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Longevity

“Sometimes you can do everything within your power and something still goes terribly wrong.”

“There is tremendous peace in knowing you paid attention, asked the questions, looked beneath the surface, and did everything you reasonably could.”

It started with Dixie. She was declining. We knew that. At her age, every additional day felt a little bit like borrowed time. But the day she went down, I was unfortunately in Craig, Colorado. I wasn't there. And somehow, that made losing her even harder.

Shortly afterward, Sugar started telling me in her own quiet way that something wasn't right with her either. Maybe she was more bonded to Dixie than I realized and had a broken heart. She was losing weight, and I knew we were going to have to make some decisions about her quickly. Three weeks after Dixie died, I drew blood on Sugar, planning to run it to figure out what was happening. I never got the chance. The next day, I found Sugar with a broken leg. There was nothing I could do to fix what had happened, and I had to euthanize her. Our two oldest horses were gone in less than three weeks.

Surely that was enough.

The following weekend I was away again, this time at the koi show, when my staff called to tell me Wasabi wasn't doing well. Wasabi was my Mastiff-Rottweiler mix, but that doesn't begin to explain who she was to me. She was the love of my life.

At first, I brushed off the concern. There was simply no way anything could be seriously wrong with her. I had taken her to the dog park the Thursday before I left. She was fine Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Then Sunday morning my staff sent me videos. She was not fine.

X-rays showed that her heart looked enormous. I packed up and rushed back to the hospital. When I walked in, Wasabi wagged her tail because we were home, despite having her muzzle in an oxygen mask, because that was the only way she could comfortably breathe. Her people were back. She was happy to see us.

I leaned over her and promised her nothing was going to hurt. And I kept that promise. I gently sedated her and withdrew more than 100 milliliters of fluid from the sac surrounding her heart, desperately trying to give her heart room to work again. Despite everything I knew how to do, Wasabi died unexpectedly, right there on the table.

And that brings me to something important about longevity.

I can preach about longevity medicine all day long. Nutrition, healthy weight, dental health, exercise, mobility, supplements, preventive testing, environmental exposures, emotional well-being, and early detection all can potentially give our animals longer, healthier lives. But longevity is not a guarantee. Sometimes you can do everything within your power and something still goes terribly wrong. Wasabi taught me that in the most painful way possible.

But because we cannot control everything doesn't mean we shouldn't try. Quite the opposite. When we lean into all the different aspects of longevity, we give ourselves, and our animals, something valuable. Maybe it is a little insurance. More importantly perhaps, it is assurance: knowing we are doing everything reasonable within our power to give that animal the healthiest, happiest, and longest life possible.

That matters while they are here and, believe me, it matters when they are gone.

Longevity isn't simply about bloodwork or finding disease earlier. We need to look at the whole animal and the whole relationship. How

is your pet eating, moving, sleeping, thinking, and playing? How healthy are their teeth and gut? Are there subtle changes you've noticed but haven't known what to make of? Are they fulfilling the purpose they have in your life, and are we giving them what they need to thrive in theirs?

That is why we now offer comprehensive Longevity Assessments at Aspen Park Veterinary Hospital. But you don't have to start with an appointment. We have a QR code on our website that takes you to a longevity self-assessment you can do at home with your pet. Take a few minutes, answer the questions honestly, and look at the different pieces contributing to your animal's health, happiness, and longevity.

You may finish feeling reassured that you and your pet are doing great, or you may discover something you hadn't considered. If the assessment leaves you thinking, "Maybe we should look a little deeper," I am here for you. Our Longevity Assessments examine your animal's health, lifestyle, and relationship with you; then help you develop an individualized plan for their future.

I wish I could tell you that doing everything right means you will never experience what I did with Dixie, Sugar, and Wasabi. I can't. No veterinarian can honestly promise that.

What I can tell you is there is tremendous peace in knowing you paid attention, asked the questions, looked beneath the surface, and did everything you reasonably could.

None of us can guarantee how much time we get with them. But we can do everything we can with the time we have.

Thanks for reading, and God bless you and the animals, 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.

— KELLER WILLIAMS FOOTHILLS REALTY —

Is it Just October, or am I a Witch?

BY LISA PLUMMER SMITH

“He will hear my call a mile away. He will whistle my favorite song. He can ride a pony backwards. He can flip pancakes in the air. He’ll be marvelously kind. And his favorite shape will be a star. And he’ll have one green eye and one blue.”—Practical Magic



Bring on all things October, crisp mornings, changing leaves, the magic of Halloween, and the celebration of Samhain. We all have a bit of magic in us, built from resilience, imagination, and our ability to create positive change. We carry the power to change our lives, and acts of kindness change our world.

I cannot wait to escape and see *Practical Magic 2*. You might dress up and go see it with friends and romanticize its witchy autumn aesthetic. I grew up watching Samantha and Darrin on *Bewitched*, yet literally could not watch *The Wizard of Oz* as a child. That green witch and her flying monkeys terrified me! The first Broadway musical I took my daughter to was *Wicked*, and I will never forget how thrilled she was. The transition back to school and a change of seasons for me brings with it a sense of melancholy. I’ve done a bit of research, and want to share a few easy things we can all do to boost our spirits, immunity, lower stress, and feel better each day. Research shows that reliving positive memories has healing benefits to our bodies. I was blessed to spend a day with my family at the beach this summer. The memory of the time we spent together laughing, sculpting in the sand, playing in the waves, floating in the ocean, and soaking up the sun is a memory that brings me to my happy place. I also visited my best friend. We did day hikes, then pampered ourselves by visiting a Korean

spa. It was an empowering experience to bond among other naked women in a safe space. This was a lesson in body positivity and total acceptance for me. Women of all ages, shapes, and sizes shared space, normalizing our real bodies. Spending time with loved ones and enjoying nature impressed me anew of the healing powers of water, air, and sun. Isn’t it interesting that historically women who lived alone were considered a threat, and some were accused of being witches? Their independence was a direct threat to a patriarchal society which required the submission of women. I’ve come to realize that perhaps I am a forest witch; I walk in woods each day to feel grounded. You might take a stroll through the woods or enjoy a hot bath with Epsom salts to relax at night; treat yourself and honor the body that carries you through life. Decades of research show that spending time in forests or near bodies of water help us deal with the stressors in our lives. It lowers cortisol levels, heart rate, and promotes a sense of well being and relaxation. It releases serotonin and

dopamine, and reduces negative thoughts. Time spent in nature restores focus, increases creativity and empathy, and evokes feelings of awe. We can experience increased feelings of awe through nature, art and music, and human goodness. Feeling awe activates parts of our brains that decrease ego, negative self talk, and repetitive worrying; and can even boost generosity. Break it down and train your brain to seek small “glimmers” each day in your surroundings, and notice how it makes you feel over time. Throughout history, humankind has dealt with stressors. Ancient humans dealt with short term threats from predators, starvation, and injuries. The body evolved to handle immediate crises through release of adrenaline and cortisol. Back then, these periods were usually followed by periods of safety and abundance. Today we deal with the continuous daily overload (or deregulation) of our nervous systems, and need to find positive coping mechanisms for our bodies. This continuous overload can actually change our brain chemistry if we don’t take steps to protect our nervous system. A healthy nervous system releases small amounts of dopamine each day. Relying on artificial stimulants and substances for dopamine releases can be harmful. Over time the nervous system can be altered, and everyday things which brought us joy no longer bring us pleasure. During periods of instability people seek ways to be grounded. Practices of modern witchcraft such as worshiping the moon phases or using crystals and tarot cards provide us daily rituals to provide a sense of control over our lives. I stir my tea clockwise to draw something to me and counter clockwise to let go of something that no longer serves me. I set intentions with the

new moon, and look forward to enjoying the full moon on a clear night. These are manageable things we can do to nourish our bodies and our minds. You might try calling an old friend or relative to talk about a happy memory. Listen to some soothing music while you get ready to leave the house. If you find yourself waiting for something, use that time to think of three things you are grateful for. Focus on a positive event from that day, and savor it. Perhaps practicing one of these rituals will bring a bit more magic into your life. All the best, Lisa.



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ALPINE RESCUE TEAM

ELAINE HAYDEN | HISTORY EVERGREEN

Of the many benefits derived from living in the Evergreen community, two top the list: 1) proximity and accessibility to the high country and 2) having the advantage of a skilled rescue team in our back yard.

The majority of those who enjoy the outdoors at altitude do not require assistance to return home safely. But thankfully, for those in distress situations outdoors, there are experienced and dedicated folks to search, assist, and often rescue them. That comes in the form of the Alpine Rescue Team (ART). In its 66 year history, the dedicated group of volunteer responders at ART have provided assistance with expertise and service, that is always free of charge. The all-volunteer team is responsible for their own equipment, training time, and transportation; never at the expense of those they serve. Their pursuit is not for accolades, as their reward is completion of a successful mission.

The origin story of ART is not merely a statement of purpose, but a total view of the values and mission of the team. As stated, “The mission of Alpine Rescue Team is to ensure all-weather, 24/7, search and rescue response, preparedness, community education, coordination, and leadership to Colorado’s residents and visitors. Alpine Rescue Team responds to emergencies such as avalanches, lost hikers, high altitude/vertical rescues, and for other situations in Colorado’s mountainous terrain.”

An incident that occurred over 65 years ago sparked the realization that a need existed for a coordinated response team, and subsequently marked the birth of ART. As reported on the ART website, a group of climbers was in need of evacuation after a climbing accident on rugged rock in Turkey Creek Canyon. Unfortunately, due to a failed piton, one of the four climbers had fallen to his death. Tragic indeed, but through the rescue efforts of volunteer fire departments from Indian Hills, Idledale, and Evergreen, three climbers were brought to safety. It was following that disastrous incident that awareness was raised as to the need of more highly-trained and equipped rescue personnel, that could respond to high-rock rescues and evacuation services. Early on, the areas in Clear Creek, Bear Creek, and Turkey Creek Canyons were the focus of these services. Current mission capacity includes the entire Front Range, all of Colorado, and Western states, as needed. Encouraged by the established Rocky Mountain Rescue Group, ART was

formed with the backing of the area volunteer fire departments. Two members from Evergreen, Idledale, and Indian Hills departments constituted the first meeting of what would become the highly specialized rescue team of ART. Nine charter members of the group, with Rozzie Clark, Jr. from Evergreen Fire at its helm, organized and encouraged the group to expand and specialize. Two charter members: Gordon Stucker, former mountaineering trainer of G.I.s at Ft. Carson and Dave Pratt, former member of a European rescue team, brought early expertise and direction to the emerging team. As more highly-capable members surfaced, ART officially disassociated from the various fire departments, and adopted by-laws and incorporated as a non-profit organization in February of 1960. The nine charter members planted a seed, and set in motion a direction that endures today. Joining Stucker and Pratt were Rozzie Clark, A. Lambert, W. Pickett, R. Perkins, R. O’Neal, E. Lines, and W. Dake.

By 1962, ART became the second Colorado mountain rescue team to join the Mountain Rescue Association. With an active membership, rich in dedication, the masterpiece that is ART was rapidly becoming a recognized asset in rescue efforts. An association with Alice and Roy Holubar of Boulder allowed ART to access specially designed mountaineering gear, including sleeping bags and down-filled clothing made by Alice Holubar for the team. The Holubar brand remains a respected mountaineering equipment supplier today.

The headquarters of the newly-formed organization were housed in a building on property donated by ART Board member, Byron Angevine, located on Independence Trail above downtown Evergreen and affectionately named “The Shack.” The facility served the team well, as gear storage and a home base until 1989, when membership recognized the need for a larger, more easily accessible facility. Grants, donations, and hard work enabled the construction of the current facility located on Rainbow Hill Road, next to Foothills Fire Rescue building, that still carries the moniker of The Shack. In 2008, a private donation was given to ART for the expansion of

headquarters at the Rainbow Hill Road site, that currently houses rescue vehicles and equipment and is humbly referred to as “The Shed.”

The current organization aligns itself and coordinates with Clear Creek County, Gilpin County, and Jeffco emergency services as needed, through the benefit of an agency memorandum of understanding (MOU). Emergency calls are received by Clear Creek/Jeffco dispatchers as well as Gilpin County dispatch, then transferred to Alpine Rescue mission coordinators; members that are on duty 24/7. Once a call is determined to be an active mission, an orchestrated effort with a second-tier mission coordinator is activated to manage communications, further dispatches, and all activity from home base to ensure a safe and complete mission response.

All missions are important, noteworthy, and receive equal levels of response. Each team member holds a memory of missions that not only bring satisfaction, but a learning experience as well. Paul “Woody” Woodward is a familiar name that emerges when conversations turn toward Alpine Rescue. Woody has been a valued fixture with ART since joining the team in 1988, and remains a vital component as a second-tier mission coordinator who mans radio communications, dispatches, and phone calls. In speaking with Woody, he has a vivid recall of a 2025 mission on Torrey’s Peak. While in phone contact with two lost hikers, Woody was successful in directing the hikers back on to the summit trail. Shortly after summiting, the hikers were hit by lightning that prompted a quick real-time response by several rescue teams. Woody was still on the phone line with the hikers at the time, that resulted in a quick response of 30 rescue responders answering the mission call. Joining ART in response in the coordinated effort were teams from Vail Mountain Rescue, Clear Creek Sheriff, EMT and Fire Authority, Flight for Life, Colorado SAR (search and rescue) Association, Air Force Rescue Coordination Center, and the Colorado Army National Guard. As reported, the Colorado Army National Guard provided a Blackhawk rescue helicopter that performed the highest elevation nighttime helicopter rescue recorded in the state, using a hoist at an elevation of 14,200 ft. The thin air at altitude is the challenge for high-elevation helicopter rescues. Both hikers survived their ordeal and were lifted to safety in a noteworthy feat, thanks to the coordinated efforts of the multiple rescue teams and the dispatch efforts of ART.

Technology has changed the response time for rescue teams in that cell phones are a valuable and far-reaching tool in summoning help. Integration of the actual “boots on the ground” responders, and the advanced technology in communication, is critical in the rapid response time in any search and rescue mission.

The ART does not receive funding from any government agency or property tax revenue. Since its establishment, the team operates through private donations, donations submitted year around through the Colorado Gives Foundation (coloradogives.org), in addition to a percentage of the revenue from the Colorado State Parks Pass (available when renewing vehicle license plates). Recent years’ data has shown an average of over 125 calls annually to ART for search and rescue missions. That translates to many ART volunteer hours that are delivered to the public with no set fee or charge of any kind. The reward and payment is a safe and successful search and rescue mission. Current ART membership is listed as 90, 15 to 20 of which are administrative memberships. An indication of the appeal of becoming an ART member is reflected in the 2025 recruitment numbers that reached 150 respondents, of which ART was able to select 15 members from the rank. Applications are received from areas both inside and outside of Evergreen, and all are considered equally. The process of becoming a prospective member of ART is not an easy task, as it involves an initial interview session, a 9-month training period that follows guidelines of proficiency set by the Board, then a final vote by the membership. The highest standards are adhered to, ensuring the reputation and effectiveness of the team.

What began as a local fire department call for a rock rescue in 1960, has evolved into a premier team of skilled and dedicated volunteers. It is with pride, deep respect, and admiration that our community can continue to call Evergreen home to the Alpine Rescue Team, a team of women and men who answer the call to service, from a place where egos don’t exist and courage runs high.

Sources:
Alpine Rescue Team website. alpinerescueteam.org
Thomas, Ann. Interview 2026.
Woodward, Paul “Woody,” Interview and photo, 2026

History Evergreen is a newly formed non-profit organization whose mission is to acknowledge the rich history of our community and to foster an appreciation of historic preservation. Through publication of books, articles, social media and pamphlets we endeavor to maintain the historic record in a sustainable and inclusive manner for all to enjoy.

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I'm Just Sayin'...

October 2026
Food, dining and Breweries

Jeff Smith owner/publisher

There are several new owners of restaurants we all love going to: Black Hat Cattle Company, Keys on the Green (now Syd's on the Green), Creekside Cellars, Dandelion Cafe, and more. Others, like Snowpack, have moved, and are doing great, with The Park taking over their old location. And don't forget one of our favorites, Aspen Peak Winery in Bailey. Many offer live music, too. Let's get out there and support our local restaurants and breweries.

Let's all welcome the new Conifer Chamber Director, Leah Peterson. She has lived up here for over 12 years, and is more than qualified for the position. We are sorry to see Beth leave, but wish her and her family the very best in their new chapter.

Highline is installing fiber in the Deer Creek Valley Ranchos neighborhood. They have been working on this project for over two years, and have made many promises and under performed on almost all of them. It's my opinion that this seems to be their mode of operation. I personally won't do business with them — make up your own mind. There are other excellent options available.

Broncos — They are changing their schedule to play High School teams. The “game” against Kansas City was probably the worst performance I have seen in the NFL for a long time, and their schedule only gets harder by the week. The next four games are against playoff teams from last year. But I am still a huge fan, and still hopeful they can fix everything. I'm not impressed with their new offensive coordinator yet, nor convinced Nix is back at 100%. And where was the best defense in the league? They missed about 30 tackles. It's time for some tough practices!

Iowa Hawkeyes — 2-0 at this writing and ranked #18. Their schedule gets really fun after the last preseason game: Michigan, Ohio State, and Washington. GO HAWKS!

Rockies — Nothing to say here. Got swept by the Tigers. They are .366 winning at this writing.

Quackadilly says:
“One can not think well, love well, sleep well if one has not dined well.”
—Virginia Wolfe

NEWS ON THE POSITIVE SIDE

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November theme: Thanksgiving

Stories are contributed by local residents to inspire healthy living, happy families, and community giving. Email your story to jeff@yourmtnconnection.com. Stories accepted on a space-available basis only. Advertorials are paid advertising. Business Profiles cost \$400, limited one per year. From the Experts educational columns cost \$300/month, minimum three-month commitment. Deadline for ads and articles is October 16. Call 515-326-2672.



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from the experts

— EVERGREEN HEALTH INSURANCE —

October 15th Starts AEP

BY ED REGALADO

It's that time of year again, if you get your healthcare through a Medicare Advantage plan. AEP is the Annual Enrollment Period during which enrollees are able to change Advantage and Prescription Drug plans for 2027. If you are enrolled in one of these plans, you've probably received your Annual Notice of Change by now, where your carrier informs you about changes being made to your plan, or if the plan you have will remain available next year. If your current plan is set to be discontinued next year, you have the opportunity to enroll in another Advantage plan or, if you prefer, you may go back to original Medicare and enroll in a Supplement plan without facing underwriting, since your plan is being discontinued.

A lot of changes are happening in 2027! Medicare funding has been reduced and the cost of healthcare, including prescriptions, has increased. Insurance carriers are reducing benefits or no longer offering plans that are unprofitable. There will also be network changes, meaning which doctors and hospitals accept Advantage Plans. No one likes change, especially as we get older. I know I don't, but at times we have no other choice. The plan you're on may have had benefits reduced, yet still may offer you the best value available. You can only know by comparing all of your options. This is where a certified broker can assist you.

If you signed up for an Advantage plan through an 800 number or directly with a carrier, you may be on your own to find new coverage. Brokers can discuss the new 2027 Advantage Plans on or after October 1st, but we



“A lot of changes are happening in 2027!”

If you and/or your family members get health insurance through Connect for Health Colorado, open enrollment starts November 1st. Those that have an individual Cigna plan, should have been notified by now that Cigna will no longer offer individual plans starting in January. You will need to select new coverage. Our own Devin Regalado is an expert in the individual market, and would be happy to schedule a phone call or virtual appointment to help new and existing clients.

Having someone you can trust to navigate through next year's healthcare policy changes and choices will be truly valuable. Call us, we would love 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 a n email to: edregalado46@gmail.com.

aren't able to enroll you for 2027 until October 15th.

If you have not done so already, call a broker and set up an appointment. My office is at the Stone House in Bergen Park, and I enjoy meeting personally with my clients. I expect to be very busy, so please call me if you would like to schedule an appointment.

If you have a Medicare Supplement plan, you don't need to do anything since these plans don't change. Your prescription drug plan, however, will change next year. Brokers are still not able to enroll you in a prescription drug plans, but as a courtesy, if you are a client, they can help guide you.

— THE SASQUATCH OUTPOST —

The Sasquatch Chronicles

BY JIM MYERS

Sasquatch is a master of Intention.

A few weeks ago, I led my last Sasquatch expedition of the season into the Lost Creek Wilderness. It was a larger group than I'm used to leading, seven guests, plus my crew, Steve, and myself. We camped in the same place as last year, about ¾ of the way into the wilderness on Lost Park road. If you remember my article after that trip, we had some excitement on the third night around 4am, when a Sasquatch unlatched the tailgate of a guest's truck and literally threw it down. It bounced LOUDLY two or three times, woke everyone in the camp, and scared Nick (who owns the truck) to death. He was sleeping above the truck in a truck-top tent.

Anyway, as I said above, I believe that Sasquatch is a master of intention...OUR intentions towards them, in particular. This trip was made even more interesting because I had two podcasters with me: Robert Maxwell, from "Cabin in the Woods" and Stacy Brown, from "The Bigfoot Underground" podcast. Together, these two men probably draw half a million views or more every time they post an episode. Robert, who's Canadian, has a particular interest in the whole topic of mind-speak, telepathy, and whether we can communicate with Sasquatch and receive communication from them telepathically.

One day he decided to put his theories to the test. He took himself off into the woods, alone, and sat down to meditate and reflect; to "project" his thoughts towards any Sasquatch in the area.



“Thinking this was no coincidence, Robert took the knocks as an invitation to move towards the sound.”

After 10 minutes or so, he opened his eyes, and almost immediately he heard two, distinct tree knocks, coming up from the ravine below the campsite. Thinking this was no coincidence, he took the knocks as an invitation to move towards the sound, which he did. Maybe 100 yards down the hill he stopped and stared, a single pine tree was swaying very obviously back and forth, even though there was no wind. He took this as another invitation to move in that direction. About 30 yards further down, he started to climb over a large fallen tree, and immediately spotted a large, human-like footprint—complete with five clear toe impressions. It was partially hidden by the log, and the odds of him finding it were a million to one. Robert believes that he was led to that spot by a Sasquatch, so that he could find the print, cast it, and take it home as evidence.

I question very little anymore, and I have no reason to doubt that Robert experienced mind-speak that day. How else could I explain how he found an almost perfect footprint, hidden under a massive fallen tree? And not just any track, but probably the most perfect footprint I have ever seen in 15 years of research. You can't make this stuff up.

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

A Holiday Tradition
49 Years in the Making

Conifer Newcomers & Neighbors Holiday Boutique

BY CARRIE BERGENER

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

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

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

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

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

And then there is the bake sale.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Experience a holiday tradition!

Conifer Newcomers & Neighbors Holiday Boutique
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A Skeptic’s View

What Are You Afraid Of?

BY GARY LOFFLER

“The days of vampires and Frankenstein’s monster being scary are pretty much gone.”

What are you afraid of? For me, it is standing next to a ledge. Acrophobia kicks in, and I am a danger to myself and the people around me. There are some tricks that make it manageable: simply being a few steps away from the ledge, looking at the horizon, and mentally focusing on something else. Still visiting the Cliff Dwellings a couple summers ago was a challenge, and climbing the ladder back out was something of an accomplishment. The guide spent something like five minutes telling us about a woman who had gone down the path to the dwellings where she suffered an acrophobia attack and it took hours to get her back to safety. He did not want a repeat of that event. Fortunately, I was able to complete the tour under my own power.

Flirting with phobias is part of the fun of Halloween and some horror movies. The days of vampires and Frankenstein’s monster being scary are pretty much gone. Fred Gwynn’s turn as Herman Munster did a lot to remove any frightening aspect of that character. Clearly, The Munsters was never meant to be scary, after all, they named the show after a cheese. Various newer remakes of Frankenstein stick closer to Mary Shelley’s original description of the monster and the plot, though I feel these tend to look more like action movies than classic horror.

I have long felt that Dracula slowly sucking the life out of someone was a reference to some diseases; cancer and anemia, in particular. Both can kill a healthy person in a short time, and medical science at that time could barely describe the diseases, much less cure them; so making up a supernatural cause might be a way to help deal with the problem. In movies, the vampire’s victims are invariably shown as suffering from “Hollywood non-wasting disease,” and not a realistic depiction of an illness.

Clowns have made some people nervous for a long time, there is just something about their



“Movie makers are not the only people who try to exploit our fears. Social media is full of posts warning us of various dangers to our health and well being.”

erratic behavior and the heavy makeup that is unsettling. 1892 saw the first performance of Pagliacci, a play about a clown who commits murder. Apparently, this was not the first time a killer clown was used on a story, because the author, Ruggero Leoncavallo, was sued for plagiarism by Manuel Tamayo y Baus. However, that suit was dropped when it was pointed out that Baus’s story resembled an even early story. So killer clowns? Nothing new.

Some people might claim that clowns are wonderfully comedic, and bring joy to children of all ages. While this can certainly occur, the science

suggests otherwise. An internet search for “terrified of clowns” reveals plenty of results. The fear of clowns is called coulrophobia, which oddly translates from the Greek as fear of stilt walkers. Stephen King is not the first modern author to capitalize on that fear, the Hanna Barbara team beat him to it in 1969, when the Scooby gang encountered an evil clown in “Bedlam in the Bigtop.” Literature and cinema have lots of other examples of bad clowns, perhaps because unlike other horror bad guys, clowns exist in the real world, making them more firmly rooted than werewolves.

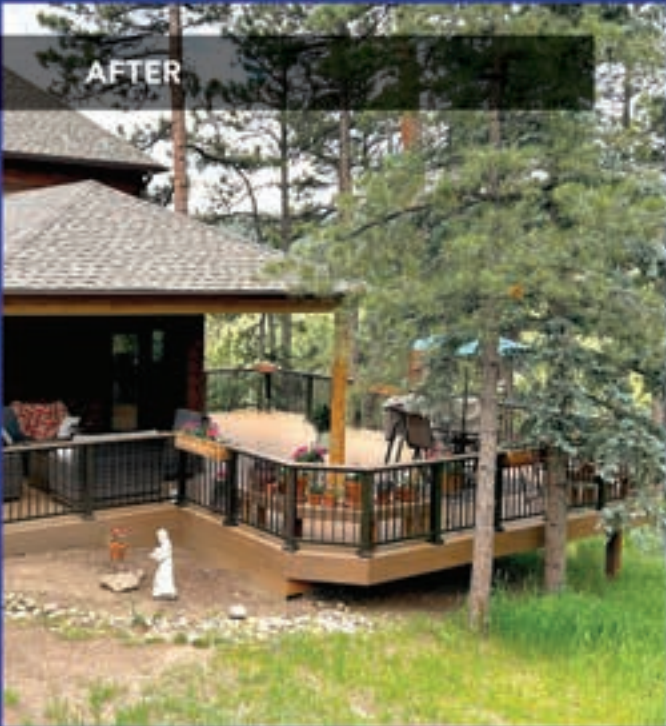
There are movies based on phobias that are meant to scare us. Arachnophobia features lots of spiders, Anaconda might scare you if you are afraid of bad CGI snakes, and Vertigo if you suffer from acrophobia. But for most every scary movie there is a comedic counterpart. As soon as a horror movie hits the big screen, there is often a funny version available. Eight-Legged Freaks, High Anxiety, and Snakes on a Plane, each take a more amusing look at some of the things that unnerve us.

Movie makers are not the only people who try to exploit our fears. Social media is full of posts warning us of various dangers to our health and well being. That most of these are at best exaggerations, or flat out lies, makes no difference to the posters. While we understand that movie monsters are not real, that understanding does not always extend to advertisements about supplements or herbal cures. The proponents of holistic medicine conjure up images of uncaring doctors, who purposely ignore simple cures and prolong suffering in order to get more money. While they may set themselves up as Van Helsing fighting the vampire that is modern medicine, it is no more real than an old monster movie. Miracle cures make a compelling story, and it would be great if simple home remedies could fix what ails you, but they do not. The reason we have modern medicine is because a mustard poultice does not cure infections, vinegar does nothing for high blood pressure, and honey is not an antibiotic.

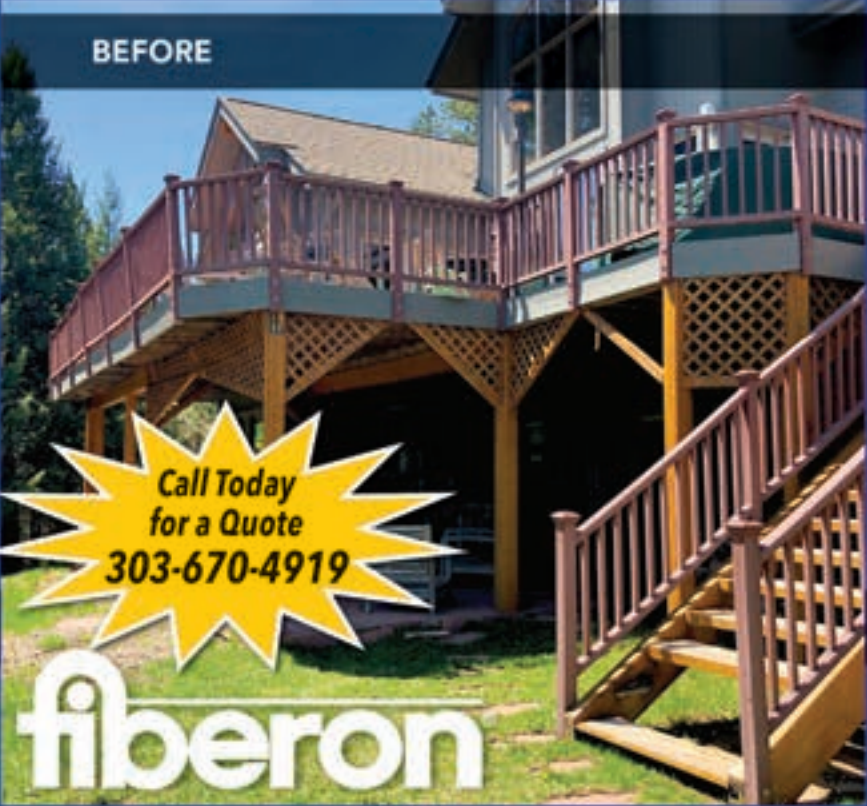
It is hard to put an exact number on how much we spend on dietary supplements, green tea, fat burning pills, or any other current health fad, but Businesswire.com put it at almost 55 billion for 2024. I don’t know about you, but I find this pretty scary.



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“33% of cat owners and 35% of dog owners categorized their pets as overweight or having obesity.”

“Exercise and cutting back on their food are ways to get the weight gain under control.”



Dogs, Dogs, Dogs

BY CATHY KOWALSKI

Most of us, at one time or another, have felt the need to lose a few pounds. Dogs can’t tell you they’d like to lose a few pounds, so it’s up to you to keep a check on their weight!

As you look at your dog from above—you see an hourglass, a tuck in the abdominal area? From the side, do you see a tuck up behind the rib cage? According to the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention, “33% of cat owners and 35% of dog owners categorized their pets as overweight or having obesity.” Your veterinarian can provide you with a Body Condition Score (BCS) for your dog or cat. You should be able to feel your dog’s ribs as you run your hands over your dog’s side, but not be able to significantly see them. In dogs, the most common preventable disease is obesity. The life expectancy of your dog is significantly reduced when it is obese. Just like in humans, dogs are at risk of getting cancer, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, degeneration of joints, urinary bladder stones, hypothyroidism, pancreatitis, kidney disease, arthritis, and Cushing’s disease. Their quality of life is severely compromised. They may have challenges walking up the stairs, or getting onto and back down off of the furniture; they may pant excessively, and may have less energy.

The biggest contributing factor to obesity is overfeeding. Never love your dog with food. Yes, they are absolutely adorable—but love them with play, hugs, training, taking a walk, or just spending time with them. If their weight gain is abrupt, schedule a visit with your veterinarian. They can run blood work to determine if there are any conditions that are causing weight gain. They may also want to do x-rays. Exercise and cutting back on their food are ways to get the weight gain under control. Don’t always go by the suggested amount of food on the package—these are suggestions. You can cut their food back by a quarter cup and replace it with canned beans, apples, or carrots. There are various weight-loss dog foods available; check with your veterinarian for recommendations. Increase their exercise by 15 minutes to start. As your dog becomes more fit, you can increase the length of exercise and the difficulty. You would want to start with walks, not jogs! People food and table scraps are not necessary for your dog. If you do want to give them to your dog, use them as training rewards, but watch the

amount you are giving them. You can also use apples and carrots for training treats. Use a measuring cup when filling their bowl, and feed them two meals per day. Don’t free feed by leaving bowls of food out all day for them to munch on. Give them 20 minutes, then pick up the bowl and save it for the next scheduled feeding. Feeding your dog twice a day is better than one big meal per day for their metabolism. It also helps to prevent bloat, which is very dangerous for your dog and can be life-threatening. We all want our pups to be with us, healthy and happy, for as long as possible. Keeping your dog at a good weight is one way to ensure your buddy is by your side for many years to come.



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.



FULL CIRCLE

BY ANNE VICKSTROM

“He always found a way to find strength and to cope with changing circumstances.”

I recently had the pleasure of meeting Lookout Mountain local Jennifer Corbet, an astounding woman who has accomplished an array of admirable feats, including graduating from Brown University, where she was a member of the rowing team and went on to represent our country at the Seoul Olympics. She also earned two Master’s Degrees, edited many scientific and technical papers, and is currently a publisher. Humble as she is, when we met she spoke primarily of her father, Barry Corbet, remembered for Jackson Hole’s Corbet’s Couloir. Barry gazed at it in the 1960s and commented, “One day someone will ski that.” He was not the first, that was a ski patroller who suddenly found himself there after a cornice broke beneath him, but years later, Barry would ski it voluntarily, even flipping into it. Barry defined the term Mountain-Man. He was a Canadian-American (born in Vancouver, BC) mountaineer, filmmaker, and author. He left Dartmouth College his Junior year when his love of skiing and mountaineering called him to Jackson Hole, Wyoming. In 1958, he and three others were the first to ski traverse the Bugaboos to Rogers Pass, now called The Grand Traverse. The following year, he completed the first ascent of the Southwest Rib of Denali, in Alaska. That was also the year he married Mary “Muffy” French. Together, they would welcome three children, Jennifer, her twin, Michael, and brother Jonathan. His love of climbing led him to join the 1963 American Mount Everest West Ridge Expedition, part of the first U.S. Team to climb Mount Everest. On May 21, 1963, with fellow climber Al Auten,

they forged the route to the final camp at 28,300 feet. Fellow climber Thomas Horbein stated, “At the time of our summit push, Barry was going strong. He relinquished a place on the summit team, leaving the last spot to Willi Unsedl and me. You’re both just about over the hump (36 and 32). This is my first expedition. I’ll be coming back again someday.” For ten years, 1958–68, Barry guided with Exum School and taught skiing at Jackson Hole; discovering new routes on the Tetons. He also opened his own mountaineering school, The Outhaus. In 1966, he joined a four-man team that summited Mt. Vinson, the highest point in Antarctica. Only days later, what he called his finest climb, he completed the first ascent of Mt. Tyree, the second-highest peak at 15,919 feet. His climbing expertise led to his involvement in a secret CIA mission to the Nanda Kot area in India, near Tibet. Working with the Indian Intelligence Bureau, the successful mission placed a nuclear-powered listening device on the summit in 1967. Returning to Wyoming, he started Jackson Hole Mountain Guides in 1968, which continues to inspire skiers today. Barry filmed in more than six locations in America and Europe to make Ski the Outer Limits, a first-of-its-kind film that showed the cutting-edge of downhill skiing. While filming his second film, the helicopter hit a knoll and bounced, throwing him to the ground. Paralyzed, he astounded even the professionals at Craig Hospital with his comeback. Still, the adventurer he always was, he kept filming even though he was in a wheelchair, especially films about and for people with spinal



cord injuries. He wrote pieces for the *Bully Pulpit*, where he and two others contributed personal accounts of living with spinal cord injuries, referring to himself and others as “wheelers.” Barry produced/co-produced more than 100 films and edited *New Mobility*, a magazine on disability culture and lifestyle, writing extensively on disability related issues. In 1980, Barry wrote a book called *Options*, in which he gathered stories from people with spinal cord injuries. The book brought these people’s stories together, interlaced with his own. Craig patients received copies, which had a huge effect and brought attention to this community. He later made two companion films, *Changes*, and *Outside – Spinal Cord Injury and the Future*.

Corbet died on December 18, 2004, which was far later than medics had predicted after his injury. Jennifer contributed to the film *Full Circle*, about her father: “He always found a way to find strength and to cope with changing circumstances.” The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree. **Anne Vickstrom proudly started her writing career with *Your Mountain Connection*. She has written for regional and national publications, and has published books, including *Depths of Devotion – A Love Story Across Continents and Cultures*. She loves living in Evergreen where she and her husband raised three children and six dogs.**

COOKING CLASSES WITH... CASTLES & KITCHENS

Wine from the Vine

BY TOM BECKER

Looks to me that we’re on an historic beverage roll! From a cup of Joe to an afternoon brew, let’s now get ready for an evening of wine from the vine!

It seems that wine has paired quite well with all of human history, with the oldest winery discovered in an Armenian cave dating back to 4100 BC. That discovery, made in 2007, found a wine press and fermentation containers, along with withered vines, seeds, skins, and drinking cups. Later, with the rise of power of the Egyptian Pharaohs around 3100 BC, a wine-like substance made with red grapes, and resembling blood, was used in ceremonies.

As the Egyptians came in contact with Jews and Phoenicians, wines began to spread around the world. A 3,700-year-old cellar was discovered in northern-Israel, where 500 gallons of the liquid was once stored. Studies showed that the wine was infused with oil from pistachio and cedar, as well as cinnamon and mint. From 1200 BC to the mid-500s, Phoenicians began trade across the Mediterranean to Greece and Italy, bringing with them their wine in ceramic jugs and, of course, grapevines. It was around 800 BC, that the Greeks were responsible for the move to the perfection of wine and the wine making process. Wine became a symbol for trade, health, and religion. It even had its own God, Dionysus. As Greece rose in power and colonization began around the Mediterranean, the vines and wines spread to new regions. The earliest Greek colonies were in Sicily and southern Italy, which fostered the wine movement northwards to Rome.

146 BC saw the Romans conquering Greece, building its empire, and making wine their own. Bacchus was the god of wine, and wine became a major part of Roman culture. Cultivation of



grapes, the maximizing of the effects of terroir, and improved production resulted in what became famous early vintages. With the growth of the empire came the cultivation of vines throughout what is modern day Europe. France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and much of Central Europe were all recipients of those Roman plantings. In 380, with the Roman acceptance of Christianity and the Catholic Church, wine became a major part of sacrament, which brings the church into cultivation and production. Monks throughout Italy and France began work as vintners, and the technology was even more perfected. And as the church grew, likewise did the wine industry. It was the church that spurred the growth of that stage of wine development.

As the conquistadors began travels to the New World in the 1400s, wine found its way to Mexico, Brazil, and throughout South America. It was Spanish Missionaries who introduced wine to Chile, Argentina, and for a brief period, Florida, where it was produced by French Huguenots in Jacksonville. Meanwhile, Portuguese Jesuits introduced it to Japan in the 1500s, but due to a banning of Catholicism in 1587, grapevines were not planted there for another 300 years. With the settlement of Quebec City in 1608, Jesuits failed to produce a quality crop with their European grapes, but later turned to the local grapes for success. In 1619, the French imported French vines and began their cultivation in Virginia.

It was about 150 years later when the Spanish missionary Junipero Sera traveled to the New World to spread the gospel and he found his way to California, where he opened a mission in San Diego. Bringing grapes with him, he successfully created the region's first wine. As the Spanish missions spread across California, so did the wine, and Franciscan monks established Sonoma's first winery in 1805. It was the California gold rush that brought an influx of European vines to those new wineries, primarily from France, but California's most notable varietal, Zinfandel, actually came from Croatia.

It was with the Dutch East India Companies colonization of South Africa that brought wine production to South Africa in 1659. In 1788, The First Fleet left England for Australia to establish a penal colony. Along the way, they stopped in South Africa, where they gathered cuttings which were then planted in Australia. Englishman James Busby traveled from Australia to New Zealand, bringing with him cuttings, which created New Zealand's first vineyard in 1836. In 1870, Don Pascual Harriague, a French Basque, planted the first Tannat vines in Uruguay, which are now considered its "National Grape." Finally, coming full circle, the Phoenicians, who originally planted vines and produced wine in Algeria around 3100 BC, had Islamic rule take that practice away, but in 1830 the French took over rule and replanted the vineyards. When phylloxera,

a grape insect pest, crippled the French wine industry in the 1860s–70s, it was the vines from Algeria that saved the day. The Algerian industry boomed and in the 1930s, most of the Algerian wine was exported to French winemakers in the Languedoc for blending.

Thus, a smash history of wine! For us wine lovers, what matters most is our draw to our favorite varietals and blends, and our desire to understand how and what our earth does to create those marvelous creations. The terroir, air movement, moisture, temperatures, sun, clouds...Mother Nature's symphony of magic.

Whether a California Zinfandel, a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, a French Malbec, a Chilean Cabernet, an Oregon Pinot, or an Italian Barolo, each wine has its place in our culinary soul. Each wine speaks to us, each wine tells a developmental story, and each enriches our spirit.

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Celebrating the Flavors of Evergreen

BY ERICA SPRENKEL

Taste of Evergreen brought our community together for a night of great food, creative sips, live music and plenty of reasons to celebrate the businesses that make Evergreen such a special place.

On behalf of the Evergreen Area Chamber of Commerce, I want to say thank you to everyone who joined us, our participating businesses, volunteers, musicians (John Erlandson and Friends), and all those who helped make the evening possible. Events like Taste of Evergreen are successful because our community continues to show up and support local.

A special thank you goes to our sponsors, whose support helped bring the evening together: Climax Molybdenum; Lifetime Home Remodeling; Motto Mortgage; Blue Sky Plumbing; PandoraJohn Properties; US Bank; Bellwether Windows, Siding, and Doors; Alpen Way; Everbot; Mr. Electirc; Aspen Park Vet Hospital; ResqRanch; Rolling Ridge; Best Custom Homes; and CM Accounts all stepped up to support not only Taste of Evergreen, but an event designed to showcase our local business community.

Congratulations to this year's winners: The Cow An Eatery II, Wildflower Café, The

Frame Shop, Suz Cookie Jar Rescue Bakery & Bites, Blackbird Café, Muddy Buck, Espresso Evergreen, Kiki's Health Care Cafe, Wolf Sciences, Cactus Jack's Saloon & Grill, Echo Mountain Ski Resort, Murphy's Mountain Grill, Lucky Charm Mobile Bar, Evoke 1923, Trusan Cuisines, and Hummingbird Club.

While we love handing out awards, Taste of Evergreen is about much more than choosing favorites. It gives our restaurants, cafés, beverage makers, and local businesses a chance to share what they do with hundreds of people in one evening.

The ask is that you go back and try the restaurant you sampled for the first time. Meet a friend for coffee at one of our local cafés. Stop into a business you have been meaning to explore.

Thank you for making Taste of Evergreen a wonderful evening, and for continuing to show our local businesses just how much Evergreen supports them.

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

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.

Conifer Chamber News



A New Role in a Community I Already Call Home

BY LEAH PETERSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello, Conifer!

For those I haven't had the chance to meet yet, I'm Leah Peterson, the new Executive Director of the Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce. While the role is new, Conifer certainly isn't. My family and I have called this community home for nearly 12 years, and I'm incredibly excited to now have the opportunity to serve the businesses and people who make this such a great place to live.

My husband and I are raising our five-year-old twin boys here, which means a good portion of my life outside the Chamber involves trying to keep up with two small humans who seem to have significantly more energy than I do. When I'm not doing that, you can usually find me at CrossFit, running the trails at Meyer Ranch or Flying J, or enjoying one of those rare and magical moments when no one is asking me for a snack.

Professionally, my path here has been a little varied—which I've come to appreciate. I have a master's degree in microbiology, worked in a clinical laboratory, and spent six years teaching biology at Chatfield Senior High School in Littleton. I've also experienced our local business community firsthand, having run a small cottage baking business right here in Conifer.

Running that little business taught me something important about this community: people here genuinely want to see each other succeed. The support I received from local customers, neighbors, and other businesses was incredible. Now I find myself on the other side of that relationship, with the opportunity to help support

the businesses that give so much back to the place my family calls home. That feels pretty special.

As I settle into my role with the Chamber, one of my biggest priorities is simply getting to know our members and the people of the community. I don't just want to know the name of a business and what it sells. I want to know the people behind it. I want to hear what's going well, what's frustrating, what our businesses need, and where the Chamber can genuinely be helpful.

I also want to continue strengthening the connection between our local businesses and the greater community. Our businesses do so much more than sell products and services. They create jobs, sponsor our kids' teams, donate to fundraisers, support community events, and step up when someone around here needs help. They are a huge part of what makes our mountain community feel like a community.

And that's probably my favorite thing about living here. Conifer has grown and changed over the years, but there is still this wonderful sense that we're all in it together. People recommend their neighbor's business, show up when

someone needs help, rally around local causes, and somehow know exactly who to call when you need a plumber, a dog sitter, a mechanic—or apparently just about anything else.

I'm still new to this position, and I have plenty to learn. That's okay with me. I'm a big believer in asking questions, listening to people who know more than I do, and figuring things out as we go. My goal isn't to walk in with all the answers. It's to make sure the Chamber is listening, connecting people, and finding meaningful ways to help our local businesses and community thrive.

So please come say, "Hi." If you see me around town, introduce yourself. Come to a Chamber event. Send me an email. And you can always stop by the Chamber office during business hours—my door is open, and I'd genuinely love to meet you. Whether you have an idea, a

question, something you think the Chamber could be doing better, or you just want to put a face to the name, come on in.

Conifer has been my family's home for nearly 12 years. I'm incredibly grateful that I now get to spend my days helping support the community that has given us so much.

Leah Peterson
Executive Director
Conifer Area Chamber of Commerce

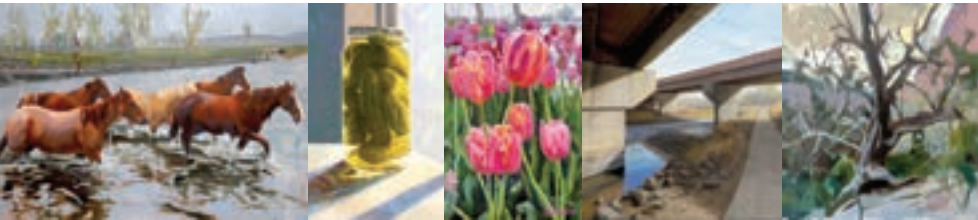
If you have any membership questions, please contact the chamber office: director@GoConifer.com, 303-838-5711. Thank you for your continued support and thank you for shopping local!



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

www.goconifer.com

WE SUPPORT LIVING LOCALLY



Of Chaos and Order

Art Collective Activates the Surface and Evergreen this Fall!

The Of Chaos and Order Art Collective is proud to present “Activating the Surface: Exploring the Expressive Qualities of Paint,” opening October 22, 2026 at the Center for the Arts Evergreen, 31880 Rocky Village Drive, Evergreen.

Of Chaos and Order Art Collective (OCAO) is a group of five artists who began meeting in 2019 with the goal of building community, while challenging themselves, each other, and their artwork. Their monthly dinners and discussions have been an opportunity to talk about their careers and the works on their easels. As the COVID pandemic interrupted life and meetings moved online, it was a lifeline to grounding and connection with other creatives. The friendship and bond have continued for seven years, even as one artist has moved to a different state. OCAO artists include from Colorado: Dan Oakleaf, Sascha Ripps, Richard Rodriguez, and Elizabeth Rouland. And from New Mexico: Hazel Weckbach.

Since the group’s inception in 2019, OCAO has presented two exhibitions at the Curtis Center for the Arts in Greenwood Village, Colorado, “Lessons from Chaos,” in 2022, and “On the Edge of Transition,” in 2024. Each of the exhibitions has focused on a visual idea that the artists discussed and then responded to in their bodies of work. The “Lessons” exhibition explored the visual idea of equalization, working with repeating patterns, while the “On the Edge” show was a chance to work with edges in new ways.

OCAO is excited to present new work in their third exhibition, this time at the Center for the Arts Evergreen, from October 22 through November 28, 2026. “Activating the Surface:

Exploring the Expressive Qualities of Paint” is about playing with marks and paint in whatever ways feel expansive to each artist. The artists have discussed using this time to fall in love with painting all over again. For some, this might mean investigating thick, juicy paint in fresh ways, while for others it might look like working with thinner paint application, transparency, and glazes. It’s all about stretching each artist’s mark and visual vocabulary in new ways. A variety of mediums and colors were explored; and sometimes tools besides paint brushes were wielded. Different subject matter was explored, or familiar subject matter was painted with a distinct approach. It has been an interesting time of growth and discomfort, as each artist has broken out of their routines and familiar tools.

“Activating the Surface: Exploring the Expressive Qualities of Paint” will open at the Center for the Arts Evergreen on October 22, 2026, with an artist reception from 4–7pm. Some of the OCAO artists will be on hand to demonstrate their work every Saturday from October 31st–November 21st from 11am–1pm, with a closing reception and artist talk on November 28th from 2–4pm.

For more information, please go to www.evergreenarts.org

Mary Wheelright

BY KAARSTEN TURNER



I followed the memory of a woman I didn’t even know. For me, it was a journey that took me offshore. The Tea House sits atop a vertical cliff on Sutton Island, south of Mount Desert, in the Cranberry Isles of Maine. Ebenezer Sutton deeded the island in 1757. It is the third largest of the five Cranberry Isles, a mile and a quarter long and half a mile wide. Long before Sutton, the Abenaki tribe summered here, and heaps of their artifacts have been unearthed.

The one-room Tea House was built in 1895 by Andrew C. Wheelwright for his daughter, Mary. Born in 1878, Mary “tead” there until 1919, when she bought a larger house nearby and spent her summers there instead. In 1935 she sold the property to the family who owns it today. It was with this family, I traveled offshore.

For almost a hundred years, nestled in Maine’s maritime spruce-fir forest, the Tea House has shared an acre with a forest of red and white spruce, balsam fir, white pine, paper birch, and red maple. It also shared the space with what looks like a fairy forest, a place where dense old growth filters the sunlight into something cool, damp, and dappled. Here, the green mosses carpet the organic soils and granite bedrock with a web of interconnected species. This soft layer cushions the forest floor and shelters the island’s small fauna. Get down on your hands and knees and you might spot a masked shrew or a meadow vole. Listen above and you might catch warblers and flycatchers flitting over the fairy garden below. In the drier places there are apple trees and blueberry patches, and a few cranberry patches too, still holding their spot on the namesake Isle.

In the second half of September, after most of

the summer residents have gone back to Boston and New York, I sat on the deck with a cup of lavender chamomile tea, the water boiled on a portable propane stove outside. Perhaps the cup in my hand was Mary’s, or perhaps someone else had carried it up the cliff entirely. It is sturdy and chipped with both a cup and a saucer. On the water, sailboats, powerboats, and lobster boats pass by. The open Atlantic wasn’t far.

I thought about Mary and her time here. She was described as “quite a character sailing up and down the coast in her father’s schooner.” She “made up her own rules and brooked no dissent... her arbitrary ways were cushioned by so much generosity and kindness to so many deserving causes and people that her idiosyncrasies were easy to forgive.” Mary made her mark in the West as well. She started a museum in

Santa Fe. Drawn by the romance, and the presumed health benefits, of dry air and altitude, she bought a house in New Mexico in 1923. Under those skies, I imagine her on horseback, galloping across open country, carrying her kindness to the Navajo she befriended.

I suppose it is a woman thing, or a landscape thing, but there is a particular kind of freedom a woman learns from the land, and I believe Mary embodied it. It is the freedom of following a ridgeline, or a river running high in April. And I hope that, like her, the landscape has taught me kindness: trees shading moss, dead ones becoming soil. It is what the little things do when they are given room.

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

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 1
Tickets now on sale for The SpongeBob Musical! Join us to find out what happens when the citizens of Bikini Bottom discover that a volcano will soon erupt and destroy their humble home! Can the power of optimism really can save the world? Performed by our professionally trained Middle School Company, this show is a must-see for kids of all ages, 4 to 104! For a variety of show dates and tickets, **please visit: www.thevenue theatre.com**.

The Venue Theatre is located at 27132 Main Street, #K-100 (near Safeway), and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. At the Venue students receive professional training for stage and life!

October 1
Heartmath Breathwork Class at Chillax Om from 5pm–7pm, with charcuterie, refreshments, and 4 hours free parking. \$25/person to learn how to de-stress and uplevel longevity, health, and wellness; with clinical research-proven breathwork that you can track with heart rate variability. This is a Chillax Om Foundation 501(c)(3) non-profit Fundraiser. To learn more and get your ticket visit: **<https://chillaxom.com/heartmath-breathwork-class-july-23-2026/>**

October 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29
Al-anon, Thursdays 7–8pm, NEW LOCATION: Church of the Cross, 28253 Meadow Drive, Evergreen. Open meeting. Offering help to deal with the impact of another’s drinking. No dues for attending.

October 1–October 28
The Venue Theatre: Improv for adults, Level 1. This introductory course welcomes beginners to the world of improvisational theater. You will learn to silence your inner critic, think on your feet, and collaborate with others in a fun and supportive environment. You will learn the “Yes, and” philosophy, active listening, character development, object work (props), environment (pantomime), and confidence building. No prior theater or comedy experience is required. Wednesday evenings. 7pm–9pm. **For more information and to register, please visit: <https://www.thevenue theatre.com/improv>**

October 3
Mountainfilm Evergreen brings the Evergreen community together, uplifting local businesses and creating a vibrant space for film lovers, activists, outdoor enthusiasts, and curious citizens to engage with meaningful issues. Join us at Ovation West Performing Arts at Center Stage, 27608 Fireweed Dr, Evergreen. Doors open at 5pm, show 6pm. **www.mountainfilm evg.org**

October 15
Wild Aware, an Evergreen, Colorado, non-profit organization, invites you to join us for a wild evening of celebration and connection at the **Open Aware Meet and Greet** on the third Thursday

of each month from 6–7:30pm at the awesome Evergreen Brewery, 2962 Evergreen Parkway, Suite 201, Evergreen, CO, 80439. **wildaware.org**

October 24
Aspen Park Spooktacular and StageDoor Haunted House. Join us for an evening of family fun and Halloween thrills at the StageDoor Theatre’s 3rd Annual Haunted House, now part of the Aspen Park Village Spooktacular! Explore the Aspen Village complex for food trucks, face painting, games, and more. Then, experience StageDoor’s Magical Toy Shop from 5–6:30pm, a non-scary adventure for younger children and the young at heart and/or brave the Haunted Toy Shop from 7–8:30pm. One ticket, two experiences: magical and haunted! Suggested Haunted House donation: \$10 ages 8+, \$5 ages 2–7, under 2 free. October 24, 5–8:30pm, at 25797 Conifer Road, Conifer. Actors and design volunteers are also needed, as well as sponsors for the event. Costumes encouraged! **See more details at StagedoorTheatre.org**.

Stagedoor Theatre is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community theatre, open to everyone. The Venue Theatre is located at 27132 Main Street, #K-100 (near Safeway), and is a 501(c)(3) non-profit. At the Venue students of all ages receive professional training for stage and life!

October 30
Wild Aware, an Evergreen, Colorado, non-profit organization, is actively recruiting volunteers, new and old, for their **Last Friday Coffee**, a monthly event that continues on the last Friday morning of every month. Our gatherings begin at 9am in the Evergreen Bread and Cocktail Lounge at 1260 Bergen Pkwy in Evergreen. Come meet new friends and make an impact in your community! **wildaware.org**

October 31
EAPL’s Zombie Fun Run 5K, Saturday, October 31st. Race Starts at 10am, Buchanan Rec Center (Ball Parks). Register at **<https://raceroster.com/events/2026/119374/eapl-zombie-run-5k>**

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

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

October 2026



October 7
Women’s Circle 5:30–6:30pm. Join us for a nurturing women’s circle created to slow down, connect, and remember that you don’t have to navigate life alone. Through guided conversation, reflection, and intentional connection, we’ll create space to share authentically, listen without judgment, and feel truly seen and heard. Come exactly as you are—there is nothing to fix, prove, or perform. This is a space to breathe, connect, and leave feeling supported, valued, and a little more connected to yourself and the women around you..

October 11
Mindfulness Walk 10am. Join Kathy at Pine Valley Ranch (30400 Crystal Lake Road, Pine) for gentle walking, grounding, and reflection. Whether you are feeling called to reconnect, reflect, or simply enjoy a calm morning, all are warmly welcomed. Bring layers for the weather, water, and an open heart.

October 14
Block Therapy™ Trauma Release 5:30–6:30pm. Trauma (physical and emotional) trapped in your body leads to pain, aging, and disease. This powerful self-healing practice unlocks the restrictions and adhesions that block blood and oxygen flow and releases trauma at a cellular level. All levels. Wear comfortable clothes. Bring a yoga mat if you have one and a water bottle.

PeaceWorks, Inc. offers a complimentary Community Wellness Program as part of our advocacy for personal wellbeing, healthy relationships, and safe homes. All are welcome. Attend in person at Taspen’s Dragonfly Studio, unless otherwise noted. Register **www.taspenshealingcenter.com** under Events or online (Zoom details on website) **www.peaceworksinc.co/communitywellness**

October 21
Dance Party 5:30–6:30pm. Dance, move, and feel good! Join us for a fun, family-friendly community wellness dance party where there’s no right or wrong way to move—just come as you are and let the music move you! Dancing and joyful movement can be powerful tools for supporting emotional wellbeing, helping lift our mood, reduce stress, and create connection. We’ll turn up the music, shake off the day, laugh, move, and make space for everyone to enjoy the simple joy of dancing together. Come ready to have fun, get your body moving, and leave feeling a little lighter, brighter, and more connected!

October 28
Dru Yoga 5:30–6:30pm. Dru has a focus upon maintaining a healthy spine, through activation 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.



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Tour Beaver Ranch Pioneer Cemetery
for stories of
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**Saturday
October 24th
2:30 pm**

Purchase tickets at
ConiferHistoricalSociety.org

Join us for a guided walking tour of Beaver Ranch Pioneer Cemetery to hear stories of pioneers, murder, mysteries, and tragedies. Since access to this cemetery is restricted, it’s a rare chance to see the little cemetery on the hill above Hwy 285. A shuttle will be provided since no parking is permitted at the cemetery. Purchase tickets online: <https://conifer.simpletix.com/>

Submit your calendar events by the 10th of each month prior to the actual date of the event to **news@yourmtnconnection.com**.



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

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