a great deal of time searching for artists and viewing their work. This time I was scrolling through Facebook and came across a painting that caught my eye. Without knowing who the artist was I knew I wanted to interview her. I was caught by the freedom in her creative process.

After reading her answers I was completely surprised at how she found her creative process by listening to her young daughter.

Tell me a little about the painting that brought you together, the portrait you posted on Facebook.

My artwork is drawings, not paintings. I use colored pencils. I assume you are talking about the portrait I did of the girl in a speedboat. Well, it was a commission from a family in Arkansas who wanted me to match a portrait I had made of their son about 10 years ago. It was a portrait of a young man in a kayak in the Royal Gorge. They had hung it up in their lakeside cabin in Arkansas and wanted one of their daughters to hang alongside her brother. Since she also loves water sports, I designed an image of her in her speedboat on a lake.

How long have you been drawing?

I have been drawing since 2010 when I got my 1st art lesson from my then 13-year-old daughter. She had been getting art lessons from my world-renowned tattoo artist Rich Ives. However, on this day, she was frustrated and wanted to quit. In a ploy to keep her engaged, I asked her to teach me what she had learned and we'd do a project together. Having failed every art class in school, I felt confident that she'd do better than me, and it'd encourage her to keep going. She broke it down for me in a very childlike way that my brain comprehended and we drew a ladybug together in pencil. It turned out better than I'd ever imagined, and I haven't stopped drawing since. I got obsessed with the whole process of mimicking photographs.

What is your favorite subject?

I love drawing a wide array of things, but I particularly enjoy portraits, animals and flowers. I enjoy trying to capture the essence of the subject and bring it to life.

What is your favorite medium?

My favorite medium is color pencil, particularly Prismacolor. I love the waxy feel of the pencils, and the ability to create layers of color. I also love all the details I can get with



creating drawings of flowers and bugs. I took a chance with a portrait and was pleasantly surprised at the resemblance to the photo reference. My friends and family encouraged me to do more portraits, and I enjoyed the process, and outcome.

What was your worse experience in creating art?

At first, I used to put so much pressure on myself to make my art look as perfect as the photo reference. I second-guessed myself a lot. Someone told me to "just have fun" and that art doesn't have to be perfect. I eased up on myself and now I try to just enjoy the process. I allow it to unfold, and the end product is just the magic of creating.

Do you ever fear creating art?

I don't fear creating art. Usually, I persist and complete my projects and end up liking them. I've told myself that if I end up creating something I don't like, I don't have to display it or share it.

Have you tried other mediums?

I have tried a very small hand at painting but don't really feel comfortable with it at this point. I'm open to trying other mediums if they come into my art journey and I meet the right teachers.

What would you like to do in the future?

I want to continually grow and get better! I want to be able to design and create the ideas that I have in my head into unique pieces that evoke emotion. I'm creating space for my work to flourish in every sense.

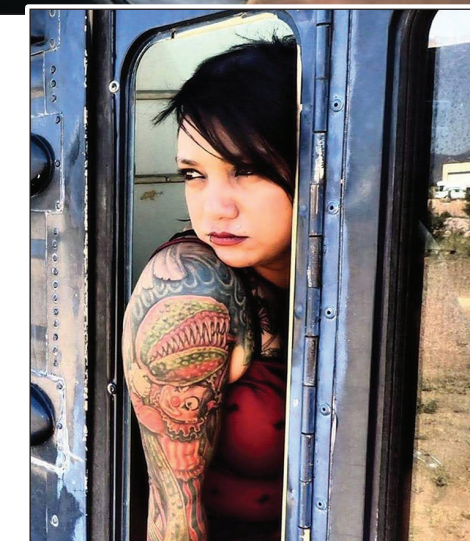
What else would people like to read about you?

I'm really not a competitive person; I just want to explore my art and let it shine in its own way. I'd rather create something true to me than try to outshine anyone else.

How would you like people to contact you?

I can be contacted best via email: Jax-EEI@gmail.com or through social media - @jaxself (Instagram) Jax Gibson (Facebook)

You can reach Mary Shell at www.maryshellart.com



a sharp pencil.

Were you always interested in painting portraits?

When I first started drawing, I enjoyed

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Life-Enhancing Journeys How to outsmart your inner critic

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

Recently, I have noticed a common pattern among some visitors to my office. No matter their age, background, or circumstances, they often struggle with the same silent issue. It is not immediately visible and does not show up on tests or scans. However, once you identify it, you start noticing it everywhere. This is the Inner Critic, a collection of negative thoughts inside our heads. It manifests as a quiet or sometimes loud voice that criticizes, judges, undermines confidence, and breeds self-doubt.

- "I'm not good enough."
- "They probably don't like me."
- "What's the point? I'll just fail anyway."

For many people, this voice may seem reliable but merely thinking something is true does not automatically make it a fact. That is why it is important not to believe everything you think! Your thoughts are shaped by your opinions, perspectives, and experiences.

How our brain functions

Your thoughts are powerful and greatly affect your mental and physical health. Every cell in your body reacts to your thoughts. When a thought occurs, your brain releases chemicals that influence your emotions and physical responses. Yet, some thoughts may be false. If you do not challenge them, you might mistake them for facts, which can lead you to feelings of anger, anxiety, or helplessness.

Negative thoughts can trigger the release of chemicals that cause physical symptoms like headaches, stomachaches, muscle tension, rapid heartbeat, or dizziness. On the other hand, positive thoughts release chemicals that promote feelings of well-being, helping you feel calm, with relaxed muscles and a slower heartbeat. Studies indicate that positive emotions, such as awe, can reduce harmful inflammation linked to various diseases, particularly autoimmune conditions. Learning to adjust your thinking can be beneficial, as it affects both your emotional and physical health.

A useful technique for handling the Inner Critic is "ANT" therapy, created by Dr. Daniel Amen, a neuropsychiatrist. A.N.T. stands for Automatic Negative Thoughts. The goal is to recognize these thoughts and stop them from controlling your mind.

Automatic Negative Thoughts

Automatic negative thoughts, known as "ANTs," are thoughts that pop into your mind without effort or intention. While most "ANTs" feel convincing, they are often distortions, exaggerations, or outright falsehoods. People who are overwhelmed by intense emotions such as depression, anxiety, anger, or jealousy often fill information gaps with negative assumptions and then treat them as absolute truths.

For example:

- You make a small mistake, "I can't do anything right."
- Someone does not return your call. "They must be upset with me."
- You feel worried. "Something bad is going to happen."

These thoughts occur so quickly that you might not notice them at first. However, they influence your feelings and behavior. That is why it is important to recognize them.

These thoughts cause many problems

When a negative thought occurs, your brain can treat it as a fact, even if it is false. For example, thinking, "I'm going to mess this up," can lead to feelings of anxiety, doubt or hesitation. This might cause you to avoid attempting the task or expect failure. The challenge is to keep such thoughts from turning into habits. The more you dwell on them, the more normal they feel. Fortunately, habits can be changed.

Over time, "ANTs" can lead to:

- Low self-confidence
- Anxiety or stress
- Feeling stuck or lacking motivation
- Problems in relationships

Negative thoughts can take many forms, but they usually follow common patterns. Once you recognize these patterns, it's easier to detect and manage them.

Different Types of ANTs (ways we distort reality)

- **All or nothing thinking:** Thoughts that are entirely good or entirely bad, with no middle ground.
- **Always/Never Trap (Extreme Thinking Words):** Using words such as always, never, everyone, every time, everything, or no one can exaggerate problems, making them seem bigger or permanent, even when this is untrue. "I always mess up" or "This never works."
- **Expecting the worst:** Predicting a negative outcome about what will happen in the future with little or no evidence. "This is going to go badly."
- **Ignoring the Positive:** Downplaying your strengths, ignoring what you do well, or dismissing positive aspects that occur. "That doesn't count... it was just luck." (Personally, I do not believe in luck; I believe most people work hard toward their own chosen path.)
- **Mind reading:** Assuming you know what someone else is thinking without them telling you. "They didn't smile at me; they must not like me."
- **Emotional Reasoning:** Believing that negative emotions are the absolute truth without questioning their validity simply because they feel true. "I feel anxious, so something must be wrong."
- **Guilt-based distortions:** Using words such as "should," "must," "ought," or "have to."
- **Self-Labeling:** Using negative or hurtful names to criticize yourself based on a single situation or mistake. "I'm such an idiot." "I didn't do it perfectly so I'm a failure."
- **Blame:** Blaming yourself for things outside your control or holding someone else responsible for your problems without looking at the full picture. "This is all my fault."
- **Overgeneralizing:** Taking one negative experience and assuming it will always happen. "Nothing ever works for me."

Looking back at who I was in my 20s, I see I was very unkind to myself. Every mistake led

to harsh self-criticism, like, "You stupid idiot... what did you do that for?" No one hurt me more than my own disapproval. Eventually, this cycle caused depression and exhaustion, and I realized I needed help. I saw a therapist who helped me understand my patterns and taught me to be more compassionate toward myself. Because those times were so painful, I now help others avoid similar self-destructive behaviors.

Destroy the "ANTs"

The idea of eliminating the "ANTs" does not mean forcing yourself to stay positive all the time. It means learning to question your thoughts rather than simply accepting them as truth.

- Notice and challenge the thought
- Start by noticing your thoughts, especially when your mood changes, then slow down to pay close attention to them. Reflect on what it means to believe, "I always mess things up." Is that truly accurate? Always? Likely not. You probably achieve many things successfully without realizing it.

Question whether the thought is genuinely accurate.

- "What am I telling myself right now?"
- "Is this completely valid and true?"
- "What are the main reasons I believe this?"
- "What evidence do I have?"
- "Am I rushing to judgment or making assumptions?"

Writing your thoughts down on paper might help you step back and see it more clearly.

Replace it

Strive for a more balanced view by being honest and realistic while avoiding overly optimistic language. For example, replace phrases like "I can't do anything right" with "I made a mistake this time, but that doesn't mean I always do." This small change can significantly affect your mood and progress.

Understanding why this approach works helps you recognize its benefits and use it confidently. Identify your negative thoughts and question them. Remember, your brain works like a muscle that grows stronger with use; the more you dwell on a thought, the more it takes hold. Conversely, paying less attention to these thoughts weakens them over time, paving the way for lasting, meaningful change.

The benefits:

- Your thinking becomes more balanced.
- You feel less controlled by your emotions
- You respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively.

You are training your mind to work with you instead of against you.

Practice

Pay attention to triggers

Notice when and where negative thoughts most often appear. Do they occur at work, especially when meeting deadlines or facing challenges? Are they more common in personal relationships, such as during conversations with loved ones or when you feel misunderstood? Or do they happen more often when you are tired? Identifying these patterns can help you discover what triggers your negative thoughts.

Keeping a list

Reflect on your day and quickly acknowledge any negative thoughts or feelings that arose. Afterward, thoroughly examine each thought and question its validity. Then try to reframe these thoughts in a more positive, encouraging, and supportive way.

Watch your words

Be careful when using words like "always," "never," and "should." These are often signs of "ANTs."

Pause and reflect

Before reacting impulsively, take a moment to pause and ask yourself: "Is this thought helping me or causing more harm?"

Be patient

Changing your thinking patterns takes time. These old habits may seem normal because they have been part of your life for a long time and changing them requires patience and consistent effort. You might realize that you have been the one standing in your own way, not out of weakness but out of habit. This awareness is meant to awaken you, as once you recognize it, you can start making different choices. There is no need to fight your inner critic; just stop allowing it to control you.

As I worked to calm my inner critic, I often faced setbacks and made mistakes. My first step was to identify "ANTs." Instead of harsh self-criticism, I complimented myself just for noticing them. When I caught myself using unkind words, I used encouraging phrases like "Good for you for noticing," "Good catch," or "Way to go, girlfriend." Over time, adopting this positive mindset became a habit, though it required perseverance and patience. Find phrases that might suit you.

The bigger picture

Learning to manage your automatic negative thoughts offers benefits that go beyond simply feeling better. You may start to:

- Be more willing to take risks
- Speak with greater confidence
- Handle challenges more calmly
- Build more meaningful connections
- Start living life more fully

Final thoughts

Your thoughts are powerful, but not always accurate. This is not about stopping your thoughts, but about preventing them from automatically controlling your responses. Focus on increasing awareness rather than striving for perfection. Each time you notice an "ANT," you are developing a healthier mental habit. By recognizing, questioning, and replacing automatic negative thoughts with positive ones, you can weaken the power of your inner critic and take charge of your mind and life. This insight can bring meaningful changes to how you feel and live.

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.

1st Anniversary Old West Liquors

by Flip Boettcher

It hardly seems like it has been a year since Old West Liquors in Guffey opened its doors for business, but April 15 was the store's first anniversary. Old West Liquors is located at 1431 Cañon Street, just down from the post office and is open 3-7 p.m. Monday-Saturday and 12-5 p.m. Sunday.

The store, housed in a CMX trailer, has gotten a face lift and is now covered with old lumber so it fits into the Guffey-look. Old West Liquors is environmentally friendly and is totally self-contained, powered all by solar, according to owner Dana Peters.

Old West Liquors started with a limited stock of items, but since its opening, has stocked more and more popular local items and will gladly order any special items for you.

The store now has a wide selection of beers and wines, as well as an extensive selection of spirits, specializing in bourbons and whiskeys, said Peters, with some Colorado-made spirits. The store also stocks Peters' homemade liquor-filled chocolate bonbons. There is a selection of sodas and mixes for cocktails and mixed drinks.

Contact numbers for the store are: 719-338-5653, store manager Jeff Rasel or 517-420-8596, owner Dana Peters.

Come on in and see what the store has for you!



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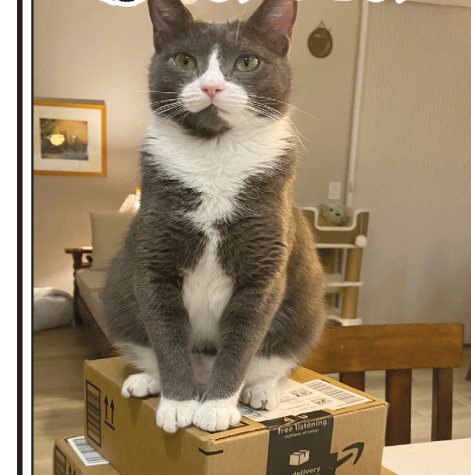
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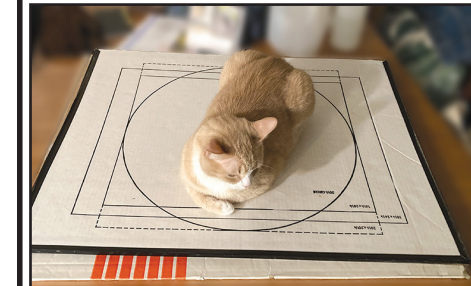
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The Donut Unicorn

by Gilrund the Historian

Avanti was a beautiful white unicorn and a good friend to the fairies of Winter Mountain. They would play together as often as Avanti could be with them, which was not as often as they all would have liked.

But there wasn't much grass on Winter Mountain, and grass was what a unicorn had to eat. So, Avanti had to live away from the mountain fairies. She mostly lived down south where the humans lived, though she stayed away from them.

Sometimes she would go and find a young human girl that might be out herding sheep by herself. Then she would allow the young girl to ride on her back, and they would have a wonderful time for as long as the girl could stay.

Then Avanti would go off over the high plains looking for someone else to have fun with.

There weren't any fairies on the high plains and that was why the unicorn often came back to Winter Mountain.

One day a young, shepherd-girl came out with a flock of sheep and Avanti came to greet her.

As they were getting acquainted, they heard a loud cry from the sheep out in the pastureland where the sheep were grazing.

The girl jumped up and started to run to see where the cry was coming from as Avanti said,

"Get on my back, I'm much faster than you can run."

The girl did so, and they were quickly approaching the spot where the crying of the sheep had come from.

The sheep were running toward them; Avanti could see a large wolf right behind the sheep. It was just about to catch a lamb, and she knew what would happen to that lamb if it were to be caught by that wolf.

As they came close to the wolf it saw them and started to turn away, but it wasn't fast enough. The girl on Avanti's back had a sling shot and she was very good with it because she practiced a lot. She had put a good-sized rock in it as they were running to the sheep.

When she saw the wolf, she started swinging the sling around and around in the air above her head.

The wolf saw the unicorn galloping toward it and knew what she could do with that long horn on its head.

Soon the girl let the rock fly, and it hit the wolf so hard on its side that it tumbled over and over in the grass.

The sheep had run past Avanti and the shepherdess by now, and the wolf was stumbling away into the forest that was a long distance away. It made it into the thick woods just as the unicorn was about to catch up with it.

Avanti came to a stop and whinnied at the wolf as loud as she could and that made the wolf try to run even faster into the trees.

She turned away from the trees and started back to where the sheep had started grazing again and the shepherdess slid down to walk through the herd comforting them.

When she felt that the sheep were doing alright again, she turned back to Avanti and thanked her for helping her.

"I think that if I hadn't been riding on your back, that wolf might have gotten one of my lambs. I don't think that he expected us to get there so fast."

"Well, your skill with the sling was great help too," replied Avanti, "Did you see how he rolled over and over when the rock hit him? I'll bet that really hurts. He'll think twice before he comes after your sheep again."

Avanti and the girl walked back to where she had placed her lunch, and the girl sat down to eat as Avanti grabbed a mouth full of grass. Avanti watched as the girl ate her lunch until the girl pulled out a round looking thing with white stuff on one side, and it had a hole in it. Avanti thought it was a piece of thick bread, but why did it have a hole in it? The girl eagerly ate it as Avanti watched and finally asked her what the round thing was.

"It's a donut," the girl said, "My mother makes them for me. Would you like to try a bite?"

The unicorn nodded her head, and the girl reached forward with a small piece for Avanti to take.

The unicorn took the small bit of the donut and ate it. She loved it!!

"May I have more?" she asked.

The girl gave Avanti the last bite and she ate it by rolling it about in her mouth and then swallowing it.

"That was wonderful! Do you have any more?"

"No, that was the only one. I'm glad that you enjoyed it so much. I'll have to tell my mother. I'm sure that she will make some for us again."

The girl had finished her lunch and started walking around the flock of sheep singing to them and Avanti followed her, sniffing at the girl's hand that had held the donut. The girl liked to have the unicorn with her and tried to pet her nose. But Avanti always licked the girl's hand and looked at her like she really wanted another bite of that donut.

It was a while later that Avanti had an idea. She knew that the fairies loved her and often gave her grass that they had smeared sweet pollen on. So, she thought that she would tell the fairies about the donut and see if they could bake some of them for her.

Off she ran toward the Winter Mountain and the fairies that lived there.

It took Avanti a day and a half before she came to the bottom of Winter Mountain and found a fairy flying about among the flowers there. It was Mystie, one of the four fairy friends that Avanti had so much fun with.

"Hi, Mystie, it's good to see you again," said Avanti, "I'm glad that I found you. I have a new recipe for you to try."



Avanti told Mystie about the donut that she had eaten with the shepherdess and how good it tasted.

"Do you think that your mother could make them?" she asked.

"They really sound good, Avanti," replied Mystie, "Let's go and tell Mom about them and see if she can make some for us."

The two friends started off for the forest where the fairies lived and Mystie's home.

On the way they saw Crystal, Avi and Glacia, and Mystie told them about the new treat called a Donut. They all thought that it sounded really tasty and said that they would see if their moms could make them.

Many of the fairies on Winter Mountain were named after cold things found on the mountain. Glacia was named after glaciers, and Avi was named after the avalanches that happened often on the sides of the mountains. Mystie was named after the mist that often flowed about the mountain.

Of course, Crystal was named after the many shiny things on the mountain.

They would have to find the things to make Fairy Donuts.

For the flour they used ground up grass seeds. For the milk they used the runny sap from various plants. For eggs, they used the eggs of insects.

They already had butter from the milk, and vegetable oil from the many plants. For the icing they used the milk and sugar from the plants and honey from the bees.

The fairy moms thought that the donut sounded like they would be easy to make and after the girls gathered up all of the extra ingredients for them, they started to try to make them.

It took a few tries, but soon the new donuts started to come out of the fairy ovens.

At first, they didn't come out so well, some of them were flat like a pancake. Some of them puffed up so big that they popped up like a cupcake.

It took a few times of changing the baking time too, so that they didn't burn or run all over the pan. After a few more changes to the recipe, the donuts started to look like donuts.

Mystie was the first to try one. Her mom had put a sweet yellow pollen on the top of the donut and when Mystie ate it, she loved it.

Mystie grabbed another one and took it out to Avanti to try.

The fairy tossed the donut into the unicorn's mouth, and it was gone in an instant.

"Well, what did you think?" asked Mystie as her mom waited behind her.

"Well, it was pretty good, but it was

Other fairy moms were busy mixing sweet pollen icing in other bigger bowls to put on the tops of the donuts when they were finished baking.

Soon the dough was mixed just right, and the dough was placed around rocks that were on the clay trays to make the hole in the middle. Then several of the male fairies carried the clay trays to the big oven with long sticks, as the mom fairies watched.

"How long would it take?" wondered Avanti. She really wanted a donut that she could really taste and enjoy.

The Moms watched the donuts bake and rise in the big oven. When they thought that the donuts had gotten as big as they should, they called the male fairies to pull the clay trays out and let the donuts cool.

They smelled wonderful and Avanti could hardly wait.

It was a short while and four of the mom fairies flew over the cooling donuts and poured the different colored and flavored icings on the donuts.

Avanti watched the icing flow down the sides of the cool donuts and drooled.

"When do we get to eat them?" she asked.

Mystie's mom flew over to one of the donuts and stuck her wand into the soft donut and it came out clean.

"Now!" she said and grabbed the donut and threw it to the waiting unicorn.

Avanti raised her head to catch the wonderful treat but didn't get her head up fast enough. The donut flew through the air and then slid down on her white horn.

That's all it took, and all of the fairy girls started grabbing donuts and tried to get them to land on Avanti's horn.

Some of them made it and some landed in the unicorn's mouth, and she ate them. "These are wonderful!" cried out the unicorn as she tried to catch another donut.

The fairies were laughing so hard that they couldn't throw the donuts very well, but several of them did land on Avanti's horn. Soon her horn was all different colors from the different colors of the icing on the donuts.

Avanti quickly learned to toss her head just right, so that a donut would fly off of her horn and land in her mouth. She ate a lot of donuts that way.

Soon all of the donuts were eaten, some by the fairies, but mostly by Avanti.

The fairies thanked the unicorn for a new treat and also for a new game that they called "Unicorn Ring Toss."

Avanti said that they were quite welcome. But if they wanted to play the new game with her, they had to use donuts for the rings.

The fairy moms loved making the new treat and using the big oven. The oven was used for making many more things than making donuts. Pollen cookies were made by the dozens, as were pollen bread and pollen pretzels and any other fairy food that needed a big oven.

Fairy parties were much bigger now and the Ring Dances always had plenty of food at the full moon.

~ 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

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Bed Racers needed for Pearl DeVere Day
 by Charlotte Bumgarner

It is time to start planning if you want to participate in our 7th Annual Pearl DeVere Day Bed Races and you don't really want to miss out on this fun. The event will be June 6, 2026. Some exciting changes are happening this year, you can pick a category to race in: General public, Casinos, News Media or 1st Responders/Military. Join us in the fun and win bragging rights with your peers.

The rules for the Bed Race include:
 Entry Fee is \$30 per team with you making the bed, need to use one of our beds the fee is \$40 per team. If you register before May 23rd, early bird prices of \$25 and \$35 respectfully will apply. Each team will have three members, two "Johns" and one "Pearl." Pearl will ride on the bed with one John, while the Johns take turns pushing, one John will push the bed to the turnaround point, change pushers and return to the start/finish line. It is up to the discretion of the team what their team looks like, it can be three guys or three women if you want, but one will need to be designated as their "Pearl" and stay on the bed for the entire race. There are no set specifications for the bed, just remember you will be pushing it on Cripple Creek Street, so take into consideration the weight, ease of handling around corners and durability. Each heat will be timed, the fastest time from all heats will

be declared the overall winner. The number of heats will be determined by the number of entries. Email ohomesteadhouse@gmail.com or call 719-689-2485 for registration form.

The racing will be held on Myers Avenue (Hey Day's red light District). Registration is at 10:30 a.m. and the first race starts at high noon. Prizes will be given in each category. Fun entertainment and events during the day between races.

Teams can wear costumes if they want, share your pride, do period, create a theme whatever works for you. There will be a separate contest for CLASSY MADAME, start figuring out that costume, just remember our house was not a cheap place so you need to truly think classy and beautiful. There is a \$5 entry fee for Classy Madame.

The Old Homestead was built in 1896 and was the most elegant brothel in the Cripple Creek Mining District during its heyday. Since 1958, the house has been operated as a museum and has been a public favorite ever since. With the continued support of the community this treasure will be around for many generations to come.

FMI about The Old Homestead Museum, contact Charlotte at 719-689-2485 or Kirstie at 719-371-6238 email ohomesteadhouse@gmail.com

Cripple Creek Colorado's Famous Donkeys Celebrate 95 Years in 2026

The Two Mile High Club (TMHC), celebrating 95 years of caring for the Cripple Creek Donkeys, invites you to join their summer and fall events. The lineup features activities for all ages and highlights community spirit and local history.

Since 1931, TMHC has been the heart of Cripple Creek, providing a loving home and enduring stewardship for a herd of remarkable donkeys — living symbols of the animals that once worked the veins of "The World's Greatest Gold Camp." Funds from these events support the care of the donkeys, now numbering 16, and special projects like building a new barn with clean rooms for medical treatment, spacious stalls and shelter from rugged mountain weather.

MAY — The excitement kicks off on Memorial Day with the heartwarming Donkey Release, a tradition where the beloved herd returns to their city roaming ways from the Cripple Creek Donkey's winter pasture. Imagine the smiles as TMHC Wranglers lead the donkeys down C Street and Thurlow Avenue, echoing the historic release of 1931 when the original donkeys were set free from their work in the Gold Mines. "President Teddy Roosevelt" returns to welcome the donkeys back to town, during this 95th annual celebration year.

JUNE — Don't miss the most anticipated event of the season: the 95th Annual Donkey Derby Days, cripplecreekdonkeys.com happening June 26-28, 2026! This vibrant festival transforms Cripple Creek into a playground of tradition and adventure. Lead Wrangler, Dale McKenzie invites all to enjoy the "thrilling donkey races on Saturday and Sunday. Registration opens May 15, 2026. New this year, Pack Burro Races the "official summer heritage sport of Colorado" whereby a runner and a donkey traverse elevation and technical trails as running partners (two professional athletes). Feel the thrill, cheer for your favorites, or maybe even join the race yourself!

But that is not all — Donkey Derby Days is a true mountain festival, boasting a dazzling parade along Bennett Av-



enue with a vintage aircraft flyover that will take your breath away. Dance to live music, including a Saturday night set from local favorite The Martini Shot, and Sunday afternoon tunes with Dakota Blonde. Snag an autograph from up-and-coming Country Music Star, Maddox Ross! Savor delicious bites from an array of food trucks or a pancake breakfast at the Cripple Creek Fire Station. Visit a wide variety of vendors and craft booths. Get your bid on for some exciting items at the Silent Auction on Saturday. Let the kids run wild in the Kid's Zone, try your hand at gold panning, and toast the festivities in a beer garden hosted by none other than a Brigade of Beer Burros!

OCTOBER — Enjoy Fall Fest in Cripple Creek on October 3-4, 2026, featuring live music, seasonal food, artisan markets, a Fall Photo Booth, and pumpkin carving contests — a great way to wrap up summer in the mountains.

"None of this is possible without the incredible support of the City of Cripple Creek, our donors, sponsors, and dedicated volunteers," shares Annie Valades, President of the Two Mile High Club. "These events don't just keep the donkeys happy and healthy, they unite our community in celebration and joy, year after year. We can't wait to welcome everyone and make new memories together! So, gather your family and friends for the best festivals this side of Pikes Peak!" Join our volunteers to help with tasks with everything from caring for donkeys, organizing the parade, providing information, or selling merchandise. Be part of the 95th anniversary celebrations! For event schedules or to donate, sponsor, or volunteer, visit www.cripplecreekdonkeys.com

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Behind the Scenes Dynamic Duo
 by Tracie Bennitt

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

Every once in a while, two people will come together and make music. That's the case with Woodland Park Wind Symphony (WPWS) treasurer Sherri Kardong and fellow flutist Treese Kjeldsen.

Born in Wisconsin, then living in Southern California, Sherri moved back to Colorado to retire in 2015. Being a dance instructor, including ballet and working in banking, took up the time in her earlier years. She picked a flute back up after 45 years of not playing and started lessons with who else but Treese! She is also a drummer and plays with the Woodland Winds Quintet and Silver Wood Flute and Guitar. She has enjoyed playing at Reserve Our Gallery for art events and is looking forward to playing at the new Tava House. She also played for the Aspen Mine Center holiday events in Cripple Creek last year along with Treese.

In 2017 Sherri joined the WPWS and was there when they moved into a 501c3 organization in 2018. The symphony has kept her busy since 2019 as their treasurer. As the "Money Bank" of the organization according to Craig Harms, director of the group, Sherri

is responsible for processing and tracking revenue and expenses as they happen. "It's important to stay current with the books," she added. Part of the paperwork also includes quarterly and year-end reports. "Revenue for WPWS comes from grants and donations from generous individuals and organizations," she said. "It's critical to maintain the integrity of the financial records to support and protect the 501c3 status."

"Serving as Treasurer is a rewarding way for me to give back to the community by utilizing my finance background (MBA in Finance; 30+ yrs of banking experience)," she said. "Being able to play music in such a great community band and its related ensembles is what keeps me going! Sometimes I think that Treese and I have way too much fun!" Sherri is responsible for managing expenses for music scores, production expenses, rehearsal hall and venue costs. "WPWS lives on donations," she said. "The group is not paid to play and is dependent on that funding."

Treese was raised as an Air Force Brat and has lived all over the world. "I've been a band-music educator, flute and guitar teacher, and owns a company, Ground Floor Home Inspection, that is a licensed Radon measurement operator," she said. "Some of the fun things I've done is play with the Portland Chamber Orchestra and Portland Musical Theater," she added. "As a union gigger I had the opportunity to play for the Moody Blues in the New Rose Garden as well as Steve Green,

Amy Grant and Michael W. Smith among others."

Playing in the Pikes Peak Flute Choir, Treese moved to Teller County where she started the High Altitude Ukelele Jam, Silver Wood Flute and Guitar and all the small ensembles of the WPWS. "It's ironic that WPWS director Craig Harms was the Student Teacher Supervisor at Coronado High School in Colorado Springs overseeing my teaching position," she said. "Eighteen years later, I'm joining forces with him playing flute and piccolo in the group."

In their "free" time, Sherri travels with her husband Jim and recently visited Ireland and Kauai. "My house is run by the cat, Shadow," she added. Treese lives with her husband Chris, an avid photographer with a page on Facebook, two dogs and three cats. "My kids are grown," she said. "Kitty lives in Scotland and David is a writer-actor-director in Colorado Springs. My newest thing is that I'm now a licensed Zumba Gold Instructor and have classes at the Woodland Park Senior Center on Fridays at 10 a.m. and the Cripple Creek Rec Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays



Sherri and Treese with the Moose.

at noon." Both are enthusiastic about the upcoming *Star Wars* concert scheduled for May 3 at the WP Church of the Nazarene. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the concert kicks off at 7 p.m. "There will be a costume contest with prizes," she said, "along with Bazinga from Colorado Springs with Star Wars memorabilia for sale." Players in the WPWS range in age from high school up to the 90s. For more information on the symphony and upcoming events, visit www.woodlandparkwindsymphony.com

Michael Dougherty Honored by YWCA for Delivering Justice and Standing with Victims
 by Holly Shrewsbury

District Attorney and candidate for Colorado Attorney General Michael Dougherty was honored April 16, 2026, by YWCA Boulder County with the "Active Ally" Award at the organization's annual Better Because of Her Luncheon. The Active Ally Award recognizes individuals who turn allyship into action by advancing justice, dignity, and opportunity across the community. Active Allies model how people of all genders can help build systems rooted in trust, accountability, and belonging to make space for women, girls and all communities to thrive.

Dougherty was recognized for his leadership as District Attorney and his commitment to strengthening public safety while advancing fairness, accountability, and support for victims. Since taking office in 2018, Dougherty has led efforts to expand support for survivors and improve outcomes across the criminal justice system. His work includes launching Colorado's first Hate Crimes Initiative, creating a Mental Health Diversion Program, and strengthening responses to human trafficking.

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The Better Because of Her Luncheon celebrates leaders and changemakers working to advance equity and expand opportunity across Boulder County.

Colorado Democrats Rally Behind Michael Dougherty

Michael Dougherty isn't just running for Attorney General — he's already outworking the field. With over 9,700 Colorado Democrats signing his petition and strong delegate support at the State Assembly, Dougherty has done what no other candidate in any statewide race has: secured his spot on the 2026 Democratic primary ballot through both pathways — signatures AND the Assembly.

That's not an accident. That's a plan. "We didn't guess whether we'd make the ballot — we knew," said Dougherty. "We built a campaign the right way: talking to voters, earning support, and doing the work in every corner of this state. That's exactly how I'll serve as Attorney General."

While other campaigns in this race and across every statewide contest chose one path to the ballot, Dougherty's team took both. They organized volunteers statewide to gather signatures, partnered with a Colorado-based signature firm, and built genuine grassroots support from day one. The State Assembly only confirmed what the signature numbers already showed: this campaign has real momentum in every part of the state.

"I nominated Michael at the State Assembly because I know firsthand what it takes to be an effective prosecutor — and Michael has it. The energy in that room was incredible. Democrats from across Colorado showed up ready to fight, and Michael is exactly the kind of proven prosecutor for justice our party and

Michael Dougherty received Blue Sky Bridge Leadership Award
 by Holly Shrewsbury

District Attorney and candidate for Colorado Attorney General Michael Dougherty was honored with the Blue Sky Bridge Leadership Award at this year's Champions for Children awards event, recognizing his commitment to protecting children and supporting survivors of abuse.

Hosted by Blue Sky Bridge, a nationally recognized child advocacy center dedicated to preventing child abuse and supporting victims, the annual Champions for Children event highlights individuals and community partners who have made extraordinary contributions to safeguarding children and strengthening families.

The event, held during Child Abuse Prevention Month, brought together leaders from across Boulder County and beyond to reflect on the importance of prevention, intervention, and coordinated care for children impacted by abuse. "What we witnessed was very powerful and should remind us that protecting children and supporting families who are dealing with abuse takes courage, compassion, and a deep commitment to doing what is right," said Dougherty. "I'm honored to receive this award from an organization doing such critical work in our community."

Blue Sky Bridge recognized Dougherty for his leadership and partnership in advancing a multidisciplinary approach to child abuse cases — bringing together law enforcement, prosecutors, medical professionals, and victim advocates to ensure children receive the support and justice they deserve.

Throughout his career, Dougherty has prioritized prosecuting crimes against children and working alongside community-based organizations to improve outcomes for young victims. His office has partnered with Blue Sky Bridge to ensure cases are handled with a trauma-informed, child-centered approach. He served as the Deputy Chief for the Sex Crimes Unit at the Manhattan DA's Office, oversees a dedicated Sex Crimes Unit in his current office, and still prosecutes child abuse and sex crimes cases himself — while leading efforts to build better prevention and support systems with community partners.

"Protecting children is one of the most important responsibilities we have," Dougherty added. "I will continue to stand with organizations like Blue Sky Bridge to ensure every child is safe, heard, and supported."

our state needs and deserves right now," said Heidi McCollum, District Attorney for Colorado's 5th Judicial District.

The voters who signed on knew it, too. "I travelled all around the state with Michael and talked to volunteers who helped us gather signatures — and the energy was real everywhere we went. People were excited to sign because Michael showed up, listened, and made it clear he's ready to do the job. Michael is the prosecutor for justice that Colorado needs right now. This wasn't just about getting on the ballot — it was about building something real across Colorado," said Sam von Mettenheim, Dougherty Campaign Senior Advisor & Coordinator.

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About Michael Dougherty
 Michael Dougherty currently serves as Boulder County District Attorney. A career prosecutor with nearly 30 years of experience, Dougherty has handled thousands of cases, including homicides, sexual assaults, and complex fraud. He previously served as Colorado's Deputy Attorney General and led the Sex Crimes Unit at the Manhattan District Attorney's Office as the Deputy Chief. Throughout his career, Dougherty has focused on protecting communities, standing up for victims, and ensuring justice is applied fairly. He is focused on public safety, defending constitutional rights, and delivering real results for Colorado families.

For more information, visit www.michael-forag.com. Follow him on social media: Facebook: @MichaelDoughertyCO, Twitter/X: @MDoughertyCO, Instagram: @michaelforcolorado, and TikTok: @michaelforcolorado.

Tales from Big Sky Ranch Bed and Biscuit Kingsley, King of the Zoomies

by Kendra Lee Hall

At Big Sky Ranch Bed and Biscuit, the mornings usually started with a gentle rhythm — dogs stretching, wagging tails, a yawn or two, and the anticipation of breakfast. But first, it's a quick trip to the front relief area.

Back inside and safely in their individual "places" for feeding, the dogs waited patiently, all eyes on Lee as she prepared the morning meal. Kingsley, a huge Saint Bernard, watched intently, his nose twitching from side to side. Bisou, a pure white retriever, hopped excitedly on her front paws in anticipation.

Breakfast served and eagerly eaten, the dogs waited patiently, as Lee gave them time to digest before their active time outdoors. Well, active for most. Harrison, the cattle dog, preferred to watch from the perimeter, not participating in the play. Then there was Molly, a 12-year-old Dalmatian, who could usually be found lying under a tree, no doubt reminiscing about her more active days as she looked on.

Every eye was on Lee, watching her every move as they waited. The dog guests learned the routine quickly and they knew the time was near.

Kingsley was especially dramatic in anticipation, pressing his nose through the bars of his pen. He was a Saint Bernard with the heart and personality of a puppy. His playful and comical antics were endearing to all the caretakers at the Bed and Biscuit.

He was lying on his belly. His eyes looked up, but his head remained resting on his paws, exposing the whites of his eyes in a humorous way. Lee wondered, as she often had in the past, if dogs knew how funny and dramatic they were being. She bet they meant every bit of it to get the attention and adoration of their family and caretakers. Some were definitely more theatrical than others, and that would be Kingsley!

Lee reached for her jacket, and they knew! The dogs hopped up. Junebug, the six-pound Chihuahua twirled like a ballerina. There were joyful barks and yaps, and excited paws tap danced on the floor.

Lee approached Kingsley's pen to let him out and he did his own version of the happy spin, his fluffy tail bobbing up and down, as he spun,

enabling him to do a full, graceful rotation. Lee opened the door to his pen, and he leapt out heading for the door. Lee let the other dogs in Kingsley's play group out as well, and they all headed for the play area.

At first, all the dogs dispersed in the large, fenced area, each finding their own most interesting scents. The fresh mountain breeze delivered other delicious scents, and Luna, a black pug with a curly tail, pointed her scrunched nose into the breeze and inhaled the luscious scent of pine.

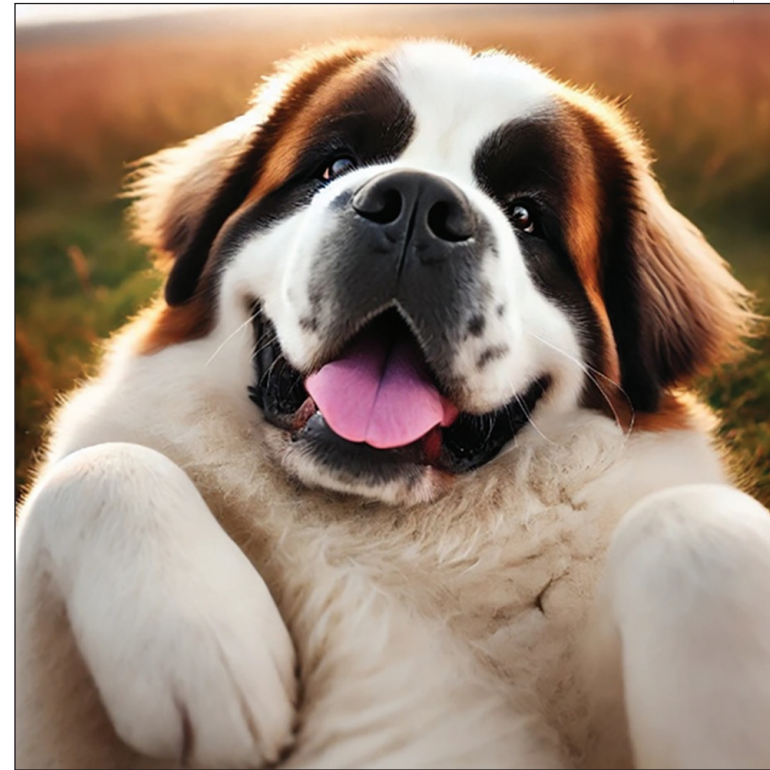
Everybody was calm until — Kingsley, king of the zoomies, took off at a full gallop. His jowls flapped in the wind of his own momentum as he careened around the space in wide, joyous circles. His big paws pounded the ground, and Lee was sure she saw a sparkle in his eyes.

Some dogs watched from a distance, afraid of what might happen if they got in his way. Others tagged along behind at a safe distance, barking encouragement.

Then it was the shed! Kingsley's favorite part of his zoomies was racing around the shed, around and around he went. Then, as suddenly as he started, he stopped, turned around and



Kingsley races around the shed with the zoomies (above). "Belly rubs, pretty please" (left).



took one more lap around the shed in the opposite direction, with just as much gusto as before.

Kingsley slowed and trotted up to Lee, who patted his fuzzy head. Then suddenly, Kingsley flopped down and rolled over, sticking all four legs in the air, exposing his thick-coated underside. His next

favorite thing after zoomies? Belly rubs.

"You're a hoot, fella!" Lee said affectionately as she obliged.

Playtime over, the dogs headed indoors and found their favorite spot for a nap. Kingsley sauntered to the couch and sat. But the giant Saint Bernard didn't sit on the couch like other dogs. No — he perched, with his fluffy butt on the cushions and his two front paws planted firmly on the floor. From his perch, he surveyed the room. His mouth curved up in a smile as he observed all of his friends relaxing peacefully after their fun time outside.

Kingsley was always a joy to have at the Bed and Biscuit, bringing laughter and smiles to the caretakers every time he visited. If ever there was a dog that embodied pure, unfiltered joy, it was Kingsley.

Luna Grace Spa

by Flip Boettcher

Located at 605 Main Street in the historic Harding Building, Cañon City, the Luna Grace Wellness and Rejuvenation Spa is a very unique place.

Judy Britten purchased the Harding Building, built in 1909, in late 2023 and had the spa's grand opening March 1, 2024. Luna Grace Spa is named after Britten's two granddaughters Luna and Sadie Grace.

The building is huge, 13,000 plus square feet, and houses the spa on the second floor, the Harding Cafe and soon to be the organic sleepwear and gift shop on the main floor and the spa's Energy Enhancement System in the basement.

Britten is all about enhancing wellness, natural remedies and healing, and a holistic approach to health, she said, and the spa shows that.

Luna Grace Spa offers many wellness and rejuvenation therapies including Halotherapy (salt room) offering a natural and therapeutic experience. One breathes in micro salt particles to help and improve respiratory health, skin conditions and a boosted immune system. The Red Light Vitality Booth includes both

red light therapy and halotherapy. For more information on red light therapy see *Fitness on the Mountain* — "Kick Pain in the Butt" by Lori Martin in the March, 2026 *Ute Country News*.

Luna Grace offers all kinds of massages, designed to meet each individual's needs, including individual and couples massage and lymphatic massage. Add ons include hot stone, cupping, royal foot treatments, lavender foot wrap, hand and/or foot scrub, hot oil scalp treatments and hand wax dip.

The Energy Enhancement System (EES) located in the basement offers life enhancing energy fields which help with cell regeneration, pain relief, inflammation relief, detoxifying the body, elevate moods, help with sleep and increasing energy levels. One can book an overnight stay in the EES apartment room.

One can also get many different kinds of facials including anti-aging, brightening, rejuvenating, hydration and European.

There is also a Foot Detox available using Himalayan salt to help detox your body. Acupuncture, Reiki and internal medicine are offered, as well as manicures/pedicures.

There is a Bio-Well Energy Field Scan for a "snapshot of your energetic state, highlighting areas of balance as well as areas that may be under stress," brochure.

The newest therapy is the full body NovaPod Infrared Wellness Capsule, which uses thermal, light, vibration and oxygen therapies to help with body contouring, relaxation, detoxification, lymphatic drainage, muscle recovery, pain relief, increased circulation, skin tightening, fat loss and more. The NovaPod is very individualized and some patients see results in a single one-hour session. Lying in the pod can be very relaxing.

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- **May 19-24**
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- **May 20-23**
Florissant Fire Station 2606 Hwy 24 will accept them 8-5 p.m.
- **May 27-31**
Divide Fire 103 County Road 51 will accept them 9-4 p.m.

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Honor Guard Ceremonies

by Jana Bartlett

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post #11411 of Florissant and Lake George will conduct its Honor Guard Ceremony in memory of Veterans that are buried in local cemeteries on Memorial Day, Monday, May 25, 2026 at the following times and locations

- 10 a.m. 4-Mile Cemetery
- 11 a.m. Florissant Cemetery
- 12 p.m. Lake George Cemetery

The public is invited to attend these ceremonies to honor our deceased Veterans.

To learn more about membership in the Florissant-Lake George VFW Post #11411 or its Auxiliary, contact Post Commander Randy Ford 719-510-9392 or Auxiliary President JaNiece Tyler 719-748-1335.

Life on a Colorado Dog Ranch Local Author Shares Heartfelt Dog Stories

Local author and dog ranch owner Kendra Lee Hall is bringing smiles and warming hearts across the region with her book *Tales from the Bed and Biscuit*, a collection of fun and touching stories inspired by the dogs in her care.

Set against the backdrop of the Colorado mountains, the stories are drawn from Hall's experiences running Big Sky Ranch Bed and Biscuit, a home-style dog boarding ranch near Jefferson. Each story captures the unique personality, spirit, and quiet wisdom of the dogs who pass through the ranch's gates and into her heart.

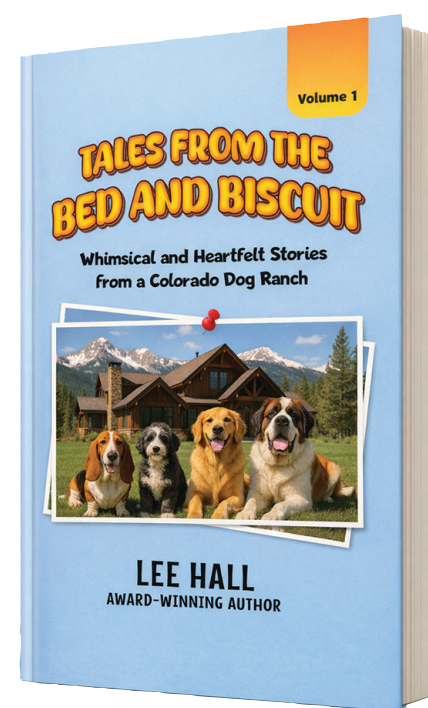
"These dogs aren't just guests," Hall says. "They become part of our lives. Some come with their own stories, like Myla in *Guided by Love*, a blind Husky who navigates life with grace and confidence. Sometimes the stories unfold right here at the Bed and Biscuit, like in *Uncle Brinkley and His Little Shadow*, where a timid little puppy finds comfort and blossoms under the care of a gentle Yellow Lab."

The book has been embraced by readers of all ages, especially dog lovers.

"You have published a delightful book for dog owners and dog lovers. I enjoyed every page. You are an excellent narrative writer with the ability to evoke emotion in every story. Sometimes I found myself laughing and tearing up on the very same page." — J. David Holt, fellow author.

Readers can now find *Tales from the Bed and Biscuit* locally at Prather's Market in Fairplay, where the owners — proud parents of beloved dogs Brizzie and Roxy — have welcomed the book into their store. Both dogs stayed at the ranch when their family was out of town. Roxy, who has since gone on to her great next adventure, is remembered fondly for the joy she brought to the Bed and Biscuit with her happy spirit and gentle soul.

Hall also shares a commitment to giving back, with plans to donate a portion of book proceeds to support local animal welfare organizations.



With its blend of humor, warmth, and emotional connection, the book has become a thoughtful gift and an engaging read — perfect for anyone who has ever loved a dog.

Hall also invites readers to experience a sample of the stories online, where they can step into the world of the Bed and Biscuit and meet some of the unforgettable dogs who inspired the collection.

For more information, to read free stories, or to purchase a signed copy, readers can visit: KendraLeeHall.com

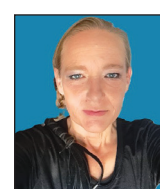
Mueller State Park

by Anna Urban

- 1 Junior Rangers on the Trail 11-12 p.m. meet at Outlook Ridge TH
- 2 Basic Fly Fishing 10-12 p.m. meet at Dragonfly Pond Parking Lot.
- 2 Forest Bathing 1-4 p.m. meet at Outlook Ridge TH. Registration required.
- 5 Basic Fly Fishing 10-12 p.m. meet at Dragonfly Pond Parking Lot.
- 9 Star Party 8:30-10:30 p.m. at Visitor Center Parking Lot.
- 12 Story of Pikes Peak Hike 10-12 p.m. meet at Elk Meadow TH.
- 12 Sensory Hike 1-2:30 p.m. meet at Outlook Ridge TH.
- 18 Fly Fishing Basics Plus 9-1 p.m. meet at Visitor Center. Registration required.
- 20 Basic Fly Fishing 10-12 p.m. meet at Dragonfly Pond Parking Lot.
- 20 Cheesman Ranch Hike 1-4 p.m. meet at Grouse Mountain TH.
- 22 Basic Survival for Kids 2-3 p.m. meet at Camper Services.
- 23 Archery 10-12 p.m. meet at Dragonfly Pond Parking Lot. Registration required.
- 23 Sensory Hike 1:30-3 p.m. meet at Outlook Ridge TH.
- 24 Basic Fly Fishing 10-12 p.m. meet at Dragonfly Pond Parking Lot. Registration required.
- 24 Junior Rangers in the Forest 11-12 p.m. meet in the front of the Visitor Center.
- 30 Story of Pikes Peak Hike 10-12 p.m. meet at Elk Meadow TH.
- 30 Sensory Hike 1-2:30 p.m. meet at Outlook Ridge TH.
- 31 Junior Rangers at the Pond 11-12 p.m. meet at Peak View TH. *TH = trailhead.

Programs happen rain, snow, or shine unless posted otherwise. Check the cpw.state.co.us/events and the Mueller Facebook page for any event changes or to sign up for events requiring registration. FMI 719-687-2366.

Did you enjoy what you read? Please thank our advertisers!



Notes on Nutrition Water is Life

by Catrina Lynn, Dance Instructor, Nutrition Enthusiast

We can't discuss nutrients, substances that are essential for growth and the maintenance of life, without beginning with water. Two-thirds of our body weight is made up of water; it's a part of every cell and every function. Water dissolves minerals, chemicals and nutrients used for growth and energy, it transports them to the locations they are needed, keeps blood fluid and able to carry oxygen to cells. Water is vital to digestion, forming the necessary fluids for breaking down food and flushing out waste products to prevent toxicity. We regulate our body temperature with sweat. Water cushions, protects and lubricates our joints and organs, all tissues including our eyes, nose, mouth, everywhere.

A person can live weeks without food, only days without water. Many difficulties we encounter might be helped greatly by taking a look at how much, and what kind of, water we are taking in on a daily basis. THRIVING depends on a daily intake of PURE water. Food and soft drinks can add something to our hydration, but there is no replacement for drinking a good amount of water. So, how much is that?

We're all a little different; age, weight, gender, lifestyle, exercise, diet, can all affect that somewhat. It is recommended you drink half your body weight in ounces, more if you are very active, drink coffee, alcohol, or otherwise expend more water or add more toxins. Men need more intake than women for several reasons. They tend to have more muscle mass, sweat more, have a higher metabolic rate, and testosterone and estrogen have a different effect on fluid retention and hydration. This is also why age can be a factor, as our hormone levels shift, adjusting our water intake can have a huge impact on how we adapt to these changes. Take half your body weight, work up to drinking that many ounces per day, and listen to your body. The more your body is processing in any given day, the more it needs.

Being actively thirsty is a sign your cells are not producing the pump actions that send signals, as well as producing and using energy. There is no water pressure. Once you're there it will take time to recover from the damage and the waste produced by dying cells that couldn't function. Our adaptive nature adjusts to a lack of resources over time and manages accordingly. Sensations of thirst and our recognition of them begin to shut down, age contributes to this too. We feel low-energy, so perhaps we over-eat or over consume products to compensate, leading to so many of the health problems we are encountering today.

Consider this, when our body enters a state of drought, histamines (neurotransmitters responsible for thirst sensation) manage important processes. More histamines are produced and released in the lungs, creating spasms to constrict bronchioles so that we can't breathe our water and can conserve it. Histamines cause more mucus to be produced, protecting the thin linings of the respiratory system. White cells that are sensitive to histamines will attack even non-harmful agents in the body. Are we experiencing an asthma and allergy epidemic or cultural H2O deficiency? Improper hormone and serotonin regulation and immune system failure are also symptomatic of histamine response to a lack of water. Solutes cannot break down in thicker, crowded fluids, hydroelectric processes cannot

be maintained, the whole system shuts down when deprived of water.

8 Amazing Benefits of a Well Hydrated Body

- **Reduce joint and lower back pain** — cartilage filled with water glides freely and reduces friction and damage in joints.
- **Energy!** Drinking enough water fuels ATP production and supports the breakdown and transport of vital nutrients.
- **Lower blood pressure** — the circulatory system shrinks without water, closing around the blood to prevent gas locks and squeezing harder to push water into critical cells, raising blood pressure.
- **Smooth moves** — water lubricates our intestines and prevents them from slowing down waste movement and disposal.
- **Big Brain!** Cation pumps are like little hydroelectric stations packed along nerve (and all) cell membranes. The rush of water moves nutrients in and out and makes more energy than used.
- **Skin protection** — keeping up with evaporation and sweat by staying hydrated will keep it looking, feeling and functioning better.
- **Prevent Diabetes** — preventing dehydration can prevent triggering the brain to require more glucose (sugar) to sustain healthy function because it is deprived of H2O.
- **Mood stability** — even mild dehydration throws off the brain's ability to process serotonin and other important transmitters, leading to mood swings and irritability.

Now that we get the importance of water intake, let's consider the source. Living in the US, many of us have the advantage of having running water in our homes to use as we like. But is it the safest, best option for our bodies? Where you live affects what is in your water. The website www.epa.gov/safewater has a plethora of information and resources for water safety and analysis. Pollutants from fertilizers and manufacturing, heavy minerals, parasites, and many other dangerous things can be found in our drinking water due to our activities on the land and natural contaminants. We even purposefully add risky chemicals to our tap water. The addition of chlorine and fluoride are intended to kill bacteria and improve dental health but are also known to be carcinogenic (cancer causing) and lead to other diseases and birth defects.

Where to turn? Bottled water? Many bottled water brands turn out to be tap water and even if you find one that has significantly better quality to the tap water in your home, bottles made of plastic contain a variety of chemicals. Especially well known for leaching into the water you are drinking are phthalates.



Water is life as important for our animals as it is for us.

While the FDA has a limit to the allowable phthalate content in bottled water, many factors like heat and sunshine, prolonged storage, pH of water (debated), reuse of the bottles, and character of the plastic can increase the amount of exposure long after the quality has been controlled. These contaminants are known (especially in high levels) to disrupt the endocrine system, leading to reproductive, developmental and metabolic issues in men, women, and children (unborn as well, from exposure in utero). Phthalates have been linked to asthma and allergies, and allergic reactions. Risks can vary with sensitivity and exposure, and there are several types. Not all are connected with all concerns.

Filtered water is an option. Some filters remove good minerals from the water, which can be counter-productive. Some do not sufficiently remove heavy metals or fluoride. Another downside can be the bad taste left by various filters and the costs of installing and maintaining them. A combination of Pressure Osmosis and Charcoal filters can remove everything we don't want, while leaving behind beneficial minerals and a great flavor. Spring water is also a fantastic choice for water. Most companies that deliver spring water do so in plastic containers.

My family's favorite way to source our water is to travel to different springs and fill our own containers. While glass and stainless steel can be heavy, they are your best bet for personal and storage bottles for water. An awesome resource for locating springs that others have used (for years and years in many cases) is www.findspring.com. It's a lovely drive and often a fun side quest when visiting new natural areas. We change up the springs we use now and again and always find ones wherever we're traveling. We want to vary the minerals and prevent over or under supplementing them. Springs all have different flavors and characters, it's so delicious to find a new spring that tastes amazing and makes your whole body wake up. It's important to avoid overuse of any particular area or resource when wildcrafting your water, food

and medicines. We always ask first and offer something to the water and the land in gratitude for the resources and the gifts they offer.

It's incredible how much difference including pure water with healthy minerals makes in how you feel and recover. Drink your first cup when you wake up in the morning, before you take in anything else. Spend even a few days replacing some of your other beverage choices with water and you'll see a difference in your skin and energy. Do NOT forget the importance of electrolytes, especially if you are diligently working up to the recommended amount of water. Over consumption of water without electrolytes (especially sodium) can deplete these minerals and cause health concerns. You will be making more trips to the restroom at first, please don't let this discourage you. Your body will adjust and you are flushing excess waste that has been hanging around making you feel bad. Try to finish up a couple of hours before bed to prevent needing to wake up. Room temperature water, or warm, is best, ice water contracts the parts of the body meant to absorb it. Also, if you want to maximize digestion of nutrients from meals, do not drink water, or other beverages, during and around eating time. Diluting stomach acid causes it to be less effective at breaking down foods, this also leads to more indigestion symptoms.

Your mission, if you choose to feel better: Wake up, drink water. Eat good food, don't drink water for half an hour before and after eating. Move your body and drink more when you do. I know it can seem overrated, a trend, a way to sell Stanley Cups. It's my experience, and I've seen it many times, that regulating water intake helps regulate everything. Well-being is a side effect. As the Lakota say, Mni Wiconi — Water is Life.

Catrina offers classes and workshops in Belly Dance Fitness, Belly Dance Fusion, and Somatic Movement. She offers private, small group and group formats. FMImagpieatthespring.com, or email dance@magpieatthespring.com

Shipping Plus



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Our New Address Will Be:
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Shipping Plus will be **CLOSED APRIL 29** for 8 days and we **Re-open on Thursday May 7, 2026.**

We must travel for a Family Celebration of Life and to carry out final wishes. We apologize for any inconvenience as we are unable to receive or send out packages during this closure. Thank you for understanding.

719-686-7587 • Open M-F 9-5:30

ShippingPlusCO@gmail.com • www.shippingplusco.net



MEMORIAL DAY
REMEMBER AND HONOR

Spread The Word!
 Pet Food Distributions for May 2026
Monday May 11
Tuesday May 26
2 - 5 p.m.

at the Little Chapel of the Hills, Divide, CO.
Help us keep pets at home with their families!
www.PetFoodPantryTC.com

The Pet Food Pantry Volunteers & our Mascots, Baylee, Yetee & Daisy, want to "Thank You" for your past support and your future contributions.
We continue to need your donations.

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220 S. Burdette, Woodland Park, CO
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 Jamie Schumacher
 Mon-Fri 8:00-5:00

~OUT AND ABOUT~

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

AVAILABLE ONLINE

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

CAÑON CITY

- 16 Museum of Colorado Prisons presents a Cemetery Crawl and Overnight Investigation. Crawl is 8-9:30 p.m. at Woodpecker Hill in Historic Greenwood Cemetery. Investigation 9:30 p.m.-3 a.m. at the Museum of Colorado Prisons. You can purchase tickets online or call 719-269-3015.
- Sundays Paint with Mary Shell - see page 7.

LIBRARY

- 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.
- Cribbage Club Fridays 10-noon.
- D&D for teens 12-2 p.m., Saturdays adults and younger kids 2-4 p.m. Registration is required.
- Dulcimer Club for kids 2nd and 4th Wednesday 3:30-4:30 p.m.
- GAME Dice with D.I.C.E. 2-4 p.m. Saturdays. Local police officers play board games with teens in our teen room.
- Mahjong Club Tuesdays 1-4 p.m.
- Metaphysical Group Second Saturdays 10:30 a.m.
- Rummikub Club meets 3rd Monday of each month 1 p.m.
- Story Swap Book Chat 1st and 3rd Tuesdays 3 p.m.
- Story time and craft Tuesday and Thursdays 10:30 a.m. All at 516 Macon Ave unless otherwise specified. FMI 719-269-9020 www.cpcpl.lib.co.us

CASCADE

- 8 LEGO Build 3:30-4:30 p.m. Engineering your best LEGO creation and completing LEGO challenges are only some of the possibilities at this open-ended LEGO program using the library's LEGO resources. Join us for creative fun! All ages welcome.
- 11 Tea Blend Workshop 4-5 p.m. Learn about and experiment with different tea leaves and ingredients to create personalized summer tea blends. Take your custom tea blend home and enjoy. Ages 18 and up. Registration required <https://ppld.librarymarket.com/event/tea-blend-workshop-544781>.
- Fridays Storytime 10:30-11:15 a.m. Stories and more for children ages 3-7 and their parents or caregivers. FMI 719-531-6333 ext. 7011 or to register.

CRIPPLE CREEK

- 16 History Talk "What She Wore" at the Heritage Center 10-noon, free, donations to benefit the speaker. Melissa Lopez from Pikes Peak Victorian Society will discuss Victorian women's clothing from society to the frontier. Light refreshments will be served. FMI 719-689-3315 or mrozzell@cripple-creek.co.us.
- 21 Third Thursday of the month is the Two Mile High Club monthly meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the lower level of the Double Eagle Casino complex 442 East Bennett Ave.
- 22-25 Memorial Day Art Show at the Heritage Center
- 23 Registration date for Pearl DeVere Bed Races. See page 12.
- 25 Donkey release!

AMERICAN LEGION

- 7 American Legion Post 171 meets the first Thursday of every month with food and social hour at 5 p.m. at 400 Carr St., Food and the main meeting starting at 6 p.m. Elections in May.
- 9 BINGO the second Saturday each month 6-8 p.m. at the American Legion Post 171. The Victor Elk's has teamed up with American Legion Post 171 to raise funds and support veterans, youth and community services in Teller County. Teamwork building a better community.

ASPEN MINE CENTER

- 29 Commodities distribution 9-1 p.m.
- Tuesdays BINGO 10:30 a.m. for seniors.
- Tuesdays Moral Reconition Therapy 5-7 p.m. at ACCC building.
- Crafting Group 12-1:30 p.m. Join us in a welcoming space designed for self-expression and connection! FMI 719-471-8181 ext. 163.
- What Matters Wednesdays 10:45-11:45 a.m. Learning Series upstairs conference room. Join us every week as we bring professionals to you. We may go over different subjects like fraud protection.
- Wednesdays Luncheon 11:30-1 p.m. upstairs dining room, every Wed, donations greatly appreciated, but not required.
- Mexican Train on Thursday 10:30 a.m. All programs at 166 E Bennett Ave.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

- 5 Playgroup 10-11:30 a.m. Cripple Creek Parks & Recreation. Learn, grow, play, and have fun! Join us to meet other children and caregivers, participate in fun and educational activities together, and nurture your child's development. Playgroup is for families with children 5 years and under and their caregivers, older siblings are welcome. Walk-ins welcome. FMI Aimee@cpteller.org
- GED Classes Mondays & Wednesdays 1-3 p.m. New students (min. age 16) may join GED classes after completing orientation and S40 registration fee. FMI Katy@cpteller.org.

DIVIDE

- 8 Teller Senior Coalition BINGO! 10-11:30 a.m. at Little Chapel Church 69 CR 5. Please call to set up a ride 719-687-0256 and join us for doughnuts, coffee and FUN!
- 10 Mother's Day with the Wolves 9-11 a.m. Wolf tour, a flower for Moms and snacks. Adults \$40 (12+), Kids \$20 (6-11). Prepay event, reservations 719-687-9742. Colorado Wolf and Wildlife Center.
- 11, 26 Little Chapel Food Pantry distribution 2-5 p.m. FMI 719-322-7610.

LIBRARY

- 11122 US-24 phone: 719-686-5301
- Wiggle Wednesdays Storytime every Wednesday 10 a.m. Come get your wiggles out at this new storytime for ages 0-5!
- 5 Fiber Arts Club 11 a.m. All are invited to join this club of fiber artists! Some of these arts include crochet, knitting, felting, needle point, sewing, macrame and more.
- 14 Fiber Arts Club 11 a.m. All are invited to join this club of fiber artists! Some of these arts include crochet, knitting, felting, needle point, sewing, macrame and more.
- 14 Wandering Book Club 2 p.m. Enjoy reading and discussing themes related to adventure, travel, fantasy, and exploration of any realm, real or fictional! May's theme is Fantastical Realms!
- 29 Garden Party at the Library 4-6 p.m. Join us for a fun and community-focused Garden Party! Come for a Seed & Plant Exchange, Kids' Garden Activities and refreshments!

FAIRPLAY

- 13 Mountain Essentials celebrates their grand re-opening 11-6 p.m. Alex the alpaca and his friends will be here for a petting zoo along with cotton candy, snacks, jewelry and good company.

FLORENCE

- 5, 7, 8, 9 Armed Forces Art Exhibit. Submit date 5. Show opens at Bell Tower Cultural Center 201 East 2nd St on 7th. Reception 5-6:30 p.m. on the 8. Downtown show opens on the 9th.
- June 9 Bobina's show at Blue Spruce Gallery. Reception May 9, 4:30-6:30 p.m. See page 4.
- 9, 10 Holistic Fair in Pathfinder Park.
- 17 Sweet Radiance celebrates 2-year Anniversary 9-4 p.m.

JOHN C FREMONT LIBRARY

- 1 Chapter of the Silent Book Club 2-4 p.m. Bring any book and meet other book lovers! Attendees will read silently together and then have time to chat with each other.
- 4 Valley Wide will bring a mobile unit to do free health screenings 9-12 p.m. Just come to the parking lot and chat with them while they're here.
- 8 Cañon City Workforce 11-1 p.m. to help people with career related questions.
- 11 Join us to make a Beaded Forever Plant 2 p.m. Registration is required; To register please call Abby at 719-784-4649 ext. 3.
- 14 Creative Writing 2 p.m. The theme is various writing prompts. Come to flex your creative muscles and meet other people who enjoy writing.
- 15 Tween Group 2 p.m.
- 18 Movie for adults 1 p.m. There will be free popcorn but bring a drink in case you get thirsty!
- 19 Fremont County Master Gardeners 10 a.m. presentation on gardening. Bring your gardening questions and a friend!
- 21 BINGO! 2 p.m. We will play three games and there will be a prize for the winner of each game.
- 26 Fremont County Clerk Justin Grantham 2 p.m. presents "Upcoming Primary Election" at the library.
- Wednesdays Wool Gatherers 10-noon.
- Fridays Story Time 10:30 a.m. The John C. Fremont Library is located at 130 Church Ave. For more information call 719-784-4649.

LAKE GEORGE

- 12 VFW at Lake George Cemetery 12 p.m. See page 16.

LEADVILLE NATIONAL MINING HILL OF FAME AND MUSEUM

- 19 Mining for Knowledge: Purls and Picks The Hidden Kinks of Miners a monthly zoom lecture series 5-6 p.m. \$20/ing. FMI visit mininghilloffame.org
- 31 Spirits at the Shaft: Ore We Go! Season kick-off event at the Matchless Mine. Join us for a bonfire, s'mores, hot cocoa, and mining history and

6-8 p.m. Dancing encouraged!

FMI to reserve your spot in classes 719-510-2225

LIBRARY

- 1 Woodburning Workshop 11 a.m. Learn the basics of woodburning using the new mini makerspace in the Florissant Library! Please call to sign up for a spot!
- 1 Writing Club from 11 a.m. Share progress, talk about the craft, bring snippets for critique and troubleshooting your projects!
- 6 Diabetes Support Group 10-11 a.m. We are coming together to talk about the ups and downs of life with Type 2 diabetes. This group is not led by a medical professional; no medical advice will be offered.
- 7 Book Cover Book Club 5:30-7 p.m. Come sit a spell! Explore stories that feature witchcraft, mystical worlds, and magical adventures, from fantasy to contemporary works, creating a space for those who love all things magical and mysterious.
- 8 Tarot Club 3 p.m. Teens and up are welcome to join this group and learn all things tarot. May's theme is "Storytelling."
- 11 Romantics with Altitude Book Club 4-5:30 p.m. Read and talk about romance books with other lovers of love!
- 12 Bookworms Book Club 10:30-12 p.m.
- 12 Makerspace Orientation 11 a.m. Get your orientation to use the new mini Makerspace! Please give us a call to sign up for a spot!
- 12 3D Printer Certification 12:30 p.m. Get certified to use the 3D printer at the Florissant Library! Please complete an orientation before reserving a spot for this class.
- 14 Yarnal! Fiber Arts Club 10:30-12 p.m. Beginner or expert, come crochet, knit, sew, and craft with us!
- 15 Writing Club 11 a.m. Share progress, talk about the craft, bring snippets for critique and troubleshoot your projects!
- 15 Teen Game Night 5-7 p.m. Have food and play games! Get competitive and win against your friends!
- 16 Relax and Craft 10-12 p.m. Bring a friend and create something wonderful. Materials for a self-guided craft will be provided. Treat yourself! For teens and adults.
- 19 Read Amok Book Club 11-12:30 p.m. Bring up to 5 books within the theme to share! May's theme is "The impact of music on your life."
- 27 Makerspace Orientation 11 a.m. Get your orientation to use the new mini Makerspace! Please give us a call to sign up for a spot!
- 27 3D Printer Certification 12:30 p.m. Get certified to use the 3D printer at the Florissant Library! Please complete an orientation before reserving a spot for this class.
- Thursdays 10-11 a.m. Homeschool Family Playgroup. Come make connections with other homeschool families!
- Tuesdays Tai Chi 10-11 a.m. Come relax with us!
- Storytime every Friday 10 a.m. FMI 719-748-3939

MANITOU SPRINGS

- 13 BYO Book Club 4-5 p.m. Join us for a monthly Bring-Your-Own book group that meets the second Wednesday of each month. Patrons are encouraged to bring their latest read and share their thoughts with the group. Book groups are open to everyone and they are a great opportunity to discover new genres and titles, meet new people and engage in discussion.
- 20 DIY Coaster Quartet 4-5:30 p.m. Join us for a hands-on craft program where you will make a set of four distinct coasters to take home, perfect as small gifts or add personality to your own table. All supplies will be provided. Ages 18 and up. Registration required at <https://ppld.librarymarket.com/event/diy-coaster-quartet-544563>.
- 22 Investing Basics 12-1:30 p.m. This class is for those who feel they have a good stance on their financial basics, debt paid down, a good emergency fund in place, and are asking themselves, "Now what?" We will discuss investments: how they work, some pros and cons to investing. We will also discuss different places where you can save and invest, how to make the most of those areas, and how they are taxed. Continue building a brighter financial future for you and your loved ones today! Registration required <https://ppld.librarymarket.com/event/investing-basics-537800>.
- Pearson VUE Testing Center Mondays 9:30-5:30 p.m. Schedule your certification or licensure exam at www.pearsonvue.com. Fees vary. FMI Katy@cpteller.org
- Playgroup Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Fridays 9:30-11 a.m. (canceled 5/15) Learn, grow, play, and have fun! Join us to meet other children and caregivers, participate in fun and educational activities together, and nurture your child's development. Playgroup is for families with children 5 years and under and their caregivers, older siblings are welcome. Walk-ins welcome. FMI Aimee@cpteller.org
- Telehealth Location Monday-Thursday 9-4 p.m. Comfortable private rooms and equipment available for any virtual appointment including health care, therapy visits, interviews, parent-teacher conferences, and more.
- Yoga with Leah Mondays 10-11 a.m. (No Yoga 5/25) First come, first served, no late entry. Bring your own mat and props. All levels welcome. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org
- Yoga with Leah Wednesdays 5-6 p.m. (No Yoga 5/20) First come, first served, no late entry. Bring your own mat and props. All levels welcome. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org
- All programs at Community Partnership Family Resource Center 701 Gold Hill Place unless otherwise noted. FMI 719-686-0705.

LIBRARY

- 1 Coffee Chats 10 a.m. Join us for free coffee, donuts and conversation. Meet new friends in Woodland Park!
- 2 Spill the Tea for Teens 10 a.m. Join us for an hour of casual hanging out and reading.
- 2 Advanced Circuit Masterclasses 1-3 p.m. Learn advanced skills using the Cricut! We're making 3D paper flowers. A library certification for using the cricut is required to register.
- 5 Mahjong 101, 10 a.m. Learn the rules to Mahjong! Give us a call to sign up! Please note this is a two part series with the second part, playing the game, occurring on May 7th.
- 5 Revenge of the 5th Star Wars Storytime 10 a.m. Come in costume if you'd like!
- 5 Woodland Park Book Club 10:30 a.m. Check our book clubs' page to see what we're reading next!
- 5 For the Love of Writing 3 p.m. Writers of all genres and skill levels are invited to join this group of those smitten with the written!
- 6 Kids Craftroom—Mother's Day Craft 3-5 p.m. Join us and make a craft for mom!
- 6 Nutrition and Aging with Natural Grocers 3 p.m. Learn how to maintain muscle mass now, and well into the future, with key foods and supplements all recommended by science-based research.
- 6 Evening Book Club 4:45 p.m. A book club for those looking for an evening group!
- 6 Evening Tarot Club at 7 p.m. Join us for an afterhours edition of tarot club! May's theme is "Storytelling."
- 7 Mahjong 102, 10 a.m. Play Mahjong! Give us a call to sign up! Please note this is a two part series, with the first part where we learn to play being on May 5th.
- 7 Photography Club 7 p.m. For the beginner and the enthusiast! Share your work, learn new tricks, and participate in monthly challenges!
- 8 Mothers' Day Charcuterie Gift Workshop for teens 3:30 p.m. Come make a board for your mom!
- 9 Board Game Club for Adults 1-3 p.m. Come play a game and meet other tabletop game players! Bring a game or play one of the many we have!
- 13 AARP Smart Drivers course 1-3 p.m. Sign up for this driving refresher course to improve your driving skills and learn how to better avoid traffic violations. AARP members (must have card) can register for \$20. Non-AARP members can register for \$25. Completing this course may qualify you for lower insurance rates.
- 13 Metaphysical Book Club 5:45 p.m. Join us for open-hearted discussions around our chosen every month. Topics touch on spirituality, philosophy, and metaphysics. Read one of the featured books and bring your thoughts and ideas to share. Check the website for each month's theme and book picks!
- 14 Readers Circle Book Club 10:30 a.m. For the avid reader! Come join us! You can find our book picks on the library website.
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WOODLAND PARK

3 Invitation to the sights and sounds of "Star Wars" concert features video enhancement by Craig Harms at Church of the Nazarene 900 Evergreen Heights Dr. Doors open 6 p.m. for concert seating, costume contest registration and judging, bazinga vintage toys with Star Wars items for purchase, and invitation to take photos in front of our Star Wars backdrop and more. The FREE concert begins at 7 p.m. Woodland Park Wind Symphony member will be in costume, and we invite our audience to wear costumes — you do not have to sign up for the contest, just enjoy being a Star Wars character!

folklife 4-6 p.m. \$20 adults, \$5 child under 13. FMI minninghalloffame.org

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

- 5 Crossroads Co-Parenting Seminar 4:30-7:30 p.m. Teller County court approved parenting and divorce class seminar. \$35 fee. Pre-registration required. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org
- 20 Civil Protection Orders 4-5 p.m. A free presentation by Colorado Legal Services to provide basic information about obtaining civil protection orders in Colorado, plus time for Q&A at the end. Free, walk-ins welcome. FMI 719-471-0380.
- Addiction Recovery Tuesdays 9-4 p.m. Serenity Recovery Connection provides peer and telephone recovery support and coaching. Walk-ins welcome. FMI 719-465-2295.
- Career Center Tuesdays & Thursdays 10-3 p.m. Pikes Peak Workforce Center helps with job searching, resume assistance, and unemployment applications. Walk-ins welcome or schedule appointments with George@cpteller.org
- Family Cafè Monday-Thursday 9-4 p.m. Enjoy coffee, free Wi-Fi, Kid's Corner, and a space for parents and caregivers in our community to connect.
- Foundation Training Innovative Exercise Program Wednesdays 7-7:45 a.m. (no class 20 & 27) 45 minutes of activation, breathing and stretching. Feel stronger and more connected with your body after just one class. Bring your mat. FMI beth.foundationtraining@gmail.com.
- GED Classes Mondays & Wednesdays 10-12 p.m. New students (min. age 16) may join GED classes after completing orientation and S40 registration fee. FMI Katy@cpteller.org
- Pearson VUE Testing Center Mondays 9:30-5:30 p.m. Schedule your certification or licensure exam at www.pearsonvue.com. Fees vary. FMI Katy@cpteller.org
- Playgroup Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Fridays 9:30-11 a.m. (canceled 5/15) Learn, grow, play, and have fun! Join us to meet other children and caregivers, participate in fun and educational activities together, and nurture your child's development. Playgroup is for families with children 5 years and under and their caregivers, older siblings are welcome. Walk-ins welcome. FMI Aimee@cpteller.org
- Telehealth Location Monday-Thursday 9-4 p.m. Comfortable private rooms and equipment available for any virtual appointment including health care, therapy visits, interviews, parent-teacher conferences, and more.
- Yoga with Leah Mondays 10-11 a.m. (No Yoga 5/25) First come, first served, no late entry. Bring your own mat and props. All levels welcome. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org
- Yoga with Leah Wednesdays 5-6 p.m. (No Yoga 5/20) First come, first served, no late entry. Bring your own mat and props. All levels welcome. FMI Michelle@cpteller.org
- All programs at Community Partnership Family Resource Center 701 Gold Hill Place unless otherwise noted. FMI 719-686-0705.

LIBRARY

- 5 Crafternoon 1 p.m. Meets every first Tuesday of the month. Meet at the library to crochet, knit, craft, learn, and get to know your neighbors! All crafters welcome!
- 5 Socrates Cafe 6 p.m. Come and exchange philosophical perspectives based on personal experiences. Everyone is welcome regardless of age or background. This will not be a class, lecture or debate, just a simple community dialogue. There may be held at the Community Center next door to the library.
- 16 Hot Rods and Hot Cakes, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Pancake breakfast and classic cars at the Guffey Community Charter School.
- 26 Guffey Literary Society 1-3 p.m. May's book is TBA. The Guffey Literary Society is a wonderfully dynamic and diverse group. All are welcome to join.
- 27 Rocky Mountain Rural Health Outreach 11-2 p.m. Free health screenings! RMRH can check your blood pressure, blood sugar, pulse and oxygen levels. If you need to see a doctor, they can help you find one!
- 28 Last day of Guffey Community Charter School. See Guffey calendar for Summer Reading Program TBA. FMI 719-689-9280 or Guffey. Library@parkcountycity.gov

LIBRARY

- 17 Downtown Clean-up, citywide
- 23 Gold Panning opens, weather allowing.
- 23-25 Citywide Garage Sale
- 30-31 Citywide Clean-Up at City Hall
- Victor Lowell Thomas Museum open weekends 10-5 p.m.

WOODLAND PARK

- 1, 2 Munchkin Market is located at 1061 Barnhart Range Rd., a HUGE consignment sale of gently used children's items with the following types of items: Clothing (sizes 0-junior 16), shoes (infant to juniors), all types of baby gear, strollers, high chairs, toys, media, health and safety, accessories, maternity, and more! We accept cash, checks, and all major credit cards. If you're interested in consigning, we'd love for you to join us! You can receive up to 70% of the selling price of your items. Register to consign or for more information, please visit our website at munchkinmarket.net
- Friday 9-7 p.m.
- Saturday 9-2 (1/2 Price Day, ALL ITEMS 50% OFF)
- 14 Special Education Resource Fair 5-7 p.m. The Pass Cultural Center. Pizza is provided, bring the family and enjoy the event. Questions contact Tatyana Chessani 719-714-2556 tchessani@wpdsk12.org
- 18 SOAR Meeting for Nonprofits 9-10:15 a.m. at 400 W Midland #100 Conference Room. Two speakers - Melody Campbell (UPCC) and Lee Taylor (Edward Jones). Call 719-23-9902 with questions.
- 31 Deadline to apply for booth for Mountain Arts Festival.
- Fridays Zumba Classes at WP Senior Center 10 a.m.

LIBRARY

- 1 Coffee Chats 10 a.m. Join us for free coffee, donuts and conversation. Meet new friends in Woodland Park!
- 2 Spill the Tea for Teens 10 a.m. Join us for an hour of casual hanging out and reading.
- 2 Advanced Circuit Masterclasses 1-3 p.m. Learn advanced skills using the Cricut! We're making 3D paper flowers. A library certification for using the cricut is required to register.
- 5 Mahjong 101, 10 a.m. Learn the rules to Mahjong! Give us a call to sign up! Please note this is a two part series with the second part, playing the game, occurring on May 7th.
- 5 Revenge of the 5th Star Wars Storytime 10 a.m. Come in costume if you'd like!
- 5 Woodland Park Book Club 10:30 a.m. Check our book clubs' page to see what we're reading next!
- 5 For the Love of Writing 3 p.m. Writers of all genres and skill levels are invited to join this group of those smitten with the written!
- 6 Kids Craftroom—Mother's Day Craft 3-5 p.m. Join us and make a craft for mom!
- 6 Nutrition and Aging with Natural Grocers 3 p.m. Learn how to maintain muscle mass now, and well into the future, with key foods and supplements all recommended by science-based research.
- 6 Evening Book Club 4:45 p.m. A book club for those looking for an evening group!
- 6 Evening Tarot Club at 7 p.m. Join us for an afterhours edition of tarot club! May's theme is "Storytelling."
- 7 Mahjong 102, 10 a.m. Play Mahjong! Give us a call to sign up! Please note this is a two part series, with the first part where we learn to play being on May 5th.
- 7 Photography Club 7 p.m. For the beginner and the enthusiast! Share your work, learn new tricks, and participate in monthly challenges!
- 8 Mothers' Day Charcuterie Gift Workshop for teens 3:30 p.m. Come make a board for your mom!
- 9 Board Game Club for Adults 1-3 p.m. Come play a game and meet other tabletop game players! Bring a game or play one of the many we have!
- 13 AARP Smart Drivers course 1-3 p.m. Sign up for this driving refresher course to improve your driving skills and learn how to better avoid traffic violations. AARP members (must have card) can register for \$20. Non-AARP members can register for \$25. Completing this course may qualify you for lower insurance rates.
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BOARDS AND BARRELS

1-3 Star Wars Weekend

Make Sure You're Ready for Fire Season

by Tracie Bennitt

In case you haven't noticed, it's pretty dry out there. I recall back in 2002 before the Hayman Fire when we had low rain- and snow-fall, and humidity levels were in single digits. Moisture levels at our property this year have been low just as they were then.

The Hayman Fire weather, fueled by dry conditions and high winds, is eerily similar to weather conditions we're having today. Local insurance companies are offering mitigation requirements to help protect properties, as well as how to prepare in case of an evacuation. I'm sure many of these suggestions were around 25 years ago, but until that 138,000 acre fire consumed all of our attention, it never really seemed that important. Now we know better.

First things first. Get your stuff ready in case of a quick departure. A go-bag comes in really handy if you have one prepared for each of your family members, as well as the pets. You can sign up for emergency alerts pekalerts.org in Teller and El Paso counties. DougCoAlert.com covers emergency situations in Douglas County. Parkcountyco.gov/alertcenter posts emergency situations in Park County. You can also subscribe to Notify Me or RSS to be instantly alerted. All of these sites can help you stay up-to-date on what's happening in your area.

After receiving an evacuation notice, close your exterior doors and windows. Leave your doors unlocked with the lights on inside and outside the house. This made it easy for emergency personnel to use our facilities, refill water bottles and feed our fish and MIA kitties. We also offered them any food in the fridge! A ladder left outside also assists firefighters with access to your roof. Closing and protecting any openings in the home also helps to keep any embers from gaining access. If possible, you can also shut off the gas supply to your house. A manual garage door is also important in case your electricity has already gone off.

Time permitting, gather up any valuables including family photos, computer info on hard drives, laptops, electronic chargers

and any other irreplaceable items you can accumulate. It was extremely difficult for us as we were not prepared for this event at all. My daughter was on a trip to Europe with many of the Woodland Park Middle School kids. My biggest concern was her coming home, and the house burnt along with all her personal items. My priority was getting her room packed up and thrown into a vehicle as quickly as possible. Of course, all of this happened in prehistoric times. We had stopped at the Divide Fire Department to see what was up after seeing the smoke on our way home. The folks there took our PAGER number to text us if the fire crossed the river up by Hackett Mountain. Middy, we got the text. It was a frantic afternoon to be sure. Plus, once you're out of the area, you can't go back in! It definitely was the most stressful month of our life and will live in our memories forever.

The one saving grace was we were stuck at Java Junction, located in Gold Hill Square at the time, with our good friend Lorena Drapeau, along with Whitney Wyckoff and Nancy Hartsfield. To keep me busy, we started the Firefighters Fund and raised over \$100,000 for the local fire departments along with receiving a TON of donations for their fire stations. Our house survived the fire, but neighbors weren't so lucky.

It is recommended to leave as soon as the evacuation is announced by fire officials. Know your route out. Lots of us have one way in and one way out. There is usually a predetermined area for evacuees. We were able to borrow and later buy a camper that we parked at Whitney's for almost a month before we were allowed back into our property. I can tell you, leaving a green (although dry) pristine forest and coming home to black, pink slurry painted sticks was quite the change. It's been over 25 years, and the aspens have started coming back, along with a number of pine and spruce trees. Growth is slow. It's definitely a biology experiment in real life.



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Reach out today: Schedule an appointment or drop by at your convenience. --Tony L. Perry, President | CEO



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