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Keep your treasured companion happy and healthy when you schedule an appointment in the hospital, or for a housecall, with our holistic veterinarian in Conifer, CO. Aspen Park Vet Hospital is your local source for quality care. From natural remedies to animal acupuncture, we offer a series of unique treatment methods in the hospital or on housecalls for your pets. We work hard to use the science of animal behavior to help horses, dogs, cats, and koi fish live healthier and happier lives. Schedule a visit in the hospital or for a housecall today to discuss treatment for your pet.



“Animals bring us so much joy, love, and unadulterated affection, and ask so little in return.”

It’s All About Love!

“It’s 2024, a new year, and a great time to revisit your commitment to the care and training of your animal friends.”

It’s February, and that means one thing, a celebration of love. That could mean romantic love with your life partner, giving your children tokens of your appreciation, or really taking a good look at the animals in your life and realizing how much they mean to you.

And to show you all a little love, and how much I appreciate your continued support, we are maintaining last year’s prices at Aspen Park Vet Hospital this year, to help our special clients more easily afford to continue to obtain excellent veterinary care for their pets. And for those animal-loving members of the community who struggle to afford great veterinary care, we give away over \$22,000 worth of services each year. Your donations and support of the ResqRanch help us to achieve that. Animals bring us so much joy, love, and unadulterated affection, and ask so little in return. We are lucky to have animal friends in our lives, and I am here to encourage you not to take them for granted.

It’s 2024, a new year, and a great time to revisit your commitment to the care and training of your animal friends. Whether it’s your dog that just won’t come when it is called no matter what, your cat that pees in your plants, or your horse that you just can’t trust all the time, make this the year you commit to not just putting up with the bumps in the relationship you have with your animal friends. You can do better than just tolerating these incidents as momentarily inconvenient, and take the time to love yourself and your animals enough to realize there is no better time than now to create

a perfectly flawless relationship with your animal friends. Now isn’t that why we have animals in our lives in the first place?

So how can we get started? The logical first step is to find a positive reinforcement trainer and/or training class. Positive reinforcement, or R+, is simply a training method where animals have a choice. R+ animal trainers, by the way, are some of the most under-appreciated, and undervalued professionals in the world. I have immense respect for the work they do, and the profound impact they have on people’s and animals’ lives. This February, send some love and appreciation to your local animal trainers! And please, only spend your time and money with R+ trainers. 100 years of behavioral science tells us that when animals have a choice (no pinch/choke/shock/spur/whip/water-bottle squirts/etc.), the training gives us the fastest, safest (think dangerous dogs and horses), most effective, most compassionate, longest-lasting, long-term results. February is all about love, so kindness only, please.

But what if you *really* love your animal like a member of the family? What if you not only want to solve behavior concerns, but you also want to make sure you are feeding your pet an ideal diet, choosing the right preventive care, and actively ensuring everything you do with your animals, every day, is leading them to their very best life? A life where they are not just cared for physically, but their emotional health is also taken into consideration. What if your love commitment to your animal(s) this year goes beyond solving irritating behaviors, and extends to a deep commitment to doing everything in your power to ensure this animal meets, and hopefully exceeds, its expected lifespan because you love them so deeply?

If that is the case, then what you might need is me, the One and Only Life Coach for People with Pets. Life coaching is support and advice from a professional for people who want to improve the *relationship*, i.e., deepen the bond between themselves and the animals in their lives. Taking into consideration health, behavior, diet, environment, and stress, a Life Coach improves lives by helping identify areas of improvement, solving problems, setting goals, and providing accountability for achieving those goals. Every person’s personal journey with their animal is unique. Having a personalized, fully “whole-istic” plan, taking into account all facets of your and the animal’s life, provides the easiest path to achieving that Movie Magic Bond we all crave, dream, and watch heartwarming movies about and wish we had.

So this February, hug your loved ones, hug your pets, hug your horse, and thank an animal trainer. And if the idea of having a personalized plan to create a deeper bond between animals and the people who love them, crafted by someone who is more than just a veterinarian, and more than just a trainer, then the One and Only Animal Life Coach is for you! I can only work at this intimate level with a few clients at a time, so please don’t hesitate to inquire about coaching packages by calling us at Aspen Park Vet Hospital, or finding more details on our website www.DrQandU.org. Make this the year you renew your commitment to the health and well being of the beloved animals in your life. And I want to send you, the animal-loving angels of the world, a little love from me. Thank you for loving and taking good care of the animals and the little fish. Your donations and support of the ResqRanch mean so much to us and the community. Thank you, and God bless! 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.DrQandU.org.

— KELLER WILLIAMS FOOTHILLS REALTY —

Let Your Love Flow

BY LISA PLUMMER SMITH



“If we allow it, love can flow into our lives from friends, family, loved ones, and pets.”

February is here, Brrr! **Happy St. Valentine’s Day to each of you.** This is a month to remember to love and care for ourselves first so we have more to give our loved ones. Let’s talk about mindset; whether you call it intuition, vibes, energy, or an inner voice inside your head, it matters. The calming effect of positive self talk is real. You choose the radio station, so to speak; make that inner voice a positive, supportive one. Let it comfort you, support you, encourage you, and boost your confidence — you are amazing!

Whether you are in a relationship with someone or not, as a human we all need love. If we allow it, love can flow into our lives from friends, family, loved ones, and pets. The thing about love is, you have to be open to love to accept it. If you aren’t open to love, it may pass you by. We open ourselves to love by being vulnerable, honest, and intentional. We all have our love languages that dictate the way we show love to our family, friends, and others. What is your love language?

Think on it, if you will. Affection, service, providing, nurturing, these are all ways of showing love. Drilling down further, how each of us physically chooses to demonstrate these qualities differs. Tuning into the love languages of your loved ones can bring a completely fresh perspective.

Life presents many challenges, but power lies in how we react to them. If we went with our instinctual reaction at all times we could be barbarians. Humans are highly evolved and have a filter and the ability to choose our behaviors. By having a sense of self regulation or filter we give ourselves a split second to think before we speak or act. Choosing kindness takes a conscious effort.

In moments of stress there are conscious things we can do to help. Breathing deeply, stretching, and visualization are all ways to calm and reset our minds. Put these tools in your kit, so to speak, to help you the next time you are stressed or pushing yourself out of your comfort zone.

Eight years ago when I took my real estate exams, the testing process was completely online in a strictly monitored environment. Starting a new career after raising my daughter and leaving the workforce for 9 years was a bit daunting, but I enjoyed the process and studied diligently. During the test, when I came to a question that was not immediately clear, I would breathe and stretch to reset. I passed the exam on the first try and launched my career as a successful Realtor.

Caring for ourselves has many layers. We do it for ourselves, to be strong and healthy, and we do it for our loved ones, so that we have more to give to them. We care for ourselves in many different ways: exercise, nutrition, stress management, listening to music, walking, reading, being present and thankful, visualizing, breathing or doing anything

that quiets the mind and helps redirect it to the positive.

If we don’t consciously choose to be present for the little positive moments in life, we may stop seeing them, stop registering these real emotions in real life and tune out. This is not good for our brains , our relationships or our mental health. Even if we are exercising and eating well, the element of self care through good mental health matters. Be aware of your mental health; check in with yourself. It is normal to feel sad and get angry, but if you find these feelings hard to shake or you are having more bad days than good, it may be time to seek professional help.



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connection to the past

A CONIFER LOVE STORY

BY DONNA LONG BECK | CONIFER HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Betty and Wes Long, wedding day, February 14, 1946



Betty and Wes Long, 50th wedding anniversary

Valentines Day was always a special day in the home of Wes and Betty Long. It was their day to celebrate the joining of two Conifer pioneer families.

On February 14th, 1946, Rudolph Wesley (Wes) Long Jr. and Betty Jean Fields were united in marriage, and it lasted 60 years. But their connection started many years prior.

Wes was born in 1921 to Rudolph Wesley Long, Sr., and E. May Long, the firstborn of their 5 children. Wes worked with his father in the garage, rescue, and community service business known as Long Bros' Garage.



R. Wes Long, Jr. and Rudy W. Long, Sr.



Tow truck, hard at work, bringing in another job off the road.

Betty was born in 1925 to George C. and Theresa Fields of the Sylvan Ranch, Oehlmann Park. Being the 7th of 10 children and the 6th of 8 girls, Betty found herself keeping busy helping her family maintain the ranch, grow and distribute the crops, and work with her mother in the family store in Conifer known as Fields Trading Post. This was the local grocery store of the early Conifer days.



Fields Trading Post 1945

It was not uncommon for Wes and Betty to spend time with each other in many activities. They attended barn dances and community or business-related activities, but not always as a couple.



Betty J. Fields at Fields Trading Post, 1940

In 1935, Betty was living with her mother at Fields Trading Post. She worked in the store and helped pump gasoline at the Conoco station located at the store. She would spend summer weekends cranking gallons of homemade ice cream to sell to travelers along the 285 Corridor. The family store was built by her father and older brother and was opened for business in 1929. It continued as a family business until the late 1960s, when her mother retired to a lower elevation for health reasons.



Betty Jean Fields at Evergreen High School

Betty had wanted to attend nurse's training since she was a child, when she helped nurse farm animals and pets back to health. She knew that she needed to attend an accredited high school, so she would travel to catch the school bus at Blue Creek Road to attend Evergreen High School. She was the first Conifer girl to graduate from Evergreen High School. She enrolled in the Army Cadet Nursing Corps School at St. Luke's Nursing School in 1943. She graduated from nursing school and continued her career with St. Luke's until she retired in 1992.



Left: Betty in Army Cadet Nursing uniform, St. Luke's Nursing School, 1943.
Right: Betty as a registered nurse at St. Luke's Hospital in Denver where she worked until she retired in 1992.

Betty told us that her favorite duty as an RN was in the labor/delivery area. She delivered countless numbers of babies, including a set of quadruplets from Sidney, Nebraska, and one of John Elway's babies. After she retired, she assisted many neighbors through their medical needs, including Slim Capps, her mother-in-law May Long, and many more.

Wes would spend many days helping community members out of difficult situations, from pulling wrecks off the road, transporting neighbors, and helping in snowstorms. One of those trips was to help Mrs. Fields and family dig out of the 8-foot snowstorm in 1937 so they could open their store to help neighbors.



Wes Long helped the Fields Trading Post remove the mounds of snow the area was hit with in 1937. He even added time to play with the younger kids.



Wes Long and Big Red



In 1942, Wes was drafted into the US Army Air National Guard and served 3 years in Calcutta, India. He said many times that he had never spent time in a hotter place in his life. While in India he visited the Black Taj Mahal. He was planning to ask for Betty's hand in marriage when he returned, so he found a special gift to present to her when he proposed. This beautiful necklace is still cherished by the family.



On Feb 14th, 1946, Wes and Betty were joined in marriage at the Stone Church at Beaver Ranch. This church was close to Betty's heart because it was built by her father; he was a noted stonemason of the

area. The building still stands as a residence along 285 at the Linville Corner, just south of Foxton Road.



Wes and Betty's wedding Day, Feb 14, 1946, at the Stone Church at Foxton Road and US 285.

Since Wes was still in the Army Air Corp (later to be the Army) at Buckley Airfield and Betty was employed by St. Luke's Hospital, their residence was to be in Denver. They brought 7 children into their lives; then in 1964 they moved from Denver back to Conifer. Wes was needed to help his father at Long Bros' Garage and Towing Service. Wes retired after 25 years of service in the Army. Betty commuted to work in Denver at St. Luke's Hospital until she retired in 1992. All their children followed Betty's tradition and graduated from Evergreen High School.



Betty and Wes' children, ca 1960. Standing in back: Donna Jean and David Wesley. Sitting: Theresa Mae, Beth Ann, Mary Lynn, and Joseph Frederick. 7th child, Timothy Clark born May 1961, not pictured.

Wes was Lt. Governor of Kiwanis, and they traveled to many interesting places around the country. After leaving the Kiwanis, they continued to enjoy many trips, visiting family and friends. For their 50th wedding anniversary, their family presented them with a trip to cruise Alaska and then visit with his sister and family in Fairbanks.

In the early 2000s their life changed when Wes was diagnosed with kidney failure and had dialysis treatments 3 days a week, which Betty transported him to without fail. But this gave Betty the opportunity to continue practicing her nursing skills by taking care of her beloved husband. Wes passed away in August of 2006. Betty never forgot her love of Wes and celebrated their love until she passed in 2019. Both were laid to rest together at Ft. Logan National Cemetery. The family was so happy to learn after her death that the Army Cadet Corps nurses were now classified as veterans, so Ft. Logan made that notification on her side of their grave marker.



“One of the really important things about preservation is it connects people to history in a very tangible way.”
— Myrick Howard

Thanks to Donna Long Beck and the Conifer Historical Society and Museum for providing content for 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.
Learn more at www.coniferhistoricalsociety.org

from the experts



UNDERSTANDING SOLAR NET METERING BENEFITS

BY SEAN BELL, VALORROOFANDSOLAR.COM

In recent times, solar panels have become a ubiquitous sight, gracing rooftops in neighborhoods and communities, and you may even have them adorning your own roof. While the concept of solar panels generating electricity is well-known, delving into the finer details of how these systems operate can significantly enhance your appreciation for this sustainable energy source. To unravel this mystery, the U.S. Department of Energy provides an enlightening video on the principles of photovoltaics (<http://tinyurl.com/35pmap98>).

At Valor Roof and Solar, we take pride in being well-equipped to guide you through the solar process. Leveraging our expertise in both solar technology and the roofs commonly used for these systems, we stand ready to assist you on your renewable energy journey. As an added bonus, all our new solar customers receive a complimentary roof maintenance package, ensuring that your roof is in optimal condition before the solar installation takes place.

Colorado, with its steadfast commitment to sustainable energy practices, has implemented various alternative energy programs supported by public utilities, the State of Colorado, and the Federal Government. These initiatives are designed to incentivize and promote residential solar panel installations, positioning homeowners to benefit from valuable incentives associated with solar electric generation systems.

One particularly enticing incentive for homeowners with qualifying homes is the net metering program. This innovative mechanism empowers homeowners by allowing excess energy produced by their solar systems to be fed into the grid, creating

a credit for future energy bills. Presently, Colorado's net metering program operates at a 1-to-1 ratio, signifying that each surplus kilowatt produced is credited to the homeowner's account to be withdrawn again when additional demand occurs, like plugging in your EV. That energy you produced comes back to you free when you need it.

While the current net metering arrangement in Colorado is generous, it's essential to acknowledge the potential for changes in the future. Recent adjustments to net metering programs in states like California serve as a reminder that the landscape of these incentives can evolve, potentially diminishing or eliminating benefits for new solar installations.

Net metering serves as a compelling incentive for electric customers to embrace solar energy, playing a crucial role in the development of the distributed energy generation network. While existing net metering agreements should be honored, uncertainties linger regarding the terms that future installations might enjoy.

To demystify the specifics of solar incentives and capitalize on the available benefits, consider initiating the process with Valor Roof and Solar's complimentary Energy Savings Review. This comprehensive review, available throughout the year, evaluates your home's potential to generate electricity from solar panels. It serves as a valuable



“We stand ready to assist you on your renewable energy journey.”

resource for navigating utility programs and exploring the full spectrum of options available to you.

Valor Roof and Solar, a distinguished veteran-founded, family-owned, local Colorado business, operates with an unwavering commitment to integrity. We embrace complex and challenging projects related to solar electric generation, roof replacement, and repair, viewing them as opportunities to contribute to and uplift our community. Our daily pursuit is to be one percent better than the previous day, striving for continuous improvement.

To kickstart your Energy Savings Review and delve into the possibilities for your home, reach out to Valor Roof and Solar at (303) 770-7663. We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to serve our community, address your needs, and contribute to a more sustainable future.

Whether in person, over the phone, or through electronic media such as Zoom or Google Meet, Valor Roof and Solar remains accessible to you. Spot us on your streets, driving in Valor vehicles, wearing Valor gear, and, when we wave or say hello, rest assured that our willingness to assist is sincere. If you miss us or have queries, don't hesitate to call us at (303) 770-7663. Our commitment is unwavering, and we look forward to engaging with you, addressing your concerns, and meeting the needs of our community.

As we stride towards a more sustainable future, your decision to explore solar energy not only benefits you but also contributes to the greater good. Valor Roof and Solar invites you to take the next step in your renewable energy journey. By scheduling a consultation, you not only gain insights into the potential of solar panels for your home but also open the door to a more sustainable and cost-effective energy future.

In your consultation, our experienced team will conduct a thorough analysis of your property, assessing its solar potential, and providing personalized recommendations tailored to your needs. We understand the significance of this decision, and our commitment to excellence ensures that you receive the highest quality service throughout your solar installation journey.

Don't miss the chance to be a part of the clean energy revolution. Contact Valor Roof and Solar today to schedule your personalized consultation and embark on a path towards energy independence and environmental stewardship. Together, let's illuminate a brighter, greener future.

By choosing Valor Roof and Solar, you not only make a smart investment in your home but also contribute to a sustainable and eco-friendly community. We look forward to assisting you on your solar journey and being a partner in your commitment to a greener tomorrow

Together, let's use the power of the sun and make a difference! Valor Roof and Solar is here to help you navigate this process. To find out if your home qualifies to produce its own power through solar, contact Sean Bell 303-770-7663



YES! Our March issue will focus on one of our favorite subjects...Our Pets! We'd love to include our reader's fur babies, as well as our own. Email your pics to: *Your Mountain Connection* via Marty Hallberg (news@yourmtnconnection.com). We'll print as many as space permits in order as received.

your MOUNTAIN CONNECTION

— LOAN ZONE MORTGAGE —

Love These Loan Options!

BY WANDA NORGE, MORTGAGE CONSULTANT

We work with many lenders to offer multiple loan products. It's like having a personal shopper who works on your behalf! People are wanting to sell and purchase different homes. Let's look at these different options:

Temporary Buydowns are popular and can be in the form of a 3-2-1, 2-1, or 1-0 buydown.

Typically, the seller pays for the buydown with concessions. If the market rate is 6.5% as an example, on the 2-1 buydown, the 1st year payment is calculated at 4.5%, the second year 5.5%, before it goes to the final note rate for years 3-30. This gives buyers time to refinance into projected lower rates sometime during the first 3 years.

Buy Before You Sell. With this program the lender provides the cash you need to purchase the new home before you even sell yours. You get time to get your home sold, and we use a loan to repay the lender that fronted the cash.

Delayed Financing. Utilize your own retirement or asset funds to purchase with cash and use delayed financing within the first couple months to take out a loan to replenish the account.

100% Financing Purchase. Use first and second loan combinations available to first-time homebuyers to cover down payment minimums. Certain properties in Clear Creek, Gilpin, and Park counties can also qualify for rural USDA loans. Veterans can use 100% VA loans.

Down Payment Assistance. Several down



payment assistance loans are available throughout the state. Denver has the Metro DPA program. Denver Housing Authority has income-restricted properties listed at below market sales prices that borrowers must qualify for.

Keep in mind that each parent can gift each child up to \$18,000 in 2024.

Reverse Mortgages. Eliminate the current mortgage payment totally and get cash disbursements depending on borrower age and equity available. You continue to own the home with full title and control of the property. We can work with your financial planner to incorporate into the overall estate plan.

If you want to sell the current home to downsize or are going through a "gray divorce," a reverse could be used to complete an equity buy-out for one spouse to use for down payment funds toward a new purchase.

Self-Employed. Self-employed business owners can count deposits on bank statements or qualify with asset conversion loans instead of providing tax returns.

Investment Properties. Traditional income and employment qualifying is avoided if using a Debt-Service Coverage Ratio (DSCR) loan, streamlining qualifying.

Second Mortgages. For those wanting to clean up debt but keep the 1st loan, we have several fixed-rate second loans available.

Let's discuss your story and see what may be available to finance a new home, second home or rental, or help with a current high debt or divorce situations.

Wanda Norge, Certified Mortgage Advisor (CMA), Certified Divorce Lending Professional (CDLP), Loan Zone Mortgage, LLC (NMLS: 1870102), 21 yrs exp, 26 yr Evergreen Resident, Phone: 303-419-6568, loans@wandanorge.com, www.wandanorge.com (NMLS: 280102).

— BUFFALO PARK DENTISTRY —

What is Your Tongue Saying?

BY ALEX ROBERTS

When it comes to oral health, your tongue is more than a muscle that helps you swallow, talk, chew, and taste your favorite foods. It can also be a snapshot of your overall health. Symptoms of many acute or chronic illnesses can appear on your tongue, and sometimes these changes are the first sign that something is amiss.

So, what should you be looking for on your tongue? First, it's important to understand the baseline or what's "normal" for a tongue. A healthy tongue is typically pink in color, although the hue can vary slightly lighter or darker depending on the individual. Ethnic background can cause color variation as well. A healthy, normal-colored tongue also has small bumps all over its surface; these are called papillae, and they help you speak, taste, chew, and swallow.

So, what is your tongue saying?

A dry tongue and mouth is usually one of the first signs of dehydration, which occurs when your body loses more water than it gains. Uncontrolled diabetes or Sjogren's syndrome, which is an autoimmune disease that affects saliva flow, can cause dry mouth as well.

Your tongue could also let you know whether your body lacks certain nutrients. For instance, an overly red tongue can show B vitamin deficiencies, particularly B12 and folic acid, and low iron. Once you address your diet and include more food containing these vitamins or take a supplement, your tongue should return to its normal color.

Signs of your body undergoing excessive stress can show up on your tongue as unusual redness, canker sores, and ulcers.



"Your tongue can be a snapshot of your overall health."

Also, if your tongue appears to have marks around the edges, that could signify consistently biting your tongue due to stress. Reading these signs early and reducing your stress could save you from more significant conditions.

If you have a weak or suppressed immune system, your tongue will let you know. The pale, white color of the tongue could indicate a yeast infection of the mouth, also known as oral thrush. Or, if you see white, lace-like patches or even swollen red tissues and open sores on your tongue, you may have

oral lichen planus. While these conditions are treatable, use them as warnings that you need to build up your body's defenses and get yourself checked out by a doctor.

If you notice your tongue is black and hairy looking, that could signify poor oral hygiene or heavy tobacco use. With proper oral hygiene, including brushing your teeth and tongue and flossing regularly, you can get your tongue back to its healthy pink color.

Most changes in your tongue are harmless and go away on their own, as long as you do certain things to repair and rebalance your health. There are more serious conditions, such as kidney disease, cancer, and HIV, that can show up on your tongue, so if there are changes that last longer than a few days, it is a good idea to have things evaluated by a medical professional.

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— THE SASQUATCH OUTPOST —

The Sasquatch Chronicles

Winter Camping and Horse Injuries

BY JIM MYERS

This past summer we heard about multiple Sasquatch sightings at Wellington Lake, particularly at one site (#14), which just happens to be the site that is the farthest back of all the mountain road sites. If you're at all familiar with Wellington Lake/Castle Mountain Recreation Area, you know that the campsites are split between those that are down by the lake, and those that are situated higher up at the base of the mountain.

Anyway, two of my more intrepid friends agreed to join me for a night of winter camping at site #14, in hopes that Sasquatch might come down to check out the unusual winter activity. One

of the guys owns an outfitter tent, complete with a wood stove, that made the prospect of camping in the snow more palatable. We set up the tent, lit the stove and waited for dark.

About an hour after sunset, Tony and I took a walk along the snow-covered road to try out Wayne's new thermal imager. As I was looking into the dark (away from camp) I spotted two very bright objects about 70 yards away through the trees. I still don't know what I was looking at (could have been eyes), and as Tony and I started walking towards the object it disappeared. The night was uneventful, other than our running out of firewood around 3 am, and a mouse deciding to take up residence in Wayne's backpack during the night. But, as researchers, the only way to acquire additional data is to get out in the woods



"The only way to acquire additional data is to get out in the woods in all seasons."

at all times and in all seasons—comfortable or not.

Yesterday (January 16) I accompanied a friend over to KZ Ranch to see the horses she'd recently purchased. The thermometer on my truck read -15 degrees! In the past I've written about my horse's mane getting braided at KZ (I believe Sasquatch is the culprit), so while we were standing there I said, "If you ever find your horses' manes braided, please let me know." No sooner had those words left my mouth than I noticed that one of the other horses standing there had a braided mane. I walked around the haystack to get some photos and my friend, being curious, led her horse over to take a

look. My mistake was getting so preoccupied with the photos that I stopped paying attention to the horses. The horses got into a tussle, one bit the other, and before I knew what was happening I'd been kicked hard right above my knee (same knee that was operated on a month ago) and knocked me on my ass into the snow. It hurt so bad I thought my femur was fractured. Another trip to the ER, x-rays, and thankfully my first horse-kicking experience only resulted in a bad charley horse (pun intended). The dangers of Sasquatch research!

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

— EVERGREEN HEALTH INSURANCE —

IRMAA's Bite into Your Medicare Costs

BY ED REGALADO

A well-funded retirement can also mean a more expensive one. One reason is that seniors with higher than average incomes are affected by IRMAA, the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount, and that means higher Medicare Part B and Part D premium fees. This month, I hope to shed some light on how IRMAA impacts Medicare, and help those of you affected make informed decisions regarding these expenses.

So what, exactly, is IRMAA? IRMAA is an additional premium imposed on Medicare beneficiaries with higher incomes. If you fall into one of the high-income categories, which in 2024 means more than \$103,000 for individuals and \$206,000 for couples, you will have to pay premiums on top of the Part D plan you choose as well as the standard Medicare Part B premium of \$174.70 in 2024, making total healthcare costs more burdensome. For review, Part B covers medical services like doctor visits, outpatient care, and preventive services, while Part D provides prescription drug coverage.

Depending on how much above the income threshold one is, seniors may experience a significant increase in their Medicare premiums due to IRMAA. The surcharge is calculated based on the modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) reported on your tax returns, and **there is a 2-year lookback. That means beneficiaries will pay this year according to their MAGI recorded in 2022.**

As income increases, so does the IRMAA premium. Even anomalies, like the sale of a property that produces capital gains, will impact your IRMAA. There are different income brackets, and each is associated with a specific premium amount. Thresholds adjust annually. This year, IRMAA peaks out at



\$594 for Part B and \$81 for Part D for seniors with the highest incomes. In order to anticipate healthcare costs, you need to know your bracket. The complete IRMAA tables are available on the IRS website.

Since IRMAA is calculated based on income seniors had two years ago, those who experience a significant life-changing event may be eligible for an IRMAA recon-

sideration or reduction. You can request a reduction in your IRMAA premium based on your current income through the Social Security Administration. Circumstances like marriage, divorce, death of a spouse are all qualifying circumstances. Additionally, most people will see a reduction in income when they retire. Work stoppage is an allowed life-changing event. If you qualify for IRMAA, you should request a reduction from the SSA if your income decreases.

IRMAA can play a significant role in determining Medicare costs. By understanding how IRMAA affects premiums, you can better plan for your healthcare expenses. If you'll turn 65 this year and don't already collect Social Security benefits, be sure to apply for Medicare Part B 3 months before your birthday, and stay informed about your income status. It's worth your time to explore options for appealing or reducing IRMAA premiums if you can. As always, your broker can provide personalized guidance based on your individual circumstances. If you need help, please give us a call!

Ed and Dana Regalado are certified brokers. Their office is located at 27945 Meadow Drive, Evergreen, CO 80439. They can be reached at 303-674-1945 or send an email to: edregalado46@gmail.com.

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Jeff’s favorites

Vincent

Starry, Starry Night

BY DON MCLEAN

Starry, starry night
Paint your palette blue and gray
Look out on a summer’s day
With eyes that know
the darkness in my soul

Shadows on the hills
Sketch the trees and the daffodils
Catch the breeze
and the winter chills
In colors on the snowy linen land

Now I understand
What you tried to say to me
And how you suffered for your sanity
And how you tried to set them free-
They would not listen,
they did not know how
Perhaps they’ll listen now

Starry, starry night
Flaming flowers that brightly blaze
Swirling clouds in violet haze
Reflect in Vincent’s
eyes of china blue

Colors changing hue
Morning fields of amber grain
Weathered faces lined in pain
Are soothed beneath the artist’s
loving hand

Now I understand
What you tried to say to me

And how you suffered for your sanity
And how you tried to set them free-
They would not listen,
they did not know how
Perhaps they’ll listen now

For they could not love you
But still your love was true
And when no hope was left in sight
On that starry, starry night
You took your life, as lovers often do
But I could’ve told you Vincent
This world was never meant for
One as beautiful as you

Starry, starry night
Portraits hung in empty halls
Frame-less heads on nameless walls
With eyes that watch the world
and can’t forget
Like the strangers that you’ve met
The ragged men in ragged clothes
The silver thorn of bloody rose
Lie crushed and broken
on the virgin snow

Now I think I know
What you tried to say to me
And how you suffered for your sanity
And how you tried to set them free
They would not listen,
they’re not listening still
Perhaps they never will

Written by Don McLean
Lyrics provided by www.azlyrics.com

Keep Me
In Your Heart

BY WARREN ZEVON

Shadows are falling
and I’m running out of breath
Keep me in your heart for a while
If I leave you,
it doesn’t mean I love you any less
Keep me in your heart for a while

When you get up in the morning,
and you see that crazy sun
Keep me in your heart for a while
There’s a train leaving nightly
called “When all is said and done”
Keep me in your heart for a while

Sha-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la, love
Keep me in your heart for a while
Sha-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-lo
Keep me in your heart for a while

Sometimes when you’re doing
simple things around the house
Maybe you’ll think of me and smile
You know I’m tied to you
like the buttons on your blouse
Keep me in your heart for a while

Hold me in your thoughts,
take me to your dreams
Touch me as I fall into view
When the winter comes,
keep the fires lit
And I will be right next to you

Engine drivers headed north
to Pleasant Street
Keep me in your heart for a while
These wheels keep turning,
but they’re running out of steam
Keep me in your heart for a while

Sha-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la, love
Keep me in your heart for a while
Sha-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-lo
Keep me in your heart for a while

Sha-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la, love
Keep me in your heart for a while
Sha-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-lo
Keep me in your heart for a while

Keep me in your heart for a while

Written by Jorge A. Calderon and Warren Zevon • Album: The Wind • Released: 2003
Lyrics provided by Musixmatch

Poet’s corner

Life

BY JEFF SMITH

Little girls and little boys
From birth to twenty years
Are told the wrongs and rights of life
And taught to hide their fears

“Do as I say not as I do”
Is a common piece of advice
Be a gentleman or a lady
Being you just won’t suffice.

And if your actions lead you to
A sound that no one else can hear
You must be doing something wrong
You’re told by your so-called peers

I live my life quite differently
I’ve always been that way
I do what I do for me and you
Whoever you might be today

Do as you do for only you
And for those that you care
Don’t shy away from being hurt
Who said that life was fair

Recall all those who touch you
With their friendship for a while
And those who hurt you
with their love
As well as those who
made you smile

To those who don’t understand you
And those who ran away
Ask if what they are getting now
Is worth what they gave away

And think of those
that you have touched
As a lover or a friend
The ones you walked away from
And the ones you stayed with
till the end

Sometime in this life of yours
You will fail to succeed
But in end, I’ll tell you my friend,
You will have all that you need

Life is just experience
You’ll have both good and bad
You have to add them all together-
When you review the life you’ve had

Love

BY NICOLA CACCAVALE-MCCRAY

Love

Love is a fickle creature
taking many forms with
no defining feature.

Unbridled, unconditional,
passionate, untraditional,
unnamed, undefined,
unplanned, untimed.

Red hot,
fever pitch,
slow burn,
secret wish.

Lock and Key

BY NICOLA CACCAVALE-MCCRAY

In my heart under lock and key lay a thousand years of memories. Love so tender like a newborn fawn, standing on shaky legs with nothing but newness to gaze upon, innocence white like the fallen snow before the shadow of nightfall haunts the glimmer of lightness. Crimson fire burns, pulsating heat that brings you to your knees, lightning storms of heaven and hell, secrets you would never tell. It is but one raging storm that lies within, leaving me to question rigid thoughts about the very definition of love. For every sweet word lingering on my lips there is a thorn.

Nicola Caccavale is originally from Chicago. She attended college in Heidelberg, Germany and loves to travel. When Nicola is not writing songs or poems she is dancing or spending time in nature.

Your Mountain Connection recognizes the talent and creativity of our mountain neighbors. Each month we invite local artists, photographers, poets, and writers to submit their work for consideration in *Your Mountain Connection*. We will choose submissions that best fit our monthly theme to be featured on our cover or here in Poet’s Corner. We look forward to each and every submission...thank you!

Submit your stories, poems, or pictures to *Your Mountain Connection* via Marty Hallberg (news@yourmtnconnection.com). We will published as space allows. Information must be received by the 10th of each month prior to the actual date of the event.



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GRANT AUTOMOTIVE

BY GARY LOFFLER

Affordable Prices! Honest Repairs.



It does not take long after meeting Ben Grant to realize that he is one of those busy people who never seem to be in a hurry. He speaks in a relaxed tone and takes the time to listen when others are talking. Ben started working in an auto shop when he was just fifteen years old and has never looked back. He had always been good with his hands and mechanically inclined, so after working on his bicycles and motorbikes, graduating to cars was a natural progression. After twelve years of working for Kevin's Subaru, he started his own shop in July of 2000. Grant Automotive at 19356 Goddard Ranch Ct. in Morrison has steadily built a loyal following and currently has twelve employees. Ben estimates that his techs and service writers total up to over 300 years of experience, but it is important to note that 36 of those years are his. Talking to Ben about Volkswagen's diesel emissions controversy from 2015 reveals the depth of

knowledge the man has about the automotive industry; the amount of NOx (nitrous oxide), the gas mileage, and the horsepower from before and after the modifications made to the vehicles are easily stated without hesitancy. Grant Automotive works on American and Japanese cars; and while they do emissions testing on European vehicles, they refer the repair work to other shops. For trucks, they can handle gas and diesel up to one ton. They offer fully licensed AWD diesel emissions testing and are the closest option for most people along the Front Range. Over the years cars and trucks have changed considerably. Carburetors are long gone, having been replaced by fuel injectors, which are being phased out in favor of

turbo-charged direct injection systems. These last changes were initially developed for diesel engines, so Ben is already familiar with the technology that is working its way through the Ford line of cars and light trucks. Driving a Ford Focus or F150? You can thank diesel engineers for your good gas mileage. Computers are also now an integral part of cars and trucks, and having a good internet service is an important part of today's automotive business. Sometimes fixing a problem requires updating the vehicle's computer, and replacing some vehicle parts can also require firmware updates. Vehicle manuals that used to be outdated as soon as they were printed are now available online and updated constantly.

Grant Automotive is a Monday-to-Friday operation, as Ben is a firm believer in having weekends and holidays off for both himself and his staff. While some large firms are just starting to understand a healthy work/time-off relationship, Ben has always known about balance. He certainly enjoys his job, but also enjoys time spent motorbiking or snowmobiling in the mountains. Directly supporting the people who are doing something in the community appeals to Ben; Grant Auto supports local high school basketball and baseball teams and also donates to The Intermountain Humane Society, Mountain Resource, and the Outdoor Lab Foundation.

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www.grantautomotive.net

A Skeptic's View

Science is Real

BY GARY LOFFLER

Science is real. It seems like such an obvious statement, and yet there are people who dispute it all the time. Annoyingly they often use the latest and greatest gadgets to do so. Posting on social media about "flat earth" while using a cell phone should give anyone pause. It is common to pick and choose which bits of science we like to believe in, and we all tend to play fast and loose with nutritional science. (Potato chips are healthy, right? I mean, they are made from vegetables.) Science is another one of those loosely defined nouns that covers too much territory, but let's go with a careful study of observational evidence and experiments. Very few people think that the aforementioned potato chips are healthy snacks, and nutritional scientists have mountains of data showing they are not, but that does not stop people (me included) from eating them. One of the most common anti-science statements is, "Science can't prove a negative." This is usually invoked when someone chooses to believe something that does not have a solid foundation of facts behind it. For example, vampires. The vampire seems to have originated from folk tales in southeastern Europe, with Transylvania as the commonly-given source. While Bram Stoker may have popularized this particular monster, the notion of devils and demons drinking human blood goes back to at least Mesopotamia. Leaving aside these ancient monsters, the lore surrounding just the modern-day vampire is significant. Included in that lore are some pretty stringent rules as to what a vampire can and cannot do. Not being able to cross running water was an early obstacle that does not come into play often in modern stories. The ability to change shapes is often cited, as is an affinity with wolves and bats, and turning into smoke or mist is mentioned often.



"Science is not a perfect predictor of all things, but it is the best tool we have for the job."

Common weapons against the undead are holy objects, wooden stakes and garlic. The Old World (and Chinese) vampires could be thwarted by a handful of seeds or rice strewn on the ground; the vamps would have to count each grain before moving on. Gives a whole new backstory for Sesame Street's Count von Count. Sunlight is an issue for most modern vampires, mirrors typically do not reflect their image and they cannot enter a home without a specific invitation. For some reason, Chinese vampires typically hop with their arms outstretched. Over the years vampires have branched out into a multitude of different forms. The original gaunt, misshapen Nosferatu has been superseded by more attractive versions

portrayed by the likes of Lon Chaney, Jr., Bela Lugosi, Christopher Lee, and Robert Pattinson on the serious side, with Leslie Nielsen and George Hamilton playing comedic versions. Besides the aforementioned Count von Count, there is also Bunnica (no carrot is safe). Vampires range from passionless evil killers to lonely eternal creatures looking for a soul mate. Sadly, despite all of this literature and documentation, vampires do not exist. The idea that "science cannot prove a negative" is often used to promote belief in this particular version of the undead; and while you can't prove a negative, you can calculate the odds of such a thing existing. The first thing counting against their existence is that

none have ever been found. While this may not have been a compelling argument in the 1700s in Transylvania, in 2024 it is. The same nutritional scientists who warn against potato chips have never found the need to include blood on their Recommended Daily Allowance lists. No vampire victims have been found, no constant raids on blood banks, bodies rarely disappear from morgues, grave sites remain undisturbed, and none of the billions of medical examinations have revealed vampirism. This produces some pretty long odds. Couple that with the fact that animal transformation breaks many laws of physics, and the odds get even longer. So perhaps science cannot disprove the existence of vampires, but it can show that the likelihood of their existence is a vanishingly small possibility. This is not to say that science is an infallible source and that what scientists say are absolutes. Certainly the broad strokes are well defined, like the age of the Earth, the distance from the Sun, the time it takes the Earth to circle around the Sun. We can measure gravity really well and predict its effect on our solar system as well as falling objects dropped from a tower. Galileo is said to have dropped a cannonball and a cabbage from the Leaning Tower of Pisa to show that objects fall at the same rate regardless of weight. (Size and shape play a role here, as does air resistance.) Common sense would suggest that heavy objects fall faster than light ones, but a simple experiment shows it to be false. Science is not a perfect predictor of all things, but it is the best tool we have for the job. When it comes to vampires, perhaps scientists can not definitively say they do not exist, but they can determine a pretty solid idea of what the odds are that such a creature exists, and those odds are not good. Don't bet against the house on this one.

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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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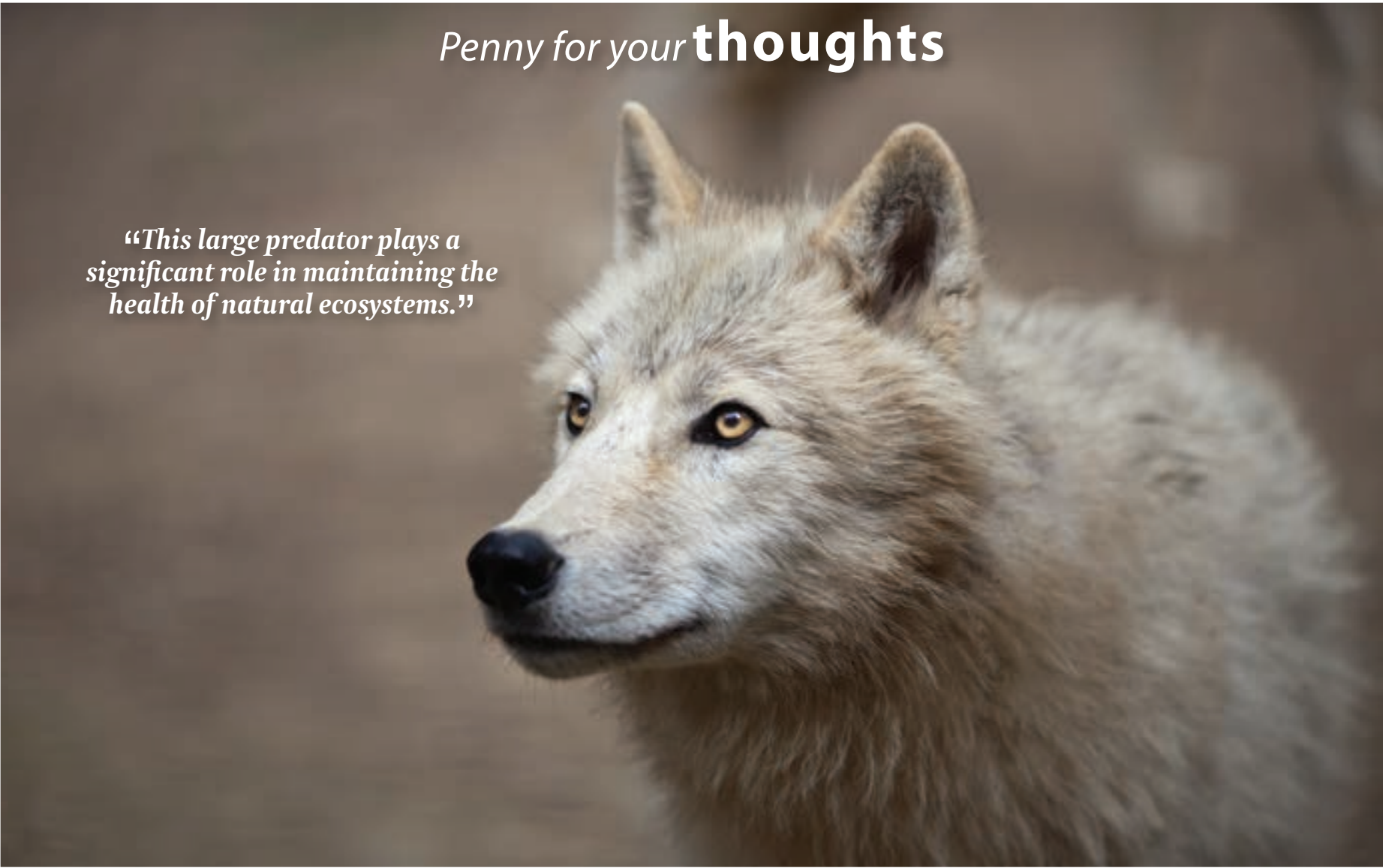


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“This large predator plays a significant role in maintaining the health of natural ecosystems.”

Penny for your thoughts

The Gray Wolf Study by Juba

BY PENNY RANDELL



Good day to all my readers.
Juba here and ready to inform all of you about gray wolves (Canis lupus), and all about their behavior and needs.

Before I get started on this, we must take an account of the recent introduction of 10 gray wolves Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) captured from Oregon and successfully released in Colorado. These animals were taken to state-owned public land in Summit and Grand counties in an effort to create a permanent, self-sustaining gray wolf population in Colorado. These 10 wolves complete the Oregon agreement with the December 2023 through March 2024 capture season. CPW will continue working to source additional animals until up to 15 wolves have been introduced to Colorado by this coming March.

Taking an in-depth look at these mammals, we discover that they can survive in a variety of habitats like forests, tundra, mountains, swamps and deserts. When homeland is considered, we find that these territories normally vary in size from 200 to 500 square miles. However, some wolves can be found dwelling in as little as 18 square miles and as much as 1000 square miles. The ideal amount of room to exist is one wolf per every 10 square miles. The size of their territories is based on density of prey, pack size, presence of neighboring packs and human land use.

The wolf spends about 35% of its time traveling. An individual that usually travels 20 to 30 miles per day may take on 100 miles in a hunt when prey declines.

Like the cougar, this large predator plays a significant role in maintaining the health of natural ecosystems. The diet of a wolf ranges from prey that is young or elderly, sick or injured, or weak and unfit, which keeps prey populations healthy. It is documented that a wolf kill creates an abundant and dependable food source for many other critters. Coyotes, bald eagles, golden eagles, grizzly bears, black bears, ravens, red foxes and at least 20 other species benefit from a wolf kill. By preventing the overpopulation of large herbivores, such as elk and deer, the wolf helps to maintain native biodiversity. It is common for elk and deer to overgraze their habitat when populations outgrow the carrying capacity of an ecosystem. You see, overgrazing destroys the plant base and makes the habitat less able to sustain other species.

Wolves, just like me and other dogs, are highly social animals that live in packs. A pack is a family group comprised of an alpha male and female pair and some of their subordinate offspring, plus pups of one or more years of age. The alpha wolves decide when the pack will travel or hunt, and are normally the first to eat at a kill. When pups are two to three years old they disperse into adjacent or available territories. Too, satellite-collar tracking has shown that some offspring and individual wolves have dispersed more than a thousand miles in three to four months. Most often only the male and female alphas of the pack will mate. Mating occurs between January and March, with the pack producing one litter per year.

It is believed that wolves mate for life, beginning breeding between two and three years of age. Wolf pups are born blind and deaf in an underground den after a gestation period of 63 days. Most often litter size is from four to six pups. During the first three weeks of age pups nurse every four to six hours while needing help regulating their body temperature. Because of this, the mother usually stays with their pups in the den. She survives on food brought to the den by other members of the pack. Pups are weaned at about eight weeks, once they begin eating semi-solid food. This diet is composed of regurgitated food from the

mother and other pack members. When more solid food is taken, the pups will begin to move about in search of “rendezvous sites” where they spend the rest of the summer learning proper pack behavior and even etiquette. The pups’ true traveling from the den begins at around eight weeks when they are weaned. Sadly, fewer than half of these pups survive to adulthood.

With ideal conditions, wolves can live up to 15 years of age in the wild. However, few live longer than five years under common conditions. The populations of wolves are naturally regulated by prey density and territorial disputes within the pack. Human-related factors such as illegal hunting, control efforts to limit killing of livestock, and car accidents take a toll on these animals as well. Pack size most often numbers anywhere from five to ten. When there is an abundance of prey, packs can sustain 20 or more members.

Besides feeding on deer, elk and moose, wolves are opportunistic feeders that will feed on smaller animals such as beavers and rabbits. Occasionally, wolves kill domestic livestock, and surprisingly, some will feed on vegetation. Coastal wolves found in British Columbia feed on salmon as well as mussels found on the saltwater beaches. Wolves require an average of 3–6 pounds of meat per day, and even more for successful breeding. However, because hunts are not successful the vast majority of the time, they typically have a feast-or-famine diet. Their metabolism allows them to survive as many as 12 or more days between feedings; but when the hunt is successful, they will gorge on the fresh meat, enough to bring their average daily intake up to the required amount. After such an enormous meal, they can remain inactive for one or more days.

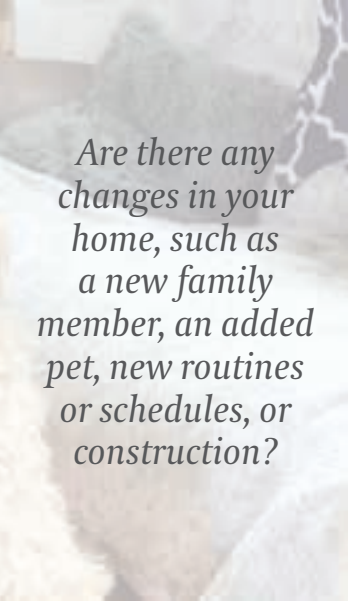
Wolf dens are primarily for the pups that cannot travel with the pack. The den entrances are usually located near water and dug into well-drained soil on a south-facing slope. A wolf may enlarge existing coyote or fox dens for their own use. Such dens can be dug under a boulder, among tree roots, or in cut banks and other sturdy natural structures. The entrance to a den measures about 18 inches in diameter. The passageway may be straight, forked or hooked and is four to 18 feet long with a communal chamber measuring about 20 inches high by 50 inches wide by 40 inches deep. Bedding is not added.

Wolves depend on body language for communication. Specialized behaviors and postures have evolved that help reduce aggression between individual animals within the pack. Body language remains superior and helps the pack live together more agreeably. In addition, facial expressions are often used to express emotions. Wolves may indicate dominant behavior by baring teeth and pointing erect ears forward. Subordinate behavior is often shown by a closed mouth and slit-like eyes, with their ears pulled back close to their head. Tail positions also communicate emotions. Tails are held high when expressing threatening behavior, whereas submissive wolves lower themselves before dominant pack members with their tail tucked between their legs.

Vocal communications among wolves consist of a variety of howls, whines, growls and barks. It is believed that wolves may howl to assemble their pack, to claim territory, to warn intruders away from a home site or kill. Wolves howl in the evening or early morning, in the summer when pups are young and during the mid-winter breeding season. They project their sounds upward to carry the sound farther. Wolves have excellent hearing and under certain conditions can hear a howl as far as six miles away in the forest and ten miles away on the open tundra.

It should be remembered that wolves play a critical role in healthy, dynamic ecosystems and have shown that their activities can help mitigate the potential impacts of climate change. They keep ungulate herds strong by culling sick individuals, which can allow plant diversity to increase by keeping grazers like elk on the move. As previously noted, a carcass left over from a kill feeds wildlife such as eagles, coyotes and others. By protecting large, connected tracts of wildlands, we can rest assured that wolves will have the space they need to provide these important ecosystem services without coming into conflict with humans.

Keep an eye out for these critters. Here in Colorado the wolves are doing their job, helping to keep our ecosystems healthy. I hope you have learned a lot and enjoyed this article. I’ll be back next month with another significant critter to explore. Meanwhile, keep an ear out for those remarkable howls.



Dogs, Dogs, Dogs

BY CATHY KOWALSKI

Most of the time our dogs bring us so much joy that we can't imagine a life without them! Sometimes there are issues that come up that are very frustrating and cause us to be disappointed with our furry friend.

One of those issues is marking in the house. First determine whether your dog is urinating in the house or marking. Marking is a small amount of urine, primarily on vertical surfaces. You might find marking on new items added to your home, corners of furniture, plants that are within reach, or by doors or windows. Have your dog checked out by your vet to make sure there are no physical reasons. Punishing them after the fact is useless; dogs live in the moment and do not understand why you are so upset. It can also make your dog afraid of you. If you catch them as they mark, make a loud noise to startle them and then escort them outside. Intact dogs are more likely to mark than those that have been spayed or neutered; however, since they have already been practicing this behavior, it may take some time to change it. Hormonal changes as dogs mature can also cause marking. Marking is communication in the dog world. Pheromones in urine are messages. Your dog may be telling another dog in the home that this is their territory. If another dog has visited recently, your dog may be marking to show this is their home.

Are there any changes in your home, such as a new family member, an added pet, new routines or schedules, or construction? These may cause anxiety, resulting in marking. If the only time your dog marks is when you aren't home, they may be showing signs of anxiety. When leaving and arriving, keep things calm so that it is not a big deal for your dog. Give them opportunities to be away from you, even when you are at home, so that they learn to self-calm and entertain themselves. Another reason that dogs may mark is if other dogs visit outside of the home and your dog can see them from a window or door. You would want to block access to those doors and windows. Having another dog in your house that is not spayed or neutered may cause marking. Management may include closing off areas that your dog marks in. Keep an eye on your dog if you add a new item to the room, and distract them if they seem to be very interested in the item. If you believe the marking is related to anxiety, then you will want to make sure that they get plenty of exercise and learn to settle or play on their own.

If there is a particular area that your dog is drawn to mark, change how they see the area by feeding, petting, and playing with the dog there. Your dog is basically putting his name on what they perceive as theirs, just like you put your name on your belongings! Cleanup is important in discouraging your dog from continuing this behavior. You will want to use an enzymatic pet stain remover to clean any area your dog has marked. There are many products at pet stores or online to choose from. Rocco & Roxie Supply Co. Stain & Odor Eliminator, Nature's Miracle, and Angry Orange are just a few. Avoid using ammonia or vinegar and steam cleaners. Remember that to be a good dog parent is to be patient and help your dog be successful in your world. Think how hard it would be if we had to fit into their world!

Faithfully K9 Service Dogs

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.



David Neils of Wild Nature Media and Christie Greene of Wild Aware

Wild Aware's January Event

On Friday, January 19, and Saturday, January 20, Wild Aware welcomed photographer and game camera expert David Neils to Evergreen. David's company, Wild Nature Media, concentrates on wildlife education, conservation, and non-invasive research, particularly focusing on mountain lions. Both nights were reserved to capacity, and David shared with those in attendance what he has learned over his 20-plus years of studying mountain lions in remote areas of the west, including Colorado. After 30,000 hours in the field, David has captured some amazing game camera footage. No enticements are used, just the cats and the critters that they live with doing what they do when people aren't around. We know that we live with these big cats, but rarely do any of us catch a glimpse of them, let alone have the opportunity to observe them behaving without human

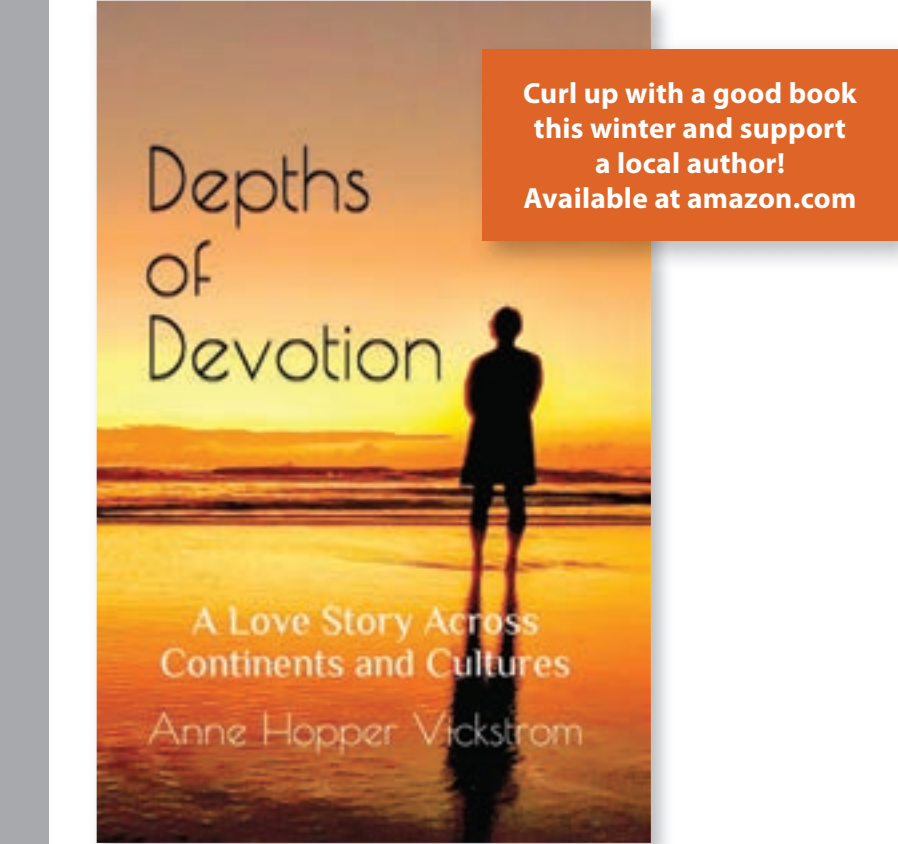
influence. David states, "I assumed they were elusive and unpredictable. But now, I know, without a doubt, they ARE elusive but also one of the most predictable animals of their size in North America." To learn more about David Neils and Wild Nature Media go to wildnaturemedia.com.

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With Colorado's Wildlife

4176 Ridge Village Drive, Evergreen
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wildaware.org

ICE SKATING IS OPEN!

The Lake House will be open Mon.–Thurs. 4–7pm and Sat.–Sun. from 9am–7pm in February (subject to the Lake House private event calendar). Always call the skating hotline before visiting at 720-880-1391. If you'd rather take a stroll, the recently improved lake trail wraps the entire lake, and a groomed trail on the ice takes you close to the action.



“What is worth fighting for? This heartwarming story will inspire and leave readers pondering the true meaning of love, sacrifice, and devotion.”

Love, sacrifice, and devotion weave throughout this heartwarming story of a newly graduated American doctor who, despite early success, feels uncertain of his future and wants to make a difference in the world. He joins an experienced doctor with decades of practice across the African continent, and they quickly become friends. Working together through tragic circumstances, Kate and Jason fall in love. They create an idyllic life together amid challenges and dangers that come from working with communities rich in natural resources—too tempting for corrupt actors to ignore. Their devotion to the tribes they serve and their ancient cultures only enhances the love between them. When violence threatens their life together, Kate and Jason’s relationship collides with prejudices outside their world, jeopardizing their future. Jason must answer the ultimate question: what is worth fighting for? This heartwarming story will inspire and leave readers pondering the true meaning of love, sacrifice, and devotion long after the final page has turned.



LOVE IN A NEW AGE

BY ANNE VICKSTROM

“Embrace the logic—and surprise, of the modern wedding.”

Things change. Not long ago when a wedding invitation arrived, it was time to find where the couple was registered. I would peruse their choice of items they had selected for their new home together. I chose an item on their list—a blender or a salad bowl—and knew that I was giving them something they wanted.

When a bridal shower invitation arrived, I did the same. But rather than have it delivered, I would drive to the store, get some beautiful wrapping paper, and head off for a fun time with the bride. She would open each gift, and everyone could ooh-and-ahh over the presents.

When the big day arrived, the wedding was usually in a house of worship, often on a weekend evening. At the end of the service, the ordained pastor would introduce “Mr. and Mrs. fill in the blank” for the first time. Gathering at a nearby reception, and then sitting down at a dinner, followed by dancing, and finally a cutting of the cake and a toast to the couple made everyone excited for the couple’s exit, when all the guests sent the new family off into their future.

Not so today.

Today’s couples may still have a registry, but now they often include things like hiking equipment or donations for a honeymoon, or even a new home. They don’t need a blender or a salad bowl. They likely have each already set up a home and have two blenders in their cabinet.



“Congratulations to all the new couples during this month of love!”

At the bridal shower, you can still find games that tell about the couple or entertain you in some way, but those pretty gifts tucked in the corner are more apt to stay that way long after the guests have left—people don’t open presents in front of guests anymore.

The big day is now more likely to be in a beautiful meadow, on top of a mountain, or in an event center. You might find a friend, relative or even a pet of the couple officiating the ceremony, and introducing “Mr. and Mrs.” is less frequently heard as brides retain their maiden names.

Catering is professional, and often dinner is heavy hors d’ouvres rather than dinner. The cake cutting seems to be leaving the scene, replaced by cupcakes or other sweet treats.

Even the notion of honeymooning is changing—the couple needing to get back to the office on Monday—putting off the travel until another time.

Traditionalists might be disappointed, but progressives can embrace the logic—and surprise—of the modern wedding. It’s fun to see what two individuals who love each other plan in representing their unique relationship on their big day.

I confess that when I was first offered the chance to donate money rather than an item, I felt offended. Now that I’ve taken in the whole situation, I realize that today, a wedding gift—in whatever form—is simply saying, I support you and wish you the best. If I can help a new couple purchase what they want and need, whether a salad bowl or a down payment, I will be happy. Congratulations to all the new couples during this month of love!

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 have raised their three children and six dogs.

Grow your
business!
Advertise with
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C O N N E C T I O N



Your Mountain Connection paper has been a fixture in the foothills for over 30 years. Serving Evergreen, Conifer, Pine, Bailey, and the surrounding area, Your Mountain Connection has been bringing positive news and local advertising to the foothills mountain communities.

“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



CALL
515-326-2672

COOKING CLASSES WITH... CASTLES & KITCHENS

FEBRUARY FUN

BY FRANCESCA ARNIOTES

“Groundhog found fog.
New snows and blue toes.
Fine and dandy
for Valentine candy.
Snow spittin’; if you’re
not mitten-smitten,
you’ll be frostbitten!
By jing-y feels spring-y.”

—The Old Farmer’s Almanac

That’s February in a nutshell. It’s deep winter. It can be bleak. (Except look where we live! Is it ever not glorious to wake up in Colorado?) And we have Valentine’s Day. Try this for a special dinner date. Set the table, pour yourselves your favorite beverage and team up in the kitchen to make this dinner in 90 minutes or less! If you’re game, do the shopping, and empty the dishwasher so you can throw everything dirty in at the end. Use your senses along the way, make it the way you like it and most of all, have fun!

Cooking Classes with
CASTLES & KITCHENS
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.



MENU

- Radicchio with blue cheese and walnuts
- Baked French onion soup
- Skewered sirloin cubes with mushroom cream sauce or roasted filled portobello mushroom
- Pilaf of long grain rice and wild rice
- Sautéed Swiss chard
- Scandinavian chocolate cake

For 2 people, you need 2 large onions, garlic, a carton of organic beef or mushroom stock, head of radicchio, 8 oz mushrooms, cherry tomatoes, a sprig of parsley, a box of Lundberg or Ben’s wild and long grain rice, a bunch of organic Swiss chard, a French bread hoagie roll, a piece of blue, Roquefort or Gorgonzola cheese, a small ball of part skim mozzarella, a small piece of Parmigiano-Reggiano, olive oil, a pint of heavy cream, thyme, a handful of walnuts, about 12 oz of thick cut of choice beef sirloin, garlic, chocolate chips, flour, sugar, 2 eggs and a lemon. The portobello recipe is at the end of this article.

Have 2 oven-safe soup bowls, 2 salad plates, 2 dinner plates, 2 dessert plates. Use 3 small to medium pots, 1 skillet with lid, broiler pan, 2–4 thin metal skewers. Ready? Follow the directions and start cooking!

Shred the radicchio and arrange on salad plates, slice wedges or crumble the cheese, and scatter walnuts on top. Leave in fridge until ready to dress and serve.

Put one oven rack in the middle and another up high.

Make the cake. **Recipe is under HOME at castlesandkitchens.com.** It takes 20 minutes. While it’s baking, slice the hoagie roll and put the slices on the oven rack to toast for the last 10 minutes or so.

Cut onions in half, slice into 1/8" slices, reserving half of a half. Chop that remaining onion. Put the onion slices and some olive oil (or butter) into the largest saucepan. Turn heat to low and cook until onions are translucent and soft, but not brown. Start on the chard while they cook. Then when they’re ready, add about 20 ounces of broth, black pepper and some minced parsley and heat through. Taste and add salt if needed. Keep warm.

When the cake comes out, place on a rack. Close oven door so you can keep the heat in. Wash the chard, cut off tips of stems and discard them. Cut stems off and slice lengthwise into strips. Rough chop leaves into about 2-inch pieces. Place in skillet with 1/2 cup of water, 1/4 teaspoon of salt, 2 smashed and peeled cloves of garlic and 3 T olive oil. Partially cover with lid and cook gently until water has evaporated.

While chard is cooking, follow package directions for rice. If desired, begin by sautéing a little chopped onion in oil and then proceed.

While rice is cooking, slice mushrooms, reserving 4 small ones. In saucepan #2, place chopped onion, a minced clove of garlic, and extra virgin olive oil, and turn heat to low medium. When onions and garlic are translucent, add the sliced mushrooms and cook about 5 minutes. Add some thyme, salt, and pepper. Add 1/4 cup of broth and 1/2 cup of heavy cream. Simmer gently until reduced to your desired thickness. Then keep warm.

Dry steak and cut into large chunks (about 1 1/2") and skewer with cherry tomatoes and the reserved mushrooms. Place on broiler pan. Brush with olive oil.

When rice is done, keep it warm.

Grate the mozzarella cheese and the Parmigiano.

Whip the remaining heavy cream with a pinch of sugar and some vanilla for the cake.

Serve the radicchio plates, drizzled generously with olive oil, a little lemon juice, salt, and a grind of black pepper.

Set oven to broil but leave the rack in the middle.

Put the hot onion soup in the bowls on a baking sheet, place bread on top of the soup, top with the cheeses, and pop them under the broiler for a few minutes until the cheese is melty and toasty. Leave broiler on. Serve the soup.

Sprinkle salt on skewers and place on upper rack. Turn after 90 seconds. Remove in another 90 seconds for medium. Remove from oven. Place a serving of rice on the plate, arrange the skewer. Top with the mushroom cream sauce and place a serving of Swiss chard. If you have more minced parsley, use it for garnish and serve.

Serve the cake with whipped cream and a cherry.

Meatless main: remove the stems from portobello mushrooms, put on baking sheet and brush with butter or olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Put under broiler for 90 seconds. Change oven to bake 375. Fill caps with a mixture of handfuls of spinach, grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, chopped tomato, some minced onion and garlic, the chopped mushroom stems, breadcrumbs, and a beaten egg with salt and pepper to taste. Drizzle the top with olive oil or butter. Bake for 15–20 minutes. Serve topped generously with Boursin cheese, garnished with some toasted pine nuts and minced fresh parsley. Serve with roasted red peppers on the side.

Evergreen Chamber News



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.



The Stone House
1524 Belford Ct. ~ Evergreen, CO 80439
EvergreenChamber.org



Feeling Good and Looking Good...

BY NANCY JUDGE

Are you looking to start a new routine of better self-care in 2024?

Massage is found to provide multiple benefits to overall health, from recovery from injury to deep relaxation. Massage can be a very personal experience and one that requires a deep amount of trust with your provider. The Evergreen Chamber recommends you consider the therapists at Grounded Massage, Essence Hair, Skin & Body, Evergreen Massage, Healing Traditions Bodywork, Metta Massage and Healing Arts or TallGrass Spa & Salon. All these salons offer multiple forms of massage and other modalities. Red light therapy and cryotherapy have both been found to alleviate chronic pain and improve recovery from injury, getting you back to doing what you enjoy most. The Light Lounge in Bergen Village provides 24-hour access to members to customize their therapy sessions, whether you are looking for improvements in your skin or anti-inflammatory and recovery-boosting effects for your joints. Restore Hyper Wellness, just

down the hill in Applewood, offers cryotherapy, which can decrease inflammation and optimize your sleep, and IV therapy to help speed the recovery process, infusing a liter of fluids filled with vitamins and minerals. Taking care of you also includes looking your best every day. Evergreen Body Contouring and Aesthetics, Medical Aesthetics, Simply You MedSpa and Trinity Esthetics all offer multiple therapies that can have your outer shell looking younger and firmer. At any time, you can visit evergreenchamber.org and look for businesses for any of your needs in our Business Directory. Want an even simpler way to find providers? Download Everything Evergreen from the app store on your cell phone. Once you find the provider, the app opens a dialog box so you can easily call them or a map to their location so you can stop in. Here's to the best you in 2024!

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

Please Shop LOCAL!!

Conifer Chamber Ribbon Cuttings and News



Conifer Area CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

February Event Schedule

Home Services Power Group
Thursday, February 1, 5:00-7:00 pm

Membership Meeting
Thursday, February 8, 7:00-9:00 am

Unlocking Financial Success
Tuesday, February 13, 4:00 pm

After-hours Networking Mixer
Thursday, February 15, 5:00-7:00 pm
Hosted by FirstBank

Building Your Business by Referral
Tuesday, February 22, 12:00 pm

Speed Networking
Tuesday, February 27, 7:30 am
With the Evergreen and Golden Chambers

Visit GoConifer.com for more details
and to register



Elevate Your Business in the New Year

The Advantages of Joining the Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce
BY BETH SCHNEIDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we step into a new year filled with opportunities, aspiring entrepreneurs and established businesses alike seek avenues to increase their visibility, credibility, and growth prospects. One avenue that consistently proves invaluable is membership in the Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce. Positioned at the heart of the local business community, the Chamber offers an array of benefits that can propel your business forward. Connection and Networking: The Chamber provides a platform for making meaningful connections with like-minded professionals, potential customers, and influential individuals in the Conifer business community. Through networking events, mixers, and workshops, members have opportunities to build relationships, exchange ideas, and explore collaborations that can foster growth and innovation. Visibility and Exposure: Being part of the Chamber affords businesses increased visibility; through numerous avenues, including the community directory, events, sponsorships, and online presence, members gain exposure that elevates their presence within the local community and beyond. Advocacy and Representation: Being part of the Chamber means having a collective voice advocating for the interests and needs

of the business community. The Chamber serves as a representative entity, voicing concerns and championing policies that support a conducive business environment, ensuring growth and sustainability. Personal and Professional Development: Beyond the tangible benefits, involvement in the Chamber fosters personal and professional growth. Engaging in discussions, learning from industry experts, and exchanging ideas with peers nurtures development, enhancing skills for staying ahead in today's business world. As we gear up for a successful start to the new year, the Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce stands as an ally. Through networking, advocacy, resources, visibility, and community engagement, Chamber involvement offers a platform for businesses to thrive and succeed. Embracing the opportunities and advantages the Chamber provides sets the stage for a prosperous and impactful year ahead. Get started at GoConifer.com or call Beth at 303-838-5711. Beth Schneider Executive Director Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce

Thank you for your continued support and thank you for shopping local!

VALENTINE’S DAY

Saints, Cards, and Candy
BY ELAINE HAYDEN | EMAHS

The tradition of showing affection on February 14th has grown from a humbling exchange of sentiments to a multi-billion-dollar industry. Memories from elementary school of creating a Valentine bag or box as a receptacle for Valentine cards from classmates is familiar to many. Choosing the appropriate card for the classroom sweetheart involved a thoughtful process!

hallmark.com, the Hallmark Card Company, established by Joyce Clyde Hall and his brother, Rollie, experienced humble beginnings in Nebraska in the early 1900s. By 1928, the Hall brothers named their greeting card company Hallmark. Descendants of the original Hall family continue to serve on the Board of Directors and have elevated the company onto a tier of marketing that generates an estimated multi-billion-dollar revenue on Valentine cards alone.

According to Kae Lani Palmisano, the tradition of boxed chocolates was introduced by Richard and George Cadbury in 1861 when they brainstormed a marketing concept that led to the production of heart-shaped boxes, filled with chocolate morsels as a symbol of affection. Cadbury chocolate, reportedly Queen Victoria’s chocolate of choice, continues to enjoy global popularity, not only with Valentine chocolates but with the iconic chocolate Easter eggs and bunnies as well. The tradition of gifting candy at Valentine’s Day is not limited to chocolates. As reported by Erin Blakemore, the tiny, heart-shaped candies, now known as “conversation hearts,” were the creative invention of the New England Confectionery Company (NECCO) in 1902. The company fabricated a process of printing simple sentiments on candies that conveyed loving words. Over time, the candies became smaller and the sentiments became shorter, as recognized today with words such as “Kiss Me” or “Be Mine.” Since the original NECCO candies began production, this type of candy has been copied many times over with more modern sentiments than the original versions offered; however, these candies remain a tradition and mainstay as an iconic Valentine gift, especially among children.

The Valentine’s Day offering of personally composed poems and simple handcrafted cards has taken a back seat to chocolate, red roses, diamond bracelets, and lingerie as tokens of love. It is estimated that revenues from all forms of traditional Valentine gifts have reached the 20B dollar mark, a far cry from the days of an exchange of hand-written poems and simple cards.

The examples of vintage Valentine cards found in the EMAHS archives and dated c. 1916–19 reveal an overwhelming number of cards represented in the collection that were exchanged between girl friends and between girls and their mothers. This may be owing to the fact that women were more apt to save cards as mementos than were male recipients of Valentine cards. Regardless, images of hearts, cupids, and lace were, and continue to be, symbols associated with love and affection on the Valentine’s Day observances to which we have become accustomed in modern time.

Sources:
Andra-Warner, E. ‘The History Behind Valentine’s Day’. northwilds.com 28-01-2021
Blakemore, Erin. ‘The Origin of the Conversation Heart’. mentalfloss.com 13-02-2017
corporate.hallmark.com website access 09-01-2023
EMAHS history archives
Lincoln Library of Essential Information.
The Frontier Press, Buffalo, New York.
Lives of the Saints. Catholic Book Publishing Company, New York, New York.

Theories of the origins of Valentine’s Day vary with references to pagan observances that coincidentally happened to occur during the month of February. Some have tied ancient customs of Lupercalia, as celebrated by the early Romans on February 15th, to current Valentine observances on February 14th. While Lupercalia does not evoke signs of affection, the festival honored shepherds, featuring priests of Lupercus roaming the streets while symbolically and randomly striking those who gathered with a strap. Women in attendance believed that their fertility was enhanced if they were struck by the priests on this festival day.

According to the *Lincoln Library of Essential Information*, as customary in medieval England and France, young people would gather on February 13th, when “Names were drawn by chance from a receptacle, the person whose name was on a slip [of paper] becoming the sweetheart for the holder for the ensuing year.” Other scholars accept the theory that dating back to the 3rd century, St. Valentine, a Roman priest as identified in the book, *Lives of the Saints*, defied Emperor Claudius II by performing nuptials in clandestine settings. Claudius forbade marriage, as he believed that caring for a wife would distract his soldiers from their military duties. St. Valentine was arrested, sentenced to death, beaten and beheaded on February 14, 270 A.D. So much for a fanciful and loving day of acknowledgment! Over two hundred years later, in 496 A.D., according to Elle Andra-Warner, the Feast Day of Saint Valentine was established on February 14th by Pope Gelasius I in honor of the beheaded Saint Valentine and his pursuits. Many years later, in the 19th century, February 14th had become an accepted date to commemorate love.

Over time, the significance of the Valentine’s Day observance has taken on a different quality. Poems became the accepted recognition of affection. Whether originally penned or borrowed from noted poets, the recipient of a poem felt adored and appreciated. So popular were written sentiments that by 1800 cards were being mass produced, with Esther Howland of Boston, Massachusetts, holding the honor of producing the first commercial Valentine cards. The daughter of an established bookshop owner, Esther established the New England Valentine Company in 1850 and is considered by Valentine aficionados as being the “Mother of American Valentines,” as reported by Andra-Warner. Others caught the love bug and began producing greeting cards for a willing public market. According to the website corporate.



Examples of vintage Valentine cards found in the Evergreen Mountain Area Historical Society’s archives and dated c. 1916–19



Evergreen Mountain Area Historical Society (EMAHS) is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to protect, preserve and promote the history of Jefferson County. EMAHS members contribute their time and financial support to collect, preserve and interpret local history, ensuring a legacy that enriches the lives of present and future generations. **Contact EMAHS at 303 670- 0784 or visit their website at EMAHS.org.**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 1, 8, 15, 22, 29
Join us from 4–7:45pm for **Thirsty Thursdays at the Blackbird Cafe**, located at 25940 Highway 74 in Kittredge. There will be weekly entree specials and live music!

February 2
The Spark Plugs - Quattro on the Drums, 7pm at Cactus Jack's, downtown Evergreen. An improvisational trio playing all genres of music with Quattro on drums, it's always a great night! evergreenlivemusic.com

February 2 and 3
Epic Improv Winter—Evergreen Players Improv Comedy, 7:30–9:30pm. Hilarious improvisational comedy performed by our Master Company. EP Improvisers will take suggestions from the audience, or draw on some other source of inspiration to get started. Evergreen Players improv Comedy is totally unscripted! EPiC regularly sells out! Potential adult content, recommended for ages 12+. www.evergreenplayers.org

February 8
Monthly **Evergreen Chamber Mixer** at Bristlecone Shooting, Training and Retail Center at 12105 W. Cedar Drive, Lakewood. \$5 members / \$10 Not-yet members

February 9
Annual Artist Reception at Mountain Home with the Evergreen Design Center, 6–8pm. Mark your calendars and invite your friends to our Annual Artist Reception where we showcase the work of multiple talented local artists. Featured art will be available for purchase for two weeks following the event. There will be appetizers, drinks, raffles, live music, and of course lots of local and original art! www.mountainhome.net

February 14
Art of Wine and Cheese Pairing with Janet Schaus, 6pm–8pm at Center for the Arts Evergreen, 31880 Rocky Village Dr., Evergreen. \$75 evergreenarts.org

February 15 – March 16
Undefined is an exhibition created by the CAE Teen Council and comprised of art-work by teens from throughout Colorado. Opening reception is Feb. 15, from 4 – 7pm, awards presentation at 6pm. Learn more at evergreenarts.org

February 22
Join us for **Evergreen Chamber Connections and Cocktails**, 4:30–5:30pm, at Little Bear of Evergreen, 28075 Hwy 74, Evergreen.



Your Evergreen Chamber is rolling out a day of fun called **Chill Out Winterfest**. For info go to evergreenchamber.org

Ice Skating at Evergreen Lake • 2024 Season
Please check our website (www.evergreen-recreation.com) often for schedule updates, or call the Lake House's Skating Hotline at 720-880-1391. Hours are normally Monday to Friday from 3–7pm, and Saturday to Sunday from 9–7pm. A Season Pass includes skate admission and rentals! Due to the nature of the ice, EPRD cannot guarantee opening days/times or ice quality. There will be no refunds, transfers, or credits. Annual pass: \$200, 10 punch pass: \$120.



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, register www.taspen-shieldingcenter.com under Events or online (Zoom details on website) www.peacework-sinc.co/communitywellness

February 7
Restorative Yoga 5:30–6:30pm. Join Carrie for Restorative Yoga, a slow and restful practice. It is a limited number of relaxing asanas (poses) held longer than those in a yoga exercise class. The use of folded blankets and bolsters supports relaxation and reduces stress in poses that are done without stretching and muscle contracting work. The rejuvenation of Restorative Yoga gives one the chance to turn inward and release the day-to-day tension.

February 14
Honoring Our Inner World Through Meditation 5:30–6:30pm. Class will begin with Activations and Dance to warm up the body; a variety of breathwork will be weaved into class, along with journaling. The combination of activations and breathwork will engage the release of energy before the meditation. Beginning classes will start as a 20–25 minute meditation, which may include a session of deep relaxation as well. Bring a journal and pen, along with a water bottle.

February 21
Block Therapy™ Trauma Release 5:30–6:30pm. 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.

February 28
Women's Circle 5:30–6:30pm. Expand your circle and connect with others in a safe space. Activate your creative power to align with your feminine presence that attracts the situations and relationships that you desire. Sabrina will share powerful practices to embolden you to show up in life to be seen and heard

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).

AWARD-WINNING THEATRE

ep evergreen players

IN THE HEART OF EVERGREEN

2024 SEASON

epic improv COMEDY

A group photo of the Evergreen Players improv comedy troupe. There are ten people in the photo, five men and five women, all smiling and posing in front of a brick wall. They are wearing black t-shirts with the "epic" logo.

We Fund Culture. SCFD

FEBRUARY 2 & 3
Center Stage Theatre

TICKETS & INFO: EVERGREENPLAYERS.ORG

A photograph of a snowy forest landscape with evergreen trees covered in snow.

Conifer Historical Society and Museum

Friday, February 16 – 11am

Conifer Connections
History Discussion Group

MEET YOUR FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS ... LEARN HISTORY - MAKE MEMORIES

The Little White Schoolhouse, 26951 Barkley Road in Conifer
ConiferHistoricalSociety.org **FREE!**

A graphic showing the OSIRIS-REx spacecraft in orbit above a rocky, cratered planet surface.

Conifer Historical Society and Museum

Saturday, February 17 – 1pm

OSIRIS-REx Mission
PRESENTED BY WILLIAM WILLCOCKSON

The Little White Schoolhouse, 26951 Barkley Road in Conifer
ConiferHistoricalSociety.org **\$10/\$12 (m/n)**



Evergreen Players presents

EPIc –

Evergreen Players Improv Comedy

ONE WEEKEND ONLY – FEBRUARY 2 & 3 | DIRECTED BY SCOTT OGLE

In the heart of our community, there’s a beloved improv comedy show named EPIc, that has become a local sensation. EPIc is an acronym for Evergreen Players Improv Comedy. Once each winter, cozy Center Stage Theatre comes alive with laughter as a talented group of improvisers takes the stage, creating spontaneous and hilarious scenes. The show’s charm lies in its interactive nature, with the audience actively participating by suggesting themes, characters, and even joining in on the fun. The performers, the Evergreen Players’ Master Company, seasoned in the art of on-the-spot humor, effortlessly weave these suggestions into side-splitting sketches, leaving everyone in stitches. This local gem has become a go-to spot for those seeking an evening filled with laughter, camaraderie, and the unpredictable magic of improvisational comedy.

Director Scott Ogle is a founding member of EPIc. Scott is also the current Evergreen High School theater teacher. As a special treat, the EHS Improv Troupe will open the show. EPIc is one weekend only, February 2 and 3 at Center Stage Theatre, 27608 Fireweed Drive, Evergreen, CO. Performances are Friday and Saturday at 7:30 pm. Tickets are \$30 Adult, \$25 Senior, and \$20 Student.

The Evergreen Players is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization producing 5 – 10 shows per year in the foothills. Established in 1950, the Players’ mission is to create professional quality theater to inspire, engage and entertain.
720-515-1528 or online at www.evergreenplayers.org
The Players’ mailing address is P.O. Box 1271, Evergreen, CO 80437.

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