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News on the Positive Side
NOVEMBER 2026

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A Short Ride with Natalia

BY DR. JENA QUESTEN

"Same horse. Different day. I had to respect that."



"Choose a small, achievable step, reward it, and resist making the next request too big, too soon."

Rhoen wasn't interested. A few days earlier, she had been wonderful when I rode her. But that Sunday, when I offered her a saddle, halter, and lead rope, she showed no interest. I groomed her a little and turned her out. Same horse. Different day. I had to respect that.

After our volunteer Sally left, I went looking for someone else who might want to spend time with me. Natalia was far away in the back corral. She lifted her head when I peeked over. I called, and she came briskly through one corral, then another, straight to me. What an incredible feeling! This young mustang had made the effort to come all that way.

In the round pen, she was wonderful for grooming and saddling. We practiced circles, then tried something new: a timer alternating forty seconds of movement with twenty seconds of rest. I wanted to give our work a predictable rhythm.

Natalia didn't always understand why one or two circles weren't the end of an interval. After several rounds, she was breathing harder and becoming anxious. I helped her settle. We stopped after about twelve to fifteen minutes instead of the twenty I had planned, following a couple of calmer rounds.

That part of the lesson needed adjusting. I would have to introduce duration and effort more gradually.

Later, with her equipment removed, we tried a few minutes of riding. I had bought peppermint-flavored treats especially for this. My hope was that having me on her back would become associated with something she really enjoyed.

I climbed aboard and offered her a few. We walked one big circle while I concentrated on staying balanced and quiet. I said, "Whoa," settled into my seat, and she stopped. I slid off. That was enough.

She finished settled, with no visible signs of stress. After the worry earlier in our session, that small, calm success meant a great deal. I was extremely pleased with her, and grateful that she had come when I called.

Her progress lately has gone well beyond that afternoon. Natalia is coming along beautifully under saddle. With our targeting work, she has learned to go to a particular target, and now I can send her to more than one distant obstacle. That is a pretty advanced move, and I am proud of her!

Watching her learn also keeps me honest about my own teaching. A horse can understand one request and still need help with the next. My plan has to leave room for that.

You can use the same idea with your pets. Choose a small, achievable step, reward it, and resist making the next request too big, too soon. If your dog is learning to go to a mat, begin nearby. Add distance gradually. Watch how your animal responds, and allow time for rest.

That afternoon gave me a willing arrival, an exercise to rethink, and one lovely little ride. Plenty to learn from, and plenty to be grateful for.

Thank you to Sally Douglass, a recent Horse Relationship Building Masterclass graduate and valued ResqRanch volunteer, for cleaning our tack room that day. She'll also lead our horse-shaped wreath class Saturday, November 21, 1:30–3 pm, at Aspen Park Vet Hospital. The $25 class has ten spots; make two wreaths, one to keep and one for our horse-rescue fundraiser. Call 303-838-3771 for details.

Pet-friendly Santa photos are December 5 at the hospital and December 13 at the ResqRanch.

Thanks for reading, and God bless you and the animals. DrQ and the crew of Aspen Park Vet Hospital and the ResqRanch.

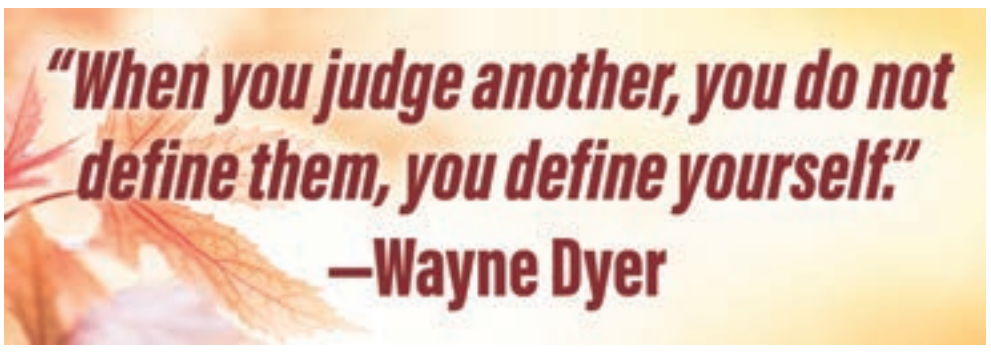
Aspen Park Veterinary Hospital is located at 25871 Duran Ave. Conifer, CO 80433. You can call the hospital at (303) 838-3771 (838-DrQ1) or visit them at www.AspenParkVetHospital.com.

— KELLER WILLIAMS FOOTHILLS REALTY —

Invest in Happiness

BY LISA PLUMMER SMITH

"I have found that the level of happiness I experience has a direct correlation with how much of an effort I make to be happy."



As we march forward into November and longer periods of darkness, consider the need to care for yourself. The next few months you may gather your loved ones in your home to share in laughter, festivities and rituals. This month I share some of my thoughts on how you might enjoy these moments a bit more.

You might make a habit of thanking your body for carrying you through each day. One of my personal mantras is "You are safe, you are loved, you have power." Try taking steps to be inclusive, to be tolerant of others' choices, and to treat others the way you wish to be treated. Consider this quote by Wayne Dyer, *"When you judge another, you do not define them, you define yourself."*

Judgment of others can be an indication that you are under stress and that you have rigid expectations set for yourself and others. It can also be a product of fear or a lack of self compassion. Be aware of your inner voice and tune that radio to a station that reminds you how amazing and resilient you are. First and foremost, love yourself and be kind to yourself. This can take many forms, but time spent in self acceptance, reflection, or processing our emotions is a tremendous investment in our future happiness.

We are given this one life to live. If you find yourself generally unhappy, stressed, anxious, disappointed, and struggling to find pleasure in routine activities, please try to identify the emotion and why you might feel it. Then look to the sources of your unhappiness and set small actionable goals to a better path.

I have found that the level of happiness I experience has a direct correlation with how much of an effort I make to be happy, choosing activities and environments where there are opportunities for me to thrive. I personally get joy from time spent in nature and find when I go to different places to enjoy the outdoors, I am able to have small positive interactions which make me feel more engaged in my life and personally satisfied.

Recently I was having lunch with a friend, and they mentioned they did an exercise years ago where they wrote down the 10 best days of their lives and then contemplated why they chose those specific days. It made me ponder what my happiest days have been; I realized they were largely moments of connection shared with loved ones: an evening of watching the Aurora Borealis as a teen, the day my sister and I got up at dawn on Thanksgiving to go on a magical trail ride, the day I married Phillip, the day I told my father I was pregnant, the day our daughter was born, a special hike with my bestie, and hopefully many more to come.

I thought about what these days had in common, and I realized there is no set recipe for a happy day. Initially you have to motivate yourself to connect or have an adventure. During the activity try to still your mind to be present, take notice of your surroundings, and let go of any expectations you may have (positive or negative). It can be a spontaneous decision to do something different or the fulfillment of a long-awaited plan.

Allow yourself to be open to joy during the most simple tasks. At my older sister's celebration of life, her stepson John said that even running errands with my sister was fun. That was who Valarie was; she found joy in the ordinary, and she had a way of making the mundane special.

Growing up with a single dad, my older sister Valarie helped raise us. We were latchkey kids who had to learn independence, responsibility, and time management at an early age. We learned to be accountable, that our actions had consequences and if we wanted to do something we had to figure out a way to make it happen. We walked or rode our bikes places, explored our environment and read everything from *National Geographic* to *Readers Digest*; going to the library was a special treat.

I feel fortunate to have gone through adolescence and early adulthood without a cell phone or computer at my fingertips. I remember when instant messaging and email became available at my office jobs. Technology has improved our lives in many ways, yes, but I feel it has also diminished the quality of our lives in some ways, too.

As you gather with loved ones and take off your coats, please consider leaving some things at the door…such as cell phones, expectations, rigid beliefs, or pressure that we can put on ourselves. Please try instead to give each other the benefit of the doubt regardless of your previous experiences. Let us gather in gratitude and be thankful for all the blessings we enjoy.



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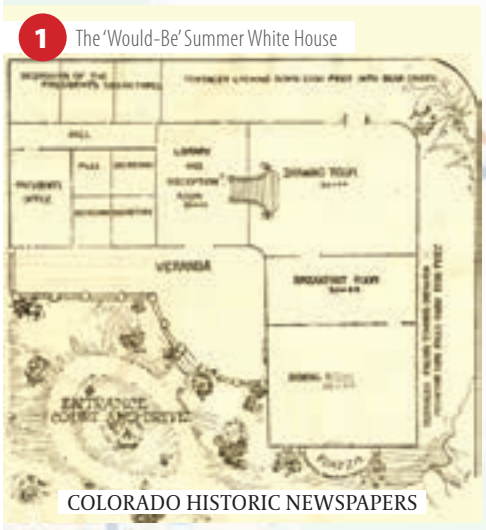
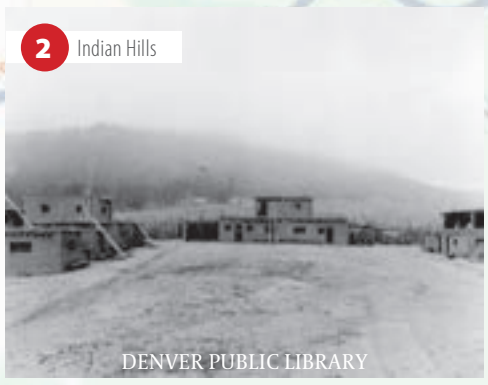
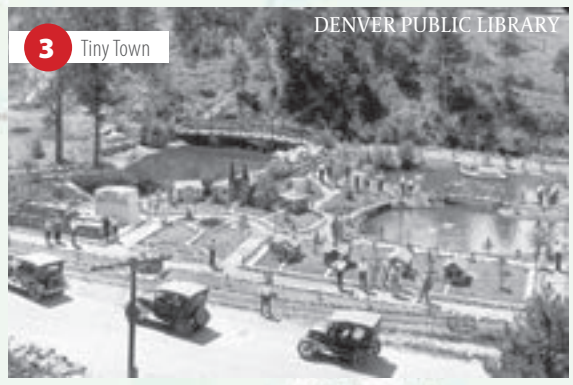
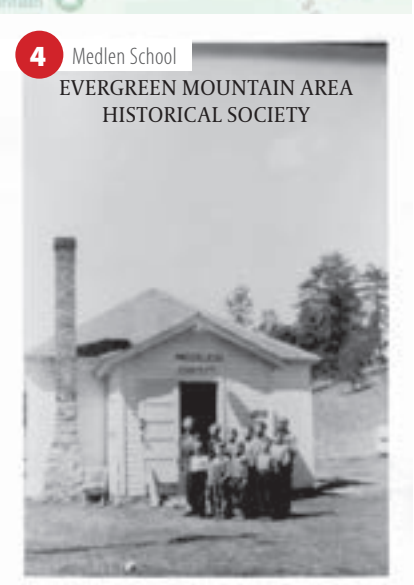
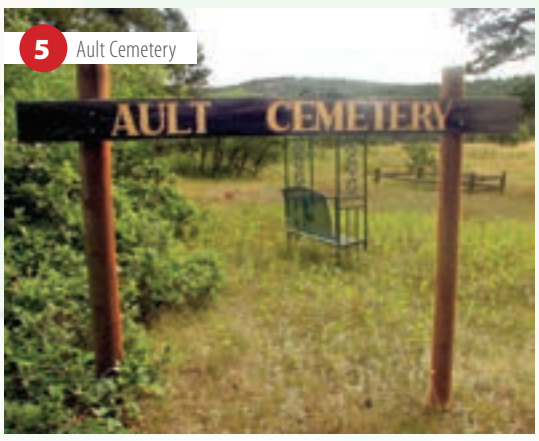
connection to the past

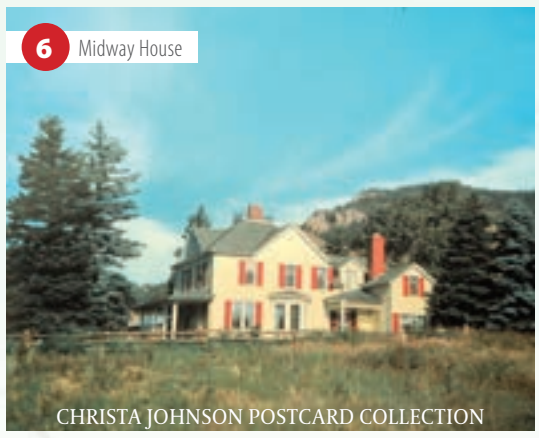














CONIFER HISTORY TOUR

BY CHRISTA JOHNSON | CONIFER HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

Part 3 of 3

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.

FROM THE HOGBACK TO CONIFER

1 THE "WOULD-BE" SUMMER WHITE HOUSE

Start on Highway 285 just past the s-curves, drive south and exit on Parmalee Gulch Road. Look for the signs to the Mount Falcon Park West Trailhead and follow Castle Trail to the ruins.

With big dreams to make Denver the summer capital of the nation, John Brisben Walker purchased 4,000 acres in the Morrison area. A casino, an incline railway, Red Rocks Park, plus a 22-room, 5-story castle as a summer White House were all part of the vision. Some of those came to pass, but the castle did not. After courting Presidents, attempting to raise funds, and even laying a Colorado Yule marble cornerstone, the dream fizzled out and died. A lack of public funds and Presidential enthusiasm, WWI, and the rise of the automobile all contributed. But take a beautiful hike and you'll understand Mr. Walker's original concept.

2 INDIAN HILLS

Drive back down to Parmalee Gulch Road and imagine this area in years past. Look for the wide-open meadows, adobe buildings, cabins with elaborate log detailing—all remnants of a former development.

George Olinger of Olinger Mortuaries in Denver began to purchase land in 1918 with the goal of developing summer cabins. He called the development Indian Hills, sold 50x100 foot lots for as low as $100 a pair, and cut timber for cabins that was dragged to the sites by horses and mules. Some of these cabins still remain as year-round residences. The Chief's Inn welcomed visitors (now a commercial building), and the NaTeSo Pueblo built by members of the Navajo, Tesuque, and San Ildefonso tribes (now a private residence) hosted guests. Tourists were transported from Denver twice a day, and the tribes demonstrated pottery-making, weaving, and crafts.

3 TINY TOWN

Take Parmalee Gulch Road to 285 and head south briefly. Turn left onto South Turkey Creek Road, traveling a little under a mile to the miniature buildings on your right. (Closed for the season)

This miniature village originated with over 100 1/6-scale buildings and a 15-inch-gauge miniature railway. After attracting attention with a miniature replica of his business on the streets of Denver—complete with horse and wagon—George Turner expanded the concept into a mountain tourist attraction. It opened in 1915 on the location of the Denver-Leadville Stagecoach Station and eventually expanded to 125 buildings. Back in the day, it even had its own pueblo with Native American entertainment, hosted rodeos, and boasted the first illuminated baseball diamond in the state.

4 MEDLEN SCHOOL

Continue on South Turkey Creek Road for 3 miles to 8369 So. Turkey Creek Rd. and look for a white schoolhouse. Tours available by appointment only.

The stretch along South Turkey Creek became popular for homesteaders as the Denver to South Park Stage Route was developed and the community grew. Medlen School is an historic, restored, 1886 one-room schoolhouse. Originally a log cabin, clapboard siding was later placed over the logs, and a small anteroom was added. A small teacherage was also constructed beside the school. The complex served as the educational and social focal point for the Medlen Community until school consolidation forced its closure in the early 1950s. Throughout the years it also served as a community meeting place where church services, funerals, and fraternal organization meetings were held. Today it is managed by the Evergreen Mountain Area Historical Society, which hosts special events, including a children's summer school program. The building is on Colorado's State Register of Historic Properties and the National Register of Historic Places.

5 AULT CEMETERY

Continue on South Turkey Creek Road for 1/3 mile, turn right on Flint Lane, left on Mariposa, then left on Ault Lane to the end.

This peaceful pioneer cemetery was initially part of Frederick Ault's 168.83 acre homestead and includes graves for the Ault family, who arrived in the area in 1881 from Wisconsin. It was originally named Medlen Cemetery, and was available to this community even though it was on private land. Frederick later donated one acre of his property to the Ault Cemetery Association in 1903, formally establishing the cemetery. It has 130 gravesites, including notable residents like Maggie Crow, Byrd Biggar, and Loren Fender. The cemetery remains much the same as it was in its beginning, including the entry arch made and installed by Glenn Vinning (1918–1990) who is interred near the sign.

6 MIDWAY HOUSE

Backtrack on Mariposa and turn left on Highway 285. Exit on the right to park at the Meyer Ranch Park Overflow Parking on the north side of the highway for a good viewing point of a yellow Victorian house.

This home's property was originally settled by Duncan McIntyre in the 1860s, who also built the barn that still stands. Louis Ramboz then purchased 480 acres of the homestead and built a two-story Victorian home with lumber from the property's forest. The house served as a boarding house and hotel for stage passengers. It was named Midway House due to being midway between Denver and Bailey. The home was later sold to Jefferson County Open Space by Norman and Ethel Meyer in 1986 to create Meyer Ranch Park. Access to the home and property is not publicly available, so remain in the parking lot.

7 MOUNT LUGO SKI HILL

Drive under the highway to the main Meyer Ranch Park parking lot on the south side of the road. Look up at the mountainside, or take a hike up the top on Old Ski Run Trail.

The north face of Mount Legault is a former ski area built by Covert Hopkins, a pioneer skier, ski jumper, and ski area developer. Originally from Steamboat Springs, Hopkins competed actively in regional ski tournaments and set new records in early state ski events, including a notable performance at Genesee Mountain. Covert lived in the Lamb area of our foothills and operated this ski hill from 1940 to1942. It consisted of a single 11,200-foot rope tow with a motor used from a vehicle. Guests were carried from the road to the base of the tow using a horse-drawn sled. Remnants of the tow motor are still visible in the park today. The area offered 150 vertical feet and over 173 skiable acres of terrain. Timber was cleared to create the bowl-shaped ski area; a rustic frame shelter at the base of the run included wood stoves for cooking and heating. Mount Lugo Ski Hill eventually closed in 1942 due to WWII gas rationing.

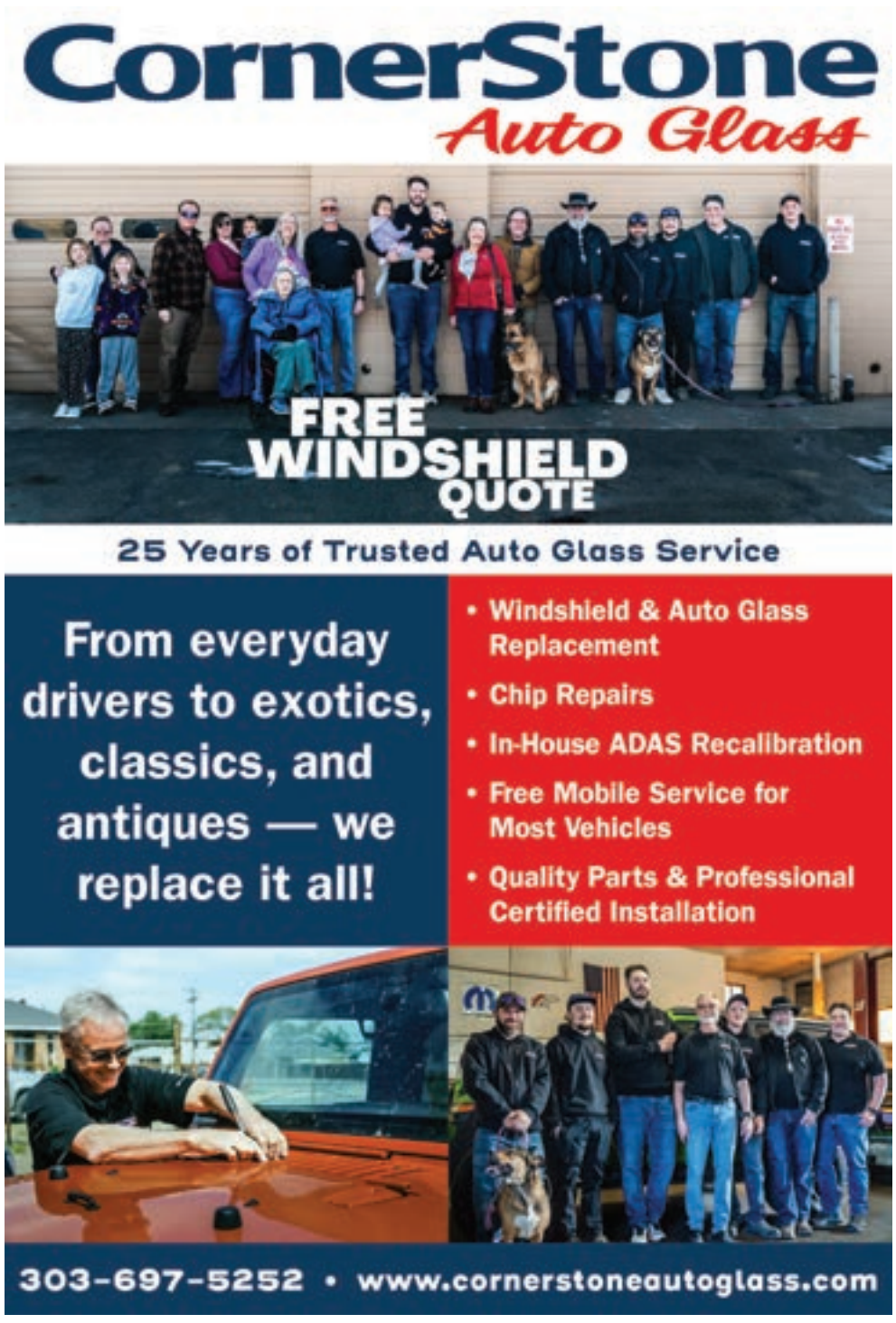


History Tour Parts 1 and 2

Revisit *Conifer History Tour* Parts 1 and 2, or any article from a past publication, by visiting our website at **www.yourmtnconnection.com** to download the PDF.

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







I'm Just Sayin'…

November 2026 –Thanksgiving

Jeff Smith owner/publisher

What a wonderful time to show our gratitude for being alive in this country. Sometimes we get hit with unforeseen problems, but nowhere else in the world would we have the ability to recover with the help of friends and neighbors like we have here. If you don't need help, then give help to someone who does. Be thankful.

It truly feels like fall lately. The leaves are falling, and the nights are getting chilly. It is becoming sweater and fireplace weather. And, of course, it's football season, for those who care.

There are several new stores and restaurant owners in our area that give us even more opportunity to shop and dine locally. With the holiday season approaching faster than we realize, let's take advantage of the great retail shops in our area. Let's do our holiday entertaining at our local restaurants and breweries. Enjoy the season locally.

It's also a season to be extra careful when driving. There are some crazies out there, drivers who just don't know how to drive in the mountains or what to do at the bottlenecks and roundabouts we have. Learn the rules and don't put others in jeopardy with your bad driving, and make allowances for those who do.

It's time to vote again. If you live here and enjoy the privileges of being here, then VOTE!

They are predicting a better winter this year. By that I mean regular or even more than regular snow. We need it badly, as do the ski venues. A little more work or inconvenience maybe, but well worth it.

Broncos – The defense is winning their games. They are 4–2 at this writing, with a probable win against the Cardinals next. Nix is having problems, but I believe he will come around. The sooner the better.

Nuggets – They start the season on the 20th. They could be contenders again this year, if they stay healthy.

The Avalanche – The Avs are also doing fine. There are a lot of games to come, and they too should be contenders again this year.

Iowa Hawkeyes – They are 5–1, 2–1 in the conference, and still nationally ranked. There are some challenging games ahead, and they need a lot more offense. Like the Broncos, they are a defensive team.

Quackadilly says:
"Even in the worst of times we should be thankful for being born Americans."
—Jeff Smith

NEWS ON THE POSITIVE SIDE

your MOUNTAIN CONNECTION

NOVEMBER 2026 • VOL XXXIV N011

next issue • DECEMBER 2026

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December theme: *The Holidays*

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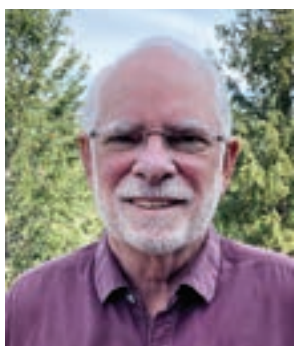

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from the experts

— THE SASQUATCH OUTPOST —

The Sasquatch Chronicles
November 2026

BY JIM MYERS

"Did you hear that?"

Two women asked me to take them on a night hike—the last organized hike of the season, actually. I've found in the past that women seem to draw Sasquatch in closer. Why? This is only conjecture, but I think women do not pose the same risk to them as men do. We shoot at them; we're the ones who take bets on who will be the first to kill a Sasquatch, and we are always carrying multiple recording devices on our person.

On this occasion, however, I made a conscious decision not to take any equipment with me. And that decision may have made all the difference. That, and the fact that both of these women had great attitudes and they were very open to any suggestions I made regarding attitude, keeping an open mind etc. I think I'm realizing just how important that last point is, if our desire is to find AND have an encounter with one or more Sasquatch.

As I usually do, I gave them a brief orientation about what to expect, what attitude to have, and what to look for (lights in the forest, for example). Well, as often happens, these two ladies were the first to spot something glowing in the woods, followed by lights in the forest. Initially, we could only see one light; but as we shifted our position relative to the light, suddenly several other lights appeared near the first one: orange, white, and red. The lights were moving, gaining brightness, then going dim again. All three of us were able to see the lights (eyes, actually), but it's what happened next that floored all of us. While we were busy talking to each other in hushed tones, suddenly—no more than 30 feet away—we heard a voice say two or three words. It wasn't in English, but it was definitely words.

"I've never actually heard it this close…"

I immediately said, "Holy sh**! Did you hear that?" They were just as excited as I was, and they asked what it was. I told them that I've never actually heard it this close, but from all I have heard and from my research…we just heard a Sasquatch speak. Then, a little farther back in the darkness, two male voices in conversation: deeper tones, longer phrases. We all heard it, and we all agreed that we were the only humans in the vicinity. It was a fantastic experience that I won't soon forget.

Discover Bigfoot in Bailey, Colorado! Explore the museum. Shop Bigfoot gifts. 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 www.sasquatchoutpost.com

— ON THE MOVE FITNESS —

A Healthy Holiday Season Starts with This…

BY DEB BROWN, NSCA CPT, CWC, CNS



The holiday season is approaching! Starting with Halloween and progressing nine weeks through New Year's Day, this time can present a challenge to maintaining our health. One of the best ways to arrive in January feeling healthy and happy is to create a health plan for the next two months.

Your personalized health plan should include healthy eating and fitness strategies, as well as ideas for stress management. The plan should be written down (or typed) and shared with someone who will support you in your efforts. It helps if it is loosely structured on the events and happenings over the course of the holiday season. It should include specific achievable goals and include strategies for each major event. It is important that your eating strategy be realistic. You should absolutely plan to enjoy small amounts of your favorite foods if that brings you joy. Include some type of consistent physical activity during the holidays, even if your busy schedule dictates that you can only do it a couple times a week.

One example of an event in your holiday plan might be attending a Christmas party. Instead of just going to the party and eating/drinking mindlessly all night, create an action plan for it. You may want to exercise for 45 minutes earlier in the day so that you have plenty of physical and mental energy. If you eat a healthy snack and are well hydrated (water!) right before you walk into the party, you will not arrive hungry. If you scope out all of the available food when you get there, then make a conscious decision about what you will eat, you will tend to eat healthier foods. And if you have already planned on taking smaller portions of the foods you love, it will be easy to do so when you are in the moment. This does not take much time; rather, it takes a specific mindset to eat with a certain intention. The intention is to eat healthily and to feel good afterwards about how you ate, both mentally and physically. Visualize how you want to feel after the event, and then work backwards with the specifics on how to achieve it.

Life is too short to stress about eating a piece of pie or extra cookies. Eat in a way that can sustain your body and provide all the nutrients you need, but also eat in a way that feeds your soul. Be mindful of what you are putting in your body; enjoy small amounts of those foods that are high in sugar, fat and/or calories. Stay physically active through the winter months through skiing, snowshoeing, or working out in a gym or with a trainer. This will help you to balance the extra calories you take in. It will also help maintain healthy energy levels and a strong immune system. Creating a plan takes no more than 10 minutes and can help you to arrive in early January at your current weight. The alternative may be weeks and weeks of hard work to take off the typical 5 pounds that are added during the holiday season.

For more information on how On The Move Fitness can help keep you in good shape over this holiday season, please contact Deb at 303-816-1426 or visit www.onthemovefitness.com. Our studio is located on the frontage road in Aspen Park.

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.

— EVERGREEN HEALTH INSURANCE —

November
Medicare Change Month

BY ED REGALADO

For those of us who are on Medicare, November is a very important month. We're now in the middle of the Annual Enrollment Period that started October 15th and ends December 7th. During this period, those enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan or Prescription Drug Plan have the opportunity to renew their plan or make a change for 2027. In years past, most people just allowed their Advantage plans to renew; the same was true for those on prescription drug plans. This year is different.



"Prepare for many changes in the Medicare world in 2027."

Prepare for many changes in the Medicare world in 2027. United Healthcare eliminated their PPO Advantage plans in 2026, and other carriers like Aetna and Humana are reducing the number of PPO plans they offer in 2027.

I have noticed a trend where more of my clients with Medicare Advantage plans are inquiring about switching to a Medicare Supplement plan. Advantage plans continue to receive some bad press in recent years. Many of the complaints have been exaggerated, but there's enough concern for some enrollees to reconsider their options. In other cases, since Supplement plans offer the best medical protection, the higher premium may feel worth it when medical needs change and more care is needed.

Historically, Supplement plan rate increases were fairly stable. Unfortunately, that changed with COVID. This is a major concern with recent double-digit rate increases over the last few years and projected increases in the future. Additionally, underwriting requirements will keep those in need of more medical care out of Supplement plans unless a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) is triggered.

Since a number of plans, especially PPO plans, were discontinued for 2027, there are quite a few seniors who have to shop for a new plan. If your Advantage Plan was discontinued, a SEP was triggered, and not only can you choose a new Advantage plan, if you want to switch back to original Medicare and add a Supplement plan, you can get a guaranteed issue (usually to a Plan G).

For those not yet ready for Medicare, usually under the age of 65, November 1st was the beginning of the Open Enrollment Period on Connect for Health Colorado where folks can enroll in an ACA plan for 2027. Big news affecting many is that Cigna is pulling out of the individual market and not renewing plans. This means if you're on a Cigna individual plan, you'll need new coverage starting January 1st.

Devin Regalado is our individual market expert, and she's managing most of our individual renewals. But don't worry about missing me; I will still be helping the clients I have been working with over the years. It will be a very busy period, and you'll want to get a new plan selected by December 15th for a Jan.1 start, so securing an appointment early is a good idea.

As always, our service and local expertise comes at no cost to our clients. If we can help you, please give us a call!

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.

Gratitude and Grace

BY KAARSTEN TURNER

"I think of Thanksgiving as a season of grace."

In November, we are invited to slow down and honor the Thanksgiving holiday.

History says that in 1827, Sarah Josepha Buell Hale, an editor who wrote "Mary Had a Little Lamb," started calling for a national day of thanksgiving and spent decades writing to governors, congressmen, and presidents. In 1863, at the height of the Civil War, she took her campaign directly to the president, Abraham Lincoln. Five days later, he issued a presidential proclamation inviting us all to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving, to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it. He invited the nation to unite and work toward the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, and tranquility. We were at war, a nation split in two, characterized by opposing forces of equal perseverance. There was suffering, and as a nation we were invited to turn our attention to thanksgiving and gratitude.



"Thanksgiving is a humble thing, and the season doesn't wait for everything to be perfect."

Thanksgiving is a humble thing, and the season doesn't wait for everything to be perfect.

There is a poem entitled "Gratitude" by Mary Oliver. It is structured as a series of eight reflective questions inviting the reader to slow down and notice the small, ordinary wonders of the natural world. She asks, "What did you notice? What did you hear? When did you admire? What astonished you? What would you like to see again? What was most tender? What was most wonderful? What did you think was happening?" As Thanksgiving approaches, I have been thinking about the questions Mary Oliver asks, and one word continues to emerge.

Astonishment.

Looking back, astonishment started on September 22nd, the autumnal equinox. This day the sun crossed directly above the Earth's equator, marking the official start of fall in the Northern Hemisphere. This day, the days become shorter than the nights. And we will follow this pattern of light and dark until the winter solstice, when the days start to grow longer once again. For the last several weeks, we have been watching what it means, noticing that not only do temperatures drop, but plant life also slows down, and the deciduous trees lose the green of chlorophyll and gain the red color of anthocyanins, the yellow color of carotenoids, and the orange from beta-carotene. Every autumn, without fail, I notice, and the aspen leaves astonish me. Catching the light when the low-angle sunlight hits their translucent yellow and gold leaves, they glow like little lanterns.

While we may not be in the middle of a civil war, we are divided and wounded. I think of Thanksgiving as a season of grace. While the word "grace" can mean different things, the simplest and most common definition of grace is unmerited favor—meaning a free, unearned gift or kindness that someone is given. There's no way to earn it or deserve it or bring it about, any more than you can deserve the astonishment of the aspen trees.

As Thanksgiving approaches, I hope we can all find room for both gratitude and grace.

Kaarsten is a forester, a mama to two boys, a sunchaser, a writer, and a lover of chocolate. She's lived in Conifer for a while now.

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— MOUNT EVANS HOME HEALTH CARE & HOSPICE —

Understanding Supportive Care

Mount Evans Relaunches Vital Community Program

Navigating a serious illness can often feel like trying to chart a course through unfamiliar terrain. For individuals and families facing complex or progressive conditions—such as heart disease, lung disease, cancer, or neurological disorders—the physical symptoms and emotional toll can be overwhelming. Fortunately, you do not have to walk that path alone. After a two-year hiatus, the Mount Evans Supportive Care program is proud to be back to serve our foothills and mountain communities.

Also known as palliative care, supportive care is designed for anyone living with a serious illness, and it can begin at any stage of your diagnosis. Crucially, supportive care works alongside your curative treatments. While your primary physicians focus on treating the disease itself, our specialized team steps in to focus squarely on what matters most: your quality of life, comfort, and peace of mind.

A TEAM DEDICATED TO WHOLE-PERSON HEALING

Living with a complex diagnosis involves more than just managing physical symptoms; it brings worry, stress, and logistical questions. The Mount Evans Supportive Care team provides a comprehensive, multidisciplinary safety net tailored to each individual and family:

- **Your Nurse Practitioner:** Partners directly with your primary care provider and specialists to build a cohesive care plan. They dedicate meaningful time to pain and symptom management, medication tracking, disease education, and aligning your care with your personal goals.
- **Your Nurse:** Acts as your primary point of contact between visits. They conduct regular wellness check-ins, proactively monitor symptoms, and coordinate directly with your broader healthcare team.
- **Your Social Worker:** Provides vital emotional support as you navigate a changing illness, alongside assistance with advance care planning—including advance directives, powers of attorney, and caregiving resources.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR OPTIONS

Many community members often wonder how supportive care differs from hospice care. While both prioritize comfort and dignity, supportive care is available at any stage of a serious illness while you pursue curative treatments. Hospice care, by contrast, is tailored for individuals in the final stage of life who choose to focus entirely on comfort rather than curative treatment.

Medicare, Medicaid, and the Department of Veterans Affairs typically cover palliative services, while commercial and Medicare Advantage plan coverage can vary. Our team is always happy to help patients understand their benefits, including any applicable co-pays or deductibles.

MOUNT EVANS IS HERE FOR YOU

Bringing this vital program back to our mountain neighbors represents our ongoing commitment to ensuring no one faces a serious illness in isolation. If you or a loved one are experiencing pain, stress, or other symptoms related to a serious diagnosis, support is available right here in our community once again.

To learn more about how our Supportive Care program can help you or your family, please call our office at 303-674-6400 to find out if you would qualify for supportive care, or ask your primary care provider or specialist if palliative care is right for you and request a referral to our team.

Kristen Mathias, MFA, Mount Evans Home Health Care & Hospice
Director of Business Development, Marketing, and Communications
303-674-6400 • kmathias@mtevans.org
3081 Bergen Peak Drive, Evergreen, Colorado 80439



A Holiday Tradition 49 Years in the Making

Conifer Newcomers & Neighbors Holiday Boutique

BY CARRIE BERGENER

"As the season approaches, the Holiday Boutique offers a chance to do something special close to home."

For 49 years, the **Conifer Newcomers & Neighbors Holiday Boutique** has brought together artisans, shoppers, volunteers, and friends for a community holiday tradition that reaches far beyond finding the perfect gift.

This year, the Holiday Boutique returns Saturday, November 7, from 9 am to 4 pm, at the Conifer High School, continuing a tradition that has become a whole-day event of fun, food, and shopping. It is a Christmas market, a community gathering, and an important way to give back to the mountain communities.

The annual event is organized and run entirely by the volunteer members of Conifer Newcomers & Neighbors (CN&N), a local nonprofit built around neighbors helping neighbors.

For shoppers, the Holiday Boutique offers a chance to step into the season's feeling, start Christmas shopping early, and discover something different. Participating artisans are juried, creating a marketplace filled with quality, handcrafted creations selected for the event. Shoppers can browse for unique holiday gifts while meeting the talented people who make them.

And then there is the bake sale.

The CN&N membership has some of the best bakers in the state and, together, their sugary magic provides goods for the most anticipated stops at the Boutique. Cookies, pies, candy, and other homemade goodies sell out early.

But what shoppers take home is only part of the CN&N Holiday Boutique story.

The Holiday Boutique is one of CN&N's major fundraisers, and proceeds are returned to the community through grants to area nonprofit organizations. Over the years, CN&N has donated over $500,000 back to the community; turning a day of holiday shopping and enjoyment into support that continues throughout the year.

The Holiday Boutique in these 49 years represents CN&N's heart for the community. Generations of volunteers and artisans have filled countless Christmas lists, brought people together, and used the proceeds to help the community.

Conifer Newcomers & Neighbors offers people an opportunity to make connections, build friendships, and become part of the community. Whether you are a newcomer who arrived last month or a long-term resident who has called the area home for decades, you are a neighbor. And CN&N welcomes you to join us anytime to have fun and support our community.

As the season approaches, the Holiday Boutique offers a chance to do something special close to home: shop for something special, meet an artisan, enjoy homemade baked goods, and run into a neighbor.

Experience a holiday tradition!

Conifer Newcomers & Neighbors Holiday Boutique
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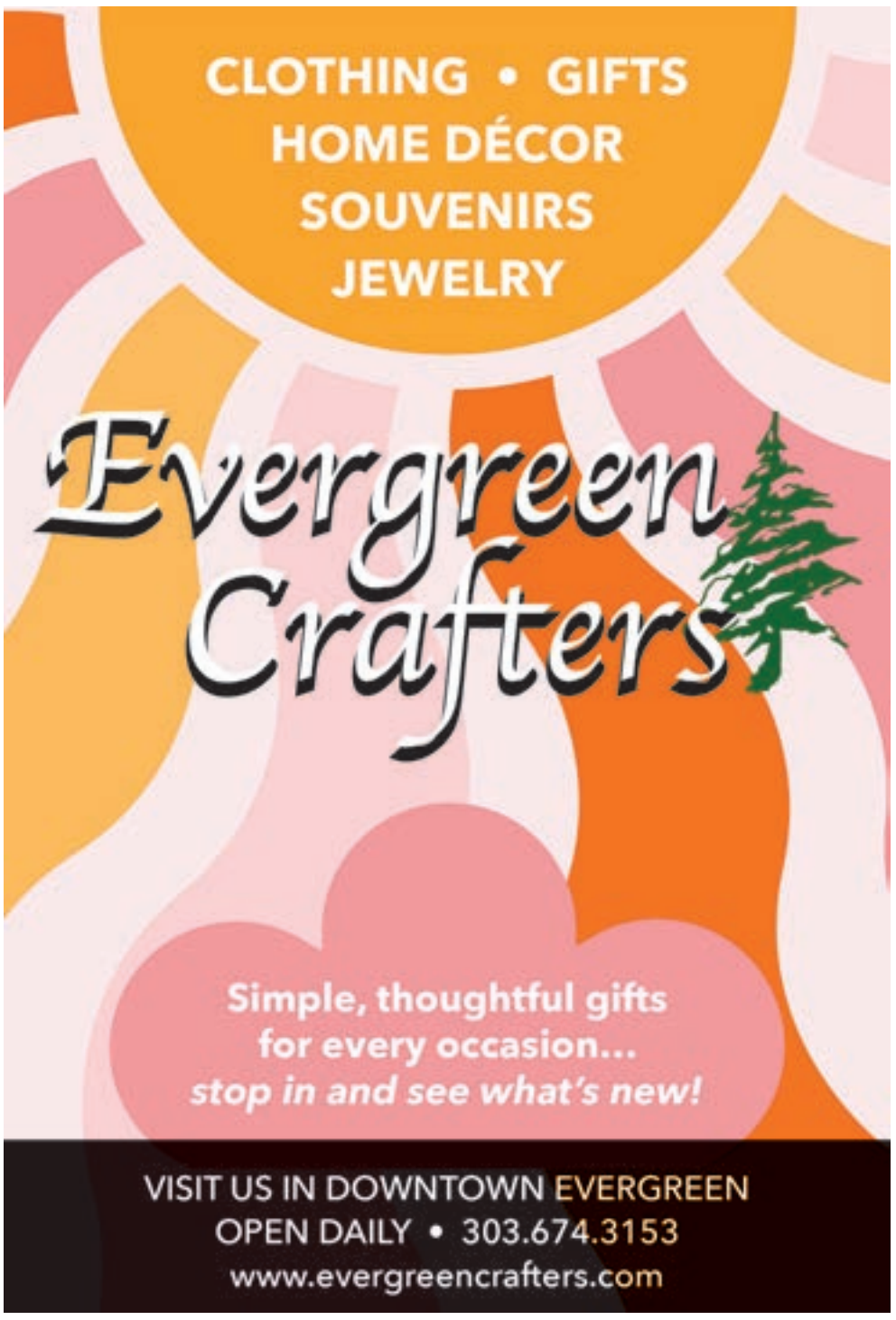
Come to the Boutique. And while you're there, discover Conifer Newcomers & Neighbors.



A Skeptic's View

Liar, Liar

BY GARY LOFFLER

"When someone lies for profit, I distrust them entirely."

Recently I came across a little video on the internet featuring a cowboy-type character in front of a large pickup truck complaining about wind turbines. In a few short seconds he stated they only lasted 15 years and would never pay back the energy cost of creating them or produce enough green energy to justify themselves. As it turns out these are all easily disproved lies. After 30 to 40 years turbines need to be refurbished to return them to full capability, and it only takes a year to pay back energy costs in green energy. (Note that these are general numbers and will vary with different types of turbines in different locations.) I have never seen these arguments run against coal- or gas-fired electrical plants.

In this case, these statements were blatant lies likely meant to profit the liar. The video was professionally made, but the person who posted it did not create it. They probably reposted it because the lies agreed with some personal preference. Reposting something like this is a lazy lie; the poster wants to believe what the video is saying and does not bother to verify the statements made. There are lots of reasons for this: peer pressure, perhaps they work for a company that runs a coal-fired plant, or they dislike seeing wind turbines. I would not now automatically distrust anything else that this person says, but I would take the reposter's views with a grain of salt. It implies a lack of diligence about verifying their opinions.

When someone lies for profit, I distrust them entirely. If the first words out of their mouths are easily disproved, then nothing else they say can be trusted. Sadly, there is no penalty for this kind of lying.

Social media has no fact checking; unless the post contains a clear violent threat, it is not going to be taken down. The original creator of the content makes money, and the reposters keep their brand alive. It is best just to ignore such posts, because arguing or correcting just tells the social media algorithms that people are engaging in the content; this promotes it, and it pays better.



"Sadly, there is no penalty for this kind of lying. Social media has no fact checking; unless the post contains a clear violent threat, it is not going to be taken down."

Another popular money-making scheme at the moment is raw milk. Proponents have a long list of claims, most of which are false, and a couple are truth adjacent. Rather than looking at numbers and statistics, let's look at bovine anatomy, starting with the rear end of the cow.

Farthest back we find the tail. While big cats use their tails for balance when running quickly, that is not its function for cows. The primary use is to shoo flies off their sides and backs. The cow has no way to clean this appendage, so any mud and grime accumulates until it rains or they get hosed down.

Moving forward from the tail is the waste-management area. This is where the copious amounts of waste produced by the cow's eating and drinking are disposed of. Next in front of that is the udder, where the cow produces and stores milk. This is not the most hygienic area for harvesting foodstuffs, and its proximity to the waste management area gives me pause. Cows are generally milked in a clean room, but that is a long way from a sterile environment.

Harmful bacteria from the cow's surrounding anatomy can easily be collected along with the milk. This is why pasteurization has been the norm for the last century. Heating the milk to over 150^0 F for a few minutes kills any bacteria and prolongs the shelf life of the milk.

Raw milk advocates promote various health benefits which are largely unproven. Whether it tastes better or not is subjective. Anyone who insists that raw milk is perfectly safe for everyone is lying either for profit or to advocate for some other belief.

A 2022 study published in the Canadian Journal of Public Health found "Twenty outbreaks involving unpasteurized products resulted in 449 confirmed cases of illness, 124 hospitalizations, and five deaths." This does not account for all the problems caused by raw milk, only the 20 outbreaks they looked at. Still, numbers like this do not even slow down the raw milk advocates, because there is no penalty for continuing to lie about it. Because the consumption of the milk is a personal choice, and producers require people to sign contracts absolving them of blame for any problems associated with that choice, there is no one to sue.

While lying on the internet is largely without penalty, believing those lies is significantly different. We have already looked at the number of hospitalizations and deaths from a small number of outbreaks caused by raw milk. Those five deaths are not the total number of people lost to this dangerous fad.

Similarly, people in Pennsylvania are paying the price for believing anti-vaxers. An October 21st update from pa.gov, Pennsylvania's official website, documents 1,317 cases, 251 hospitalizations, and five deaths from measles. In that same study, there are only 4 cases of measles reported for vaccinated people with no deaths. The hospitalization rate for the disease is 1 in 20.

Sometimes being skeptical just saves you the embarrassment of being wrong, like believing the sky is blue because that is the color of air. Other times it can save your life or the lives of those you care about.

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PASTA LIKE A NONNA

BY FRANCESCA ARNIOTES

"In Italy pasta is its own course, a 'primo.' It shares the spotlight with nobody."







"Pasta shapes vary by region, and each has its paired dressing or at least its style of dressing."

There is no such thing as spaghetti and meatballs. In Italy.

In Italy pasta is the sun, the moon, the rain, breath, life itself. Pasta has rules. People have expectations.

To add onions to carbonara will not only elicit profound disappointment on the part of the recipient, but will likely mean the end of the cook's good name.

In Italy pasta is its own course, a "primo." It shares the spotlight with nobody. Not shrimp. Not meatballs. Certainly not chicken. With the exception of ragu—Bolognese or the wild boar of Chianti—meat or fish is a second course to be enjoyed on its own plate after the "primo" has been cleared from the table.

Pasta shapes vary by region, and each has its paired dressing or at least its style of dressing. I say dressing rather than sauce because the pasta is the star. Sauce is meant to kiss each piece of pasta in order to enhance, not overpower, its flavor. The step of dressing the pasta with sauce is overlooked in our American kitchens, even in Italian-American kitchens. It does require a little extra time and it makes a world of difference.

In our little area of Chianti there is a particular local fresh pasta called pici—pronounced "peachy"—and it is paired with a unique sauce made from a variety of garlic called aglione. You might remember the story of how Arduino refused to sell me the aglione. Before we got to know each other, I selected some extra large garlic from a crate at the market and handed it to Arduino, who promptly put it aside and told me with the wag of a finger, "no." That led to a hilarious series of exchanges, in my then quite







poor Italian, during which he repeatedly told me it was aglione and only used for making pici all'aglione, to which I repeatedly responded that pici all'aglione was exactly what I was making with it. Of course how could he have believed that someone not from these parts could possibly even know what that was, let alone be cooking it, pici all'aglione being a hyper-local dish. The fact of the matter was that I had been making what I thought was pici all'aglione for years. I was taught to make it by several locals, but always we started with a ladle of chopped garlic in olive oil scooped from a big jar by the stove. Nobody mentioned that it wasn't actually garlic, but rather this giant bulb of something garlic-like. The name—of the dish and of the vegetable, aglione—means "big garlic." I thought the name was colorfully descriptive, that such a huge amount of it was used in it, that it meant, figuratively, a big garlic presence. Aglione had become scarce in the last decade, the price was very high and for those reasons, Arduino didn't want someone wasting money or the aglione on mundane garlic uses. We eventually sorted things out with the help of one of his regular customers who spoke some English. I got my aglione and an education while providing entertainment for the other customers.

The pici pasta itself is hand-rolled, about 3 feet long, then cut into spaghetti-length pieces. We make a different pasta every day as the first course in our dinner of seasonal, local dishes like rostinciana, fagioli all'uccelletto, and bistecca Fiorentina. Pappardelle is a wide long noodle usually paired with ragu—wild boar or duck—sugo Toscana, or mushrooms. Tagliatelle is a bit wider than fettuccine and perfect for porcini and walnuts or a creamy saffron sauce. While these local ingredients aren't available to us at home, we and our friends who spend a week here with us do develop a pasta-a-day habit.

Look for some new menus to be posted in our offerings for cooking classes in the next few weeks, because I would love to share the flavors of Chianti with you. Cooking classes are scheduled upon request. Check out the current offerings and choose a date, gather some friends, and book online. Menus can be adapted to accommodate dietary needs or preferences. There are lots of toys to play with in the pasta kitchen too.

Maybe you've done a pasta class already. But if you really want to pasta like a nonna, let us know and we'll customize an afternoon or evening of crazy fun with flour and water.

It might be fun to know what the names of some of the pasta shapes mean. And you can learn a little Italian at the same time.

Spaghetti means little strings. Linguine, little tongues, because of the profile of the noodle. Farfalle, which people call bowties, in fact means butterflies. Penne are quill tips, radiatore are radiators, and gemelli are twins.

Campanelle are bell flowers. Orzo means barley, the shape of the grain. Acini di pepe are peppercorns. Fusilli are little spindles.

Cappelletti means little hats. Lumache are snails, and cavatappi are corkscrews. Conchiglie are seashells. Cavatelli means little hollows. Garganelli, which we make in Pasta Fresca class are, quite unromantically, throats, and grimly-named strozzapreti means priest-chokers.

Cannelloni are tubes, and tagliatelle refers simply to being cut. Anelli, from Sicily, are rings and might be remembered as spaghetti-O's by Chef Boyardee. Vermicelli are worms. Orecchiette are little ears, and ziti means fiancèe, because they are traditional at weddings.

Happy pasta!

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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.



Evergreen Legacy Foundation (ELF) Launches Its Colorado Gives Campaign

Your Gift Can Help ELF Support Local Safety Projects and Nonprofits

The Evergreen Legacy Foundation is a local nonprofit that invests in our community and mobilizes people, ideas, and resources to preserve and strengthen the quality of life in Evergreen. ELF's vision is an Evergreen shaped by active community participation, bold ideas, and a lasting commitment to its future.

ELF's funding comes from local business contributions and individual donations, including those garnered through Colorado Gives. Those who give to ELF help the Foundation empower local nonprofits, civic initiatives, and infrastructure projects. Colorado Gives Early Giving runs Nov. 1-Dec. 7, with the statewide Colorado Gives Day on Tuesday, Dec. 8.

For ELF, Colorado Gives Day includes incentives and opportunities for donors to amplify their gifts.

- Colorado Gives Foundation will match the first $100 of any new monthly gift set up during early giving (Nov. 1-Dec. 7) from a statewide fund of $250,000. Monthly donations provide a sustainable revenue stream for ELF throughout the year.
- Businesses can support ELF's Colorado Gives campaign by participating in the Good for Business Challenge, sponsored by Gary Community Ventures, by creating a free fundraising page for ELF on **ColoradoGives.org** and spreading the word to their clients and colleagues.
- On Colorado Gives Day, a statewide day of giving that brings Coloradans together to support the causes and communities they care about, donors who give $100 or more to a single nonprofit are entered to win a pair of roundtrip Southwest Airline tickets every hour.

The Colorado Gives Foundation created the giving movement in 2010 with presenting sponsor FirstBank, now PNC, as a way for Coloradans to make a difference for local nonprofits by making is easy for people to donate.

Recent projects made possible by ELF and its supporters include the paving of Meadow Drive, painting of a mural in the tunnel connecting Center Stage to the Church of the Transfiguration, and allocating Evergreen Strong funds to organizations responding to the last year's Evergreen High School shooting. **For a full list of ELF projects, go to evergreenlegacyfdn.org**.





"Because dogs metabolize some foods differently than we do, what doesn't cause problems for us may be something that is deadly to a canine."

Dogs, Dogs, Dogs

BY CATHY KOWALSKI

As Thanksgiving is this month's theme, I thought it would be a good time to talk about what NOT to feed your dog! Many foods can cause major issues with your dog's health, and even death.

Because dogs metabolize some foods differently than we do, what doesn't cause problems for us may be something that is deadly to a canine.

A small amount of **chocolate** will probably give your dog diarrhea, or they may vomit. Large amounts of the toxic component theobromine that is in chocolate can cause death.

Raisins and grapes can cause kidney failure. The amount of grapes or raisins that can hurt your furry buddy vary by your dog's weight.

Macadamia nuts have been known to cause weakness, vomiting, tremors, and hyperthermia in dogs.

There are about 10,000 species of **mushrooms** in North America. Some of these will not cause problems for dogs, but it's not worth the risk! When it rains in our area, many types of mushrooms pop up (it seems overnight) and can be quite toxic. I try to pick them when I see them—sometimes two grocery bags after a storm. One day as I went to pick one, I noticed my dog Mia standing next to me, and the top was gone from the mushroom. About 12 hours later, I found Mia lying in vomit and diarrhea. She was weak, couldn't stand or hold herself up if I lifted her. She was drooling and hitting her head into the wall. We were lucky. I took her to the vet, they gave her fluids, and when she came home we hand fed her, carried her outside to relieve herself, and made sure she drank a lot of water. It took a couple weeks for her to get back to her active self.

Onions, garlic, chives and leeks are all from the same plant family. Garlic is the most toxic of the four.

Alcohol of all types causes depression of a dog's nervous system; their kidneys are not meant to filter alcohol. A dog may experience low body temperature, poor breathing, vomiting and diarrhea. Hard liquor's alcohol content can be as high as 90%; even small amounts can be detrimental. In addition to beverages, alcohol can be found in perfume, mouthwash, paint, varnish, and cleaning products. Something else we might not think of is raw dough that contains yeast. As the yeast ferments, it produces alcohol. Dough can also expand and cause bloating, putting pressure on organs, making it difficult to breathe.

The **avocado seed** can become an obstruction in the esophagus, stomach or intestinal tract.

Marijuana edibles are legal in our state for humans, but they are not meant for canines. One dog found an edible at the local park. Later in the day he was twitching, couldn't walk, and had diarrhea.

Xylitol is used to sweeten foods and is found in some peanut butter. Many of us like to fill a Kong with a mixture of peanut butter, treats, and kibble. Read the label—make sure the peanut butter you are using does not contain xylitol.

Caffeine can be found in coffee, tea, and soft drinks. It has been known to speed up the heart rate and stimulate the nervous system in dogs. Restlessness, lack of bladder control, vomiting, diarrhea, and excessive thirst may result.

Salted items like pretzels, popcorn, or chips can lead to salt poisoning, causing tremors, fever, seizures, vomiting, diarrhea, etc. Always make sure your dog has access to clean, fresh water.

Seeds and pits from apples, apricots, cherries, peaches and plums contain cyanide and can cause serious side affects.

There are also many plants that are toxic to your pet. There is a list on the ASPCA website.

The ASPCA has an Animal Poison Control Center Hotline, 888-426-4435, offering 24 hours a day, 365 days a year animal poison-related emergency assistance.

Cathy is the Executive Director and trainer at Faithfully K9 Service Dogs and Dog Training. She trains dogs as pets and also trains personal dogs to be service dogs for those with a disability.
Contact Cathy at 970-591-3205.



THANKSGIVING

BY ANNE VICKSTROM

"How wonderful to have an entire afternoon or evening with old and new friends and family, discovering what makes them happy, and hearing about their traditions and what they remember about their Thanksgivings growing up."

Thanksgiving is that great holiday where, other than prepping an entire dinner or part of a potluck dinner, there's nothing to do beforehand. Just show up, in our case, wearing turkey shirts, so you don't even have to consider what you'll wear.



In the past few years, it seems the tradition of eating, sharing conversation, maybe watching the Thanksgiving Day Parade, and later some football, while trying to digest a delicious meal, has been hijacked by, you know what: P-O-L-I-T-I-C-S. Whisper and do not actually say the word.

My advice for having a lovely Thanksgiving this year is: don't go there. It will only be 23 days after the votes are tallied, and if someone is on the disappointed side, it's best to leave it alone.

I've been frustrated when I'm around someone who doesn't think as I do, and in the past I've tried to convince them to see things from my point of view. Believe me, it doesn't work.

What I have come to focus on instead is that I never know when my last conversation will be with someone—someone who is close to me, whether family or friend. I would be sick to my stomach to think that the last words I shared with someone who moved away or passed away were about politicians; they are not invited to my Thanksgiving table. In fact, even if I am surrounded by like-minded folks, I don't want politics to be served alongside the cranberry sauce. I vote for No Politics Thanksgiving Dinners.

Instead, I want to watch my grandson sit at the Thanksgiving table for the first time. (Last year he was a little too new to join us.) I want to see whether he likes mashed potatoes the way his father makes them, or whether he'll prefer his mother's version. What will his reaction be to Brussels sprouts? Or asparagus? I'll want to have my camera ready for his expression! What will he do with the whipped cream on the pumpkin pie? Is he a canned or fresh-berry cranberry guy?

I want to share conversation with our hosts and catch up with their family. I want to hear details of a recent family wedding and get the latest update on a renovation project.

How wonderful to have an entire afternoon or evening with old and new friends and family, discovering what makes them happy, and hearing about their traditions and what they remember about their Thanksgivings growing up. We'll surely do the "What are you thankful for?" round table. I always love when my turn is toward the end—it gives me time to carefully select one of my many blessings. Maybe we'll have time to pull out several guitars and enjoy the tunes that those who know what to do with the instruments play.

I'll get to stand back and witness people I love get to know each other so they can develop a relationship that won't depend on me. I'll look forward to charades, puns shot across the room, and quiet private talks with guests who have something special to share.

And at the end of the day, after pitching in to help with the dishes, when we're all satiated, after a warm coffee has closed out the evening, I'll thank my generous hostess and head west back to our mountain community. I'll only have good things to reflect upon and maybe, just maybe, on the Friday morning after Thanksgiving, I'll pick up the paper and read only good things. Hey, as they said in *Angels in the Outfield*, "It could happen."

Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours. May it be a day filled with rest and relaxation, and leave you full not only of great food but also of great companionship.

Anne Vickstrom proudly started her writing career with *Your Mountain Connection*. She has written for regional and national publications, and has published books, including *Depths of Devotion – A Love Story Across Continents and Cultures*. She loves living in Evergreen where she and her husband raised three children and six dogs.

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THE ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION OF THANKSGIVING

BY CARLA MINK | CONIFER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Edward Winslow was a passenger on the *Mayflower* who served as a leader of the Pilgrims. He attended and documented the First Thanksgiving, and his is the only written account of the Plymouth Colony and this important event. Winslow's letter was re-discovered in 1822.

"Loving and old Friend, although I received no letter from you by this ship, yet forasmuch as I know, you expect the performance of my promise which was to write unto you truly and faithfully of all things. I have therefore at this time sent unto you accordingly referring you for further satisfaction to our more large relations. You shall understand that in the short time we few have been here, we have built seven dwelling houses, four buildings for the use of the plantation, and have made preparation for several others.

Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that we might after a more special manner rejoice together, after we had gathered the fruits of our labors. They four in one day killed as much fowl as, with a little help beside, served the Company almost a week. At which time, amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest king Massasoit, with some 90 men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed on our governor, and upon the captain and others. And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty."

THE EARLY TRADITION OF CELEBRATORY FEASTS

The custom of celebrating after a successful hunt, foraging, or harvest is deeply rooted in human history. Such gatherings have been a way for communities to come together, share their bounty, and express gratitude for nature's provisions.

The First Thanksgiving: Pilgrims and Wampanoag

Among the most renowned harvest feasts is the event of 1621 in Plymouth, Massachusetts, where the Pilgrims—English settlers seeking religious and intellectual freedom—joined the Wampanoag people for a communal meal. The Pilgrims embarked from Plymouth, England, on September 6, 1620, with 102 passengers, including three pregnant women, several children, and a crew of 30. Their vessel, the *Mayflower*, was a cargo ship designed to transport goods like lumber, fish, and casks—not people. During the voyage, passengers subsisted on hardtack biscuits, dried meat, and beer.

After a lengthy 10-week journey, the group arrived at the eastern tip of Cape Cod on November 11, 1620. Amazingly, only one passenger died during the crossing. The harsh winter weather prevented the settlers from building shelters, forcing them to live aboard the ship. The conditions were dire: food was scarce, and diseases such as smallpox, cholera, typhus, and plague spread rapidly. By the end of winter, half of the passengers and half of the crew had perished.

Relations with the Wampanoag People

The Wampanoag initially kept their distance from the English due to previous negative encounters, including an incident in 1614 when Captain Thomas Hunt kidnapped Native people from the future Plymouth area to sell them into slavery. Additionally, diseases brought by European traders had devastated the Wampanoag population.

Despite these tragic events, the Wampanoag eventually aided the Pilgrims, helping them build shelters, hunt, fish, and farm. They negotiated a peace treaty with the settlers, marking the first formal agreement between English colonists and Native Americans, and this peace lasted for the next fifty years.

The First Thanksgiving Feast

In November 1621, a year after the Pilgrims' arrival, they invited the Wampanoag to join them for a celebratory feast, now known as the First Thanksgiving. This event was largely forgotten for centuries until a letter surfaced that brought renewed attention to it. Edward Winslow, a *Mayflower* passenger and leader among the Pilgrims, attended and documented the First Thanksgiving, and his account remains the only written record of the event. His letter, rediscovered in 1822, described the construction of homes and buildings, the successful harvest, and the communal feast shared with the Wampanoag, including their leader Massasoit and ninety of his men. The festivities lasted three days and featured hunting, feasting, and mutual goodwill.

THANKSGIVING BECOMES A NATIONAL TRADITION

The tradition of Thanksgiving evolved over time. The Second Continental Congress issued a national proclamation for Thanksgiving in 1777. The first official National Thanksgiving was celebrated on November 26, 1789, when President George Washington declared a day of public thanksgiving and prayer for the new nation. In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln established Thanksgiving as a federal holiday, making it an annual tradition. Since then, Thanksgiving has been observed on a Thursday in November, specifically the fourth Thursday of the month.

Thanksgiving on the American Frontier

When Abraham Lincoln formalized Thanksgiving as a federal holiday, many Americans were migrating westward. Conifer's early homesteaders arrived in the early 1860s, inspired by the Homestead Act. During the westward journey, travelers paused for Thanksgiving, sharing simple meals from what they could hunt or had preserved. These meals included game such as venison, duck, goose, or other small animals, and staples like bacon, flour, cornmeal, or dried beans. Occasionally, pioneers contributed dried fruit for pies or molasses for corncakes. The day was marked by rest, gratitude, and community, with music and games following the meal.

THE MEANING OF THANKSGIVING TODAY

Though the nature of Thanksgiving celebrations has changed over the centuries, the core meaning remains: families gather to express love of each other and to honor God/Mother Earth for the abundant harvest. Modern distractions—such as shopping, travel, sports, and technology—have altered the experience, yet the spirit of gratitude endures. Today, meals are often sourced from supermarkets, and preparations include travel and anticipation for holiday sales and December festivities.

NATIVE AMERICAN INFLUENCE AND MODERN REFLECTIONS

Thanksgiving's origins are rooted in the Native American philosophy of giving without expecting anything in return. Stephen Peters, spokesperson for the Wampanoag Tribe, notes that his ancestors held four harvest festivals each year. He emphasizes the importance of gathering, sharing blessings, and giving thanks. Peters encourages a spirit of hope and healing, urging all people, Native and non-Native, to break down the barriers that divide us and to be thankful together.



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Evergreen Chamber News

The Chamber Is Making Breakfast Plans for Santa

BY ERICA SPRENKEL



Santa Breakfast is coming! A delicious breakfast awaits families who would like to meet with Santa Claus in a cozy setting. We can't wait to share the Joy of Santa Breakfast!

I can't believe we're already talking about the holidays! It seems like I just started at the Chamber, and here we are getting ready for December.

This will be my first holiday season as President of the Evergreen Area Chamber of Commerce, and I have to say, it's been quite a year already! It's been a busy several months filled with meeting new people, working with local businesses, and being part of some great community events.

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

Now we're turning our attention to **Santa Breakfast**, and I have to say, planning this event has been a lot of fun! Of course, there's also the challenge of figuring out how to feed a crowd, coordinate Santa's busy schedule, and make sure everything runs smoothly. Who knew Santa required so much planning?

Santa Breakfast has been a holiday tradition in Evergreen for several years, and I'm excited to be part of keeping it going. It's a great opportunity for families to enjoy breakfast together, visit with Santa, and take a little time out of their busy schedules to enjoy the season. I especially love that it's an event families can share year after year.

As Thanksgiving approaches, I also want to recognize the businesses, volunteers, and community members who have supported the Chamber throughout the year. I've had the opportunity to work with some wonderful people, and I appreciate how willing everyone is to pitch in and help make things happen.

I'm looking forward to welcoming families to Breakfast with Santa and seeing all our planning come together. For event details and registration, visit the Evergreen Area Chamber of Commerce website at evergreenchamber.org. Now, if we can just make sure Santa arrives on time and we have enough bacon, I think we'll be in good shape.

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





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For over 50 years the Evergreen Area Chamber of Commerce has proudly been serving the mountain community. Our mission is to grow the local economy by building business relationships, promoting the community and representing local concerns with our county government.

EVERGREEN AREA Chamber of Commerce

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EvergreenChamber.org

Conifer Chamber News

Christmas in Conifer: A Little Mountain Magic

BY LEAH PETERSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



There's something pretty special about Christmas in the mountains. Maybe it's the snow-covered trees, the twinkling lights along 285, or the fact that we live in a community where running into someone you know at the grocery store is practically guaranteed. Whatever it is, the holiday season up here has a charm all its own, and this year, the Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce is hoping to make it even more magical.

Christmas in Conifer is about more than one day of festivities. While our beloved Christmas Parade remains a centerpiece of the celebration, we're working to make the entire holiday season an opportunity for our community to come together, support local businesses, and enjoy everything that makes living up here so special.

THE CHRISTMAS PARADE

Our long-standing Christmas Parade is a tradition that brings families, friends, and neighbors together year after year. From festive floats and holiday music to the excitement of seeing Santa, it's one of those events that reminds us why we love calling this community home.

This year, we're looking forward to bringing back the traditions everyone loves while adding a few new surprises along the way. Whether you're participating in the parade, volunteering behind the scenes, or watching from the sidelines with a warm drink in hand, there's a place for everyone to be part of the fun.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

One of the things I'm most excited about this year is Holiday Happenings. Rather than packing all our festivities into one day, we're encouraging businesses and organizations throughout the community to host their own holiday activities during the season.

Think cookie decorating, holiday workshops, family activities, festive shopping experiences, and plenty of opportunities to make memories close to home.

The best part? Every participating business gets to put its own spin on the holidays. It's a chance to discover a business you haven't visited before, support your neighbors, and maybe even check a few names off your Christmas shopping list.

LIGHT UP 285

We also want to see our mountain community shine, quite literally!

Light Up 285 encourages residents and businesses to get creative with their holiday decorations. Whether you're the type who carefully places a few tasteful strands of lights or the type whose electric meter starts spinning the moment Thanksgiving ends, we want you involved.

We're hoping to turn our neighborhoods and business districts into a festive display worth bundling up and exploring. It's another opportunity to bring people together while celebrating the creativity and spirit of our community.

KEEPING CHRISTMAS LOCAL

Of course, there's another important piece to all of this: our local businesses.

The holiday season can make a tremendous difference for small businesses, and every purchase made locally helps support the people who make this community what it is. These are the businesses that sponsor our youth sports teams, donate to local fundraisers, support our schools, and show up when our neighbors need a hand.

Christmas in Conifer is our chance to show up for them, too.

As we head into the holiday season, I hope you'll join us in celebrating everything our mountain community has to offer. Attend an event, decorate your home, volunteer, shop locally, or simply come out and enjoy the festivities.

After all, the magic of Christmas in Conifer isn't something the Chamber creates on its own. It's something our entire community creates together. **Be Part of the Magic!**

Leah Peterson
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!



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Conifer Area CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to making our community the best it can be. We are here to support our local businesses and create opportunities for them to grow and get connected to our community.

www.goconifer.com

WE SUPPORT LIVING LOCALLY

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 5 and 19
Evergreen Newcomers & Neighbors sponsors Evergreen Speaks! twice during November. First on Nov. 5, 5:30–6:30 pm, at Evergreen Christian Church, 27772 Iris Drive in Evergreen, featuring Diane Gansauer: "For the Next Chapter in Life, Travel Lightly." Second opportunity is on Nov. 19, 7–8 pm, also at Evergreen Christian Church, Drs. Benjamin E. Sax and David M. Krueger: "Dialogue, Antisemitism, and Israeli-Palestinian Divide." **Details at evergreennewcomers.com**

November 5, 12, 19, 26
Al-anon, Thursdays 7–8 pm, NEW LOCATION: Church of the Cross, 28253 Meadow Drive, Evergreen. Open meeting. Offering help to deal with the impact of another's drinking. No dues for attending.

November 6–7
Improv! Only 2 performances: Nov 6 and 7, PG-13. Please visit: www.thevenuetheatre.com.
The Venue Theatre is located at 27132 Main Street, #K-100 (near Safeway), and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. At the Venue students receive professional training for stage and life!

November 6–15
November at StageDoor Theatre we have HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON, Jr! by Dreamworks Theatricals. Shows run Friday and Saturday at 7 pm, and Saturday and Sunday at 2 pm. Tickets are $20, with a $5 discount for seniors, students, and educators. Directed by Kris Sage, musical direction by Alexandria Sullivan, choreographed by Mallory VanBeek, and stage managed by Cora Vigil. Join us as we head to the village of Berk, for an unforgettable time of laughter, courage, and family fun adventure. **For tickets and information: www.stagedoortheatre.org.**
Stagedoor Theatre is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community theatre, open to everyone.

November 7
Join us for the 49th annual Holiday Boutique from 9 am to 4 pm at Conifer High School. All of the proceeds are returned in the form of grants to area nonprofits. **coniferneighbors.org**

November 7
Pumpkin Smash Event, Saturday, November 7th, 9 am–12 pm at 1928 S. Hiwan Drive (former Bergen Meadow Elementary parking lot). Smash your pumpkin and stay for games, or drop them off if you are just stopping by. Compost your pumpkins with ESA and Wild Aware to keep them out of the landfill and prevent them from being an unnatural food source for wildlife.

November 7
Monthly Poetry Open Mic, free and open to the public. Saturday, November 7th, 11 am–12:30 pm at Center for the Arts (31880 Rocky Village Drive, Evergreen). Please join us!!

November 7
Christmas Cafe and Craft Fair, 9 am–2 pm at St. Laurence Church. We will have hand-crafted items and delicious, cozy homemade foods. Many of our baked goods can be frozen and served at your holiday dinners, parties, and pot-lucks. Find us at 26812 Barkley Rd. in Conifer. Join us for a beautiful beginning to the holiday season in Conifer!

November 18
Create your own personalized art journal! Transform an old book into a personal art journal to play with ideas and find inspiration for your artwork. 11 am–12:30 pm at Mountainside Bakery, 32156 Castle Ct #207, in Evergreen. All levels welcome! Four-session series; $45 per session. Register at Mountainside Bakery. Questions: **gopris1930@comcast.net**

November 18
Get Creative for a Cause: Wild Aware Paint Night from 6–8 pm, at Go Paint, 4602 Plettner Lane, in Evergreen. An evening of creativity, refreshments, and good company!

November 19
Wild Aware, an Evergreen, Colorado, non-profit organization, invites you to join us for a wild evening of celebration and connection at the **Open Aware Meet and Greet** on the third Thursday of each month from 6–7:30 pm at the awesome Evergreen Brewery, 2962 Evergreen Parkway, Suite 201, Evergreen. **wildaware.org**

November 21
Chillax Om Natural Health and Longevity Center Annual Friends Giving Party. Walk in anytime between 1–5 pm to chillax and enjoy. For more info go to: **https://chillaxom.com/nov-21-2026-friendsgiving-party-sat-1p-5p/**

November 22
DAKOTA BLONDE will perform at Stagedoor Theatre on Sunday, November 22, 7:30 pm, $22 for reserve seats. Dakota Blonde plays a blend of acoustic, folk, bluegrass, rock, singer/songwriter, and Celtic music. **For tickets and information: www.stagedoortheatre.org.**
Stagedoor Theatre is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community theatre, open to everyone.

November 27
Wild Aware, an Evergreen, Colorado, non-profit organization, is actively recruiting volunteers, new and old, for their **Last Friday Coffee,** a monthly event that continues on the last Friday morning of every month. Our gatherings begin at 9 am in the Evergreen Bread and Cocktail Lounge at 1260 Bergen Pkwy in Evergreen. Come meet new friends and make an impact in your community! **wildaware.org**

November 26
The 16th Annual EChO Turkey Trot 5K Run and Walk is a festive morning of running, walking, costumes, dogs, and community spirit—all while supporting the EChO Food Pantry. The 5K begins and ends at Evergreen Christian Outreach and travels through downtown Evergreen, along Hwy 74, around Evergreen Lake, and back to EChO. The race begins at 9 am (race-day registration opening at 8 am). Participants of all ages and abilities are welcome. Pets are welcome on leashes, and costumes are encouraged! Your participation helps provide food and essential resources to neighbors in need. **https://evergreenchristianoutreach.org/turkey-trot/**

November 28
LIGHT UP CONIFER is back, and we want YOU to be part of it! Whether you're a business, organization, or resident, join in the fun and spread some holiday cheer. Register by November 23, and your location will be featured on our virtual map so the community can visit and vote for their favorites. **https://www.goconifer.com/christmas-in-conifer/**

November 2026

PeaceWorks, Inc. offers a complimentary Community Wellness Program as part of our 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.taspenshealingcenter.com** under Events or online (Zoom details on website) **www.peaceworksinc.co/communitywellness**

November 4
Block Therapy™ Trauma Release 5:30–6:30 pm. Trauma (physical and emotional) trapped in your body 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.

November 11
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.

November 15
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.

November 18
Dance Party 5:30–6:30 pm. Dance, move, and feel good! Join us for a fun, family-friendly community wellness dance party where there's no right or wrong way to move—just come as you are and let the music move you! Dancing and joyful movement can be powerful tools for supporting emotional wellbeing, helping lift our mood, reduce stress, and create connection. We'll turn up the music, shake off the day, laugh, move, and make space for everyone to enjoy the simple joy of dancing together. Come ready to have fun, get your body moving, and leave feeling a little lighter, brighter, and more connected!

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**).



Evergreen Sustainablity Alliance Refill Station (zero-waste store) recently relocated from the Blue Spruce Habitat Restore to the Meadow Village building at 27905 Meadow Drive. Open at the new location Wednesdays and Fridays 10 am–5 pm and Saturdays 11am–4 pm.

Colorado Gives early giving runs November 1 – December 7, with the statewide Colorado Gives Day on Tuesday, Dec. 8.


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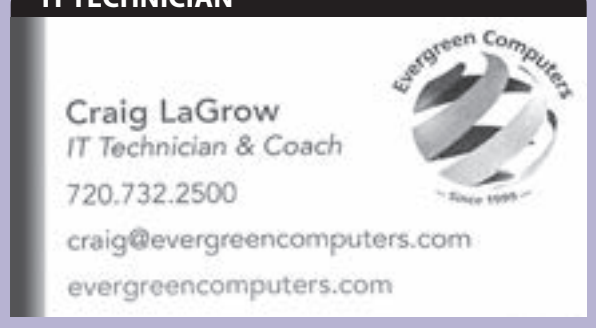

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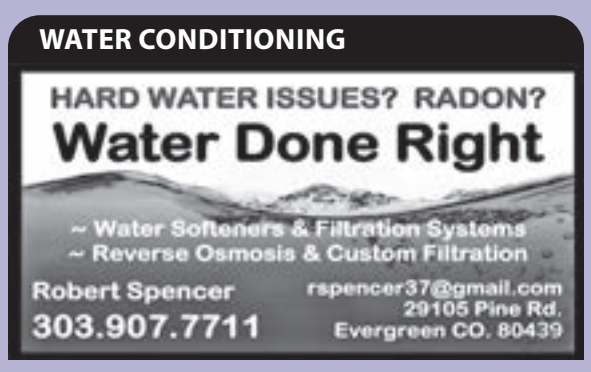

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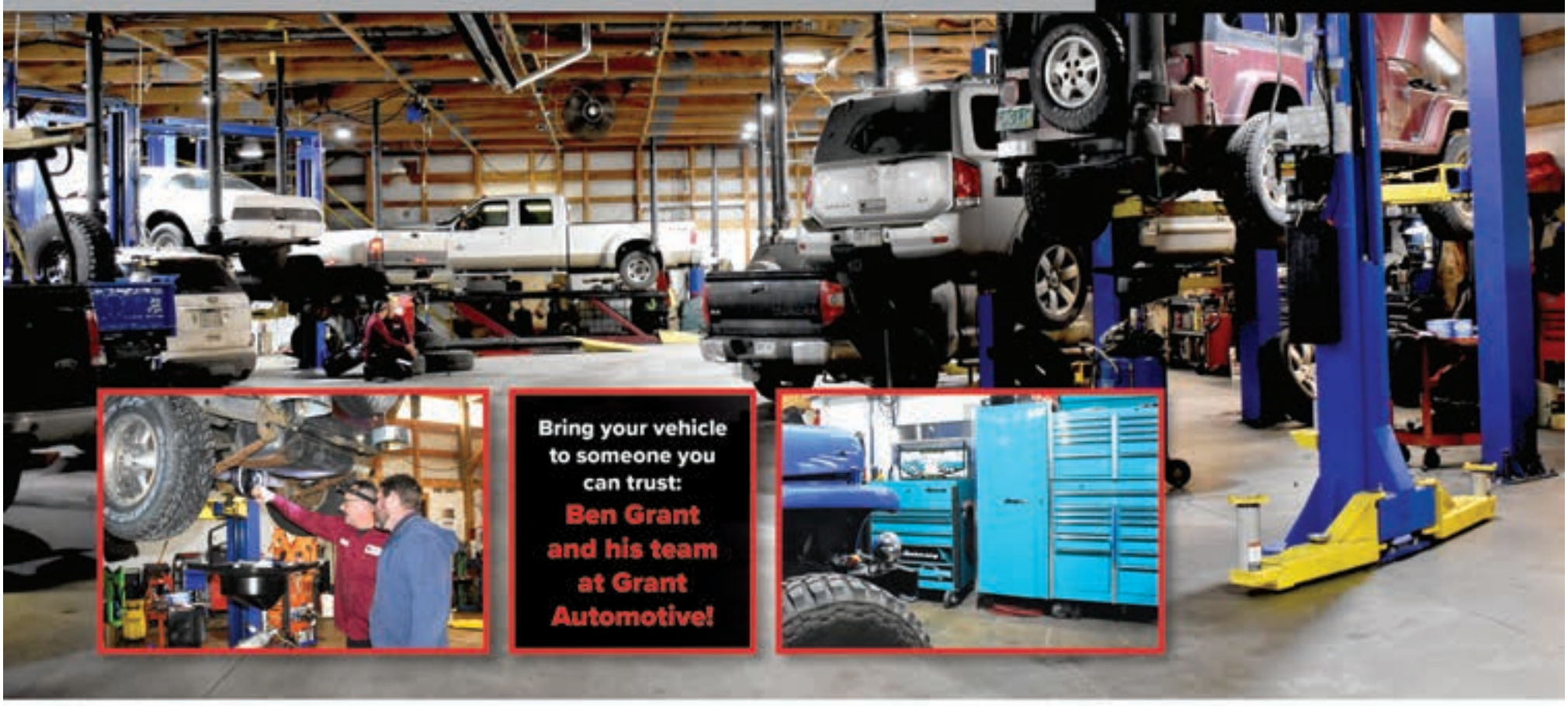

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Ben has steadily built a loyal following and currently has ten employees. He estimates that he and his techs combine to reflect about 100 years of experience, and it is important to note that 30 of those years are his.

Ben prides himself in the volume of repeat service in American and Japanese-made vehicles. They have the latest computerized diagnostic equipment including two alignment racks that utilize digital cameras to align all four wheels accurately.

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