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— EXPLORE THE HISTORY OF OUR COMMUNITY ON PAGE 4 —

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## Love Your Pet? Love Your Vet!

*“We do [this job] because we love it. But it’s not easy.”*

Greetings, animal-loving angels of the world! We hope you are enjoying the wonderful weather and making happy memories with your beloved animals. We are honored as your veterinary team to be able to help make more of those happy times possible.

I am truly humbled and grateful to all of our wonderful clients who truly appreciate us, are considerate when we have emergencies, and are kind to us even when it’s sometimes not so easy. Thank you, thank you, thank you. You, and the miracles we see every day, are the things that keep us going, like the Bernese mountain dog with a brain tumor who, with our holistic supplements, is living her best life 2 years longer than expected and still going strong.

Now seems like a good time to remind animal owners in our community that, if you love your animals like family, please love and appreciate your veterinary team, too! As you may or may not know, we are still, post-COVID, in a severe shortage in our profession of both veterinarians and veterinary support staff. Veterinary colleges have increased class sizes and brought new vet schools online, but it will still take several more years for those new graduates to be licensed to practice and help alleviate the shortage. So many people who want to work at a vet’s office seem to think that all veterinary personnel do all day is cuddle puppies and kittens. This appears to me to be one of the primary reasons for high turnover in our profession, as this is truly a hospital, where we have to pay consistent attention to detail, double-check every



*“Our life is ours to make of it what we wish. And I wish for you all to have much joy, happiness, and health, for yourselves, your families, and your animal friends.”*

word on hundreds of prescription labels for accuracy, keep track of countless details, and answer multitudes of questions from anxious pet owners who expect answers to their concerns immediately, no matter how many animals we have in the back room that might be bleeding to death in that same moment.

It is a rewarding career, but it is also stressful and requires a tremendous amount of integrity, compassion, and willingness to have difficult conversations with people, even under extreme pressure. We do it because we love it. But it’s not easy. There is a high rate of suicide and mental health issues among veterinarians. So today I implore you, if you love your animals, love your veterinary team working so hard to help keep

them healthy! Before COVID we often got notes from clients thanking us for our work, especially during the holidays. Since COVID, everyone seems more demanding, stressed, strapped with finances, quicker to leave negative reviews, and less appreciative than in years past. No wonder we have mental health issues in the profession!

Not to worry, we at Aspen Park Vet are not going anywhere; we are tough cookies, and we can handle the pressures, whether we get kudos or not. We are ultimate professionals and will always do our best every day, no matter how stressful the days get. It just seemed like a good time to remind the community just how hard my entire team works, every single day, to provide the outstanding care you come to expect.

With another veterinary practice in the community providing less service due to many of the factors listed above, it is bound to get tougher for those in the profession, before it gets easier. And then when those new vets and vet techs do graduate, we will all have to be patient with them as they learn the ropes of real-life, day-to-day practice. So I don’t see the pressures of the veterinary industry lightening up anytime soon. It’s a good thing we don’t mind working hard!

In conclusion, this is not a complaint, simply an opportunity to remind us all to be kind to each other. We all went through a lot during COVID, and life will never be the same in all industries. Now just seems like a good time to take stock of everything that is going right, how far we have come since those scary dark times, and how it’s time for us to not merely survive, but thrive, with our animal friends. Our life is ours to make of it what we wish. And I wish for you all to have much joy, happiness, and health, for yourselves, your families, and your animal friends. And if I and my team at Aspen Park Vet Hospital can assist you in that journey, we are honored to play a small part. Thank you to all of our wonderful clients, and we have many, who do clearly appreciate us and our dedication! You are the ones who give us the strength and courage to carry on, even on the most difficult days. We appreciate you! And of course, the opportunity to cuddle and love on your precious pets, and share in the joy they bring to the world, including ours. Thank you all, and God bless! DrQ and the crew of Aspen Park Vet 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](http://www.DrQandU.org).



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WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

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connection to **the past****HAPPY TRAILS**

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PHOTOS BY DYAN ZASLOWSKY

Joe Williford at 50 working a roundup riding Pistol. Pistol was born at Joe's Stables and was 17 at the time of this picture.

It is unlikely that most folks have the horseback-riding experience reflected in the above lyrics, regardless of how harrowing a first ride on an unruly mount may have felt. The penchant for riding on the backs of horses has grown over time from the early use in commerce, transportation, migration and sport to the pleasant pastime it is today. Horsemanship has been a lifestyle for many and a form of enjoyment for others seeking a respite from urban living. Those fortunate enough to have been raised with horses know a friendship that lasts a lifetime.

As road improvements allowed for more convenient mountain travel, especially through the Bear Creek Canyon, the Evergreen area became a magnet that attracted travelers seeking the destination resort experience. In response to the popularity of guest ranch vacations, many resorts sprang to life, beginning in the early and mid 1900s. These destination resorts offered amenities ranging from fine dining and entertainment to fishing and horseback riding for those embracing the romance of the West. First among Bear Creek resorts with on-site stables was the Bendemeer Lodge c. 1916, followed by Troutdale in the Pines c. 1920, Greystone Lodge c. mid 1940s and the T Bar S c. 1947. The Brook Forest Inn and Marshdale Lodge also offered trail rides for guests beginning in the 1920s era.

Many children's interest in riding a live mount was sparked by riding stick horses, the penny rides on supermarket mechanical horses, and circle pony rides at amusement parks. While trail rides at area resorts catered only to guests, the opportunity for the public to rent a horse for an hour or two was met with the emergence of public riding stables. The easily accessible Bear Creek Canyon boosted the popularity of area stables for day tourists. Morrison, Indian Hills, and Lookout Mountain were among convenient stable locations, as was the popular riding stable in Kittredge. Owned by Glen Christmas, the stable offered tourists and locals alike the opportunity for a pleasant

trail ride through the area. Sue Tsoupakis recalls her aunts from Denver visiting Kittredge to ride Glen's horses in and around the town. The stable was located near the intersection of Meyers Gulch and Hwy. 74, between the current locations of Kittredge Auto Rebuilders and the Blackbird Café. A barn at the location was transformed into living quarters and currently houses the consignment shop. Glen Christmas raised registered quarter horses and trained cutting horses along with his riding stable venture. The Christmas home was located nearby at the intersection of Meyers Gulch and Columbine Road in Kittredge, at the corner location of the former Babcock's garden and feed center.



Listing in Evergreen phone directory, 1952

The best-known and longest-serving stable in the Evergreen area was Joe's Stables, established by Joe Williford in 1946. Pete Anderson and John Ellis recall the original stable location above the Anderson Station site and below the Church of the Hills on Buffalo Park Road, where a car wash is currently located. Williford relocated his operation farther west on Buffalo Park Road, near the intersection of Valley View Road and



*“When the stranger hit the saddle, Old Dunny quit the earth,  
And traveled right straight up for all that he was worth.  
A-pitching and a-squealing, a-having wall-eyed fits,  
His hind feet perpendicular, his front ones in the bits.”*

— *The Zebra Dun*—Randolph Reynolds, 1890

directly across the road from Evergreen High School, in 1967. Dyan Zaslowsky viewed Williford as a person who defined the consummate cowboy. Joe arrived in Evergreen in 1934 at the height of the guest ranch days and worked horses at both Bendemeer Lodge and Troutdale Resort. He was an early organizer of the Evergreen Rodeo and served as first Board President of the Evergreen Rodeo Association in 1967, helping to ensure the future of the local rodeo.



Joe Williford

Evergreen reflected a different face in the 1950–60s than it does today, as Williford remembered when hitching posts at various Evergreen locations allowed for, and welcomed, riders into town. Williford never lost his passion for horses; and his confidence in and friendship with R.A. (Dick) Porter enabled him to ensure the future of the stable by selling the operation on

Buffalo Park Road into Porter's able hands in 1971. Williford relocated to the Western Slope in 1980, while Porter operated Joe's Stables for many years beyond. Porter ran a successful business at the Buffalo Park Road site from 1971 to 1993 by offering trail rides to the public as well as accommodating the summer campers from St. Anne's in the Hills Camp at Indian Hills and Our Lady of the Rockies Camp, then located on Buffalo Park Road near the Broce Pony Ranch. It was not uncommon to see a “dude string” crossing Buffalo Park Road on sunny summer days, as the route for the trail ride from the stable wound past Evergreen High School and the Evergreen Rec Center's (EPRD) tennis courts, above which the Denver Mountain Park trail began, culminating over the hill at Cub Creek (Brook Forest Road). Porter further diversified his business by supplying horses and guiding services for hunting and fishing trips in the (then) Mt. Evans basin. Dick Porter at Joe's Stables was the man to see for any venture involving horses.

Porter never lacked for company at the stable, as many of the neighborhood kids gravitated toward the stables, which served as their gathering spot. Porter recalled the feeling of being a kid-sitter at times for the neighborhood. Every kid who spent time at the stable was put to work and willingly performed chores for a chance to ride a horse.

Dick Porter's Joe's Stables remains a fond topic of conversation among long-time Evergreen residents. The horse culture will never fade from our mountain area, but hitching posts, and riders on Evergreen's roadways, are a vision of the past.

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**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.**





## I'm Just Sayin'...

June – Father's Day

Jeff Smith owner/publisher

June is, of course, the month of Father's Day. Like Mother's Day, it should be celebrated every day. Fathers play a stabilizing role in the family, and we can often see the results of a family without a father. They often are the provider, the protector, and the family guide. Give your dad a hug this Fathers Day on the 16th.

I have heard comments from several Bailey residents about what a breath of fresh air it is to have Mark Linné as President of the Bailey Chamber of Commerce. He is a good listener, and he cooperates with the other chambers. What a difference!

Be sure and read the article on page 6 about the insurance industry and how it is affecting your homeowners insurance. It is a little scary and will affect your property values in the future.

Do you know who owns the papers you are reading and who is funding the purchase of a large number of Colorado papers? It may surprise you. Since I don't get political in *Your Mountain Connection*, I'll let you do your own research. The National Trust for Local News, NTLN, has bought out the Colorado Community Media group and now owns 24 papers in Colorado, including the *Canyon Courier*. Where did they get the money? BTW, this paper is owned locally by yours truly.

It looks like we may actually be done with the winter weather. It has been wonderful weather lately for all the outside activities we all enjoy up here. Golf, fishing, hiking and many more activities are now available almost daily. ENJOY!

Avalanche – What a great season they had! Yes, we are all disappointed that they lost in the playoffs to the Dallas Stars. But they didn't play that great in the series, and Dallas just may be the better team. I can see them going to the finals for the Cup. Congratulations, Avs!

Nuggets – Same thing for the Nuggets. A great season, with Jokic getting his third MVP. They had a tough time with the Timberwolves and never really hit their stride. The Wolves are a good team, and Edwards really showed what a great athlete he is. They also could get to the finals. Congratulations, Nuggets!

Rockies – Still having another tough season, in spite of their recent 7-game winning streak. Too little too late, I'm afraid. Don't give up, Rockies, you can still have a better season than last year.

Quackadilly says:  
"Dad: A son's first hero,  
a daughters first love."

### NEWS ON THE POSITIVE SIDE

your MOUNTAIN CONNECTION

JUNE 2024 • VOL XXXI N06

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next issue - JULY 2024

July theme:  
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DOGS WELCOME



# Cost of Insuring Homes Skyrockets

REPRINT COURTESY OF THE SUNDAY DENVER POST | SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2024 ISSUE

By Judith Kohler jkohler@denverpost.com

Coloradans looking to buy homes or simply hold onto their property face a barrage of challenges: a white-hot real estate market, high interest rates, and soaring property taxes. You can add surging home insurance rates to the pile of problems eroding the landscape of affordable housing options.

Colorado homeowners are reporting premium increases ranging from about 30% to more than 130% in just the past few years. People are getting the bad news that their policies won't be renewed. Some insurance companies are deciding not to write new policies to cut their risks. And condo owners are getting hit with special assessments and higher dues because premiums are sky-rocketing for homeowners associations. The groups often must resort to nonstandard carriers, which typically charge sky-high rates for lesser coverage.

"We truly have the hardest market that we've seen in a generation for property insurance," said Carole Walker, executive director of the trade organization Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association.

Colorado's not alone. Inflation, higher home costs, and the rising number and severity of natural disasters and wildfires are pushing up insurance costs. The average premium rate increase nationwide in 2023 was 11.3%, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence.

But Colorado's recent increases stand out. The state was one of three with the biggest cumulative change in rates 2018-23. Colorado logged a 57.9% jump, just behind Texas, at 59.9%. Arizona saw a 52.9% increase.

A convergence of factors is driving the run-up in costs, Walker said. Higher inflation is one of those. "You have everything that insurance pays for going up in cost." Building materials are more expensive. Labor costs are up, and labor shortages create delays and add to the expense. Walker said insurance-related lawsuits also push up premiums.

An even larger force is the fallout from increasingly costly wildfires, hailstorms, and other disasters. Insurance companies doing business in Colorado reported the fourth-highest losses in the country for five years, according to data compiled for a 2023 report by the Colorado Division of Insurance.

"I hate to say it, but we all likely need to adjust to higher premiums over the long term," Walker said.

The effects of the mounting risks are being felt by a lesser-known but crucial link in the chain that connects to homeowners: the reinsurance market. Reinsurers are typically large, global companies that provide insurance to insurance companies to help spread the risk. "The international impact of climate change, of increasing climate disasters, the severity of those disasters is causing reinsurers to consider their risk, reduce their exposure or increase their premiums," said Vince Plymell, spokesman for the insurance division. As a result, the effects of hurricanes and earthquakes in other parts of the country or world eventually can show up in a Colorado homeowner's insurance bill, said Jason Lapham, the state's deputy commissioner for property and casualty insurance.

Closer to home are the growing risks of wildfire and hailstorms. Colorado is second in the nation for hail-damage claims and second only to California for the number of homes at risk from wildfires. Colorado hasn't seen the kind of wide-scale refusal of companies to write new policies that California has, but Lapham said there is a trend of some companies not re-upping policies in areas prone to wildfires or other disasters or taking "a pause" on new clients.

"It doesn't mean they're leaving the state entirely, but for those people who are affected, the effect is the same," Lapham said.

State officials don't have a lot of insight into the modeling used by companies to decide which areas are too risky to insure, Lapham said. "We're focused on getting a better understanding and creating transparency, not just for us but also for policy holders."

## WORSE THAN RISING PREMIUMS?

There were plenty of insurance options for Bryan Watts and his wife when they bought a house in Guffey in Park County, west of Cripple Creek. The premium was about \$2,000 in 2019 and rose gradually to \$2,522 for the 2023-24 policy year.

"Things changed dramatically in August 2023 when we received a notice of nonrenewal at the policy maturity of June 2024," Watts said. "I called them and was told it was simply due to wildfire risk."

Watts tried to reason with the company, saying he had done a lot of work to reduce threats from wildfire. He offered to send pictures of his home or show an inspector around his property. But the insurer told him that it wasn't going to cover homes in his ZIP code. "I thought, 'Well, no big deal. I'll just move to another carrier,'" Watts said. "I had no idea how bad it had gotten just in the last year or two."

A broker Watts worked with found only nonstandard insurers willing to cover his home, but the coverage comes at a high price. In Watts' case, nearly \$35,000.

After making calls on his own, Watts found one of the big-name companies willing to write a policy for \$4,800. A hang-up for companies that turned him down was that the nearest fire station is about 16 miles from his home. "They're looking for substations that are 10 miles or closer," Watts said.

Like a lot of people, Watts has a mortgage on his house, which means he needs to carry insurance. "There are going to be very few people who are able to live out here without a mortgage," he said.

Escalating home insurance premiums and companies scaling back coverage are creating angst in the real estate industry. Brian Tanner, vice president of public policy for the Colorado Association of Realtors, said agents are seeing properties lose coverage or unable to find insurance.

"All of this together is incredibly problematic for a market that we already know is strained. We need more available units," Tanner said. "If we have existing residences that cannot secure insurance, that is absolutely a market disruptor."

Real estate agents are scrambling to help clients find coverage, Tanner said. He is concerned about rising rates on people on fixed incomes.

The state is creating an insurer of last resort, officially called the Fair Access to Insurance Requirements, which will be paid for by assessments on the insurance industry. But it won't be up and running until 2025, and applicants must have been turned down by at least three carriers. Walker said the goal is to relieve pressure on the standard carriers by shifting some of the high risks, which the industry hopes will stabilize the market.

"Everybody I talk to is talking about the property insurance issue," said Sarah Thorsteinson, CEO of the Altitude Realtors association, which includes Summit and Routt counties.

Real estate agents working in mountain communities started looking at the effect of wildfire risks on home insurance rates around 2012. That's when the association started education and fire-mitigation programs for members and the public to head off possible mandates it worried could increase costs for buyers and sellers.

Thorsteinson represents property owners as a nonvoting member of the Colorado Fire Commission. She said the association's biggest concern with rising insurance premiums is housing affordability.

The ongoing struggle by homeowners associations to secure insurance has grown tougher, Thorsteinson said.

She has heard of HOA dues doubling and tripling for condo owners in her area after insurance premiums shot up.

"We've seen increases of 100% or more for HOA policies," said Lapham with the state insurance division.

Even before the recent rate increases, it was common for HOAs to have to seek providers in the nonstandard market, also called the surplus lines market. "My guess is that it's more common now than it has been simply because of the tightening of the market generally," Lapham said.

Many of the more well-known insurers have gotten out of the condo business, Walker said, leaving the nonstandard carriers, whose policies are more expensive and have higher deductibles. The more traditional insurers exited in part because of fears around construction-related lawsuits by HOAs.

A 2017 law that requires a majority of homeowners to approve pursuing a lawsuit rather than just the HOA board has done little to coax insurers to write policies for condo buildings. In some cases, HOA boards,

trying to avoid raising dues, have put off infrastructure improvements and maintenance, making insurers nervous about the liabilities, Walker said.

The insurance division offers a toolkit for questions about home and HOA insurance.

The Hiland Hills Townhomes HOA was able to line up a new insurer in 2023 but had to budget for a 30% increase in premiums. Dues went up from \$336 a month to \$460 per unit. "The coverage decreased overall. This year we're budgeting for another 15% increase," said Dmitry Gall, the HOA board president at the Denver complex.

The HOA was able to shuffle some items in the policy to hold down the increase. Gall said the association is cutting back in other areas to help pay the premium.

The HOA where Jon Christianson has a rental unit saw its insurance premium leap from the \$167,000 budgeted last year to nearly \$607,000. His fees doubled, "with a special assessment coming," he said.

A letter from the HOA board that Christianson shared with *The Denver Post* said the previous insurance carrier got out of the Colorado market. Several companies declined to offer bids on a new policy because of the height and age of the three buildings in the complex and the fire suppression system. Then the insurance for Christianson's primary residence rose by 40%.

"I've never filed a claim. I've been with same insurance company for five years," Christianson said. "This is becoming unsustainable."

## A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT

The Marshall fire, which killed two people and destroyed 1,084 homes and businesses, receives a lot of the blame for Colorado's escalating home insurance rates. The Dec. 30, 2021, wildfire raged through Louisville, Superior, and parts of unincorporated Boulder County, leaving more than \$2 billion in property damage in its wake.

Walker said although the Marshall fire was a devastating event, the reasons for rising rates are more complex. For instance, more people are moving into areas along the Front Range that frequently get battered by hail. Walker said Colorado's most expensive hailstorm hit in May 2017, wreaking \$2.7 billion in damage in today's dollars.

But for Alan McDaniel, who has an insurance agency in Castle Rock, the threat of wildfire is the primary obstacle when looking for ways to get a handle on rising insurance costs. "I'm lucky enough that the carrier I mostly use, Farmers Insurance, isn't not renewing policies, but others are," McDaniel said.

He has worked with homeowners around Larkspur and other areas deemed too risky for wildfires by some insurers. "You have to fill out a fire-mitigation plan, take pictures and prove to my underwriter that it's worth taking on because they've done all the steps they need to do," McDaniel said.

McDaniel and other insurance agents have met with fire agencies to learn more about reducing wildfire risks and programs like Firewise, a national program overseen by the state forest service in Colorado. A goal is to lower homeowners' premiums by making changes.

"In light of the Marshall fire, we did get inquiries from some homeowners and associations that were facing increased premiums as well as potentially losing coverage," said Bart Chambers, the fire marshal for the Castle Rock Fire and Rescue Department.

Chambers has met with insurance agents to help them understand the steps needed to better protect homes and businesses. The fire department collaborates with town planners on decreasing wildfire threats and hopes to increase the number of certified Firewise neighborhoods in Castle Rock.

"This is a marathon, not a sprint," Chambers said. "It needs to be maintained and followed through continuously."

Chambers spent 30 years with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

"We saw that on the front end there, and we're seeing it nationally now 20 years later, not only with wildfires but also with natural disasters," Chambers said. "In Colorado, we can look at other people's losses and make it better locally."

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## Dental Implants

BY ALEX ROBERTS



*“Dental implants offer a welcome alternative to dentures or bridgework.”*

A dental implant is a small post, usually made of titanium, that serves as a substitute for the root of the tooth. Titanium is a strong, biocompatible, and lightweight metal. Dental implants are used to replace tooth roots with artificial teeth that look and function much like real ones and can offer a welcome alternative to dentures or bridgework that doesn't fit well.

The dental implant procedure begins with surgically placing the dental implant, or metal “root,” in the jaw. The implant provides the support needed for the new crown once it integrates into the jawbone. Then a connector, called an abutment, is placed that supports a crown on top of the implant in a shade that matches the rest of the teeth.

While implants cannot decay like teeth, they are susceptible to periodontal disease. For this reason, implants need the same care as natural teeth. Regular brushing, flossing, dental checkups, and cleanings will help maintain the bone and tissue that support the implant.

### Patient Commitment

Dental implants take time, and patients need to be willing to invest the time it takes for the healing process to take place. Typically, an implant will take 4–9 months from start to finish.

If a tooth needs to be removed, the first step is the tooth removal, followed by a bone graft in the site where the tooth was. This graft

provides support for the surrounding bone so it shrinks as little as possible and provides the most suitable spot for the implant to be placed. The more bone that is present, the easier the implant placement. After the extraction, the bone is allowed to heal for 3–6 months prior to the implant being placed. After the bone is healed and the implant is placed, 3–4 months of healing is needed for the implant to heal into the bone. In the right situation, an implant may be placed at the same time a tooth is removed, which can shorten the process.

After this healing time for the implant, the fabrication of the tooth can begin. Teeth that are visible in the smile may need a temporary crown prior to the permanent, to ensure the proper gum appearance and esthetics. The process of making the permanent crown takes about a month.

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— THE SASQUATCH OUTPOST —

## The Sasquatch Chronicles

BY JIM MYERS

I heard a saying a few days ago that I really liked: *“For the [Bigfoot] believer, proof is not necessary. And for the skeptic, no proof is possible.”* In other words, in my own case, I am no longer seeking to prove that Sasquatch exists. Why? Because I am completely satisfied that more than sufficient evidence has been discovered, collected, and validated to prove their existence. My main interest, at this point, is rather to understand how they think, how their culture works, how they choose to interact with us, and how to understand their language.

One of the main reasons why we struggle in our understanding of the Sasquatch people is that Sasquatch researchers can be some of the most distrustful, paranoid people in the world. Rather than sharing our research with other, and by so doing move everyone forward in our understanding, some groups would rather remain silent and sit on their data...forever, apparently. I am convinced that there is enough research currently out there that if we could share



*“I appeal to you to keep an open mind.”*

our findings with each other, we could all move forward 10 years in our understanding.

The second half of the statement relates to skeptics, some of whom will never believe in the existence of Sasquatch...regardless of what they hear, see, or encounter. For these people, there MUST be a natural, rational explanation for all supposed Bigfoot eye-witness accounts. For these folks, no amount of evidence will ever be sufficient to convince their doubting minds that Sasquatch exists.

Not personal stories, nor footprints, nor vocalizations, nor photographic evidence will ever be enough, because Sasquatch just CANNOT exist, in their way of thinking. To the skeptics among us, I appeal to you to keep an open mind, because as soon as we stop growing, we start to die. Growing is a lot more fun.

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— EVERGREEN HEALTH INSURANCE —

## Medicare Updates and Considerations

BY ED REGALADO



*“Do not procrastinate on applying for Medicare.”*

Benjamin Franklin has a famous quote, “Nothing is certain except death and taxes.” If he were alive today he may have also added “..and changes to Medicare.” Medicare is a benefit from paying into the Social Security taxes during our working careers. Unfortunately, it is not a “set it and forget it” situation. Every year, as new rules and policies are implemented, it is very important to be familiar with how the new changes may affect your care and costs.

Although we are still only halfway through 2024, we already know of new changes in Prescription Drug Plans set to begin next year. The most notable is the elimination of the Coverage Gap, commonly known as the “Donut Hole.” Medicare beneficiaries will now see an annual cap of \$2,000 on out-of-pocket spending for prescription drugs. While this is great news for many who have expensive drug costs, it is likely going to result in higher costs for Prescription Drug Plan (PDP) premiums. There will also be improved access to generics and biosimilars, so we can anticipate some changes in the specific drug brands that will be included in PDP formularies. One way or another, the insurance companies will be making changes to adjust to the new higher costs. This may be a very important year to verify that your PDP plan is still right for your specific needs and preferences.

When it comes to Medicare Advantage Plans, one of the main concerns is complaints regarding prior approval. When you stay on Original Medicare, your doctor can approve whatever procedures he recommends. This is not the case with Medicare Advantage Plans.

Prior approval is needed from the insurance company. Your doctor is no longer your “gatekeeper” regarding prior authorizations, it's the insurance company. However, be aware recent studies have shown that as low as 30% of denials are overturned on appeal, while prior years' studies have shown up to a 75% approval of appeals. So, if your doctor tells you that their request for prior approval was denied, tell them to appeal the decision. There is a good chance the appeal will be granted. Lastly, most of the problems with prior authorization denials have been in rural areas where there are few doctors and hospitals. This problem has been noted by members of Congress, and they are working on improving the situation.

If you are reading this article because you will soon be aging into Medicare, my strongest advice to you is to not procrastinate on applying for Medicare (you should submit your application to [ssa.gov](http://ssa.gov) 3 months before the month you turn 65) and to decide whether you will choose a Medicare Advantage Plan or a Supplement Plan. There is a lot to consider, but you have a local connection (not an 800 number) that can help you navigate which plan works best for your situation. Feel free to reach out to us at any time. Our services are free, and we are always happy to help.

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



## Chi-Town Stop

Whether you were born in Chicago, or have recently watched the famous show “The Bear” on Hulu, you don't have to go far to try an authentic Chicago-style Italian beef. Chi-Town Stop will give you the experience of what a “real” Italian beef tastes like, right here in Evergreen. Located at 3949 Rt 74 Frontage Road, this food truck specializes in Vienna hot dogs and Italian beefs, owned and operated by Chicago native Laurie Pfister.

The “Italian beef” originated in Chicago in the early 1900s, when Italian immigrants slow roasted top round, seasoned with Italian herbs, thinly sliced, and served on a French roll. It has been an all-time favorite of natives and visitors alike. For those who like a little “heat,” the beef can be topped with a spicy combination of pickled vegetables called giardiniera, a staple for Chicagoans. Don't be surprised, when ordering one of these mouth-watering sandwiches, if you're asked dry? juicy? or dipped? The “dipped” version is reserved for those veterans who know they might need a fork, but would have it no other way.

Laurie is of Greek and Polish descent, and is no stranger to the restaurant business. She was raised in a family who owned

multiple restaurants on the Northwest side of Chicago over a 30-year period. Laurie first moved to Evergreen in 2008, and returned to Chicago a few years later to work as a manager at the United Center. Missing her beloved mountains, she was transferred to the Pepsi Center as a Suite Attendant in 2016. Thrilled to be back in Denver and loving her job at the stadium, this quickly changed in March of 2020 with the start of COVID. During the lockdown, Laurie decided to act on her life-long dream of owning a Chicago-style food truck in her little town of Evergreen. As a single mother, she worked tirelessly making her dream come true. On February 20, 2021, she opened for business at the old Anderson's Market on Rt 73, and became a local favorite for 2 years before moving to her current location. You can now find Chi-Town Stop located between Safeway and Ponderosa at the “Christmas tree” lot, with their new drive-through. She anticipates that her new location will bring back her loyal customers and attract new ones to try her delicious sandwiches. Her loyalty and enthusiasm shows through with everyone she meets, as she strives to treat her customers like “family” in the town she loves.



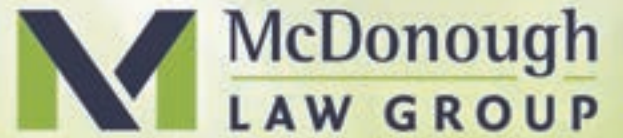
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# SOLAR MAKES SENSE

BY VALDON THOMAS, VALORROOFANDSOLAR.COM

Are you tired of seeing your electric bill rise? If you're a homeowner in the Denver Metro area, it's time to harness that abundant sunshine, reduce your carbon footprint, and save some serious cash. Let's dive in!

## THE SHOCKING REALITY OF RISING ENERGY COSTS

Remember the feeling when you open your bill and you notice it's only getting more and more expensive. Thanks to Xcel's relentless rate hikes, their profits are only growing as our wallets get thinner. Since 2019 alone, energy rates have risen 38%, and are predicted to double in the next 6 years. Part of the reason for this is that Colorado has been mandated to be 80% renewable by 2030, which is only putting the pressure on power companies to shut down their coal power plants. While these companies try to catch up with the demand of building their own renewable infrastructure, the consumers are footing the bill for it. But don't worry, there's a light at the end of the tunnel. Solar power is here to save the day (and your wallet).

## SOLAR MISCONCEPTIONS

**Misconception #1:** Solar is too expensive. People often think affording solar is like

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**Misconception #2:** It's hard to sell the house.

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**Misconception #3:** Hail, warranties, and maintenance are too much to deal with.

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## SOLAR JUST MAKES SENSE

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Roof and Solar, we're passionate about educating homeowners on the bright future solar energy represents. Most families can go solar with no money down, swapping their monthly electric bill for a solar payment that will eventually be paid off. Stop throwing your money away—let's get you on the path to energy independence.



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# A Skeptic's View

*Science is Boring*

BY GARY LOFFLER

*“What [pseudosciences] lack in proof, they make up for in entertainment value.”*

One of the sad truths of the world is that science can be boring. For someone taken to flights of fancy, it can be a real buzz kill. Want to believe in fairies? Science says nope. Elephants with ears big enough to let them fly? Nope. Magical beans that overnight grow tall enough to reach a castle in the clouds? Sorry, again no.

Science is not really boring. The images being returned by the James Webb Space Telescope are astounding. As is typical with better findings from better instruments, they are answering some questions while also creating some new ones. Perhaps the biggest question right now for astronomers is, “Where is all the hidden matter?” Our measurements of the speed and mass of the universe are at odds with each other. There really should be a lot more matter that we can account for to explain the way objects move around the universe. Various dark matter and dark energy hypotheses are being proposed, but none have been proven. These are very interesting to some people, but for most of us they play no part in our day-to-day life; they are just a continuation of mankind’s long fascination with the stars.

Astrology has been around for at least four thousand years and is found in many different cultures. Likely its origins are related to using the stars as a calendar to tell farmers when it is safe to start planting crops. From our perspective on the planet’s surface, certain stars rise above the horizon at the same



time every year. Waiting for a specific star to break the horizon before planting crops helped ensure a good harvest. If the stars can dictate the start of growing seasons, perhaps they can predict other events as well. And maybe not just events, but also people’s personalities and futures. Astrology became a new field of study, alongside astronomy and, to be fair, some early astrologers put a lot of effort into their studies. The positions of the planets and stars were mapped carefully and matched to historic events and human behavior. The lack of any repeatable proof did not deter all of the researchers, and while many abandoned astrology, others made a profit from it. Astrology flourished for centuries.

Unfortunately, widespread belief does not constitute proof. Astronomy (the scientific

study of celestial objects) and astrology (the divination of the future based on planetary motion) are two very different things. Astronomy is predictive, as evidenced by the recent total solar eclipse. We knew where and when the path of the eclipse would travel years before the event. Astrology claims to be predictive but has no evidence to back this up.

Let’s imagine a TV news show that dedicates an episode to astrology vs astronomy. In the interest of being fair they invite an astronomer and an astrologer and give them equal time. Perhaps the host starts with the astronomer and asks about the stars dictating the course of our lives. The astronomer is going to answer in the negative. Astrology has been debunked countless times over the course of its history. So the host moves on

to the astrologer, who cheerfully explains how the stars do in fact tell us important information that can help us guide our day-to-day life. They may go on to cite examples of famous people who were born under a zodiac sign and exhibit characteristics of that sign. The host then returns to the astronomer, who basically can only restate the lack of any evidence of this being true. So the host is going to return to the astrologer, who continues to weave fanciful stories while never presenting any proof supporting those stories. What these tales lack in proof they make up for in entertainment value, and often that is what people remember. The scientist ends up looking like a killjoy, while the astrologer offers hope and insight into the future.

Once an astrologer dismisses scientific facts and starts making up a pseudoscience, there is really nothing holding them back from saying anything. Want to say that the stars are in alignment on June 21st so this will be a good day for spending time with family, go ahead. Want to claim that Friday the 13th is a bad day to start a business because Saturn is in the wrong house, have at it. Want to read someone’s zodiac chart and tell them that the stars show they are clever, trustworthy, loyal, kind, and good with animals? Again, as all scientific fact is being ignored, there is no one to stop you.

Astrology, like many other pseudosciences, continues to exist because people want to believe in it. Some believe on a casual level, but some people take astrology far too seriously and fall victim to con artists and scammers who bilk them out of considerable sums of money. An internet search for “astrologers sued for fraud” returns a considerable number of results.





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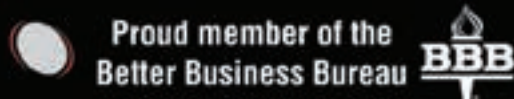
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## Penny for your thoughts



*“[A skunk’s] spray is so powerful it can ward off bears and other potential attackers.”*

# Juba Entertained by Another Species

*(Forgoing Smell)*

BY PENNY RANDELL



Good day to all of our readers out there. It's Juba again, taking on a mammal that is common here where we live

This critter was considered to be a Mustelid and in the same family as the weasel, stink badger, otter, wolverine and marten. Mustelids make up about 66 to 70 species found in nine subfamilies within the order Carnivora. This month we take an in-depth examination of one not too popular, yet easily discovered roaming about. These animals are known for the outstanding development of their anal scent glands, which are utilized for protection from predators. However, it was the early 1990s when genetic evidence proved this animal to be in a separate family along with the stink badger, called Mephitidae.

OK, did you guess the animal? It's the SKUNK! These amazing mammals are related to the polecat as well as others found in the weasel family, and of course the stink badger. Within the family of Mephitidae there are 12 separate species of skunks in three genera. They range from the hog-nosed skunk and the striped skunk to the spotted skunk. Skunk species vary in size from about 15.6 to 37 inches in length. A spotted skunk

weighs in at around 1.1 pounds, whereas the hog-nosed skunk can reach 18 pounds. Each foot has five toes, and the body is a moderately elongated. Their legs are well-muscled, and those toes are a major reason for their success when it comes to digging.

Most skunks have black and white fur, although some are brown or gray, with a very few sporting a cream color. Even from birth all skunks maintain a stripe. They may have a single thick stripe across their back and tail, two thinner stripes, or a series of white spots with a broken stripe. Then again, they can even be albino.

The skunk is considered a crepuscular animal, meaning they are primarily active during twilight hours. They are not out and about during the day or night for the most part. Although they are solitary animals, they often gather in a communal den for warmth, sheltering in burrows during the day in an effort to keep safe. Their powerful front claws are used for digging these burrows. All considered, a skunk maintains a home range of .5 to 2 miles in diameter, with males traveling beyond that during the breeding season. It is recorded that a male can travel up to 5 miles at night looking for a mate. Skunks are known to den up for extended periods of time, but they are not true hibernators in the winter. Still, they do experience a dormant stage when they eat little and are relatively inactive.

During winter as many as 12 females have been found denning together, whereas a male will den up alone. The same den is often used repeatedly by both males and females during a season. This animal has excellent senses of smell and hearing, but their eyesight is poor, being unable to see anything more than 10 feet away. Because of this, they often end up as road kill. Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions (WVC) have increasingly been the topic of academic research to understand the causes and how they can be mitigated. A lifespan totals seven years, with an average of six years. In captivity they have lived up to 10 years.

Skunks mate in early spring; the polygamous males are quite uninhibited and can mate with many. The females usually give

birth in May. She excavates a den before giving birth to anywhere from four to seven kits. Having a gestation period of about 66 days, they are placental, meaning each offspring is encircled by a temporary embryonic sack. After this, a fetal organ develops and protects the kit just after implantation. This development plays a critical role in facilitating delivery of nutrients, plus gas and waste exchange between the physically separate maternal and fetal circulations. At birth skunk kits are both blind and deaf, but covered with a soft layer of fur. They open their eyes at about three weeks after birth and are weaned at about two months. They begin mating around one year of age; until then they stay with the mother for protection. The male is not involved in raising the kits.

Now then, let's take a look at diet. This mammal is omnivorous, meaning they eat both plant and animal substances, often changing their diet with the season. Diets range from larvae, earthworms and grubs to rodents, lizards, salamanders, frogs, snakes, birds, moles and eggs. Besides these, they commonly eat berries, roots, leaves, grasses, fungi and nuts. They frequently feast on garbage left by humans, too. Less often, skunks take on a scavenger disposition, eating bird and rodent carcasses left by cats and other animals. Also, skunks have been found in a pet owner's garage or basement where pet food is stored. They can dig holes in lawns in search of grubs and worms. These critters are capable of using their long claws to break apart rolling logs to find insects that live within them. When hunting for a skunk, it should be remembered that they often leave a pit in the soil in their search for food. In addition, skunks are primary predators of the honeybee.

Skunks are notorious for their anal scent glands that are used for defense. These glands are similar to, though much more developed than, those found in species which belong to the family Mustelidae. Skunks have two glands, one on each side of the anus. This is where the spray is developed as a mixture of sulfur-containing chemicals such as thiols, that have an offensive odor.

This substance is commonly called mercaptans. Too, these thiols contribute to making skunk spray highly flammable. This spray is so powerful it can ward off bears and other potential attackers. Muscles located next to the scent glands enable extreme accuracy when releasing spray, and it can travel as far as ten feet. This spray can cause irritation as well as temporary blindness. A human can be affected by this smell up to 3.5 miles downwind. And before we move on, it should be known that the greatest threat to this critter is the horned owl.

Common in suburban areas, skunks frequently have encounters with dogs and other domesticated pets. If they are killed on the road, their odor will affect anyone nearby. The belief that tomato juice will neutralize the odor is false. These household remedies are ineffective and only appear to work due to olfactory fatigue. In 1993 American chemist Paul Krebaum developed a compound that chemically neutralizes the skunk spray by changing the odor-causing thiols into odorless acids. Here is the effective recipe: 1 quart of 3% hydrogen peroxide, 1/4 cup of baking soda and 1-2 teaspoons of liquid dish soap. This mixture is recommended for dogs that have been sprayed.

Mephitis mephitis, the striped skunk, is the most social skunk and the one most commonly kept as a pet. There are 17 states within America that legally allow this, not including Colorado, however. When kept as a pet, the scent glands are often removed. It is rare for a healthy skunk to bite a human, although it does happen in captivity. Still, this is a rare occurrence. If a human is bitten, it can result in an infection with the rabies virus. Skunks are quite a bit less prominent than raccoons as vectors of rabies. These critters are mostly found throughout most of the United States.

Well, this concludes our abbreviated study of the interesting, yet somewhat threatening skunk. So I, Juba, bring this to an end and invite you to read about another species next month. Have a wonderful summer, and stay alert for any skunks in our mountain areas.



— KELLER WILLIAMS FOOTHILLS REALTY —

# Here's to Fathers

BY LISA PLUMMER SMITH



Here's to all the father figures out there. We all have special people in our lives who serve as role models, mentors, supporters and nurturers. The dads who support their daughters and sons alike and raise them with the same level of energy are special indeed. By teaching them both how to do all the things that may have been gender specific in the past, they empower their children and promote a society where we can all thrive. Through loving their children unconditionally, they provide an environment where a child may live free from fear with the ability to make choices that make them happy. Please join me in celebrating all types of father figures this month.

I learned by my father's example how to treat everyone the same, no matter what they looked like or their socioeconomic level. I was encouraged to talk to people,

show respect and kindness, and follow my dreams. He was a busy trial attorney raising three children by himself, and he would take our calls during the day no matter what he was doing, and this in the pre-cell phone age.

He attended as many of our sporting events and performances as he could manage, and taught us to be self-sufficient and encouraged our independence. He provided guidelines and boundaries and expected us to be responsible. When we made poor choices, we knew there would be consequences.

Our father was by no means perfect, and we saw him fail at times. Through it all he showed us that we were loved unconditionally. The important thing was that he kept on trying, he never gave up and in his later years redeemed himself in our eyes after years of doing the best he could at the given moment.

We lived with our father's mean temper and drinking problem. Over time we saw him struggle and eventually overcome both of these vices. The strong message I received from him was one of personal redemption. I learned by his example the behaviors I would not allow to continue when raising my child. I was able to stop the pattern in my own life, but some of my siblings still struggle from the trauma they experienced as a result of my father's vices.

Trauma is real, and doing the work to overcome the trauma we endure in our lives is a key factor to achieving a happy life. Think of it as an investment in your future, and the future of your family. Each generation experiences different challenges and sources of joy. Joy for me was running track and riding horses; for my older sister it was singing in choir and creating art, and for my older brother it was playing football and downhill skiing. Our father allowed us to experience many paths and choose what passions we were drawn to.

Having a passion in life has been an immense blessing to me. Our father was passionate about mushing sled dogs. Later in life, when he remarried and started a family again, he had the time and energy to devote time to sharing sled dog mushing with my younger siblings. He bought a team of dogs that were housed at our home, and they all took care of them. They mushed in competitive sprint races, traveling throughout Alaska and having amazing adventures with the dog truck.

I went from being the baby to the middle child and enjoyed a very rewarding period in my life and loved being a big sister. To me, all of my siblings are equal, no matter who their mother was. We have shared experiences and unique experiences, depending on what phase of my father's life we grew

up in. Each of us has followed our own path and found things we are passionate about.

Fathers don't have to have all the answers or be perfect. Through my father's unconditional love and his expression of it, I was able to cope with his vices, find my voice and set my boundaries accordingly. I too have a temper, but it comes only after a very long patience, and I know better than to say things that cannot be taken back.

Please celebrate all the father figures, the supportive and loving family members who do fatherly things, no matter what the blood relation. If you are one, please keep it up, live right and have a positive impact on the children in your lives. They need you more than you will ever know, and the value of your caring for them is immeasurable. Thank you.



Savvy Mountain Realtor specializing in Relocations/Horse Properties/Estates  
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## Dogs, Dogs, Dogs

BY CATHY KOWALSKI

*“Keeping your dog on leash and asking if they can meet the other dog would be a better way to meet.”*

Walking your dog should be a pleasant experience for both you and your dog. Getting out on a warm day, or a chilly day if you prefer, and sharing those moments with your furry friend is such a wonderful way to use your down time.

But sometimes other people can make those moments difficult. Jefferson County’s leash law was written to keep your dog and all dogs safe. “Dogs must be on a leash while off the owner’s property unless in a sanctioned off-leash park. Tickets can cost the dog owner \$50 per dog off leash in undesignated areas.”

In the mountain area we have an abundance of wildlife, and dogs off leash can chase the wildlife, endangering the life of the dog as well as the animal they are chasing. Dogs running up to bull elk or a buck can get gored when they get too close. An interaction with a raccoon or fox could result in a quarantine because of the threat of rabies. Our trails can also have venomous snakes – dogs meeting up with these slithering creatures don’t have good interactions!

Walking with a leashed dog eliminates the possibility of your dog running off and getting lost.

Keeping your dog leashed can also

prevent the spread of parvo or distemper by not allowing them to sniff droppings.

Keep in mind that you may have a friendly dog that loves everyone and every dog; however, there are people who are afraid of dogs, and even a friendly dog running up to them can cause fear and stress.

It’s also a good neighbor policy to keep your dog off other people’s property.

A dog walking with their best buddy may not be friendly, may want to protect their human, and may not have a good reaction to your dog running up to them. A dog running up to another dog and getting into a fight can result in a human being bitten while trying to break up the fight. A dog might see a small dog as prey and attack it. Keeping your dog on leash and asking if they can meet the other dog would be a better way to meet. Some people don’t want their dog to meet another dog or even a person.

Dogs off leash running on a road after a squirrel or rabbit can cause an accident as a driver tries to brake to avoid the dog.

People walking their dog may be training their dog during their walk, and a dog running loose can interfere with that training.

Faithfully K9 Service Dogs trains individuals with a disability to train their own dog to

become their service dog. They are required to work with their dog every day, inside and out. Our service dog teams spend many hours walking their dogs, working on their dog staying right next to them in a nice heel. When a dog runs up to them, this disrupts everything they are working on and causes stress to the owner, who already may have a difficult time leaving their house. If their dog is a puppy, it may cause the puppy to become fearful of unfamiliar dogs, which could cause the dog to not be able to complete our program.

Everyone should feel comfortable and safe while walking their dog and not have to worry about other dogs off leash running towards them. Let’s all think about everyone who wants to be out in our lovely area enjoying the environment and keep our 4-legged friends on a leash.



**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](http://www.faithfullyk9.com).



## I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU — BUT THIS ASTOUNDS ME

BY ANNE VICKSTROM

Father’s Day was founded in Spokane, Washington, at the YMCA in 1910 by Sonora Smart Dodd, who had a very cool name, and while hearing a sermon in church on Mother’s Day, had the notion of creating a Father’s Day.

Mother’s Day had been suggested as far back as 1858 by “Ann Maria Reeves Jarvis who was a social activist and community organizer during the American Civil War era.” She saw Mother’s Day as a means to support mothers in raising children to adulthood, after losing eight of her 12 children. About 1873, eight years after the Civil War ended, Julia Ward Howe, “American author and poet, known for writing the ‘Battle Hymn of the Republic’ and the original 1870 pacifist Mothers’ Day Proclamation, was also an advocate for abolitionism and a social activist, particularly for women’s suffrage,” (Wikipedia) wanted Mother’s Day to become a day to promote peace. Alas, it was Jarvis’ daughter, Anna, who in 1908 finally achieved making what we officially celebrate today as Mother’s Day, in honor of her mother.

It took dedication and writing to 45 governors by Jarvis, until finally Woodrow Wilson declared it a national holiday in 1914. It took 56 years to get our country to acknowledge

*“Why it took 56 years to acknowledge the amazing act of motherhood, and 62 years to acknowledge the importance and impact of fatherhood, is beyond my comprehension.”*

the work of a mother, waking each day to put in the effort to make good citizens, to hold us as we cry, to calm our fears, to teach right from wrong, to demonstrate love and dedication.

Sonora spent endless energy, beginning in 1910, to get folks excited to acknowledge Father’s Day. It wasn’t until 1972 that Richard Nixon did something his administration could be proud of, by making Father’s Day a national holiday.

This astounds me. Was it so hard to declare a day for women who carried every person on the face of the earth for nine months and then went through hours of labor to bring a new soul into the world? I think that those with the power to formalize these days of recognition—ahem, old-fashioned men—seemed to not understand what it takes to become a mother. Oh, yeah, they were enjoying a cigar with other fellows who had no idea what was going on in the birthing room down the hall.

Did the same folks who ignored the plea for Father’s Day not recognize that when a man helps create a child, he suddenly has this massive sense of responsibility to make sure that the woman and children in his life have a roof over their heads, clothing on their backs, and food in their bellies?

I’ve often thought how interesting it would be to be a man and father. For a woman, there is no denying that there is a connection between mother and child. We hung out for nine months and have known each other longer than anyone! But good men, who could have walked away, instead insert themselves to connect. They toss balls, braid hair, shop, cook and clean, get down on their knees to hug a hurt away, stand tall to make a child have accountability, hurt when failure comes, and beam when goals are attained.

Being a mother or a father figure is a big deal, not to be taken for granted. Some gave birth, and share DNA with children, while other “mothers” and “fathers” are that neighbor or friend who encourages a child through their young days. They might help with a spelling test, or explain algebra. They teach someone how to cut wood for a perfect corner or add a little salt to make the perfect pie. They are there to listen and encourage a child to discover their true selves and support whoever that child wants to become as an adult.

I’ve written in the past about how lucky our children were to know fathers who were the primary caregivers, not only for their own children, but for my family and others as they volunteered in the classroom, stood

in cold storms to cheer on hopeful athletes, and used their deep voices to quiet a child or make it clear that a tantrum wasn’t acceptable. Most importantly, they demonstrated that it isn’t a matter of gender that makes a good parent. It is the effort, concern, and devotion to helping children make their way in the world that counts.

Why it took 56 years to acknowledge the amazing act of motherhood, and 62 years to acknowledge the importance and impact of fatherhood, is beyond my comprehension.

What I do know is that while my mother is still a part of my life, I get to tell her what all her sacrifices and efforts have meant to me. I hope my father, long passed, knows what his legacy has been for our family – even to those who never knew him.

And when in the future someone suggests that perhaps we should have a special day for sisters, brothers, or just “really cool people.” I hope those in power will allow a special day for them too. It shouldn’t take decades to acknowledge how important people are in our lives.

Happy Father’s Day, and Happy Really Cool People Day!

**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 three children and six dogs.**



COOKING CLASSES WITH...

CASTLES &amp; KITCHENS

## POSTCARD FROM VERONA

BY FRANCESCA ARNIOTES

“So many of the wealthy people of Verona during the Renaissance had frescoes done on the outside walls of their palazzi that the city became known as ‘The Painted City.’”



Being “country mice,” living life in the woods on the side of our mountain, my husband and I appear to have cultivated the habit of vacationing in cities. Not dodging taxicabs in New York City, but the “feels more like a small town” Italian cities like Rome and Verona. At the end of March, I was ready for another course at the language school at which I’ve been studying on and off for fifteen years; and since the grandest international wine event in the world, VinItaly, was scheduled during April, Dean and I decided to spend the whole month in Verona. For tourism, Verona is the city of love. For history lovers, it’s a treasure trove.

While tour groups mass at the entrance to the fictional house and balcony of Juliet, the compelling attractions of Verona are everywhere in sight, the architecture itself a montage of layered and interwoven centuries.

We are absorbed by a Renaissance-era building containing a small museum. We wonder at tools from 9,000 years ago, about the hands that used them. Axes and arrowheads. Neolithic pots; what was cooking in them? Delicate bronze safety pins from 3000 BCE. They look just like modern safety pins!

Our daily walk to school and shopping takes us around a Roman amphitheatre. Verona’s L’Arena, built in 30 CE, is the third largest and the best preserved. It seated 30,000 people in ancient times. It has been in use in some capacity continually during its long life. Since the 1800s it was used for theatrical performances, and in 1913 one

end was transformed into a stage for the performance of Verdi’s opera, *Aida*.

Ever since, it is a world-renowned opera venue. 22,000 people can be seated in the arena now. The scenery of course must be giant sized. The pieces are hoisted up and over the walls by crane each day, one set out and another in, since the operas are performed in rotation, a different one each night. Gigantic roses are part of *The Barber of Seville* set, which will be offered this season along with *Turandot*, *Carmen*, *La Boheme*, *Tosca*, and as always, *Aida*. The roses are staged in one section of Piazza Bra, close to the arena, while another section holds set pieces for *Tosca*, including a gargantuan angel. Enormous Chinese lions dwarf the heavy equipment needed to maneuver them into their staging places outside of the arena wall.

In years when we could be in town during the summer months, we have enjoyed sitting on the stone slabs in the upper tiers. The tickets are inexpensive, the view is fantastic and the acoustics of this arena are perfect, which is one of the reasons for its fame as an opera venue.

“The Hill” is the site of the original Neolithic settlement. The Romans arrived around 300 BCE and expanded the settlement to the existing city center. They built a theatre as well as the amphitheatre, and here, these days, Shakespeare’s plays are performed with popular singers and comedians in the lead roles. Translated into Italian, the Bard’s wordplay doesn’t work, so instead

directors take full liberty to distill the essence of the comedy, find the messages of universal humanity and create wildly imaginative productions.

Piazza delle Erbe is built atop the ancient Roman Forum. On two sides, palatial Renaissance residences and medieval tower houses remain, and one Baroque palazzo sits upon the ruins of an ancient Roman temple. I love the frescoes from 1500 on the “Mazzanti houses.” The artist Alberto Cavelli was from Rome and was influenced by Michelangelo’s Mannerist style. So many of the wealthy people of Verona during the Renaissance had frescoes done on the outside walls of their palazzi, since it was actually less expensive than statuary, that the city became known as “The Painted City.” The fountain in the piazza is ancient, crowned with a Roman statue dating from 320 CE. These days, as in Roman times, this piazza is filled with a daily market, a one stop for tourists to find any type of souvenir.

Adjacent to Piazza delle Erbe on the east side is the Piazza dei Signori, where a statue of Dante Alighieri greets us every morning on our way to school, and I thank him for this beautiful language I am studying. Italians have only spoken a common language since the 1950s, though Dante basically created it in the 1300s. He incorporated some of the many dialects spoken on the peninsula, all of which were based on Latin, into the Tuscan dialect of the time to create an Italian language which was spread through his writing.

Returning to Verona-the-City-of-Love, Juliet’s House is the main reason for Verona to be on the group-tour circuit. While “Romeo and Juliet” is a fictional play based upon prior stories and poems set in various locations, it is intriguing that Shakespeare’s play specifies existing places in and around the city center. The city grasped the opportunity in 1902 to purchase the residence of a family with a name similar to “Capulet” and brand it as Juliet’s House. Romeo’s house is also on the tour circuit, as well as the monastery where the star-crossed lovers sought the confidence of Friar Lawrence. The most intriguing aspect of this is the playwright himself, who was long thought never to have left England, yet clearly was familiar with this city and Italian society of the time. Shakespeare’s “lost years” may well have been spent in Italy. Yet one more example of the value of travel enriching our lives.

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# Evergreen Chamber Ribbon Cuttings and News



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**FOOTHILLS  
4TH EVERGREEN  
COLORADO**

BY NANCY JUDGE

Evergreen will once again be a great place to be on July 4th.

Once you finish the Mount Evans 5K, join Evergreen Parks and Rec and your Evergreen Chamber of Commerce for old-fashioned fun for the whole family at the Buchanan Ball Fields from noon to 8pm. Kids: decorate your bikes for the holiday and join us for a bike parade around the Buchanan ponds for fun prizes. Then the whole family can enjoy live music and short performances by local community groups on the "Home Sweet Home" stage. There will be carnival games, and a beer garden for the

over-21 crowd; and enjoy watching master carvers take tree trunks and carve them into beautiful masterpieces. You will then be able to vote on your favorites and place bids on them when they are auctioned! And did I mention a log-rolling contest? Yup, fun for the whole family. Ticket sales are open now, and it is just \$5/person to attend the event. Day-of pricing will go up to \$15/person. Go to evergreenchamber.org for your tickets now.

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

**FOOTHILLS  
4TH EVERGREEN  
COLORADO**

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# Conifer Chamber Ribbon Cuttings and News

## 2024 Membership Milestones

BY BETH SCHNEIDER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Almost fifty years ago, a group of local entrepreneurs set the wheels in motion for something extraordinary. Since that day in December of 1975, the Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce has been a cornerstone of our community, uniting businesses and fostering growth.

Our mission is simple: to support, promote, and empower small businesses through collaboration, education, and community engagement. We envision a thriving business community through meaningful connections, igniting growth opportunities, and advocating for a healthy economic environment.

Today, we celebrate our members' achievements and their commitment to our shared vision. Though it takes time and investment, becoming a Conifer Chamber member is a great opportunity

to increase your visibility and connection within the community. Join us as we acknowledge our 2024 milestones!

Beth Schneider  
Executive Director  
Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce

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

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

[www.goconifer.com](http://www.goconifer.com)



### 5 YEARS

Nicole Leroux, Medicare Insurance Specialist  
The Paint Bucket at Conifer  
Best Awning Company  
Rocky Mountain Wraps, Inc.  
Jessica Gentry, KW Foothills Realty  
Evergreen Lutheran Church  
Aspen Park Montessori  
The Law Office of Dual C. Schneider, LLC  
SSP Waste, LLC  
Servpro  
Blue Spruce Habitat for Humanity  
Mountain Women In Business  
Tiffany & Christy, RE/MAX Alliance  
Amramp Accessibility  
All Things Vertical  
Blue Leaf Design Build  
Conexsmart  
Joy International  
Geowater Services  
RPM Agency, Inc.

### 10 YEARS

Spectrum Electric, LTD.  
Boys & Girls Club of the High Rockies  
Macaroni Kid Evergreen/Conifer/Bailey

RE/MAX Alliance  
Scripps, Taylor & Associates, PC  
1st Colorado Roofing, LLC  
Smarter Women Colorado  
Conifer Physical Therapy  
Conifer Jazzercise Center

### 15 YEARS

Aspen Peak Cellars Winery  
Bartojay Carpentry, Inc.  
All-Phase Plumbing & Heating  
Congregation Beth Evergreen

### 20 YEARS

Lone Rock Veterinary Hospital  
Mountain Realty & Development  
Paul Ogle

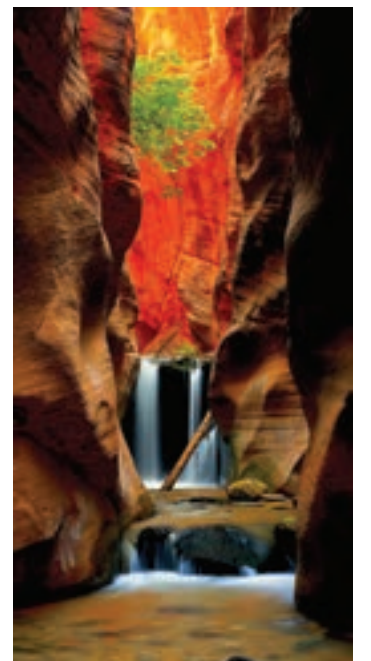
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### 45+ YEARS

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Member Since 1975  
Beth Schneider  
Executive Director  
Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce

## WE SUPPORT LIVING LOCALLY



## Cover Artist David Julian

*“Now more than ever, we need to cherish and raise awareness of what we hold dear.”*

As a photographer with a deep love for the natural world, David Julian strives to capture the beauty of our world for those who don't have the opportunity or ability to experience it personally and also so future generations can continue experiencing pride and wonder for this great land. David decided to embark on a life of adventure,

traveling full time across the United States, exploring and photographing the American wilderness and paying his way through sales of his images. Each photograph tells a story of time and place along that journey, and he's excited to share those great adventures with you.

[www.davidjulian.com](http://www.davidjulian.com)



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## June 2

**Wild Aware's Awe & Wonder Walk.** Join Wild Aware volunteers and others from 9am to noon on a casual spring Awe and Honor walk. Your guide, naturalist and ecotherapist Kimberly Rose, will guide participants to listen and observe with awakened senses and learn more about local wildlife and plant kin. Learn ways to protect local flora and fauna and discover that finding awe is easy when we shift our ordinary perception to wonder and curiosity. Limited capacity, location TBD. <https://wildaware.org/upcomingevents>

## June 6, 13, 20, and 27

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!

## June 7

**Buchanan Park family movie night!** Join us for FREE outdoor movies at Buchanan Park Field from 6-11pm. Food trucks, games, music, and more! Bring your own blanket or chair. June's movie is *Mission Impossible*.

## June 7-30

**StageDoor Theatre's Adult Company Presents *Sweeney Todd, The Demon Barber of Fleet Street***, music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, book by Hugh Walker, musical direction and direction by Tanner Kelly. Performances Friday and Saturday at 7:30pm, Sunday matinee at 2pm. Tickets \$35. Discounts available for seniors, students, and educators. For tickets and information contact StageDoor Theater at [www.stagedoortheatre.org](http://www.stagedoortheatre.org). *This show is rated PG-13, is not suitable/recommended for young audiences.*

## June 7, 14, 21, and 28

**Cactus Jack's** is always the spot for the best live music in Evergreen. Enjoy outstanding live music every Friday, from 8-11:55pm. [evergreenlivemusic.com](http://evergreenlivemusic.com)

## June 8

**CAE Evergreen Sculpture Walk 2024 Installation Day.** In 2023, Center for the Arts Evergreen entered a new era of art in Evergreen. We welcomed Sculpture Evergreen to the CAE family. The second weekend in June the 10-14 new sculptures will be installed throughout Evergreen as part of the Sculpture Walk. Join us on Saturday, June 8, when the sculptures will be installed around town. A fun way to watch artists and crane operators in action!

## June 13

**Father's Day Leather Project.** Join us for this special Father's Day edition of ART BAR at CAE! Kristin Heidbreder will guide you in crafting a unique piece of leather art that's perfectly giftable or a cool keepsake of the time you spent creating. What's included: Step-by-step project instruction, 2 glasses of wine or beer, 10% off items in the gift shop on the night of your class. Details: \$50/person, 6-8 pm in either the CAE classroom or gallery. Wear apron or clothes that you don't mind getting dirty. <https://evergreenarts.org/artbar/>

## June 14

**Come celebrate the America 250!** Marker Dedication at 1pm at the Veterans Commemorative Walk memorial in Buchanan Park! Sponsored by Evergreen Rotary, American Legion Post 2001 and the Mountain Rendezvous Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

## June 15

**Evergreen Rodeo Community Pancake Breakfast**, 7-10 am, Main Street Downtown Evergreen. Adults and youth \$10, seniors 60+ and active or retired military \$8, kids 6 and under \$5. Enjoy pancakes, sausage, orange juice, and coffee, hosted by Blue Spruce Kiwanis. All proceeds from this breakfast donated to charities that help children in our mountain community. [www.bluesprucekiwanis.org](http://www.bluesprucekiwanis.org)

## June 15, 16

**Evergreen Rodeo**, return to the Old West, a Colorado mountain tradition, Father's Day weekend. Start Rodeo weekend off right by attending the Annual Evergreen Rodeo Parade. [evergreenrodeo.com](http://evergreenrodeo.com)

## June 21

**Friday Cafe**, 11:30 am-2:30 pm, at Christ the King Church, 4291 Evergreen Pkwy., Evergreen. This luncheon is for seniors who would like to have a scrumptious luncheon along with music and an enjoyable afternoon out. The lunch menu changes each month. Great fellowship, fun, and entertainment will be in store! [seniors4wellness.org](http://seniors4wellness.org)

## June 22

Keep your hard-to-recycle items out of the landfill. Save your electronics, old paint, block styrofoam, appliances, glass, toothbrushes and toothpaste tubes, old markers and pens, plastic film, and car batteries. Evergreen Sustainability Alliance will take them off your hands at our June 22nd, **Spring Clean Recycling Event, held at the Evergreen Lutheran Church** from 10am-2pm. Donations are greatly appreciated. TVs are an additional \$50 given the day of to the electronics company. Contact [info@sustainevergreen.org](mailto:info@sustainevergreen.org) with questions.

## June 23

**Sips for Scholarships, BBQ and Brews, at Fountain BBQ in Evergreen**, from 1-4pm. Gather with our community as we raise funds for Bootstraps! Our finger-licking menu will feature pulled pork, smoked chicken, and Polish-style sausage. Alongside your proteins we will have baked beans, potato salad, and coleslaw. Save room for the Texan pecan cobbler! Wash it all down with a tasty beer or non-alcoholic iced cold drink. Keep your toes tapping to live music as you connect with local friends and family! This is a fundraiser for Bootstraps, a local non-profit that provides scholarships and interest-free loans to our mountain-area high school seniors so they can pursue their educational and career dreams! [BootStrapsinc.org/events](http://BootStrapsinc.org/events)

## June 27

**Evergreen Chamber Connections and Cocktails**, 4:30-5:30pm at the Blackbird Cafe and Tavern, 25940 Hwy 74, Evergreen. Join new members, ambassadors, and seasoned members alike to network in a casual setting. [evergreenchamber.org](http://evergreenchamber.org)

## June 28 and 29

**Annual DCVR Community and Elk Creek Highlands Neighborhood Garage Sale.** It's that time of year to start decluttering your home and getting ready for our 2nd annual Deer Creek Valley Ranchos community garage sale. This year we are teaming up with Elk Creek Highlands Neighborhood to make it even BIGGER & BETTER! The dates for this year's Garage Sale will be Friday, June 28th, and Saturday, June 29th, from 9am-2pm. Check out the DCVR Art Barn for unique and beautiful creations by local artisans. Follow the banners and road signs on CR 43 to find the sale. For more information on the sale visit our website, [DCVRNeighborhood.com](http://DCVRNeighborhood.com)

## June 29

**Join Evergreen Park & Recreation District for a Family Campout!** This overnight camping event is open to all ages and will take place on Buchanan Park Field. There will be an outdoor movie, concessions, and food trucks. Lights out at 11pm. Open to all ages, \$35 per camping plot. What's included: the movie *Migration* at 8pm, s'mores kits and firepits, EPRD's Rolling Recreation Trailer with games and activities; concession and food trucks will be available with goods for purchase. (Tent-only event. Personal grills are not permitted. Pets must be leashed at all times.) Check-in begins at 5pm and closed at 7pm. <https://www.evergreenrecreation.com/467/Family-Campout>

## June 2024



**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-shalingcenter.com](http://www.taspen-shalingcenter.com) under Events or online (Zoom details on website) [www.peaceworks-inc.co/communitywellness](http://www.peaceworks-inc.co/communitywellness)

## June 5

**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.

## June 12

**Dru Yoga** 5:30-6:30pm. Dru has a focus upon maintaining a healthy spine, through activational movements in the beginning

of class and throughout a Dru session. A typical Dru Yoga class includes Energy Block Release Sequences, classical Asanas (yoga postures), Pranayama (breath work), Mudras (gestures), positive affirmations, and also empowering visualizations. Dru classes are tailored to the student and their individual level, which makes it great for everyone!

## June 19

**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.

## June 26

**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](mailto: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](mailto:news@yourmtnconnection.com)).



## Come Celebrate the America 250!

Flag Day, June 14th

**Marker Dedication at 1pm on Flag Day, June 14th**, at the Veterans Commemorative Walk memorial in Buchanan Park! Sponsored by Evergreen Rotary, American Legion Post 2001 and the Mountain Rendezvous Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

## Wild Aware Brings Volunteers Together Again

**W**ild Aware, an Evergreen, CO, non-profit organization, is actively recruiting volunteers, new and old, for their *Last Friday Coffee*, a monthly event that takes place on the last Friday morning every month until further notice. This month's gathering will begin at 9 am on June 28, at the Evergreen Bread and Cocktail Lounge, 1260 Bergen Pkwy, Evergreen, CO 80439.

Wild Aware volunteer coffees are fun get-togethers. Attendees get to know each other in a casual environment, sharing wildlife stories, learning the many ways to get involved with Wild Aware, and making new friends. Volunteer co-leaders Sara Barnas and Melanie Mills coordinate these monthly socials to create friendships with like-minded animal lovers, gain knowledge

about our wildlife neighbors, encourage participation in activities and events, and build loyalty among volunteers.



For more information, contact Sara at [barbedwire@wildaware.org](mailto:barbedwire@wildaware.org) or Melanie at [melanie@wildaware.org](mailto:melanie@wildaware.org).





# Congratulations to the 2024 Bootstraps Award Recipients

**THANK YOU TO ALL THE INDIVIDUALS, BUSINESSES, AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS WHO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR THE SCHOLARSHIPS AND LOANS WE AWARD TO OUR LOCAL STUDENTS! WE COULD NOT DO OUR WORK WITHOUT YOU!**

The Bootstraps Board of Directors, parents of students, generous supporters, and community members celebrated the **2024 Bootstraps Awards Recipients** at the Evergreen Lake House on May 22nd. Each recipient received special recognition and had the opportunity to meet and thank the people who are responsible for helping them pursue their educational dreams. It was a fabulous gathering celebrating our local students and the Bootstraps supporters!



For more information about Bootstraps, visit our website [www.BootstrapsInc.org](http://www.BootstrapsInc.org) or call 720-618-8924

**THE RECIPIENTS OF AWARDS FOR THE CLASS OF 2024 ARE:**

- Adilyn Avery - Conifer High School
- Trace Avery - Conifer High School
- Chloe Bender - Evergreen High School
- Sam Billups - Evergreen High School
- Finley Bowen - Conifer High School
- Fletcher Brown - Evergreen High School
- Sean Butler - Conifer High School
- Trinity Cade - Clear Creek High School
- Zachary Gillings - Evergreen High School
- Corbin Hall - Clear Creek High School
- Ily Hardey - Platte Canyon High School
- Benjamin Harrison - Conifer High School
- Reid Hollis - Conifer High School

- Sarah Mack - Conifer High School
- Dale Manifold - Clear Creek High School
- Simone McClellan - Evergreen High School
- Kariana Mitchem - Evergreen High School
- Gregory Oramas - Platte Canyon High School
- Kathryn Parivar - Conifer High School
- Rose Rogin-Roper - Evergreen High School
- Henry Rutter - Conifer High School
- Stellan Stewart - Evergreen High School
- Samantha Stojanov - Evergreen High School
- Leona VanDyke - Platte Canyon High School
- Vega Verkaik - Evergreen High School
- Aidan Voigt - Evergreen High School

Thanks to our donors and supporters, we awarded over \$380,000 to the 26 students we just celebrated, and 25 continuing students. The volunteers who serve on the awards committee worked thoroughly and thoughtfully reviewing each application. Each candidate's application included four essay questions, teacher recommendations, academic information, extracurricular activities, community service, and work experience. Awards are made based on merit and financial need.

**The mission of Bootstraps, in partnership with the community, is to support continuing education for promising students in the mountain area, with an emphasis on financial need.**

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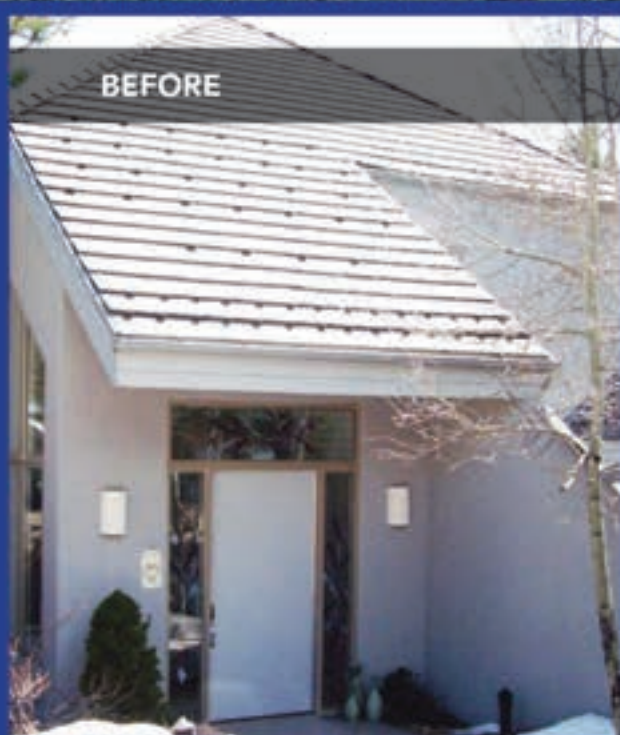




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