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3 Choices

"The risk must be taken, to create expansion for something different, for more."

o you sometimes wonder what those little coincidences in life all mean? What about that cat you see sitting nearby, obviously without a home; how does that make you feel? Do you wonder if it's a sign? Should you take this cat home? Should you put in the effort to find its owner? Or do you just shrug, and go about your day and leave the cat on her own? Would your life be different, if you chose one path over the other? Of course it would. So the underlying question then remains, is your life better for the choice you made?

In life we are often faced with many choices, and it can be difficult to know how to respond. What do you do when faced with circumstances like these? Do you feel calm, and at ease, while you consider the options? Or do you feel your heart pound, your pulse quicken, as you grow uncomfortable with the impending decision heading straight at you?

I felt that way at that Mustang Auction at the Horse Expo the year before last. We walked by the pens where the little baby wild horses were being kept, under the bright lights, right in the middle of the big arena, for everyone to walk by, stare, and point at. The babies were dirty, bewildered, and looked so lost and sad after their ordeal. You can only imagine what they have been through: Rounded up, terrified, by helicopters and trucks, running like mad over uneven terrain, trying to keep up with the herd, seeing others trip, fall, break their legs, and have to keep going, finally finding themselves trapped behind high steel bars, with nowhere to go; crammed into small spaces with all of the other horses, being at risk of being trampled by the terrified adults hitting the fences, desperate to escape.

Then, somehow, being separated from their mothers, the only source of security they have known out in the world for the past few precious months of their young lives; calling for her, the mare calling back, also terrified for herself, her family, and her baby. Yet, for all their strength, and power, and resourcefulness, horses are still subject to the will of man, even wild horses. So



the babies are then herded again, now into a truck, with insecure footing, fumes, and loud noises. The babies are made to stand for hours inside this cavernous, moving, loud, shaking metal box down the highway, with no understanding of what is happening or why. They travel for hours, across state lines, moving farther and farther from everything they have ever known. Perhaps they stop somewhere in between, and are led into a new steel corral with fresh hay and water, with fresh smells and terrain. But who can eat after all that? And besides, these are babies whose tummies are hungry for mother's milk, and have not yet learned to live by the taste of grass. But only for a moment, because the most beautiful of the babies, six in particular, are hand chosen, separated again, and pushed back onto another truck, for yet more highway travel, before arriving at the Horse Expo, exhausted, terrified, bewildered, hardly having the strength to care anymore about the bright lights and crowds of gawking people who come to stare and point at them. They are just so tired, and their adrenaline is spent, their lives are in total upheaval, and nothing will ever be the same again. What must be their opinion of humans, with this being their first experience with them? Can you imagine?

This is how we first encountered Chilli and Natalia, so beautiful and precious. I had no interest in another horse for the rescue, so I forced myself to look away, like with that cat in the alley all alone. I didn't want to get involved. But as the days wore on, and so little interest was shown

in the horses due to the snowstorm and the low turnout at the Expo, I grew more and more anxious for the fate of those babies. I knew they wouldn't go to slaughter; well, at least not immediately. But I also knew if they didn't get adopted, they would go back to a holding pen at the prison, with an uncertain future ahead of them. I agonized over not wanting to get involved. How could we afford to feed them? How could we even get them, with our trailer currently stuck in the snow? Is this something I even could handle, when already feeling buried in the finances and responsibilities of running an animal rescue, and a business, and being a single mom?

Then, being a mom, that's what did me in. My daughter felt an immediate connection with one of them; and, then, I noticed with my heart sinking that no one was bidding on either one of them; there just weren't enough people around to have interest in them. And I slowly, reluctantly, thought, well, we do have room, they are small and won't cost a lot to feed (for now), and we have trained a wild mustang before, so I knew we should be able to handle them. I had no idea what I was getting into, or whether I was about to make my life better or much worse, but it sure seemed that God had put that circumstance right in front of me for me to experience, and see how I would respond. So I took a deep breath, braced myself, and I didn't walk away. I reluctantly readied myself to embrace whatever that meant for us in the future, the struggle to feed them, to train them, just to get them home.

When God, or the universe, puts situations like this in front of you, how do you respond? Do you get involved, or walk away? Or do you support those others out there making the tough decisions, so you don't have to? As this new year of 2026 unfolds, I encourage you to embrace those situations where you are walking into the unknown. For that is how we grow, as humans. If we always stay the same, there is no room for something more. The risk must be taken, to create expansion for something different, for more.

So if this is the year you decide you want to give more, so that you can get more (because that's how it works), please consider being a monthly supporter of the ResqRanch, so we can continue to do our little part, with less anxiety about being able to care for wild mustangs like these and the other aging horses in our care. And if being around horses this year is part of your New Year's resolution, join our newsletter so you can be the first to know about upcoming events, where you can come and smell the wonderful smell of horses, and contemplate the life these animals have had, and wonder whether you would be as kind, if you had endured a life like theirs. And is my life better for having made the decision to bring home Chilli and Natalia? I think my daily YouTube videos, that mostly show Natalia beelining for me every single morning, pretty much answers that question; she is the palomino wild mustang I had no idea I needed, and that now I never want to be without.

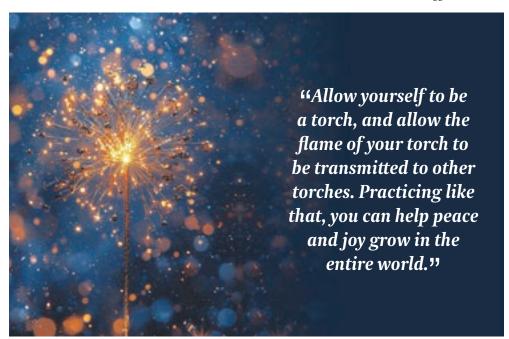
Thank you as always for your support of Aspen Park Vet Hospital and the ResqRanch, wishing that 2026 is a breakthrough year for you and brings you nothing but blessings, easy decisions, and good fortune!

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You can call the hospital at (303) 838-3771 (838-DrQ1) or visit them at www.DrQandU.org.

— KELLER WILLIAMS FOOTHILLS REALTY —

Let Your Light Shine

"Make a conscious effort to be positive and live in gratitude."



Isn't it funny how a place, a smell, even a song can take you back to another time in your life?

drove my old pickup recently. My daughter is in town for the holidays, and I relinquished my daily driver so she could have her own wheels. Settling into my old ride was comforting and empowering all at once. It's a beast with a huge turning radius and the only vehicle I've ever purchased with cash that I earned wholly myself.

Driving it, I am transported back to a time before I married Phillip or had our daughter Ellie. Back then I was working as a full-time paralegal for BP Exploration Alaska and was the owner of Plummer Park Equestrian Center, my own hunter jumper show barn where I successfully competed and coached groups of riders and horses on the Alaska show circuit. I was young and free-hair past my waist, with a strong lithe body, working two jobs that left time for little else.

That pickup truck radio plays a staticky country station, and some of "her" features are finicky. She has scratches and a couple of dents, but she was built to last and gets the job done. I still use this truck to haul my horse trailer (which is a rarity these days); but back then, driving it and pulling my beloved horses, I was somehow invincible.

Driving this truck is like entering a time capsule for me. It reminds me where I came from and who I am and makes me feel proud of myself. I have some things in common with this truck; it's not the newest model but solid, steady, and safe as heck! A friend recently commented that I was one of the most grateful and accomplished people they knew but felt I could value myself more. This resonated with me. I am confident, unpretentious, and consider myself a modern day "bad ass," but admit sometimes I may shrink to make others feel comfortable.

I am sensitive to the feelings of those around me. I make a conscious effort to be positive and live in gratitude, but I now realize I need to allow myself to shine brightly as a way of encouraging others to shine their very brightest, too

We should treat ourselves as sacred by nurturing our mind, body, and spirits. There is no one exactly like each of us, we hold the power to direct our lives, and we have survived every adversity we have ever faced. Please acknowledge and celebrate your accomplishments as a way of boosting self-esteem, reinforcing positive behavior, and releasing dopamine.

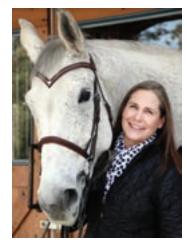
I was this many years old when I realized that we are in control of programming the dialogue of our inner voices. I used to think that the little voice inside us was like a conscience; but as mine fed me more and more questionable information, I began to realize that an inner voice can be wrought with self-doubt.

Two books popped out at me on the bookshelf at Namaste, so I took them on loan and read them. They each explored the relationship between our brains and our hearts, and our ability to overcome and accomplish literally anything if we open our hearts, use a growth mindset, and do the work to reprogram our brains. They discussed confronting uncomfortable emotions through self-reflection and therapy,

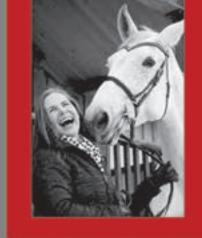
and how using mindfulness, visualization, and affirmations can help us achieve our goals and live happier lives.

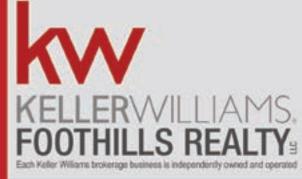
I recently Googled "living a life you're proud of" in AI mode, and the result was, "Living a life you're proud of means aligning your actions with your core values, setting and achieving meaningful goals, taking responsibility for your choices, and finding internal validations rather than seeking constant external approval. It involves being honest with yourself, focusing on personal growth, contributing positively, and approaching the journey, not just the destination, to build self-worth and fulfillment."

Here's to living your best life in 2026. Happy New Year! All the best, Lisa.



Savvy Mountain Realtor specializing in Relocations/Horse Properties/Estates Lisa Plummer Smith Keller Williams Foothills Realty, LLC Cell: 907-632-3683 lisarayanne@gmail.com



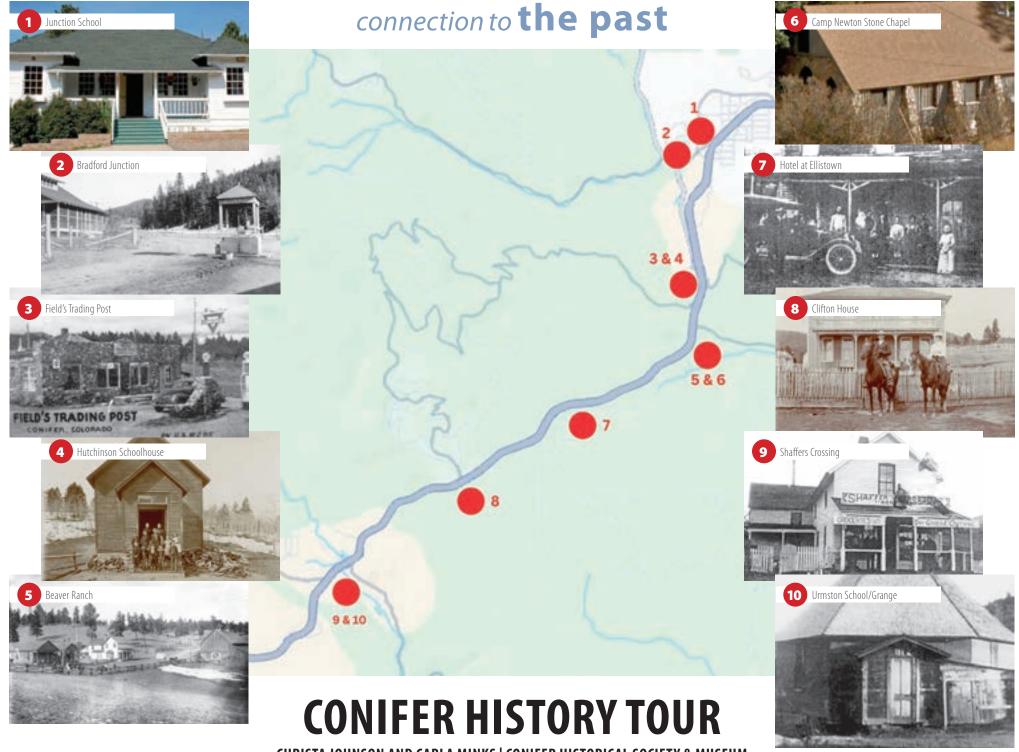


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CHRISTA JOHNSON AND CARLA MINKS | CONIFER HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Part 1 of 2

It's the perfect time of year for a Conifer History Tour!

There's nothing quite like traveling the local roads, wondering what the area looked like 100+ years ago, while following a tour route of historic places from your car or in your mind. Start near Bradford Junction at the Little White Schoolhouse, travel down Hwy 73 and south on Hwy 285 to Shaffer's Crossing. We've provided a map with the locations, with a picture and brief history of each site or landmark.

1 CONIFER JUNCTION SCHOOL

In 1922 local resident John J. Mullen loaned property adjacent to his yellow barn to the area's school district. What we now know as the Little White Schoolhouse was originally built as the Conifer Junction School. It opened in 1923 to eight students 1st-8th grade. In 1946 the schoolhouse was sold to the school district and the building ownership was transferred in 1950. The "new" West Jefferson Elementary opened in 1955, and the little school became an overflow classroom, including kindergarten students. From 1969 to 2013 the historic school served the preschool children and families. In 2013, the preschool classrooms were moved to the next "new" West Jefferson Elementary, and the building was donated to the Conifer Historical Society.

2 BRADFORD JUNCTION

The crossing at today's Barkley Road and Highway 73 was once a stage stop for pioneers and miners traveling several toll roads to the placer mines, including the Denver, Bradford, and Blue River Toll Road, Bergen Park Toll Road, and Denver and South Park Wagon Road. Robert Bradford purchased the original 320 acres, and the crossing eventually included a hotel, restaurant, barn, Post Office, and the Civil War Well. The corner property is best known for the Yellow Barn that was added to the property in 1918.

3 JUNCTION SCHOOL / HUTCHINSON

Many of Conifer's pioneers were members of the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints, and the community built a church where today's Staples parking lot is. It quickly became an interfaith place of worship for all residents in 1911. In 1911 the school district purchased it as their second school building. Eventually in 1937 the Junction Schoolhouse was sold and dismantled, and students were educated in the area's other schools.

4 FIELDS TRADING POST

Fields Trading Post was built in 1929 and was located where Dutch Brothers Coffee is today. It offered travelers a store, gas station, and small restaurant. The post was famous for its taxidermized 4-legged chicken, perched atop a display cabinet. A glass cover was made to protect it from dust and curious hands. The building was demolished during the Highway 285 expansion.

5 BEAVER RANCH

George O. Kennedy 1860s 583-acre homestead was a favorite stop on the trail to Leadville because it had cold spring water, good corrals, and hotel space for the men and families who made their way to the mountains seeking gold. The ranch included the family home, a hotel, and Conifer's first Post Office. It hosted community events like rodeos and bucking bronco contests. The red barn visible from 285 is the last remaining original structure.

6 STONE CHAPEL

The stone chapel on Hwy 285 dates back to the time when Beaver Ranch's James Quigg Newton, Sr., the father of Quigg Newton, Denver mayor from 1945 to 1951, was the owner of the ranch. In 1939 Mr. Newton donated 583 acres to the Grace Methodist Church, and in 1951 a portion of the property was established as Camp Newton, a camp for girls and boys ages eight to thirteen. The stone chapel was built at this time, and the camp directors, H.R. and Ginnie Linville, lived in a home at the rear of the chapel. The surrounding property is now Newton Park (Denver Mountain Parks) and Beaver Ranch (Jefferson County Open Space).

7 ELLISTOWN

Today's Green Valley was once platted as Ellistown by Silas Elliott—the man rumored to have shot his nephew John Kennedy. After finding gold-bearing minerals on Elk Creek, he formed the town in1896 and named it after his in-laws John and Agnes Ellis. The town had 3 saloons, a grocery store, and a meat market. When the financier of the venture, Mr. Cole, died, Ellistown died with him. Silas later moved to California and lived to be a centenarian.

8 CLIFTON HOUSE

The Clifton House dates back to 1875 when it was built as a homestead cabin by Rudolph Pollitz. It was expanded into a two-story, 14-room home and served as a stagecoach stop and hotel along the Denver-Leadville Stagecoach Road. The home also housed the local telephone exchange for over 30 years and even had a handwritten newspaper. A little known fact? It was the site of a stagecoach robbery where bandits stole horses from the barn. It's now Conifer Ranch, where guests can stay and host events.

9 SHAFFER'S CROSSING

Shaffer's Crossing was originally the home of Samuel Shaffer, who moved from Wyoming to Colorado in 1902. The spot marked where a stagecoach route crossed Elk Creek. He started a horse ranch and also farmed, threshed, milled, and cut railroad ties. The property included the family home, a store, dance hall, and a church. The store was known to have "everything from a needle to a threshing machine."

10 URMSTON GRANGE

The white hexagonal structure at Shaffer's Crossing was likely built by the Shaffer family and has had a number of uses. Originally it served as a dance hall where couples would arrive in wagons and dance all night. Isham Jones, a musician, played at the hall and composed songs like "It Had To Be You," "I'll See You in My Dreams," and many other songs on his nearby ranch. Later the Grange and the Fire Department met there as well. In the 1920s it became the area school until a brick school was built in 1936. It is now owned by the Archdiocese of Denver but listed on Colorado Preservation Inc's. Most Endangered Places.

Thank you to **Christa Johnson of the Conifer Historical Society & Museum** for her hours of research, write up, photos and map of the historic sites to turn her research into a tour.

There are too many fascinating historic places in Conifer for one issue! Look to upcoming editions for more.

Thanks to Christa Johnson and the Conifer Historical Society and Museum for providing this month's Connection to the Past article.

The mission of the Conifer Historical Society is to share the region's legacy by collecting, preserving, and exhibiting historical and cultural materials.

www.coniferhistoricalsociety.org



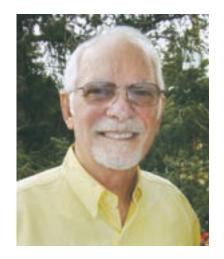
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I'm Just Sayin'...

January '26 – New Year

Jeff Smith owner/publisher

e always pray that this year will be better than the last. Less violence, less political upheaval, more good old-fashioned respect for others. We hope all of our readers and businesses will have a better, healthier, more prosperous year. And of course, the Broncos, Avalanche and Nuggets will all have a great finish to their seasons. Other than that— HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Thanks for a great year to all our advertisers, readers, and of course the Your Mountain Connection staff!

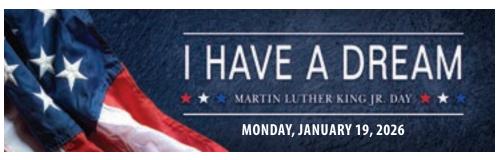
College Football – The Iowa Hawkeyes will play in the ReliaQuest Bowl against Vanderbilt (with a Heisman Trophy nominee QB) on December 31 in Tampa, Florida, at 9 am our time. GO HAWKS!!!

Broncos – 12–3 at this writing. Need to beat KC (without Mahomes and playing their thirdstring QB) and Chargers at home. The path is clear, and they're in charge of their own destiny. GO BRONCOS!!!

Avalanche – 26 – 2 at this writing, the best team in the NHL. There are other good teams out there, so they need to keep up the pace. GO AVS!!!

Nuggets – 21–7. They are in a good position, but need to pick up the pace. Lots of games left. GO NUGGETS!!!

> Quackadilly says: "Have a prosperous, healthy, and peaceful New Year." —Your Mountain Connection staff



NEWS ON THE POSITIVE SIDE

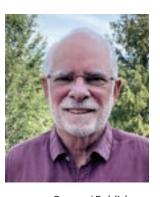
MOUNTAIN CONNECTION

JANUARY 2026 • VOL XXXIV NO 1 next issue • FEBRUARY 2026

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February theme: Valentine's Dav

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— THE SASQUATCH OUTPOST —

The Sasquatch Chronicles

BY JIM MYERS

"Please tune in to 'Sasquatch Beyond the Outpost."

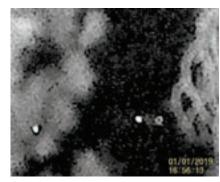
Hello, Bigfoot fans and friends of the Sasquatch Outpost! We are deeply grateful to our loyal customers who continue to visit the Outpost and who bring along friends and relatives whenever they're in town. Thank you for your continued support!

For those interested in joining me for a night hike or a Sasquatch camping expedition this summer, all the details and booking information can be found at rabbitholeadventures.co (and yes, the .co is correct; it's not a typo). We have multiple trips planned, so be sure to check it out.

to "Sasquatch Beyond

the Outpost." My co-host, Sybilla Irwin, and I interview eyewitnesses and discuss the latest Sasquatch-related news. In our most recent episode, airing this week, we take a deep dive into the controversial topic of Sasquatch eye-glow.

This phenomenon is often confused with what we observe when shining a flashlight at animals such as dogs, cats, or deer at night, and their eyes reflect back a green or white glow. That reflection is a well-understood scientific principle: certain animals have an extra layer behind the retina called the tapetum lucidum (meaning "shining layer"). When light enters these animals' eyes, it passes through the retina, reflects off the tapetum lucidum, and exits the eye, providing enhanced night vision for nocturnal animals.



"I have observed Sasquatch eyes glowing in the pitch-black darkness of a moonless night, shining so brightly that I initially mistook them for a If you enjoy pod-casts, please tune in flashlight or a porch light."

evidence suggests that whatever light is being emitted appears to come through the sclera rather than the pupils, as one can easily observe in this photo, which was recorded at 1:30 am in the pitch black near Guffey, CO. The pupil is black, as seems logical... yet the entire sclera is brilliant white.

Most researchers accept

that Sasquatch eyes shine

at night. The contro-

versy, however, centers

on why they shine. If the

explanation is a tapetum

lucidum, we encoun-

ter a problem—neither

humans nor any of the

great apes possess this

structure. Additionally, I

have personally observed

Sasquatch eyes glow-

ing in the pitch-black

darkness of a moonless

night, shining so brightly

that I initially mistook

them for a flashlight or a

porch light. Anyone who

thinks that the tapetum

lucidum can produce

light of this intensity

has never actually seen

eye-GLOW. Furthermore,

Until science can identify the mechanism behind Sasquatch eye-glow, this phenomenon will remain a mystery. Or, perhaps we will have to redefine our scientific theories to explain a phenomenon that, for the time being, is completely unexplainable.

Come by and check out the store and museum for yourself! 149 Main Street in Bailey. Open every day. You can contact us by writing to: info@sasquatchoutpost.com

— CORE HABITS COACHING —

Why New Year's Resolutions Fail

And How Coaching Helps People Finally Succeed

BY ISABELLE DE FAYS COMINA

Every January, millions of people make bold promises: eat healthier, exercise more, lose weight, get organized, stress less. But despite all of the enthusiasm, most resolutions don't survive beyond the first few weeks. In fact, an estimated 80% fail by early February, because resolutions rely on a strategy that is fundamentally flawed.

Many of our resolutions are rooted in unrealistic expectations. We imagine a new year will suddenly bring new levels of discipline, motivation, and willpower. When the excitement wears off and daily life returns to normal, discouragement and abandonment set in. Resolutions depend on willpower, yet willpower, like a battery, drains throughout the

day as we make decisions, resist temptation, and handle stress. Once depleted, even strong intentions crumble. Resolutions require us to sustain maximum willpower. So, when life gets overwhelming, the resolution is the first thing to go.

Most resolutions are vague outcomes ("Get healthy") rather than specific behaviors. Without a roadmap, the brain perceives the goal as a threat or a burden, and you are simply either "on track" or "off track." One slip-up is viewed as a total failure, leading to the "what the hell" effect, where a single cookie leads to binge-eating the whole box because "the diet is ruined anyway."



"Habit formation and lifestyle coaching work because they align with human nature."

If resolutions are about the destination, habits are about the journey. Shifting focus from resolutions to new habits honors the journey and allows for a sustainable change that lasts a lifetime. Resolutions are going cold turkey, while habits form over time with small changes that rewire the brain, turning hard choices into automatic behaviors that require zero willpower. But how can you form these new habits? A coach can help provide the framework and accountability to turn resolutions into lifelong habits.

There are many benefits to using a coach. A coach provides external accountability, which is often the missing link for adherence. Knowing someone is checking in on your progress

creates a social contract that bolsters commitment when internal motivation wanes. While resolutions are rigid, coaching is adaptable, to meet you where you are. You might blame yourself for failed resolutions; your coach helps you recognize and overcome obstacles.

Habit formation and lifestyle coaching work because they align with human nature. Resolutions fail because they rely on motivation and perfection. Coaching succeeds because it provides structure, support, accountability, and flexibility. Instead of trying to reinvent yourself in 24 hours, a more effective approach is to build a lifestyle where the "healthy choice" eventually becomes the easy choice.

With over 30 years as a physical therapist, 10 years as a yoga instructor, and extensive healthcare executive leadership experience, I guide clients on a journey of transformation, helping them create lasting habits, nurture their well-being, and reconnect with their natural energy and confidence. www. Core Habits Coaching. com ~ core habits coaching @gmail.com

— EVERGREEN HEALTH INSURANCE —

What's New at Evergreen **Health Insurance?**

BY ED REGALADO

Wow! This last Annual Enrollment period was very different from past AEPs. Traditionally, most clients have been happy with their Advantage Plans and, in most cases, benefits improved year over year. In fact for many years, unless their medical needs changed, most of my clients could just let their plans auto renew. This year is different.

A big change was that the largest Medicare carrier eliminated their popular PPO plans, and this required all PPO enrollees to select new plans for 2026. In addition, most other Medicare carriers

modified plans and, in some cases, no longer allow brokers to sell all their Medicare offerings. By and large, brokers can no longer sell prescription drug plans at all.

In addition, folks who are insured through the individual marketplace are enduring a difficult stage of adjustment right now. The premium increases for 2026 are significant, 18-26% on average, and because of subsidy losses, costs are up even more. Older enrollees, who often earn over 400% of the FPL in their category, will see dramatic increases in premiums this year. I'm still grappling with how to advise my individual clients who find themselves no longer reasonably able to afford premiums. While I hope Congress will come up with a solution to assist individuals in 2026, at this time we are also looking at other insurance products worth consideration for those who can no longer afford to enroll in an individual plan. The last day of Open Enrollment is January 15th.

With so much going on, I've needed more horsepower to help the many folks who need it than what your favorite, local senior broker can deliver! I'm fortunate to have two of my grown



different."

children, who are also certified brokers in Colorado, working with me now. My daughter, Devin Regalado, is certified to work in both the Medicare and individual marketplaces. I now refer most of my new and existing individual clients to Devin. My son, Christian Regalado, is primarily a Medicare broker in Florida, but he is also licensed in Colorado and can assist when needed. Both Christian and Devin are available for remote appointments over video or phone. And I continue to serve new and existing clients who prefer to meet in person at

The Stone House in Evergreen. As I write this article in the middle of December, Congress is debating how to handle the burgeoning healthcare affordability crisis; at this juncture, I don't see how anything will be meaningfully resolved in the coming weeks to positively affect individual tax credits in 2026. We'll all be watching. In the meantime, healthy individuals who can no longer reasonably access comprehensive coverage may be looking at hospital indemnity or accident and critical illness plans to help provide a little peace of mind.

As always, our services are free to you. Please feel free to reach out. We are independent brokers who can help you design individual health and Medicare solutions that work best for you. Here's to a healthy 2026!

Ed Regalado is a certified broker. The office is located at the Stone House at 1524 Belford Court in Evergreen. Ed can be reached at 303-674-1945 or send an email to: edregalado46@gmail.com.

— PEOPLE PROBLEMS —

Small Businesses Matter in the Age of Al

BY JENNIFER MAY ELLIS

2026 is here. For some of us the world has never felt faster or seemed more vast with all of the endless virtual distractions at our fingertips. Technology is supposed to be synonymous with words like progression and advancement. Yet many of us are feeling increased loneliness and discontent. As a result, something else is starting to happen that is riding alongside technology. That something else is a newfound appreciation for local goods and services that are provided by our small business communities.

People are starting to connect the dots when it comes to the viability of their favorite small my beloved coffee shop, it could disappear." They are disappear." They are starting to appreciate actually knowing the

person who provides their favorite goods or services. Suddenly, interacting with a bot or supporting another multi-billion dollar company has lost its glamour. There is a growing trend of people becoming energized by interacting, investing, and supporting their local communities. And at the heart of all local communities are small businesses.

Small businesses bring a unique touch to a landscape filled with mass-produced stuff. It is the small business owner who actually knows their customers and values those relationships. It is the small business owner who still takes the time to create something meaningful.

Advancing technology and advancing human connection don't need to be in opposition. Small business owners can actually benefit from AI. If used correctly, AI can actually give the gift of



"Small businesses bring a unique touch to a landscape produced stuff."

time to do the things that bring more joy, like connecting with customers in a more meaningful way or creating a new business offering.

So...in the Age of AI, how can the small business owner thrive and leverage technology for their sustained success? By recognizing that AI is not a replacement for our humanity or creativity, and instead can be utilized as a time-saving tool and supporter of small businesses. Here are some examples of how small businesses can effectively use AI: (1) Have AI interview you. "I'm thinking of launching this new product, XYZ. What are five things that I have probably not thought about?" (2) Have AI draft recurring content. "Create a social media campaign with graphics for my upcoming

new product launch, XYZ." (3) Have AI analyze sales data for better predictions. "Analyze the provided sales data. Forecast sales for the next two quarters, identify key growth drivers, and suggest three strategies to meet targets."

If you need any help, operations is one of my specialities.

P.S. I would like to experiment with offering a "Dear Abby" type column, focused on the workplace. I will be very careful with privacy considerations. Sometimes, it's helpful to know that you are not alone in the workplace world. Any advice would not be legal and instead from the realm of HR Consulting. If you have a situation that you would like some thoughts on that could also be referenced in a future column, please contact me at www.jennifer-may.com.

Jennifer May Ellis is a human resources consultant and former employment law attorney. She is an Evergreen resident and supporter of small businesses. She is the founder of Jennifer May Consulting and can be reached at jennifer@jennifer-may.com or https://www.jennifer-may.com/



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Evergreen Animal Protective League

₹ince 1981, the Evergreen Animal Protective League (EAPL) has been steadfast in its mission of aiding lost, abandoned, and suffering animals. Many rescue organizations across our state are facing closure due to rising costs and stringent regulations. The need for organizations like EAPL has never been more critical. EAPL is licensed by the Colorado Department of Agriculture under their Pet Animal Care Facilities Act (PACFA).

Last year, we rescued and provided care for 696 animals and helped hundreds of other animals receive shelter, food, training, and veterinary assistance. Thanks to the support of our community, 532 animals were adopted into loving homes.

We are a foster-based rescue organization and do not have a shelter facility that houses our available animals. Most are in loving foster homes located in Evergreen, nearby mountain communities, and along the Front Range Corridor. We also have a one-room adult-cat-only Cat Adoption Center located in, and donated by, the Chow Down Pet Supply Store in the Bergen Park Shopping Center in Evergreen.

- We adopt unclaimed pets into new homes.
- We reunite lost pets with their owners through lost and found records.
- We assist financially with the neutering of pets, and we educate pet owners about neutering whenever possible.
- We educate adults wherever possible about proper care of pets.
- We provide educational programs to the youth community through scout programs and church summer programs
- We provide free pet registration tags for pets. • We conduct fundraising activities to finance
- our programs. • We are a source of information on pet behav-
- ior problems, but do not consider ourselves a replacement for a veterinarian.
- We help animals in any way that we can.

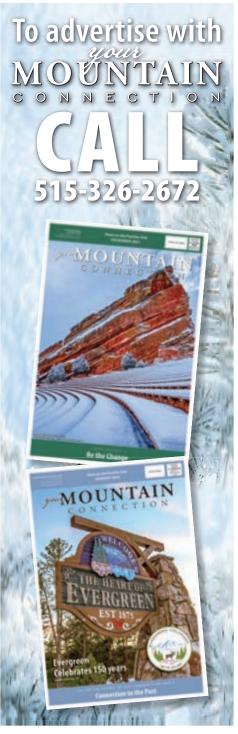
All this vital work is made possible by a dedicated team of volunteers who generously give their time and talents to create a world in which animals know safety and love. There are no paid directors or employees for our rescue operations. We welcome volunteers who wish to dedicate their time to support our mission.

We operate a retail Thrift Store whose profits go entirely to the rescue operations of EAPL. The store is staffed by four paid employees and many volunteers.

However, donations are the lifeblood of our organization, enabling us to provide the necessary care for animals in need. Every dollar donated is carefully allocated to directly aid animals in need. Contributions, no matter the size, can have a significant impact.

We are not supported by taxes. All funding comes from donations from the public, from fundraising activities, and from our retail Thrift Store. We are a non-profit organization recognized for tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. Our tax-exempt number is

Our website, EAPL.com, has all the details for donating, volunteering, fostering and of course, photos and bios of all our adoptable pets. You can also go to our events page and save the date to join us.





There Once was this Dog Park...

BY MARTY HALLBERG

A nyone who lived near Evergreen prior to 2017 and had a dog knew the off-leash dog park on Stagecoach Blvd. It was 107 acres that got loved to death. Eroding trails and stream banks, overcrowding, and excessive dog waste were a few of the reasons stated for closing the beloved park. I used to spend a great deal of time there (during the week, as the weekends were far too busy), first with Roxie and then Sweet Pea, my boxer babies. It has been greatly missed.

Now we can enjoy that beautiful area again. On October 25, Jefferson County reopened the Stagecoach trailhead, with a much larger parking area, 2 EV chargers, upgraded restrooms, and a flashing crosswalk allowing you to safely cross Stagecoach from the parking lot to the newly opened trails. Your pup has to be on a leash, but you can enjoy the trails, the views, and the stream just like before.

I've recently been hiking there with my bouncing boxer, Kiko, following the footprints, paw prints, hoof prints, and bike tracks along many of the same trails that I enjoyed years ago. What had once been a web of social footpaths is now a well-maintained system of trails that make great use of the area. There is also a new 1.3-mile trail to Jenkins Peak, with an elevation gain of 300 feet.

Much of the hike is very familiar, but the work put in by Jefferson County is apparent everywhere you look. Fire mitigation has opened up dramatic views. Years spent re-establishing native plants and building up the stream banks has returned the area to its natural beauty.

We are fortunate to live in an area that values our open spaces. I can hike numerous trails within minutes from my house. Now I have one more familiar, yet new, space to enjoy. Even if a leash is required.





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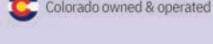
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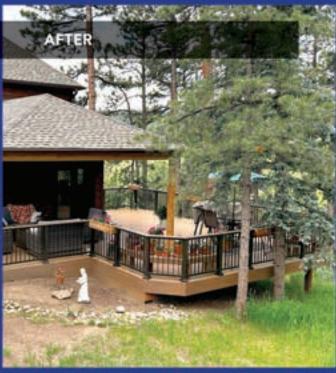
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— ON THE MOVE FITNESS —

Ready, Set, GO!

BY DEB BROWN, NSCA CPT, CWC, CNS

As we head into the new year, many people start to think about changing or improving their lives. January 1st starts a clean slate for us all, and it is a great time for introspection and motivation. How do you want to be different in the coming year? What would you like to improve about your life? We routinely work with clients who are wanting to transition into a healthier lifestyle. They express that they want to eat healthier, feel stronger and look better. An important point that we tell them to consider is that they must prepare to change. It is difficult under the best of circumstances to change one's habits. But one thing that will give you a shot at being successful is to prepare.

How do you do this? First, it helps to define where you are today and where, exactly, it is that you want to go. Define the gap between here and there. Writing it down will help to articulate the specifics and to get things clear in your head. Define your motivators for wanting to achieve this change. It also helps to document the challenges you may have in your way. As you list the challenges, also list several strategies to overcome these challenges. If you get stumped, ask family and friends for help. Second, create specific steps that you are ready to take to start the process of change. Think of small changes and baby steps. Visualize yourself doing the actions it will take to get you to your goal. Also, visualize what it will look like when you have achieved success.



"What would you like to improve about your life in the coming year?"

Third, measure your progress, and adapt to changing life situations as you go. And don't forget to reward yourself as you obtain your goals!

One of the most important areas in your plan should be to define your support system. This is your group of family, friends, and knowledgeable professionals who have a clear understanding of what you are trying to accomplish and want to help you get there. Also figure out if there are saboteurs in your life, those people who do NOT want you to succeed. Unfortunately, some of your closest friends and relatives can be your most daunting saboteurs. It takes courage and real commitment to realize that and decide that you are going to

change anyway. Figure out how you will deal with those people NOW. Do not wait until you are actively working hard on your personal change. You must be prepared beforehand.

January is the perfect month for organizing how you will change. As the hectic schedule of the past few weeks begins to wind down, take some time to ponder what you want your life to be like in the next year. Some time invested now in planning will pay dividends down the line as you execute a well-organized, supported plan for life change. If you need a structured plan for weight loss, healthier eating and/or fitness, please give us a call at 303-816-1426 or visit www.onthemovefitness.com to see how we can be of help!

Deb Brown is an NSCA Certified Personal Trainer and the owner of the On The Move Fitness Personal Training Studio located in Conifer. For more information about how we can help you get in shape for winter fun, please visit www.onthemovefitness.com or call us at 303-816-1426.



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A Skeptic's View

Ultra Processed
BY GARY LOFFLER

Tow that the culinary excesses of the holiday season are over, many people are looking to improve their diet, or at least get it back under control. The internet is full of all sorts of helpful hints on how to do this, so let's take a thoughtful (skeptical) look at a couple.

The first trend is blaming ultra-processed foods for obesity and illness. The immediate thing that comes to mind about this suggestion is, "How are ultra-processed foods different than processed foods?" As best as I can tell, there is no difference. Perhaps someone added the marketing term "ultra" to make it hip and new, but concern about processed foods goes back decades. Ultra has very little meaning as a definition unless you are talking about HDMI cables, in which case Ultra High Density specifies a very exact data transfer rate. Often, the helpful people warning about ultra-processed foods provide little guidance on avoiding them or offering a definition. For a little bit of clarity, let's define processed foods as "mass manufactured foodstuffs with high caloric contents and low nutritional values." You may have a different interpretation, which is fine, but this is the one I am using for this discussion. Using this definition, things like soft drinks and boxes of mac and cheese would qualify as processed foods. Generally speaking, processed foods are heavy on some combination of salt, sugar, and fat and low on fiber and protein. Fiber is tough to work with, and protein tends to be expensive, while sugar, salt, and fat are cheap and easy to use.

Bringing in the second piece of advice, "Don't eat things you can't pronounce," adds a secondary condition for calling something processed. The idea here is that if something has a long chemical name, it can't be good for you. The obvious problem with this is that pretty much everything has a chemical name. Sodium chloride and monosaccharides are table salt and sugar. Coffee contains polyphenols and 1,3,7-Trimethylxanthine (caffeine), and to be snarky, I am never going to be able to pronounce gochujang correctly, but I

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"The problems of obesity and diabetes in America are complex and have many different root causes."

will continue to keep it in my kitchen. My problem with this phrase is more along the lines of its sloppiness than anything else. Again nothing is defined, and often random chemical additives are singled out as being bad. The idea of keeping additives to a minimum is a good one, but it is best to come at this from a scientific standpoint. Each item added to a foodstuff has a specific purpose; and because they are monitored by the FDA, there are regulations for how and where they can be used. Everything added to food has had multiple studies going back years, and has a track record for safety. Still, there is nothing wrong with limiting preservatives, stabilizers, and food coloring when you can, but memes should not play a big part in decision making.

As with so many of these simple solutions, both of these ignore the fact that the problems

and have many different root causes. Can avoiding processed foods help with a diet? Sure, sometimes. A meal of brown rice, roasted vegetables, and 4 ounces of chicken breast is a good healthy meal that some people thoroughly enjoy and doctors would prefer more people ate. However, not everyone enjoys such a meal. Expense is one reason: mac and cheese runs about a dollar per serving for the cheap stuff. Another consideration is time: five minutes in the microwave versus half an hour in the kitchen. Then there is taste: some people simply prefer the taste of mac and cheese over vegetables. There is also a convenience factor: a box of mac and cheese will last for a really long time in the cupboard, whereas vegetables do not. Lastly there is portion control: mac and cheese, one box one serving. The stuff

of obesity and diabetes in America are complex

I cook is typically way more than Marty and I should eat, but it is hard not to fill a plate after spending the time making supper.

When cooking at home to avoid processed foods, it is important to remember that the same salt, sugar, and fat used in factories is also what makes home cooking taste good. If you compare boxed mac and cheese with rice and roasted vegetable, then there is a clear dietary winner. But what happens when you make homemade carbonara instead? This is a fairly quick recipe starting with frying bits of bacon, then adding some cooked spaghetti, and finishing off with a cheese, butter, and egg mixture. Takes a while to get the technique right, but once you do it is pretty easy; but it is a major calorie hit and only a little better nutrition-wise than boxed mac and cheese. Portion control goes out the window as well.

Clearly mac and cheese and carbonara are related. While they taste quite different, their components are basically the same: pasta (carbohydrates/complex sugars), cheese (fat), and salt (sodium chloride). While you may argue that the processed cheese in the box is chemically enhanced, remember that the aging process for real cheese involves mold and bacteria, and that both kinds have a very good safety track record.

Fortunately, I did not start to write this article with the intention of offering anyone advice on eating or not eating processed food, and/ or avoiding substances with unpronounceable names, or choosing home cooking over store bought. The only person who can really decide what you eat and how you eat is you. There are so many variables to consider, including time constraints, money constraints, availability, cooking ability, allergies, and what you like to eat. My opinion is that you should try to avoid processed foods and added chemicals, but not worry too much about them. They should be just another consideration when figuring out how eating and nutrition figure into your lifestyle.

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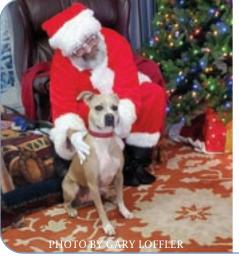
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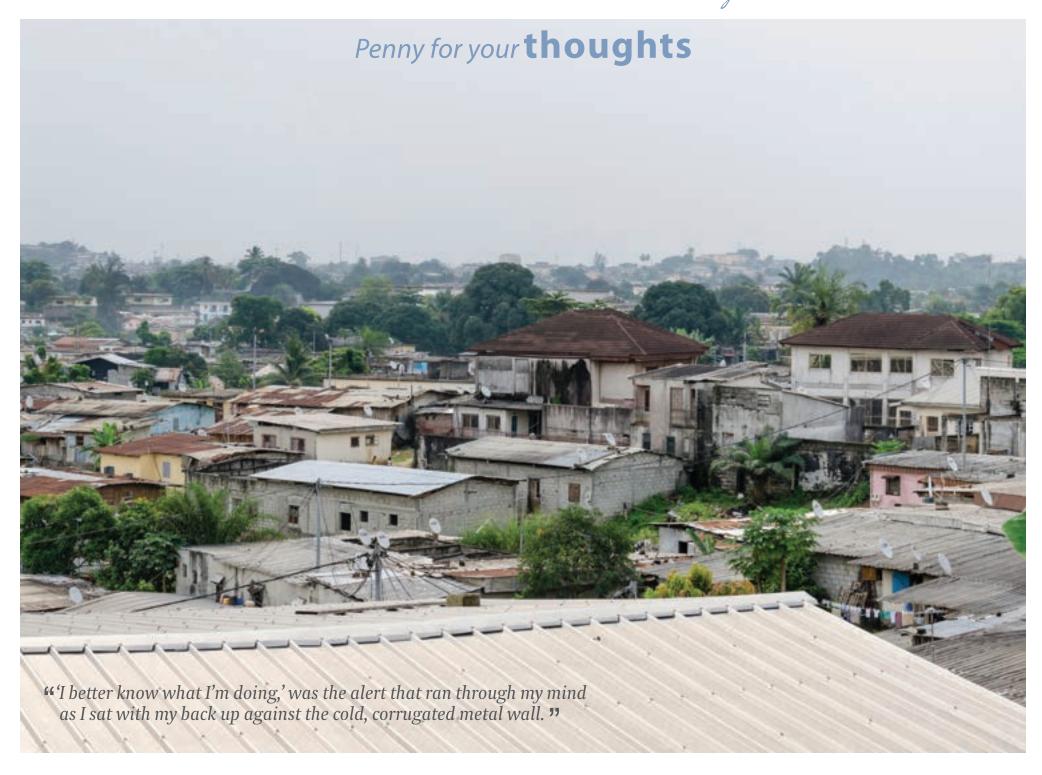
This spunky "puppy" is about 1.5 years old (guesstimate bd 3/13/24) with lots of fun puppy energy. Her first home in life was rough, and she didn't get a chance to be the funny, happy dog that she is. She loves walks, hikes, and car rides and is doing better on a leash all the time. She gets along great with other dogs and loves living with her doggy foster sister. She is great with kids too! Rae is an all-around sweet, loyal, and funny dog. Put in an application at www.eapl.com.



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Deadline is the 16th of each month. Email your contribution to news@yourmtnconnection.com



Where Hope Thrives

BY PENNY RANDELL

After living in Africa beginning in 1997 and returning dozens of time since, I have participated in countless mind and soul-moving conversations with everyone from local average townsfolk to the highest government officials. This is one of those stories.

better know what I'm doing," was the alert that ran through my mind as I sat with my back up against the cold, corrugated metal wall. I was inside a dark and musty shack in the middle of one the poorest ghettos in Kampala, Uganda, surrounded by 23 African men. All eyes were trained on me, the only white woman ever to enter this inconspicuous enclave. The lack of available electricity kept any visible definition at bay; therefore, faces were not distinguishable. The young man positioned next to me whispered, "You must greet us all, Madam." I rose, found my footing and did just that.

I shuffled along the dirt floor, fist in front, bumping each hand one by one. Repetition was relaxing and I gave a huge smile as I uttered "Wud up?" with each bump. They loved it and said so through their laughter and the questions they soon were free to ask. Inquiries came flying at me, expressed in soft tones and broken English. In this steady stream of questions, most members of this delightful and eclectic group were asking about my personal beliefs. The usual explanation of where I was from and why I was in Africa was repeatedly addressed.

This particular ghetto lies on the road between Kampala and Jinja, and is within a thriving metropolitan area swamped with industry. Known as Nakawa, it is the Headquarters of Nakawa Division, one of Kampala's five administrative divides. Besides hosting institutions such as Ugandan Revenue Authority, a major quality shopping complex, central markets, and a well-established rugby club, Nakawa lies adjacent to Ntinda, one of Kampala's more affluent residential areas. Marginalized communities such as Nakawa are pretty much common

throughout Kampala, but none have a history quite like this one.

President in the 1970s, Idi Amin remains the most notorious of all Ugandan leaders after ruling for eight consecutive years. Ousted in 1979, he fled the country and died in exile in 2003 while residing in Saudi Arabia. During his presidency he referred to himself as The Hero of Africa, His Excellency President for Life, and even Lord of the Beasts of the Earth and Fishes of the Sea. State officials from around the world, particularly in the West, nicknamed the man "Butcher of Uganda" in reference to his taste for war and horror, adding up to half a million victims by the time he was removed. Known for his Kakwa tribal ancestry, Amin hailed from Western Uganda and the West Nile area, where he is somehow loved and honored until this day.

Adoration for such a flamboyant, evil villain seemed implausible, and I was more than amenable to visiting his homeland during my trip to Arua, West Nile region of northern Uganda. The car ride took eight hours, and the visit encompassed four days. The town of Arua lies just a few kilometers north of Amin's hometown, Koboko. There in his town his name is common to see, as establishments are named after him, including a club frequented by city officials and local residents. Indeed, Idi Amin, "Dada," named so as the father of the country, had quite the following in the northwest of Uganda, and it surprisingly left a trail all the way back to Kampala's Nakawa ghetto.

As it turns out, this maze of living quarters, shops, food vendors and hordes of residents in Nakawa was settled by second-generation Idi Amin warriors. The families of these fighters

were allowed to make a home on this land and have never been charged a penny for any of it.

Absorbing these seldom-heard accounts was stirring as I freely participated, whatever language was spoken that day in the shack. Vivid acclamations ruled as they paid tribute to the "only man that loved Uganda more than himself." Some of these narratives did ring with truth, for Amin was originally well-liked by the West and applauded by the British. In point of fact, Amin began his military career in the British army. It was Amin who served as a great ambassador and worked tirelessly to promote Uganda around the world. When he died, his family was given an offer to bury him "in state." In fact, if it had not been for this tyrant, perhaps Sir Winston Churchill would have never originated Uganda's nickname, "The Pearl of Africa."

Apparently it was the history of this village that helped to create the quality of conversation that we maintained that evening. Nonetheless, the incomparable caliber of what I first learned from those men brought me back on several occasions. One evening the electric light bulb that hung in the shack was pumped with energy, and I could easily see each one of them. In fact, that night we even had a radio, and a local station was playing Reggae music to the delight of my newfound friends. Limited space prohibited much dancing, but on occasion one or two would amble into the middle of the floor and move about quietly to the beat. Others would sing a few lyrics, but most were up for conversing.

The best of all was the heart-to-heart accountings concerning the spirit of hope. One evening a doctor replied to my inquiry about hope and happiness. His convictions were rousing, and I tried to memorize his every word. This man was married and had been the father of two children. Both of his babies had died from malaria, despite their receiving the antidote during the course of their illness. In both cases there wasn't enough money available to treat their disease early on.

Of all the men in the crooked, thin-sided, makeshift enclosure, this man gave the most passionate of speeches. His idea of hope was simple and was defined in one word: tomorrow. He honestly believed with all of his strength that tomorrow would be better. As the testimonial continued, others would engage. Before night's end even I began to buy into their theories that tomorrow HAD to be better. This and only this made the most sense, and not a soul in the room disagreed. "How could things stay same?" questioned one young man. "Just as you came as a stranger, you are now our trusted friend. How did this happen? See, every day is better," was the chronicle of another.

At no time have I ever been engulfed in such devotion to belief in hope as when I am in this country. The overwhelming and alluring display of happiness, coupled with the dependence on daily aspirations, is extraordinary. Indeed, I am a dutiful student of the "Pearl of Africa" and know without any doubt whatsoever that I am a better person because of these endearing people.

Much later, after everyone was tired and wanting to go to bed, the doctor in the group asked if he could accompany me to my living quarters. I was more than pleased and agreed. As we made our way out to the street, the doctor remained close. His chosen desire to protect me led us to his home and a pleasant surprise. This man raised rabbits at his compound, and once there he offered me a free rabbit. I literally hopped at the opportunity and bought into the offer. He sold me an enclosure for the bunny, and I was set.

Getting all this back to my apartment wasn't easy, but the kind doctor gave me a hand. Once home I readied an area by my back door, and the rabbit settled in. While at the doctor's house I purchased plenty of rabbit food, and all was good. Silly me had to work on making that rabbit comfortable practically all night into the wee hours of the morning.

And, by the by, of course I named the rabbit Peter.

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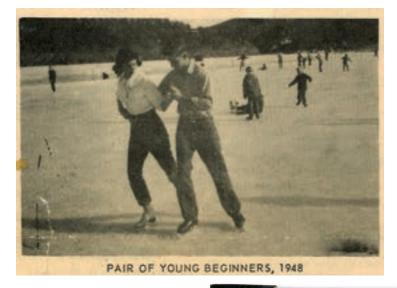
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We have advertised in Your Mountain Connection for years. I think it generates the best response out of anything we do to market our store. We are happy to be a part of our community newspaper"

> —Susan Fariss, Owner, Evergreen Crafters



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...The charm of open air skating helped to promote Evergreen Lake as a destination for a day's worth of outdoor fun."



Ice Skating at Evergreen Lake

hile the iconic Lake House at Evergreen Lake has earned renown for its stunning beauty and utility in our community and beyond, the sod-roofed historic warming hut nestled in the hillside on the banks of Evergreen Lake has a long and storied past. Built in the mid-1930s by a team from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), an agency created by Franklin Roosevelt as part of his New Deal, the warming hut has helped to foster many nostalgic memories from generations of residents and visitors.

Ice skating on Evergreen Lake was made available to hearty enthusiasts beginning in 1928, shortly after the dam was built and the lake formed. The sheer joy of skating was the lure, as there were no amenities in the early days before the warming house was built. It has been stated that in the early years, skaters provided their own shovels and brooms to remove snow from the icy surface, indicating the fervor exhibited for this outdoor activity. Lighting, ice grooming and music arrived at the ice rink years later. Today the ice rink is managed by the Evergreen Park & Recreation District (EPRD), boasting its status as the world's largest outdoor ice rink groomed by a Zamboni ice groomer. In addition, rink-side lighting enables the enjoyment of nighttime skating.

According to a notice printed in the leaflet, Denver, January 29, 1948, the Denver Chamber of Commerce and the Denver Figure Skating Club staged an afternoon presentation of skating events ranging from solo and pairs figure skating to speed skating exhibitions. All events featured "sparkling musical accompaniment." The event was held at center ice and, according to the historic record, spectators were offered transportation from Denver via bus service at the cost of \$1.15 round trip, while parking space at the lake was offered for 25 cents. This event, coupled with the charm of open-air skating, helped to promote Evergreen Lake as a destination for a day's worth of outdoor fun. The multi-acre, outdoor ice rink continues to lure skaters from the Evergreen area as well as Denver-area visitors.

In more recent history, students from nearby Wilmot Elementary School and Evergreen High School counted the hours until the end of the school day when, with skates and hockey sticks slung over their shoulders, they would traverse the snow-covered Evergreen Golf Course on a direct route to the lake. Offering an inviting space to re-invigorate icy-cold fingers and toes, the quaint warming hut served as a gathering spot

for the community of skate enthusiasts, as well as those merely wanting to gather with friends. At one point in time, a bonfire lit in the small dirt parking lot at the west end of the lake would offer another form of warmth. The warming hut provided skate rentals, hot chocolate and snacks, as well as refuge from the bitter cold temperatures of the multi-acre open-air ice rink. The small nature of the hut structure lent an atmosphere of coziness and warmth. The pervasive aroma of wet wool mittens, water-soaked floorboards and the errant single sock or glove peeking from under the log benches were all part of the charm of skating at Evergreen Lake in years past.

The long and active life of the warming hut came to an abrupt halt when, in 1993, a fire gutted much of the interior of the historic structure. While the integrity of the logs remained intact, the renovation proved to be arduous and expensive. The thought of demolishing the hut brought resounding public appeals to preserve the historic integrity of the warming hut. The EPRD obtained a grant from the Colorado Historical Society to determine the feasibility of rebuilding the structure. While the charred remains of the warming hut stood in the shadow of the newly constructed Lake House, the hut was eventually restored, retaining much of the enchantment and character of the original structure.

That same year, Evergreen Lake welcomed a new feature on the west bank that emerged as the Lake House. The newly-built center of lake activity became the skate hub, as well as a visitor center of sorts that welcomes summer guests to the lake. Built by Arrowhead Design Company and headed by local resident Scott MacKenzie, the 5,000-square-foot structure enhances the beauty of the lake and surrounding area by serving as a community center made available to many organizations' meetings and fundraisers, as well as a popular wedding venue. Our community is fortunate to have had many groups and individuals involved in the analysis and creation of this successful and splendid addition to the character and eminent standing of Evergreen in general, and the lake area specifically. It is difficult to imagine the lake's visual aspect in days before the construction of the Lake House. Photographs and oral histories are a testament to the importance of the historical record by way of acquainting many current residents with the historic character of the lake and the community. The landscape and utility of Evergreen Lake has progressed from a dirt parking lot on the

west bank of the lake and the warming hut serving the skating community to the conception and completion of a stunning community gathering place that was once a mere vision in the eye of the EPRD and concerned community leaders.

Presently, Evergreen Lake dominates the regional winter scene for ice skating and the ever-growing popularity of ice fishing. Anticipation for opening day at the lake heightens as the lights are turned on and the nighttime grooming of the lake ice begins. Opening day for ice skating is dependent upon the ice thickness and condition, monitored by EPRD in accordance with their safety standards. Public ice skating is encouraged and enjoyed by all ages and abilities. Numerous ice hockey rinks are made available for pick-up games, and private rink rental and convenient hockey and broomball equipment rental is offered. In 1995 the organization Drive Smart established a festive and popular New Year's Eve event, Skate the Lake, that continues today through the sponsorship of the Evergreen Chamber of Commerce and has emerged as a holiday tradition for many families from Evergreen and afar. Proceeds from this festive celebration benefit local charities.

The future of the historic warming hut was ensured by the EPRD in the early 1990s. The building is now occupied by the Evergreen Nature Center, operated by the Evergreen Audubon Society, which opened in 2008 to serve as a center for those interested in nature studies; it continues to be a vital component of the lake's importance to the area. The preservation of this structural reminder of Evergreen's past and the repurposing of the space is a gift for all visitors to enjoy. While the original purpose and ambiance of the hut has been transformed, the honor of the humble structure has been preserved.

Today, the historic warming hut and the Lake House sit in tandem as representations of the importance and integrity of Evergreen Lake and the foresight of the Evergreen community, whose progressive movement to improve and yet preserve the lake environs has evolved into a birder's paradise, thoughtful wetland preservation and an open public space for all to enjoy.

Resources and photos from the EMAHS archival

The Evergreen Mtn. Area Historical Society is your local history resource. Visit our website at jchscolorado.org and like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/JCHSCOLORADO/

Dogs, Dogs, Dogs

BY CATHY KOWALSKI

It's January; are you ready for making new year's resolutions? Time is a real equalizer because we all have 24 hours every day! Of course we have many demands on those hours.





Dogs, Dogs, Dogs

BY CATHY KOWALSKI

reating a strong bond with your dog starts with time! You can work on that bond by acknowledging your pup when they come into the room—ask them to sit, to down, to look you in the eyes (watch). Right there you have devoted a few minutes to training and at the same time given them that much desired attention, and most dogs love to please you!

One of your goals might be to get more exercise—and there is your fur baby, ready to assist! Those walks you take are great for both of you. Take a new route that opens up new horizons. As you are walking, talk to your dog—they love it! Playing hide and seek in the house when it's too cold outside will make your dog's tail go crazy when they find you and get out some of their excess energy!

Make sure their health is on your list. Are their immunizations up to date? Are you feeding them the correct amount? Obese dogs' life span is much shorter than that of a dog that is at a healthy weight. Taking care of their teeth will help them to stay healthy; try to brush their

teeth at least once a week. Make sure they get a bath—but no more than once a month, or their skin will dry out. Brushing your dog builds that relationship and keeps their coat healthy by distributing the oil on their skin. This also enables you to notice any lumps or skin issues.

There are many tricks you can find online to teach your dog. Roll over, high-five, bow, and crawl are a few. You can teach your dog to spin; and if they do it on the rug inside the door, they will clean their feet. If you want an impressive trick, go to https://www.youtube. com/watch?v=cSJ5gAmPRfE; one of the tricks in this session is teach your dog to walk with their feet on your toes! Another easy-to-train trick is to have your dog change the direction they are facing when they are lying down. If you want to snuggle with your dog with your arm around them but they are facing you, you will need them to face the other way. When they are lying down on their hip you will take a treat, keeping it low to the ground, and lure them towards the hip they are lying on—in this picture you would be luring towards their left hip-they will flip to the other hip!

If your dog doesn't already know basic obedience—sit, down, heel, stay, come—now is the time to devote to those important cues, which also helps with their focus and good behavior.

The Canine Good Citizens test might be a goal for 2026. https://www.akc.org/products-services/training-programs/canine-good-citizen/take-the-test/ is the American Kennel Club website where you can get information on the 10-skill test that shows that your dog has good manners. Theynotonlylist the test items but also have training resources. Amy's Mountain Dog Training, https://www.amysmtndogtraining.com/groupclasses, and Willow Acres Dog Training, willowacresdogtraining.com offer CGC group classes.

At the beginning of each year, we plan to make changes — this year let's focus on our four-legged buddy and make it their best year ever!



Cathy is the Executive
Director and trainer at
Faithfully K9 Service
Dogs and Dog Training.
Call 720-934-7378
or visit the website
www.faithfullyk9.com.



FEW WORDS INSPIRE

BY ANNE VICKSTRON

"There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."—Leonard Cohen

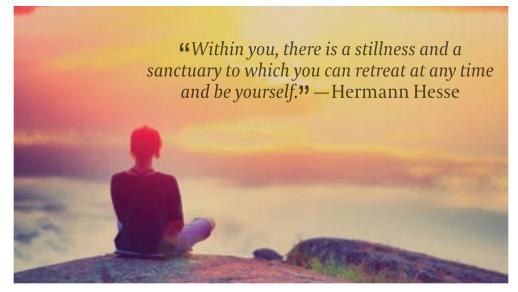
ver the past years, I have made a habit of collecting quotes that caught my attention. I've allowed several sites into my morning email feed, and I find they've become a moment of meditation. Only a moment—after all, I've got things to do! But seriously, I find that reading short quotes, something someone wrote concisely, makes me stop and ponder the thought. There are times I find myself leaning into the quote and trying to make it stick, questioning if my actions have been up to snuff, and willing myself to do better, or to look at matters with a fresh eye.

I admit that one of the reasons for turning to quotes is that it simplifies matters. When I sit down and read a book, something I love to do, I come away with new ideas. Since I don't have time to read as much as I wish to, quotes seem to satisfy that same yearning to open my mind and explore thoughts without committing to an eight-hour reading session.

Here are some that I've captured and now share with you:

"Never leave the house without a kiss, a hug, and an 'I love you.' Then wipe the dog hair off your lips on the way to the car." This is something I do, but I always start with a kiss for my husband, then my dog. And I always make sure the last words out of my mouth before leaving are "I love you." There may be some who would roll their eyes at the suggestion, but leaving the house knowing that those might be the last words my loved ones heard from me gives me comfort that the world is right.

"It is not happiness that makes us grateful. It's gratefulness that makes us happy." Hallelujah.



Absolutely. It's too easy to let the grind get us down. A friend and I were driving and watched "an idiot," she called him, weave in and out of traffic. Luckily, he didn't cause any accident that we witnessed, but we know he did miss the always-stunning and awesome herd of elk inching their way across Highway 74. While he bolted toward whatever he found so important, the rest of us slowed our cars to let them safely cross. As I perused other drivers, I saw smiles stretch across faces, several phones were poised to capture the magic on their cameras, and I felt myself take a deep breath of appreciation that we get to have these magnificent creatures as our daily neighbors.

Leonard Cohen knew what he was talking about when he wrote: "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in." This one took time to process. At first, I pictured a crack in a crystal container that allowed light to enter and brighten the object from within, rays dancing and bouncing off the inside curves. But then I sat with it and thought, how lovely that "there is a crack in everything" includes me, you, and us. We all have bad days; sadly, some have bad lives. Imagine if, when coming across someone who has experienced a lot of cracks in their life, we would stop and take time to learn what sort of light came from it all. I turned the spotlight inward and asked myself about my

current collection of cracks. I've not stayed on track toward my dreams lately, and reading this reminded me that the time is now to get cracking. Pun intended.

Within you, there is a stillness and a sanctuary to which you can retreat at any time and be yourself." —Hermann Hesse. At first, this didn't mean much to me, and yet I had screenshotted it. I looked at it again, and a calm overcame me. I'm not as bad as I used to be, running willynilly this way and that, but there are times I've planned too much. Despite being exhausted, I still head out to the art opening or meet friends. This quote reminded me that we each can take time, sit quietly, and rediscover our true selves. It's the joy of being alone at home—just me and my dog—where I can lose myself. I'll find myself reading, or writing, or deep-cleaning that bathroom that I've only spot-cleaned for too long. I'll find that I'm lost in my own world without any sort of outside influence guiding my thoughts and actions. That is, until the dog insists on

Oh, there are so many more quotes I want to share, but I'll end by encouraging you to search out a few sites that share daily quotes. You just may find out for yourself how few words can inspire.

Anne Vickstrom's first writing gig was right here at Your Mountain Connection. She has written for national and regional publications and has published books. She loves living in Evergreen where she and her husband raised three children and six dogs.

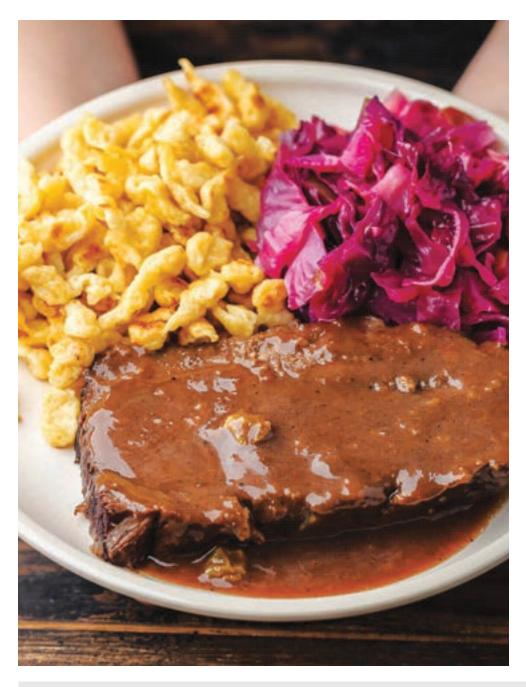
COOKING CLASSES WITH...

*CASTLES & KITCHENS X

A German Treasure

BY TOM BECKER

"As you travel through Germany, you will find recipe variations for each region's sauerbraten."



We're doing German today. And although it's debated as to whether or not there is a most popular dish in Germany, it has long been considered that sauerbraten is perhaps the national dish.

auerbraten, meaning sour roast, dates back to medieval times where vinegars and wines were used to tenderize and preserve the tough cuts of meats of the times. This marination process is one inspired by Roman techniques and was popularized by the likes of Charlemagne, Albert the Great, and Albertus Magnus, ranging from the 9th through the 13th centuries. It was Magnus who reportedly popularized the technique in Cologne, making it a popular dish. It was traditionally made with horsemeat but evolved into a dish featuring game and roast beef, and to this day it has established itself to be the featured dish in the Rhineland of Germany. Due to its long marinade involving the acids of wine and vinegar, which break down the muscle fibers and connective tissues of the meat, along with a slow, moist cook, followed by the thickening of the sauces using gingerbread and adding currents or raisins to impart sweetness, the process creates an amazing sweet-sour finish and an ultra-tender fall-apart roast.

As you travel through Germany, you will find recipe variations for each region's sauerbraten. Although the main contents of the Rhineland recipe will hold true, there are differences. The Rhineland marinade features red wine, red wine vinegar, spices and herbs, and a finishing gravy of the marinade with gingerbread and raisins. The Westfalischer region sauerbraten will be thickened with pumpernickel bread, with no raisins, eliminating the sweet. Thurgau will use apple wine and cider for the marinade. Bavarian sauerbraten will use cranberries, cherries, beer, and lemon in the marinade, along with cream or sour cream in the gravy. Dresden will use buttermilk in the marinade, as will a number of other northern Germanic regions.

With the exception of the marinade and German seasoning choices, a sauerbraten can basically be looked at as a roast beef, seasoned, seared, and braised. But today's cook will be following a pretty traditional Rhineland sauerbraten recipe. The sauerbraten beef cuts will typically be a rump roast, a bottom round, or a chuck roast, and today we'll be using a chuck. This cook can be done in a slow cooker, a stovetop braise, or an oven braise. I'd like to try it on my Traeger, but due to Hurricane Colorado, playing with fire is out. So, I'll do the stovetop

Cooking Classes with

Join us! We offer hands-on cooking classes in our Conifer kitchen. Browse classes on our website www.castlesandkitchens.com or contact Francesca or Tom at castlesandkitchens@gmail.com.

- Experience the flavors and techniques of world cuisine.
- Learn presentation tricks that make even the simplest foods special.
- Family cooking parties, office cooking parties, team building parties...give a unique and entertaining experience with valuable skills everyone will use daily.
- Eat what you cook and take home the recipes and new techniques to share with your family and friends.

SAUERBRATEN

Let's get started with these ingredients...

Marinade:

2 onions – chopped 2 carrots – chopped 1 leek – washed and chopped 3 cloves garlic – chopped 1 t dry thyme 2 small sprigs rosemary 1 T Herbs de Provence 2 bay leaves 8 juniper berries – crushed

6 whole cloves 12 black peppercorns 1 T salt 1 T sugar 2 ½ C red wine (Cabernet/Merlot/Pinot Noir) 1 C red wine vinegar 1 ½ C beef stock + additional as needed

3-4# beef roast

At Cook:
3 T olive oil
4 slices bacon – lardon ¼"
4 T flour – sifted
4 C raisins
3 oz. crumbled ginger snaps
1 T honey

Let's cook...

Marinade: Place all of the dry marinade ingredients into an enameled Dutch oven. Give it a good mix and add then add the wine, vinegar and stock. Mix it well. Bring it to a boil for 10–12 minutes. Remove from heat and let it cool completely. When cool, add the roast and add stock, if needed, to cover it completely. Cover the pot and place it into the refrig and let it marinate 7–10 days.

Cook: Remove the roast from the marinade, pat dry and let it come to temperature, 30-60 minutes. Meanwhile, strain the marinade. Remove the bay leaves and rosemary stems but save the veggies as well as the marinade liquid. When the roast has warmed, heat the oil at medium high. When hot, add the roast and sear on all sides. This searing creates a flavorful crust and enhances texture. When seared, remove from pot and set aside. Add the bacon and begin to brown, stirring. When half cooked, add the vegetable mix and complete cooking the bacon. Sift the flour and add it to the vegetable-bacon mix while stirring steadily. When blended, add the marinade liquid, the raisins and ginger snaps, stirring. When mixed add the roast, bring to a boil and then turn to low, cover and simmer for 2-4 hours until the meat is tender and is able to pull. Timing depends on the cut of roast and the weight. When done, remove the meat and tent it with foil to keep it warm. Meanwhile, prepare the gravy by adjusting the flavor with salt, pepper and sugar as needed. If you find that the sauce is too acidic to your taste, add additional stock. Also, the technique to combat an acidic edge is to add sugar. It's a bit of a balancing act, but this is the fun part of cooking. Make it work! Should your sauce need to be thicker, simply make a cornstarch slurry with cornstarch and hot sauce, mixed in a bowl and add it at a low boil, stirring.

Perfect sides for this dish include potato dumplings, egg noodles, mashed potatoes, braised red cabbage, cucumber salad, roasted vegetables, and green beans of most any preparation. But, when choosing sides, it's important to consider what works with this hearty gravy-laden dish. Look for recipes with an ability to cut through the rich flavor profiles of sauerbraten, a true German treasure!

Build your community...BUY LOCAL!

Evergreen Chamber Ribbon Cuttings and News



"Thank you for your support, your partnership, and your dedication to Evergreen."

— Nancy Judge

Dear Evergreen Community,

A fter just over five wonderful years serving as President of the Evergreen Chamber of Commerce, I have made the decision to step away from my role. This community, and each of you, have made this experience deeply meaningful, and I am truly grateful for the opportunity to work alongside such passionate business owners, my board members, my Chamber team, community leaders, and the community at large.

Together, we've celebrated growth, supported one another through challenges, and strengthened what makes Evergreen so special—a vibrant, welcoming mountain community with a strong spirit of collaboration.

While I have left the president's role, I'll continue to assist the Chamber during the transition period to ensure a smooth handoff to the next leader. I'm excited for what's ahead—for both the Chamber and our community—and remain confident the organization will continue to thrive and evolve in the years to come.

Thank you for your support, your partnership, and your dedication to Evergreen. It's been an honor to serve this community, and I look forward to continuing to cheer on the Chamber's successes in this next chapter.

With appreciation and optimism,

Nancy Judge

Past President, Evergreen Chamber of Commerce



The Evergreen Chamber will continue to partner with Evergreen Park and Recreation for a day of winter fun at Chill Out on Saturday, February 7. Come join us for

the Mushie Cup races, the Evergreen Amazing Race, "Rad as Ice" bike race, Teen Glow Skate and a Winter jam concert. Look for all the details and registrations at evergreenchamber.org

Follow us on Facebook. Visit our website EvergreenChamber.org. Call us anytime 303-674-3412.

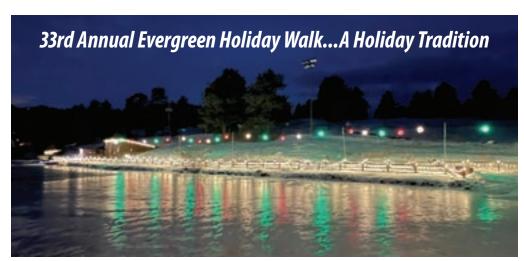


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Bridging humans and technology through interactive AI and robotics experiences that inspire curiosity, creativity, and connection across Colorado.

Jenny Sacks – Co-Founder 303-503-2712 info@everbot.tech everbot.tech

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your MOUNTAIN CONNECTION | Stories are contributed by local residents to inspire healthy living, happy families, and community giving. Email your story by the 16th of each month to jeff@yourmtnconnection.com.

Conifer Chamber Ribbon Cuttings and News



A Heartfelt **Thank You**

BY BETH SCHNEIDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The magic of the holiday season in Conifer does not happen by accident — it happens because of people. As we reflect on another joyful Christmas in Conifer and the 42nd Annual Christmas Parade, we are filled with gratitude for the incredible volunteers who gave their time, energy, and hearts to make these cherished traditions possible.

Trom the earliest planning meetings to the final moments of cleanup, volunteers stepped up in countless ways. They coordinated events, organized logistics, recruited participants, communicated with businesses and neighbors, decorated, set up, directed crowds, supported families, weathered blizzard conditions, and somehow managed to keep the holiday spirit alive through it all. Their dedication behind the scenes ensured that our community could come together to celebrate in a way that feels uniquely Conifer—warm, welcoming, and full of joy.

We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to the neighbors along the parade route for their patience with road closures and increased activity, and to those who generously shared their property and space to help make the event possible.

Because of these volunteers, children waved at Santa with wide-eyed excitement, neighbors gathered with cocoa and conversation, local businesses shined, and Sutton Road once again came alive with festive floats, music, and cheer. The Christmas Parade, now in its 42nd year, continues to be a beloved tradition not only because of its history, but because each year a new group of volunteers pours their passion into carrying it forward.

Our community is truly fortunate to have so many enthusiastic and caring individuals willing to give back. Their commitment reflects the very best of Conifer, a place where people show up for one another and work together to create moments that matter.

 $To \, every \, volunteer \, who \, helped \, plan, or ganize,$ support, and celebrate Christmas in Conifer and the Annual Christmas Parade: thank you!! Your efforts made the holidays brighter, brought our community closer, and created memories that will last well beyond the season.

Beth Schneider **Executive Director** Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce

If you have any membership questions, please contact the chamber office: director@GoConifer.com, 303-838-5711. Thank you for your continued support and thank you for shopping local!



Dakota Dolph of KW Foothills Realty accepting their award



Best of parade float made by KW foothills Realty



Thank you





June McKenzie Noah Martin Denise Stephenson David Borden Alex Hardesty Danna Johanson Jon Farris Karen Heydman Chris Heydman Martha Beckwith Punky Kiefer Rachel Rush Lance Swearenain Donna Prescott Wes Humes Melanie Swearengin Amy Cooper Audra lori Stephanie Johnson Dan Snyders Ann Mattingly-Lowe Nancy Parks Dustin Bartell Jessica Gentry Mark Spiroff Vivian Russo Jacqui Angelo Mary Beach Flint Cheney Alex Bauer

Sarah Bauer

Kristin Judy Kelly Beaulieu Kim Erikson Bill Aubin Edward Vaughn Debra Vaughn Mike Thompson Melissa Baker Nate Baker Tyler Coomes Riley Coomes Aimee Pless Erika Armstrong Steven Klimowski Marilyn Saltzman Jan Schmidt Ron Schmidt Suzy Nelson Kurt Kaisler Thomas Schenck Peter Barkmann Claire McCollum Katie Metzger Toni Johnson Nancy Anderson Tracy Anderson **Bud Moore** Lorna Grooms JD Lawrence Robert Lawrence Kelly Schneider



West Jeff elementary school fifth graders



Second place float by Rocky Mountain French bulldog rescue

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29

Join us for Thirsty Thursdays at the Blackbird Cafe, from 4-7:45 pm, for local live music, appetizers, and drinks. 25940 Highway 74 in Kittredge.

January 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29

For horse lovers of all ages, TrailBlazers Class at **the ResqRanch** will be held every Thursday from 4:30-6 pm. This isn't just another riding lesson. This is a movement. The Trailblazers is a weekly community gathering for compassionate horse lovers of all ages, dedicated to creating a better future for equines. Together, we are embarking on a mission to dramatically increase the number of people skilled in the art and science of Positive Reinforcement (R+) training. By joining, you become a vital part of the solution, helping to prepare the world to welcome and care for every horse in need. Trailblazer Single 90-minute Session: \$52 or Trailblazer 10-Session Pass: \$430. https://www.resqranch.org/trailblazers-a

January 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29

Preschool Adventures at Evergreen Nature Center, weekly on Thursdays, 9-10am. Bring your little one to the Nature Center each week to develop their early childhood readiness skills through nature exploration. Practice fine motor skills, literacy comprehension, and more at the Evergreen Nature Center. These programs are designed for children ages 2-5 years old. All children must have an adult in attendance. Come dressed to explore the outdoors. This program is completely FREE and no registration is needed. Approximately 45-60 minutes. https:// evergreenaudubon.org/events/preschool-adventures-at-evergreen-nature-center/

January 3, 9, and 10



Wine, Women, and Wealth (WWW), 6:30-8 pm at Willow Creek Restaurant, 29029 Upper Bear Creek Rd., Evergreen. Amazing things happen when women get together in community. And empowered, educated women make great decisions with their money! Relax, enjoy a glass of wine and light appetizers, meet other amazing women, and learn about money! It's FREE. There's time for networking and sharing about yourself, so bring business cards if you have them! RSVP is required. Text or call Amelia at

720-722-0094 or use the Meetup or Eventbrite link to register: https://www.meetup.com/ wine-women-wealth-evergreen-co/

Mountain Mixer @5, Elevate Your Networking, 5–7 pm at FlowTheory CoWorks, 3540 Evergreen Parkway. \$5 members, \$10 not yet members. For info email Admin@evergreenchamber.org

January 8 – February 7

Center For the Arts Evergreen (CAE) will open its first exhibition of 2026 on January 8 with a dynamic new partnership: a showcase featuring thirty artists from the Colorado South Asian Artists Group (C-SAAG) entitled "Grounded." The show will feature around seventy works exploring culture, storytelling, heritage, identity, and contemporary artistic practice. An opening reception will be held on Thursday, January 8 from 4 to 7 pm. On the final day of the exhibition, Saturday, February 7, visitors will be invited to return for an afternoon artist talk in the gallery. Visit evergreenarts.org for more info.

Join Center For the Arts Evergreen for our monthly Creativity, Coffee & Conversation (CCC) for mountain area seniors! Each month, we offer the opportunity for artists, writers, and arts appreciators (aged 55 and better) to gather and find connection through art. The first portion of the afternoon is a tour with the curator. Then we enjoy coffee and cookies as we come together to create. CCC is an opportunity to come together, make new friends, and learn something new. Social interaction and community engagement keep us all a little healthier.

Connections & Cocktails, 4:30-5:30 pm at The Cow an Eatery II, 28215 Hwy 74, Evergreen. Join new Members, ambassadors and seasoned members alike to network in a casual setting. evergreenchamber.org

January 15

Wild Aware, local Evergreen nonprofit, invites you to join us for a wild evening of celebration and connection at the Open Aware Meet & Greet on the third Thursday of each month beginning January 15, at 6pm at the Evergreen Brewery, 2962 Evergreen Parkway, Suite 201, Evergreen.

Morning Birds and Brews with Evergreen Audubon and Nature Center, weekly on the last Friday of the month, 8:30-10 am at the Evergreen Nature Center, 27640 CO-74. We will spend some time chatting indoors at the Evergreen Nature Center before heading out to the meadow and seeing what birds we can find. Evergreen Audubon will provide hot drinks. Bring your own coffee mug or thermos, binoculars, and weather-appropriate clothes. We have binoculars to lend out, so don't worry if you don't have your own! This event is geared toward adults, but all ages and birding abilities are welcome.

Wild Aware, an Evergreen non-profit organization, is actively recruiting volunteers, new and old, for their Last Friday Coffee, a monthly event on the last Friday morning of every month. Our gatherings begin at 9 am in the Evergreen Bread and Cocktail Lounge, 1260 Bergen Pkwy, Evergreen



January 2026



January 7

Block Therapy™ **Trauma Release** 5:30 – 6:30 pm. Trauma (physical and emotional) becomes trapped in your body and leads to pain, aging, and disease. This powerful self-healing practice unlocks the restrictions and adhesions that block blood and oxygen flow and releases trauma at a cellular level. All levels. Wear comfortable clothes. Bring a yoga mat if you have one and a water bottle.

January 11

Mindfulness Walk 10 am. Join Kathy at Pine Valley Ranch (30400 Crystal Lake Road, Pine) for gentle walking, grounding, and reflection. Whether you are feeling called to reconnect, reflect, or simply enjoy a calm morning, all are warmly welcomed. Bring layers for the weather, water, and an open heart.

January 13

Men's Group, 7-8 pm, at PeaceWorks' admin office 25997 Conifer Rd, Ste D-6 upstairs conference room. Are you a victim or a survivor? Learn more with Dean at our monthly men's group to foster genuine connections, learn healthy relationship skills, and uplift each other. Through open discussions, activities, and support, we aim to build a community where every man feels valued and understood. Embrace your strengths, confront your challenges, and grow alongside like-minded individuals committed to personal and collective growth. Together, we redefine masculinity with empathy, resilience, and mutual respect.

advocacy for personal wellbeing, healthy relationships, and safe homes. All are welcome.

Attend in person at Taspen's Dragonfly Studio, unless otherwise noted. Register www.taspens healingcenter.com under Events, or online (Zoom details on website) https://peaceworks inc.co/events

PeaceWorks, Inc. offers a complimentary

Community Wellness Program as part of our

January 14

Dru Yoga 5:30–6:30 pm. Dru has a focus upon maintaining a healthy spine, through activational movements in the beginning of class and throughout a Dru session. A typical Dru Yoga class includes energy block release sequences, classical asanas (yoga postures), pranayama (breath work), mudras (gestures), positive affirmations, and also empowering visualizations. Dru classes are tailored to the student and their individual level, which makes it great for everyone.

January 21

Meditative Sound Bath 5:30-6:30 pm. Join Brenda for a transformative vibrational meditation to harmonize emotions and thought patterns while soothing tensions in the body. Sensation is integrated with mindful intention to enliven energy centers and internal wisdom. Wear comfortable clothes, bring a water bottle, head pillow, and yoga mat (if you have one).

January 28

Block Therapy[™] **Trauma Release** 5:30 – 6:30 pm. Trauma (physical and emotional) becomes trapped in your body and leads to pain, aging, and disease. This powerful self-healing practice unlocks the restrictions and adhesions that block blood and oxygen flow and releases trauma at a cellular level. All levels. Wear comfortable clothes. Bring a yoga mat if you have one and a water bottle.

Submit your calendar events to Your Mountain Connection via Marty Hallberg (news@yourmtnconnection.com). Calendar Events are published as space allows. Information must be received by the 10th of each month prior to the actual date of the event.

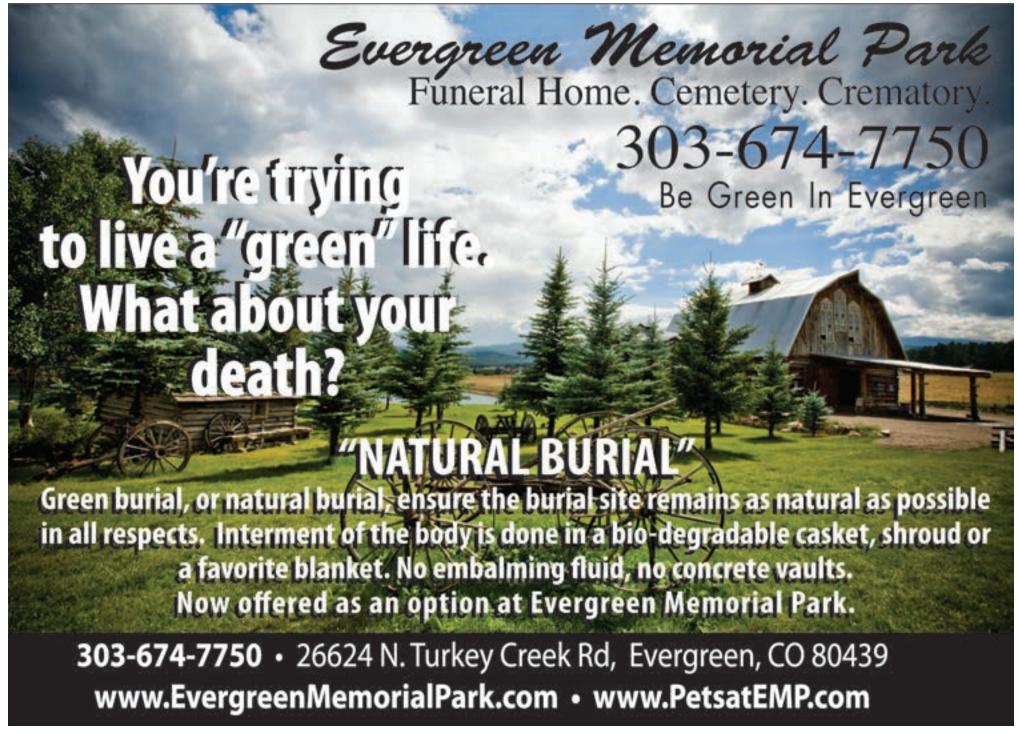
If your group is no longer meeting, please let Your Mountain Connection know via Marty Hallberg (news@yourmtnconnection.com).







26624 N. Turkey Creek Rd., Evergreen, CO 303-674-0556 | thebarn@evergreenmemorialpark.com www.TheBarnatEMP.com



BUSINESS SERVICES































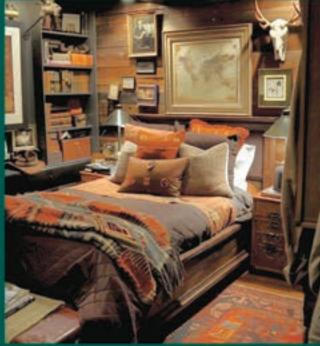
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Ben Grant, the owner of Grant Automotive, grew up in Pine Junction and has always been involved in the mountain community. At the age of 15, Ben knew that his strong interest in automotive repair would determine his professional direction and after 12 years of working for Kevin's Subaru he opened Grant Auto in July of 2000.

Ben has steadily built a loyal following and currently has ten employees. He estimates that he and his techs combine to reflect about 100 years of experience, and it is important to note that 30 of those years are his.

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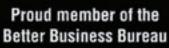


















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