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the Montrose Mirror

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Issue No. 409 Dec. 28 2020

LEADING WITH INFORMATION: COMMUNICATION PROS RAISE THE BAR

By Gail Marvel

MONTROSE-The community fight against COVID is only as good as the collective information citizens receive from their local Emergency Management Teams. Two prominent members of those teams are **Montrose County Media Relations Manager Katie Yergensen** and **Matt Jenkins, Public Information Officer for Montrose County Schools**.

Yergensen, who has been with Montrose County since 2013, said, "I could not manage without Erica Story [Digital Communications Project Manager]. Hiring her is the best decision I've made since working for Montrose County. Erica has a background in creating and designing websites. If the county had to hire outside the company it would cost five figures. She is that good and we are a team."

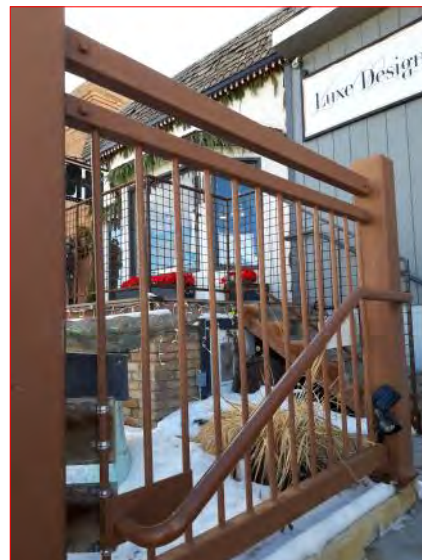
Montrose County communicates with the community through a variety of channels, including the county website, the Montrose County JIC (Joint



Pictured above are (left) RE-1J Schools PIO Matt Jenkins and (right) Montrose County Media Relations Manager Katie Yergensen. Courtesy photos.

Continued pg 9

MORE SHOPPING IN LOMO: LUXE DESIGNS BOUTIQUE OPENS IN SAMPLER SQUARE



Mirror Staff Report

MONTROSE-Luxe Designs Lifestyle Boutique is now open at 24 South Grand Avenue in Lower Montrose (LoMo)! Shoppers can find the latest fashions, and services that include closet consulting, personalized style workshops, and private shopping events. Despite the many challenges of opening a new retail outlet in 2020, business has been good so far, owner Ellena Wenger (center) said. "People are loving the store," she said. "We have done really well." For more information call 970-650-5893, or stop in.

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

CORONER'S OFFICE INFORMATION RELEASE

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-On Monday afternoon, Dec. 21, 2020, a call was received by Western Colorado Regional Dispatch Center stating there was a person trapped under a semi-truck cab that he had been working on. Montrose Fire Protection District EMS, the Montrose County Sheriff's Office, and the Montrose Police Department responded. Roger Clyde Neely, a 54-year-old male of Olathe, Colo., was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident. Cause and manner of death are pending autopsy results and toxicology analysis. The case is under investigation by the Montrose Police Department and the Montrose County Coroner's Office of Medical Investigation.

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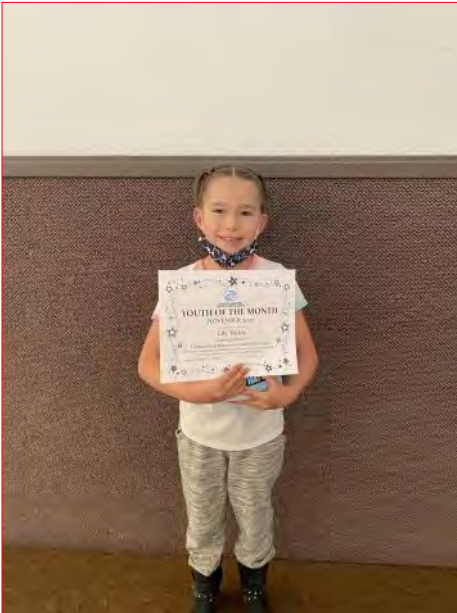


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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

BLACK CANYON BOYS & GIRLS CLUB NOVEMBER & DECEMBER YOUTHS OF THE MONTH



Lily. Courtesy photo.



Callie. Courtesy photo.

Club member. Lily had a rocky start at Club but recently staff has noticed a huge improvement in her attitude and behavior. When she first started at Club, she had a hard time getting along with some of the other members and communicating how she was feeling. However, Lily has become one of the kindest members at Club and staff is so proud of how well she works with her peers. Lily is always willing to participate in activities, help clean up, and gets along well with everyone in her group. Callie was chosen as the BCBGC Youth of the Month for December. Staff chose to recognize Callie because of her awesome behavior and attitude at Club. Callie has worked hard this semester on controlling her reactions to situations and treating everyone with kindness. Staff has seen Callie grow so much and they are extremely proud of all her hard work.

Way to go Lily and Callie! For more information on the BCBGC, visit www.bcbgc.org.

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-Lily was chosen as the Black Canyon Boys & Girls Club (BCBGC) Youth

of the Month for November. Lily was chosen by staff because of how much she has improved and grown since she became a



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: LETTERS

CITY OF MONTROSE, FIND ANOTHER LOCATION FOR YOUR HUB

Dear Mayor Bynum, City Councilmen and the Planning Commission,

Judging from the huge city wide outcry sighting very strong reasons against going forward with subject development in the proposed location, we hope you have taken this extended period of time to reconsider your prior decisions. It's untenable that you would proceed.

In addition to all of the problems anticipated with such a development in its proposed location, there is yet another problem. The streets, starting with Cobble Drive at 6450 have not been properly maintained and are full of holes, patches and are in substandard condition despite repeated promises to amend. It's an amusement park ride to drive through here. Yet, the City of Montrose has over \$2 million dollars to out right GIVE to a contractor who intends to build structures (substandard other communications have stated) that will house yet another 1000+ people on the same roads. Of all the terrible ideas planned for this development, using Cobble Drive as an entrance to HUB is possibly the worst.

The City of Montrose chose to develop the N. Grand Ave. property and has tax payer money invested there. Build HUB there or find another location for your HUB.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeanette and John Ritchey, Montrose



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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

COLORADO SECRETARY OF STATE'S ELECTION SECURITY TEAM WINS PRESTIGIOUS U.S. ATTORNEY'S AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Special to the Mirror

DENVER- The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Colorado has awarded the Secretary of State's Election Security unit with its Award of Excellence for its role in safeguarding the 2020 General Election.

The Award of Excellence was presented to State Elections Director Judd Choate and the Department of State's Chief Information Officer Trevor Timmons.

"Congratulations to State Elections Director Judd Choate, Chief Information Officer Trevor Timmons, and members of their divisions for receiving this Award of Excellence for their outstanding work on election security in the 2020 election," said Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold. "The 2020 General Election once

again proved that Colorado's elections are the country's gold standard. Thank you to U.S. Attorney Dunn for recognizing our dedicated team with this award."

The team was recognized for their tireless efforts over the last year to ensure election security in the state. The 2020 election had the largest number of Coloradans participate in state history, in the midst of foreign and domestic misinformation efforts as well as a global pandemic.

"Coloradans can be proud of their election system and the professionals who make it safe and secure," said U.S. Attorney Jason Dunn.

"Over the past year, this group of dedicated public servants from state and federal agencies worked together to protect and ensure the security of the election in our

state. Their efforts contributed to the confidence that law enforcement now shares in the election in Colorado. I couldn't be prouder of this team and am grateful for their outstanding service at this critical time."

The U.S. Attorney Award of Excellence is bestowed by the U.S. Attorney on a quarterly basis to honor outstanding service to the District of Colorado. Award winners often include law enforcement partners, including those from state and federal agencies, as well as employees of the U.S. Attorney's Office.

In addition to the Secretary of State's Office, the latest awardees include employees from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, and the U.S. Attorney's Office.

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

DELTA COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES BUILDING FLOODS

Special to the Mirror

DELTA-The new Delta County Human Services Building sustains substantial flooding. On Thursday, Dec. 24 at approximately 2 p.m., the Delta County Department of Human Services Building, located at 320 W. 5th St., experienced a failure of a fire suppression line, causing extensive flooding of the interior of the building. While flooding was sustained throughout the entire building including the areas occupied by the County attorney and probation offices, significant damage occurred in one of the primary work areas of Human Services.

While recovery began immediately and is ongoing, a disruption in services may be experienced in the weeks ahead; Human Services will be open on a limited basis Monday, December 28, 2020. Additional updates can be found at www.DeltaCounty.com.

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LEADING WITH INFORMATION: COMMUNICATION PROS RAISE THE BAR From pg 1

Information Center), the West Slope info.com (<http://www.westslopeinfo.com/category/west-slope-news/>) and press releases.

Yergensen said, "COVID is a complex issue. We spend a lot of time on the phone. Frankly, people are concerned and they want to express their concern. They want contact with a person who can help. We have a COVID hot line staffed by a variety of people. Citizens can communicate with a person and get questions answered."

In the early days of COVID, Yergensen personally handled an average of 60 telephone calls a day. She said, "Now it averages about 30. People want to know where to get tested, how to get the results of tests, business guidance and so on. Part of our goal is to be as accessible as we can be. Currently we are running 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. I like talking to people and learning from them; it helps me do my job."

In the world of the COVID emergency, the Joint Information System (JIC) is heavily relied upon. Throughout the entire pandemic all agencies (county, city, school district, county health, fire district) have been meeting virtually and physically whenever possible. Yergensen said, "Great partnerships help us work together and we can cross-promote messaging. Currently we meet weekly for about an hour. We are able to tailor the messaging to our needs. One of the biggest challenges is to keep up with changes in COVID. We want to do the best job we can to present accurate information. This pandemic shows us we need to be flexible. The entire process is a matter of scaling up, scaling down, and scaling up again. All our partners want the same thing...accurate and reliable information. Health and safety for everyone and their family."

COVID reports are driven by increases in cases and calls from citizens. Yergensen said, "Our public, whatever they are looking for, we make it prominent in our messaging. We take strategies into account and address specific areas when something comes up. Questions like quarantine vs isolation, how do I handle that?"

On any given day the website has 4,000 to 5,000 views. Yergensen said, "There was a lull in September and October. Again, we are always scaling up and down with the number of cases. We have an open and accessible platform called 'Ask Us Anything' where we answer every question they have."

Yergensen noted that regular business is still occurring at the county. She said, "But it's not the bulk. The majority of what we are doing is COVID. This is a team effort for the county to get information out and meet people where they are. Communication takes people. The commissioners are very involved, attending meetings and doing double duty. Commissioner Hanson is going out and talking to business owners."

With so much focus on the pandemic Yergensen is trying to imagine what she will be doing when COVID is over. She said, "At some point we will be able to celebrate what we've lived through, what we've endured together moving forward. After this is over, we're all still community members, we're all human, and we've all been impacted."

Yergensen noted the vaccine rollout will be critical. She said, "We anticipate there will be confusion, but we will make changes and adjustments as needed."

Matt Jenkins, Public Information Officer for Montrose County Schools, has been in his position for one year. Jenkins said, "The Public Information Department for schools had been closed for the last five years and it was reopened by the new Superintendent, Dr. Carrie Stephenson. She wanted to provide better messaging and transparency."

Prior to becoming the Public Information Officer for the district office, Jenkins worked for the school district on a contract basis teaching English, film, and working in multimedia. He said, "In my free time I do contract work; I'm a storyteller, writer, and filmmaker. I can bring creativity to my position."

A one-person department, Jenkins said, "As a reset, the new superintendent wanted to improve messaging. She wanted a

designated staff person and a department for communication. What we had before was picking up pieces of work, but it wasn't focused. I'm able to focus on the message and public relations. For Dr. Stephenson transparency is a priority."

Jenkins uses a range of different media. He said, "In the past we had a news release for every event, but we are no longer able to do that for each event. We have thousands of daily views on Facebook and the home page [mcsd.org]. We have an educational information system, a campus family notification, a parent portal, and a dashboard for students and staff."

"We've received a lot of positive feedback for our level of transparency."

As it relates to COVID Jenkins said, "I don't have a team for public information, but we do have a CRT [COVID Response Team] that consists of five individuals and there is communication within that team. We get guidance through EOC [FEMA's Emergency Operations Center] and the county JIC [Joint Information Center]."

In order to reach all students and their parents, any information that goes out on the school district website is translated into Spanish. Jenkins said, "We have to keep up with the changes; we have a growth mindset. It's impossible to be static in a pandemic. You have to be flexible and adjust. We know more now than five months ago. Our knowledge will continue to improve. It's a task with some unpredictability in our lives and we have to be creative."

No longer can organizations schedule a weekly, or monthly news release. Jenkins said, "What concern you had about your schedule has been turned on its head. Everything is time sensitive. We have to process immediately if your child has been exposed [to COVID]. In the last six months of pandemic every school situation is different. We try to be as proactive as we can, but to some degree you are reacting to developments."

Jenkins noted that the school district's relationships with Montrose County and Montrose County Public Health are essential. He said, "We are all are stepping up."

LEADING WITH INFORMATION: COMMUNICATION PROS RAISE THE BAR From previous pg

We have weekly meetings with all public relations representatives to discuss issues and keep organizations informed. Montrose County has been the model of cooperation and all partners have stepped up with contact tracing."

Expressing the importance of the community adhering to COVID guidelines Jenkins said, "It is vital for our schools to function in-person. People who care about our students will take COVID seriously so that schools can stay open. We need everyone to be on board. Our shared concern will determine whether or not we go remote or have in-person learning. With the vaccine, there is light at the end of the tunnel and a hope that we can again open our schools."

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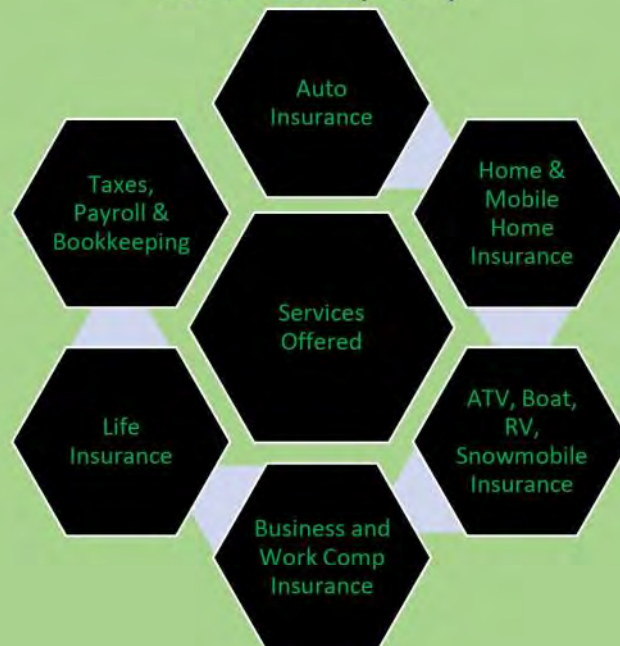
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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

CRIME STOPPERS ALERT: SOLVE OLATHE THEFT CASE

Montrose Regional Crime Stoppers

MONTROSE-Montrose Regional Crime Stoppers, Inc. and the Olathe Police Dept would like the public's help in solving a theft case in their city.

In the early morning hours of Dec. 22, 2020 suspects proceeded to cut a padlock and gained access to a storage yard located at 321 Main Street Olathe Colorado /Olathe True Value Hardware Store. The suspects took a DR 22 black horizontal/vertical log splitter. The log splitter is valued at \$1,500. Below is a photo of what the log splitter should look like. Anyone with information about this crime or the identity of the perpetrator (s) or any other crimes may call Crime Stoppers anonymously at 970-249-8500, use the free mobile app P3 Tips, or provide information via P3tips.com. Crime Stoppers wants your information, not your identity. If the Tip results in an arrest, the Tipster may receive a cash award. For additional information, please view our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/montroseregionalcrimestoppers. Crime prevention and crime solution are everyone's responsibility. MRCS would like to remind everyone that all persons of interest depicted in our Alerts by photo or not, or by any other means, are presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.



Crime Stoppers courtesy photo.

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

CITY TO CLOSE FOR NEW YEAR'S HOLIDAY

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE — City of Montrose offices will be closed Thursday, Dec. 31, and Friday, Jan. 1 for New Year's. Police Department offices will be closed on these days however, officers will be on duty and responding to calls. Montrose City Hall, Visitor Center, Municipal Court, Animal Shelter, Montrose Pavilion, Black Canyon Golf Course, and City Shop will be closed. Trash collection for the New Year's holiday is as follows:

For residences with Thursday, Dec. 31 collection, trash pickup will instead occur on Tuesday, Dec. 29, and Wednesday, Dec. 30.

Residences west of Townsend Ave that are normally on the Thursday route will receive collection services on Tuesday, Dec. 29. Residences east of Townsend Ave that are normally served on Thursday will receive service on Wednesday, Dec. 30.

Recycling collection for customers will not change for the New Year's holidays.



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OPINION/EDITORIAL: COMMENTARY

THE HUB AND URBAN GROWTH



Paul Arbogast.
Courtesy photo.

By Paul Arbogast
MONTROSE-For the most part, areas where humans live tend to grow. Growth is a natural occurrence tied to birth rates, available jobs, and the desirability of living in

one area vs another. Montrose is no stranger to natural growth.

The path of growth most often follows economic opportunity. Several decades ago, locals thought that Montrose would grow to the north, with Montrose, Olathe, and Delta eventually all growing together. But change is a consistent thing in life, and change happened.

A growing desire for outdoor recreation, along with Telluride turning from a mining town to a tourist hot spot, has turned attention to the south of Montrose and thus growth has changed direction.

In Montrose, growth always comes with criticism, as most projects that have been completed were initially met with complaints and resistance.

The latest big project by local developer Matt Miles, The HUB at Montrose Crossing, is no different.

Miles has already done a good bit of development in Montrose, from residential neighborhoods to the Oxbow Crossing and River Landing shopping areas.

Oxbow offered more retail and office space that was much needed at the time it was built, and quite possibly helped keep Montrose from stagnating or worse. But even that much-needed space and growth had people fighting against it, including some quite prominent citizens—at least one a current city council member.

The big complaint was that the retail developments south of town would ‘kill’ downtown businesses. Downtown has many issues that do not contribute to it being a vibrant and bustling place, but development elsewhere is not one of those issues. And Downtown certainly could not supply the space needed for all the businesses we now have south of town.

The current complaints about the planned HUB development seem to mostly come from those in neighboring Cobble Creek, and to focus on the traffic and potential infrastructure improvements that may be needed. When I talked to Montrose City Engineer Scott Murphy recently, neither of those two issues seem to present insurmountable problems.

A traffic analysis has been completed and both the city and county have reviewed it. The reality is that the additional traffic generated by this development will not cause anywhere near the impact or problems that residents of Cobble Creek seem to envision. The biggest traffic-related change would be the need for a traffic signal at the intersection of Chipeta and US-550. Murphy said, “Based on the results of this study, a signal is already warranted at this intersection based on present day volumes.”

As for water and sewage impacts Murphy said, “Based on our own running of the utility models with our master plan work we do not anticipate any issues that would require upsizing of the water and sewer utilities.”

Others have said that the HUB at Montrose Crossing is not compatible with adjacent Cobble Creek, and of course most of these complaints come from the residents of Cobble Creek. It seems the thought is that this will be some sort of low-cost section 8 housing or workforce housing for

those that work outside of Montrose.

The reality is the development will be market rate housing, not low cost, and not workforce housing.

Many people who work in Ouray county or Eastern San Miguel County do not actually live in those communities, they live in Montrose. If Montrose continues to offer more housing and a lower cost of living than the resort towns, those numbers will grow and growth in Montrose will continue to trend to the south.

Looking at drawings of the HUB development and elevation drawings of the units, they strike me as a higher-level multi-family complexes that you would find in a fancy neighborhood in other cities. The initial buildings planned for the first phase are two story buildings with garages, designed to fit the area and the look is nice with rock and natural tones.

I sat down with Matt Miles recently to ask questions, and he said this project is meant to target not just new people moving to town, but those looking for better housing than they currently have due to the shortages Montrose faces. He also said that the location puts potential new residents closer to shopping, jobs, and even the Rec Center. I see this as a plus for those who live there, without added traffic strain on our already choked North/South travel lanes as there would be if such a development were on the north side of town. There is no doubt that people living next door will have a positive economic impact even on the Cobble Creek golf course, tavern, and dining facilities.

I asked Miles about all of his projects, and his thoughts and reasoning for them. He said that he sees growth as inevitable and wants Montrose to grow in positive ways. As he said, “we need a place where our kids will prosper.”

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Coverage with vision for the future.



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CORONER'S OFFICE INFORMATION RELEASE

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE- On the morning of Dec. 19, a call was received by Western Colorado Regional Dispatch Center stating there was a person injured at a local residence. Montrose Fire Protection District EMS and the Montrose County Sheriff's Office responded and the patient was transported to Montrose Memorial Hospital where she later died of her injuries. The decedent was Karmen Keefauver, a 62-year-old female of Montrose, Colo. Cause and manner of death are pending autopsy results and toxicology analysis. The case is under investigation by the Montrose County Sheriff's Office and the Montrose County Coroner's Office of Medical Investigation.



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HAVE A COVID CARE PLAN

MAKE A PLAN MONTROSE COUNTY!

It's important to be prepared for any emergency, and it's never too early to prepare to protect your family in case of illness. From healthcare to childcare, use this checklist to prepare your family's COVID Care plan!



WHO IS YOUR DOCTOR?



It is important to find a doctor to care for your family right away, before anyone gets sick. Then, if you or a family member becomes ill, you can simply **call your doctor** rather than filling out paperwork with a fever.

PREPARE A COVID PLAN NOW:



Create an at-home plan to avoid the spread.

Encourage your household members to maintain everyday preventative actions like washing hands frequently and avoiding touching eyes, nose, & mouth as much as possible.



Know your workplace policy.

Talk with your supervisor to determine the most effective steps necessary if you should become sick, and never go to work when you are feeling ill.

PLAN AHEAD:



Create a sick room.

This will help contain the virus as much as possible and prevent other household members from getting sick. Include basic need items like water and fever-reducing medicine, cleaning supplies, and disposable masks and gloves. Have disposable protective gear available for the caregiver.



Create your COVID Care Team.

Coordinate with your family and friends to provide support to one another if a family member gets sick. Ask for family members or friends to safely deliver groceries to your household so you can effectively quarantine and prevent the spread.



Centralize medical information.

Create a folder with your family's necessary medical information. Have your primary care doctor's phone number on hand.



Mask up. Make good choices now.

Wear masks in communal areas you share with people outside the family to help prevent the spread to household members.

Preparing your household ahead of time will alleviate much of the stress that arises if a family member gets sick with COVID-19. Make a plan and prepare now to keep your family and your community safe and healthy.



For more ways to make a plan, visit www.montrosecountyjic.com



TENGA UN PLAN DE ATENCIÓN PARA COVID

¡HAGA UN PLAN, CONDADO DE MONTROSE!

Es importante estar preparado para cualquier emergencia y nunca es demasiado pronto para prepararse para proteger a su familia en caso de enfermedad. Desde atención médica hasta cuidado de niños, use esta lista de verificación para preparar el plan de atención para COVID de su familia.

¿QUIEN ES TU DOCTOR?

Es importante encontrar un médico que atienda a su familia de inmediato, antes de que alguien se enferme. Luego, si usted o un miembro de su familia se enferma, simplemente puede llamar a su médico en lugar de tener que completar el papeleo con fiebre.

PREPARE UN PLAN CONTRA EL COVID AHORA:



Cree un plan en su casa para evitar la propagación.

Anime a los miembros de su hogar a que mantengan acciones preventivas diarias como lavarse las manos con frecuencia y evitar tocarse los ojos, la nariz y la boca tanto como sea posible.



Conozca la política de su lugar de trabajo.

Hable con su supervisor para determinar los pasos necesarios si se enferma y nunca vaya a trabajar cuando se sienta enfermo.

PREPÁRATE AHORA:



Cree una habitación para enfermos.

Esto ayudará a contener el virus tanto como sea posible y evitará que otros miembros de su casa se enfermen. Incluya artículos de necesidad básica como agua y medicamentos para reducir la fiebre, artículos de limpieza y máscaras y guantes desechables. Tenga equipo protector desechable disponible para el cuidador.



Cree su equipo de atención para COVID.

Coordine con su familia y amigos para apoyarse mutuamente si un miembro de la familia se enferma. Pídale a su familia o amigos que le entreguen alimentos de manera segura en su hogar para que pueda poner en cuarentena de manera efectiva y prevenir la propagación.



Centralizar la información médica.

Cree una carpeta con la información médica necesaria de su familia. Tenga a mano el número de teléfono de su médico de atención primaria.



Usar una máscara. Tome buenas decisiones ahora.

Use máscaras en las áreas comunes que comparte con personas ajenas a la familia para ayudar a prevenir la propagación a los miembros de su casa.

Preparar su casa con anticipación aliviará gran parte del estrés que surge si un miembro de la familia se enferma con COVID-19. Haga un plan y prepárese ahora para mantener a su familia y su comunidad seguras y saludables.

Para más formas de hacer un plan, visite www.montrosecountyjic.com

COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

BACKCOUNTRY SKIER KILLED IN AVALANCHE AT BERTHOUD PASS

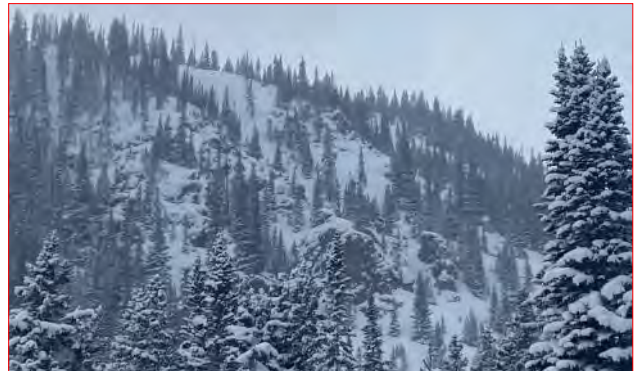


Wear
your mask

Thank you for doing your part
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Special to the Mirror

COLORADO—According to the Colorado Avalanche Information Center, a backcountry skier was caught buried and killed in an avalanche in the First Creek Drainage, of Berthoud Pass, on Dec. 26, 2020. Preliminary reports are, the avalanche occurred in an area locally known as Chimney Chute, which is a steep, narrow, north-facing below treeline chute. The victim was located by Grand County Search and Rescue team members with an avalanche probe. The Grand County Sheriff and Grand County SAR worked into the night to recover the body. CAIC forecasters will visit the accident site on Sunday. Our condolences to the friends and family of the victim.



Right, Crown of an Avalanche that killed a backcountry skier. Courtesy image.

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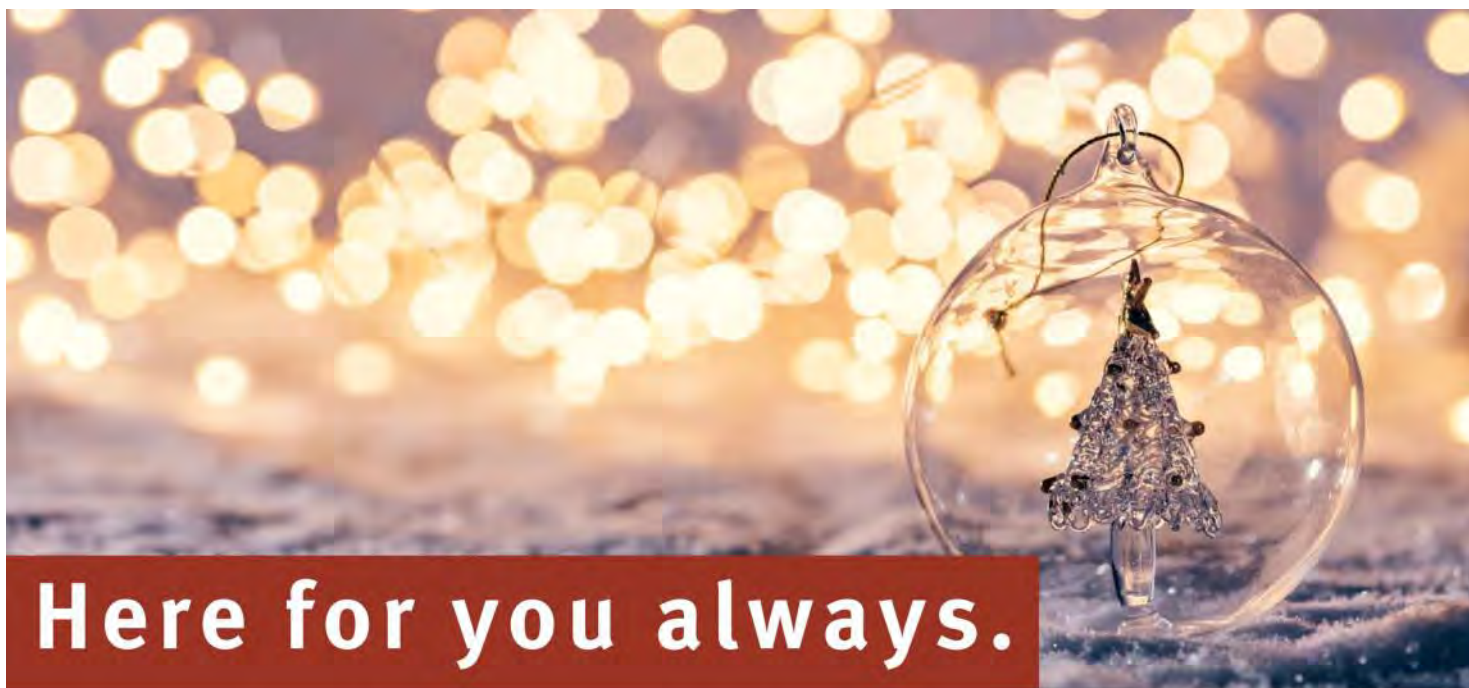


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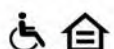
Service to the health of the greater community is of utmost importance today and always. During the pandemic, our caregiving teams have worked diligently to keep our community and program participants healthy, safe and connected to those they love---and at times, stepped in when family members could not.

Your ongoing support has been so appreciated. The patience, commitment and love you have shown to us during the pandemic is deeply moving and felt by our entire organization. We appreciate how special the holiday season is to you and your loved ones and we wish to make this year's holiday season as joyful and festive as possible.

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AdvantAge Health Resource Center



Visit voaseniorkiving.org for a comprehensive listing of local and national services.

COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

TRUCKER SAFETY VIDEO UNVEILED FOR I-70

Special to the Mirror

DENVER – With winter officially underway, the Colorado Department of Transportation, in partnership with the Colorado State Patrol and Colorado Motor Carriers Association, are distributing a video to help educate truckers on the challenges and best practices for safely traveling the Interstate 70 Mountain Corridor.

The Mountain Rules video includes information on potential hazards truckers may face driving the Corridor year-round, including sudden weather changes such as heavy snowstorms, high winds, poor visibility and avalanches – along with rockfall, wildlife, and wildfires.

“Our mountains can be an immense challenge for all drivers but especially for those who drive semi-trucks. Producing this video as part of *The Mountain Rules* program is another tool designed to prepare in-state and out-of-state truckers for what they may encounter when driving through the high country,” said CDOT

Executive Director Shoshana Lew. “The mantra is simple – ‘Slow, Steady, Safe for the Long Haul’ – no matter the time of year you’re traveling I-70.” In addition to the natural hazards, the video also details other challenges truckers may encounter, including chain laws, steep grades and overheated brakes.

“Safety is our first priority and the video reiterates the necessary key practices and what the existing options are when driving the I-70 West corridor, including the availability of runaway truck ramps,” said CSP Colonel Matthew Packard. “Those ramps exist for all commercial carriers. Should your brakes fail, please save lives and use those ramps. You will not be cited by law enforcement for using them in an emergency.” CDOT’s Freight Office and CMCA are distributing the video to numerous freight industry stakeholders, including state and national trucking companies and associations, Ports-of-Entry, truck driving schools and other educational institutions.

It can be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/wQNsvtUzpfk/>.

“The Mountain Rules video provides an excellent framework for safe driving for truck drivers through the forever changing and unpredictable conditions that one may experience in traveling through Colorado’s High Country,” said CMCA President Greg Fulton. “The video provides a great overview of the mountain terrain, geo hazards and extreme weather conditions as well as preparing drivers for snow, wind, rain, chaining up/down and navigating the steep hills to avoid overheating brakes. We commend CDOT for their work and for partnering with Colorado State Patrol and the Colorado Motor Carriers to enhance the safe travel of Commercial Motor Vehicles in Colorado.”

CDOT, CSP and CMCA would like to thank Colorado truck driver and America’s Road Team Captain Nate McCarty from ABF Freight for narrating The Mountain Rules video.



These days, photography is practiced by anyone with a smartphone, but it's mastered by few.

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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY BEGINS VACCINE DISTRIBUTION

Special to the Mirror

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY --- San Miguel County Public Health and the Telluride Regional Medical Center have received their first doses of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. Distribution has begun for Phase I recipients which includes frontline healthcare and emergency services workers.

"This is truly the moment the world has been waiting for, we're taking the first step in ending the pandemic. We could not be prouder of our frontline workers for the hard work put forth over the last many months," said Public Health Director Grace Franklin. "We are working diligently to vaccinate Phase I recipients and will continue to work rapidly to get our residents immunized in the coming months. Rest assured, we will get through each Phase as quickly as supply allows."

The first recipient at the Uncompahgre Medical Center was Robin Richards Templin, PA, her vaccinator was Codi Alexander, MA.

"Our frontline workers have been helping our community get through this pandemic with grace and compassion," said Andrew Brown, PA-C at the Uncompahgre Medical

Center. "The majority of our staff will be vaccinated during Phase I and we're excited to be seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, especially for our residents."

The first recipients at the Telluride Regional Medical Center included Dr. Diana Koelliker and Dr. Paul Koelliker. Vaccinators included TRMC Laboratory Manager Nancy Landon and TRMC Laboratory Technician and Paramedic Steve Langion.

"It can't be understated how excited we are to give Dr. Diana Koelliker and Dr. Paul Koelliker the first doses of COVID-19 vaccines," said San Miguel County Chief Medical Officer Dr. Sharon Grundy.

"Together they make up 50 percent of our emergency department. Keeping them safe means they're available to help the whole community. If one of them were to get COVID-19 or end up a close contact of someone confirmed to have COVID-19, we'd lose them both for at least 7 to 10 days. They represent the challenges of rural medicine, where the limited supply of medical healthcare personnel, along with COVID-19 caseloads, compound to create serious capacity issues."

The rollout of vaccines will continue on a

weekly basis with the first of two rounds of Phase I vaccine distribution projected to be completed within the coming weeks, pending supply from the State of Colorado.

For more information regarding the subsequent phases of the Moderna vaccine distribution in San Miguel County, please visit our COVID website and sign up for the Public Health newsletter.

There have been 398 total COVID cases among residents to date with 40 active cases.

To learn more about the County's current COVID-19 metrics, please [visit the County COVID-19 dashboard](#).

San Miguel County will continue posting caseload updates twice a week. The next update will be published on Friday, December 25.

Five Commitments of Containment:

Wear a mask

Maintain six feet of physical distance

Minimize group size

Wash hands frequently

Stay home when sick and get tested

For up-to-date coronavirus information, visit: [https://](https://www.sanmiguelcountyco.gov/coronavirus)

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Photo taken from corner of driveway and Pine Drive

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OPINION/EDITORIAL:LETTERS

HUB AT MONTROSE CROSSING THREATENS SPRUCE POINT AND COBBLE CREEK

Editor:

A large portion of Montrose growth over the last 15 years has been retirees, and now urban escapees able to work from home are relocating here. Relocating isn't always easy, particularly when you are enamored with areas like Montrose but don't know anyone in the area. That's why retirees in particular gravitate to developments where friendships and a sense of community can be quickly established. Spruce Point and the adjoining Cobble Creek fit that bill. We are growing and successful because our communities offer amenities that encourage personal interaction. Our significant contribution to city and county coffers is obvious through property and sales taxes but the extent of our volunteerism, especially with charitable organizations, is not well known. The Cobble Creek Community Angel Tree program has been around for 15 years, and this year we provided Christmas gifts to 320 children and food cards to 150 families (valued at \$15,000) so families and children have a nice Christmas after this terrible year we have all been through. We also have residents on the boards of Boys and Girls Club and many are active in other Montrose community organizations. We love living here and appreciate the opportunity to give back to our new community. Given the importance of these contributions, city management must decide whether or not to guard against threats to the continued growth of these type communities. The HUB at Montrose Crossing ("HUB") presents those threats to Spruce Point and Cobble Creek as prospective buyers will be deterred by HUB's unreasonable size, imposing structures, and complete incompatibility with the surrounding area. Current residents will also incur both lifestyle and financial injury. Other residents in our general area have also expressed deep concern with the project as the same threats could happen to them and to other Montrose developments if a large project like HUB is allowed to move forward without significant changes. About two years ago the developer, Mr. Matt Miles, told Spruce Point and Cobble Creek residents that his plans to develop

the property would resemble Spruce Point. That plan appeared reasonable so we didn't object and fully expected the development would conform to the city's Comprehensive Plan. Subsequently the developer switched the scope of his project to the HUB large apartment complex. HUB's zoning allows for single family homes, but the zoning also allows a very high density apartment complex. The developer optioned for the highest density possible- 500 apartments situated on HUB's perimeter with no buffer between them and the Spruce Point and Cobble Creek single-family homes. The HUB density is also 9 times greater than Spruce Point and Cobble Creek combined. How is any of this remotely compatible with the surrounding area and the city's Comprehensive Plan?

As a retiree and resident in Spruce Point, one of the things we considered when we purchased a lot and built a home here 2.5 years ago was the Comprehensive Plan. It is a key standard by which development proposals are evaluated, because it is the right way to do things, and because it helps ensure that all of Montrose is protected against uncontrolled development. If the Comprehensive Plan is not a key consideration when City management makes its decisions it is of no value and should be scrapped. We are not against development on the HUB site and understand that an alternative development plan that adheres to the Comprehensive Plan and mitigates our concerns was proposed. The developer declined to consider that option. However, an alternate development plan doesn't compensate for HUB's location in an area unequipped with the infrastructure and city services needed to support this large project. Fixing that could cost in the millions. The city should encourage smaller apartment complexes in locations where infrastructure, city services, schools and area residents are not adversely affected and where development would enhance the area. We also believe the traffic study, paid by the developer, has shortcomings. Chipeta Road is a secondary road built to minimum county standards and would cost millions to im-

prove if that is even possible. The study didn't adequately consider the build out of all the area developments nor differentiate between cars and trucks as truck traffic has increased dramatically over the last couple of years since we moved here. We also believe a hazard assessment is needed as common sense says HUB residents will walk or bike along Chipeta Road to reach nearby river and biking pathways. Knowing that this is dangerous and not doing anything about it now would be a very serious omission. Impartial evaluations must be made before construction begins using accurate traffic projections and their ramifications plus a county plan illustrating and confirming how Chipeta Road can be improved into a capable and safe roadway.

It is our understanding that the developer has not built apartments but it appears some in city management are confident that the developer's experience in commercial projects transfers over to residential apartment development. There are no assurances that the developer will be the long-term HUB manager.

Either rejecting HUB in total, or requiring changes to mitigate our concerns as nearby residents would demonstrate the city's resolve to comply with the Comprehensive Plan and protect us against unnecessary threats to developments like ours in Spruce Point and adjacent Cobble Creek (and also Chipeta Pointe!).

We understand that a few years ago there were protests against a proposed development of low-income housing crammed together off of 6400 Road. It was not built. Those protesting the project at the Planning Commission hearing recall their fellow neighbor, Mr. Miles, saying "It might be legal but is it moral?" Taking morality out of the equation, we believe the pertinent questions are whether the currently proposed project is justified, ethical, proper, advisable, or warrants a city incentive of \$2.35M.

We believe the answers to these questions are NO.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,

*Ned and Judy Frazier
Residents of Spruce Point*

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

DELTA COUNTY COVID-19 UPDATE

Special to the Mirror

DELTA-It's important to reiterate the critical importance of being thoughtful about how you plan on spending the holidays; we urge everyone to take personal responsibility, to do what we can to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 in our communities, so as not to overwhelm our healthcare system.

As a reminder the most common way COVID-19 spreads is through respiratory droplets or small particles during close contact with someone who is already infected.

Person-to-person contact:

People are at greatest risk when they have direct contact with or spend time near a person while they are infectious with COVID-19. [Read more about what counts as close contact.](#)

Exposure can occur through respiratory droplets -- when an infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, or talks. This is similar to how flu and other respiratory viruses spread.

Although much less common, COVID-19 can also spread through airborne transmission or direct contact with infected surfaces or objects.

Airborne transmission

Sometimes smaller respiratory droplets can remain in the air for up to several hours and can travel on air currents farther than six feet. Airborne transmission occurs when droplets or small particles carrying the virus remain suspended in the air or travel farther than 6 feet away from the

person with COVID-19.

Airborne transmission has occurred when a person with COVID-19 was participating in an activity that increased the number of respiratory particles they produce, like singing or exercising.

This type of exposure usually occurs indoors in spaces with poor ventilation. For information on Holiday guidance visit <https://covid19.colorado.gov/for-coloradans/winter-holiday-tips>; here are some tips that can help keep not only you and yours healthy, but those around you, as well as our hardworking healthcare heroes:

Only interact in-person with people from your household (defined as those who normally live and sleep under the same roof).
Refrain from traveling. Celebrate virtually with the people who don't live with you. .
Avoid crowded stores. Find local Delta County businesses to support and have your items delivered or pick them up curbside. Wear a mask and keep your distance whenever you do leave your home.

Delta County Health Department received their first shipment of Moderna vaccines; they began administering those Dec. 24, and will continue vaccinating through Monday, Dec. 28. The Health Department is following CDPHE's priority guidance 1A and vaccinating Healthcare workers that may have direct exposure to a Covid-19 patient. Delta County Memorial Hospital also received their first shipment of Moderna and will continue to vaccinate

local healthcare providers, EMS, and first responders.

On Dec. 23, Delta County reported 12 new positive cases for a total of 1302 with 364 active and 917 recovered. We currently have 11 individuals hospitalized. Sadly, Delta County Health Department is reporting two additional deaths this week bringing the total to 22; we send our deepest condolences to each family, and ask the community at large to respect their privacy.

Mental Health Assistance:

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, please reach out to one of the following resources:

Center for Mental Health: 970-252-6220 or text "Talk" to 38255

A KIDZ Clinic: 970-874-2753 or Text: 970-901-0445

Families Plus: 970-874-0464 or Text: 970-433-6835

Colorado Crisis Hotline: 844-493-TALK (8255) or Text "Talk" to 38255

Delta County has two community test sites: Delta County Health Department, located at 255 W. 6th St., in Delta. Tests are by appointment only Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Call 970-874-2172. You can also get tested at North Fork EMS, located at 110 E. Hotchkiss Avenue, in Hotchkiss. Appointments are Mondays and Wednesdays only. Call for an appointment at 970-778-7426. For additional COVID-19 resources, click [here](#) to see Delta County's COVID-19 resource page and [here](#) for the State's COVID-10 resource page.





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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

OURAY COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH ANNOUNCES COVID-19 OUTBREAK

Special to the Mirror

OURAY-Ouray Silver Mines, Inc. (OSMI), in partnership with Ouray County Public Health Agency, is reporting a confirmed outbreak involving two COVID-19 cases. The cases are not attributed to Ouray County's case count because the new cases are not Ouray County residents. "Mask wearing, social distancing, and robust disinfecting efforts become even more important during winter months when we are indoors and in close quarters", said Ouray County Public Health Director Tanner Kingery. "I want to commend Mr. Briggs and his team at Ouray Silver Mines for working with our contact tracers and case investigators in order to limit the spread of COVID-19 at their

workplace".

OSMI currently has more than 200 employees, contractors, and vendors traveling to and from the mine site which provides unique challenges when it comes to preventing transmission of COVID-19. OSMI COVID protocols require complete disinfection of all offices and workplaces after every shift as well as required mask wearing in company provided transportation to the site. OSMI has also doubled its transportation capacity in order to limit each vehicle's capacity to 50 percent. Updates are provided on the Ouray County website: ouraycountyco.gov as well as Ouray County Public Health Facebook page: [Facebook.com/OurayCountyPublicHealthAgency](https://www.facebook.com/OurayCountyPublicHealthAgency)

Ways that you can continue to protect yourselves, family members and community members:

- Stay home if you feel sick
- Wash your hands, often
- Seek testing if needed
- Practice social distancing
- Wear a mask when around people you don't live with

And if you become sick or are a close contact of a confirmed case:

- Self-Quarantine. If possible, keep yourself isolated from other people in your household.
- Call your healthcare provider if you have concerns about your symptoms
- Seek testing if recommended by your healthcare provider



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- Camp Robber - 970-240-1590
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REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

FIRST DOSES OF COVID-19 VACCINATION GIVEN IN MONTROSE COUNTY



Pictured are Tamara Anderson, RN (black scrubs) vaccinating Veronica Ramirez, MMH Environmental Services Technician and Danny Barela, Paramedic and ED Tech, General Educator at MMH vaccinating Dr. Alexis Garza, MMH Co-Emergency Medical Director (green scrubs). Courtesy photos.

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-Montrose County and Montrose Memorial Hospital (MMH) are excited to share the news that the Moderna COVID-19 vaccination was administered today in Montrose County. The first vaccine recipients of the vaccine were Dr. Alexis Garza, MMH Co-Emergency Medical Director and Veronica Ramirez, MMH Environmental Services Technician.

The COVID-19 vaccine has been authorized for emergency use by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Multiple vaccines are under development and several are in large-scale clinical trials with tens of thousands of volunteers to ensure they are both safe and effective. Montrose County Public Health, Montrose County Emergency Management, and Montrose Memorial Hospital are working with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment on local vaccine distribution.

"This vaccine is our ticket to freedom. This vaccine will help our community and the entire nation return to events, concerts, and all the things we love,"

said Montrose County Public Health Medical Advisor Dr. Joseph Adragna, MD, MHA, MGH. "Many of you have done the right thing and helped protect our community by wearing masks, keeping your distance, washing your hands, and staying home when sick. We have more one hurdle to make it through this pandemic. Please help the entire community by getting vaccinated when you are able. Vaccinate to help save lives and save jobs . . . today we go on the offensive."

"I feel honored to be a part of a hospital system and a county that works so well together to implement this process," said Dr. Garza. "I am proud to sit here with Veronica because together—doctors, nurses, hospital staff—we have been working to keep our patients and our families healthy through the pandemic. I will admit that I had my doubts initially when the vaccine was announced, but after research and discussion with colleagues, I feel 100 percent confident in the COVID-19 vaccination. As a healthcare worker, we dedicate our lives to helping others,

but today took a vaccine for personal reasons: I took it to protect my family and my parents because they are not replaceable. I took it to get my community one step closer to 'normal' again."

Currently, the state of Colorado is in Phase 1a of vaccination which includes the following groups:

- High risk workers in health care settings
- Residents and staff of nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other community-based, congregate living settings where most individuals over 65 years of age are receiving care, supervision, or assistance.

Phase 1a is defined at the federal and state level to preserve our critical health care workers and to protect those at highest risk of severe outcomes of COVID-19. The number of doses available in each area of the state is determined by federal and state government allocations based on population factors, priority group factors, and disease incidence.

Vaccine safety is a priority. All COVID-19 vaccines must go through a rigorous and multi-step testing, evaluation and approval process before they can be used. They will only be approved if they pass FDA's safety and effectiveness standards. Vaccines will also be monitored for safety once they are given. COVID-19 vaccine is not anticipated to be widely available to the general public until later in spring and summer. Eventually, vaccine will be available for everyone in all recommended groups. [For more information and for the most up-to-date information, visit our vaccine webpage here.](#)

REGIONAL NEWS BRIEFS

MONTROSE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE K-9 JOCKO TO GET DONATION OF BODY ARMOR

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE- Montrose County Sheriff's Office K9 Jocko will receive a bullet and stab protective vest thanks to a charitable donation from non-profit organization Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. K9 Jocko's vest is sponsored by Darby Kelly of Heroes with Paws in Parker, Colorado and will be embroidered with the sentiment "This gift of protection provided by Heroes with Paws". Delivery is expected within eight to ten weeks.

K-9 Jocko is the second K-9 in the Montrose County Sheriff's Office K-9 program to receive a vest from Vested Interest in K-9s. "We are very grateful to Vested Interest in K-9s for their support of our four-legged heroes," said Undersheriff George Jackson. "These vests are critical in helping provide an extra layer of safety for both K-9 Jocko and K-9 Tigo." K-9 Jocko works towards keeping the community safe with handler Deputy Mimi Savage on the west end of Montrose County.

Vested Interest in K9s, Inc., established in 2009, is a 501(c)(3) charity whose mission is to provide bullet and stab protective

vests and other assistance to dogs of law enforcement and related agencies throughout the United States. This potentially lifesaving body armor for four-legged K9 officers is U.S. made, custom fitted, and NIJ certified. Since its inception, Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. has provided over 4,101 vests to K9s in all 50 states at a value of \$6.9 million, made possible by both private and corporate donations.

The program is open to U.S. dogs that are at least 20 months old and actively employed and certified with law enforcement or related agencies. K9s with expired vests are also eligible to participate. There are an estimated 30,000 law enforcement K9s throughout the United States.

Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. accepts tax-deductible contributions in any amount, while a single donation of \$960 will sponsor one vest. Each vest has a value of \$1,744-\$2,283, weighs an average of 4-5 lb., and comes with a five-year warranty. For more information, or to learn about volunteer opportunities, please call 508-824-6978. Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. provides information, lists events, and



*Deputy Savage and K-9 Jocko.
Courtesy photo.*

accepts donations at www.vik9s.org, or you may mail your contribution to P.O. Box 9, East Taunton, MA 02718.

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ANONYMOUS CALL

MONTROSE REGIONAL CRIME STOPPERS

ISSUE 296 Dec. 28, 2020

ART & SOL

WALKING & TALKING IN THE DARK

Review by Art Goodtimes

REGIONAL-Production kudos to Telluride's Scott Upshur of Starch and ace mountain storyteller Craig Childs for the twelfth annual **Dark Night show ... Interrupted**. This year appropriately distanced on Vimeo.

One misses the intimacy of live performance. A couple years back I had a part in an earlier Dark Night production at Paonia's smalltown mainstreet movie and performance icon, the Paradise Theatre. Fun to do. And even greater fun to watch, from all accounts.

But in this Covid gap year, the video was very nicely done. Multiple camera angles. Creative editing. Mostly spot-on dubbing. It felt like it was, a virtual walk in the forest dark, with Childs as our guide, on our way to the campfire. Indeed, the core of the performance was Childs' bear story sandwiched between the unearthly aetheral ululations of gypsy guitar chanteuse Beth Quist -- sitting on a drum box singing a Central European folksong to the dancing flames and Childs' fire stick. I watched it twice, just to hear her high notes that put could put a martin to shame.

Craig is more than just a reporter, although his adventure books and essays attest to a fearless persistence and informed curiosity. He's a word man. He

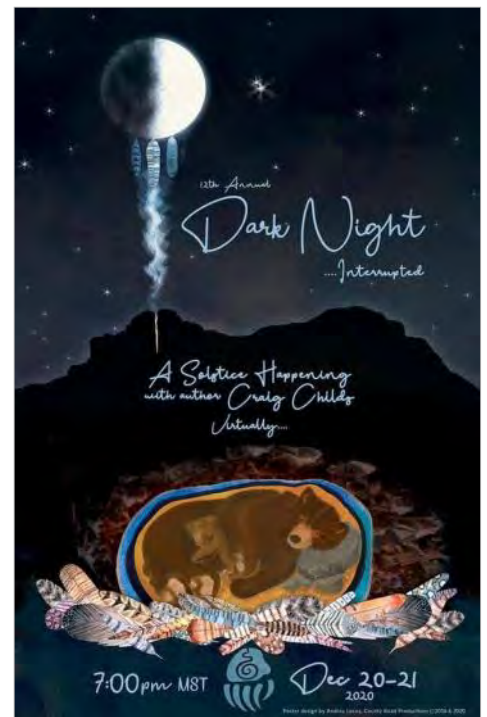
wears the abalone pendants of his exploits on his chest and spins circles for us around our shared flames with his storytelling tongue.

His other guest, Emily Scott Robinson, gives us the Dylanesque anthem for the Cthulucene, as brilliant Donna Haraway has dubbed this geologic era during the planet's Sixth Great Extinction. It's called "The Time for Flowers."

Some of us still wear flowers in our hair. But the dangers are real. Robinson has "lived long enough to know, the time for flowers will come again ... witnessed funerals & wars ... empty stores ... gonna find out you're stronger than you know ... maybe one year, maybe ten ... the time for flowers will come again."

Finally, let me just free associate some of Childs' lines that caught my ear: "This is the winter to hunker ... Shake the dust off the rafters ... Winter trance's deep dive into the dark ... Like following knots on a rope ... Where stars cover the sky ... Back into the beginning ... The dark place you leave behind ... The place where the old gods reside."

He takes us with him, crawling into a refrigerator-size hole in a hillside to take shelter from a raging snowstorm, on all fours, nosing into an awakening bear. "It's



The poster for the 12th Annual **Dark Night show ... Interrupted**. Courtesy image.

something I do," he tells us. "Crawling into spaces."

And virtually, massaged by his wild vision and madness, he takes us with him. Into the underground.

Continued (new poem by Art Goodtimes) next pg

WALKING & TALKING IN THE DARK From previous pg

COVID Winter Solstice

-for Tony & Crow

Got to see it big eye-lensed
at Danny's Fruita observatory
Hay bales eight feet high smeared
with mud & shaped, rounding one around
& into a central viewing courtyard
to block out surface photon static

The rings of Saturn & moons of
Jupiter side by side in the Great Conjunction
The heavens coming together
Even as we go on pulling ourselves
apart

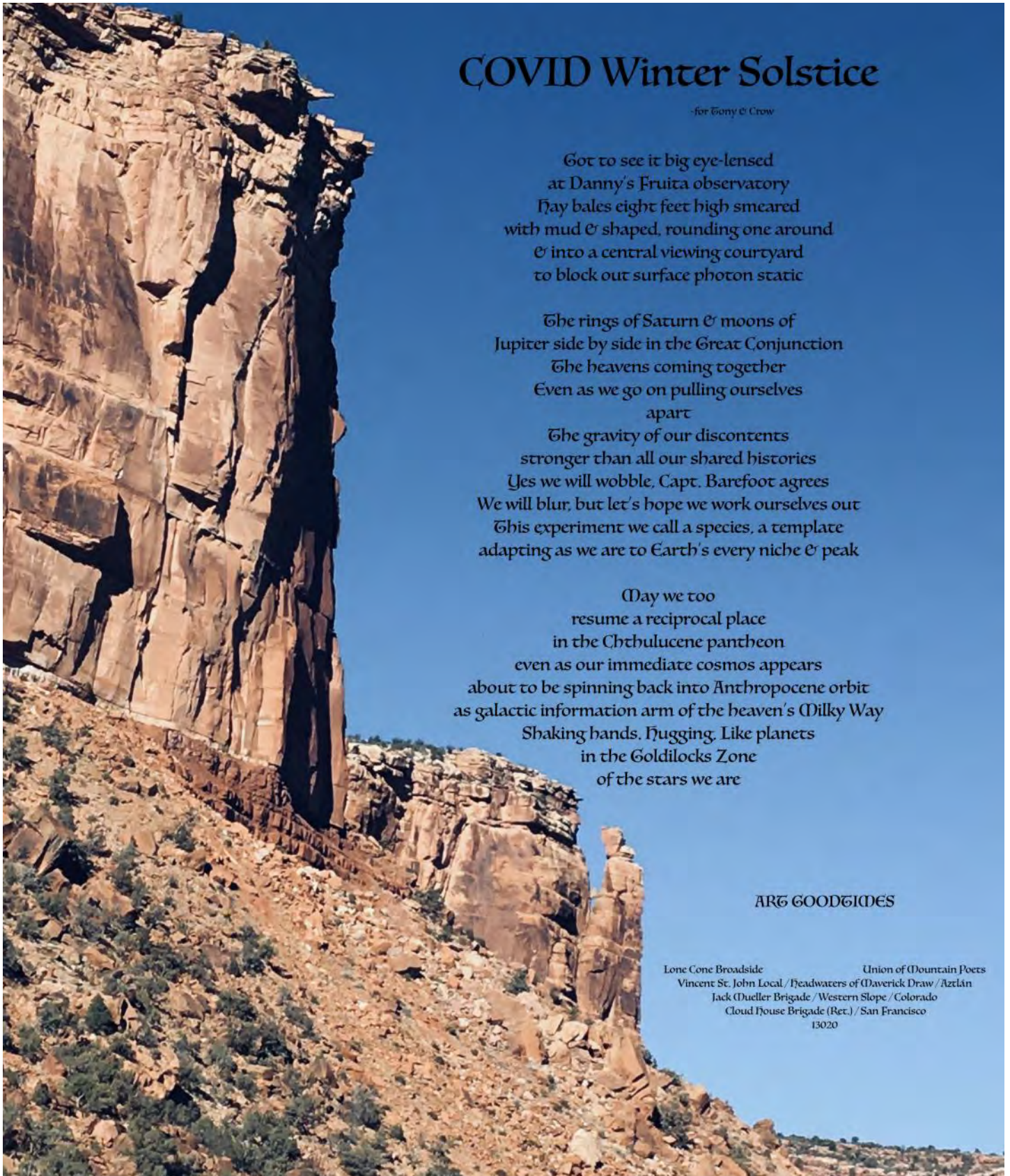
The gravity of our discontents
stronger than all our shared histories
Yes we will wobble, Capt. Barefoot agrees
We will blur, but let's hope we work ourselves out
This experiment we call a species, a template
adapting as we are to Earth's every niche & peak

May we too
resume a reciprocal place
in the Cthulucene pantheon
even as our immediate cosmos appears
about to be spinning back into Anthropocene orbit
as galactic information arm of the heaven's Milky Way
Shaking hands, Hugging, Like planets
in the Goldilocks Zone
of the stars we are

ART GOODTIMES

Lone Cone Broadside
Vincent St. John Local / Headwaters of Davaerick Draw / Aztlán
Jack Dueller Brigade / Western Slope / Colorado
Cloud House Brigade (Ret.) / San Francisco
13020

Union of Mountain Poets



COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

PTARMIGAN POPULATIONS STRONG IN THE ROCKIES, CONCERNS REMAIN



Southern White-tailed Ptarmigan. Courtesy photos.

Special to Art & Sol

MONTROSE-- Conservation biologists at Colorado Parks and Wildlife are charged with keeping a close eye on sensitive wildlife – animals that sometimes are classified as “species of greatest conservation need” by the agency. One of those species is the Southern White-tailed Ptarmigan. CPW biologists become alerted when a conservation organization asks the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to place an animal on the federal endangered species list. If that animal’s range includes Colorado, a team of CPW biologists put together a plan to study the species to determine how it’s doing here and to present the research to the federal agency for review. The process can take several years.

Recently, a Colorado study of the Southern White-tailed Ptarmigan was used by the USFWS to decide that the iconic bird does not need special protections under the federal Endangered Species Act. The study showed that populations of ptarmigan are holding steady throughout the mountains of Colorado. “We have widespread distribution of ptarmigan across the state in suitable habitat,” said Amy Seglund, a conservation biologist based in Montrose who coordinated the study. “Not much has changed in their distribution across the alpine ecosystem since they were first studied in the 1960s and 1970s by CPW agency biologists.”

Ptarmigan live year-round from about 9,500 feet elevation and above, so studying these well camouflaged birds is challenging – to say the least. Basically, this is how the research method works: Seglund



examined previous studies to identify locations the bird occupied. Next, using geographic information, she identified all of the bird’s potential habitat – which in Colorado is, essentially, all the millions of acres above timberline. Using a computer program, 60 sites were selected randomly and field staff went to those locations to look for birds.

To get more thorough population data, they trapped and placed tiny leg bands on 637 birds. Fortunately, Seglund said, ptarmigan are relatively easy to trap because they stay in place when approached, relying on their camouflage for cover. They also can tolerate being handled by humans.

Leg bands provided researchers an opportunity to evaluate abundance of ptarmigan. The bands also helped Seglund assess whether birds returned to the same breeding sites each year and selected the same mate.

Radio transmitters were placed on 126 birds over the course of the study which allowed field staff to find females later on their nests. There they could see how many eggs the hens had produced, how many hatched and track how many chicks survived. The transmitters also allowed the researchers to determine annual and seasonal survival rates of individuals.

It’s a tough go to make a living above timberline, so not many chicks survive – less than one in nests that average 5.46 eggs. They are most often picked off by predators or sometimes killed in big weather events when they are not in close contact with their mothers. At about 10-14 days old the chicks can fly. If they make it to that age they have a good

chance of surviving to become an adult bird and begin to breed. The field work was rigorous and covered not only several years but also required multiple visits to the same site: Each was checked three times over the course of the breeding cycle from nesting to brood-rearing to fledging of the young. Aerial surveys were used during winter to assess survival of radio-collared birds.

Seglund said she is pleased by the study results. “I was surprised how many birds we found at many of the sites, they’re a very resilient species,” Seglund said.

Yet, despite the solid and widely dispersed populations, Seglund is concerned about the increasing dangers the birds face. One of those is the pressure of human recreation. While they seem to tolerate some human activity, the birds are less capable of handling constant recreational pressure. In the uber-popular Ice Lakes area near Silverton, the ptarmigan disappeared during the course of the study from the narrow alpine meadow through which dozens of hikers pass each day during the warm months.

The other concern: increasing temperatures on the alpine tundra that are accompanying climate change. Ptarmigan are well-known for turning white during the winter and taking shelter beneath the snow. During summer their plumage becomes a mottled brown so they can blend into the landscape. During the warm months they can be found near persistent snowfields foraging and taking snow baths. What they need most during the summer is the moisture and cool temperatures that historically have accompanied the monsoons. But during the last few years the monsoons have been absent, temperatures on the tundra have soared and Seglund worries that the birds are having difficulty handling the heat.

“It’s amazing to me how a bird that weighs just 350 grams (less than a pound), can live year around at that altitude,” she said. “And they always seem so at peace in their surroundings.”

COLORADO NEWS BRIEFS

JANE ALEX OF MONTROSE NAMED TO UVM DEAN'S LIST

Special to Art & Sol

BURLINGTON, VT-- Jane Alex, Class of 2022, has been named to the dean's list for the fall 2020 semester at the University of Vermont. From Montrose, Alex is in the College of Engineering and Mathematical Sciences. To be named to the dean's list, students must have a grade-point average of 3.0 or better and rank in the top 20 percent of their class in their respective college or school.

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& Reporter

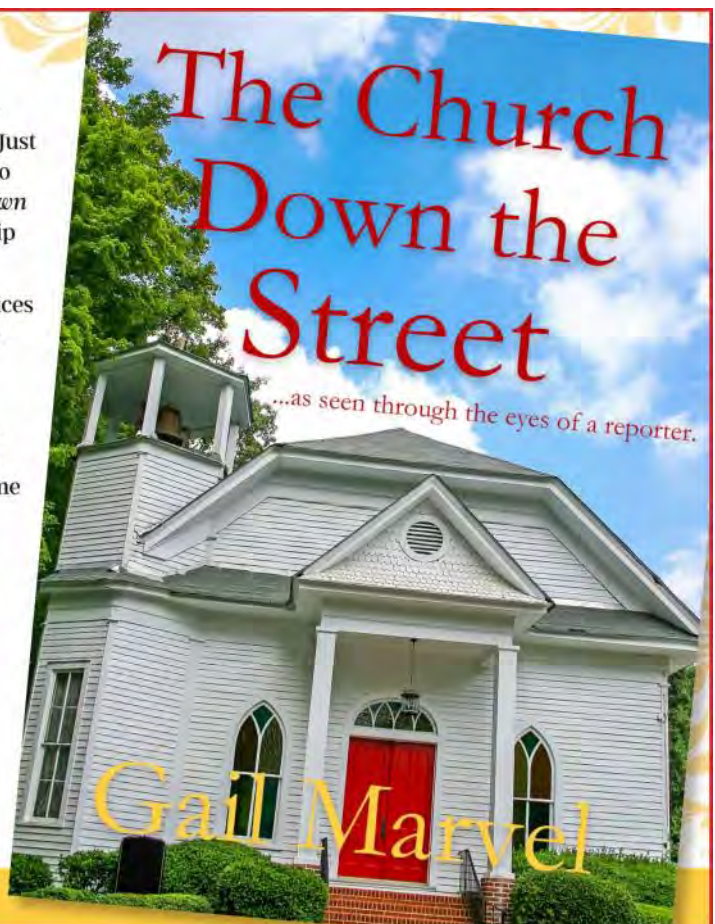
It is human nature to compare ourselves with others, and the church is no different. Just as Paul's Epistles allowed the early church to peer into the lives of each other, *The Church Down the Street* allows readers to peer into the worship services of other churches.

The presence of a reporter in the worship services produced mixed reactions. While many church leaders were grateful for the publicity and exposure for their congregation, others were uneasy. One pastor said, "The minute I saw you

I knew this wasn't my best sermon!" Another pastor said, "We didn't like everything you wrote...but we've made some changes." One elder defended his congregation's lack of friendliness, "Maybe no one spoke to you because of the perfume you were wearing."

Excerpts and anecdotes from approximately 120 church visits are organized in a topical format (Hospitality, Program and Source Material, Music, Meditations and Invitations, and Sermons) and include mainstream denominations, as well as Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, Christian Science, New Age, and Quaker Silent Worship. *The Church Down the Street* is unbiased and reports on the worship experience, not on the denomination.

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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

WANTED: A FEW YOUNG SNOW RANGERS



A family snowshoe outing. Courtesy photo.

By Anne Janik, Friends of Youth and Nature

Yes – there are rangers that specialize in snow! Their jobs involve protecting the natural environment, evaluating snow conditions for avalanches and providing warnings of avalanche danger, monitoring snow accumulation to predict spring runoff, skiing/boarding down ski areas to make sure everyone is safe, protecting wildlife and their winter habitats from disturbance, and; search and rescue when people go missing. What does a job like this require? A keen interest and knowledge of earth science and a passion for winter and the outdoors are a must. Most snow rangers develop a love of winter at an early age and continue to build personal experiences in the outdoors eventually pursuing academic classes and other certifications. The key is developing a love for winter and the outdoors at an early age, and that is what the Junior Snow Ranger Program is all about.

Developed by the US Forest Service in 2012, the Junior Snow Ranger program is intended to inspire youth to embrace a relationship with the winter environment, and to become stewards of the land. The Junior Snow Ranger activity booklet is targeted for 4th and 5th graders, however, children and adults of all ages can take away something from the program. You can download the booklet by searching the web for “Junior Snow Ranger”, which takes you to a Forest Service webpage.

When the booklet is completed, parents can mail in the certificate and your child will receive an official Junior Snow Ranger bandana, card and patch.

The booklet is filled with activities that will help you and your child learn about the winter environment such as: how to become a snowflake sleuth, how to identify animal tracks in snow and how to observe what’s happening in their “hood.”

There are plenty of things to observe in nature this time of year! Surprisingly you can spot quite a few critters that are very active in the winter months. These animals have strategies to help them survive cold temperatures and short days. You may observe a short-tailed weasel or a snowshoe hare whose coats have amazingly transformed from the dull browns of summer to pure white! They are now camouflaged to visually blend in with the snow in order to protect themselves from predators. Many animals add to their insulation this time of year with thicker fur, puffer feathers or extra layers of fat. These are just a few of the “cool” adaptations animals have in winter.

Ever wonder how avalanches happen? The Junior Snow Ranger Booklet explains the science of snow and how strong snow layers on top of weak layers within the snowpack can be triggered to slide. The booklets even provides instructions on how to create your own avalanche. And you can meet Cutler, the avalanche rescue dog!

People have been having fun in winter for years! Over 5,000 years ago people of Nordic and Asian cultures watched snowshoe hares and lynx easily travel across the snow with their huge feet. They figured a way to make their own snowshoes, and were then able to travel long distances across frozen landscapes. Give it a try and follow the directions in the booklet to make your own snowshoes similar to those that were once used in some Native

American cultures.

If there is enough snow- you and your friends can build a snow fort complete with your own artistic touches of snow sculptures or snow angels out front. Or, make frozen bubbles! There are lots of other ideas and games in the booklet to get you acquainted with the winter environment.

Want to know how much snow is in your backyard? Or how much water will result when the snow eventually melts? Scientist call this “snow-water equivalency” and you can figure it out with a yardstick, a measuring cup and of course, a little math!

Safety in the outdoors is important all the time, but in winter, it is imperative! To become a Junior Snow Ranger you need to know a few important concepts such as: “dressing like an onion” in layers (base, middle and outer layer); go exploring with a buddy, never alone (an adult is a good companion); stay on marked trails and designated areas and always pay attention to signs and instructions; pace yourself – don’t go too fast, and figure out when you need to turn around to get back; go with someone that knows first aid and can identify hypothermia and hypoglycemia (low blood sugar); and make sure you have the “10 essentials” for your pack (outwear, drinking water, map/compass, pocketknife, sunscreen, duct tape, whistle, headlamp, and a space blanket). And, remember to “hug a tree” if you feel like you are lost.

Staying near a tree offers some protection from the elements, and keeps lost children in the same place, which makes it easier for searchers to find them.

A winter outing can be a great time to try a new challenge like walking with snowshoes or cross-country skiing. There are several places where you can rent snowshoes or cross-country skis in Montrose, Cedaredge, Grand Junction, Hotchkiss, Ridgway, Telluride and Ouray. Odin Recreation at the entrance to Powderhorn has ski rental and offers instruction. Visit the “Need Gear?” section the FOYAN website (friendsofyouthandnature.org) for a list of

WANTED: A FEW YOUNG SNOW RANGERS

From previous pg

gear providers in Montrose, Mesa, Delta, Ouray and San Miguel Counties. Ridgway State Park has snowshoes that can be used within the park. It is best to call ahead for availability and to reserve rentals under Covid-19 protocols.

And if your children become hooked on growing up to be a snow ranger, track down and interview one. Lucky for us, the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre Gunnison National Forest has several on staff! This may be just the endeavor to spark a life-long enthusiasm for winter in your child and may lead to a future snow ranger caring for our public lands.

Friends of Youth and Nature is a non-profit that promotes opportunities for youth and families to get outside, experience outdoor activities, and explore nature. Follow our outdoor news blog and receive monthly tips on connecting your children to nature. Learn more, visit: www.friendsofyouthandnature.org

COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

YAMAHA AWARDS GRANT OF \$9229.25 TO WESTCORE

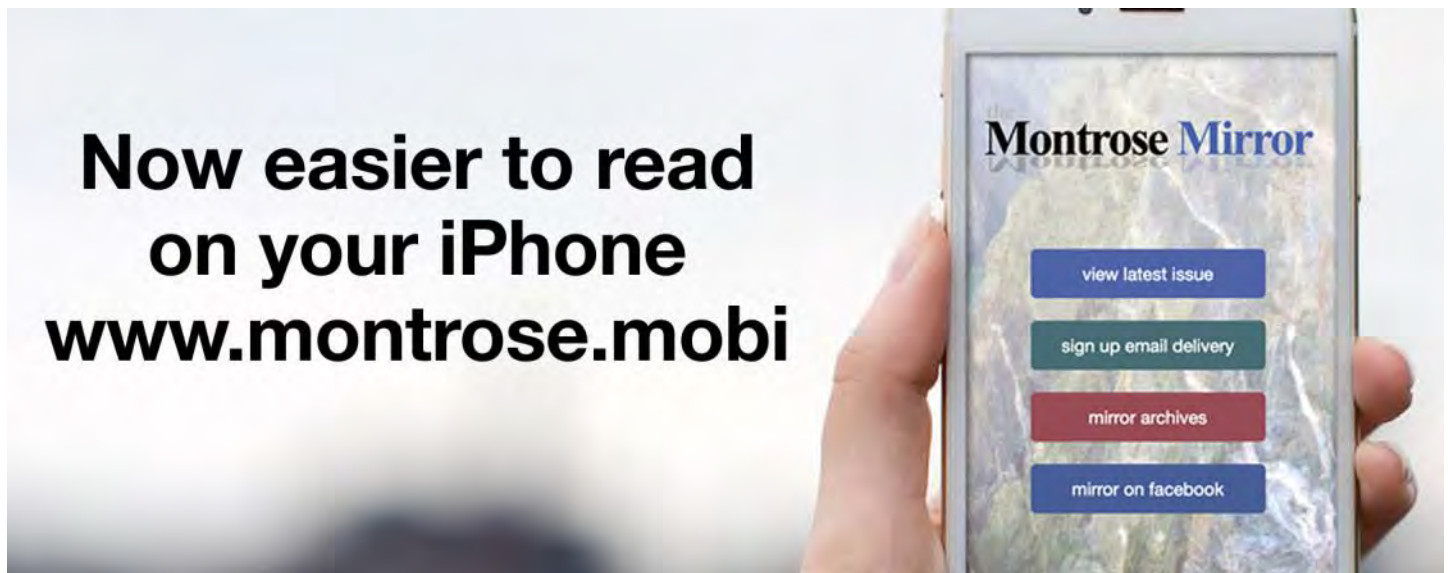
Grant Supports Maintenance of Multi-Use, Single Track Trail in Western Colorado

Special to the Mirror

MONTROSE-WESTCORE received a Yamaha Outdoor Access Initiative (OAI #yamahaooutdoors #yamahaoai), grant of \$9229.25 in January of 2020 for Maintenance of Multi-Use, Single Track Trail in Western Colorado. The grant was awarded as part of Yamaha's Outdoor Access Initiative promoting safe, responsible riding and open, sustainable riding areas.

Grant funds were used to outfit 6 WESTCORE members with Stihl chainsaws and additional trail clearing tools, fuel, oil, and personal protective equipment. Yamaha OAI funds were also used to purchase materials and supplies to build 2 bridges along the Slanty Bridge trail in the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area. The 80 and 20 foot long bridges were built in conjunction with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) of the Southwest District. Yamaha OAI grants make it possible for WESTCORE to maintain Western Colorado single track trail for all user groups.

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COMMUNITY NEWS BRIEFS

MUSEUM OF THE MOUNTAIN WEST RECEIVES RECOGNITION

Special to Art & Sol

MONTROSE – The Museum of the Mountain West received notification from *True West Magazine* that its readers have selected the Museum as “Best Preserved Pioneer Town Re-created” and Founder and Executive Director Richard E. Fike as the “Best Western History Collector” for 2021.

Recognition by the magazine will be appear in its January “Best of the West 2021” special collector’s edition available on national newsstands in early January. Museum Founder and Executive Director Richard E. Fike commented, “This is a very special honor for the Museum and for me to be recognized by the magazine’s readers since I have been collecting since the age of four and am now in my 70’s. The Museum’s vast artifact collection and focus on historically accurate information and presentations are what keeps visitors fascinated and returning time and again.”

Information on truewestmagazine.com notes that the magazine has been published since 1953; it has a vast readership of history enthusiasts and heritage travelers with articles about the myths, legends, and lore of the American West.

Step back in time into the real history of the “Old West” and Western Colorado with a visit to the Museum of the Mountain West located at 68169 Miami Road, Montrose, Colorado. For additional details, visit www.museumofthemountainwest.org or call 970-240-3400.



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FAITH COLUMN: DEACON SPEAKIN' WITH DWIGHT HARP



Anglican Deacon Dwight Harp. Courtesy photo.

By Dwight Harp

MONTROSE-The world's many cultures celebrate new beginnings each year in so many different ways.

New Year's Eve is a time of celebrating a by-gone 365 days and welcoming and embracing what's in store.

There's no right way to 'bring in the New Year' as long as you WISH with a positive attitude. I know of no tradition where the New Year is a time to wish for something bad.

Of course New Year's Celebrations don't all come at the end of our calendar year but most of them do.

In Denmark you are encouraged to actually 'jump' into the New Year with a 'JUMP!' Food is a staple for many celebrations. Such is the case for Estonian New Year's festivities. Eating seven meals on New Year's Eve will provide you the strength of seven men in the New Year. Sauerkraut and marzipan are favorites.

In Ireland people deep clean their belongings, from homes to cars to pets, as they start the next 365 with 'a clean slate.' They also borrow loosely from the Hebrew Passover tradition of setting a place at the dinner table for those loved one's who have recently passed.

Scotland's claim to New Year's traditional fame is having a tall dark and handsome man cross the threshold right after midnight. They call it "first-footer."

Sekt, German sparkling wine, is a central part of their celebrations.

Eating twelve grapes at midnight highlights more than one culture's activities.

So it is in Spain. Additionally in Australia folks are encouraged to wear colorful underwear.

Some Spanish speaking cultures build scarecrows or dolls of different sizes and then burn them. The huge doll in Santa Fe, NM moans and groans as the bad of that year goes up in smoke. That tradition is in the fall. The Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, also arrives in the fall. Many

culture's New Year celebrations occur in the spring and coincide with planting and the starting of the year's agricultural efforts.

Canada's New Year uses the same calendar as do we but the hearty might include a polar bear plunge to top things off. Vietnam names its New Year celebration Tet. It happens toward the end of January or the first of February. I'll never forget the one in 1968.

No matter when the celebration occurs, the symbolism attached to this moment points to the human motivation to survive. "Another day, another dollar" can be expanded into 365 days. New Year's resolutions show we want to control what lies ahead. Not knowing leaves us powerless. We do things to help us take control, or at least think we do.

We resolve to diet, exercise, lose bad habits and start new and good ones. Babylonians returned borrowed objects. Hebrew tradition has folks seeking and offering forgiveness.

Many resolve to pray more. Ask God to help with our weaknesses. My short arrow prayer is- "God Almighty, in your most Holy Name, I ask that you Guide, Guard, Direct and Protect us all, in all ways and at all times."

David Roelk recently penned a piece entitled "Why we really celebrate New Year's Day" in Psychology Today. The title peaked my interest. He says we are social animals and therefore depend on one another for survival. As he continues to note the many ceremonious ways New

Years and new beginnings are faced by the world's culture he states, "As common as these shared behaviors are across history and culture, it's fascinating to realize that the special ways that people note this unique passage of one day into the next are probably all manifestations of the human animals fundamental imperative for survival." All in all he builds a pretty interesting wind-up. What I had difficulty with is his 'pitch.'

He concludes, "So, how do you reassure yourself against the scariest thing the future holds, the only sure thing that lies ahead, the inescapable reality that you will someday die? Pass the donuts, (circular and good luck in some cultures) and the grapes, light the fireworks, and raise a glass to toast: "to survival!"

His 'pitch' differs from mine significantly. God specializes in new beginnings in the Bible. Let's look at some examples that encourage us as we start a New Year. New beginnings can mean a new job, a move across town or across the country, a new relationship, or a new phase of life.

The following biblical excerpts encourage the human spirit in uncertain times:

-Isaiah 43:18-19 "See I am doing a new thing...I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

-Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

-Matthew 7:7 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."

-Lamentations 3:22 "The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end..."

-Psalms 65:11 "You crown the year with your bounty; your wagon tracks overflow with abundance."

That last one is especially good in an agribased community such as ours.

God calls us to let go of "former things," so we can cling to our new identity in Christ. Remember in the first chapter of the first book of the Bible this truth is proclaimed: "God made all things and behold they were good."

Blessed New Beginnings!

SAVE THE DATE! UPCOMING REGIONAL EVENTS

ONGOING-

MONTROSE FARMERS' MARKET is a weekly gathering of vendors selling local fruit, vegetables, meat, crafts, and more. **Date and time:** Saturdays 10 am-1 pm, first three weeks of November and December 2020, every other week-end starting Jan. 9th 2021

Location: Montrose Centennial Plaza and Centennial Meeting Room, 15-99 S Uncompahgre Ave, Montrose, CO 81401

Cost: Free to attend

Curbside service is still available in the winter season!

COMMUNITY BIBLE STUDY-Every Wednesday beginning Sept. 2, 2020, through April, 2021 - Community Bible Study live virtual meetings mornings and evenings: gospel of John. Classes for women and children. Call 720-635-0091 for more information or to register.

MONTROSE ALTRUSA-1st Tuesday of the month Program meeting; 2nd Tuesday of the month committee meeting; 3rd Tuesday of the month Business meeting. Meetings are held at the Hampton Inn conference room at Noon.

MONTHLY

Jan. 22-23-The Western Colorado Food and Farm Forum is going virtual Jan. 22-23, 2021. To register please visit: food-farmforum.org or call Amanda Laban, Event Coordinator at (781) 264-1882.



Wash your hands

Thank you for doing your part
to keep CO safe!



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READER PHOTO SPOTLIGHT: BY DEB REIMANN



At left, Deb took this photo Saturday, of low and fast-moving snow clouds over the Gunnison Gorge, looking toward the Elk Mountains. Happy New Year!



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